

**PATTERNS AND PERCEPTIONS OF FRIENDSHIP
AMONG MAINSTREAMED INTELLECTUALLY IMPAIRED JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR NON-HANDICAPPED PEERS**

by

SIGRID K. LYLES

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education and
the Graduate School of the University of Manitoba
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
EDUCATION**

Winnipeg, Manitoba
1996



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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

PATTERNS AND PERCEPTIONS OF FRIENDSHIP AMONG MAINSTREAMED INTELLECTUALLY IMPAIRED JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THEIR NON-HANDICAPPED PEERS

Interest in the nature and extent of friendship among handicapped and non-handicapped students is relatively new and provides a logical extension of previous research regarding attitudes, peer acceptance, social interaction and social satisfaction among students in mainstreamed environments. Although many students experience difficulties in establishing satisfactory social relationships and friendships with their peers, the problem is even more serious for mainstreamed adolescent students who are intellectually impaired.

The purpose of this investigation was to learn more about the size and nature of the social networks, and the friendship perceptions of intellectually impaired Junior High School students. A further purpose was to investigate the effects of levels of friendship understanding and aspects of the education, home and community environments on the ability of intellectually impaired students to form and maintain mutually reciprocated, lasting friendships with their non-handicapped peers. To accomplish this, the investigator used a qualitative research design and ethnographic methods that included student records, socio-metric devices, questionnaires, interviews and observation in home, school, community and classroom environments.

The subjects were six intellectually impaired students, their non-handicapped peers in five Junior High classrooms, and those peers who were identified as "best friends" by the intellectually impaired students. Data were collected within four broad areas: (1) patterns of friendship; (2) perceptions about friendship; (3) levels of friendship perceptions within the dimensions of initiation, maintenance and conflict resolution; and (4) social aspects of the mainstream environments.

The data provide evidence that, although mutually reciprocated friendships of long-standing did exist among handicapped and non-handicapped students, these friendships were not with non-handicapped peers in their class. Friendships with peers in class were very few and usually of a complementary type. The data also demonstrate that educational background, personal characteristics, and social aspects of the environment had a greater influence on the friendship perceptions and friendship choices of these students than their levels of academic functioning and friendship understanding. The discussion of the data concludes with recommendations for further research and implications for mainstreaming practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my adviser Professor Jeffrey Hughes and the members of the Advisory Committee, Professors Clifton, Wiest, and Whiteley for their support and assistance in conducting this research and in preparing the manuscript. I would also like to thank the students, parents, and teachers involved in this investigation for their valuable contribution to the research.

I also wish to give special thanks to my husband Stephen and my friends for their patience and continued support throughout the progress and completion of this project, and to Linda Chicoyne for her contribution in editing and finalizing this document.

I dedicate this research to the memory of my parents, Richard and Klara Ehnis. Also to Velma who during her short, but eventful life, has enriched the lives of so many of her friends and made a major contribution to this research.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The provision of services for people with handicaps has evolved from a time when the handicapped were treated with abuse and neglect to the present time when they are being increasingly integrated into the mainstream of society. A major development, the provision of educational services for handicapped children by the public school system, occurred during the twentieth century. A feature of these services was that educational programs were developed to meet the individual needs of mentally and physically disabled, emotionally and behaviour disordered children. In the beginning these programs were delivered to these children in segregated educational settings.

The philosophy of normalization had its origin in Scandinavia (Nirje, 1969) and matched well the political agenda of the civil rights movement. This movement advocated equal rights for minorities and produced a shift from serving people within segregated settings to providing them with access to integrated settings. The introduction of the principles of normalization into the North American society (Wolfensberger, 1975), promoted the philosophy that handicapped children should, as much as possible, live and be treated like their non-handicapped peers. Thus, the interpretation of the principles of normalization lead to the provision of surroundings, opportunities and programs for handicapped students that were much like those available to non-handicapped students (Cartwright, Cartwright and Ward, 1989). The philosophy of normalization and the objectives of the civil rights movement were adopted by advocates for the rights of the handicapped to promote the mainstreaming movement in North American schools with the result that mainstreaming became the most widely accepted method of providing educational services for handicapped students.

Mainstreaming has been defined as the temporal, instructional and social integration of handicapped students with their non-handicapped peers (Kaufman, Gottlieb, Agard, and Kukic, 1975). It was more recently defined by Johnson and Johnson (1980:90), "as the provision of appropriate educational opportunities for all handicapped students in the least restrictive alternative, based on individualized education programs, with procedural safeguards and parent involvement, and aimed at providing handicapped students with access to and constructive interaction with non-handicapped peers".

In the United States, Public Law 94-142, enacted in 1975, mandated the provision of educational

programming for all handicapped students within the least restrictive environment. Similar legislative provisions were adopted in Canada, such as Bill 82 of the Ontario Education Act (1974), the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 15, granting equality rights for all individuals, and Bill 7 (1980), providing access to a free public education for all children between the ages of six and twenty-one.

The North American statutes led to an interpretation of mainstreaming as the inclusion of all handicapped students into regular classrooms with their non-handicapped peers, regardless of their age and the severity of their handicapping condition (Wolfensberger, 1975). In contrast to the North American approach, the European approach to mainstreaming was to conduct pilot programs, implementing mainstreaming as a collaborative effort shared by educational and health services and monitored by long-term research projects. Based on the information provided through these pilot programs, mainstreaming was implemented at the kindergarten level and subsequently in the primary grades (see Speck, Gottwald, Havers and Innerhofer, 1978; Feuser and Meyer, 1986; Speck and Warnke, 1989). In "Setting the Record Straight", Perrin and Nirje (1985) discussed the misconceptions that have evolved with regard to Nirje's (1969) philosophy of normalization and their effects on present mainstreaming practices. One of these misconceptions refers to the practice of mainstreaming all students, regardless of their age and the type or severity of their disability. The practice of mainstreaming in Manitoba is to place handicapped students in regular classrooms, regardless of the type and severity of their disabilities.

The arguments used to support the value of mainstreaming are based on three major assumptions: (1) that physical placement of these students with their non-handicapped peers into mainstreamed classrooms will result in increased social interaction; (2) that physical placement of these students with their peers will result in social acceptance; and (3) that handicapped students will imitate the behaviour of their non-handicapped peers in mainstreamed classrooms (Bricker, 1978).

Although mainstreaming provides opportunities for handicapped students to interact with their non-handicapped peers, many parents, educators and researchers increasingly question whether this is actually occurring in mainstreamed environments. At the heart of the problem is the assumption that integration will result in increased interaction between handicapped and non-handicapped students. This assumption has been brought into question (Gresham, 1982), because integration may occur at three levels: (1) physical integration, (2) curricular integration and (3) social integration. If it does not result in social integration there will be only limited social interaction between the two groups of students. Johnson and Johnson (1980:75) go so far as to state: "experience with a broad range of peers is not a superficial luxury to be enjoyed by some students and not others, but rather an absolute necessity for maximal achievement and healthy cognitive and social development".

Research identified the importance of satisfactory social adjustment to the emotional health and

well-being of students (Schultz, 1989; Asher and Coie, 1990) and it is therefore important to determine to what extent mainstreaming practices assist or limit the development of social relationships of handicapped students.

The Meaning of Friendship

The implications of the assumptions made by Bricker (1978), are that handicapped and non-handicapped students will develop a relationship when handicapped students are integrated with their non-handicapped peers. These relationships are expected to culminate in friendship between the handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers. Friendship has been identified as the most significant of the voluntary social relationships (Corsaro, 1985). Friendship has also been described as a complex system of meanings, feelings, and interactions (Corsaro, 1985), and although each individual pattern of friendship may be different, the underlying structure of friendship contains similarities that form the basis for our common understanding of what friendship is and what it is not.

The role of friendship as an important factor in a child's social development and academic performance is increasingly recognized by educators (Rizzo, 1989). The social support derived from friendship provides children with an opportunity to explore their social identity and acquire the skills necessary to successfully negotiate a social position in a world of multiple social roles. Friendship also provides opportunities to learn social skills within a safe context, specifically those used for problem solving and the resolution of conflict within social situations (Selman, 1980). Friendship allows for social comparisons to be made and fosters a sense of group belonging (Asher and Gottman, 1989).

Furthermore, the successful acquisition and development of social skills can only be achieved through practice with peers, in an environment where these skills are shaped to conform to group standards (Furman, 1984). The support provided through friendship, is a factor in encouraging children to seek to expand their social network, and in this process, expand their understanding about friendship and their repertoire of social skills (Hughes and Lyles, 1994). A great deal of research has been conducted into friendship but little of this research has involved friendship relations between handicapped and non-handicapped adolescents.

Definition of Intellectual Impairment

The term "intellectually impaired" is used synonymously with mental retardation. The definition of mental retardation has been revised numerous times to reflect our evolving understanding of mental retardation as well as our philosophy. Currently, the most widely accepted definition comes from the American Association on Mental Retardation. It was accepted as the new definition in 1993. Mental retardation refers to substantial limitations in present functioning. It is characterized by significantly subaverage intellectual functioning existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of the following applicable adaptive skill areas: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, leisure, and work.

Four assumptions are essential to the application of this definition: (1) Valid assessment considers cultural and linguistic diversity as well as differences in communication and behavioral factors; (2) the existence of limitations in adaptive skills occurs without the context of community environments typical of the individual's age peers and is indexed to the person's individualized needs for supports; (3) specific adaptive limitations often coexist with strengths in other adaptive skills or other personal capabilities; and (4) with appropriate supports over a sustained period, the life functioning of the person with mental retardation will generally improve (Hunt and Marshall, 1994).

Mental retardation is categorized according to the degree of retardation manifested. The levels of severity are often based on intelligence quotients and the Adaptive Behaviour Scale (1993), categorizing these children into three levels: mildly and moderately, severely, and profoundly retarded. The focus of this study is on students who have been identified as intellectually impaired, falling under the category of mildly and moderately retarded. This category represents about eighty per cent of students who are identified as mentally retarded, and between three and four per cent of the total student population (Hogg and Raynes, 1987; Gearheart, Weishahn, Gearheart, 1992; Manitoba Department of Education, 1994).

Currently the identification of intellectually impaired students in Manitoba is based, not so much on intelligence quotients, as on principles of learning and the students' potential for training and education (Manitoba Department of Education, 1994). All the primary subjects in this study were students that had been identified by their schools as intellectually impaired using the guidelines provided by the Manitoba Department of Education. The primary subjects in this investigation are six intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in five mainstreamed classrooms in two Winnipeg High Schools. The parents\guardians, teachers and the nominated friends of the intellectually impaired students were also included in this study.

Statement of the Problem

"One of education's greatest challenges is to devise an effective array of programs that will meet the individual needs of students on their way to adulthood" (Hallahan and Kaufman, 1994:83). At the heart of the problem with mainstreaming is our concern that present practices seem to result in the social isolation of handicapped students from their non-handicapped peers and that social isolation prevents the handicapped students from making maximal social and academic progress (Gresham, 1982; Schalock, 1990; Hughes and Lyles, 1994). To assist in the exploration of this question the present study investigated the friendship relations between intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in a Junior High School setting.

To find answers to this problem, the researcher asked the following questions:

- 1) Who are the friends of the intellectually impaired students in Junior High School classrooms and how are the social network and friendship patterns of these students affected by their placement in a mainstreamed environment? (The number, type and distribution of friendships are expected to determine the level of satisfaction intellectually impaired students experience through their friendship relations with non-handicapped peers in their class.)
- 2) What are the perceptions intellectually impaired students have about friendship? Without knowledge about the intellectually impaired students' own thoughts and feelings about friendship we will not be in a position to support these students in their quest for satisfactory social relationships with their peers -- relationships that will positively affect their quality of life.
- 3) What are the levels of friendship understanding of intellectually impaired students and what are their effects on their ability to form friendships with their non-handicapped peers in mainstream Junior High School classes?
- 4) What are the effects of mainstreaming practices on the social interaction patterns of intellectually impaired students at the Junior High School level? This question necessitates an investigation of the various aspects within the mainstreamed environment that affect the ability of the handicapped students to form friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class.

Design of the Study

The design of this study is based on a qualitative research design as defined by Wolcott (1975), Wilson (1977), Bogdan and Biklen (1982), Magoon (1982), and ethnographic research methods defined by Cartwright and Cartwright (1984) and the anthropologists Crane and Angrosino (1974), Pelto and Pelto

(1978), Spradley (1979, 1980), and Burgess (1982, 1984). Ethnography is a method that is gaining attention in research into social interaction in educational settings and in particular with small populations (see Rubin, 1980; Selman, 1980; Corsaro, 1985; Hughes, 1985; Lutfiyya, 1989; Rizzo, 1989; Hughes and Lyles, 1994). The ethnographic approach enables the researcher to enter into the classroom, school, and home settings, and develop a description of the environment and the participants' own views of social situations through face-to-face interaction. The principal method used in this investigation was participant observation (Spradley, 1980) in mainstreamed environments. The observations included formal and informal interviewing, the use of official documents and mapping, survey questionnaires and socio-metric devices (Moreno, 1953; Crane and Angrosino, 1974).

Significance of the Study

This investigation, into friendship patterns among intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in mainstreamed Junior High classrooms, is a continuation of previous social interaction research (see Hallinan, 1976; Herink and Lee, 1985; Stainback and Stainback 1985; Conway and Gow 1988; Claes 1992; and Stainback, Stainback, East, K. and Sapon-Shevin, 1994), and is intended to provide data that will enable researchers to establish and compare the friendship patterns of these students with those of their non-handicapped peers. The results will provide an empirical data base for the evaluation of the social networks of intellectually impaired students and future educational decisions regarding mainstreaming.

This research further intends to provide empirical data regarding the "ideal friendship" perceptions of the intellectually impaired students and their perceptions about their actual friendship relations from their own point of view. These data provide insight into the needs, feelings, and motivations of these students with regard to their friendship relations and an understanding as to how their friendship perceptions affect their ability to interact with, and make friends with their non-handicapped peers in Junior High school classrooms. This information also increases our understanding concerning the quality of these relationships and the satisfaction intellectually impaired students derive from social interaction with the non-handicapped peers in their class.

Research about friendship has so far been restricted to non-handicapped students at the primary school level, (see Foot, Chapman and Smith, 1980; Rubin, 1980; Heeking and Mengel, 1983; Corsaro, 1985; and Rizzo, 1989). Only a limited number of studies have dealt with handicapped pre-school students and adults, (see Hughes, 1985; Matthews, 1986; Lutfiyya, 1989). Only one study by Hughes and Lyles (1994) included a Junior High School student. The intent of the present investigation is to provide empirical data

about major aspects related to mainstreaming practices at the Junior High school level on which an evaluation of existing programs and future placement decisions can be based.

This investigation will provide evidence regarding the levels of friendship perceptions of the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in Junior High classrooms, within the three process dimensions: the formation of friendships, the maintenance of friendships, and the resolution of conflict within friendship relations. These data will help us identify not only the differences that may exist between the levels of friendship perception of the intellectually impaired students and those of their non-handicapped peers, but they will also help us determine to what extent the levels of friendship understanding affect the friendship choices of the intellectually impaired students, their ability to form and maintain friendships and resolve conflicts during social interaction with their peers. The results will enable us to identify specific problem areas within the process dimensions under investigation.

Five essential aspects of research into mainstreaming practices were identified by Weber (1994). These include: the intellectually impaired student; the nature of the normal student population, the teachers and other adults, the spiritual and physical environment of the school, and the programs. Previous research about mainstreaming has focused mainly on single aspects, such as attitudes, the environment or social skills development. The present research takes into account a number of aspects involved in the social integration of handicapped students and investigates the complex relationships that exist between these variables to provide a meaningful explanation of their effects on the social integration of intellectually impaired students.

In summary, the information gathered during this investigation provides a broad empirical data base that may improve our understanding and guide policy makers and educators in their review of educational policies and practices, and the development of educational programs that facilitate social acceptance, friendship formation, and social satisfaction among intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers at the Junior High school level.

Limitations of the Study

This investigation dealt with six intellectually impaired students in five Junior High classrooms in two Winnipeg High schools. These students were selected, not at random, but by special educators at each school, after the students and parents had given their informed consent. All of the students in these classrooms were invited to participate in this research. Most of these students received parental permission to participate in this study.

The target students were selected on the basis that they had previously been placed in segregated

educational settings, identified as intellectually impaired, and were now attending a regular classroom with the provision of special education programming and educational supports. The results will not be generalizable to students with other, or more severe handicapping conditions.

The major focus of this investigation was to provide information regarding friendship patterns and perception of intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in mainstreamed classrooms at the Junior High level. Therefore, the data will not be generalizable to students at the pre-school, primary schools and high school levels.

This investigation was limited to a period of one school year. During this period the recruitment of schools, parents, teachers and students and all the necessary preparations for entry into social situations that attend the implementation of ethnographic research, were completed. In this instance, an extension of the study would have been impossible, due to a change of circumstances entailed within every school year.

Overview of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters: Chapter I deals with the introduction of the research, and Chapter II reviews pertinent literature that provided the basis for the theoretical and conceptual framework of this investigation. This review includes literature dealing with three main aspects that affect social interaction patterns and the formation of friendship among intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in mainstreamed classrooms: the theoretical and conceptual aspects of attitudes, acceptance, and friendship; the developmental aspects of cognition, social perspective-taking, and the dimensions and processes of friendship; and the social aspects of mainstreamed environments.

Chapter III provides a description of the research design and the methods used in the investigation of the friendship patterns and friendship perceptions of intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers. The principal method used was participant observation that included the completion of questionnaires and interviewing. This chapter also provides a detailed description of the population and a rationale for using ethnographic research methods.

In Chapter IV the data are presented, analyzed, and interpreted under four main headings: data relating to the patterns of friendship among intellectually impaired students, their friends, and their non-handicapped peers in Junior High School classrooms; data relating to the perceptions about friendship held by the intellectually impaired students, their nominated friends, and the non-handicapped peers in their class; data related to the developmental levels of friendship understanding; and data resulting from observations

within the social settings of mainstreamed environments. The organization, analysis and interpretation of the data in this chapter are based on Selman's (1980) "Issue-by-Stage-Manual: Principal Analysis", described in Chapter II of this study.

Chapter V provides a summary of this investigation, a discussion of the findings within the theoretical and conceptual framework provided in the literature described in Chapter II, implications for further research, and implications for the implementation of mainstreaming at the Junior High School level.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of Chapter II is to review existing research dealing with the social aspects of mainstreaming. The review is presented under three main topics dealing with: (1) theoretical and conceptual aspects that include a rationale for mainstreaming, theories about attitudes and social acceptance, and guidelines regarding the dimensions and processes of friendship; (2) developmental aspects that relate to cognitive and social development, the development of social perspective taking, and the development of friendship understanding; and (3) social aspects that include the educational setting, the composition of the peer group, and social skills training programs.

Theoretical and Conceptual Issues

Over the course of our history, the prevailing social philosophy of North America has experienced a paradigm shift from the exclusion of handicapped students from educational programs in public schools to the inclusion of these students (Gaylord-Ross, 1987; Hayes, 1989). This concept has frequently been interpreted as integrating handicapped students into regular classroom settings, regardless of the type or the severity of their handicapping conditions. Special interest groups are presently shaping the attitudes of the media to accept mainstreaming as the natural placement for all handicapped students. In addition in the United States, and to a lesser extent in Canada, the courts are making placement decisions about individuals with special needs that may have profound effects, not only on the special student, but also on the majority of students in the regular population (Weber, 1994). These decisions to mainstream handicapped students with their non-handicapped peers are based on a complex set of factors involving the principle of normalization and human rights, culminating in Bricker's (1978) rationale for mainstreaming.

A Rationale for Mainstreaming

Advocates of mainstreaming have stressed the social, educational, and psychological aspects of integration. They contend that mainstreaming provides the handicapped students with access and proximity to non-handicapped peers, facilitates changes in attitudes and friendship patterns, and provides a context conducive to social interaction between the handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers. Bricker (1978) summarized these aspects into a rationale for mainstreaming which contains the following aspects: (1) the social-ethical arguments, that attitudes toward mentally handicapped and peer interaction are positively affected by mainstreaming and that handicapped students benefit from mainstreaming from an educational programming point of view; (2) the legal-legislative arguments that pertain to free public education, regardless of the severity of the handicap, within the least restrictive environment, and with parents having access to due process; and (3) the psychological-educational arguments, that support the view that the descriptive developmental approach, the mainstreamed environment and imitation learning are effective educational alternatives for the following reasons: children acquire new responses through observation, active participation enhances learning and children tend to model selectively.

The decision to mainstream handicapped students, therefore, is based on three main assumptions: (1) that physical placement of handicapped students into mainstreamed classrooms with non-handicapped peers will result in increased social interaction; (2) that physical placement of handicapped students with non-handicapped peers will result in social acceptance; and (3) that handicapped students will imitate the behaviour of their non-handicapped peers (Bricker, 1978). Gresham (1982) declared all three assumptions as faulty. In many cases the expectations stated by Bricker (1978) are not being realized and the handicapped student, instead of finding an environment that facilitates social interaction, find an environment that is critical and isolates them from their non-handicapped peers. Despite the doubts raised by Gresham (1982), the implementation of mainstreaming as the preferred placement option continues to expand. In part this expansion is based on research that supports the efficacy of mainstreaming and reports value for both the handicapped and the non-handicapped student. According to Weber (1994), much of this research is flawed because of small populations and because of the extreme difficulty of controlling variables that is inherent in all research on human subjects. There exists, however, a great deal of research regarding attitudes toward mainstreaming and social acceptance of handicapped students by their non-handicapped peers -- research that may provide some explanations for the present controversy.

Attitudes and Social Acceptance

The major focus of previous research dealing with mainstreaming was on attitudes and acceptance. The theoretical framework for this investigation is based on Allport's (1960, 1968) contact theories. Allport (1960) defined attitudes as feelings and beliefs that are closely related to prejudice. Allport (1986:267) further stated that: "the trend of evidence favours the conclusion that knowledge about and acquaintance with members of a minority group make for tolerant and friendly attitudes". Based on this statement it may be assumed that closer contact can lead to a truer set of beliefs -- more rational perceptions. According to Allport, however, attitudes and prejudice, are part of a general personality trait and will not always change in proportion to proximity. Evidence suggests that casual contact for example "does not dispel prejudice but seems more likely to increase it" (Allport, 1986:263). Only true acquaintance actually lessens prejudice, making changes in attitudes more likely. Mere exposure to, or physical proximity to individuals perceived as "deviant" [different] will therefore frequently lead to a loss in status, social acceptance and social interaction for the individual perceived as deviant. According to Allport (1986) specific obstacles to attitude change and reduction of prejudice are denial of a problem or unawareness of the undercurrents of friction and hostility -- denial and apathy.

Furthermore, Allport (1986) refuted the assumptions made by the advocates of mainstreaming on the basis that attitudes are influenced by societal norms and value systems in combination with personal characteristics and personal value systems. The attitudes the non-handicapped have toward the handicapped students influence the social status of the handicapped students and their acceptance by non-handicapped peers. As a result we find that although the physical integration of handicapped students with their non-handicapped peers does provide proximity and choices in partners and friends, mere contact may not lead to an increase in social status, acceptance or social satisfaction for the handicapped student (Hughes, 1985). Mainstreaming therefore, may not result in greater frequency or more meaningful social interaction between handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers -- interaction that will promote the formation of friendships between handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers. Research about attitudes has established that attempts to integrate handicapped students without physical and attitudinal supports are likely to be counter-productive -- they may have a negative effect on the realization of mainstreaming (Allport, 1986, Hughes, 1985).

Most of the research into mainstreaming has dealt with attitudes toward handicapped students. Berryman (1989) presented the results of his "Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Scale (ATMS), a Likert-type 6-point scale containing 18 items related to the placement of handicapped students in mainstreamed classrooms. This instrument was administered to 377 adults in a shopping mall. The results indicated that the public in general has a positive attitude toward the concept of mainstreaming. Attitudes were found to

be less favourable toward students who were likely to have difficulties in cognitive, adaptive, or behavioural areas. They were also less favourable if the respondent had a child enrolled in school or was familiar with mainstreaming. Gottlieb and Corman (1975) reported similar findings, supporting the assumption that widespread efforts to improve attitudes toward handicapped students have met with some success, but only as far as the general public is concerned. Those people, who are most closely involved with intellectually impaired or behaviour disordered students tend to have the least favourable attitudes toward mainstreaming.

Garvar-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989) assessed attitudes with the aid of a questionnaire that contained items relating to the possible effects of mainstreaming on the academic, social, emotional, and behavioural development of handicapped students and the effects of mainstreaming on their non-handicapped peers, teachers, and administrators. This investigation included principals, special education teachers, administrators, and regular classroom teachers. The results of this study revealed significant and meaningful differences in the attitudes toward mainstreaming among these four groups. Classroom teachers exhibited the least favourable attitudes regarding academic concerns, followed by the special education teachers. Principals and special education administrators, who were more distant from the actual process of integration, held more positive attitudes toward mainstreaming. On the administrative sub-scale, special education teachers had the least favourable attitudes toward mainstreaming reflecting the belief that support from principals, in spite of their generally positive attitudes toward mainstreaming, would not be forthcoming. According to the researchers, the principals responded in a way that may have been more socially appropriate than their actual attitudes might have predicted.

Siperstein, Bak and O'Keefe (1988) investigated children's attitudes toward and their social acceptance of, mentally handicapped peers. Gottlieb and Leyser (1989) found that contact between handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers did not produce positive attitude changes and acceptance of these students by their peers, unless the handicapped students could be taught to exhibit behaviour that conformed to the standards expected of their non-handicapped peers. These findings are in line with Allport's hypothesis (1960), that mere proximity is not enough and will not always lead to social interaction and acceptance. Such findings resulted in the proliferation of social skills training programs for handicapped students (Gresham, 1982; Furman, 1984; Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985).

Although social skills training was found to be effective in experimental settings, it has not resulted in the generalization or maintenance of these skills in mainstreamed settings (Trower, 1984). Research has provided little evidence that such programs have led to an increase in social status, social acceptance, or the formation of friendships between handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers (see Spivack and Shure, 1974; Guralnick, 1979; Duck and Gilmour, 1981; Furman, 1984; Sabornie and Kaufman, 1987; Asher and Conway, 1989; and Speck and Warnke, 1989).

Iano, Ayers, Heller, McGettigan and Walker (1974) concluded that mentally handicapped children frequently were tolerated, but not sought out by their non-handicapped peers. Children who received supportive services fared no better than those who were fully integrated. These authors agreed that it might be unrealistic to expect that organizational changes, such as physical placement of handicapped students with their non-handicapped peers, alone can overcome the negative effects of the age-grade system in regular education. These researchers also found a considerable overlap in the status, acceptance, and rejection rates of the mentally handicapped students and those of their non-handicapped peers. These results indicate that mental handicap alone is not sufficient to determine whether a student will be accepted or rejected by his or her peers. These results also indicate that a large number of students, who are not identified as handicapped, are also not well liked by their peers (Ballard, Gottlieb, Corman, and Kaufman, 1972; Gottlieb and Budoff, 1973).

Further research (see Schmelkin, 1981; Taylor, 1986; Smith, 1987; Ayres and Briggs, 1988; Feuerstein, et. al., 1988; Graffi and Minnes, 1988; Luftig, 1988; Mest, 1988; Reis, 1988; Miller and Associates, 1989; Roberts and Zubrick, 1992; Rojewski and Pollard, 1993; and Shin, Baker, Habedank and Good, 1993) investigated the attitudes of parents, teachers and peers, the effects of labelling, appearance, expectations, motivation (Bindra and Steward, 1973) and social status (Ballard, 1972 and Reis, 1988), making use of a variety of instruments with which to measure loneliness, isolation, social distance and attitude change (Voltz, 1980; Taylor, 1987). The findings of these studies were at their best inconclusive.

The review of the research on attitudes, status, and acceptance indicates that, although the attitudes of the general public may have become more accepting through media exposure, the attitudes of teachers and peers have in many instances become more negative through their contact with handicapped students in mainstreamed environments. Educational programming and environmental adaptations so far seem to have had little effect on attitudes and acceptance and we need additional information that might help to provide answers to the problems inherent in the implementation of mainstreaming.

Dimensions of Friendship

Friendship has been likened to an attitude. According to Allport, "the deeper and more genuine the association, the greater its effects" (Allport, 1986:489) -- the more likely it will be that social acceptance will occur and genuine friendships will be formed. Although the individual patterns of friendship are different and cannot be replicated, the underlying structure of friendship contains similarities that form the basis for our common understanding of what friendship is and what it is not. Friendship consists of a voluntary, dynamic, and dyadic association between two individuals who are able to fulfil each other's needs in a reciprocal or complementary fashion (Mussen, 1984). Friendship also provides opportunities to learn

social skills within a safe context, especially those skills used for problem solving and the resolution of conflicts within interpersonal relations (see Rubin, 1980; Corsaro, 1985; Rizzo, 1989; and Schulz, 1989), allows for social comparisons to be made, and fosters a sense of group belonging (Asher and Gottman, 1989). For school-age children friendships with peers form the basis for the development of their self-concept, as the self exists only in relation to the other. Children develop their self-concept through their perceptions of how others perceive them and respond to them within social situations. The opportunity for positive peer relations and the ability to form friendships are important factors in the development of the child's self-concept.

Corsaro's (1994) research into friendship processes within Italian nursery schools concludes "that friendship processes are seen as being deeply embedded in children's collective, interpretive reproduction of their culture", stressing the effects of environmental influences and social situations to the perceptions and motivations children have with regard to the formation of friendship. "The discovery of friendship is seen as a major step in children's acquisition of social knowledge" (Corsaro, 1985:121). It plays an important role in the development of social competence and serves as an index of the proficiency with which individuals can establish and maintain long-term relationships with others. Such proficiency will determine to a great extent the level of social satisfaction the individual will experience during social interaction and therefore also affect the individual's quality of life (Brown, 1988; Dennis, Williams, Giangreco and Cloninger, 1993). For adolescent students and adults, close friendships provide a source of companionship, nurturing and affection that confirm their self-worth. Friends within these age categories provide allegiance, help and advice, and someone in whom to confide.

There is little research concerning friendships among intellectually impaired adolescents and their non-handicapped peers. Lutfiyya (1989) investigated the phenomenon of relationships between non-disabled and disabled adults. This researcher pointed out that while friendships between handicapped and non-handicapped adults do exist, little is known about the nature and meaning of these friendships. Lutfiyya (1989) used ethnographic research methods, including in-depth interviewing and participant observation within four friendship dyads composed of handicapped and non-handicapped adults, to discover the nature of friendship and the meaning the handicapped and non-handicapped adults gave to their particular friendship relations.

The above mentioned studies about friendship (see Rubin, 1980; Selman, 1980; Corsaro, 1985; and Rizzo, 1989) were used as guidelines for this investigation into the patterns and perceptions of friendship of intellectually impaired Junior High School students. These researchers investigated the processes of initiation, negotiation, termination of friendship interactions and conflict resolution within friendship relations in kindergarten and primary school settings. These processes and dimensions of friendship provided the conceptual and empirical guidelines for this investigation.

Developmental Aspects

The processes of friendship formation undergo developmental changes similar to those involved in the development of cognition and social perspective-taking (Lewin, 1935; Heider, 1958; Beard, 1969; Brophy, 1977). Students who have been identified as intellectually impaired are frequently deficient in their cognitive and adaptive behaviours of which social interaction skills are an important aspect. The assumption in approaching the issue of friendship between intellectually impaired students and their peers is that there are few qualitative differences in their social needs, social perceptions and social behaviours and in fact "any differences are a matter of degree rather than of substance" (Gottlieb and Leyser, 1989:150).

Many researchers (see Piaget, 1952, 1954; Flavell, 1963; Beard, 1969; Damon, 1977; Selman, 1980; and Asher and Gottman, 1989) have stressed the importance of the developmental aspects of social cognition, social perspective taking and the formation and maintenance of friendships. Although it has been suggested that students who have been identified as developmentally impaired are delayed in cognitive development and socially adaptive behaviour, they are presumed to pass through the same developmental stages as normal students, but at a slower rate.

Cognition and Social Development

Piaget described cognitive development as "a biological function of mental embryology", stating that intelligence bears a biological imprint and that this imprint defines the essential characteristics of intelligence (1952: 143). Flavell (1963) researched the concepts of specific and general heredity, the first forming the basis for biological limitations that can be transcended by intelligence, and the second forming the basis for intellectual achievement, the ability to adapt, that remains essentially constant throughout life. These functional invariants form the central aspects of Piagetian theory and intellectually impaired students are presumed to be deficient in both of these invariants.

Organization and adaptation are inseparable, complementary, ongoing processes through which individuals structure their environment (Piaget, 1952). Thus, individuals construct a framework and perceptions which enable them to understand and make sense of their interactions within the environment. In line with Flavell's (1963) cognitive theories of information processing, children categorize and fit new social knowledge into the framework of their existing social knowledge. They code, store and retrieve the information and make informed decisions as to whether, when, how and where to make use of this information.

Information processing theorists (Klausmeier, 1985; Gagne, 1985) stressed the importance of having adequate skills in cognitive information processing and meta-cognition to achieve successful and satisfying social interactions and relationships. These theorists described deficits in short-term memory, organizational, and meta-cognitive strategies, deficits in the retrieval of information and difficulties in the appropriate application of information within a given social context, as major problems with regard to developmentally delayed individuals. Being deficient in these areas of cognitive development reduces the ability of these individuals to adapt and to function within social situations. Cognitive delay therefore affects not only the behavioural responses to environmental stimuli, but also the social perceptions upon which the behaviour is based.

Social Perspective-Taking

Social perception rests on the ability of the individual to infer and adopt the perspectives of others. In Flavell's model (1963), social perspective taking is conceptualized as a sequence of cognitive acts involved in learning to take the role of another. This model describes the following developmental phases of social perspective taking: the *existence phase* in which the social cognizer assesses the possibility that the other has a point of view (knowledge or attitude) different from one's own; the *needs phase* during which the need to make inferences about the other's viewpoint is recognized, and if there were no perceived need, social perspective taking would not occur; the *inference phase*, that includes all those mental actions that go beyond the social data at hand, inferring what the pertinent role attributes of the other are in a given situation; and lastly; the *application phase*, during which the application of social knowledge occurs when one uses the inferential information about others by applying it to one's own forthcoming behaviour. These phases are described and investigated under the motivations the intellectually impaired students have for forming and maintaining friendships, their perceptions about these friendships, and their level and range of skills used to maintain their friendship.

Cognitive-social psychological theories relating to interpersonal relationships lend support to the cognitive theories of perception and social perspective taking and provide a social perspective to this field of study (Mischel, 1973). Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory is based on the assumption that the individual's actions proceed from his or her unique ways of anticipating events. Governed by their personal construct systems people construct a satisfying version of reality for themselves. The sources for these construct systems are the socializing agencies in society, such as the family, the classroom, the school and the community. Successful interaction results from each individual's construing the construction process of the other(s), for such construing allows for accurate prediction of the other person's behaviour (Kelly, 1955),

and this social reality can be validated by the experience of having one's predictions confirmed by others within a social situation (Trower, 1984).

Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory and his Social Foundations to Thought and Action (1986), are in line with the cognitive theories of perception, motivation and social perspective taking. He further states that the related concept of expectancy plays a major role in social situations. The ability to predict and the idea of expectancies are based on an individual's perceptions -- perceptions that are based on past experience and understanding of the present social situation -- of the consequences that might result from a course of action. Predictions and expectations, therefore, are closely linked to the perceptions and motivation of the individual.

Furman (1984) has included perceptions and motivation in his model of social skills components and remarked that there is as yet a dearth of studies that have investigated the perceptual and motivational aspects that guide social interaction and the formation of friendships between handicapped individuals and their non-handicapped peers.

