

**Special Education Service Delivery in a Provincial Jurisdiction:
First Nations Perspectives for an Interdependent and Inclusive Model
of Student Support Services for Band Operated Schools in Manitoba**

by

Curtis D. Mallett

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology

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Of

Master of Education

Curtis D. Mallet @ 2008

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Abstract

In this inquiry, I use a critical ethnography approach to study student support services within a Nursery to Grade 5 school under provincial jurisdiction. The purpose of this study is to form a conceptual framework of how school-based and school board type models of student support services may be consolidated within K-12 First Nation schools systems. Student support services need to be organized in order to best address both the underlying causes of systemic problems as well as ameliorate the symptoms that manifest as low and unacceptable educational outcomes for on-reserve students. In this thesis, informed by a review of the literature on colonialism and special education constructs, I propose that interdependent and holistic systems of school administration and organization are necessary for First Nation schools to indigenize and de-colonize student support systems in order to improve student learning outcomes. In the final chapter, I synthesize the perceptions of the informants to examine the extent of the interdependent administrative and programming aspects of this provincial model. I also use this synthesis to reorient service delivery, construct meaning, and describe implications for band operated schools. I have attempted to frame my discourse on de-colonization within a First Nation epistemology of research methods and based on a First Nation ontology on neo-colonial schooling.

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Acknowledgements

This journey of learning has been a self-actualizing experience for me, given the need to reconcile the cross-cultural tensions of university requirements and First Nations perspectives. The broad nature of this systemic study, as well, required a careful analysis and interpretation of all the complex and interrelated socioeconomic and political issues that affect First Nations education and band operated schools.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Richard Freeze for his invaluable feedback, as well as my graduation committee, Dr. Clea Schmidt, and Dr. Laara Fitznor for providing resources and guidance. I would like to acknowledge the senior administration of the Manitoba First Nation Nations Education Resource Centre, Inc. and the staff of the Fisher River Cree Nation Education Authority for their support and for their vision for First Nation education in Manitoba. I would especially like to thank the participants who volunteered their time and wonderful insights and feedback for this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, Jennifer and Sherry, for their understanding and patience as I pursued this personal and professional goal. Ekosani.

Preface

Overview and Organization

In the introductory chapter, I state the purpose of the study, describe the research question in relation to the study's purpose and underlying assumptions, as well as provide background information and current context for K-12 First Nation schools. In chapter 2, I outline definitions and assumptions around First Nations' identity, student support services and inclusive education, including a deconstruction of current First Nation, federal and provincial special education service delivery. In this chapter, I also provide a rationale and political context based on an interpretation of First Nation system needs and capacity development for the development of a First Nation regional managing organization for student support services. I include also in this chapter (and in the following chapter) an explanation of some of the historical problems indigenous peoples and researchers have had with colonial assumptions, research methodologies, and Western epistemologies around education and schooling.

A review of the literature on First Nation special education, sources of which are somewhat limited, is integrated throughout my thesis and summarized in chapter 3. Chapter 3 continues to outline regional and national

First Nations' educational challenges and their colonial, social, and political origins and implications. In chapter 4, I provide a school and community profile, discuss qualitative methodology and research design, as well as protocol for conducting research in First Nation communities. Finally, in chapter 4, I report, summarize, analyze, and provide an interpretation of the research data in relation to critical ethnography, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the previous research and scholarship.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Purpose

I conducted this study and used informants' perceptions and opinions to 1) formulate a critical understanding of the underlying social, political and systemic issues affecting inclusive special education programming and