Selman (1980) developed a model that is structural rather than process-orientated and describes the various types of perspective coordination that occur in ontogenetic development and their developmental-stage properties. He describes perspective coordination as a basic structure underlying social conception in four interpersonal domains -- one of these representing the friendship domain. Within the friendship domain Selman (1980) describes five levels of social perspective-taking: Level 0 occurs in children between the ages of three and seven and is known as the ego-centric or undifferentiated perspective during which the child is said to be capable of recognizing the reality of subjective states of self and other, but frequently does not distinguish between these states. Level 1 occurs in children between the ages of five and nine. At this level the child understands that even in similarly perceived circumstances, the self and other's perspectives may be either the same or different. This shows concern for the unique psychological life of people. Level 2 occurs in children between the ages of six and twelve. At this level the child develops a self-reflective, reciprocal perspective, he or she can put him or herself in the other person's shoes and reflect upon his or her thoughts and feelings from another perspective. Level 3 occurs in children between ages of nine and fifteen. At this level the child develops third-person or mutual perspectives; it understands the mutuality of human perspectives. Level 4, also called the "society" or "in-depth" perspective begins at age twelve to adulthood. There is an understanding that the mutuality of persons exists not only at superficial levels of shared expectations, but at deeper levels of un-verbalized feelings and values. Students at the Junior High School level, between the ages of twelve and fifteen, should be functioning mainly within Level 3 of social perspective taking.

Perceptions about Friendship

Research into the perceptions about friendship are a natural outcome of research concerned with social cognition and social perspective taking. It is only recently that the study of friendship has moved from a focus on how children behave with their friends, to how they conceptualize friendship itself (Selman, 1980; Rizzo, 1989). As defined by adults, friendship is not unilateral such as liking or attraction for an individual, but a reciprocal relationship between two individuals (Mussen, 1984). Friendship has been likened to an attitude based on perceptions, feelings and behavioural aspects. It is, therefore, important to investigate, not only the attitudes toward handicapped students, but also the perceptions and expectations these students have about friendship within their mainstreamed environment -- from their personal perspective. How children conceptualize friendship, and how these conceptualizations change with increasing age, has been investigated by Damon (1977) and Selman (1980). Their research related to social perspective-taking and friendship understanding provided the guidelines for the present investigation into the perceptions about friendship.

Children's perceptions about friendship move from defining friendship as a concrete, behavioural, surface relationship of playing together to more abstract relationships in adolescence, that include caring for one another, sharing one's thoughts and feelings, and comforting each other (Mussen, 1984). Children move from a self-centred orientation of the friend as satisfying one's wants and needs to mutually satisfying relationships, and from momentary or transient good acts between individuals to relations that endure over time despite of occasional conflicts.

The semi-structured interview method with probing has been the primary method used in friendship studies. Damon (1977), interviewed children about their knowledge about friendship. His questions included: who their best friend was, the reasons for making friends, how they knew that their best friend liked them, and how they made friends and enemies. Damon (1977) also included a series of probe questions to define the limits of friendship, for example: can a parent be a friend?

Selman's (1980) approach to friendship perceptions is very similar to the model advocated by Damon (1977). Selman (1980) established four stages of friendship development, each being divided into several sub-stages. These stages are commensurate with levels of friendship understanding, or friendship perceptions and are in line with his levels of social perspective taking. Selman (1980) used child and adult versions of a story to present a dilemma to children and adolescent students. Based on these stories Selman (1980) conducted a friendship domains interview with these students to explore their reasoning -- their perceptions about friendship. He defined six processes as being critical to friendship relations: (1) formation; (2) intimacy; (3) trust and reciprocity; (4) jealousy; (5) conflict resolution; and (6) the termination of friendships.

Levels of Friendship Understanding

The stage-related processes used in the formation and maintenance of friendships described by Selman's (1980) Stages of Friendship Perception, form the basis for this investigation. "Selman's Issue-by-Stage-Manual: Principal Analysis" (1980) describes the following stages of friendship understanding, stages that are closely linked to his levels of social perspective-taking:

Stage 0 concerns children under seven. At this stage friendship is perceived as a momentary play situation based on proximity. Conflict relates to space and toys rather than feelings and affection.

Stage 1 concerns children age four to nine and is related to one-way assistance with a focus on specific acts performed by the friend to meet with self's wishes. The child assumes a standard or role for friendship and is vigilant to see that the friend acts accordingly. Friends have more accurate knowledge of one another's likes and dislikes at this stage.

Stage 2 concerns children ages ranging from six to twelve and is called "fair-weather" cooperation. In "fair-weather" cooperation the reciprocal perspectives are recognized and arguments frequently sever the relationship.

Stage 3 concerns children age nine to fifteen and includes intimate and mutually shared relationships. Evidence of continuity, affection and mutual support is given. The limitations are jealousy or possessiveness felt for a friend arising out of the realization that it is difficult to form and maintain friendships. Junior High School students, the subjects in this investigation, their ages ranging from twelve to fifteen, would be expected to be functioning with Stage 3 of Selman's (1980) levels of friendship understanding, a level that is commensurate with levels 3 and 4 of his stages of social perspective taking.

Friendship as a Social Experience

Corsaro's (1994) research into friendship processes within Italian nursery schools concludes "that friendship processes are seen as being deeply embedded in children's collective, interpretive reproduction of their culture", stressing the effects of environmental influences and social situations on the perceptions and motivations children have with regard to friendship.

The discovery of friendship is said to occur during face-to-face interactions with peers in the pursuit of play, work, or recreation (Corsaro, 1985; Rizzo, 1989). Friendship, therefore, is a social phenomenon whose meaning is negotiated during social interaction. Social interaction is either facilitated or hindered by the social setting within which it occurs. Thus, the environmental and educational aspects of educational settings play an important part in the success of mainstreaming. Researchers have investigated

social acceptance, social interaction, and the formation of friendship by making use of ethnographic methods such as questionnaires, interviews and observations in naturally occurring settings. They are now consistently entering children's worlds and documenting their perspectives when studying interaction processes. This trend is especially apparent in research on children's friendships (Corsaro, 1994). These researchers have based their investigations on observations of verbal interactions and overt friendship behaviours among children in preschool and in primary educational settings (see Rubin, 1980; Corsaro, 1985; Selman, 1980; Rizzo, 1989).

Weber (1994) also stressed the following social aspects as being important to the successful mainstreaming of handicapped students: (1) the characteristics of the teacher; (2) the characteristics of the handicapped student; (3) the composition of the peer group; (4) the socio-emotional climate of the classroom; and (5) educational programming. Many of these aspects have also been investigated by Kaufman, Agard and Semmel (1985), and Asher and Gottman, (1989). More recent research has focused on an assessment of the educational environment in mainstreamed classrooms. Research by Trickett, Leone, Molden, Fink and Braaten (1993) deals with a revised edition of the "Classroom Environment Scale" (CES), to assess students' perspectives of various aspects within residential and day treatment settings. Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) discuss the increasing insularity of the "Inclusive Schools Movement"; McCusky and Pacchiano (1994) question whether any progress has occurred in mainstreaming; and Osborne and Dimattia (1994) the legal implications of the "Least Restrictive Environment Mandata". Their findings suggest that eighteen years after the passage of P.L. 94-142, United States courts may have become more forceful in requiring that school officials provide less restrictive environments for students with disabilities. The question whether mainstreamed classrooms provide the best possible environment for handicapped students still remains unanswered. Weber (1994) suggests that we look at the following aspects of the mainstream classroom:

Teacher Characteristics

Positive interaction is facilitated by teacher warmth and support, involvement, group cohesiveness and minimal levels of dislike, competition, and hostility among students. Research has identified the socio-emotional climate of the classroom as the most significant predictor of the individual student's social and academic status (Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985). Further studies supported the assumption that leadership and a warm, accepting, yet structured mainstreamed climate and group cohesiveness (Kaufmann, 1986) facilitate the development of social competence and social status. Social status is described as "a person's social acceptance by his or her peers" (Kaufman, 1986:198). Weber (1994) stressed the importance of teacher characteristics and Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968); Guralnick and Groom (1988); Giangreco,

Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman and Schattman (1994) examined the importance of teacher expectations and the perceptions regular teachers have about students. Although the perceptions teachers had about handicapped students were negative to begin with, seventeen out of eighteen teachers investigated later reported benefits to the handicapped students, their class peers, and the classroom as a result of mainstreaming. Furthermore, Blanton, Blanton and Cross (1994) offer implications for teacher preparation with regard to professional knowledge, classroom management, instructional problems, and the ability to collaborate with other teachers.

Accurate knowledge about these aspects of the educational setting and mainstreamed environments and teacher characteristics will have to be taken into account in order to assess, and make the necessary adaptations to mainstreaming practises.

Student Characteristics

The ability to initiate and maintain friendships also depends to a large extent on how closely the personal characteristics of the friend match the initiator's perceptions of what a friend should be like. Friends tend to be more similar than non-friends. Similarity builds solidarity, leads to the discovery that individuals like the same things, resulting in an increase in interaction between these individuals. Much of this similarity tends to be related to social-ecological factors, not to the interpersonal process of friendship development and will therefore be amenable to environmental adaptation (Rizzo, 1989).

Recent studies (see Buhrmester, 1990; Papini, 1990; Camarena, 1990; Larsen and Richards, 1991; and Moore and Boldero, 1991) were concerned with questions of gender and the age level of pre-adolescent and adolescent students. Findings provide evidence that the importance of intimate friendships increases proportionately with the age of the students, and that the need for intimacy seems to be greater for female than for male students. Female students tend to have high expectations for intimacy within their friendship relations (Feiring and Lewis, 1991; Adler, Kless and Adler, 1992). During adolescence, as the influence of the family decreases, students tend to rely more and more on friendship relations with their peers. Recent research emphasizes the increasing struggle of pre-adolescents to free themselves from their dependency on parents and teachers and find acceptance among their peers. This tendency leads to a dramatic increase in the importance of the peer group (Gruntz - Stoll, 1989).

Composition of Peer Group

According to Rizzo (1989) the most important requisites that facilitate the formation of friendship are the availability of a target child, the target child's attraction toward the friendship initiation, and similarity in status. Individuals tend to prefer other individuals who are similar to themselves (Festinger,

1957), individuals they perceive to be like them (Sipperstein and Chatillon, 1982). Therefore, the acceptance or rejection of handicapped students is affected by the characteristics and the perceptions of the peer group. More recent studies have investigated the negative aspects of choosing the wrong friends (Mirzaee, E., 1991); and the effects of the peer group on the academic competence of handicapped students (Clark, 1991). A further aspect of mainstream classrooms that is seen to affect social interaction and the formation of friendship in the educational program (Weber, 1994).

Educational Programming

Rizzo pointed out that the development of friendship is characterized by being a discovery and not a problem-solving activity and that marked increases in friendship display follow the discovery of friendship. This discovery of friendship, is unintentional and occurs during play or work. Children need a "persistent pattern of interaction, a proximity of desks, enticing activities and mutual friends" (Rizzo, 1989:87).

Rizzo (1989) made use of socio-grams and participant observation to gather information about the following aspects of friendship relations, mutual recognition of friends, the time the friends spent together, and continuity of interaction. He discovered that friends at the preschool level tended to stick with decisions made early in the day, progressively chose classmates more often, chose to sit close together, and usually formed a playgroup based on ability grouping. These findings provide evidence that proximity, the choice of sitting next to a friend, and availability of peers with similar abilities and interests are environmental aspects that affect the formation of friendship among pre-schoolers. Hartup and Laursen (1989) researched the contextual restraints of social environments.

Rizzo (1989) further identified the processes involved in the formation of friendship as friendship bids. Friendship bids include such processes as being nice, asking a child to be your friend, and helping someone. Corsaro (1985) investigated friendship in a kindergarten environment. He identified processes that are involved in maintaining friendships as resistance behaviours that include the protection of interactive space, dislike, and children who already have a friend. He discovered that, although bidding for friendship demands great effort and skill, generally only about six percent of the bids are successful.

Fitzgerald (1985) described the competencies required to make friends and the varying contexts of friendship within a preschool setting. Heeking and Mengel (1983) suggested activities that would help children understand and accept individual differences and Rogers-Warren, (1980) provided a breakdown of the patterns of social interactions and social skills needed in pre-school settings. These studies led to a number of related research studies which investigated remedial programming for social skill development and their effectiveness in providing handicapped individuals with the necessary skills to form and maintain satisfactory social relations and friendships with their peers in mainstreamed environments.

Research into social acceptance and peer relations among handicapped and non-handicapped students has concerned itself mainly with attitudes and the efficacy of remedial social skills training programs (see Sheare, 1978; Furman, 1984; Trower, 1984). According to Rubin "attempts at friendship formation are not likely to succeed until the handicapped child has assimilated a repertoire of tactics for entering groups, complete with implicit rules about how and when a certain ploy can be used most effectively" (Rubin, 1980:47). These skills include the ability to be a friend, "to be an attentive, approving, and helpful playmate and associate" (Rubin, 1980:51). The development of social skills is based on social cognition and social competency. Social competency parallels social status, and social status can be defined as a person's social acceptance by his or her peer group (Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985).

One approach to the problem of social skills training programs has been on interpersonal cognition and problem solving (Spivack and Shure, 1974). Problem solving includes the following aspects: being aware of alternatives, consequences and causality. Researchers found little or no correspondence between these abilities and levels of intelligence or verbal ability and "the two most important interpersonal measures: concern for others and being liked by peers, were completely unaffected by intelligence" (Spivack and Shure, 1974:20). These measures include sensitivity to human problems, the ability to imagine alternative courses of action, the ability to conceptualize means of solving a problem, and sensitivity to consequences - the cause and effect of human behaviour. In order to maintain friendships, children must also be able to deal with conflicts arising within their relationships. They must be capable of expressing their own rights and feelings toward others, to suggest and accept reasonable compromises and "learn the subtle skills and tact which are necessary to maintain friendships" (Rubin, 1980:57).

According to Trower (1984) children acquire these skills not so much from adults as through their interaction with peers. They are likely to discover, through trial and error, which of their strategies work and which do not, and later reflect consciously upon what they have learned. Such reflection requires the ability to employ meta-cognitive strategies in order to monitor one's own thoughts and behaviour, to predict the behaviour of others and adapt one's own behaviour in order to achieve desired social goals (Melson, 1989). Children who are intellectually impaired frequently have difficulties in employing meta-cognitive skills and consequently this deficiency adversely affects their social cognition and social competency. Although skills training programs have been implemented and researched extensively, the results have been less than encouraging. It was found that social skills training programs have not been effective in increasing the ability of the handicapped population to form satisfactory social relationships and friendships with their non-handicapped peers in mainstreamed environments (see Gresham, 1982; Howarth, 1983; Herink and Lee, 1985; Maag, 1989; Williams, Walker, Homes, Todis and Fabre, 1989; McLeod, Kolb and Lister, 1994).

In his "Model of Skills Components Underlying Overt Social Behaviour", Furman (1984) describes the following components: *Social perception skills*, the abilities involved in accurately identifying and interpreting social input, including perspective-taking ability, the ability to identify internal states, and the ability to draw appropriate attributions; *motivation*, one's general intentions or goals for social interchange; and *social knowledge*, an awareness of social routines or social acceptability of different behaviours. The latter also includes knowledge about the person(s) involved in the relationship, processing or problem-solving skills, translating one's perceptions and motives into a course of action, alternate solutions and consequential thinking; a *behaviourial repertoire* that includes a sufficient number of verbal and motor behaviours that can be used successfully during social interaction; *internal feedback* that allows for the evaluation of one's behaviour and ability; and *external feedback* that confirms the perceptions of the individual.

According to Furman (1984) to be maximally effective, contact and acquaintance programs should lead to a sense of equality in social status, they should occur in ordinary, purposeful pursuits and if possible enjoy the sanctions of the community in which they occur. Furman (1984) points out that perceptions and overt behaviours are influenced by feedback from the environment and the behaviours of others.

Summary of the Review

Following litigation, legislation and extensive efforts on the part of parents, lawyers, advocates, and educators of handicapped children, we have now completed more than two decades in the implementation of mainstreaming practices. In line with the human rights perspective, the normalization principles (Nirje, 1969), and individuals advocating improvement in the quality of life for handicapped persons (see Trower, 1984; Brown, 1988; Halpern, 1993; and Dennis, Williams, Giangreco and Cloniger, 1993) educators are required to provide the least restrictive learning environment for handicapped students. This requirement has frequently been interpreted as providing access to regular school settings that encourage the handicapped students to achieve their highest potential and provide them with access to their non-handicapped peers -- regardless of the type and severity of their handicapping conditions.

Mainstreaming, at its best, provides the handicapped person with opportunities to become an accepted and productive member of society. It does not remove the handicapping condition, nor does it ensure attitude change and acceptance by non-handicapped peers. Physical placement of intellectually impaired students within the mainstream will not ensure social interaction and the development of friendships between the handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers (Gresham, 1982).

Although major advances have been achieved in the areas of academic programming, the findings of research concerned with attitude change, social status and acceptance, social interaction and social skills training programs, tend to question the assumption that present mainstreaming practices are achieving their goal of social integration. Allport's (1960,1986) contact theories provided the theoretical guidelines for this investigation.

The greater part of research with regard to mainstreaming theories and practices concerned itself with attitudes, status, and social acceptance. The findings suggest that there has been a slight improvement in the attitudes of the general public toward mainstreaming practices. They also suggest that exposure to handicapped students, or working closely with handicapped students may have a negative influence on attitudes and the acceptance of mainstreaming practices. Research has emphasized the importance of attitudinal and educational supports in order to improve present mainstreaming efforts.

Interest in the study of friendship across the life-span has been on the increase (see Rubin, 1980; Selman, 1980; Corsaro, 1985; Matthews, 1986; Rizzo, 1989; and Lutfiyya, 1989). These studies identified the dimensions and processes of friendship upon which the present research is based. Very few studies, however, have investigated friendship between handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers at the early childhood, primary and elementary levels (see Bricker, 1978; Hughes, 1985; Feuser and Meyer, 1986; Beckman and Kohl, 1987; and Eichinger, 1990). None of these studies, however, have dealt with the friendship perceptions, friendship patterns and friendship behaviours of handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers in mainstreamed secondary school environments.

Friendship perceptions and behaviours may also differ across contexts and in specific social situations (see Miller, 1976; Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985; and Weber, 1994). The socio-emotional climate of the classroom, emphasized by teacher warmth and leadership, and the characteristics of the peer group, has been identified as an important indicator of status, social acceptance and social interaction, that affect the formation of friendships among handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers (Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985; Asher and Gottman, 1989).

Major research was undertaken concerning the proliferation of social skills training programs for handicapped students (Spivack and Shure, 1974; Furman,1984). The findings were that social skills training programs, intended to achieve social integration of the handicapped students have had little effect on attitudes and acceptance, and no observable effect on the formation of friendships among these students and their non-handicapped peers (see Trower, 1984; Furman, 1984; Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985).

Friendship is perceived differently by each individual and these perceptions about friendship undergo developmental changes throughout a person's life span. Research identifying specific levels of friendship understanding (Selman, 1980), was a natural outcome of research on cognitive development (Piaget, 1952; Wyer and Scrull, 1984) and the development of social perspective-taking (Flavell, 1963; Damon, 1977). Research during the early 90's concerned itself mainly with age and gender differences (Feiring and Lewis, 1991; Adler, Kless, and Adler, 1992). Selman's (1980) research regarding the levels of friendship understanding - described in his "Issue-by-Stage-Manual: Principal Analysis" provided the theoretical and conceptual guidelines for the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data in Chapter IV. Chapter IV is concerned with the levels of friendship understanding of intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in mainstreamed environments at the Junior High level. There are very few studies relating to the perceptions handicapped individuals have about friendship and their friendship relations with their peers (Lutfiyya, 1989; Hughes and Lyles, 1994); and there are as yet no data available about the friendship perceptions of handicapped students at the Secondary School level.

According to Weber (1994), much of the present research on mainstreaming is flawed because of small populations and because of the extreme difficulty inherent in all research on human subjects of controlling variables so that the results will have wide and general applicability. The social aspects stressed by Weber (1994) as important to research on mainstreaming consist of the special student, the nature of the regular school population, the teachers and other adults, the physical and social environment of the school, and the program.

Recently researchers have become increasingly concerned about mainstreaming practices in our schools, providing evidence that on numerous occasions the decision to mainstream handicapped students is not based on empirical research and sound educational practices (see Gottlieb and Budoff, 1973; Hayes, 1989; Weber, 1994). The importance of basing mainstreaming decisions on empirical research has been borne out by the European experience in mainstreaming. In many parts of Europe, a gradual approach to mainstreaming -- based on extensive and ongoing research monitoring and evaluating its progress -- was used under the combined auspice of the Departments of Health, Education and Social Services. This approach, although time consuming [lasting a period from four to seven years] and initially very costly, has proven successful in the early grades [up to and including the equivalent of Grade 4]. In Italy, by contrast, a "blanket approach" was used, mainstreaming all handicapped students, regardless of the type or severity of their handicapping condition. In this case mainstreaming practices have not realized their expectations, resulting in a termination of these practices [papers presented at seminars during the International Conference on Integration in Kiel, Germany (1989)].

Parents and educators in North America continue to voice their concerns about attitudes, acceptance and opportunities for appropriate social interaction between handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers -- interaction that would enable these students to form satisfying and lasting relationships and friendships with their peers -- and prepare them for successful integration within the mainstream of society.

The purpose of the present study is to provide empirical data that will add to existing theories and knowledge about friendship. These data may increase our understanding about the complex relationships that exist between the levels of perception, friendship choices and friendship behaviours of intellectually impaired adolescents as observed within a number of mainstream environmental settings. Such data provide evidence of the expectation these students have of their social interactions and their friendship relations with their peers and that knowledge will allow us to make the necessary adjustments in our own perceptions of what these students need and expect from mainstreamed environments. The findings of this research also provide knowledge about the dynamics at work during the integration of intellectually impaired students at the Junior High school level, identifying those aspects of the educational settings and educational practices that facilitate or hinder social interaction and the formation of friendships among handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers. Upon this empirical data base future direction of educational research and future policies and educational practices can be based.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In Chapter III the qualitative design used in this investigation, the characteristics of the population, and the ethnographic methods used to investigate the friendship patterns and friendship perceptions of intellectually impaired students are described. In addition, this chapter provides a rationale for using ethnographic research methods. The principal method used was participant observation, this included the use of questionnaires and interviewing.

Design of the Study

A qualitative research design (see Glazer and Straub, 1967; Wolcott, 1975; Erickson, 1977; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; and Ellen, 1984) and ethnographic research methods (see Crane and Angrosino, 1974; Spradley, 1979/1980; Selman, 1980; Morisson, 1981; Burgess, 1982,1984; and Cartwright and Cartwright, 1984) were used to investigate the patterns and perceptions about friendship of intellectually impaired students in mainstreamed Junior High School classrooms. The research was conducted in three phases. During phase one the researcher recruited the subjects, conducted interviews with the intellectually impaired students, their parents, and their teachers, collected background information about these students and prepared schedules for observations in classrooms, schools, home, and community environments. Observations were conducted during phase two of this investigation. During the period of observation, survey questionnaires, interviews, socio-metric tests, and essays about friendship were completed by the subjects. The initial analysis and interpretation of the data were also undertaken during phase two of the research. Phase three consisted of a debriefing interview, the final analysis and interpretation of the data and the writing of the research report.

Population

The participants for this research were selected from two Winnipeg High Schools. Their ages ranged from thirteen to fifteen years, and they attended Junior High classes, Grades 7 to 9. One of the High

Schools was representative of a school serving "Middle to Upper Class" neighbourhoods, and the second High School of "Inner-City" neighbourhoods. The focus of the research were six intellectually impaired students who were identified as the primary subjects in this investigation. In addition the parents of these students, their teachers and instructional assistants, their nominated friends -- identified as the secondary subjects -- and their non-handicapped peers in class, took part in this investigation.

Primary Subjects.

The primary subjects had previously been identified by their schools as intellectually impaired, meaning that they were functioning at least two or more years below regular grade level requirements and required developmental or alternative educational programming. These students were selected in collaboration with Special Education Coordinators in each school and presented under assumed names [printed in capitals] to protect their identity. Four of the primary subjects were female students of whom two attended Grade 8 and two Grade 9 classes; the two male subjects attended Grade 7 and Grade 8 respectively. The primary subjects were also selected on the basis that they did not have any major speech or language impediments or physical disabilities and had previously attended segregated educational facilities. The main focus of this research is on the primary subjects and their personal and academic background, and educational setting are, therefore, presented in detail.

Information about the personal background of the intellectually impaired students is reported in this section and was supplied by their parents\guardians, their siblings, and provided by their cumulative files. VAL was described by her parents as pleasant, outgoing, confident in her relationships with her friends, but cautious with other peers. Her relationship with her own family was described as very intense. VAL had been in several foster homes and had spent a great deal of time in hospitals with severe health problems, including a kidney transplant followed by rejection, seizures, and strokes that caused severe damage in the left hemisphere of her brain.

TINA's parents described her as shy but friendly; her sister described her as "a little weird at times". She seemed introverted, very dependent on her family and relying mainly on adults for help. Her family spent many years in foreign countries and this had affected TINA's academic development and her long-term relationships with peers.

STELLA was described as talkative, friendly, overly trusting and as behaving "weird at times", by her parents and siblings. She was extremely slow about completing homework and chores and preferred to go out and play with her friends.

GARY was described as fun-loving and helpful by his mother and sister. His mother also described him as lonely and unhappy about his relationships with his peers in school. He had no friends in his

neighbourhood and seemed to spend most of his spare time at home with his mother and sisters, or with his father at work.

NINA was described as temperamental and opinionated by her foster mother. Comments made by NINA herself and her foster mother suggest that her expectations of her friends tend to be unrealistically high. NINA also had high expectations of herself. At home she was learning to cook, sew and to take care of children. In school, she concentrated on her studies, achieving better academically than some of the non-handicapped peers in her class. She also attended classes in sewing and baby-sitting.

KURT's parents described him as outgoing and happy with his friends, but cautious and timid when dealing with other peers. They could not understand why KURT had problems in school. He had many friends in the community and friendly relations with the neighbours. KURT and Mike [his friend in class] earned their pocket money by helping their neighbours with chores and yard work.

Assessments of the academic functioning levels of the primary subjects completed by special education consultants in September 1991 produced the academic functioning levels shown in Table 1. These levels are comparable to grade levels and formed the basis for individual educational programming for these students.

TABLE 1

ACADEMIC FUNCTIONING LEVELS OF THE PRIMARY SUBJECTS

SUBJECT	AGE/GRADE	READING	SPELLING	MATH	WORK HABITS	BEHAVIOUR
VAL	15 (8)	2 / 3	2.4	2.4	NI	VG
TINA	14 (8)	5 / 6	5.8	4.5	NI	VG
STELLA	14 (9)	5 / 6	4.8	3.9	NI	NI
GARY	13 (8)	7 / 8	6	3.2	S	S
NINA	15 (9)	COMPREHENSION, BASIC OPERATIONS WEAK				VG
KURT	13 (7)	2	2.7	3	S	S

KEY: FUNCTIONING/INSTRUCTIONAL LEVEL 2 / 3
 TESTS: SCHONELL SPELLING, FORM A; KEY MATH
 NI = NEEDS IMPROVING, S = SATISFACTORY, VG = VERY GOOD
 ASSESSMENT DATA FOR NINA WAS NOT AVAILABLE

The results of tests indicate that the primary subjects were functioning at widely different grade levels, regardless of their age and class placement. VAL, at the age of fifteen, attended Grade 8 and was functioning at Grade 2.4 -- a difference of approximately six years in all subject areas. TINA, at the age of fourteen, attended Grade 8. Her academic functioning level was approximately two years below that of her expected grade level. STELLA, at the age of fourteen, attended Grade 9. She had a slight speech impediment and was functioning approximately three to five years below her expected grade level. GARY, at the age of thirteen, attended Grade 8. He had a reading level similar to that of his peers, but was functioning about five years below Grade level in Math and Spelling. His special education placement was also based on difficulties in the areas of behaviour and social interaction. NINA's levels of academic functioning were not established through tests. Specific areas of weakness were identified, however, and remedial programming was provided through an individual program plan. She attended Grade 9 at the age of fifteen and worked on the same curriculum as her peers. KURT, at the age of thirteen, attended Grade 7 alternative programming and functioned approximately four to five years below his expected grade level.

The primary subjects had been integrated for the first time at the Junior High School level. VAL, TINA and GARY attended regular Grade 8 classes, STELLA and NINA attended Grade 9 classes that served a small group of students with specific needs and KURT was integrated into a Grade 7 class whose students followed an alternative curriculum. VAL, TINA, GARY and STELLA worked part of the time with instructional assistants and attended remedial classes in language arts and mathematics. TINA and KURT did not have educational supports in the classroom, but were provided with remedial classes in mathematics. In the case of VAL, TINA and GARY, the educational setting was affected by frequent absences of the classroom teacher, necessitating a succession of substitute teachers over prolonged periods of time. STELLA's class had a substitute teacher from January to the end of June 1992. NINA's and KURT's regular classroom teachers were present during the entire investigation. All the students in NINA's class were working with an adapted curriculum. Work experience and gym periods were part of their daily schedule. Problems in scheduling observation periods occurred in KURT's class due to the nature of the alternative programming. The implementation of this program meant that the class was frequently away on field trips or working on special projects. Their educational program was based on real-life experiences. The teacher made use of hands-on activities, multi-level and multi-media instruction.

Secondary Subjects.

The secondary subjects were those peers nominated as friends by the primary subjects. The primary subjects were asked to identify their friends and those peers nominated as friends -- mostly described as "best friends" by the primary subjects -- became the secondary subjects in this investigation and are also

presented under assumed names to protect their identity. These nominations were verified through interviews, questionnaires and socio-metric measures.

Peers of the Primary Subjects.

Students in the five classrooms containing the six primary subjects are presented as the peers of the primary subjects. Most, but not all of the students in these classes had their parents' permission to participate in the research. The composition of the peer group has been identified as an important factor in establishing social interaction among handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers (Kaufman, Agar and Semmel, 1985) and will, therefore, be described in detail.

VAL's and TINA's peers included twenty-two students in Grade 8, thirteen male and nine female students, ages ranging from thirteen to fifteen, who took part in most aspects of this research. Their peer group consisted of students who were academically orientated and presented no other distinctive characteristics.

STELLA's peers included fifteen students in Grade 9, eight were male and seven female, ages ranging from fourteen to fifteen years, who were involved in most aspects of this investigation. Three of these students did not have permission from their parents to take part in the research. Absenteeism was very high in this class. STELLA's peer group fell into two distinct categories: the male students exhibited severe behaviour problems, very low levels of academic performance and poor work habits; whereas most of the female students were high achievers.

GARY's peers included twenty-one students in Grade 8. Ten of these students were male and eleven female, ages ranging from thirteen to fifteen. All the students in this class took part in this investigation. The general behaviour of these students was predominantly boisterous and several students in this class had emotional, behaviour and academic difficulties.

NINA's peers included seventeen students in Grade 9. Only ten of these students, seven male and three female, ages ranging from fourteen to sixteen, had permission to take part in this investigation. Some of these students had already attended several different schools that year, others had spent time in detention, in prison or were run-aways. The highest number attending on any given day was ten. The student turnover between January and May of 1992 was over fifty per cent. NINA's peer group consisted of very low functioning students of whom only about fifty per cent spoke English. These students fell into two distinct groups: native students, who kept to themselves and acted as one large group; and ESL students, who associated mainly with those students who spoke their own language. The latter formed several small groups in class, but functioned as one large group in the gym. Both groups had severe problems in academic

areas, difficulties in communication and poor work habits. The language difficulties experienced by more than half of the students made conversation and interaction among the students extremely difficult. Most of the students, however, enjoyed their periods in the gym.

KURT's peers included fourteen students in an alternative Grade 7. Twelve of these students, nine male and three female, ages ranging from twelve to fourteen, took part in this investigation. His peers were a very mixed group of students of varying abilities. These students worked mainly on co-operative group projects in a supportive learning environment.

Methodology

The primary method of investigation was observation and whenever possible, participant observation as described by Spradley (1980). Through participant observation one observes the activities of people, the physical characteristics of the social situation, and what it feels like to be part of the scene. The questions that will be asked include: (1) what people are there, (2) what are they doing, and (3) what is the physical and social setting? According to Spradley (1980) participant observation begins with wide-focused descriptive observations. Although these observations continue to the end of the projects, the emphasis shifts first to focused and then to selective observations. Although observations were made in each classroom, the focus was on the interactions involving the primary subjects in this investigation. Those interactions that related to friendships between the primary subjects and their friends were selected and described. The students under investigation were observed in their homes, and in their classroom, school, and community settings. As Spradley points out: "in complex societies people move about from place to place, interacting with a wide range of other people" (Spradley, 1980:43) and it is difficult to conduct active participant observation in all of these places. In such instances Spradley (1980) advocated the use of passive participant observation - being present and observing the subjects within their natural environment. The preferred method in this investigation was participant observation whenever possible. Arrangements were made with the classroom teachers and the students to this effect.

A Rationale for Ethnographic Research

The question frequently arises whether ethnographic research is scientific. Ethnography, however, is not a method of testing, but of understanding human behaviour. The purpose of ethnography is, not to test hypotheses based on prior knowledge in order to understand behaviour and to determine what is relevant information, but to generate hypotheses and to identify problems.

The rationale for using ethnographic research methods to conduct educational research is that ethnography is a reconstruction of the behaviours and the events that occur in the natural setting. Through ethnographic research we attempt to understand the meaning that ordinary people give to everyday events in specific social situations and try to interpret people's reactions in that light (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). Such research involves the systemic uncovering of human behaviour and the socio-cultural interaction patterns within the natural environment, in this case the friendship patterns of intellectually impaired students in mainstreamed Junior High classrooms.

An investigation into the concepts, perceptions, and interactions within a social context is fraught with complexities and difficulties in itself. When the target population is represented by a limited number of intellectually impaired students, exhibiting delays in cognitive, adaptive and language development, and selected from a small pool of volunteers on the basis of predetermined criteria, the difficulties increase considerably. The use of ethnographic methods, such as interviewing, observing, and interacting even with a limited number of subjects over a period of time will, however, increase the likelihood of reliable, meaningful data.

The ethnographer's unique contribution to research is the commitment to understand the meaning of situations and interactions from various points of view (Wolcott, 1975:113). Ethnographic methodology enables the researcher to gather data in the natural setting and interpret information and observations with reference to each individual's unique perspective. Participant observation and interviewing are the predominant methods used in ethnographic research.

In the present study ethnographic methods were used to investigate the perceptions students have about friendship and the relationships they enjoy with their friends. Observations were conducted in five mainstreamed classrooms in two Winnipeg Junior High Schools, and in the home and community environments of these students. These observations included participation in class activities whenever possible, interviewing, and the use of questionnaires and sociograms. The observation occurred during the period from September, 1991 to June 1992.

Participant observation was used whenever this was possible. In most instances the classroom teachers and the students were prepared for and accepted participation gratefully. During work experience and unstructured periods participation was also welcome. Special events, remedial classes and observations in other than the home rooms of the students precluded participation by the researcher -- the method of participant observation needed to be modified.

Ethnographic data, gathered during these periods of observation, through questionnaires, sociograms, and interviews assisted in establishing the friendship patterns and the perceptions about friendship

held by the subjects. The research provides an empirical data base regarding the friendship patterns, friendship perceptions and friendship behaviours of the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in mainstreamed Junior High classrooms. The resulting information provides insight into the unique meaning the subjects ascribe to their friendships, and assists in identifying the effects of the subjects' levels of friendship understanding.

Procedures

The schools and the primary subjects were selected during the introductory phase at the beginning of the 1991 school year. During initial visits to the schools the participants were informed about the research and provided their consent. The researcher also visited the homes of the primary subjects on several occasions. The first visit was to inform these students and their parents\guardians about the purpose of the research and request their informed consent. During the second visit the parents\guardians and the intellectually impaired students were interviewed and the parents\guardians completed parent survey questionnaires. The interviews served to familiarize the subjects with the purpose of and the procedures used in this investigation. They also provided data about the home and community environments of the intellectually impaired students. The survey questionnaires and interviews were completed by January 1992.

On completion of the questionnaires and interviews the researcher gathered information about the educational background and individual educational programs of the intellectually impaired students from their cumulative files, and through interviews with the special education staff and classroom teachers. Observation schedules were prepared in consultation with the classroom teachers. The established time-tables in each of the five classrooms were also taken into account in setting up the observation schedules. Participant observation was an important aspect of this investigation. Once the schedules were established, the role of the researcher as a participant observer was discussed and curricular activities were matched to the activities proposed by the researcher. Whenever possible arrangements were made with the teachers and students to make participant observation possible. Phase one of the research was completed in December, 1991.

The principal research method used during phase two of the investigation was observation -- if possible participant observation. In the first school participant observation occurred in the home rooms of the primary subjects, in school, in the home, and in community settings. In the second school observations covered a number of classroom settings, the gym, the library, and during work experience. Participant observation was possible in the classrooms, the gym, during work experience and to a limited extent in the community. The observations covered a period from December 1991 to May 1992. The data were analyzed on a provisional basis throughout the data-gathering period.

Instruments

The following instruments were used to collect data about the social network and friendship patterns of the subjects, their friendship perceptions and their levels of friendship understanding: (1) Survey Questionnaires completed by the parents; (2) Survey Friendship Questionnaires completed by the primary subjects and their peers; (3) Formal and Informal Interviews with the parents of the intellectually impaired students, the intellectually impaired students and their nominated friends; (4) Essays about Friendship, completed by all subjects in the five classrooms; and (5) Socio-grams, administered twice during the investigation to all the subjects.

The design of the instruments was based on ethnographic methods as defined by Crane and Angrosino (1974), Spradley (1980), Ellen (1984), and Burgess (1984). The ethnographic methods recommended by these researchers include interviews, both random and directed, case histories, participant observation and the use of archives, records, and other written documents, both historical and contemporary, and standardized questionnaires.

Selman's (1980) levels of friendship perceptions and his Friendship Domains Interview, in conjunction with Rubin's (1980), Corsaro's (1985) and Rizzo's (1989) friendship dimensions, provided the theoretical and conceptual basis for the development of the friendship questionnaires and interview guides. The survey questionnaires and formal interviews included five questions: (1) Who are your friends? (2) What kinds of activities do you and your friends enjoy together? (3) What is it that makes a person a good friend? (4) What do you expect you have to do to keep your friends? and (5) How would you go about making new friends?

The questionnaires and interview guides had been previously field-tested with intellectually impaired students in 1989 and 1990 in the following studies: A pilot study employing the Friendship Survey Questionnaires with students in Grades 2, 6 and 9; a second pilot study using the Friendship Survey Questionnaires and Interview Guides with mainstreamed intellectually impaired students in Grades 4, 6 and 9 (Hughes and Lyles, 1994); and a third pilot study using both general and focused observations within an integrated pre-school setting. The sociometric testing was based on guidelines provided by Moreno (1953), Morrison (1981), and Herink and Lee (1985).

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

The analysis and interpretation of the data were conducted in line with Selman's (1980) "Issue-by-Stage-Manual: Principal Analysis", and based on data provided by the primary subjects, the secondary

subjects and the non-handicapped peers of the primary subjects. Spradley's Participant Observation (1980) and Selman's manual provided the theoretical guidelines within which the data were described, categorized and analyzed. A preliminary analysis and interpretation of data occurred during the observation period in phase two. The social networks and friendship patterns of the subjects were also interpreted and analyzed at this time. The second phase of the research was completed by the end of May 1992 with debriefing interviews that included the intellectually impaired students, their parents and their friends. During these interviews the data, their analysis, and interpretation were verified.

During the third and last phase of this investigation the interviews and observations were transcribed, analyzed, and categorized, and a detailed analysis of the data obtained through the questionnaires, friendship essays, and the socio-metric data was made. The final written report was completed in 1995.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

Observation and whenever possible participant observation provided the methodological framework for data gathering in this investigation. Within this framework the following aspects related to friendship were described, analyzed, and interpreted. First, in Patterns of Friendship, data regarding the patterns of friendship of the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers are presented and the actual friendship patterns of intellectually impaired students in Junior High School classrooms were identified and compared with those of their non-handicapped peers. Second, in Perceptions about Friendship, data regarding the perceptions about friendship held by the intellectually impaired students, their friends and their peers are presented, analyzed and compared. Third, in Levels of Friendship Understanding, the levels of friendship understanding, based on the perceptions the subjects held about friendship, were identified and presented. Fourth, social aspects within the mainstreamed environments were identified that seemed to affect the formation of friendship between the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers are investigated.

Patterns of Friendship

The friendship patterns of the primary subjects and their non-handicapped peers in class were established using sociograms administered during March and May of 1992. Individuals nominated by the primary subjects as "best friends" were given fictitious names and are henceforth identified as "secondary subjects" in the presentation of the data. In addition, the primary subjects and their nominated "best friends" were interviewed at various intervals during the investigation to gain further information about the number, type and the distribution of their friendships.

Friendship Patterns: Primary Subjects

Figure 1 represents the sociograms of the primary subjects identifying those students among their peers who were nominated as friends. The sociograms provide information about the number, types, and distribution of friendships. The primary subjects [presented in capital letters] occupy the centre circle. The best friend nominations that were reciprocated mutually are presented in circle two and underlined. Nominations that were reciprocated but not mutually are in bold letters but not underlined. Nominations that were not reciprocated are represented in regular type setting. Friends nominated by the primary subjects are represented in circle three and the same distinctions are made between mutually reciprocated, reciprocated, and unreciprocated friendships. Apart from VAL and TINA, the primary subjects did not identify acquaintances [circle four] among their non-handicapped peers in class. The sociograms also provide information about the distribution of the primary subjects' friendships within the classroom, school, home and community environments.

VAL identified TINA, a peer of similar educational background and ability in her class as a good friend. This friendship was reciprocated by TINA as a "best friend" relationship. Later during the investigation VAL mutually reciprocated TINA's "best friend" relationship. VAL chose her "best friends" among members of her family [eight siblings and five children in her foster family] and among students in other classes. Her "best friends" included Jane in Grade 10, and STELLA and Ann in Grade 9. Jane and Ann were non-handicapped students who functioned at similar academic levels to VAL and shared her social and recreational interests. All of VAL's nominated "best friends" mutually and consistently reciprocated the friendship.

TINA identified peers in class, including VAL, Karen, Linda and Hal as "best friends". Of these four nominees VAL was functioning at a similar academic level, and shared an instructional assistant and recreational interests with TINA, whereas the other three friends were in a helping relationship with TINA. VAL and Karen reciprocated TINA's friendship, but not mutually and consistently, Linda and Hal did not. TINA and Karen had been friends for some time outside the classroom. TINA also identified STELLA, with a similar academic background and similar recreational interests in Grade 9 as a "best friend". This friendship was mutually but not consistently reciprocated by STELLA.

STELLA identified Ann and VAL as "best friends". Her friendship with Ann, who was a peer of similar academic standing in her class, was not reciprocated mutually or consistently over time. Her friendship with VAL, who shared a similar educational background and recreational interests but was not a peer in her class, was mutually and consistently reciprocated by VAL.

FIGURE 1

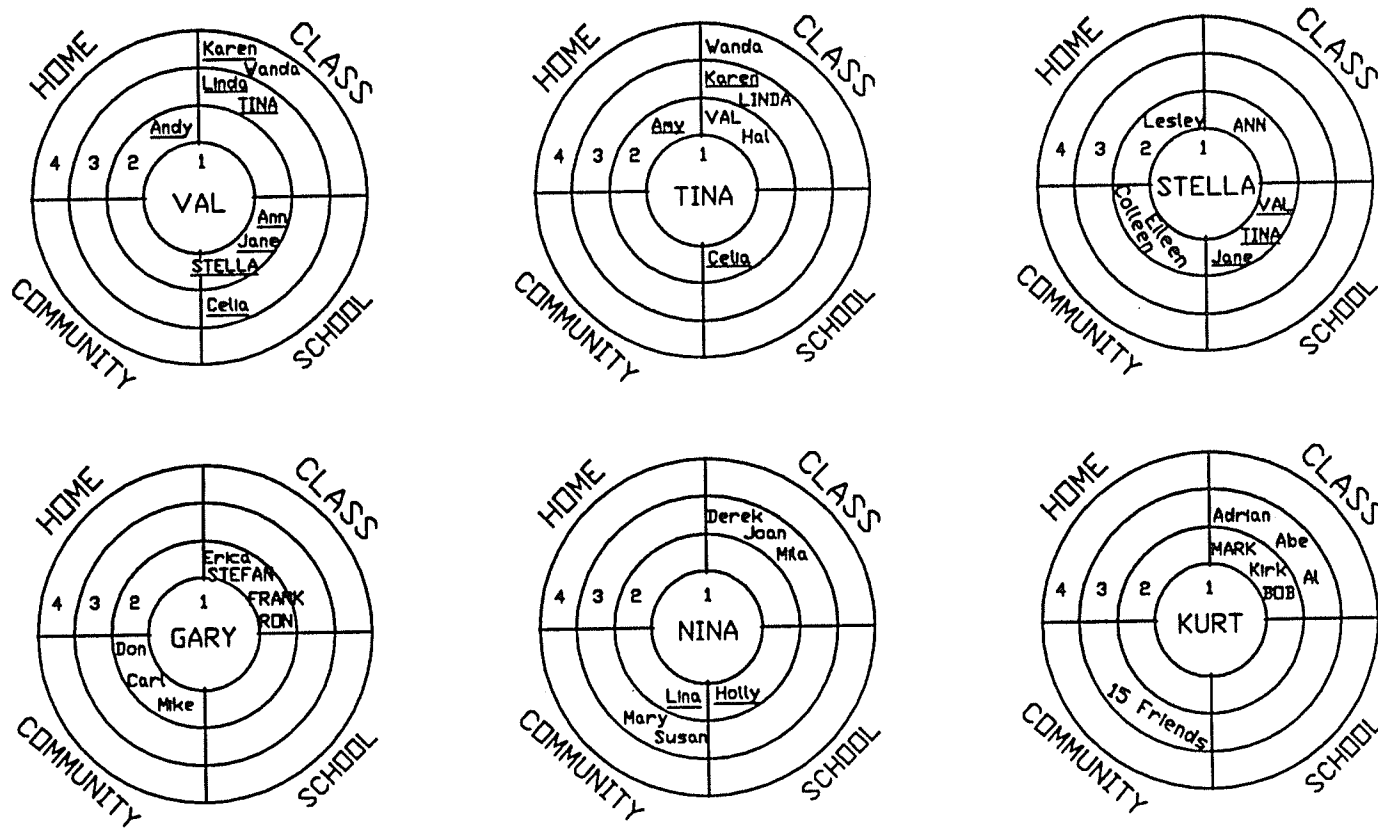


Fig 1 Friendship Patterns: Primary Subjects

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| KEY: | Circle 1 - Primary Subjects | Underlined - Mutually Reciprocated |
| | Circle 2 - Best Friends | Capitals - Reciprocated |
| | Circle 3 - Friends | Normal - Not Reciprocated |
| | Circle 4 - Acquaintances | |

GARY identified Stefan, Ron, Frank and Erika as his "best friends" among his peers in class. These students shared a similar academic status, remedial programs and recreational interests with GARY, but their friendship relations with GARY were not intimate or mutually and consistently reciprocated by these peers. His friendship with Erika was not reciprocated.

KURT identified Mark, Bob and Kirk as "best friends" among the peers in his class. Mark was functioning at a similar academic level and shared recreational interests with KURT. KURT's friendship with Mark was mutual, but not consistently reciprocated by Mark. Bob was a student of excellent academic standing, who worked with KURT in a tutoring and helping capacity. Kirk was Bob's friend. Bob reciprocated KURT's friendship, but not mutually and Kirk did not reciprocate the friendship nomination.

NINA identified two friends in class, Joan and Mila. These friendships were not reciprocated. NINA's "best friend" relationship with Holly, who was an ESL student in a parallel Grade 9 class, was reciprocated mutually and consistently by Holly. Holly shared similar academic difficulties and recreational interests with NINA. NINA also identified Holly's sister Lina as a "best friend".

The data provide evidence that the primary subjects used the term "best friend" with little discrimination between their intimate, mutually reciprocated "best friend" relations and their unilateral, unreciprocated relationships with those peers who were in a helping and supporting relationship with them. The primary subjects identified two types of friendships relations -- those of an intimate, mutually reciprocated nature, and those that were established because of their need for nurturing and supportive relationships, as TINA's comment indicates: "I have many friends, I have friends for different things".

Table 2 represents the number, type, and distribution of the "best friend" and "friend" relationships of the primary subjects and is referred to in the discussion about relationships among the primary subjects..

Friendship Patterns: Secondary Subjects

The friendship patterns of the secondary subjects were established through questionnaires, sociograms and interviews with the secondary subjects. These patterns proved to be very similar to those established for the primary subjects. The secondary subjects had the same number of "best friend" relationships as the primary subjects, but fewer friends than VAL and KURT. Many of the nominated friends of the primary subjects were students that had been identified as intellectually impaired.

TABLE 2

PRIMARY SUBJECTS: NUMBERS, TYPE, AND DISTRIBUTION OF FRIENDSHIPS

ENVIRONS	BEST FRIENDS			FRIENDS		
	CLASS	SCHOOL	OTHER	CLASS	SCHOOL	OTHER
VAL	0	3 M	1 M	2 M	1 M	-
TINA	1 R 1 N	1 M	1 M	1 M 1 R	-	-
STELLA	1 R	3 M	3	-	-	-
GARY	3 R 1 N	-	3	-	-	-
NINA	-	1 M	1 M	3 N	-	2
KURT	2 R 1 N	-	-	3 N	-	15

KEY: M = MUTUALLY RECIPROCATED
 R = RECIPROCATED
 N = NOT RECIPROCATED
 OTHER includes home & community

TABLE 3

PEERS: NUMBER OF FRIENDSHIPS

CLASS	BEST FRIENDS		FRIENDS	
	RANGE	AVERAGE	RANGE	AVERAGE
8 / 1	1 - 3	1.5	2 - 15+	13 / 15
9	0 - 2	1	0 - 15+	11
8 / 2	0 - 3	1	5 - 15+	12
9	0 - 3	1	0 - 15	5
7	1 - 5	2	3 - 15+	11

Friendship Patterns: Peers of Primary Subjects

The friendship patterns of the peers of the primary subjects were established through questionnaires and sociograms. The data were summarized and the average number of friends are presented in Table 2. Although more than half of these students nominated more than fifteen friends among the peers in their class, there were a small number of non-handicapped peers in each classroom who insisted that they had very few if any friends. Most of the non-handicapped peers, however, identified only one "best friend" among their peers in class. In Table 3 the range and average number of "best friend" and "friend" relationships of the peers of the primary subjects are presented. The tables allow for a comparison between the numbers of "best friend" and "friend" relationships experienced by the intellectually impaired students and their peers. These tables also provide a comparison between the friendship patterns of the primary subjects and their peers that may help to clarify the interpretation of the data that is presented in the following section.

Summary and Interpretation of the Data on Friendship Patterns

The focus of this investigation was on the number and types of friendships of intellectually impaired students and their distribution within mainstreamed environments. A further question was whether the "best friend" relationships of the primary subjects were (1) mutually and consistently reciprocated, (2) reciprocated, but not mutually or consistently over time, or (3) not reciprocated by the nominated friends of the primary subjects.

Number, types, and distribution of friendships. The data indicate that the intellectually impaired students identified between two and seven "best friends", substantially more than their peers, who averaged only one "best friend". Approximately half of the friendships described by intellectually impaired students as "best friend" relationships were not reciprocated mutually or consistently, but were of the helping and nurturing type described by Mussen (1984) as compensatory. Some of the nominations were not reciprocated.

The intellectually impaired students and their friends, however, nominated a substantially smaller number of friends, about two to three, whereas more than half of their peers nominated in excess of fifteen friends among the peers in their class. KURT proved an exception by nominating fifteen friends, but none were among the peers in his class.

The intellectually impaired students identified two distinct types of friendships, those that were mutually reciprocated, and those that were of the helping and nurturing type and not mutually or consistently reciprocated by those peers they had identified as "best friends". In addition, the "best friend" relations of the intellectually impaired students were only mutually reciprocated by those peers who were

not classmates, but shared similar academic backgrounds, academic status, and those that attended community activities such as roller skating, movies, malls, and visited the homes of the intellectually impaired students on a regular basis. This lack of differentiation between mutually reciprocated friendships and nurturing and helping friendship relations leads to an identification of most friends as "best friends", and explains the large number of "best friend" relationships identified by the primary subjects. These "best friend" relationships of the primary subjects fell within the following categories:

Mutually and consistently reciprocated friendships. Intimate and mutually reciprocated friendships were experienced by the female primary subjects, VAL, TINA, STELLA and NINA, who chose their "best friends" among peers of similar educational background and similar recreational interests among students in their school who did not attend the same class. Their friendship group included mutual friends and sisters of friends, such as Jane and Ann. VAL and TINA shared the same classroom, an instructional assistant, and attended pull-out session in remedial Mathematics together. Their friendship developed during this investigation into a mutually reciprocated "best friend" relationship. GARY had no mutually and consistently reciprocated friendships among his peers during the period under investigation. NINA identified one "best friend", Holly, who was not a peer in class, but reciprocated NINA's friendship mutually and consistently. KURT identified friends with whom he was in a mutually and consistently reciprocated relationship among peers in his neighbourhood and at the community centre, but not among peers in his class.

Friendships with peers in class that were not mutually and consistently reciprocated. GARY chose his "best friends" among peers in his class who were of similar academic status and shared recreational interests, but these friendships were not mutually and consistently reciprocated by his peers. KURT identified Mark and Bob as "best friends" among his peers in class, his friendship with Mark was reciprocated mutually, but not consistently and his friendship with Bob was reciprocated, but not mutually. TINA's friendship with Karen was based on tutoring and not mutually reciprocated. STELLA's friendship with Ann was not consistently reciprocated.

Friendships with peers in class that were not reciprocated. TINA nominated Linda and Hal as "best friends" among the peers in her class, but these relationships were based on tutoring and helping and were not reciprocated by these students. GARY's friendship with Erika, a non-handicapped peer in his class, was based on GARY's admiration of Erika and was not reciprocated by her. KURT's friendship with Kirk, a non-handicapped peer in class, was not reciprocated by Kirk. NINA's friendships with Joan and Mila were based on a need to initiate new friendships. These friendships were not reciprocated by the two students in NINA's class.

Perceptions about Friendship

The data for this section were collected through interviews with the primary and the secondary subjects, and questionnaires and essays about friendship completed by all the subjects. The interviews and questionnaires contained the following questions: (1) Where, when and how did you meet? (2) Why is this person your best friend? (3) What kinds of things do you and your best friend do together? and (4) Do you visit each other at home? These questions were based on Selman's (1980) Friendship Interview. The essays, under the topic of "What my Friends Mean to Me", were part of the regular language arts requirements for all students. Teachers and students agreed that information provided in these essays could be used as an additional data source.

Data were gathered on both, the abstract "ideal friend" perceptions held by the subjects and the perceptions they held about their real friendships, in order to establish whether discrepancies existed between these two sets of perceptions. Data related to the "ideal friend" perceptions provide information upon which levels of friendship understanding can be based. The data were organized and analyzed within the guidelines provided by Selman's (1980) Issue-by-Stage Manual.

"Ideal Friend" Perceptions

The following section deals with the "ideal friend" perceptions of the subjects in this study. These perceptions include the "ideal friend" perceptions held by the primary subjects, the perceptions held by the secondary subjects, and the perceptions held by the non-handicapped peers in each classroom. "Ideal Friend" perceptions are established at an abstract conceptual level and concern the ideal friend-qualities of persons that make them good friends. Selman's (1980) Issue-by-Stage Manual describes the following stages:

STAGE 1 - One-way assistance: someone with good intentions, someone who matches activities with self.

STAGE 2 - Fair-weather cooperation: concern with not putting on a false appearance, someone who acts like an equal, not bossy or show-off.

STAGE 3 - Intimate sharing: the rub-off theory [matching a friend's characteristics], complementary personalities and generally similar interests.

STAGE 4 - Autonomous interdependence: relativity and complexity of personality, friend as sensitive, empathic to self's needs.

"Ideal Friend" perceptions: primary subjects. The primary subjects provided the following data regarding their perceptions of what an "ideal friend" should be like.

VAL made the following comments: "...people who talk to me, kind and honest friends, they don't do

bad stuff like drugs, smoking, friends help each other with their problems, with what is bothering them". These comments indicate a heavy emphasis on support for, caring and sensitivity toward others. VAL perceived complementary personalities with similar interests, who were sensitive to the needs of others as "ideal friends".

TINA made the following comments: "...a friend is important, everyone needs a friend to talk to, a friend to have lunch and to hang out with, someone who does not get me into trouble". These comments were indicative of her need for nurturing and helping relationships as well as the need for companionship. TINA placed greater emphasis on companionship, similar interests and supportive relationships.

STELLA made the following comments: "...a friend would trust me and help me with problems - I would not expect too much from my friends, a friend would not use me, is good to me and does not put me down". These comments emphasize the helping, nurturing aspects of her perceptions of an "ideal friend", including concern about bossiness and being used. Her comments also indicate that she had very low expectations with regard to friendship.

GARY made the following comments: "...you have to like someone, trust them and be compatible, friends should be easy-going, honest, caring and happy -- I want my friends to have a sense of humour, fun, that's all, and that they are not opinionated, quiet, not loud". These comments indicate that GARY placed emphasis on compatibility, companionship and trust. Foremost, GARY perceived an "ideal friend" as someone with whom he could have a good time.

NINA made the following comments: "...friends have common interests and background, they understand you and are there for you -- are dependable, I want a good listener so we can talk and someone who does not use people -- "best friends" are those of your friends you have known for a long time, they are patient, kind and always there for each other, they help each other, share secrets and talk with each other". These comments indicate that NINA placed emphasis on helping, supporting and complementary relationships with friends of similar educational status and background. Her comments also indicate that she perceived the "ideal friend" as someone one has known for a long time, someone who is dependable and trustworthy.

KURT made the following comments: "...I like my friends to have a good attitude, no swearing, no bad language, the same interests -- "best friends" are nice, they like you, they help you with your school work, share, care and trust each other, they spend time together and do things together". These comments indicate that KURT perceived "ideal friends" as being supportive and helpful, fulfilling his need for nurturing helping relationships. KURT's comments emphasize the importance of being liked by his friends, the importance of matching friendship choices to one's own requirements for nurturing relationships and companionship in friendship relations.

"Ideal Friend" perceptions: secondary subjects. The perception of the secondary subjects in the case of VAL, TINA and STELLA matched those held by the primary subjects. Secondary subjects, who were not represented under the category of primary subjects held the following perceptions about "ideal friends":

The comments made by NINA's, KURT's and GARY's friends indicate that they perceived an "ideal friend" as "someone who is dependable, who is there for you, someone to share interests with -- someone who supports and protects you". These comments are very similar to those expressed by the primary subjects and reveal a similar level of perception about "ideal friends" by the two groups of students. By contrast, the responses made by TINA's friend Karen and KURT's friend Bob, are identical to the perceptions held by their non-handicapped peers in class. Karen and Bob were in a helping and tutoring relationship with the primary subjects.

"Ideal Friend" perceptions: peers. The "ideal friend" perceptions of the peers were established to gather data for comparison among the three groups. The friendship perceptions of the peers of the primary subjects describe responses to friendship questionnaires and friendship essays that were completed by all students in the five classrooms investigated.

The peers of the primary subjects provided the following responses: "...friendship is a process, it is established through trial and error -- to have a friend you have to be one yourself -- friends are there for you in good times and in bad, you can depend on their support when you are in trouble -- friends are people I can trust -- friends are long-term, they share and encourage me, give me advice, they are honest, nice and caring, make me feel secure, wanted and safe -- I can test my limits with friends, develop my personality - - friends get you out of trouble, they are a lot of fun and differences don't matter that much, we learn from each other; friends are forever, even if they have a disagreement".

The non-handicapped peers of the primary subjects perceived "ideal friends" as dependable, as capable of sharing thoughts, ideas and interests, as honest, loyal, helpful, trustworthy and respectful of the opinions of others. Their comments indicate they perceived their friendships as long-term relationships, developed over time, that differences did not matter much and that friends should help each other and learn from each other. Their comments reflect a much broader range of friendship activities and expectation of friends than was expressed by the primary subjects, although there were no major differences between the levels of "ideal friend" perceptions among the three groups. Their comments also indicate that some students who were not identified as intellectually or otherwise impaired experienced similar feelings of rejection and loneliness as were expressed by some of the primary subjects.

Perceptions about Actual Friendships

These are the perceptions the subjects held about their real friends and their actual friendship relations with their peers. These data were used to establish possible discrepancies between the subjects' levels of friendship understanding with regard to "ideal friendship qualities" and the perceptions they held about their real friendships. Discrepancies between the two indicate that their expectations and perceptions about their real friendships are not in line with their "ideal friend" perceptions. The extent of these discrepancies between "ideal friend" perceptions and the perceptions held about real friendship relations is frequently commensurate with and an indication of the level of satisfaction the students experience in their social relationships with peers in mainstreamed environments (Brown, 1988).

Actual Friend Perceptions: primary subjects. The comments the primary subjects made about their friends include the following descriptions: VAL described her best friend Jane as: "...lots of fun to be with, sometimes she acts crazy -- she is always there when I need her and we share all our secrets about boyfriends and things". She further commented about her friends: "...my friends mean a lot to me, they are just like my sister to me -- they are there when I need someone to talk to, we do things together, go places, spend time together, I have so many friends". These comments indicate that VAL saw her friends as being dependable, trustworthy and supportive, and her friendships as intimate and mutually reciprocated. VAL was satisfied with the extent and quality of her social networks and friendship relations.

TINA described her friendships as follows: "...I do different things with different friends. We do things together, go out together, go to parties, sleep-overs and movies, we have lots of fun together -- my friends are nice to me and spend time with me and some of them help me with my homework", for example indicate that she expected different friends to fulfil different needs. Her friendships also tended to be situation-specific [when she was in need of help] rather than intimate.

Karen, Linda and Hal, nominated as friends and "sometimes best friends" by TINA, were peers in her class who provided help, tutoring and support for TINA, and in some instances for VAL. Karen and TINA already enjoyed a longstanding relationship outside of school. TINA described Karen as: "...nice, sensitive and helpful". She also described Linda and Hal as "...helpful, fun to be with and mostly okay". These comments indicate that she was not entirely satisfied with either the extent or the quality of her social networks and friendship relations.

STELLA described her friend Ann as "weird but funny" and indicated that she could trust and depend on Ann. Ann was observed as quiet, not very motivated and very easy to get along with. She did not seem to reciprocate STELLA's friendship mutually or consistently and ignored many friendship bids made by STELLA during class time. STELLA's continued efforts to establish friendships with her peers

in class indicate that she was not satisfied with her relationships with her peers in class. Her friendships with Jane, TINA and VAL were mutually and consistently reciprocated by these friends.

VAL, TINA and STELLA were members of the same group of friends that also included Jane, Ann and Celia. The members of this group were described as pleasant and outgoing, shy, but friendly, sometimes crazy and talkative and overly trusting by their parents and mutual friends. They were also aware that friendships were formed for mutual benefits, placing emphasis on companionship, sharing of interests and leisure time activities, and having fun together. These friends provided a non-threatening, supportive and accepting environment for the members in this group, an environment that facilitated the maintenance of mutually and consistently reciprocated friendships among its members. These students, however, also looked for friendship relations with their non-handicapped peers in class that would provide for their need for helping, nurturing relationships and peer tutoring.

GARY described his friends Stefan, Ron and Frank as: "...my friends are helpful and kind, they respect privacy, we have our problems but always find a way to work them out -- we have a lot of fun together, do things together, we hardly ever argue", demonstrate his appreciation of his friends and his willingness to make every effort in maintaining his friendships with his peers. The data also indicate that GARY was not entirely satisfied with the quality of his friendships with class peers, as his comment: "I had a best friend once, but he moved away, he was not in my class", demonstrates. He missed the more intimate relationships he had enjoyed with his friends in the past.

GARY's friends Stefan, Ron and Frank were peers in his class who shared many of GARY's characteristics, including a feeling of being rejected by their peers. These students found it difficult to adjust to the routines of the classroom. Stefan had been a long-time friend of GARY's. He was functioning at a higher academic level, seemed better adjusted socially, and was observed as being protective and supportive of the other members of the group. Ron was observed as talkative, frequently engaged in verbal and physical altercations and as having severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Frank appeared quiet and shy and had severe academic difficulties. Stefan occasionally engaged in friendship relations with other peers in class. As a result, Ron and Frank frequently behaved in a jealous and possessive manner toward Stefan.

NINA described Holly as nice, dependable and trustworthy: "...I can talk with Holly, we share our thoughts about family and boyfriends -- I can trust Holly with my secrets, she won't tell anyone else". Her comments: "...my friends are there for doing homework with and to study with, to go places together -- friendships are lasting -- appreciating and trusting your friends will bring pleasure in the relationship", indicate that she perceived her friendship with Holly as very satisfactory, although the data establish that she was the least satisfied with the extent and quality of her friendship relations with her peers in class.

NINA's friendship with Holly, appeared to be her only "best friend" relationship. NINA was also in helping tutoring relationships with several of her male peers during gym activities. These interactions did not lead to friendship relations. She tried to increase her friendship circle by initiating friendships with Joan and Mila, non-handicapped peers in her class, but her efforts were not successful.

KURT described his relationship with his "best friend" Mark as: "sometimes difficult". Mark frequently needed and asked for KURT's protection and support. Mark's level of academic functioning was below that of KURT and he seemed to have difficulties making friends in class, but he was not identified as a special needs student. KURT's comments reflected his need for support, companionship and being liked: "...my friends are nice and kind people, they trust me -- we share with each other and help each other to solve problems, we support each other". In spite of this situation Mark was frequently observed ignoring even the most persistent friendship bids made by KURT. In contrast, KURT described his "best friend" Bob as: "...very sensitive, helpful and nice". His comments: "...Bob was new to this school, he needed a friend and so did I, he helped me with my work and we became friends", are indicative of a friendship based on needs. The need for friendship was mutually reciprocated by Bob. Bob was a student of superior intellectual ability, but lonely and admitted to "having difficulties making new friends". KURT's frequent efforts to establish a more intimate relationship with Mark indicate that he was not entirely satisfied with the extent and quality of his friendship relations and expected his friendships with different peers to fulfil his need for mutual as well as complementary relationships. His comments about his friends in his neighbourhood indicate that he did enjoy mutually reciprocated friendships with these peers.

KURT insisted that he had many friends. He was very interested in several kinds of sports and spent a lot of time with his neighbourhood friends. In school he had only two friends, Bob and Mark, and a brief relationship with a girl in another Grade 7 class. His friendship relations with his peers in class were not consistently or mutually reciprocated by his friends.

Actual Friends Perceptions: secondary subjects. The secondary subjects described their friends as follows: VAL's friends Jane and Ann described VAL as a "best friend". Their comments: "...she is always there for us and lots of fun to be with", describe VAL as kind, sensitive and supportive and having a good sense of humour.

VAL's perception of TINA as a "good friend", sometimes "best friend", developed during the investigation. Data obtained during observations demonstrate VAL's and TINA's capacity for empathy, their ability to care about and provide support for their friends when they found themselves in trouble.

Linda and Hal, two non-handicapped peers who performed the role of peer tutors for VAL and TINA, did not reciprocate TINA's friendship nomination. Karen, another non-handicapped peer in class, already had a long-standing relationship with TINA outside of class. She frequently acted as a peer tutor

for TINA, reciprocated her friendship and described her as: "...a good friend, but sometimes weird, then I have to stay away from her".

STELLA's friends Ann and Lyn reciprocated her friendship, but not consistently as the following comments indicate: "...we are good friends, sometimes best friends, sometimes she bugs me, we used to visit after school, but not any more". These comments suggest "fair-weather" relationships, that were not consistently reciprocated. Only VAL reciprocated STELLA's friendship mutually and consistently over time.

The friendship perceptions of GARY's friends were very similar to his own. Stefan's comments: "...friends are there for you when you are lonely, sad, mad or frustrated, you can call on them and they help and share with you"; Ron's comments: "...friends are nice, they share my interests, they support you and protect you in fights, they do things together"; and Frank's statements: "...I really like my friends, we do and share things together, they get into arguments and then forget about it", indicate that these friends placed major emphasis on support, companionship and situation specific needs. The comments made by GARY's friends indicate that they did not reciprocate his friendship mutually or consistently over time.

Holly made the following comments about NINA: "...we have known each other more than two years -- we are best friends, we take the bus together to school and spend lunch-time together -- we also talk a lot on the phone and share secrets, she is my best friend". These comments indicate that Holly reciprocated NINA's perceptions about their friendship relations as long-term, consistent, mutually reciprocated and within the "best friend" category. NINA's perceived friendships with her peers in class, Joan and Mila were not reciprocated. Her friendship with Joan was of very short duration and Mila did not identify NINA as a friend.

KURT's best friend Mark perceived KURT as his "best friend" some of the time. This was indicated by the following comments: "...KURT is my best friend, but on and off, we fight a lot -- we share things and he gives me stuff, he takes me places and sticks up for me -- we both like and hate the same people". At other times Mark commented: "...he is not, N O T my friend!" These contradictory statements provide an example of what Selman (1980) called a "fair-weather" friendship. Bob described his friendship with KURT as being "different" and "very difficult at times". He makes the following comments about KURT: "...he gets on my nerves so much -- he is different from other kids, but I choose to stay his friend to help him with his work and to protect him". These comments provide examples of a complementary, nurturing and helping relationship with altruistic undertones.

The secondary subjects understood and accepted differences in personality, such as "being weird" and saw them as minor problems that could be overlooked, could add fun to and would have no adverse effect on long-term friendships. This was expressed by Ann's comment: "I just ignore it". The secondary subjects also were fully aware of the difference in academic functioning levels and status between

themselves and their class peers and, like the primary subjects, they chose friends who were functioning at similar academic levels. Karen, Linda, Hal and Bob, non-handicapped peers in class and secondary subjects who were in tutoring and supportive relationships with the primary subjects were exceptions and enjoyed a high academic status among their peers.

Actual Friends Perceptions: peers. These perceptions are described in order to establish the extent to which the "ideal friend" perceptions differed from those held about their actual friendships, to make comparisons among the subjects, and to identify any differences in the perceptions held by the three groups of subjects.

Non-handicapped peers of the primary subjects made the following comments: "...my friends are helpful, supportive, dependable -- I feel included, we do things together, we share the same interests, ideas and respect each others' opinions -- we spend good, fun times together -- my friends are trustworthy, loyal, honest and helpful. I can have a fight with my friends, test my limits and still be friends -- I respect my friends and they respect me -- my friends are cool, nice, they keep me company -- help me when I am in trouble -- I have both, good and bad friends -- my friends are there when I need them -- they are cool to hang out with -- share the same interests in music, pool, hockey and we like doing things together -- we are always together".

These comments demonstrate that non-handicapped students have a wider range of friendship expectations and a level of friendship understanding described by Selman (1980) as age-appropriate for Junior High school students.

Summary and Interpretation of the Data on Friendship Perceptions

The analysis and interpretation of the data on friendship perceptions took account of the extensiveness and consistency of the comments provided by the subjects. The interpretation is concerned with: (1) the levels of understanding regarding the "ideal friend" perceptions and the perceptions held about real friends, among intellectually impaired students, their friends, and their non-handicapped peers in class; (2) the identification of discrepancies between the "ideal friend" perceptions and the perceptions about real friendship relations; and (3) a discussion that deals with the interpretation of discrepancies between the perceptions concerning the abstract concept of "ideal friendship" and the perceptions concerning the real friendship relations.

Levels of friendship perception. The comments made by the primary subjects suggest that the intellectually impaired students generally functioned one stage below the level expected for their age range in their conception of what the "ideal friend" should be like. VAL's and NINA's responses, however, represent perceptions that are closer to age appropriate, although NINA's perceptions frequently seemed

unrealistic. The perceptions intellectually impaired students have about their actual friendship relations indicate an even lower level of understanding, although VAL's and NINA's perceptions were again more in line with those of their non-handicapped peers. The levels of friendship understanding of the intellectually impaired students and their nominated friends were similar in those cases where mutually reciprocated friendship relations were involved, indicating about one Stage below that of their non-handicapped peers.

The comments of friends who were in a supportive and tutoring relationships with the intellectually impaired students, demonstrate that the friendship understanding of the tutors was in line with that of their non-handicapped peers in class. The comments made by the non-handicapped peers demonstrate an understanding of friendship processes and the application of skills mainly at the age-appropriate level, although some responses were representative of a much wider range of levels.

Differences in language proficiency were demonstrated in the much wider range and complexity of descriptive words used by the non-handicapped peers in expressing their friendship understanding. Those friends of the intellectually impaired students who were not in helping and nurturing relationships with these students, and the ESL students, in many cases experienced even greater difficulties in describing their perceptions about the "ideal friend", and their perceptions about their real friendships, than the intellectually impaired students. NINA's comments about the "ideal friend" appeared to be largely the result of extensive counselling sessions with her teachers. Her extensive knowledge of vocabulary was not commensurate with her friendship understanding and her friendship behaviours observed in the classroom.

Discrepancies between "Ideal Friend" perceptions and actual friend perceptions. These discrepancies were reflected in NINA's essay on friendship. An abstract of this essay is presented to provide further insight into NINA's perceptions about friendship and about her friends:

"Friendship is a special thing to me. I have few friends and the ones I do have are older than me. In a friend I look for someone I can be confident in, someone I can trust in, who will always be unfailingly honest and is fun to be with. This is why I have few friends. My mother says my standards are too high but I always have a good time with my friends.

I love all my friends. I have known them all for a while. I like all people until they show that they don't deserve it. Of course my friends care about me, I wouldn't love them if they didn't. I like doing things with my friends. We often debate things like the environment and Canadian unity. We also go for walks and talk on the phone for hours".

The data indicate that the "ideal friend" perceptions of the intellectually impaired students are a better indicator of their levels of friendship understanding than a description of their perceptions about their real friendship relations with peers in mainstreamed environments. The data also demonstrate that the

discrepancies between "ideal friend" perceptions and the perceptions about real friendships was much greater for the intellectually impaired students and their friends than their non-handicapped peers in class.

Interpretation of the discrepancies. Data identifying the discrepancies between the "ideal friend" perceptions and expectancies, and the perceptions held about real friendship situations provide information about the level of satisfaction the subjects experienced with their friendship relations. Brown (1988) identifies the level of satisfaction with relationships as one of the major issues regarding "the quality of life" of an individual. Quality of life is described as a discrepancy between a person's achieved and his unachieved needs and desires. Data indicate that the discrepancies between the "ideal friend" perceptions and perceptions about real friendship relations were much more apparent with regard to the intellectually impaired students. VAL's perceptions about "ideal friendship" and her real friendship relations, however, were very similar and her satisfaction with her friendships was greater than that of the other primary students. NINA demonstrated the highest level of discrepancy and was the least satisfied with her friendship relations. The secondary subjects who were in mutually reciprocated friendship relations with the primary subjects showed some of the largest discrepancies, indicating that their friendship relations were even less satisfactory than those of the primary subjects. The findings also demonstrate that the friendship relations of the non-handicapped peers tended to be generally more in line with their expectations about friendship, and consequently may have been more satisfactory than those of the intellectually impaired students and their friends.

Levels of Friendship Understanding

Selman (1980) described the sequential stages of friendship understanding as being similar to the levels of cognitive development described by Piaget (1952), and the stages of moral reasoning established by Kohlberg (1981,1984). The analysis and interpretation of the data with regard to the levels of friendship understanding of the intellectually impaired students and their peers are based on Selman's (1980) "Friendship Relations Issue-by-Stage Manual". In this manual Selman described the following stages of friendship understanding as follows:

Stage 0, Momentary Physical Playmate, under the age of 7;

Stage 1, One-way Assistance, ages 4-9;

Stage 2, Fair-weather Cooperation, ages 6-12;

Stage 3, Intimate-mutual Sharing, ages 9-15; and

Stage 4, Autonomous Interdependence, 15 to adulthood.

Only the stages related to the age and functioning levels of the subjects will be used to guide the organization, analysis, and interpretation of the data presented in this chapter.

Each of Selman's stages is characterized by one or more aspects which describe a particular stage-related quality. Brief descriptions of these stage-related qualities are provided for processes within the three friendship dimensions of: (1) formation, (2) maintenance, and (3) conflict resolution within friendship relations. A more detailed description of these aspects was presented in the literature review.

Data in this part of the presentation reflect the comments, written thoughts and overt behaviours of the subjects, including those of the intellectually impaired students, of their friends, and their non-handicapped peers of Junior High classes, within the age range of twelve to fifteen years. The responses were elicited during formal and informal friendship interviews, through questionnaires, essays about friendship and during participant observation. These comments were interpreted in line with "Conceptions of Friendship, Principal Analysis" by Selman (1980).

Formation of Friendships

The formation of friendships is concerned with why and how friendships occur and includes the following sub-categories: (1) motivational aspects and expectations, and (2) the processes of friendship initiation.

Motivation. Under this category data are presented which describe perceptions related to needs, motives, expectations and the reasons why friendships are formed. These aspects seem closely linked to the perceptions of the "ideal friend" and the actual friendship choices of the subjects, described under the previous heading.

STAGE 2 - Important motivational factors at this Stage are the need for companionship, to be liked and to have friends who will do things for you. There is a growing realization that social relations are important in themselves.

STAGE 3 - the primary function of friendship is that of mutual support which is upheld over a period of time.

The following statements have been selected from interviews and questionnaires as representative of the primary subjects' motivations -- their perceptions about their needs and expectations of their friends:

VAL made the following comments: "...my friends mean a lot to me, they are just like my sister - they are there when I need someone to talk to, we do things together, go places, spend time together -- you can feel happy with your friends and have fun together". These comments indicate an emerging Stage

3 level of friendship understanding, stressing VAL's need for companionship but also mutual support over time.

TINA made the following comments: "...a friend is important, everyone needs a friend to talk to - I do different things with different friends -- we do things together, go out together, go to parties, sleep-overs and movies -- my friends are nice to me and help me, they spend time with me and we have lots of fun together". TINA's comments stress her need for different types of friendships for companionship, mutual support and nurturing and indicate a level of friendship understanding commensurate with Stage 2.

STELLA made the following comments: "...you need friends to stick up for you, to talk to and share secrets with -- friends make you feel good, happy and excited -- you can trust your friends, you can do things together, test your limits, have fun together -- your friends are supportive, caring and they make you feel safe". These comments indicate that STELLA, like TINA expected her friends to provide support and companionship, but also a safe environment in which to practice her social skills. These comments indicate that STELLA had more intimate and meaningful relationships with her friends than TINA and was functioning at Stage 2 and emerging Stage 3 of Selman's (1980) levels of friendship understanding.

GARY made the following comments: "...you need friends to share your interests with, sports and jokes and secrets -- to help each other, do projects together, to work and hang out with, someone to talk to and do things with at weekends and in summer". These comments indicate that GARY was functioning at Stage 2, emerging Stage 3 friendship understanding with emphasis on a need for companionship and mutual support.

NINA made the following comments: "...friends are there for doing homework with, study with and go to places with -- we need friends to share our secrets with and to help us solve our problems -- friends make me feel contented -- I have older friends I think because they help me and give me advice, I find that with a lot of people my own age I don't get anything out of the friendship -- my friends and I are always challenging each other, this is one of the best parts of our friendship, these challenges range from climbing a tough tree to getting an A on a test, they do have boundaries though I have never seen them, things like going to a party or kissing a guy are not to be considered challenges".

NINA's comments indicate that she was functioned at the Stage 2, emerging Stage 3 level of friendship understanding and was able to express her perceptions very well, especially her specifications for and expectations of friends. Her need for supportive relationships and unrealistic expectations place her at Stage 2.

KURT made the following comments: "...you need friends to talk to and do things with -- friends share things with me and help me solve problems, best friends are nice, they like you, they help you with your school work -- we share, care about and trust each other -- friends spend time together and do things

together". KURT's comments describe his need to be liked, of having friends do things with him and for him and the need for companionship and nurturing and helping relationships. KURT's comments indicate a level of friendship understanding at Stage 2 in this category.

The following comments were selected from interviews and questionnaires completed by the secondary subjects with regard to their motivation to form friendships:

Comments made by VAL's friends: "...my friends are fun to be with, we tease each other, do fun things together and cheer each other up", indicate very similar, but more limited motivational aspects than those expressed by VAL.

Comments made by TINA'S friends: "...my friends mean a lot to me -- TINA and I met ten years ago when we moved, she was the first person to come up to me, we found that we had a lot in common and we have been friends ever since -- without my friends I would not have anyone to talk to, do things with, complain to", indicate similar motivational aspects to those described by TINA.

Comments made by STELLA'S friend Ann: "...we are good friends, sometimes she bugs me -- we used to visit after school, but not any more", reflect a "fair-weather" approach to friendship, casual rather than of the intensity of a "best friend" relationship at Stage 2 friendship understanding.

Comments made by GARY's friends: "...friends are there for you when you are lonely, sad, mad or frustrated, you can call on them or call them on the phone, they are helping and sharing -- my friends are nice, we visit each other often, do things together, they support you in fights, they share with you and call on you -- I really like my friends, they buy me things and I buy them things, we share interests like sports, we get into arguments but usually we forget about it -- most of my friends live close to me, some I met this year". These comments indicate that GARY's friends placed emphasis on both supporting and companionable friendship relations that were not very intimate and at times situation-specific. These comments demonstrate Stage 2 friendship understanding.

Comments made by NINA'S friend Holly: "...we have been friends for about two years, we are "best friends", take the bus to school together and talk on the phone a lot", indicate Holly's need for intimate and consistent relationships at Stage 3 friendship understanding, although the sparseness of her responses made an accurate analysis difficult.

Comments made by KURT'S friends reflect the very different types of friendship relations that existed between KURT and his friends Mark and Bob. Mark made the following comments about his friends: "...my friends are nice people, who actually care about the things I do -- my best friend does not ignore me like some of the people in my class, he doesn't care what I look like or do -- KURT is not my friend, n o t -- my friends are there when I need them, most of the time, like when I wanted to talk to someone when my Dad told me he had Lupus disease -- [observations confirmed that it was KURT Mark

talked to on this occasion] -- I wanted someone to talk to so I talked with my friends and they made me feel better -- I'm glad I have friends because it would be hard to live without them". Mark's comments indicate that he was looking for acceptance and assurance from his friends and that his friendship with KURT was of the "fair-weather" type typical of Stage 2 friendship understanding.

Bob's comments about his friends include: "...I do not have too many friends, but most of the people I know trust me and like me, I think -- I am a person who hates being alone, most of my friends and my best friend are not in this school, they are there to talk to and to do things with and I can trust them and I can always tell my best friends things that trouble me -- I feel really good with my friends and hope that this will continue my entire life". These comments indicate that, due to his recent change in schools, Bob was still looking for intimate, mutually reciprocated friendship relations among his peers in class. He had no friendships that provided him with intimacy and companionship among his peers in class, although his friendship understanding was well within Stage 3.

The responses from the secondary subjects represented a wide range of friendship understanding, depending on the type of friendship they shared with the primary subjects. The secondary subjects, who were in mutually reciprocated friendship relationships with the primary subjects, demonstrated levels of friendship understanding at Stage 2, levels that were close to or lower than those presented by the primary subjects and in most cases, one Stage below that of their non-handicapped peers. The secondary subjects, who shared a complementary, nurturing and helping relationship with the primary subjects, however, manifested a level of friendship understanding that was closer to Stage 3, commensurate with the level of their non-handicapped peers in class.

The following comments were selected from friendship questionnaires as representative of the peers motivations, their perceptions about their need for and expectations of friendship:

The comments of the non-handicapped peers included a wide range of responses from: "I have no friends", to "you need friends for being yourself with, to trust, to talk with, to help you and to respect you - - friends share common interests, ideas and confidentialities, they get along, do things and go places together -- friends are trustworthy, loyal, understanding, dependable, they are there in bad and good times, to make plans with and have fun with -- friends are sensitive and cheer you up -- you need people you can trust, who are nice, safe, caring, honest, friends you can hang out with, who are there for you, have the same interests -- you need friends who support you, encourage you, help you test your limits, develop personality, have disagreements with and you don't have to worry about losing them, friends are forever -- there are good and bad friends, we need friends we can do things with and go out with, friends we can trust, who help and respect us -- we need friends we can share our feelings, thoughts, secrets, things and interests with -- I need someone nice who will be there when I am lonely, you need friends to talk to, have fun with and

test your limits with, to argue and fight with -- you need friends who stick up for you and you can be yourself with -- friends are sensitive to your moods, you feel comfortable and safe with friends, they won't put you down or hurt you, they accept your opinions, trust you and believe in you".

The motivational aspects described by the non-handicapped peers of the primary subjects paralleled those aspects that reflected the "ideal friend" perceptions of the peers in the five classrooms. The comments varied over a wide range of motivations, mainly within Stage 3 friendship understanding.

Processes of initiation. These processes include the mechanics and the skills necessary to initiate friendships with peers. In

STAGE 2 - making friends requires the coordination of context-specific likes and dislikes to the fixed standards of another person. A true friend is one who will share his inner, true feelings rather than present a false front.

STAGE 3 - friendships are seen as developing over a period of time during which friends get to know each other.

Establishing the levels of friendship understanding within this category was difficult because most friendships had been in place for some years prior to this investigation and the students presented the strategies hypothetically and from memory. It was also difficult because the intellectually impaired students had recently experienced changes in their school setting and had not been able to establish long-term friendships. Friendships that develop over a period of time are a major aspect of Stage 3 friendship understanding.

The following statements have been selected from interviews and friendship questionnaires that were completed by the primary subjects as representative of strategies described and used by the primary subjects in the initiation of friendships.

VAL's comments: "...I would look for someone kind, nice and fun to be with -- someone who is not into drugs -- I would introduce myself to them, talk to them, ask them how they are doing and ask them to be my friend", indicate an active, but somewhat cautious approach to initiation. Several of VAL's other responses confirm her understanding that friendships develop over a period of time during which friends get to know each other. These comments indicate Stage 3 friendship understanding.

TINA's comments: "...I would watch them when they are with their friends, I would just sit with somebody, introduce myself, ask someone to introduce them to me -- it is hard to make friends when they move so much -- I would look for someone who does not get me into trouble", indicate an active yet cautious approach to initiation and an awareness of the difficulties involved in initiating friendships,

particularly as this student's family did move frequently. TINA's comments are indicative of a Stage 2 and emerging Stage 3 level of friendship understanding, partly due to the life style of her family.

STELLA's comments: "...I would try and be nice to someone, talk to them -- I would look around for someone I like, say Hi!, join a group of people with similar interests, find someone who would help me with my homework and problems -- doing things together, working on projects together", demonstrate a wide range of initiation skills, although her initiation attempts remain situation specific. STELLA's comments place her within Stage 2 friendship understanding.

GARY's comments: "...go to more places and meet people, talk to more people -- join things, look for someone I like, check them out first, help them, work with them", indicate a cautious yet active approach to friendship initiation and a good repertoire of initiation skills. His friendship relations with his peers in class tended to be situation-specific, a matching of context-specific likes and dislikes. GARY's comments indicate that his level of friendship understanding was at Stage 2 and emerging Stage 3.

NINA's comments: "...don't know, ask around, I would ask the teachers, look for someone with a common background, someone who is nice, understanding, dependable -- I would check out their attitudes, their academic level, ask them if they want to be friends -- I am interested in people and what they do -- I like helping someone who is new, talking to someone, asking them if they need help, someone I like and who is nice to me". These comments indicate that, although NINA had an extensive repertoire of initiation skills and seemed highly motivated, she relied mostly on adults for advice. At the same time NINA was also hesitant and cautious in approaching potential friends. Potential friends included those peers who shared NINA's attitudes, academic functioning level and common background, indicating a level of friendship understanding at Stage 2. Her comments about Holly indicate that she realized that intimate friendships develop over a period of time during which friends have an opportunity to get to know and trust each other. These comments indicate a friendship understanding at Stage 3.

KURT's comments: "...I don't know, I probably talk to someone -- I never knew Bob, he was sitting at my table, he started to talk to me, he never knew anyone in the classroom, we decided to be friends -- I would ask someone I like to work with me, someone who lives close and has a good attitude, someone who does not swear". These comments indicate a very hesitant and cautious approach to friendship initiation in spite of a good repertoire of initiation skills and expressed his need for companionship and a supportive, helping relationship with his peers. KURT's level of friendship understanding falls within Stage 2 and emerging Stage 3.

The following comments were selected from responses provided in questionnaires and during interviews, on the basis that they were representative of the skills known to and used by the secondary subjects:

VAL'S, TINA'S and STELLA'S friends made the following comments: "...I don't know, they just come -- I would go up talk to them, make conversation, I am usually shy, but sometimes not -- or I'll be partners with them for school and we'll end up as friends -- I don't have a clue, I would just go up to a person and say Hi!". These comments indicate a passive approach toward the initiation of friendships and a limited repertoire of initiation skills.

GARY'S friends' comments: "...asking someone to work or play with you, yes that's it", were indicative of an active, yet hesitant approach to the initiation of friendships and a rather limited skills repertoire.

NINA'S friends' comments: "...when I came to this school two weeks ago I just said Hi and made friends", indicate a hesitant or passive approach to friendship initiation, although the data were not sufficient in this case to come to a meaningful conclusion and affected by Joanna's recent change of schools.

KURT'S friends' comments included responses from Mark: "...I wait for them to come to me", and Bob: "...ask someone to work or play with you", and clearly indicate differences between the passive approach to initiation used by Mark and the more active approach used by Bob. Both students demonstrated a limited repertoire of initiation skills, but Bob's situation was complicated by his recent change of schools.

The responses provided by the secondary subjects generally indicate a level of friendship understanding within Stage 2.

The following statements were selected from the responses provided by the peers of the primary subjects in a friendship questionnaire: "...having a good attitude, being helpful, showing interest in people - looking for someone with a nice personality, a good attitude, for someone who is kind, honest, someone who looks like he needs a friend -- asking someone to do things with you, someone who has the same interests, likes the same things and does not fight". These comments are indicative of a wide range of initiation skills at Stage 3 friendship understanding. Comments such as: "...asking someone to do things with you, someone who has the same interests -- I don't know, asking someone to go to the movies with you, someone you like -- it just happens, asking someone who is nice, not smart, someone who is cool -- sitting down with them and making friends, helping someone, being nice -- introducing yourself, doing things with them, talking and sharing with someone -- I wait for them to come to me -- hanging out with people, inviting them to a party, waiting for them to accept me", indicate a wide repertoire of initiation skills at Stage 2 and emerging Stage 3 friendship understanding.

Interpretation of the data. The subjects' responses to friendship questionnaires and interviews were analyzed and interpreted in line with Selman's (1980) "Conceptions of Friendship, Principal Analysis". Problems arose in assigning appropriate stages of friendship understanding to the intellectually impaired students and their friends due to the wide age-range described within each stage and the limited range of responses provided by some of these students. Selman (1980) proposed the use of emerging stages, indicating an awareness at a specific stage level, but not a complete understanding of all the aspects that relate to a specific level. This "emerging stage" category has been used extensively to accommodate the responses of the intellectually impaired students and their nominated friends.

The comments of the primary and secondary subjects indicate that they placed greater emphasis on helping, nurturing and complementary friendship relations, whereas this aspect of friendship was hardly stressed by their non-handicapped peers, except in one Grade 9 class.

VAL, her friends and peers: VAL's motivational aspects for choosing her friends were very similar to those of her peers in class. They included the need for intimacy and companionship, someone to trust and feel safe with, someone to have fun with and to share interests and activities with. VAL's friends shared these motivational aspects but not to the same degree.

TINA, her friends and peers: TINA was motivated to choose friends for both, intimate or mutual and nurturing or helping relationships. She expected support, safety and companionship from her friends. These aspects indicate that TINA's friendship understanding was somewhat less developed than that of her peers and most of her friends and that her needs were more diverse.

STELLA, her friends and peers: STELLA's motivation for choosing her friends related more closely to the motivations of her friends than those of her peers. She needed someone to share with, talk to and do things with, someone who made her feel good, happy and excited, someone she could be herself with. Her level of understanding remained one Stage below that of her non-handicapped peers in class.

GARY, his friends and peers: GARY's motivation to form friendships included the need for companionship, someone to share interests with in sports, jokes and secrets. Someone to talk to and to do things with at weekends. His friends tended to share the same motivational aspects, indicating a preference for situation-specific relationships. In comparison to their peers in Grade 8, personal growth and long-term relationships seemed less relevant to GARY and his friends, placing them one Stage below the friendship understanding of their non-handicapped peers in class.

NINA, her friends and peers: NINA was motivated to choose friends who would be there for her and ready to help her. NINA's expectations indicated the need for relationships which would serve her own needs. She also mentioned the challenges offered through friendship, the testing of boundaries, which

implied the need for personal growth within the safe environs of a friendship relationship. These comments indicate heavy emphasis on helping and nurturing relationships with peers who are older and/or more accomplished than NINA. According to her foster mother, NINA expected too much of her friends and her friendship understanding was limited and within Stage 2, possibly emerging Stage 3. The responses from NINA's non-handicapped peers reflect similar needs and a similar low level of friendship understanding.

KURT, his friends and peers: KURT'S motivation to form friendships was based on his need for companionship, academic support and security. Mark's motivations were similar and Bob's also included the need for companionship and acceptance. Bob's motivation included being able to help someone -- he seemed to welcome an opportunity to practice altruism. KURT and Mark demonstrated Stage 2, whereas Bob's responses indicate a level of friendship understanding within Stage 3. KURT's peers stressed the need for empathy, personal growth and mutual acceptance, demonstrating Stage 3 friendship understanding.

Differences among the primary subjects, the secondary subjects and peers were found to reside in their expectations about friends. The first two groups tended to look for friends who would provide a safe, accepting environment, who would like them, help them and give them advice. Their expectations for safe, nurturing and helping relationships were fulfilled by peers who were in a tutoring relationship, by older peers and by teachers. These relationships were based on Stage 2 aspects. They also expected companionship, close and mutually reciprocated friendship relations with peers who had similar academic function levels and similar recreational interests -- these choices occurred mainly outside their own classroom and were based on emerging Stage 3 aspects. The Stage 3 aspect of friendships as long-term relationships was of little consequence for most of the primary subjects because of the recent changes in their school environment. The Stage 3 aspects of personal growth and mutual reciprocity that were stressed by their non-handicapped peers were less well defined by the primary and secondary subjects.

The responses to questionnaires and interviews indicate that the primary subjects had the necessary skills repertoire to initiate friendships and were actively involved in identifying and befriending peers who most closely approximated their friendship perception. Potential friends included peers who were perceived as being able to help and protect the primary subjects, and peers who were of similar educational background, academic standing and had similar recreational interests, with whom they could engage in more intimate, mutually reciprocated friendships. The secondary subjects demonstrated a limited skills repertoire and were less actively involved in initiating friendships, illustrated by such comments as, "they just come".

It became clear that the primary subjects, some of the secondary subjects and the non-handicapped peers of the primary subjects chose from a wide range of strategies, within both Stage 2 and Stage 3 friendship understanding. From this range of skills they selected strategies that were found appropriate for

a specific social situation or had been found useful in past social situations. Two levels of understanding were, therefore, taken into account during the analysis of the data, firstly the stage to which most of the observed responses applied and secondly the highest stage at which aspects of friendship understanding had been demonstrated. For example, intellectually impaired students seem to be aware of, but do not consciously think about the aspect of friendship evolving over time. The need for working and doing things together over a prolonged period of time, of growing up together, was frequently mentioned, but not expressed as explicitly in the comments made by the primary and most of the secondary subjects as by the non-handicapped peers, implying an awareness but not a full understanding of this aspect. Selman (1980) describes this awareness as an emerging stage of friendship understanding that leads to a more complete understanding. The recent changes in school environments provide a further explanation of the difficulties the primary subjects experienced with regard to intimate, long-term friendship relations. The level of understanding and skills development of the primary varied, actually fell between those levels demonstrated by the secondary subjects and the levels demonstrated by their non-handicapped peers in class. VAL's level was more similar to that of her non-handicapped peers. Another problem in establishing stages of friendship understanding was that the non-handicapped peers of the primary subjects were frequently not motivated to describe or explain their efforts in initiating friendships. A number of students shrugged their shoulders and made the following comments: "...I don't know, they just come". These responses provided few data that reflect stage-related aspects.

Furthermore, the primary subjects perceived the initiation of friendships not as much as a process that happened on a voluntary basis over a period of time, but more as a process that had to be approached with caution and would require a great deal of effort on their part. Although the primary subjects made use of a greater variety of skills and in most cases were much more active in initiating and maintaining friendships than the secondary subjects or their non-handicapped peers, their efforts in establishing friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class were frequently not successful. Their cautious approach to establishing new friendship relations with their peers might therefore also be interpreted as a useful adaptation to situational aspects and past experiences with friendships.

Maintenance of Friendships

The following aspects of friendship were investigated under this heading: (a) closeness and intimacy of the friendships in the "best friend" category; (b) trust and reciprocity -- whether friendships were reciprocated mutually by both partners or of the complementary or the nurturing kind; and (c) aspects of jealousy and exclusion.

Closeness and intimacy. Closeness and intimacy are indicators of the type of friendship, its mutuality and the extent to which intimacies are shared among friends. Selman (1980) described the following aspects as relevant to the identification of the levels of friendship understanding:

STAGE 2

(1) close friends get along, like to do the same things, yet each party wants compatibility for the sake of the self; satisfaction is reciprocal but not mutual. Best friends are identified as those friends one gets along best with.

(2) children realize that there is a discrepancy between what a person says he wants or likes and what that person really thinks or likes. Over time one gets to know the other person's true self and "true, real or inner" attitudes.

STAGE 3

(1) close friends feel compelled to have the other experience what they themselves are experiencing. Close relations are based upon sharing and intimacy.

(2) the concept of "shared experiences" and how the person relates over time become very important. Lengths of time of friendship is important because close relations are built upon mutual experiences.

(3) close friends don't have to be alike, but they have things in common which provides an underlying basis for mutuality.

(4) at this stage a friend cares as much about the other as he\she cares about him\herself. You worry more about close friends than about yourself. A close friend is like part of the family.

The following statements have been selected from the responses provided during interviews and in questionnaires, as representative of the primary subjects' perceptions about closeness and intimacy. These comments have been categorized into the four stage-related aspects described by Selman under Stage 3 friendship understanding (1980).

VAL's perceptions about the closeness of her friendships are demonstrated by the following responses:

(1) "I share my papers and things like school supplies, sometimes lunch, if they don't have any lunch we share -- we talk, fool around and have fun, laugh together -- I also share my thoughts and secrets with Jane, about boyfriends and so on".

(2) "We meet every day in school and on Fridays at the roller rink -- we sometimes help each other with our work in class, have sleep-overs, weekends at the lake -- we go roller skating, to the shopping mall and to movies -- my friends are fun to be with and they are always there when I need them -- I have known

STELLA since Grade 5 and the others since Grade 7", [from one to three years].

(3) VAL and her friends had much in common such as shared special education programming, instructional assistants and recreational activities, VAL's background was very different from that of the other primary subjects.

(4) "My friends mean a lot to me they are just like my sister, I talk to them, if they have -- like a problem, help them with what is bothering them".

These comments reflect VAL's emphasis on the sharing of experiences, mutuality and caring, and friendships of long standing. Her remark that "my friends are just like my sister", is indicative of a high level of friendship understanding. Selman (1980) described "being just like one of the family" as a very close and intimate friendship relationship at Stage 3.

TINA 's perceptions about the closeness of her friendships are demonstrated by the following responses:

(1) "My friends are nice, they make me feel happy".

(2) "We see each other every day in school, we met in Grade 7, one year ago -- it is hard to make friends when we move so much, I have known Karen for about ten years, off and on".

(3) "I have different friends for different things -- we work together in school, they help me with my school-work, we do lots of things together and have fun".

(4) "A friend is important, everyone needs a friend to talk to". During observations TINA's concern for her friend Celia became very apparent. Celia was found sitting in the hall on the floor and seemed in great pain. TINA and VAL rushed into the hall, procured a chair for Celia to sit on. TINA held Celia in her arms and tried to comfort her. After her return to class TINA was extremely pale, she was so upset about her friend's discomfort that she was unable to continue with her work and had to be taken out of the classroom by the instructional assistant.

TINA'S comments are representative of a wide range of functioning levels. She chose complementary rather than mutually reciprocated friendships. She also found it difficult to form long-term friendships because of her family's frequent moves, although she had known Karen of and on for 10 years. TINA was however observed demonstrating a great deal of empathy and concern for her friends, a Stage 3 aspect of friendship understanding.

STELLA's perceptions about the closeness of her friendships are demonstrated by the following responses:

(1) "Ann is my best friend because she is understanding and trusting -- we share secrets, talk and share our lunch together".

(2) "My friends and I like to hang out together, we have lots of fun -- I have known Ann since Grade 8 and VAL for two years, we all go to the roller rink each Friday".

(3) STELLA chose friends who were in many ways different from herself, although they shared a similar academic background, academic status and similar interests in recreational activities.

(4) "We spend a lot of time together, helping each other, not being mean -- VAL sticks up for me, Ann is nice to me, she helps me a lot".

STELLA'S comments indicate that she had known her friends for at least two years, their mutuality was based on common experiences, but she seemed to be stuck in the getting-along phase and her friendships were frequently of the nurturing type and not always reciprocated equally, mutually or consistently by her friends, indicating Stage 2 and emerging Stage 3 aspects.

GARY's perceptions about the closeness of his friendships are demonstrated by the following responses:

(1) "My friends are special, they are not loud-mouthed, bragging -- we talk, help and trust each other, I shared secrets with my former best friends Morris and Carl".

(2) "My friends and I see each other every day in school and most weekends in summer, in winter I have to do school-work -- I used to see my best friend Carl quite often and have known him since Grade 5, Morris I met only once in a while -- I met Stefan in Grade 2 and we have had an on-off kind of relationship".

(3) "Stefan, Ron, Frank and I share the same interests like sports, we like the same jokes".

(4) "We support each other when we're in trouble, we stick up for each other".

GARY'S comments indicate a casual, distant, or "cool" approach to his friendship relations with his peers in class. He frequently referred to his close friendships with past friends. Although his friendship with Stefan was of long standing, it was not mutually or consistently reciprocated. He and his friends shared common experiences within the school setting, tried to get along, and shared their interest in hockey. Their relationships were not very close, mutually reciprocated or consistent over time. These comments represent Stage 2 aspects of friendship understanding.

NINA's perceptions about the closeness of her friendships are demonstrated by the following responses:

(1) "Holly is my best friend, we share secrets and things like information, she is discreet about boyfriends".

(2) "I have known Holly for a long time, about two years, we meet at school, during sewing class -- we meet before and after school, on the bus, for lunch -- I don't go out much but we talk a lot on the phone".

(3) "The kids in school told Holly not to be my friend because I am dumb and weird -- she understands me, she knows how I feel".

(4) "We help each other, we are there for each other".

NINA'S comments indicate a high level of functioning at Stage 3, but only with reference to her best friend Holly. She emphasised getting along, a matching to her own needs as well as true mutuality based on common experiences, sharing of intimacies and having known each other over a period of time.

KURT's perceptions about the closeness of his friendships are demonstrated by the following responses:

(1) "My friends are nice and kind people, we share with each other -- Bob shares with me, not Mark".

(2) "I have known Mark since Grade 4, Bob only just started school here -- Mark and I do things together, yard-work, playing nintendo, skating, road hockey -- Bob and I work together in school, he helps me with my school work".

(3) KURT's friendship with Bob was very different. Bob was a high academic achiever, but like KURT, he was looking for acceptance and companionship and willing to help KURT with his work in order to keep him as a friend. In contrast, Mark met his own needs through his friendship with KURT but seldom bothered to return favours.

(4) "Bob is nice, he helps me -- Mark and me, we help each other and stick up for each other". Observations and interviews with KURT's friends confirmed that Bob showed much concern for KURT, in spite of the problems his relationship with KURT caused him. He was trying to be his friend and helping him with his school-work. KURT protected Mark and showed great concern for Mark when his father became very ill. Mark, however, ignored KURT when he tried to share with him the problems he was experiencing with his girlfriend.

KURT's comments indicate a broad range of, but not a very advanced level of understanding at Stage 2 with marked differences regarding the two types of friendship relations with his non-handicapped peers Bob and Mark.

The perceptions of the primary subjects were widely distributed, VAL and NINA demonstrated understanding at Stage 3, TINA and STELLA at Stage 2, emerging Stage 3, and KURT and GARY had a level of friendship understanding commensurate with Stage 2 in regard to closeness and intimacy.

It appears, however, that the levels of friendship understanding were affected by the distribution and type of friendships. Not one of the primary subjects formed close and intimate relationships with non-handicapped peers in their class. Levels of friendship understanding based on comments about mutually reciprocated friendship relations with peers outside their classroom place the primary subjects at least within the emerging Stage 3 of Selman's levels of friendship understanding.

The following statements have been selected from responses provided during interviews and in friendship questionnaires on the basis of being representative of the perceptions the secondary subjects had about closeness and intimacy.

VAL's friends' perceptions: Ann made the following comments: "...she is my best friend, nice, fun to be with -- we go roller skating, hang out at the shopping mall, go to movies and call each other on the phone -- we visit each other and have sleep-overs, I met VAL in Grade 7 through STELLA" (1 year ago). STELLA made the following comments: "...she is my best friend, fun to be with, we go roller skating, to the shopping mall, to movies -- I visit her at home and we have known each other since Grade 5" (3 years ago). Jane, identified as VAL's "best friend" attended Grade 10 and was not available for comments. Observations during lunch at the shopping mall confirmed VAL's statements about Jane. Jane and VAL went roller skating on a regular basis and Jane was VAL's major confidante. The two girls seemed to have much fun together. Jane behaved very much the clown, which amused VAL, who was usually more reserved and shy. The responses of VAL's friends indicate intimate, mutually reciprocated friendship relations of long standing.

TINA's friends' perceptions: TINA was identified as a friend by VAL, in the time during which the investigation was conducted she gained "best friend" status. The two girls spent all of their time in school together, sharing an instructional assistant, but their relationship never became very intimate in class. Karen made the following comments about TINA: "...TINA is nice, a good friend and funny -- we work together in school and visit almost every day -- I met TINA 10 years ago and have a lot in common"; and Linda made further comments about TINA: "...we met last year, she is funny, but a little weird and so am I, so we are perfect for each other -- we mostly see each other in class -- without my friends I would have no-one to talk to, to complain to". TINA's friendships with Karen and Linda, non-handicapped peers in her class, were based on tutoring and helping relationships, they were not close or intimate.

STELLA's friends' perceptions: Ann made the following comments about STELLA: "...we are sometimes best friends, we act crazy together, sometimes she bugs and teases me -- we go roller skating and to the shopping mall, and have lots of fun together -- I met STELLA this year, we used to visit after school, but no more". VAL made the following comments: "...she is my best friend, always there for me, funny, weird at times but I ignore that -- we go roller skating, to the lake on weekends, to the movies and phone a lot -- we also have regular sleep-overs, I have known STELLA since Grade 5, for three years". These comments indicate both, "fair-weather" aspects of friendships and intimate and mutually reciprocated relationships that had evolved over a period of time.

GARY's friends' perceptions: Stefan made the following comments about GARY: "...he is a nice guy, we have a good relationship, I stick up for him, we do things together -- we met in Grade 7"; Ron made the comments: "...he is a good friend, we tease and play-fight a lot, we also play sports together -- we met in Grade 7"; and Frank commented: "...he is a good friend, we fool around a lot, work together in class and talk on the phone, but don't go out together -- we met during floor hockey in Grade 7". Although GARY's friends shared a similar academic background, remedial pull-out programs and interest in hockey, these friendship relations were not very close or intimate.

NINA's friends' perceptions: Joan made the following comments: "...she is not my friend, I have only one best friend outside of school". Holly's comments about NINA are in agreement: "...she is my best friend, we hang out together in school and work together, NINA helps me -- we have known each other a long time". These comments demonstrate the differences in NINA's friendship relations with Joan a non-handicapped peer in her class and with Holly, an English-Second-Language student who attended a parallel Grade 9 class.

KURT's friends' perceptions: Mark made the following comments about his friendship with KURT: "...we are best friends on and off, we fight a lot -- KURT shares things, gives me stuff and takes me to places -- we both like and hate the same people, he protects me and sticks up for me -- we meet at the shopping mall, watch videos together and visit at his home -- I met KURT in Grade 5, two years ago". Bob made the following comments: "...we try to be friends, sometimes it is hard, this is a different kind of friendship -- I feel concern for KURT, he is funny, we work together in school -- I have only known him since the beginning of this year". These comments indicate that KURT's friend Bob perceived his friendship with him as complementary and nurturing, and his friend Mark perceived his friendship with KURT as a "fair-weather" association of long standing. The responses and observations also indicate empathy and caring in Bob's friendship with KURT, and caring demonstrated by KURT for his friend Mark. Neither of KURT's friendships with his non-handicapped peers in class were very close.

The perceptions of the secondary subjects indicate a friendship understanding at Stage 2, emerging Stage 3 with regard to closeness and intimacy.

The following statements have been selected from responses to friendship questionnaires as being representative of the peers' perceptions about closeness and intimacy: "...friends get along, like each other, they are special and nice -- friends have fun doing things together, they are not mean, but helpful, compassionate and understanding, and they have a sense of humour -- friends are all equal, no rank -- they are honest, loyal and support you". Further comments indicated that friendships were perceived as consistent over time and that friends like the same things, are compatible, appreciate each other and share confidences: "...friends are long-term, have interesting personalities -- they share intimate thoughts, feelings and dreams."

The peers in the five classrooms presented a wide range of responses that related mainly to Stage 3 of Selman's (1980) friendship understanding. Several students also professed to having no friends, or having no friends among the peers in their class.

Trust and reciprocity. The subjects' comments concerning their perceptions about trust and reciprocity in friendship supplied data that identified differences in the levels of mutual reciprocity experienced by the subjects.

STAGE 2 friendship understanding presents a "fair-weather" cooperative conception of reciprocity and trust including:

- (1) Two-way reciprocity: Each person can take the other's perspective and each person has to act in a way that is judged to be okay with the other. There is a concern for balance of payments based on straight equity - avoiding friends who are "bossy".
- (2) Trust as in keeping secrets, opinions or beliefs about others or oneself, which may be revealed privately with the expectation that they will be kept private.
- (3) Trust as a payback reciprocating tangible products and services. Each party is independently satisfied - a reciprocal, not mutual agreement exists.

STAGE 3 friendship understanding represents an intimate, mutual conception of trust and reciprocity:

- (1) Reciprocity of mutual support and admiration. Gaining from giving to others.
- (2) Trust is seen as shared intimacy, helping each other with intimate, personal concerns, relationships with others.
- (3) Trust is seen in the consistency and dependability of personality, the stability of a relationship across time and social interactions, providing predictability and security.

The following observations and comments were selected to represent the perceptions about trust and reciprocity with regard to the primary subjects:

VAL's friendships were reciprocated equally and mutually by STELLA and Ann in Grade 9 and Jane in Grade 10. These friends shared intimate concerns about boyfriends and family. She had no mutually reciprocated "best friend" relations among her peers in class. TINA was a good friend, sometimes a "best friend" and eventually became a "best friend" to VAL.

VAL was frequently observed smoothing out relationships, helping others with their concerns. Although she was shy and reserved, she tended to take the initiative in maintaining friendly relations among the members of her group of friends and had the implicit trust of her friends.

VAL was very consistent in her friendship relations, once they were established. Her friendships with Jane, STELLA, Ann and later TINA remained stable throughout the year, demonstrating a high level of dependability, trust and mutual reciprocity.

These observations indicate that VAL had several close friends who shared trust and mutual reciprocity. Her most intimate friendship was with Jane, but she had no intimate friendships with her peers in class.

TINA identified VAL and Hal as her best friends among the peers in her class, and Linda and Karen as friends, sometimes best friends. These friendships were not mutually reciprocated by her friends. VAL identified TINA as a friend and sometimes as a best friend, Karen identified TINA as a good friend she had known for a long time, and Linda and Hal did not identify TINA as a friend.

TINA showed much concern for her friend Celia when Celia, a student in another class was hurt. She also showed concern for VAL and her teacher, when they were ill. TINA and VAL spent most of the day together and seemed to share a close relationship, although VAL initially did not reciprocate the best friend nomination made by TINA.

TINA's best friend relations, although not equally reciprocated, were consistent throughout the school year. TINA had started at the school after having spent a year at a Canadian Forces Base in Germany and had met all her friends, except for Karen, in Grade 7. She was still in the process of developing more intimate, mutually reciprocated friendships with VAL and STELLA, both students of similar academic background and status.

STELLA identified Ann as a best friend among her non-handicapped peers in class and that relationship was reciprocated, but not mutually and consistently by Ann. VAL and Jane reciprocated STELLA's best friend relation on a mutual basis, whereas TINA identified STELLA as a friend from the beginning of this investigation. The friendship relations between STELLA and TINA changed to a mutually reciprocated relationship as the year progressed.

STELLA's comments, "...we share secrets, we talk -- mostly about boys -- share lunch and our clothes. VAL is always there when I need her", indicate that her friendship relations were built on trust and reciprocity.

STELLA had known Ann since Grade 8 [1 year] and VAL for 2 to 3 years. Ann commented, "...we are good friends, sometimes best friends, sometimes she bugs me, teases...", indicating a "fair-weather" friendship. VAL reciprocated STELLA's friendship mutually and consistently, as indicated by her comments, "...she is my best friend, she is funny, a little weird at times, but I ignore that". VAL stated that she had known STELLA since Grade 5.

These observations and comments indicate that STELLA was in a "fair-weather" relationship with Ann and preferred developing, mutually reciprocated friendships with those of her friends who were not peers in her class.

GARY identified Erika, Ron, Frank and Stefan as best friends among his peers in class. Ron, Frank and Stefan reciprocated as friends, but only Stefan did so on a more consistent basis. GARY's comment, "...we support each other when in trouble", describes a caring, reciprocated relationship, that was, however, not very intimate or mutually reciprocated by his friends in class. Erika did not reciprocate GARY's friendship nomination.

GARY's comments, "...I trust some of my friends, I want to be really sure -- I only trust Mike and Carl [past friends from another school], we give each other presents, share lunch at the shopping mall, go to the arcade and write to each other", indicate that he was hesitant, even reluctant, to fully trust his friends among the peers in class. His comments were representative of "fair-weather" or situation-specific friendships with his peers in class that were not very close and trusting.

GARY had known Stefan since Grade 2. Their friendship was identified by both students as "a long-standing on-off relationship". Stefan, Ron and Frank said that they had known GARY since Grade 7. GARY's friendship relations with Ron and Frank fluctuated throughout the year between best friends, friends and acquaintances, although they all admitted to having a good relationship that is "basically okay".

These observations and comments indicate that GARY did not enjoy mutually reciprocated, long-term friendships with his peers in class. Although his friendship with Stefan was of long standing, it was not mutually or consistently reciprocated by Stefan.

NINA identified Mila, Joan and Darcy as friends among the peers in her class -- none of these nominations were reciprocated. NINA also identified Holly from a parallel Grade 9 class as her best friend. This friendship was mutually and consistently reciprocated by Holly. NINA also identified Lena, Holly's sister as best friend and this friendship was confirmed by Holly.

NINA's comments: "...Holly understands me, she is discreet about boyfriends, she does not want anyone to know, does not tell anyone, she knows how I feel", indicate trust in her friendship with Holly. (3) NINA had known Holly and her sister Lena for two years and made the following comments about her friends: "Best friends are those friends you have known for a long time".

These observations and comments indicate that NINA enjoyed one mutually reciprocated consistent best friend relationship with Holly, but had no reciprocated friendship relations with her non-handicapped peers in class.

KURT identified Mark, Bob and Kirk as best friends among his non-handicapped peers in class. Mark reciprocated his friendship mutually but inconsistently, Bob reciprocated KURT's friendship, but not mutually or consistently. He described his friendship with KURT as different and an off-on relationship. Kirk, who was really Bob's friend did not reciprocate KURT'S friendship nomination.

KURT shared secrets and problems with Mark, but not with Bob. His comments: "...I only share secrets with Mark, we trust each other, but not quite, I trust Bob, we help each other", are indicative of the instability of his relationship with Mark and his trust in his friend Bob. During observations KURT's concern for Mark became very obvious when he repeatedly tried to comfort Mark after Mark had told him about his father's grave illness. KURT also sought comfort from Mark when he had to break up with his girlfriend, but Mark did not show any concern. A discussion with the teacher confirmed that KURT had become very friendly with a Spanish girl. He had started to learn Spanish to be able to converse with his girlfriend in her own language but the girl's father forbade the relationship. KURT made repeated attempts to get Mark's attention and his sympathy in this matter, but to no avail. This incident caused a major setback for KURT, evidenced by a regression in his academic and social performance and a deterioration in his behaviour.

KURT had known Mark since Grade 4 [3 years] and Bob since the beginning of the school year.

These observations indicate that KURT's friendship was not mutually reciprocated by Bob and on an inconsistent, "fair-weather" basis by Mark. Even though he could trust Bob, he felt that he could not always trust Mark. Observations, and KURT's responses, indicate that although KURT was continuously trying to improve his friendship relations with his peers in class, he was not successful in forming mutually reciprocated friendships with these peers.

The following interpretations of trust and reciprocity were based on comments provided by the secondary subjects during interviews and in questionnaires and observations made in the classrooms.

VAL's friends reciprocated her friendships mutually and consistently over time, although she had no friends among the non-handicapped peers in her class. Her friendship with TINA, a special education student in her class, developed into a mutually reciprocated best friend relationship.

TINA's friends: of TINA's peers in class only VAL and Karen reciprocated her friendship, Karen not mutually or consistently. The friends TINA chose among peers outside her classroom reciprocated her friendship mutually and consistently.

STELLA's friends: STELLA's friend Ann, a peer in her class, did not consistently reciprocate STELLA's friendship, indicated by her statement: "...she's alright, sometimes weird and I have to stay away from her". STELLA'S friends TINA and VAL, who were not peers in her class, reciprocated mutually and consistently.

GARY's friends: GARY's peers in class did not reciprocate his friendship nominations mutually or consistently.

NINA's friends: NINA's peers in class did not reciprocate her friendship, as indicated by Joan's comment: "...I have no friends, she is not my friend". Her friend Holly from a parallel Grade 9 class, reciprocated NINA's friendship mutually and consistently.

KURT's friends: KURT's peers in class did not reciprocate his friendship nominations mutually or consistently over time, as indicated by Bob's comment: "...he is different, it is difficult sometimes", and Mark's comment: " He is not, not my friend".

The following observations and comments were selected to represent trust and reciprocity as emphasized by most students in the five classrooms. Important aspects included: trust, honesty and understanding, trusting each other with secrets, being yourself, respect for each other, the sharing of feelings, thoughts and secrets without fear of gossip -- putting friends first, respecting each other, trusting your friends and being trusted -- being considerate, not mean, nice, compassionate and accepting of your friends.

The comments of the peers of the primary subjects indicate that these students understood a wide range of aspects, mainly within Stage 3 of friendship understanding.

Jealousy and inclusion. These aspects include the effects of competition or a third person's intrusion on an established relationship:

STAGE 2 friendship understanding represents jealousy and exclusion as the hurt feelings resulting from being slighted, left out of inter-personal interactions, being snubbed by a friend.

STAGE 3 is sub-divided into two categories:

- (1) Jealousy as possessiveness in a relationship: a pre-occupation with the 'stealing' of friendship relations.
- (2) Jealousy as a trait as well as a stage is seen as a personal characteristic.

The presentation and interpretation of data in this section is based on responses provided by the primary subjects during interviews, in questionnaires and data gathered during observations in the classrooms. Observations and comments were selected as representative of the perceptions about jealousy and exclusion held by the primary subjects:

VAL provided no evidence of jealousy or exclusion in her comments or actions. Although VAL engaged in very few interactions with her class peers, she was frequently observed watching interactions among her peers and the interactions of her friends with their peers.

TINA seemed to be aware of the difficulties involved in finding friends, indicated by her comment: "...it is hard to make new friends". There were, however, no indications of feelings of jealousy or possessiveness in her comments or actions.

STELLA gave no evidence of jealousy as far as her friends were concerned. STELLA was observed in incidents involving teasing about her gum chewing and bubble blowing. This teasing was mostly observed between STELLA and the male peers in her class. Although STELLA seemed very upset by these behaviours, she did not stop chewing gum and blowing bubbles. STELLA's parents commented that she was very concerned about losing her friends and would avoid conflict or confrontation with her friends. These observations indicate that STELLA frequently felt rejected by her peers and hurt by their actions. Her comment: "...I'll call him [Mike, a peer in her class] tonight, he upset me", also indicate that, although she did not change her behaviour, she tried to remedy the situation.

GARY: Observations of the relationships between GARY and his friends Stefan, Ron and Frank provided a number of instances where rivalry, jealousy, protectiveness of the relationships and exclusion became evident within this group. Stefan, GARY's best friend of long standing, was also popular with other students in class. When Stefan joined his friends among the other peers in class, both Ron and Frank ganged up on him, even physically attacking Stefan on occasions. GARY did not take part in these violent incidents in the classroom, although he was carefully observing these behaviours among his friends. In unstructured settings, however, such as during class changes, in the hall-ways, by the lockers, and when there was a substitute teacher in the room, GARY could frequently be observed taking part in these more violent incidents.

NINA's comments and actions provided evidence of jealousy and exclusion with regard to all her relationships. Her peers tried to interfere with her friendship with Holly as her comment indicates: "...the kids in class told Holly not to be my friend". As a result NINA kept her relationship with her best friend Holly jealously guarded. It became necessary to invite Holly and NINA for lunch away from the school setting to interview and observe the two friends together. Both seemed fiercely protective of their relationship. These observations indicate that jealousy and exclusiveness played a major role in this particular relationship. NINA's friendship bids with Joan, although successful in the beginning, left her with mixed feelings when Joan denied her friendship with NINA and later made friends with Mila. NINA blamed this lack of success on Joan's attitude and behaviour in class.

KURT: Frequent periods of tension were observed between KURT and Mark with regard to Kirk. Kirk had been nominated as a best friend by KURT. Kirk nominated both Mark and Bob as his best friends and did not even identify KURT as a friend. There were at least two possible explanations for this tension, it could have been attributed to the on-off, "fair-weather" type of relationship between KURT and Mark,

or jealousy on KURT's part because Kirk identified Mark and Bob as best friends and did not even acknowledge KURT as a friend. KURT was jealous and was frequently hurt and slighted by his friends and by his peers in class. Bob felt sorry for him and provided consistent support for KURT.

Apart from NINA who demonstrated emerging Stage 3 aspects with regard to Holly, VAL, TINA and STELLA engaged in very few incidents of jealousy, but felt excluded by their peers in class. GARY and KURT demonstrated instances of jealousy and exclusion with regard to their friendships with peers in their classroom at Stage 2.

In line with the sparsity of responses and lack of incidents during observations, the interpretation of the perceptions about jealousy and exclusion held by the secondary subject has to remain tentatively at Stage 2 for most of the friends of the primary subjects.

VAL's friends showed no obvious signs of jealousy or exclusion and their comments provided no evidence of these aspects of friendship.

TINA'S friends tended to act in a somewhat reserved manner towards her. It was TINA's choice, however, not to roller skate with her friends because she found this sport too rough and dangerous. Her friends did not exclude her from any activities.

STELLA and her friends showed no jealousy or exclusion within their friendship circle, there were, however, some incidents between STELLA and her class peers. These peers were not identified as friends by STELLA.

GARY's friends provided several instances of jealous and exclusive behaviour within their friendship group and with some of their class peers.

NINA's responses and actions and those of her friends indicated that jealousy and exclusion were a major part of their friendship relations and their interactions with peers in class.

KURT's friend Mark demonstrated several instances of jealous behaviour and Kirk, Bob's friend excluded KURT from his friendship circle.

The peers of the primary subjects completed questionnaires and essays about friendship, but their behaviours in class were not observed. The written comments provided evidence of a wide range of perceptions with regard to jealousy and exclusion as various friendship dyads were formed and disbanded. Best friend relations were perceived as stable and had been formed during previous years. The emphasis was on responses which related to Stage 3 friendship understanding.

The data were analyzed and interpreted in line with Selman's (1980) "Conceptions of Friendship, Principal Analysis.

VAL, her friends and peers: The data confirm that VAL's relationships with her best friends, were intimate, mutually reciprocated and of one to three years standing. She had not chosen her best friends among the peers in her class, although her friendship with TINA became more intimate during the year. Her comment: "...they are just like my sister", attests to the closeness and appropriateness of her relationships with her friends. VAL's levels of friendship understanding were similar to those of her non-handicapped peers in class, at emerging Stage 3 and Stage 3. That of her friends tended to be slightly below that level.

TINA, her friends and peers: The data confirm that TINA's friendships were less intimate and of shorter duration, which reflected her family circumstances rather than her level of friendship understanding. Her ability to react with great sensitivity to her friends' feelings and needs indicates a high level of friendship understanding. TINA chose "different friends for different things" and her compensatory friendship with Karen was reciprocated by Karen, but not mutually. Her friendships with VAL and STELLA evolved into more intimate, mutually reciprocated relationships. TINA's level of friendship understanding was mainly at Stage 2 and emerging Stage 3, although her family background had an effect on her perceptions and social relationships.

STELLA, her friends and peers: The data confirm that STELLA could sustain intimate, mutually reciprocated friendship relations with some of her friends, although not on a very consistent basis and not with peers in her class. Her comments and those of her friends indicate that her friendship understanding was at Stage 2 and the emerging Stage 3 levels, very similar to that of her friends.

GARY, his friends and peers: Data confirm that GARY had no close, intimate friendships with his peers in class. His comments regarding past friendships and friends outside of the school setting indicate an age-appropriate level of friendship understanding at Stage 3. His comments about and observations of his friendship behaviours with his friends in class, however, suggest one level below that indicated by the comments of his peers in class. GARY and his friends functioned mainly at Stage 2 of friendship understanding with regard to the aspects related to the maintenance of friendships.

NINA, her friends and peers: The data confirm that NINA was not able to form friendships with the peers in her class, but maintained an intimate, mutually reciprocated friendship relationship with Holly. NINA and Holly demonstrated an age appropriate friendship understanding at emerging Stage 3, similar to that of her non-handicapped peers in class, but only with regard to her friendship with Holly. Problems related to the lack of understanding of the English language and a transient student population made it difficult to assess the levels of friendship understanding of her non-handicapped peers.

KURT, his friends and peers: The data confirm that KURT's friendship with Mark was of the "fair-weather" type, his friendship with Bob of the nurturing, helping type. Comments made by KURT gave the impression of an understanding about intimacy and the need for long-term relations, but observations of his behaviour within social situations did not support this impression. KURT functioned mainly within Stage 2, with some instances [trust] at the emerging Stage 3 of friendship understanding. Mark's comments indicate Stage 2 and Bob's responses a Stage 3 level of friendship understanding, commensurate with that of the non-handicapped peers in class.

Interpretation of the data. The intellectually impaired students shared similar academic backgrounds, academic functioning levels, recreational interests and levels of friendship understanding with those of their friends with whom they shared an intimate, mutually reciprocated relationship of long standing. Their responses related to these relationships demonstrate emerging Stage 3 friendship understanding. The intellectually impaired students choose these friends among peers across grades and age groups, not among peers in their class. They did, however, choose friends among the peers in their class that could fulfil their need for helping and nurturing relationships and in the case of GARY and KURT, also for companionship. These friendships with the peers in their class were, however, not mutually or consistently reciprocated by these peers and their responses relating to these friends indicate Stage 2 friendship understanding.

The concepts of trust, sharing, compatibility and togetherness over a period of time were understood by the intellectually impaired students and their friends, even though they did not always seem to have adequate vocabulary to express these concepts in as many ways as their non-handicapped peers in class. The educational background of these students prevented them from forming intimate long-term friendships with their peers in class. They also lacked the opportunities to interact and the academic status that would facilitate friendship relations with their peers in class.

Data confirm that there was little rivalry among the female intellectually impaired students and their friends. Nina, however, exhibited extremely possessive behaviour concerning her friendship relations with Holly and STELLA showed hurt feelings after being teased, admonished and rejected by her peers in class.

TINA's complementary friendships with her non-handicapped peers in class did not indicate any feelings of jealousy. VAL and TINA, who shared the same classroom, eventually established a mutually reciprocated friendship while working on the same academic program and sharing an assistant for 50 per cent of their instructional time. There was no evidence of jealousy between these two students.

Several instances of rivalry and exclusion could be observed among the two males of the intellectually impaired students, their friends and peers in class. They had chosen their friends among the peers in their class, but these friendships were not close or mutually reciprocated by their friends. These

Friends shared a similar academic status and recreational interests with the primary subjects. Jealousy and exclusion were evident in KURT's relationship with Bob's friend Kirk.

Problems in Maintaining Friendships

Problems investigated under this heading include processes involved in maintaining friendships in the face of difficult situations. Methods and procedures are described that are used to rectify disagreements within a friendship and the kinds of conflicts that are natural and expectable in a friendship relationship. These processes include: (a) conflict resolution, and (b) perceptions about the termination of friendships.

Data concerning the primary and the secondary subjects were collected through questionnaires, interviews and essays about friendship. Data on the perceptions of the peers in the five classrooms were collected through questionnaires and essays about friendship.

Conflict resolution. This topic is concerned with data relating to conflict resolution within the individual relationships and the ability of the subjects to understand and resolve conflicts in order to maintain friendships over a period of time.

To stress the importance of this topic, the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data in this category were based on three out of the four stages of friendship understanding established by Selman (1980):

STAGE 1 - involves one-way solutions to interpersonal conflict, attempts to reduce the conflict by reversing the result of the conflict-producing activity:

- (1) actively negating the action or "undoing" the action, saying "sorry", or
- (2) appealing to the other's outlook, making the other person "feel" better by doing something nice for that person.

STAGE 2 - involves cooperative solutions to interpersonal conflict, the solutions must appeal to both parties:

(1) Resolutions that appeal to both parties sensibilities, yet, although satisfactory to both parties are lacking a sense of mutuality. Conflict is seen as having external causality and not as originating within the relationship.

(2) Taking back true intent: this involves a change of attitude, meaning it when you say you are "sorry", and a realization that friends, when angry, can say things they do not mean.

(3) Forgetting in order to forgive: children do not believe that friendship can continue to exist through serious conflict and use avoidance or forgetting in order to re-compose their attitude. This strategy emerges during Stage 2, but is often appropriately conceptualized by subjects capable of higher level reasoning.

(4) Friends on the inside but not on the outside: a belief that although friendship bonds are broken, each party can maintain separate feelings of goodwill toward the other, these feelings do not translate into mutually shared feelings.

(5) Getting the friend's okay: trying to change the perspective of the other, appealing to that perspective, changing the opinion of the friend, trying to make him/her see the issue in line with the subject's own perspective.

STAGE 3 - involves mutual solutions to interpersonal conflicts: The subject looks for the source of the conflict in the interaction between the parties rather than external problems. The subject is aware that conflicts need to be worked through. Such working through is seen as a commitment, the partners are aware that conflict resolution may strengthen the bond of friendship between them.

(1) Conflicts arising within the relation need mutual solutions: this means that accommodation is no longer sufficient, that each partner must feel that both he and his friend are truly satisfied with the resolution, making the resolution not just reciprocal but also mutual.

(2) Personality traits are seen as conflicting rather than similar or complementary, requiring a change in personality.

(3) Working through conflict strengthens the friendship, for example accepting and giving criticism and still maintaining the friendship.

(4) Superficial conflict versus deeper bonds deals with the ability to distinguish between immediate inner reactions to conflict and the long-term effective relation that transcend immediate feelings. Trust in the friendship bond is seen as a source of healing.

The interpretation of the data presented under this topic is based on responses made by the subjects during interviews, in friendship questionnaires and data collected during participant observation in the classroom. The analysis of the data is in line with Selman's (1980) Issue-by-Stage Manual.

The following comments were selected from responses provided during interviews, through questionnaires and during observations made in the classrooms. These responses have been selected as being representative of the perceptions of the primary subjects with regard to conflict and the resolution of conflict.

VAL made the following comments: "...we have disagreements, sometimes my friends get mad at me for nothing -- I just talk to my friend, or she writes me a letter asking me to be her friend again -- I ask her why she was mad with me, sometimes she won't talk so I tickle her and make her laugh and then we are friends again and we stay friends -- I tell my friends not to use bad language, I listen, forgive, make

my friends feel good". These comments demonstrate a broad range of skills and an age-appropriate level of friendship understanding. VAL endeavoured to discover what the problem was, work problems through and make her friends feel good. She was aware of the difference between minor conflicts, and conflicts which might endanger a relationship, such as a break in trust.

VAL's comments suggest accommodation and avoidance to some extent, but also an understanding of the processes and the concept that true friendships can outlast minor skirmishes and that working things out can strengthen rather than terminate a relationship. These are strong indicators of Stage 3 friendship understanding. Her sensitivity to the needs and problems of others and her feelings of responsibility toward others also indicate a high level of awareness and understanding in the areas of conflict resolution and the maintenance of friendship relations.

TINA made the following comments: "...we fight sometimes, we have disagreements about what to do and we try to solve them, this is difficult sometimes -- I don't really fight with my friends, I never lose a friend over a disagreement, we remain good friends -- we have no big conflicts, we talk it out, make up after a fight, we avoid conflict or give in". These comments demonstrate that TINA was frequently willing to give in to her friends demands in order to avoid fights and conflicts. The comments also indicate that the disagreements were about "what to do" [situation-specific], and could frequently be worked through. TINA was also aware that minor skirmishes did not necessarily lead to the termination of a friendship.

TINA's comments identify accommodation and avoidance as her main strategies in resolving conflicts. TINA had a clear understanding of the differences between minor skirmishes and major conflicts that can threaten friendship relations. She found it preferable to work things out. Her comments indicate a level of functioning within Stage 2 of Selman's friendship understanding.

STELLA made the following comments: "...we have disagreements, arguments about what to do, about boys -- we fight a lot but we apologize, make things okay -- I'm afraid of losing a good friend, we don't fight all the time and we are still friends after a fight -- after a major fight my friend is still my friend, but more distant, not a close friend any more". These comments demonstrate that STELLA had the skills to work through disagreements or apologize, "make things okay". Her comments that she was "afraid to lose a friend over a disagreement" and would be less close to a friend after a major disagreement, indicate a willingness to give in rather than lose a friend, and an awareness that major disagreements can affect a friendship adversely.

STELLA'S responses demonstrate that her conflicts were mainly related to situation specific issues. Her skills included working through problems, trying not to lose a friend over an argument, and remaining friends after a fight. Her comments indicate an awareness that major fights would not always result in the termination of a friendship but can lead to a cooling off of relationships due to conflicting personality traits

and loss of trust. STELLA is functioning at Stage 2 friendship understanding with some instances at Stage 3 with regard to conflict resolution.

GARY made the following comments: "...we have disagreements about a book we are reading, but not often, we are basically just good friends, we usually just make up -- how do we settle fights? I can't answer this question, whatever works, we discuss the problem, compromise, we are still friends -- I don't know, it just ends, blows over, we talk about it, forget it, compromise to settle our differences, accept each other's opinions or apologize -- you can forget about it and still be friends, we have our problems but we always find a way to work them out, we hardly ever argue".

GARY's responses demonstrate a wide range of conflict resolution skills, including denial, forgetting about the problem, working it through and accepting each other's opinions. He also mentioned compromise and accommodation, but saw conflicts as mainly situation-specific, external not as an integral part of the relationship, indicators of Stage 2 and emerging Stage 3 friendship understanding.

NINA made the following comments: "...we don't argue much, it seems we never do -- we have some disagreements about what to do, about activities, we just don't do it, give in for the moment, compromise or take turns -- we still are friends, we hardly ever fight, only with Susan next door, we solve our problems to the satisfaction of both of us -- to get along you also have to assert yourself, say what you mean -- we sometimes fight, then we talk about it and solve the problem". These responses demonstrate a level of friendship understanding ranging from Stage 1 to emerging Stage 3. Following a disagreement with Joan, NINA made the following comments: "Joan smokes, it is no-smoking week and I don't want to smoke, there is no smoking in the foster home -- my mom died of lung cancer, I don't want to die young and I get upset when people smoke in the car". These comments indicate an understanding of fundamental differences in attitudes and her willingness to sacrifice a relationship rather than put up with behaviours she finds unacceptable. NINA's comments further indicate a certain amount of denial and compromise, Stages 1 and 2, but also the intention to work things out "to the satisfaction of both of us", clearly indicating Stage 3 friendship understanding. She distinguished between minor conflicts and the seriousness of conflicting personality traits and realized that the former do not lead to the termination of friendship, but the latter frequently will, again demonstrating Stage 3 friendship understanding.

NINA'S responses and her comment: "I didn't want to be friends with them", suggest that her conflicts tended to be both situation specific or due to differences in attitudes. She seemed fully aware of conflicts relating to unacceptable behaviour or incompatible personality traits and admitted that these problems led to the termination of her friendship with Joan and previously her friendship with Lisa. NINA's friends were not available for comments. Data gathered during observations in the classroom gave little evidence of NINA's attempts to resolve conflicts with her peers being successful.

KURT made the following comments: "...Mark gets into fights during French, he is disruptive and I get mad at him and tell him so, we try to calm down, make up and forgive each other -- I fight with Mark, he disturbs me during work, I am mad at him, I told him we will both get told off, so we talk about it and make up -- after we talk about it we can still be friends and forgive each other". These responses demonstrate cooperative, but not mutual solutions to conflicts relating mainly to situational or external causes. KURT also believed in forgiving, making up and still remaining friends. His level of friendship understanding tends to be more situation-specific, indicative of Stage 2 friendship understanding. Data gathered during observations in the classroom confirm that his friend Bob tended to be accommodating rather than assertive, and his friend Mark did not want to talk about conflict resolution at all.

The following observations and comments represent the perceptions the secondary subjects held about conflict resolution:

The friends of VAL, TINA and STELLA: Jane was not available for comments. Ann's comments: "...we don't fight about anything really, I would talk about it", were representative of her placid and easy to get along with personality. They also indicate a limited repertoire of skills within Stage 2 of friendship understanding.

GARY's friends: Stefan's comments: "...tell the person to shut up -- they get over it quickly, especially if that person has only one friend", indicate a limited skills repertoire and a level of friendship understanding within Stages 1 and 2. Frank's comments: "...we get into arguments but usually we forget about it", also indicate a limited skills repertoire and levels of friendship understanding within Stage 2. GARY's friend Ron had no comments to make on this topic.

NINA's friends: Joan's comments: "...we sometimes fight then we talk about it to solve the problem", indicate that Joan's approach to conflict resolution was also rather casual and her repertoire of skills very limited. Holly's comments were not available.

KURT's friends: Bob's comments: "...we talk and try to work it out", indicate a limited skills repertoire but at Stage 3 friendship understanding. Mark's comments: "...I don't want to tell, I forgot", indicate a lack of understanding and a limited repertoire of conflict resolution skills. His comments did not allow for the identification of a Stage level, but are indicative of low levels of friendship understanding.

The responses of the secondary subjects confirm that, apart from Bob, these students had very little understanding about conflict management and very few skills that would help them to solve conflicts within their interpersonal relations. In fact, the secondary subjects tended to have a more limited skills repertoire and in most instances functioned at a much lower level of friendship understanding with regard to conflict resolution than the primary subjects.

The responses on this topic are summarized within categories dealing with aspects that were emphasized by the majority of the students: "...I don't know, it just ends -- let things blow over, compromise -- split up, fix things up, laugh it off -- forgive and avoid conflict at all cost". They also included: "...listening and talking it out -- being equal, kind and trying to get along -- hug and apologize". The responses of the peers ranged from finding some way to solve the problem, saying sorry and starting to talk to each other again and accepting each other's opinions to changing the topic and forgetting about it. These responses are indicative of a fairly wide range of conflict resolution skills, but also a low level of friendship understanding within Stages 1 and 2, with some exceptions at Stage 3. Very few of the non-handicapped peers were functioning at Stage 3, the age-appropriate level for Junior High School students.

Comments made by the peers of the subjects ranged from don't knows, ignoring, forgetting to working things out and respecting each other's opinion. The methods described presented a greater variety, although no greater efficiency in solving conflicts than those employed by the primary subjects and their friends. Many of the non-handicapped students functioned at levels below those indicative of the comments and behaviours of the primary subjects. It appears that problems related to conflict resolution exist for all students at the Junior High School level, regardless of their cognitive functioning level or academic standing.

Termination of friendship. These perceptions include the following processes described in Selman's (1980) stages of friendship understanding:

STAGE 0: Momentary physical causes: physical harm, physical separation (living too far away).

STAGE 1: One-way conceptions: unilateral decisions -- just forget about it; bad manners, name calling and insults.

STAGE 2: Fair-weather conception of causes: disagreements and differences of opinion about what to do etc, fair and foul weather friendships -- not agreeing, not getting along.

STAGE 3: Mutual conception of causes of friendship termination: conflicts of basic trust in the relationship, greater stability but also less irreversibility, transcending minor disagreements, incompatibility related to personality, finding out that they have nothing in common, lack of common interests.

Data about the perceptions on the termination of friendship were collected through interviews, questionnaires and during participant observations in the classrooms. The comments of the subjects were selected as representative of their perceptions with regard to this topic.

The primary subjects' perceptions about the termination of friendship were represented by the following comments:

VAL insisted that she had never lost a friend, "not even when she moved, we still stayed friends". It was, therefore, not possible to analyze VAL's responses in line with the aspects provided by Selman's (1980). Observing VAL with her friends and taking into account VAL's personality as described by her foster parents and friends it was apparent that VAL went to extraordinary lengths to maintain her relationships with friends and family and was not in the habit of terminating friendships.

TINA made the following comments: "...no, only when we moved, this happens a lot, but we keep in contact by writing letters -- I miss my friends, it is hard to make new friends". These responses gave little information indicating functioning levels. TINA believed that friendships terminated when one of the partners moved and that they could be maintained to some extent through phone calls and letters. TINA's circumstances made it difficult for her to have control over this aspect of her friendships. Data gathered during observations confirm that TINA was highly motivated and actively involved in increasing her friendship circle and developing the quality of her friendships with VAL and STELLA during the course of this investigation.

STELLA had lost her friend Kate and felt sad about this, "it is hard to make new friends". She provided no further information on this topic. Observations confirm that STELLA had not only maintained but also managed to strengthen her friendship relations within her group of friends as the year progressed.

GARY made the following comments: "...I lost a couple of friends, when they moved away -- I felt miserable for a little while, can't feel that way for ever". These responses confirm that in his perception the termination of friendships was a result of friends moving away rather than conflict with friendship relations.

NINA made the following comments: "...yeah, I lost a couple of friends, Lisa, I didn't want to be her friend any more, forget it, I ignore her, forget her, she instigates arguments and trouble -- I have lost Lisa because of her attitude problem and behaviour, she got me into trouble and we had many arguments about smoking, drugs and boys -- I tried to ignore the problem, but it did not work -- when you break up with a friend it is sad, but it is not the end of the world". NINA's comments were very specific and related closely to aspects described by Selman (1980) for Stage 3 friendship understanding. She had lost two friends Leslie and Joan because of conflicting personality traits. Her attitude toward the termination of friendships seemed very mature, except that most of her friendships were observed to end in unilateral termination by NINA or her friends in class, presenting a lower level of friendship understanding than that previously indicated by her responses.

KURT made the following comments: "...yeah my friend Eric, he moved, he was my best friend - he moved to another school, I phone and see him once in a while, but I lost him, we still talk on the phone sometimes, I feel mad, sad, but I have other friends". KURT'S comments, like TINA's relate to termination due to friends moving away rather than conflict within relationships. Both students were aware of the difficulties involved in keeping relationships going by phoning and visiting once in a while and the subsequent weakening of these friendship bonds.

The responses of the primary subjects did not deal with stage-related issues, except for those made by NINA with regard to incompatibility related to personality traits and behaviours. GARY, TINA and KURT, however, appeared to be functioning at a more age-appropriate level with regard to the termination of friendships due to their friends moving away (Stage 2), and NINA's responses demonstrate a friendship understanding at the emerging Stage 3. Observation of actual behaviours in the classroom did not confirm this high level of friendship understanding.

Data relating to the perceptions of termination of friendships held by the secondary subjects was gathered during participant observation.

VAL, TINA and STELLA belonged to the same group of friends, their perceptions about the termination of friendships could not be fully analyzed due to the brevity of their responses.

GARY's friends: Only Stefan commented and reflected upon previous friendships. He regretted losing his friends when they moved, but also mentioned that: "...life has to go on, you just have to make new friends".

NINA's friend Holly was not available for comments.

KURT's friends: Bob commented on the loss of his friends when he moved to this school. He regretted losing his friends and found it hard to make new friends. He described his friendship with KURT as an effort to make friends and wrote in his essay, "I hope I will always have friends, for the rest of my life". Mark made few comments and did not seem concerned about losing his friends.

The secondary subjects also provided few responses, other than that they had lost friends when they moved or when their friends had moved away. They described feelings of sadness and regret, but also commented that: "...losing a friend is not the end of the world". These comments are indicative of a functioning level equivalent to Stage 2 friendship understanding.

The non-handicapped peers of the primary subjects provided the following responses regarding the termination of friendships: "...loss of trust, incompatibility related to personality, loss of interest and lack of shared interests -- major disagreements, having nothing in common, outgrowing a relationship, or moving to another school or place".

Comments made by more than fifty per cent of the peers of the primary subjects, suggest that their levels of friendship understanding with regard to the termination of friendship were equivalent to Stage 3, although there were also several instances of levels of understanding relating to Stages 0, 1 and 2.

Interpretation of the data. The data indicate that many students had problems in solving conflicts within their social relationships. The intellectually impaired students had an extensive repertoire of conflict resolution skills, but a lower level of friendship understanding than was indicative of their age group. VAL's and NINA's comments included some aspects demonstrating age-appropriate level of understanding. In NINA's case these responses related only to her friendship with Holly and were not confirmed by her social interactions with peers in class. VAL managed to maintain the most satisfactory friendship relations with her peers, although not with the peers in her class, whereas NINA enjoyed the least satisfaction with her friendship relations, except for her friendship with Holly, a peer in a parallel Grade 9 class. The skills repertoire and some of the language used by the primary subjects in responding to this aspect, in particular by NINA, appear to be the result of extensive counselling.

Friends nominated by the intellectually handicapped students among their class peers, and the non-handicapped students in the Grade 9 class of one of the schools had not only a very limited skills repertoire, but also very low levels of friendship understanding. These deficits may be attributable to the academic and social background of these students. A further explanation for their use of lower level skills may be found in their past experiences with social relationships in which these skills had been effective. Lastly, an explanation may be found in the present social situation where their behaviours may represent a realistic adaptation to conflicts within relationships.

By contrast, the non-handicapped students in Grade 7 demonstrated a more extensive skills repertoire and a level of friendship understanding representative of Stage 3. The students in this class were enrolled in a program that taught interpersonal problem solving skills on a regular basis to all students in this class. This program provided modelling and practice sessions for the students, and social situations that provided opportunities to demonstrate specific skills. The non-handicapped students in the other school had a larger skills repertoire than the primary and secondary subjects, but their levels of friendship understanding seemed to be low.

Perceptions relating to the termination of friendship were difficult to establish for VAL, TINA and STELLA, the female intellectually impaired students in School A. GARY, NINA and KURT provided responses that placed them within the emerging Stage 3 friendship understanding, similar to that of most of their non-handicapped peers.

Summary and Interpretation of the Data on Levels of Friendship Understanding

Table 4 provides a comparison of the levels of friendship understanding among the subjects within the three dimensions of formation, maintenance and conflict resolution\termination of friendships. The findings regarding the effects of the levels of friendship understanding of the intellectually impaired students indicate that their level of cognitive functioning was not the dominant factor in their ability to form and maintain satisfactory relationships and friendships with their peers. This was made evident by the following findings:

VAL, with the lowest level of academic functioning in all areas appeared to have an age-appropriate level of friendship understanding in most measurable aspects within the three process dimensions. She had many friends and the most satisfactory friendship relations with her peers, although these did not include the non-handicapped peers in her class. Another example was Bob, a student with high academic achievement, whose need for companionship motivated him to form a friendship with KURT, even though this friendship was limited to a complementary, helping and nurturing relationship that was not mutually reciprocated. NINA, who also demonstrated some aspects of age-appropriate friendship understanding and an extensive skills repertoire, had the least number of friendships and was the least satisfied with her friendship relations.

The levels of friendship understanding in most cases affected the type and distribution of the friendships -- whether the friendship was complementary or mutually reciprocated -- based on the social situation within which the interaction occurred. An important aspect was the strong emphasis intellectually impaired students placed on supportive, nurturing and helping relationships, demonstrated by the frequency of the following comment: "helping and sticking up for each other, and not getting someone into trouble". Duck and Gilmour (1981) describe complementary behaviours, as behaviours that are seen as a reflection of the taxonomy of needs and goals that apply to intellectually impaired students in the mainstream. Complementary friendships elicited responses demonstrating Stage 2 friendship understanding. These friendships were established with non-handicapped peers in class who performed the role of tutors for the intellectually impaired students. Reciprocated friendships with non-handicapped peers in class were less intimate and also elicited responses indicative of Stage 2 friendship understanding. Mutually reciprocated friendships were established exclusively with peers who were not students in the same class and these friendships elicited responses that approached the age-appropriate Stage 3 of friendship understanding.

The responses tended to vary from situation to situation. Selman (1980) explains that students will frequently select from their repertoire of skills responses acquired during earlier stages if these responses had previously achieved positive results and if they believe that they will serve them well in the

TABLE 4

LEVELS OF FRIENDSHIP UNDERSTANDING

SUBJECTS (Ages)	FORMATION		MAINTENANCE			CONFLICTS	
	MOTIVATION	INITIATION	CLOSENESS	TRUST	JEALOUSY	CONFLICT	TERMINATION
VAL (15)	-3	-3	-3	-3	0	-3	0
TINA (14)	2	2 / 3	2 / 3	2	0	2	0
STELLA (14)	2 / 3	2	2 / 3	2 / 3	2	2 / 3	0
GARY (13)	2 / 3	2 / 3	2	2	2	2 / 3	-3
NINA (15)	2 / 3	2 / 3	-3	-3	-3	1 / 2	-3
KURT (13)	2	2 / 3	2	2 / 3	2	2	-3
PEERS	3	2 / 3	3	3	3	2	3
FRIENDS	2	2	2 / 3	2	2 / 3	3	-3

KEY: 1 / 2 INDICATES THAT BOTH STAGES ARE REPRESENTED EQUALLY
 - 3 EMERGING STAGE 3

present social situation. This aspect may represent an adaptive response based on past experience and the reality of the present social situation. The data also indicate that differences between the perceptions of the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers may have been the result of delays in expressive language skills and concept development, affecting the range and type of responses made by the intellectually impaired students. Some of the comments were too brief to provide an adequate data base for establishing specific functioning levels. This was a particular problem regarding the perceptions about the termination of friendships.

The findings regarding conflict resolution are of major importance to educational program planning within mainstreamed classrooms. By dealing with this category separately the researcher stressed the importance of problem solving skills in maintaining satisfactory friendship relations. It must also be pointed out that difficulties in conflict resolution were experienced by most students at the Junior High level -- the intellectually impaired students, their friends and their non-handicapped peers in class -- to a greater or lesser extent. We also need to emphasize that "the two most important interpersonal measures -- concern for others and being liked by peers -- are completely unaffected by intelligence" (Spivack and Shure (1974:20) and were demonstrated to a high degree by the intellectually impaired students.

It must also be noted here that intellectually impaired students who have recently been mainstreamed at the Junior High School level are at a severe disadvantage with regard to establishing long-term, mutually reciprocated friendships with their peers. These students not only had to move from a segregated setting into one that is now integrated, they also had a history of being moved from school to school and from program to program. This situation made it impossible for them to form satisfactory long-term friendship relations with their peers. Most of the friendships among their non-handicapped peers had already been established during their primary school years, thus reducing the availability of suitable non-handicapped peers who might have become friends of students who were new to the school. This was made evident by NINA's unsuccessful efforts to establish a friendship with Joan and by Bob's unusual friendship with KURT. Joan and Bob were both new to their school and were also trying to establish new friendship relations with their peers.

Most of the research (see Rubin, 1980; Selman, 1980; Corsaro, 1985,1994; Rizzo, 1989), however, supports the assumption that friendships are formed between individuals who have similar academic and recreational interests. The intellectually impaired students formed intimate and mutually reciprocated friendships with peers of similar academic background, academic status and recreational interests. They did not choose their "best friends" among peers in their own class. Academic status of the intellectually impaired students appeared to be the primary determinant of the type and distribution of their friendships.

Social Aspects of Mainstream Environments

Observations took place during structured periods in Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Art and in the Gym. The primary subjects VAL, TINA, STELLA and GARY were observed during academic periods when an instructional assistant was present and during periods when they were working independently without an instructional assistant. Participant observation was only possible during the periods when the instructional assistants were not present. The primary subjects NINA and KURT were observed in a variety of settings, including the classroom, the library, the gym and during work experience. These students worked independently without the support of an instructional assistant.

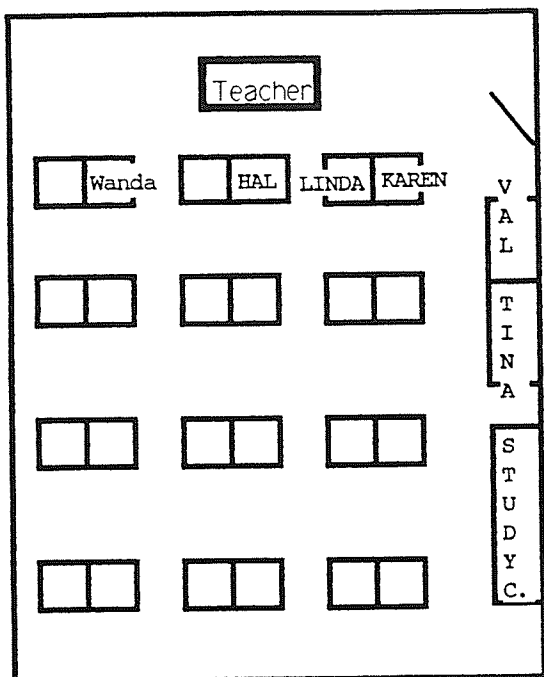
The primary subjects were also observed during unstructured periods in their schools and in their home and community environments. Excerpts from transcripts have been selected for the purpose of highlighting specific issues under discussion. The purpose for these observations was to observe social interaction among intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in mainstream environments, and to identify aspects within these environments that either facilitated or hindered the intellectually impaired students in their efforts to establish and maintain friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class. The data will be presented individually for each of the primary subjects to preserve and emphasize the variations that existed within each environmental setting.

Aspects of the School

VAL and TINA were enrolled in a special education program, consisting of placement in a Grade 8 class with a modified curriculum in Mathematics and Language Arts. Math skills were taught during remedial sessions with a group of students from another Grade 8 class. VAL and TINA shared an instructional assistant for one period each day during Language Arts. The classroom teacher seemed supportive toward VAL and TINA, but absent from school for lengthy periods of time during which several substitute teachers taught the class. The substitute teachers were not informed about the primary subjects' special program. Observations took place on school days 3 and 5 in a six-day cycle. They occurred in the classroom, the school, in a shopping mall and at home. Observations in the classroom covered 20 periods each for VAL and TINA, from November, 1991 to the end of May 1992.

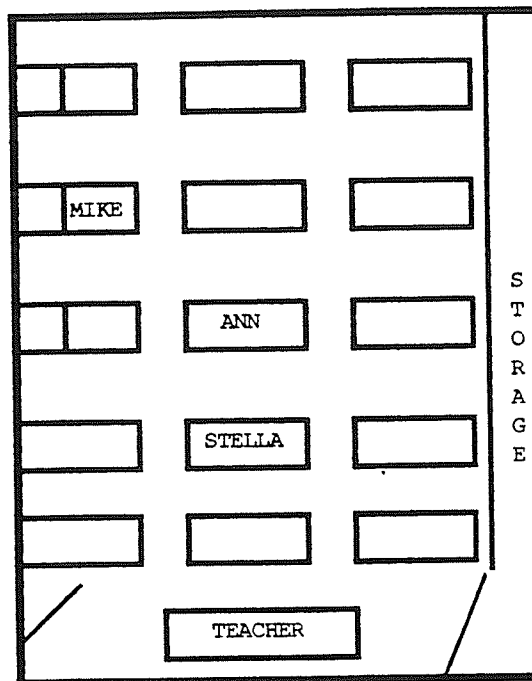
Although VAL and TINA used the same curriculum as their peers with major adaptations and reduced expectations, most of their work was so different that it was not possible to make comparisons between their assignments and those of their peers. VAL and TINA, therefore, did not work on academic assignments or group projects with their peers. The seating was arranged in such a way that physical and

Val and Tina Grade 8



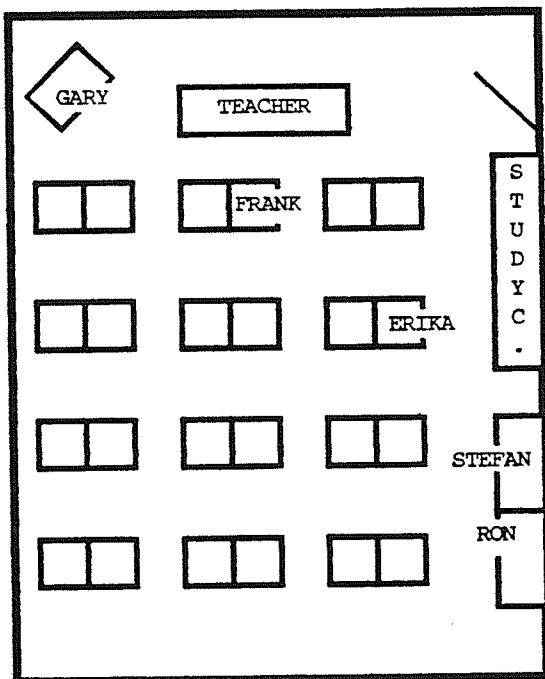
22 students

Stella Grade 9



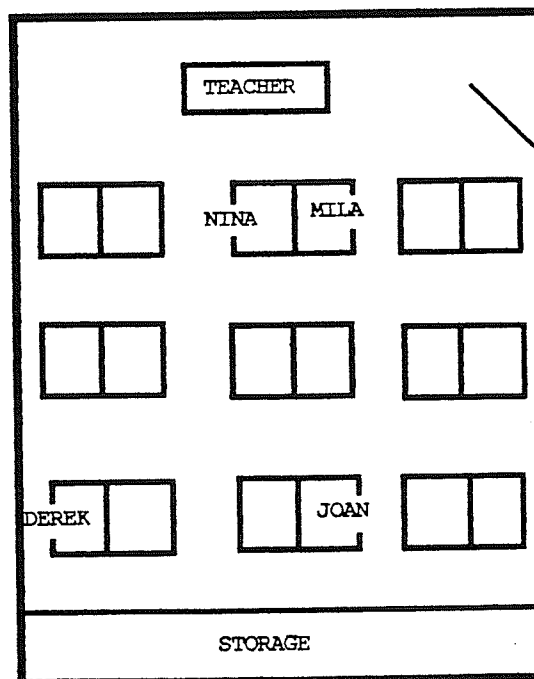
15 students

Gary Grade 8



21 students

Nina Grade 9



17 students

FIGURE 2

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

visual interaction with their peers was at a minimum (see Figure 2), especially when the instructional assistant sat at their table. Being seated right beside the door made it unnecessary for the primary subjects to interact with their peers.

Interaction when the instructional assistant was present. These observations took place during double periods in Language Arts, Social Studies, and in Art class. Social interaction with peers was not observed when the instructional assistant was present. When a substitute instructional assistant was present Kim, a non-handicapped peer in class, wanted to help the two students with their work, but TINA ignored her and looked to the assistant for help, although he was not familiar with the program or the needs of the primary subjects. In every setting that was observed, the students tended to be isolated from the rest of the class, forming their own group with the instructional assistant seated between them. They did not accept help from or interact with their peers or the teachers during these periods. VAL and TINA also attended remedial classes in Mathematics with Grade 8 students from a parallel Grade 8 class. There was no interaction between VAL, TINA and the other students during these periods.

Interaction when the instructional assistant was absent. The observations took place during Language Arts periods when the researcher observed either Karen or Linda, two non-handicapped peers who sat at a table beside VAL and TINA, coming to their aid. Karen and sometimes Linda moved to TINA's and VAL's table, answering their questions and helping them with their assignments. At other times TINA and VAL were standing at Karen's and Linda's table, talking with these students and asking them for a look at their assignments, or for their help with their own work. These interactions occurred spontaneously and every time the instructional assistant was absent. During one Language Arts period the classroom teacher initiated interactions between TINA and Hal, a non-handicapped peer in her class. The teacher had first asked Karen, who had refused, and then Hal to tutor TINA for a history exam. Hal reluctantly accepted the task to tutor TINA, but once into his role became quite enthusiastic. He was so successful that TINA did well in her exam and identified Hal as a "best friend" in her first sociogram. Hal, however, did not reciprocate the friendship and no subsequent interactions occurred between TINA and Hal.

Interaction in unstructured settings. The observations occurred in the hallways, at the lockers and in the cafeteria. During unstructured time the primary subjects interacted on a very consistent basis within their group of chosen friends. This group consisted of students with similar academic background and functioning levels and similar recreational interests. The interaction occurred on a daily basis, across age groups, and with students from Grade 8 to Grade 10. Interaction between the primary subjects and their class peers, however, was not observed in unstructured settings.

VAL and TINA were not required to take part in regular class assignments as VAL's comment illustrates, "I don't have to do this, I have special work to do". This situation did not facilitate interaction or cooperation with their class peers. The presence of an instructional assistant further impeded the interaction among the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in class. Their seating arrangements, placing VAL and TINA between Karen, Linda and Hal's table and the wall on the one hand, and the door and study carrels on the other, excluded these two students from the mainstream of interaction in their class. During class changes VAL and TINA went to their lockers together, where they frequently met with STELLA, Ann, Jane and Celia. This group frequently spent their lunchtime together at the shopping mall. During these lunch gatherings they talked about boy friends and made arrangements to meet for a movie, roller skating on Friday evenings, or to go on shopping trips on Saturdays.

STELLA was integrated into a Grade 9 class. The regular curriculum taught in class was modified. She also saw the special education resource teacher 3 times per cycle and had the support of an instructional assistant for 13 periods per cycle.

The data reported were obtained from observations made during 17 formal periods in class, during remedial sessions, in the shopping mall and in STELLA'S home, from December 1991 to the end of May 1992. Observations in the structured classroom environment were arranged to occur fifty per cent of the time during periods when the instructional assistant was present and fifty per cent during periods when the instructional assistant was absent. Observations during unstructured periods, such as lunchtime at the shopping mall, were made on two separate occasions. The regular classroom teacher was on long-term disability leave and a substitute teacher had taken over the class at the beginning of January 1992.

Interaction when the instructional assistant was present. Observations occurred during Language Arts periods. STELLA was frequently absent from class, the substitute teacher was not informed about her whereabouts. On following up on this situation it became apparent that STELLA spent these times with the instructional assistant in a quiet room to catch up with her reading. Observation during these pull-out remedial sessions provided evidence that the instructional assistant was reading to STELLA most of the time, explaining what she had read and asking questions about the content of the book. STELLA paid little attention and showed many signs of being bored, such as rocking in her seat, shaking her head from side to side, drumming on her book or desk with her fingers or a pencil. STELLA frequently complained that she was tired. She was chewing gum almost continuously and blowing and bursting bubbles, but was never reprimanded for this behaviour. At other times STELLA and the instructional assistant took turns in reading one page at a time.

During the periods when STELLA and the instructional assistant were in the classroom, they both sat at STELLA's desk. The instructional assistant took out STELLA's binders, books and pencils and

arranged them on her desk. She then opened the binder or book at the right page and started to read to STELLA. She also turned the pages and wrote down answers to questions for STELLA. STELLA spent most of her time drumming on her desk with her fingers or a pencil, chewing gum. She frequently turned in her seat to look at her friend Ann or the boys at the back of the classroom. During these periods there was no further interaction between STELLA and her peers in class. In the classroom her interactions with her "best friend" Ann were minimal. Although Ann sat right behind her, STELLA was not able to engage her in conversation.

Social interaction with other peers was limited to observing what was going on in the classroom during periods when the instructional assistant was present, except for one time when the teacher asked the instructional assistant to work with another student and STELLA and Ann were allowed to read together.

Interaction when the instructional assistant was absent. The observations occurred during Language Arts periods. When the instructional assistant was absent STELLA tried to interact with her peers in class, especially with her friend Ann and the boys. A great deal of teasing was observed between STELLA and her peers. Mike, one of the non-handicapped peers in class usually came to STELLA's rescue, both, admonishing her for her behaviour and supporting her against her peers. Although Mike spent a lot of time in the hall or being sent to the office for his own behaviour, he seemed very aware of STELLA's feelings and her problems. STELLA expected his support and became very annoyed when Mike criticized her or did not act according to her expectations. After one particular incident she commented, "I'll call Mike tonight, I'll tell him! He embarrassed me", although Mike had actually defended her, he had also asked her to stop the behaviour which was annoying the other students. Mike was not identified as a friend by STELLA.

STELLA accomplished very little on her own. She was frequently observed engaging in time-wasting activities or waiting until class was over. Her efforts in engaging Ann in conversation were seldom successful, Ann tried very hard to attend to her work. Although STELLA was the first to pack up and leave the class, she always waited for Ann at the door, or came back into the classroom to wait for her. Ann was very slow in putting away her things and frequently the last student to leave the classroom. Interaction was not observed between STELLA and the other female peers in her class.

Interaction in unstructured settings. These observations took place in the hallways and the shopping mall. They confirmed that STELLA had a very good relationship with her friends, shared their interests and jokes and enjoyed their company. Her circle of friends consisted entirely of students who had a similar academic background and functioning level as STELLA and enjoyed the same recreational activities. This group of friends met regularly, every Friday evening at the roller skating rink.

STELLA was very active socially. She enjoyed interacting with her friends and the peers in her class. Interactions ranged from quiet observation of her peers when the instructional assistant was present, to continuous, overt involvement in classroom situations and "clowning", when she was not present. She frequently interacted with the male students in class who themselves had academic and behaviour problems. The female students in her class did not interact with STELLA, but concentrated on their work. STELLA made some effort to attend to her work when she was closely supervised. STELLA spent most of her unstructured time with her friends in the hallway, by the lockers and in the shopping mall. Most evenings and weekends were spent visiting with her friends.

GARY was enrolled in an integrated Grade 8 special education program with modifications to the regular curriculum. He had the support of resource 4 times per cycle and an instructional assistant for 9 periods per cycle. GARY was observed for 20 formal sessions during a period from December 1991 to the end of May 1992. He was observed during structured situations in the classroom with and without an instructional assistant present, and during pull-out remedial sessions. He was also observed during unstructured situations in the hall-ways and at the lockers in school, and in his home environment.

GARY sat at a table, beside the teacher's desk, facing the rest of the class. While working with the instructional assistant he remained at his table throughout the period. At other times he sat with his three friends Stefan, Ron and Frank at their table. When sharing an instructional assistant with Frank, he shared Frank's table in front of the teacher's desk. GARY worked on similar assignments as his class peers with greatly reduced expectations.

Interaction while the instructional assistant was present. Observations took place during Language Arts periods in the classroom. When working with the instructional assistant GARY was on task, he discussed his work with her and completed his assignments under her supervision. He was spending a lot of time observing his peers and friends while he sat facing the class. No interaction occurred during class time, although GARY entered and left the classroom fighting and laughing with his friends.

During pull-out sessions GARY and his friends worked diligently. Stefan, who was a non-handicapped peer in GARY's class and a nominated friend of GARY's, had a very good understanding of math and was much admired by the other students in the program. These observations provided an additional data base regarding the friendship relations within this group consisting of GARY and three of his non-handicapped peers in class and confirmed Stefan as the leader of this group. Their similar academic background and functioning level, particularly in mathematics, and their interest in hockey, their understanding and acceptance of each other's feelings and needs, were the basis for the friendships within this group.

Interaction when the instructional assistant was absent. The observations occurred during Language Arts periods. GARY spent much of his time alone at his table even when the instructional assistant was not present. He was observed tearing up his work and throwing it away on several occasions. As the term progressed, and the class more frequently had a substitute teacher, GARY was less supervised and spent more and more time with his friends. At these times he seemed to be very boisterous and often instigated inappropriate behaviours within his group of friends. GARY and his three friends, Stefan, Ron and Frank spent most of their time discussing hockey games, looking at hockey pictures, laughing and play fighting, or teasing their peers in class. GARY was never observed interacting with anyone else in class, except when he was shooting rubber bands at one of the other students in his class. A lot of his time was, however, spent observing his peers in class.

Interaction during unstructured periods. These observations took place during class changes, in the hallways and by the lockers. GARY and his friends were always together laughing, talking, "clowning" around and fighting. Interaction with other classmates was not observed during these times.

GARY interacted with the peers in his class whom he had nominated as "good friends" consistently and on a daily basis. These interactions ceased when an instructional assistant was present and during strictly supervised periods in the classroom. When supervision was lax, GARY spent most of his time play-fighting, laughing and talking with his friends Stefan, Ron and Frank. He did not interact with any of his other peers in class or with students in the school environment.

NINA was enrolled in a modified alternative program in Grade 9 with emphasis on work experience. She did not have the support of an instructional assistant but received a great deal of in-class support from her teachers. She continuously asked for and accepted help from her teachers in order to be successful, but refused regular help or remedial pull-out sessions that would identify her as a special needs student. She did receive one-on-one instruction in mathematics in the resource room.

Observations occurred during 20 formal periods, from December 1991 to the end of May 1992 at home, in classrooms, at the school, during work experience and during lunch at McDonald's. Fifty per cent of the observations occurred in classroom settings and fifty per cent occurred in the gym and during work experience.

Interaction in the classroom. Observations occurred during Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies classes. NINA's preference for sitting in the centre of the first row, facing the teacher's desk resulted in her focusing directly on the teacher, and not on her peers in class. Her questions and interactions were directed at the teacher. It was quite obvious that she tried to please her teacher and was completely dependent on him. Only once was she observed studying for a test with Mila. She asked Mila, a non

-handicapped peer in her class, a question but Mila could neither understand nor answer it. The girls were not able to communicate meaningfully in English. Mila, an English-Second-Language (ESL) student, depended a lot on illustrations and NINA sometimes tried to help her understand them.

During a biology test NINA observed that the teacher was giving some extra attention to another student, explaining one of the questions to her. She proceeded at once to ask several questions herself. Nina always made certain that she had the attention and support of her teachers. She felt very much rejected by her peers and believed that this rejection occurred because she was identified as a special education student, "they think I'm dumb because I am not working at the same level as they are". She was also very unhappy with the teasing she received from her peers. Observations and test results, however, confirmed that NINA had very good work habits and study skills. She was working on the same curriculum expected of her class peers. NINA asked frequent questions of the teachers and scored well above average in her class on tests - even placing second in her class in one particular test. Her manner and comments suggested that she frequently felt superior, rather than inferior to her peers in class, especially to those of her peers whose work habits and behaviour were inferior to her own.

Interaction in the gym. Observations were conducted during every visit to School B. The class was usually split into two groups, consisting of native students and ESL students. NINA and her friend Joan spent their time with the ESL group. Many instances were observed when the teacher teamed NINA and Joan with some of the best performers in the ESL group, thus providing opportunities for interaction and tutoring. These students were very competitive and worked hard on helping NINA and Joan to improve their skills and performance in order to win the game. They were observed doing this in a very helpful, encouraging and positive manner. Although the interactions were based on a tutoring relationship, they were pleasant and seemed quite natural. They did, however, not transfer to situations outside the gym.

Interaction during work experience. Observations occurred on two occasions in a recreation room at the Lyons Manor House on Portage Avenue. The students worked for several days filling containers that were to be used for advertising purposes by a Winnipeg chain store. The students were paid a certain amount of money for each batch of one hundred containers. Two of the students invited the researcher to help them with their work. NINA was in the habit of putting earphones on and listening to music while she worked. She sat at a table with Mila, never talking, but working very hard during the entire afternoon. There was no interaction between NINA and her peers. The students sat in small groups at round tables. Some of the students talked quietly, others made jokes and laughed a great deal, but most of them worked hard to make some money. These situations were very competitive as everyone tried to earn as much money as possible. She met with Holly on the bus on her way to and from school and during lunch periods. Her home was too far from school to meet with friends from school at any other time.

Interaction during unstructured periods. The researcher invited NINA and her friend, Holly, to lunch at a restaurant. The girls talked quietly during lunch, they did not converse with the researcher, but confirmed that they had known each other for several years and had been "best friends" for at least two years. They confirmed that Lena, Holly's sister was also a friend of NINA's. Lena was not able to attend lunch that day. NINA had kept her friendship with Holly very much to herself up to this time, and this was the only occasion the researcher was able to observe NINA with her "best friend" Holly.

Almost all of NINA's interactions in class were with the teachers in the various classrooms. NINA actively seemed to avoid contact with her peers. She disappeared during lunch periods and was never seen before or after school. I was informed by NINA's foster mother that NINA, Holly and Lena took the bus together to and from school. NINA kept her friendship secret from her peers in class. Her efforts to establish relationships with her peers in class faltered, with Mila because of language barriers and with Joan because of Joan's attitude and conduct in class.

KURT was integrated into a flexible alternative learning program in Grade 7. He had individualized instruction in Mathematics but he did not have the support of an instructional assistant. The classroom program consisted of academic assignments and group projects, that allowed for individual differences and team work among all students. KURT worked within the regular curriculum with some adaptations.

KURT was observed during 24 formal periods fifty per cent of the time in the classroom\library, fifty percent in the gym, and also at home and on two special event days from December 1991 to the end of May 1992. He worked mainly with Mark, a student with similar academic achievement and Bob and Kirk, two of the most accomplished students in his class. Seating was in flexible groupings, in line with the requirements for individual projects. A great deal of work was accomplished in the library.

Flexible programming and flexible seating arrangements made it possible for KURT to work on the same curriculum as his peers in class and interact freely with peers throughout the school day. He was frequently assigned to work with Bob and Kirk, two students with excellent academic achievement, but more often chose to work with Mark, a student with whom KURT shared a similar academic status. Bob, Kirk and Mark were nominated as friends by KURT. In spite of the opportunities provided by this type of program, KURT did not interact with the other students in his class.

Interaction in the classroom. These observations occurred during Language Arts and Social Studies. KURT's interactions in the classroom were restricted mainly to working with Bob and Kirk, while being interrupted or teased by Mark, and frequent interactions between KURT and the teachers. KURT almost always sat at a table in front of the classroom, or took a seat in the front row, closest to the teacher. During work periods he was actively involved in group discussions and projects, and very observant of the group leaders. He was often observed making valid contributions to discussions, but in a very soft and hesitant

voice. At times the group leaders encouraged him to repeat his suggestions, or provided further opportunities for KURT to contribute to the discussion. On one occasion he was observed sitting in the back with a group of his friends and peers, acting out, flicking the light off and on and play-fighting. At another time he was observed in a very serious discussion with his friend Mark, trying to get Mark's attention during the entire period and then outside the classroom in the hall. Mark tried to avoid any involvement with KURT at that time.

Interaction in the library. These observations occurred while the students worked on projects for the science fair. In this setting KURT spent more time working with Mark than with his other friends. They shared their ideas and worked side by side on their projects. KURT was often praised by the teacher for his continued attention to his project after working through the entire period. There seemed to be less interaction with peers in this setting, everyone concentrated on their own projects, although students did share their results.

Interaction in the gym. Very little interaction was observed between KURT and his friends in the gym. He spent most of his time bouncing a ball alone or with available adults, such as student teachers. KURT was very proficient in basketball, on some occasions he was observed showing other students how to shoot baskets. On another occasion Mark tried to teach KURT how to play badminton, but without much success. On the same day KURT tried to attract Mark's attention in the classroom, he also followed him around in the gym. They walked together and sat on the bench a great deal. During the majority of the periods when KURT was observed in gym he was alone or shooting baskets with the student teacher. At times other students would join him, but only for a few moments.

KURT took part in presentations by visiting gym teams and the Contemporary Dancers. He seemed very interested in the performances and was frequently observed in conversation with Mark, who sat beside him in the bleachers. Most of the time he was watching the performances and rocking his head from side to side. He did seem very restless during these times in the gym.

During unstructured gym periods KURT spent a lot of time with Mark, in conversations, walking around the gym, or sitting on the bench. Occasionally he demonstrated his skills in shooting baskets to other students, but during much of the time he was bouncing a ball against the wall or the gym doors. He frequently left the gym to obtain water from a drinking fountain.

KURT interacted only with the three peers in his class, whom he had nominated as his friends. His interactions with Mark were of his own choosing. His interactions with Bob were based mainly on tutoring and Kirk was a friend of Bob, who happened to be working a lot with Bob. Kirk never admitted to being

KURT's friend, as his comment illustrates: "I am Bob's friend, not KURT's". KURT interacted with these friends in school, but talked about a large number of friends -- about fifteen -- he identified among peers in his neighbourhood and at the community centre.

Aspects of the Home and Community

These observations occurred at the beginning and at the conclusion of the observations in the classrooms. VAL lived in a foster home with several foster children. She still visited with her own family and was very attached to her siblings. She was allowed to bring her friends home and her foster parents invited them to their cottage at weekends. VAL met her friends in community recreational facilities, such as the roller rink, the cinema, and in shopping malls on a regular basis.

TINA lived with her parents and siblings. Her father's employment in the army made it necessary for the family to make frequent moves. They had just returned from a year overseas. TINA's friends were not invited to her home, but she was allowed to visit VAL. Her parents were very protective. Although TINA spent some time with her friends in shopping malls and at the cinema, she avoided sports and reported that she thought, "roller skating too dangerous".

STELLA lived with her parents and an older sister. Her parents did not encourage or discourage STELLA from spending time with her friends, but did not invite them to their home. STELLA's mother took "the girls" [STELLA and her friends Ann, Jane and VAL] to the movies. STELLA had a friend next door and spent a lot of time playing outdoors with her. She also met with her friends in community and recreational facilities, such as the roller rink, on a regular basis.

GARY lived with his parents and siblings. GARY's parents only spoke Italian. His three older sisters and his mother were very protective. He was not encouraged to go out or invite his friends to his home, Stefan made the following comment: "I would go if I was invited; I went to a birthday party once". GARY's parents felt that the community lacked appropriate facilities, and that there was a lack of same-age peers within their neighbourhood, making it difficult for GARY to make friends. His home environment was not conducive to the formation of friendships, and he did not attend any community recreational facilities to meet with same-age peers. During the week his evenings were spent doing homework or helping his father in the bakery.

NINA lived in a foster home with a foster mother and several handicapped foster children. The foster mother also worked outside the home and major emphasis was placed on self-sufficiency. NINA was proud to show off her skills in sewing, cooking and taking care of herself and the other children when necessary. The conditions in the home did not allow for visits from her friends. NINA did not live close to recreational or community facilities. She attended a babysitting course and spent time with Holly, who

was a student at NINA's school, but not a peer in her class. NINA's home and community environments did not encourage interaction with friends or facilitate the formation of friendships with her peers.

KURT lived with his parents and several younger siblings. He invited and met with his friends on a regular basis for recreational activities [sports] and to do "odd jobs" for neighbours for pocket money. His parents did not approve of his friendship with Mark and would have preferred it if he had invited his friend Bob instead. KURT only invited Bob once to his birthday party and never visited Bob's home. KURT also spent a great deal of time at the community centre, playing hockey with his friends. His parents confirmed his friendships and complained that he was "always out with his friends and hardly had any time to do his homework".

Summary and Interpretation of the Data of Social Aspects of Mainstream Environments

The interpretation of these data is focused on four major aspects of friendship that are affected by social issues within mainstreamed environments: the friendship choices of the primary subjects, whether their friendships were reciprocated by their friends, the distribution of these friendships, and the characteristics of their nominated friends.

The friendship choices of the primary subjects. The educational background of the primary subjects affected their perceptions about themselves, their academic status and their motivation for choosing friends who would fulfil specific needs resulting from previous educational experiences. The primary subjects chose their "best friends" among students of a similar educational background, academic standing and recreational interests. To fulfil their needs as special education students, they also chose friends among the peers in their class who interacted with them in a helping or tutoring relationship.

Reciprocated friendships: primary subjects. Based on their needs the primary subjects maintained two very different types of friendship relations: friendships that were mutually reciprocated and fulfilled their need for intimacy and companionship, and friendships that fulfilled their need for nurturing relationships, but were not mutually or consistently reciprocated by the friends who were in a helping or tutoring relationship with the primary subjects.

Distribution of the friendships: primary subjects. Although the educational placement of intellectually impaired students within mainstreamed classrooms provided access and proximity to non-handicapped peers, their academic status, the seating arrangements, differences in their educational program, and the presence of instructional assistants, severely curtailed their opportunities for interaction with their class peers. Despite the limited interaction observed with peers in their own class, these students did maintain mutually reciprocated "best friends" relations with peers who were not students in their own class.

The data also indicate that the home and community environments of these students played a major role in facilitating peer interaction and enhancing opportunities to establish and maintain "best friend" relations with same-age peers.

Non-handicapped peers who were identified as "best friends" or friends among the peers in class by the intellectually impaired students, did not reciprocate these friendship nominations mutually or consistently. This situation was most apparent for those students who were in tutoring relationships with the primary subjects. It also applied to the friendships between the two male students with their non-handicapped peers in class. Their friendships were established for the purpose of companionship, support and the sharing of recreational interests rather than the sharing of academic interests.

Characteristics of the friends of the primary subjects. The peers chosen as "best friends", who mutually and consistently reciprocated these friendships were students with similar educational background and academic standing. They shared recreational interests with the primary subjects on a regular basis but were not peers in their class. The peers in the same class, who were chosen to fulfil a nurturing and protective role toward the primary subjects, were frequently of above average academic standing. These peers did not mutually or consistently reciprocate their friendships with the primary subjects. The friends chosen by the male primary subjects among the peers in their class were peers of similar academic standing, who shared remedial programming and recreational interests with the primary subjects. These friendships were not intimate and were not always mutually and consistently reciprocated by the non-handicapped peers in class.

Summary of Findings

The data are summarized and interpreted under the following headings: (1) Patterns of Friendship; (2) Perceptions about Friendship; (3) Effects of Levels of Friendship; and (4) Effects of Mainstream Environments. Implications for the implementation of mainstreaming practices and conclusions based on the findings are presented, and recommendations for further research are provided.

Patterns of Friendship

The question of "who are the friends of the intellectually impaired students in mainstreamed Junior High School classrooms" was investigated under the heading of "Patterns of Friendship". This investigation was concerned with the effects of mainstreaming on the patterns of friendship of intellectually impaired students. Eppstein Karweit (1983) studied the patterns of selection of friends in secondary schools. In this

study the patterns of friendship had to be identified. The patterns of friendship refer to the number and types of friendships and their distribution among peers in class, in the school, in the neighbourhood and in the community at large.

Number of friendships. Intellectually impaired students tend to categorize almost every friendship as a "best friend" relationship, regardless whether or not the relationship is reciprocated mutually and consistently by the nominated friends and the number of "best friend" nominations made by these intellectually impaired students -- between two and seven "best friend" relations -- surpassed that of their non-handicapped peers in class. A major finding of this investigation was the detrimental effect the educational background of the intellectually impaired students had on their ability to establish intimate, long-term friendships with their peers in class. According to Selman (1980), friendships that are mutually reciprocated and consistent develop over a period of time during which the individuals in a friendship relationship get to know each other. Frequent moves, due to special programming requirements, mobility of families and changes in foster home and group home situations, make it extremely difficult for handicapped students to form long-term relationships or friendships with their class peers.

Students who are being mainstreamed at this level invariably come without long-time friends. These students have no opportunities to maintain friendship relations of long standing. In contrast, their non-handicapped peers enter Junior High school with friendship networks that were established during their primary years. Even Bob, a gifted student who had moved to his school recently, felt that he had no "best friend" in class.

The findings provide further evidence that the intellectually impaired students and those of their nominated friends with whom they shared a mutually reciprocated friendship, had far fewer friends than most of the non-handicapped peers in their class. They only averaged about two to three friends, whereas their non-handicapped peers averaged fifteen or more friends who were chosen among peers in their class. There were, however, non-handicapped peers in every class, who stated that they had no friends at all, while KURT nominated fifteen friends, thirteen within his neighbourhood and two among his peers in class.

Types of friendships. Three distinct types of friendship relations were identified in this investigation. First the complementary friendships the intellectually impaired students had with their peer tutors in class; second, friendships with peers in class that were not mutually or consistently reciprocated by the nominated friends; and thirdly, mutually reciprocated, long-term friendships with peers that were not members of the same class. The "best friend" nominations of the intellectually impaired students included two very different types of friendship relations. One type included friendships that were based on tutoring

relationships and were of a nurturing and complementary type and not mutually or consistently reciprocated. This type of friendship was also less consistent over time, lasting only while the tutoring relationship was in place. For example, the friendship between TINA and Hal was identified in sociograms as a "best friend" relationship by TINA, but maintained only during the time Hal was tutoring TINA for a test.

The second type consisted of mutually reciprocated "best friend" relationships existed between the intellectually impaired students and peers who were functioning at similar academic levels and shared recreational activities with the intellectually impaired students on a regular basis.

The third and most common type of friendship between intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in class were friendships that were not mutually reciprocated. These friendships were formed to provide companionship and protection in social situations. Both male and female intellectually impaired students established this type of relationship with peers in their class who shared similar academic status and recreational interests. This was the dominant type of friendship established between the male intellectually impaired students and their peers in class.

Distribution of friendships. Mutually reciprocated "best friend" relations between the intellectually impaired students were formed only with peers chosen across grades and age groups, not among their peers in class. The males of the intellectually impaired students did not appear to have intimate, mutually and consistently reciprocated friendship relations either with peers in class or outside of their classroom environment. The results demonstrate that the intellectually impaired students chose friends who would understand, accept and protect them, with whom they could share common interests, academic and personal problems, and recreational activities on a regular basis. Differences in academic functioning levels and educational programming had a detrimental effect on social interaction and the formation of reciprocated friendships among the intellectual impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in class. These differences interfered with the sharing of academic interests and pursuits in class and restricted interaction to recreational interests outside of the classroom environment.

The findings further demonstrate that female intellectually impaired students more frequently chose their friends among peers outside of their class, across age and grade levels and among those students who had a similar educational background and academic standing than did male students. The low academic status of the female students and their lack of common academic, social and recreational interests resulted in their not being accepted by their academically orientated female peers in class. VAL and STELLA, however, were very satisfied with their friendship relations with peers outside the classroom, but TINA and NINA would have liked to have more friends within their neighbourhood and among their peers in class.

The male intellectually impaired students chose their friends among peers in their class with whom they shared a similar academic functioning level, remedial programming and interests in sports. These

friendships provided companionship, educational supports and protection for these students, but were not intimate or mutually and consistently reciprocated by the non-handicapped peers.

The results demonstrate the importance of investigating a number of mainstreamed environments that have different effects on the patterns of friendship of intellectually impaired students, when interpreting the findings. These include the school, home, and community environments of the students.

Perceptions about Friendship

To answer the second question "what is the meaning intellectually impaired students attribute to their relationships with friends", the present research investigated the perceptions intellectually impaired students have about friendship and their relationships with their friends. The findings indicate that the perceptions held by the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers determined their friendship choices and, therefore, their patterns of friendship. These findings are in with line previous research, conducted with young children, indicating that the ability to form and maintain friendships depends to a large extent on how closely the personal characteristics of the friend match the initiator's perceptions of what a friend should be like (Rizzo, 1989). Friends tend to be more similar than non-friends and similarity leads to the discovery that individuals like the same things. Friendship perceptions, therefore, determine access and proximity to peers who match these perceptions.

Ideal friend perceptions. Data regarding the "ideal friend" friendship perceptions of the intellectually impaired students and the perceptions they held about their actual friendship relations were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and friendship essays. It was assumed that the "ideal friend" perceptions of the intellectually impaired students would provide a better indicator of the level of friendship understanding of these students, whereas their perceptions about their actual friendship relations would provide a basis for an interpretation of their functioning level and the effects of environmental influences.

The "ideal friend" perceptions of intellectually impaired students presented only minor differences from those of their non-handicapped peers. Some of these differences may have been attributable to insufficient vocabulary and difficulties in expressing thoughts, rather than differences in cognitive development.

Actual friend perceptions. The perceptions the intellectually impaired students held about their actual friendship relations, however, differed from their "ideal friend" perceptions noticeably. The "ideal friend" perceptions of the non-handicapped peers were much closer to their perceptions about their actual friendship relations. The perceptions the intellectually impaired students held about their actual friendships

also differed substantially from those of their non-handicapped peers in class. The result of this investigation provides evidence that the perceptions and expectations intellectually impaired students have about their friendships are affected by their past educational experiences and their perceived needs within the present educational setting. They also demonstrate that these discrepancies in friendship perceptions are less pronounced in the perceptions of their non-handicapped peers in class.

Explanations for discrepancies. The discrepancies between the "ideal friend" perceptions and the perceptions about actual friendship relations -- their perceptions of what a friend should be like and their expectations and perceptions of their real friends -- provide evidence that the friendship relations of the intellectually impaired students are qualitatively inferior to those of most of their non-handicapped peers in class.

These discrepancies between the "ideal friend" perceptions and the actual perceptions the intellectually impaired students have about their friends may be attributed to at least two factors: their educational background and their academic standing within the existing social situation in each classroom. These factors result in differences in the experiences, needs, and motivations of these students.

The discrepancies between perceptions suggests, on the one hand, that the handicapped students may be deficient in social knowledge, the ability to solve problems, and in managing conflicts and are therefore not capable of choosing or applying their strategies effectively. On the other hand, it may well be that these differences between their "Ideal Friend" perceptions and the perceptions intellectually impaired students have about their actual friendship relations represent a mainly successful adaptation to the realities of special education programming and the prevailing mainstreaming practices.

Levels of Friendship Understanding

The third question was concerned with the effect of the levels of friendship understanding on the ability of intellectually impaired students to form mutually reciprocated friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class. Previous researchers have stressed the importance of the developmental aspects of social cognition, social perspective taking and friendship understanding (see Piaget, 1952; Flavell, 1963; Damon, 1977; Selman, 1980), in the formation of social relationships. Gottlieb and Leyser (1989:150), suggest that intellectually impaired students show few qualitative differences in their social needs, social perceptions and social behaviours, and that "any differences would be a matter of degree rather than of substance" .

The subjects for this investigation had been selected on the basis of having previously been identified as intellectually impaired, with deficiencies in both, cognitive and adaptive behaviour. The levels of friendship perception of the intellectually impaired students, their identified friends, and their peers in

class, were identified and interpreted within the dimensions of formation and maintenance of, and problems arising within friendship relations.

Formation of friendships. Under this topic motivational aspects that lead to the friendship choices made by the intellectually impaired students and their peers, and their repertoire of initiation skills are discussed. The results of this investigation indicate that friendship fulfils specific needs that each individual brings to a relationship and that the relationship is maintained as long as these needs are fulfilled to the mutual satisfaction of each of the partners. Mussen (1984) explained that there are two distinct kinds of need that are fulfilled in a friendship relationship: firstly the need for nurturing and support, resulting in friendships that are compensatory or complementary rather than mutually reciprocated, and secondly the need for companionship resulting in mutually reciprocated, intimate friendships. These needs are usually provided for within a single friendship relationship. The findings of the present investigation provide evidence that for most of the intellectually impaired students these needs were fulfilled by different people with whom they formed two distinct types of friendship relations: firstly complementary, helping and nurturing relationships that provided support and protection in social situations, and secondly mutually reciprocated friendship relations that provided these students with intimacy and companionship.

TINA and KURT, for example, chose friends among the non-handicapped peers in their class who were able to provide tutoring and help in academic areas. The motivation for establishing these friendships was based on personal characteristics, past social and educational experiences and the demands of the present educational setting.

The focus of the non-handicapped peers was on choosing someone who was compatible and respected one's opinion. The female intellectually impaired students provided for their need for companionship and intimacy by choosing friends among peers of similar educational background, academic status and recreational interests, but not among their non-handicapped peers in class. These friendships were mutually reciprocated by the friends of the intellectually handicapped students.

The male intellectually impaired students chose friends among their non-handicapped peers in class to fulfil their need for companionship. They chose peers with similar academic status and recreational interests, but these friendships were not mutually or consistently reciprocated by their friends.

The findings also provide evidence that the intellectually impaired students had an extensive repertoire of social skills, spanning across several of Selman's (1980) stages of friendship understanding. They frequently took the initiative in approaching potential friends after carefully observing them within a social situation. These students also made substantially more frequent and more intense efforts to initiate friendships with their peers than their friends and the non-handicapped peers in their class. Their friendship

bids were, however, less successful than those of their non-handicapped peers -- they resulted in fewer friendship relationships.

The results of this investigation are in line with earlier studies conducted with younger students suggesting that physical access to non-handicapped peers and social skills training for the handicapped students have not been very successful in increasing social interaction and have not resulted in an increase in the formation of friendships among handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers (Gresham, 1982; and Furman, 1984).

Maintenance of friendships. The investigation into the maintenance of friendship included the processes of intimacy and trust; reciprocity and consistency over time; and jealousy and exclusion. The findings of this investigation provide evidence that the intellectually impaired students were aware of the differences in their friendships with class peers. Their responses indicate that they are aware of a lack of intimacy, trust and reciprocity in their friendship relations with peers in their class. They were also aware of their need for both, compensatory and intimate friendship relations. Their friendships with the non-handicapped peers in class were based on their need for help with academic work, support and protection in social situations rather than intimacy. They only formed intimate friendships with peers who were not students in their class.

TINA, STELLA, KURT and GARY maintained friendships with peers in their class that were not mutually reciprocated and of the inconsistent "fair-weather" type. Only VAL's friendships were all mutually and consistently reciprocated by her friends, although her friends were not peers in her class. TINA and STELLA also had a more limited number of mutually and consistently reciprocated friendships with peers who were not students in their class. NINA had one mutually and consistently reciprocated friendship with Holly, who was not a student in her class. KURT and GARY did not have any mutually reciprocated friendships or friendships that were consistent over time, although they both had friends among their peers in class. GARY's comments demonstrate his awareness of the limitations of his present friendship relations and express his wish that he would like to have new "best friend" relationships, but did not really expect intimate relationships with the peers in his class. TINA also mentioned that she had problems with maintaining intimate, long-term friendships mainly because her family moved so frequently. KURT indicated that he enjoyed consistent and mutually reciprocated friendships, but only with peers in his neighbourhood. In contrast, the non-handicapped peers in each of the five classrooms -- with a small number of exceptions - - identified as many as fifteen friendships with peers in class, but only one or two friendships that were intimate "best friend" relationships and mutually reciprocated by their friends.

These findings demonstrate that in addition to the distribution of friendships, both, the number and type of friendship relations established by intellectually impaired students differ from those established by their non-handicapped peers. Handicapped students experience greater difficulties in establishing intimate and mutually reciprocated long-term friendships than their non-handicapped peers in class.

The findings also provide evidence that the intellectually impaired students were not aware of or tended to avoid situations that might have lead to jealousy in their friendship relations. VAL and TINA made few comments regarding the topic of jealousy and exclusion, although all of the intellectually impaired students made reference to the difficulties involved in initiating and maintaining close relationships. In contrast, STELLA, KURT and GARY were observed in a number of social situations in the classroom and in the school setting, during which aspects of jealousy and exclusion became prominent and NINA gave many examples of feeling excluded, teased and ignored by her peers in class. VAL and NINA's scores in the processes of maintaining friendships were similar to and STELLA's close to those of their non-handicapped peers, whereas TINA, GARY and KURT scored one Stage below that of their non-handicapped peers in class.

Problems in maintaining friendships. Research by Kaufman, Agar and Semmel (1985), Furman (1984), and Spivack and Shure (1974) suggests that social skills training programs and programs providing students with interpersonal problem solving skills have not always proven successful in increasing interaction among and acceptance of handicapped students by their non-handicapped peers. There is no evidence that such programs increase the development of friendships among handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers in class. This lack of success of social skills programs may be attributable to their being administered to the handicapped student population only. It may also be a result of the handicapped students being taught these skills in segregated remedial programs without regard to relevant social situations in mainstreamed classrooms. The present study investigated the processes of conflict resolution, and the termination of friendships. The findings provide evidence that problems in maintaining friendships were experienced to a lesser or greater degree by all students in Junior High School classrooms.

The results demonstrate that the intellectually impaired students minimized the existence of conflicts within their friendship relations and showed a reluctance to deal with conflicts in general. Their responses provide evidence of a level of friendship understanding that is one Stage below that advocated by Selman (1980) for students of his age. VAL's comments, by contrast, demonstrate a more age-appropriate level of understanding in the area of conflict resolution.

The findings also provide evidence that the inter-personal problem solving or conflict resolution skills of the friends of the intellectually impaired students were even less well developed. Their responses demonstrated a very low level of understanding and functioning within the dimension of conflict resolution, a level that is two or more Stages below that advocated by Selman (1980) for their age group.

The non-handicapped peers provided few comments regarding this topic. Most of them stated that they did not know what they would do. Many of their responses were similar to those of the intellectually impaired students. The findings provide evidence of a more comprehensive and aggressive repertoire of conflict resolution skills that in some instances included humour and physical altercations, but generally remained one Stage below the level of understanding advocated by Selman (1980). Only a few of the responses provided by non-handicapped students were in agreement with Selman's Stage 3 friendship understanding, an appropriate level for students at the Junior High School level.

The findings of this investigation provide evidence that intellectually impaired students are very aware of the difficulties involved in making new friends, and give the problem of maintaining their friendships a great deal more thought than their friends and most of their non-handicapped peers. Empathy and caring were demonstrated by the intellectually impaired students at a much greater frequency than by their non-handicapped peers in class. They were however much more hesitant to act in an assertive or aggressive manner in case such actions would disappoint or upset their friends and lead to the termination of the friendship. This lack of assertiveness in conflict situations may be a result of previous experiences, a lack of experience in social situations, insufficient understanding of social situations or the inability to employ effective strategies appropriately in certain social situations. It may also represent a functional adaptation to specific social situations that is based on past experiences.

Although social interaction skills were seen as a priority in every individual program plan, only one of the five classrooms, KURT's Grade 7, offered a program teaching interpersonal problem solving skills. This program was implemented with all students in class. The findings of this investigation provide evidence that most of the students -- handicapped and non-handicapped alike -- had difficulties in solving interpersonal conflicts.

The students provided few comments regarding the termination of their friendships. It appears that they were not comfortable with this topic. VAL and STELLA both insisted that they had never lost a friend. TINA and GARY admitted that they had lost friends because they had moved away. NINA, in contrast, had been actively engaged in terminating friendships with peers who did not match her perceptions of what friends should be like. Most of the students, however, agreed that it is sad to lose a friend, but it is not the end of the world.

The findings provide evidence that the levels of perception of the intellectually impaired students and those of their "best friends" in these process dimensions tended to be approximately one level below that expected of same-age peers. In addition, the level of perception regarding conflict resolution tends to be one level below the level identified by Selman (1980) as appropriate for students at the Junior High school level for all students.

The findings of this investigation also support the suggestion that levels of intelligence and academic performance, although not the deciding factors in determining levels of friendship understanding, affect the distribution of friendship choices. The intellectually impaired students find it necessary to choose friends who fulfil their need for intimacy and companionship among peers of similar aptitudes, academic status and recreational interests from among the total school population, rather than among their peers in class.

Effects of Social Aspects

To provide answers to the fourth and final question, aspects of mainstream environments were investigated, with a particular focus on the mainstreamed Junior High School classroom setting, were investigated. The environmental aspects that were found to have a marked influence on social interaction and the formation of friendships among intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers include personal characteristics, and aspects of the classroom, the home and community environments.

Personal characteristics. The most important finding in this study was that the intellectually impaired students formed intimate, mutually reciprocated friendships with peers of similar educational background, academic status and recreational interests, and that these mutually reciprocated friendships were not formed with peers in their own classrooms. The results of this investigation demonstrate that the personal characteristics of the intellectually impaired students affected their being accepted by their non-handicapped peers. VAL and KURT, who were perceived as nice, friendly, caring and fun to be with by their parents and friends, had extensive friendship networks, albeit outside their classroom setting, and seemed satisfied with these friendship relations. KURT was described as "o.k." but different by his friends in class had no mutually reciprocated friendships with these friends. He appeared to have many friends in his neighbourhood. STELLA and TINA, who were perceived as friendly, caring and as "acting crazy at times" by their parents, friends and peers, had fewer friends and enjoyed their friendship relations but to

a lesser degree than VAL. At times "acting crazy" was interpreted positively as evidence of a sense of humour and at other times it was interpreted negatively, as unacceptable behaviour that needed to be ignored or avoided. GARY, described as shy by his parents, as boisterous by his teachers and as "okay" by his peers, had even fewer friends and less intimate relationships. NINA, who was perceived as "too demanding" by her foster mother and showed little tolerance toward her peers, had fewer friends than the other primary subjects and was the least satisfied with her friendship relations with her peers in class.

The findings, that the personal characteristics of the intellectually impaired students play a major role in their being accepted by their non-handicapped peers are in line with previous research conducted with young children, stating that children chose peers as friends who had the characteristics that matched their perceptions of what a friend should be like (Corsaro, 1985; Rizzo, 1989), and that their characteristics played a major role in their finding acceptance by their non-handicapped peers (Furman, 1984; Allport, 1986). The adolescent intellectually impaired students in this study also chose friends who shared similar characteristics and interests.

The results of this investigation further demonstrate that the composition and characteristics of the peer group are major factors in establishing supportive friendship relations with non-handicapped peers in class. KURT's peer group included students with a wide range of abilities and interests, and the classroom environment encouraged the sharing of knowledge, skills and activities among all students. KURT maintained friendships with two non-handicapped peers in his class. Ben provided educational and social supports and Mark provided companionship on an intermittent basis. In spite of these advantages, the friendships with his peers in class were not mutually or consistently reciprocated by these friends and KURT chose most of his friends among peers in his neighbourhood. VAL and TINA received tutoring from peers in their class, but again these relationships were not mutually or consistently reciprocated.

The findings also indicate that in those classrooms where the non-handicapped peers have problems themselves, social interaction and the formation of friendships among the handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers may be difficult to achieve. NINA's peer group consisted of transitory students, students with severe behaviour problems and police records, and students whose proficiency in the English language was less than her own. The composition of this peer group did not facilitate interaction and the formation of friendships among the primary subjects and their non-handicapped peers.

Effects of classroom environment. Most importantly, the findings demonstrate that intellectually impaired students chose friends for companionship among peers of similar academic background and status. The majority of VAL's and TINA's peers in class were female students who appeared to be high academic achievers. Most of the female students in STELLA's group were also high academic achievers, but her peer group consisted mainly of male students with severe academic and behavioral problems. STELLA interacted with the male students in class and was friends with Ann who enjoyed a similar academic status. Her friendship with Ann was not mutually and consistently reciprocated by Ann. GARY's peer group consisted mostly of male students, of whom several had behavioral and academic difficulties. GARY maintained friendships with Stefan, Ron and Frank, three peers in class who had similar behavioral problems, an academic status that was similar to GARY's and enjoyed similar interests in sports. These friendships, however, were not mutually or consistently reciprocated by GARY's friends. The findings of this investigation support previous findings by Kaufman, Agar and Semmel (1985), that the composition of the peer group and group cohesiveness are essential pre-requisites for peer acceptance.

Observations in the classrooms provided evidence that the seating arrangements in two of the classrooms were not conducive to social interaction. Placement at separate tables, apart from the regular student body and the presence of an instructional assistant, prevented VAL, TINA and GARY from interacting with their non-handicapped peers. The segregated seating -- VAL and TINA against a wall between the door and study carrels, and GARY in a corner beside the teacher's desk, facing the class -- had several adverse effects on interaction and the acceptance of the intellectually impaired students by their non-handicapped peers in class: First, the seating arrangements and the presence of educational support from an adult stressed the special education status of the intellectually impaired students; second, the seating arrangements kept these students out of the mainstream of interaction and prevented close proximity to their non-handicapped peers; third, the particular seating arrangements of these students -- with their back toward the blackboard and teacher, prevented them from following instruction and forced them to rely even more on the support of the instructional assistant when interpreting assignments and copying assignments from the blackboard.

KURT, by contrast, enjoyed a flexible seating plan and frequently worked with his friends Mark or Bob in class or in the library on group projects. On several occasions he was observed acting out with his peers at the back of the classroom, but in general both, KURT and NINA preferred to sit in close proximity to the teacher in the centre of the front row in the classrooms.

The findings of this research provide evidence that individual education plans that are not part of the regular curriculum taught in class, were a major factor in segregating the intellectually impaired students from their non-handicapped peers in class. Observations in the classrooms identified the following effects of special education programming on the acceptance of the handicapped students by their non-handicapped peers in class and the interaction pattern between the two groups: First, emphasis on special programming for the intellectually impaired students affected their academic and social status. This effect was greater for the female students, who had to contend with their academically oriented female peers, than for the male students, whose male counterparts placed greater emphasis on sports. The special education status of the intellectually impaired students affected their acceptance by, and reduced their opportunities for interaction and the formation of friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class. Although STELLA and GARY worked on the same curriculum as their non-handicapped peers in class, their program was modified to such an extent that they themselves and their peers were fully aware of their special education status.

Second, emphasis on special programming reduced the need for interaction among the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers by reducing their source of shared academic interests and the need for cooperation. Special programming removes the necessity for supportive relationships, cooperative learning, shared activities based on a common knowledge base and the consequent interaction and opportunities to develop friendships with non-handicapped peers.

Remedial programs are a part of most special education programs and serve the purpose of teaching the handicapped students additional concepts and skills in specific areas where a lack of such concepts and skills may impede their academic achievement and social adjustment. In the present study the intellectually impaired students in three of the five classes were required to leave their classrooms for remedial instruction on a daily basis. Two major problems with remedial programming were observed during this investigation:

First, the instruction received in remedial classes did not always assist the handicapped students in learning content delivered in the regular classroom. Remedial programming that is unrelated to the curriculum taught in class tends to be meaningless and likely to lead to frustration and boredom. It will also lead to an increase in the student's reliance on adult assistance and support. By contrast, observations during remedial classes in mathematics provided evidence that the instruction was directly related to the curriculum taught in class and assisted the students with their preparations for tests in mathematics.

Second, although the remedial program in mathematics appeared to be effective, the scheduling of the remedial sessions required the students to leave and enter the classroom while instruction was in progress. As a consequence it was difficult for students to follow the instructional sequence and to

understand and integrate the information presented by their teachers. In addition to being absent from class during vital instruction time these students were also deprived of the necessary time to complete class assignments, further adding to the frustration felt by the intellectually impaired students.

This investigation provided evidence that aspects of the educational support system may adversely affect social interaction and the formation of friendship among intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers. Instructional assistants form an integral component of most special education programs. Their expertise and support is required in implementing special programming and in supporting students in their efforts to function within the regular program. They can also play an important role by providing support for the classroom teacher who has to deal with additional problems caused by students with severe behaviour disorders. The academic programs for the intellectually impaired students in this study were planned by special education teachers who also acted as consultants to the classroom teachers. The burden of implementing the programs with the intellectually impaired students in one of the two schools rested entirely with the instructional assistants. The findings also provide evidence that the frequent and consistent support of instructional assistants affected the academic and social interaction patterns among intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in a number of ways. It was observed that the presence of instructional assistants had a detrimental effect on the academic and social status of the intellectually impaired students. Academic status has been identified as one of the major factors in the rejection or acceptance of handicapped students by their non-handicapped peers. The intellectually impaired students preferred to interact with non-judgmental, nurturing adults and had little motivation to interact with their non-handicapped peers when an adult was available. In the presence of an instructional assistants the students relied entirely on adults to fulfil their academic and social needs. The close and constant presence of an adult prevented social interaction between the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers by increasing the handicapped students' reliance on adults. This situation fosters "learned helplessness" and interferes with the educator's goal to foster self-reliance and independent work habits in handicapped students. "Learned Helplessness" consists of a lack of persistence and motivation and the inability to see efficacious solutions to problems. It is associated with poor school achievement, poor social competence, depression, and low self-esteem (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wolfsom, Mumme and Guskin, 1995). Furthermore, the decreasing need for helping and nurturing relationships between these students and their non-handicapped peers resulted in a decrease in interaction between the two groups.

Close proximity of adults was observed to preclude interaction among students during academic pursuits and in social situations. The non-handicapped peers were not interested in interacting with the handicapped students when an adult was present. Interaction among the intellectually impaired students and their peers in class was however observed during those times when the instructional assistant was absent. On these occasions VAL's, TINA's and STELLA's peers acted in a supportive manner toward them and they themselves frequently took the initiative to ask for help with their academic assignments. GARY left his own desk when the instructional assistant was absent and joined his friends Stefan, Ron and Frank to socialize at their table. The findings of this investigation indicate that the presence of an instructional assistant interferes with cooperative interaction among handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers by removing their need for help in their academic endeavours and in social situations.

NINA and KURT worked independently, without the support of an instructional assistant. Although both of these students had well developed study skills and were able to follow the regular program, they too relied exclusively on adults whenever adults were available. NINA relied heavily on the support of her teachers and KURT's reliance on adults was prominent in the gym, where he was observed playing with a student teacher rather than his peers. He was often observed sitting alone on a bench and his interactions with his peers were infrequent, of short duration, and restricted to demonstrating skills for them or having his peers demonstrate for him. These findings support the contention that intellectually impaired students have a predilection for interacting with adults. This preference for adult interaction is based on their educational background, educational status and perceptions about their abilities.

Most handicapped students require educational supports in order to function within an adapted regular academic curriculum. This support can also be provided by peers through peer tutoring, group projects and a cooperative learning environment within the classroom. Peer tutoring was frequently initiated by the teachers for three of the intellectually impaired students. Data gathered during participant observation in the classroom provide evidence that peer tutoring may lead to an increase in the interaction among intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers, and in many instances to friendship relations. Several effects of peer tutoring were observed during this investigation: KURT and TINA identified all their friendships as "best friend" relations, but they distinguished clearly between their complementary friendship relations with tutors and their mutually reciprocated friendships with peers of similar academic status. Peer tutoring was found effective in providing the help the intellectually impaired students needed to achieve academically. Although peer tutoring provided opportunities for social interaction and the formation of friendships among the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers, these friendships, however, were not mutually or consistently reciprocated by the tutors.

Home and community environments. The findings of this investigation confirm that a supportive home environment and access to appropriate community recreation are major factors in providing opportunities for intellectually impaired students to engage in recreational activities with their non-handicapped peers on a regular basis. These results support Rizzo's belief that, "a persistent pattern of interaction, enticing activities and mutual friends" are the necessary pre-requisites for satisfactory friendship relations (Rizzo, 1989:87).

VAL and KURT enjoyed very supportive home environments. VAL's foster parents frequently invited her friends to their home and to the cottage at weekends. KURT's parents encouraged KURT to invite his friends, although they did not approve of his friendship with Mark and would have preferred it if he had invited Bob more often.

The parents of TINA and STELLA were less concerned with providing a welcoming environment for friends, although TINA's mother took TINA and her friends to the cinema and STELLA's mother had no objections to her visiting and going out with her friends. Data gathered during observations may be interpreted to mean that the friendship relations of TINA and STELLA were less intimate and less satisfactory than those of VAL and KURT.

NINA's and GARY's foster mother and parents respectively did not encourage their children to invite their friends to their home. NINA's foster home environment was unsuited for visitors. GARY's mother was concerned about the type of friends GARY associated with and did not allow him to invite them to their home. GARY's mother was also very concerned about their "bad language" and forbade him to have his friends call and talk on the phone.

The findings indicate that VAL, STELLA and KURT took part in a variety of recreational activities with their friends and met on a regular basis at the local community centres. TINA's activities with her friends were restricted to visiting the shopping mall and the cinema. NINA's and GARY's parents, however, expressed concern about the apparent lack of suitable peers and recreational facilities within their area.

These results demonstrate that VAL had the greatest number of friends and the most diversified and satisfying friendship relations with her peers. While KURT nominated many friends in his neighbourhood, his friendships with his peers were less intimate than VAL's. STELLA and TINA enjoyed fewer and less intimate friendship relations with their peers and GARY had no friends in his neighbourhood. NINA had only one "best friend" Holly, with whom she met during lunch breaks and on the bus to and from school.

It appears that parents who support their children's efforts in initiating and maintaining friendships with their peers, by frequently inviting their friends to their home, welcoming their friends from school and providing opportunities for them to visit recreational centres on a regular basis, assist their children in securing satisfying and lasting friendship relations. In contrast, over-protectiveness tends to have the effect of limiting access to peers who have the potential of becoming friends.

In spite of their concerns about the lack of social acceptance and opportunities for their intellectually impaired children to establish mutually reciprocated friendship relations with their peers, every one of the parents involved in this study was highly supportive of mainstreaming. These parents expect their children to be integrated into their society, to lead independent and productive lives, enjoy satisfying social relationships and find economically viable employment.

The findings of this investigation support Kaufman, Agar and Semmel (1985), and Weber (1994), who have stressed the importance of taking into account aspects of the social environment when planning for integration. These researchers state that social aspects such as teacher behaviour, classroom composition and instructional conditions affect the socio-emotional climate of the classroom. The socio-emotional climate in turn has an important affect on social status, peer acceptance and cooperation among students, issues that are of major importance in the formation of mutually reciprocated friendship relations of long standing.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the investigation, including the problem, the theoretical and conceptual guidelines, the design and methodology, and the findings. The chapter concludes with a discussion of these findings within the theoretical framework provided by previous research, implications for further research, and implications for mainstreaming practices.

Summary of the Investigation

The arguments used to support the value of mainstreaming are based on three major assumptions: (1) physical placement of the handicapped students with their non-handicapped peers into mainstreamed classrooms will result in increased social interaction between these two groups, (2) physical placement of handicapped students with their non-handicapped peers will result in social acceptance, and (3) the handicapped students will imitate the behaviour of their non-handicapped peers (Bricker, 1978).

The Problem

Researchers, educators, and parents have expressed concern that present mainstreaming practices seem to result in the social isolation of handicapped students from their non-handicapped peers in class, and that social isolation prevents the handicapped students from making maximal social and academic progress in mainstreamed classrooms (Gresham, 1982, Gottlieb and Leyser, 1989; Schalock, 1990; Corsaro, 1994; Hughes and Lyles, 1994).

To address some of these concerns this investigation focused on the friendship patterns of intellectually impaired students in Junior High School classrooms, the perceptions these students have about friendship, and their relationships with their friends. The research also investigated the effects of the levels of friendship understanding and the effects of the mainstreamed environment on the ability of intellectually impaired students to form and maintain friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class.

In order to accomplish this task the researcher asked the following four questions: (1) Who are the friends of the intellectually impaired students? (2) What are the perceptions intellectually impaired students have about their friends? (3) What are the levels of friendship understanding of the intellectually impaired students and what is their effect on the ability of these students to form, and maintain friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class? Finally, (4) what are the effects of present mainstreaming practices on the social interaction patterns among intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers in Junior High School classrooms?

Review of the Literature

The literature review focused on research about attitudes and acceptance, the meaning of friendship, the development of friendship understanding, friendship in social settings, and social skills training. These studies provided the theoretical and conceptual framework for the present investigation.

Attitudes and acceptance. Research on attitudes theorized that casual contact increases, rather than dispels prejudice (Allport, 1986), and that only true acquaintance actually lessens prejudice and makes a change of attitudes likely. In his Contact Theory, Allport, (1960 and 1986) describes the major aspects of contact and acceptance. These aspects include status, role, social atmosphere, personality and social setting. He also describes the stages involved in establishing a relationship as moving from sheer contact to competition, accommodation, and lastly to assimilation (Allport, 1960 and 1986). Allport's theories on attitudes and acceptance were major factors in the establishment of the theoretical framework for this investigation.

Allport (1986) further stresses the importance of equal status contact in the pursuit of common goals, that will be greatly enhanced if the pursuits are sanctioned by institutional supports, and lead to common interests between groups. The deeper and more genuine the association, the greater its effects (Allport, 1986:489) and the greater the likelihood that social acceptance and friendship will result. The major focus of previous research on mainstreaming has been on attitudes toward and acceptance of handicapped students by the non-handicapped population (see Goodman, 1971; Gottlieb and Budoff, 1973, Berryman, 1989, Hayes, 1989). This research has established that attempts to integrate handicapped students into classrooms with their non-handicapped peers without physical and attitudinal supports are likely to be counter-productive and may have a negative effect on the realization of mainstreaming (Gresham, 1982; Hughes, 1985).

Research also provides evidence that classroom teachers and special education teachers who are in close contact with handicapped students tend to have less favourable attitudes toward mainstreaming than principals and special education administrators who are more distant from the actual process of

mainstreaming (Garvar-Pinhas and Schmelkin, 1989). A review of the literature on attitudes, social status, and social acceptance indicates that, although the attitudes of the general public may have become more accepting through media exposure, the attitudes of teachers and peers have in many instances become more negative through their close contact with handicapped students, and many parents are seriously concerned about the shortcomings of present mainstreaming practices.

The meaning of friendship. Friendship has been described as the most significant of the voluntary relationships (Corsaro, 1985), and has been identified as a major component in the acquisition of social knowledge (Corsaro, 1985, Rizzo, 1989). Interest in the study of friendship has been on the increase (see Rubin, 1980; Selman, 1980; Corsaro, 1985; and Rizzo, 1989) and researchers have identified dimensions and processes of friendship. The conceptual basis for the present investigation into friendship among handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers was established within the guidelines provided by these researchers.

Interest in the nature and extent of friendship among handicapped and non-handicapped persons is relatively new and provides a logical extension to previous research about attitudes, peer interaction, and social acceptance (see Bricker, 1978; Hughes 1985; Feuser and Meyer, 1986; Beckman and Kohl, 1987; and Eichinger, 1990). So far research into friendship between handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers has focused on the pre-school and primary school levels (Rubin, 1980; Corsaro, 1985; Hughes, 1985; and Rizzo, 1989). Very few studies have investigated friendships of handicapped adolescents and young adults in mainstreamed settings (see Matthews, 1986, Lutfiyya, 1989, Hughes and Lyles, 1994).

The development of friendship understanding. The processes used in the formation and maintenance of friendship undergo developmental changes similar to those involved in the development of cognition and social perspective-taking (see Piaget, 1952; Flavell, 1963; Beard, 1969; Brophy, 1977; Damon, 1977; and Wyer and Scrull, 1984). Children move from a self-centred orientation, seeing a friend as someone who is satisfying their wants and needs, to mutually satisfying relationships, and from momentary or transient good acts between individuals to relations that endure over time despite occasional conflicts.

Selman (1980) established stages of friendship understanding that closely resemble the five levels of social perspective-taking identified by Damon (1977) and Selman (1980). These stages include: Stage 0, momentary play situations based on proximity; Stage 1, one-way assistance with a focus on the child's own wishes; Stage 2, "fair-weather" cooperation that is situation-specific [friendships that are inconsistent across social situations] and the recognition of the reciprocity of relationships; Stage 3, mutually reciprocated, long-term relationships. Selman's stages of friendship formation provided the theoretical guidelines for the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data in this investigation.

Friendship in social settings. Researchers describe friendship as a social phenomenon whose meaning is negotiated during social interaction (see Rubin, 1980; Selman, 1980; Corsaro, 1985; and Rizzo, 1989). According to research, friendship perceptions and friendship behaviours differ across contexts and with regard to specific social situations (see Miller, 1976; Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985; and Weber, 1994). The socio-emotional climate of the classroom, teacher warmth and leadership, and the characteristics of the peer group have been identified as important indicators of status, social acceptance, and social interaction (Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985; Asher and Gottman, 1989).

Social skills training. Research also indicates that the handicapped students will not be accepted by and form friendships with their non-handicapped peers unless they can demonstrate behaviours that are deemed acceptable by those peers. Furman's (1984) "Model of Skill Components Underlying Overt Social Behaviour", provides a breakdown of important issues that need to be considered in regard to social competence. These include social perception, motivation, social knowledge, the behavioral repertoire, internal, and external feedback that will confirm the perceptions of the individual.

An area where major research has been undertaken with regard to mainstreaming practices, concerns the proliferation of social skills training programs for handicapped students (Spivack and Shure, 1974; Furman, 1984; Trower, 1984). These findings, however, demonstrate that social skills training programs intended to facilitate the social integration of handicapped students have had little effect on attitudes and acceptance, and no observable effect on the formation of friendships among these students and their non-handicapped peers (Trower, 1984; and Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985).

Research in the 1990's has been mainly concerned with age and gender differences. Researchers have stressed the importance of taking into account the age and gender of the handicapped students when making placement decisions (Feiring and Lewis, 1991; Adler, Kless, and Adler, 1992). In addition, Weber (1994) lists social and educational aspects of the mainstreamed classroom as important issues that need to be addressed by future researchers. These aspects of the mainstreamed classroom include the social climate of the classroom, teacher and student characteristics, peer composition, and educational programming practices. These aspects concur with the theoretical guidelines provided by Furman (1984) and Allport (1986).

The Methodology

Under this heading the design of the study, the methods used to collect, categorize, analyze, and interpret the data, are presented. In addition, the characteristics of the population are summarized.

Research design. A qualitative research design (see Wolcott, 1975; Erickson, 1977; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982; and Ellen, 1984) was used to investigate the patterns of and perceptions about friendship of intellectually impaired students and their peers, and the friendship understanding and behaviours

demonstrated by these students in a number of social settings. A qualitative research design and the use of ethnographic research methods enabled the researcher to understand the meaning that the students in this investigation attached to their friendships within specific social situations, and interpret their reactions in that light.

Research methods. The ethnographic methods used in this investigation (see Crane and Angrosino, 1974; Spradley, 1979 and 1980; Selman, 1980; and Burgess, 1982 and 1984) included participant observation - or when this was not possible, just observation (Spradley, 1980) -- in a number of social settings. During these observations interviews were conducted and questionnaires, socio-metric tests, and written essays were completed. Selman's (1980) Friendship Domains Interview, in conjunction with Rubin's (1980), Corsaro's (1985), and Rizzo's (1989) dimensions and processes of friendship formation, provided the theoretical basis for the development of the interview guides and friendship questionnaires. Selman's (1980) Issue-by-Stage Manual: Principal Analysis, provided the guidelines for the analysis of the data.

The population. The focus in this research were six intellectually impaired students in five mainstreamed Junior High School classrooms. Intellectual impairment meant that these students were functioning at least two or more years below grade level requirements and required alternative programming. These students were identified as the primary subjects of this investigation. Also included were the parents, the classmates, and the nominated friends of the primary subjects. The nominated friends of the primary subjects were identified as the secondary subjects in this study.

The Findings

The findings were presented under the following headings: The Patterns of Friendship, Perceptions about Friendship, The Levels of Friendship Understanding, and Social Aspects of Mainstream Environments.

The patterns of friendship. This investigation resulted in three important findings regarding the friendship patterns of intellectually impaired students in mainstreamed Junior High School classrooms: (1) although the intellectually impaired students had approximately the same number of best-friend relationships as their non-handicapped peers in class, they had a much smaller number of friends; (2) the intellectually impaired students formed different types of friendship relations with their peers, these included reciprocated, compensatory, and mutually reciprocated friendships; and (3) the distribution of the friendships of intellectually impaired students differed from that of their non-handicapped peers in class. The most important finding in this investigation was that intellectually impaired students did not form intimate, mutually reciprocated friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class. These students did, however, form mutually reciprocated friendships with handicapped and non-handicapped peers who were not in their own class.

Perceptions about friendship. The investigation indicates that the abstract perceptions intellectually impaired students have about friendship are similar to those held by their non-handicapped peers in class. The findings further indicate a discrepancy between the perceptions intellectually impaired students have about the abstract meaning of friendship and their actual friendship relations with their peers. The abstract meaning of friendship and the perceptions about actual friendship relationships of the non-handicapped peers in class did not show this discrepancy. This discrepancy between abstract meaning and the perceptions about actual friendships of the intellectually impaired students supports the assumption that although these students have a similar interpretation of the meaning of friendship, they have fewer and frequently very different expectations of their friends than their non-handicapped peers.

The levels of friendship understanding. The findings demonstrate that the intellectually impaired students generally scored one stage below that indicated by Selman (1980) for students of the same age group. The findings also indicate that the majority of the friends nominated by the intellectually impaired students functioned at a similar level of friendship understanding. It appears, however, that for some students the level of friendship understanding was higher than would be expected by their level of academic functioning. This discrepancy also applied to the nominated friends and to some of the non-handicapped peers and was found to be more or less pronounced within the process dimensions of friendship formation and conflict resolution.

These findings provide evidence that the problems intellectually impaired students encounter in the mainstream classroom cannot sufficiently be explained by their level of academic functioning, or their level of friendship understanding. A delay in language development may be partly responsible for the low ratings of the intellectually impaired students, making it more difficult for these students to express their perceptions and feelings. The findings of this investigation indicate that aspects of the social environment play an equally important role in providing opportunities for intellectually impaired students to interact with and form friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class.

Social aspects of mainstream environments. The investigation took into account the social environments of the mainstreamed classroom, the home and the community of the intellectually impaired students. The findings provide evidence that there are a number of personal, social, and educational aspects within the mainstreamed classroom that affect the patterns of and perceptions about friendship of intellectually impaired students in Junior High School classrooms and their ability to form and maintain friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class. These aspects included personal attributes, educational background and academic standing of the intellectually impaired students, the composition of the peer group, educational programming practices, and educational supports.

Personal attributes and prolonged exposure to special education programming appear to affect not only the social status of intellectually impaired students, but also their social experiences and perceptions upon which their needs and their expectations about friendship are based. Their needs and expectations determine the patterns of friendship -- the number, type and distribution of friendships established between intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers.

The special education status also seemed to affect the academic and social status of the intellectually impaired students. The findings indicate that the effect of the special education status was more pronounced with regard to the female intellectually impaired students than the males. The female students formed mainly compensatory friendships for tutoring purposes with non-handicapped classmates, whereas the male students also formed friendships for companionship and the sharing of recreational interests with their classmates. Not one of these friendships, however, was mutually reciprocated by their non-handicapped peers.

The findings further indicate that aspects of the social environment, such as the characteristics and composition of the peer group seem to be important considerations when placing handicapped students in a mainstreamed classroom setting. The intellectually impaired students in this study derived little benefit from being placed with peers who demonstrated consistent behavioral, academic and social difficulties. The findings also indicate that classroom organization -- for example the seating arrangements -- seemed to play an important role in increasing the frequency of social interaction between handicapped and non-handicapped students.

The aspects of programming practices, particularly the implementation of individual program plans, also played an important part in facilitating social interaction among students. The most advantageous practice observed was that of implementing the regular curriculum taught to all students in class and adapting this curriculum to suit the individual needs and strengths of all students in that class, including those of the intellectually impaired student. This practice provided students with a common knowledge base, allowed all students to participate at their own level of ability, and provided opportunities for students to interact purposefully and work cooperatively with others. Cooperation and working toward common goals seemed to provide a social environment that facilitated social interaction and increased the likelihood of friendship.

The findings further indicate that social interaction and cooperation between the handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers in class were at a minimum when an adult, such as an instructional assistant, was present and involved with the student. Support, cooperation, and reciprocal interaction seemed to increase when the adult was not present and the intellectually impaired students joined their non-handicapped peers to ask for help, and when the non-handicapped peers joined the intellectually impaired

students to give them directions and support. Peer tutoring also tended to increase interaction and cooperation between the two groups, although these relationships only existed during the time of tutoring.

The research further suggested that a supportive home environment that encourages frequent visits by friends and provides access to enjoyable activities as well as encouraging the sharing of academic interests, seems to facilitate the formation and maintenance of friendships. The findings also suggest that access to community facilities and recreational programming play a major part in providing an additional pool of peers with whom the intellectually impaired students can share activities on a regular basis and form long-term, mutually reciprocated friendships.

Discussion of the Findings

Under this heading the researcher discusses: the findings of this investigation in the light of the theoretical and conceptual framework provided by related research that focused on aspects of mainstreaming, theories about attitudes and acceptance, the meaning of friendship, the developmental aspects of friendship, and issues of friendship in social settings. In addition, the implications of the findings on future research, and their implications on present mainstreaming practices are discussed.

Findings and Theory

Advocates of mainstreaming claim that research supports mainstreaming as the preferred and most beneficial method of providing services for all handicapped students, regardless of the type, or severity, of their handicapping conditions (Bricker, 1978). An examination of the literature has revealed that this, in most instances, is not the case (Gresham, 1982). The findings of the present study also confirm that -- at least at the Junior High School level -- mainstreaming practices do not meet the assumptions made by its advocates. These findings support Allport's Contact Theory (1960 and 1986) stating that, to be maximally effective, contact and acquaintance programs should lead to a sense of equality in social status. Contact should occur in ordinary and purposeful pursuits, avoid artificiality, and if possible enjoy the sanction of the community in which they occur. Allport states that: "the deeper and more genuine the association, the greater its effect" (Allport, 1986:489).

Proximity alone, therefore, can have an adverse effect on attitudes and acceptance, unless it is accompanied by a genuine, close and meaningful relationship. The purpose of the present research was to identify and investigate such meaningful, close relationships -- the friendship patterns of the intellectually impaired students at the Junior High School level -- and to discover the meaning these students attached to friendship. In addition, the researcher made an attempt to establish the levels of friendship understanding

of these students, and the effects of the levels of understanding and the social aspects within the mainstreamed classroom on the ability of intellectually impaired students to form and maintain friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class.

The patterns of friendship. The intellectually impaired students who took part in this investigation, although not actively rejected by their non-handicapped peers, were certainly ignored by them for most of the time. Their friendships with classmates were few in number and not mutually reciprocated by the non-handicapped peers in class. The intellectually impaired students categorized most of their friendships as best friend relationships, regardless of whether or not the relationships were reciprocated mutually or consistently by their nominated friends. When interviewed, however, a distinction was made between best friends or buddies and friends who were in a nurturing or helping relationship with these students. Mussen (1984) stated that both types of friendship are legitimate. He described them as mutually reciprocated friendships for companionship, and as complementary or compensatory friendships that fulfil specific needs for each of the partners involved in the relationship. He continues, however, to say that most persons find both types of friendship within one and the same relationship. The findings of the present research indicate that the intellectually impaired students were aware of their need to form compensatory as well as intimate friendship relations and chose friends among their peers in class who were able to fulfil their need for academic and social support. The intellectually impaired students were also aware of the lack of intimacy, trust, and reciprocity they enjoyed through their friendships with peers in their class and found it necessary to search for intimate, mutually reciprocated friendships of long standing with peers outside their classroom. The intellectually impaired students in this study, therefore, looked for the two attributes of friendship in separate friendship relations with different peers.

The discovery that this dichotomy within the types of friendship also applied to some of the nominated friends of the intellectually impaired students -- including those students who held a high academic status and were in a tutoring relationship with the handicapped students -- supports the assumption that friendships are formed to fulfil a wide variety of needs, ranging from the need for companionship and the need for helping and nurturing relationships to a need of being supportive and finding expression for altruistic feelings (Mussen, 1984). In addition to the two types of friendship relations established by the intellectually impaired students, they also nominated friends in class who provided them with companionship. These friendships, however, were never reciprocated mutually by their non-handicapped peers in class.

The findings of this investigation indicate that, although the female intellectually impaired students formed about the same number of best friend relationships -- friendships that were mutually and consistently reciprocated by these friends -- as their non-handicapped peers, these friendships were established exclusively with peers outside their own classroom. The male intellectually impaired students, however, had

no intimate, mutually reciprocated friendships either with their peers in class or outside the classroom, although they often mentioned having had such relationships in previous school settings. In their case the best friend category seemed to be more loosely applied to peers in class with whom the male students shared a similar academic functioning level, remedial programming, and interests in sports. Their friends provided companionship, educational, and social supports, but they did not reciprocate the friendship mutually or consistently over time.

Studies about the effects of social and academic status on acceptance and the formation of friendship (see Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985; Allport, 1986; Asher and Coie, 1990; Adler, Kless and Adler, 1992; and Roberts and Zubrick, 1992) provide several explanations for these findings. One of the explanations for this gender-related phenomenon relates to the academic and social status of these students. The female students' focus on academic achievement and social competence and their subsequent rejection of students with a low academic status, reduced the likelihood of intimate friendships between the intellectually impaired student and their non-handicapped peers in class. The male students' focus on sports and physical rather than academic interests, made it more likely for the males of the intellectually impaired students to find acceptance with those peers in class whose academic standing and social behaviour were similar to, and whose interests in sports coincided with their own. Again, these friendships were not mutually reciprocated by the non-handicapped peers in class.

The finding that intellectually impaired students, in most instances, formed intimate, mutually reciprocated friendships exclusively with students of a similar educational background and status who also shared recreational interests and mutual friends, are supported by previous research (see Sipperstein and Chatillon, 1982; Corsaro, 1985; Allport, 1986; and Rizzo, 1989), indicating that children form close friendships with peers who have a similar status and interests.

Research also indicates that friendships develop over time, during which children get to know and like each other (Selman, 1980; Rizzo, 1989). The intellectually impaired students' lack of intimate, mutually reciprocated, long-term friendship relations with their classmates was also observed with non-handicapped peers who had moved between schools, resulting in the termination of previously established friendships. A change of schools, particularly at the Junior High School level, without the possibility of retaining long-term and intimate friendships established during the primary years, can be expected to be detrimental to the social adjustment of most students. All the intellectually impaired students in this investigation were in such a position and so were some of their nominated friends. As a result of their special education placement, handicapped students encounter this situation far more frequently than their non-handicapped peers.

The findings further indicate that the intellectually impaired students had far fewer friends than the non-handicapped peers in class. The non-handicapped peers in the five classrooms nominated an average of fifteen friends among the peers in their class, the intellectually impaired students and their nominated friends, averaged only one or two friends. This lack of friendships in general was one of the most obvious differences between the friendship patterns of the intellectually impaired students and their nominated friends, on the one hand, and their non-handicapped peers in class, on the other hand, providing evidence that the handicapped students were, if not actively rejected, were at best ignored by their non-handicapped peers in class.

The meaning of friendship. The findings indicate that mutually reciprocated friendships are formed between students who have similar characteristics, a similar academic status, and similar interests. Previous research indicated that the closer the match between the perceptions about friendship and the characteristics of the peers available as friends, the more meaningful the friendship will be (Selman, 1980; Corsaro, 1985; Allport, 1986; and Rizzo, 1989). The findings of this investigation further indicate that the perceptions of the intellectually impaired students appeared to be based on their past experiences in special education settings, their needs and expectations resulting from their special education background, and the needs inherent in their present special education placement. These students, therefore, chose friends among peers in class to form helping and nurturing relationships, as well as peers with similar experiences and recreational interests among peers who were not peers in their class with whom they formed mutually reciprocated friendships. These findings concur with the theoretical concepts provided by Mussen (1982) and Furman (1984).

In addition, the discrepancy found between the intellectually impaired students' abstract perception about friendship and their perceptions about actual friendships presents a difference between perceptions and expectations that was not prevalent among the non-handicapped students. The difference in perceptions and expectations may be interpreted as being the result of previous experiences in special education settings and prove to be a positive adaptation to the specific demands of the present social environment rather than a measure of deficit in social adjustment. These findings support Allport's theory that: "what people think of us is bound to some degree to fashion what we are" (Allport, 1986:159). The interpretation of this phenomenon is also congruent with the concepts and measurement of "quality of life", provided by Brown (1988) and Schalock (1990). These researchers indicate that "quality of life" can be equated to the differences that exist between abstract expectations and actual behaviours possible within specific social settings. The next logical step, therefore, was to investigate the levels of friendship understanding of the intellectually impaired students and the social environment of their mainstreamed classroom, in order to establish the effects of these issues on the friendship patterns of these students.

The levels of friendship understanding. Researchers have stressed the importance of the developmental aspects and of the relationships between intelligence, social cognition, social perspective taking and friendship understanding, particularly in regard to the formation of social relationships and the formation of friendships (see Piaget, 1952; Flavell, 1963; Damon, 1977; and Selman, 1980). Gottlieb and Leyser (1989:150) suggest that intellectually impaired students show few qualitative differences in their social needs, social perceptions and social behaviours, and that "any differences would be a matter of degree rather than substance". Allport (1986) emphasized the importance of cognitive processes in the perception, selection, and interpretation of social situations. These processes include the ability to anticipate reality, remembering social events, perceiving, judging and planning -- processes that require reasoning and directed thinking. Intellectually impaired students tend to be lacking in these meta-cognitive strategies. This important role played by meta-cognitive strategies in the development of social competence has also been emphasized by Melson (1989).

Although the findings of the present study tend to support previous research, the issue seems to be much more complex than suggested by previous findings. The complexity of this issue has, however, been described by Furman (1984) in his "Model of Skill Components Underlying Overt Social Behaviour". The intellectually impaired students in the present investigation tended to function approximately one level -- as established by Selman's (1980) stages of friendship perception -- below that of their non-handicapped peers in class. Their levels of friendship understanding also varied considerably within the individual process dimension under investigation. The intellectually impaired students, for example, demonstrated a high level of abstract understanding of friendship and had an extensive repertoire of initiation skills. The findings also indicate that although these students made more friendship bids than their non-handicapped peers in class, these bids were frequently not successful. Again, this phenomenon may be attributed to the fact that they had moved from previous special education classes without their friends and were, therefore, more anxious to make new friends than were their non-handicapped peers in class. Whether their frequent failures to establish friendships were a result of their level of friendship understanding, their special education status, or the problems inherent in breaking into established friendship circles -- or cliques -- at the Junior High School level, or a combination of these factors, remains unanswered by this investigation and requires further study.

The intellectually impaired students, however, seemed very aware of the difficulties involved in establishing and maintaining intimate friendships and were very concerned about losing their friends through conflicts. In addition, these students also demonstrated the greatest deficits in the area of conflict resolution. They expressed a general reluctance to deal with conflict and frequently tried to deny or minimize conflict situations. A number of their non-handicapped peers in class and their nominated friends, however,

demonstrated similar attributes. In many instances these students found it easier to give in or ignore conflicts within their friendship relations, rather than risk terminating the relationship.

Again this issue appears to be more complicated than assigning a level of friendship understanding to these students. Their past experiences in special education settings and their present social situation in which they had to establish new friendships despite the difficulties inherent in their special education status, may partially explain their lack of enthusiasm in solving conflicts within their friendship relations and their fear of losing their friends by being too assertive. These perceptions and behaviours indicate a very low level of friendship understanding with attendant difficulties in social awareness and a lack of social skills. They may, however, also prove to be representative of a realistic adjustment or adaptation to the demands of the present social situations in which these students find themselves.

Although the friends of the intellectually handicapped students showed a similar reluctance to enter conflict, the data provided by the non-handicapped peers in class demonstrated that the non-handicapped students were in command of, and applied a more comprehensive repertoire of, conflict resolution skills. They also were more assertive and frequently employed humour or physical altercations to settle their interpersonal difficulties, without fear of the consequences. Research suggests that the handicapped students will not be accepted by their non-handicapped peers unless they demonstrate behaviours that are acceptable by their peers. Allport (1986) further explains, however, that: "A minor offence, overlooked in a member of our own group, seems intolerable when committed by a member of an out group".

A great deal of research has dealt with social skills training for handicapped students in order to minimize their deficits in social competence, yet much of that research suggests that social skills training programs, as well as programs providing these students with interpersonal problem solving skills, have not always proven successful in increasing social interaction among and acceptance of handicapped students by their non-handicapped peers (Spivack and Shure, 1974; Furman, 1984, Trower, 1984; and Kaufman, Agar and Semmel, 1985). Furthermore, these researchers found no evidence that social skills training programs facilitate the development of friendship among handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers in class.

The findings of the present study indicate that levels of academic performance and friendship understanding are important factors in determining the ability of intellectually impaired students to form and maintain friendships with their non-handicapped peers in class, mainly because they tend to have an effect on the academic and social status of these students. Their academic status, in turn, seemed to affect their acceptance by the non-handicapped peers in their class and, therefore, the number, type, and distribution of their friendship relations with peers. The intellectually impaired students who took part in this study found it necessary to fulfil their need for intimacy and companionship by choosing friends among peers of

similar educational background, academic status, and recreational interests from among the total school population, rather than among their non-handicapped peers in class. Their level of academic functioning also had an effect on the need for these students to establish compensatory friendships with those of their non-handicapped peers in class who would provide educational supports.

Friendship in social settings. Friendships are formed during social interaction, while children engage in enjoyable and meaningful activities with their peers on a regular basis (Corsaro, 1985). Allport states that intimate relationships are formed in the pursuit of common goals, and that personality and environmental factors are equally important in facilitating the formation of friendships (Allport, 1986:280). The findings of the present study indicate that special education programming practices, classroom management procedures, the characteristics of the peer group, and the use of educational supports seem to be of major importance in the implementation of mainstreaming practices. These findings concur with research conducted by Kaufman, Agard and Semmel (1985) and Weber (1994).

The findings of this investigation suggest that in those classrooms where special education programs were based on a common curriculum and adapted to the needs of individual students, social interaction among the students appeared to be greater than in classes where the intellectually impaired students were on individual programs that were not based on the curriculum used by their non-handicapped peers. Separate special education programming tended to affect the academic status of the intellectually impaired students, decreased their opportunities for sharing and collaboration, and decreased the necessity for interaction based on nurturing or helping relationships with their non-handicapped peers. These findings concur with Allport's (1986) assumption, that the existence of a common goal and shared activities sanctioned by a social group, are important factors in the formation of meaningful relationships.

The findings also suggest that classroom management, particularly the arrangement of seating and location of equipment, has an effect on the social interaction patterns of the handicapped students. Interaction between the two groups occurred on a regular basis in those classrooms where seating arrangements were flexible or where the intellectually impaired students sat among the non-handicapped students in class. Whereas interaction was minimal in classrooms where the intellectually impaired students were separated from the non-handicapped students and placed in an area shared only by the instructional assistants.

Observation of the remedial classes provided for the intellectually impaired students and some of their classmates raised several issues concerning remedial programming. Several of these issues were investigated by Sheare (1978). The findings of the present investigation indicate that in those instances where the remedial program facilitated participation in regular classroom activities and enhanced the academic performance of the intellectually impaired students with regard to the curriculum taught in class, social

status, interaction and the formation of friendships seemed to increase. This result was more pronounced when remedial programming occurred in a group setting. The male students attending remedial programs formed friendships, albeit not mutually reciprocated friendships, with those of their classmates who also attended these programs. Little effect was observed as far as the female students were concerned.

The importance of the composition of the peer group has been stressed by several researchers (Duck and Gilmour, 1981; Kaufman, Agard and Semmel, 1985; and Weber, 1994). The peer groups in two of the classrooms were composed of transient students, non-English-speaking students, and students with severe social, academic, and behavioral difficulties. In one instance this provided a barrier to interaction. In the second classroom interaction occurred between the intellectually impaired student and some of the students of low academic achievement who also exhibited behaviour problems. Supportive, helping, and nurturing relationships between the intellectually impaired students and their non-handicapped peers did not exist in these classrooms. Friendship bids were rejected and those friendships that prevailed were not reciprocated by the classmates.

Educational supports were provided in part by instructional assistants for four of the six students who were intellectually impaired. Three of these students also received educational support through peer tutoring that was in some instances initiated by the teacher and in some instances voluntarily provided by non-handicapped peers in class. The findings indicate that the presence of an adult prevented interaction among the handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers, whereas the peer tutoring relationships resulted in friendships, but only during the tutoring periods. These friendships based on tutoring were not mutually reciprocated by the non-handicapped peers. Indications were that the presence of an instructional assistant not only emphasized the special education status of the intellectually impaired students, it also made it unnecessary for these students to interact, in order to ask for and receive academic and social support from their non-handicapped classmates. In addition, the continued presence of supportive adults seemed to prevent the handicapped students from developing independence and self-esteem. Low academic status, a lack of self-esteem, and a lack of necessity for interaction made it particularly difficult for these students to form friendships with their peers in class.

Implications for Research

Previous research has focused mainly on friendship between handicapped and non-handicapped children at the Primary School level. Social perspective-taking, social interaction patterns, and social needs and expectations of adolescent students at the Junior High School level, and of young adults at the High School level, differ considerably from those of the younger children that have been the focus of previous research.

Age and grade level. The review of the literature on mainstreaming and the findings provided by this investigation indicate that the implementation of mainstreaming will benefit from further research into the numerous social and environmental issues that are involved in the process of providing educational services for handicapped adolescent students. For example, additional research is needed to investigate the major issues related to social interaction patterns and the formation of friendships between intellectually impaired students in Junior High School classrooms -- research at the macro level that will include a larger number of subjects and settings. Research is also needed at the micro-level to gather detailed and more precise information about individual issues that have been identified as relevant to the social aspects of mainstreaming at the Junior High School level.

Type and severity of the handicap. The present study has provided data relating to Junior High School students who were identified as intellectually impaired. Intellectual impairment was interpreted as a mild to moderate level of mental retardation without physical disabilities or behavioral disorders. The findings of this study cannot, therefore, be generalized to students with handicapping conditions that differ in type and degree of severity. The research suggests, however, that for more seriously disadvantaged children the aspects of personal characteristics and the social environment in mainstreamed classrooms will have far more serious consequences than those indicated by the findings of the present study.

Longitudinal and comparative studies. There is also a need for longitudinal studies that will establish whether social and academic gains made by students in mainstream environments at the Primary levels continue when these students enter mainstreamed Junior High and High School classes. Such studies will also provide information as to the success of mainstreaming practices in preparing handicapped students for a productive adult life within their community. Comparative studies will be helpful in comparing the social and academic benefits these students derive from educational services offered in settings that represent different levels or types of integration (Guralnick and Groom, 1988).

Implications for Mainstreaming

Special interest groups are presently shaping the attitudes of the media to accept mainstreaming as the natural placement for all handicapped students. Largely due to the idea's moral appeal and image, the media, politicians, and high-level educational bureaucrats have been won over and the idea of mainstreaming appears to be on its way to becoming official policy. Weber (1994) indicated that once universally mandated and implemented, practical implications are bound to resurface since mainstreaming will not produce the same results in an educational macrocosm that it did in the microcosm of isolated experiments and pilot projects. He further suggests that the failure of mainstreaming practices is never attributed to expecting more of the idea than it could deliver, or to the idea's own image protecting it from rational analysis or empirical

evaluation, but rather to faulty strategies, inadequate resources, and unwilling or ill-prepared teachers.

Although the present study has resulted in more questions than answers to the social problems faced by intellectually impaired students in mainstreamed Junior High School classrooms, it is hoped that the findings will result in greater awareness of special educators, parents, and researchers concerning the academic and social needs of handicapped students, and the complexity of the problems inherent in the implementation of mainstreaming. Hopefully, these questions will also encourage further research in this area.

Parents, advocates for mainstreaming, and special educators need to be aware of the shortcomings of our present system and the possibility that they will have to provide alternatives to the services presently provided for handicapped students. The results of this investigation also suggest that the implementation of mainstreaming becomes increasingly more complex as students reach the Junior High School level and that mainstreaming practices tend to become less successful at this level. There are numerous personal, social, and educational programming changes that handicapped students must face at the Junior High School level and many of these changes appear to have a detrimental effect on their being mainstreamed successfully. The assumption that these difficulties will increase further at the High School level also needs to be investigated.

It may further be assumed, that the difficulties faced by intellectually impaired students -- functioning at the mildly to moderately retarded level -- will increase dramatically when mainstreaming is implemented with students who present more severe types and levels of disabilities. The findings of previous research on mainstreaming (Howarth, 1983) and the findings of the present study indicate that alternatives to our present mainstreaming practices will have to be considered if all handicapped students are to achieve the quality of life advocated by the supporters of mainstreaming (Brown, 1988; Schalock, 1990).

Unfortunately, until alternative services can be made available -- services that will deal more successfully with the academic and social needs of handicapped students with varying types and levels of severity of handicapping conditions -- it will be necessary to search for solutions that can at least ameliorate, if not remedy the present difficulties these students have to face in mainstreamed classrooms. Previous research has provided a number of suggestions that have practical implications for mainstreaming. Unfortunately educators seem to be unfamiliar with the implications of these findings or unable to put the suggestions into practice because of a lack of professional training and administrative supports.

The findings of the present investigation provide useful information on how to improve mainstreaming practices with regard to intellectually impaired students at the Junior High School level. This information may lead to an increase in the awareness of educators with regard to the specific needs, perceptions, and expectations intellectually impaired students have of friendship, and an understanding of the underlying

reasons for their friendship behaviours. Awareness about the problems these students face in mainstreamed classrooms will make it more likely that alternative practices may be used that can deal more effectively with the problems of these students.

The findings also suggest that the focus on content rather than the processes of learning, that seems prevalent in educational programming at the Junior High School level, makes it even more difficult to provide an integrated program with adequate academic and social supports, and environmental and curricular adaptations for handicapped students. The implementation of separate educational programs does not foster social interaction, cooperation, or the formation of friendships between the handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers in class. An integrated program, based on the curriculum taught to all students in class, reduces the stigma of academic status and provides a common knowledge base that encourages interaction, and the sharing of academic goals and social interests among all students. Allport theorized that: "lacking a common, objective, contact may lead to frustration or even antagonism (Allport, 1986:489). An integrated program, however, also becomes progressively more difficult to implement as the severity of the handicapping condition of students increases.

The findings further indicate that the composition of the peer group has to be taken into consideration when making placement decisions for handicapped students. It is more likely that a handicapped student will receive academic and social supports within a peer group that includes students with a variety of academic and social abilities and backgrounds. Such a peer group will be more likely to include students who are able and willing to provide academic and social supports for the handicapped student. A group of students with diverse abilities and interests is also more likely to include students of similar background, ability, and interests with whom the handicapped student can form more intimate and mutually reciprocated friendships. Such help and companionship, however, will not be forthcoming if classroom management and programming are based on competitive practices rather than cooperative practices.

In addition, special education students frequently require educational supports to function within a mainstreamed classroom. The findings of this study suggest that teachers need more autonomy in establishing the job descriptions of educational support staff. Assigning instructional assistants to one student in class can be detrimental to the academic and social development of that student and may ignore the needs of other students in class. This practice also interferes with social interaction, the development of independence, and has a detrimental effect on the academic and social status of the handicapped student. Greater autonomy will enable teachers to employ educational support staff in areas that will derive the most benefit for all students in class. Furthermore, educational supports provided by non-handicapped peers in class seem to have none of these detrimental effects. This practice appears to increase interaction, awareness and understanding, and may encourage acceptance among both groups of students.

Finally, the findings of this study indicate that, due to the problems inherent in present mainstreaming practices, the involvement of home and community is even more essential in providing handicapped students at the Junior High School level with an environment that allows them to meet with their friends and share activities, interests, and concerns on a regular basis. Activities and programs that are accessible to handicapped students and their non-handicapped peers alike, provide an additional pool of peers from which these students can choose their friends. Opportunities for social interaction, and the sharing of enjoyable activities and recreational interests, will support handicapped students in their efforts to establish meaningful, mutually reciprocated, friendship with their peers. The provision of such opportunities may go a long way toward the realization of the assumptions held by the advocates of the mainstreaming movement and those persons concerned with the issues of quality of life for handicapped people.

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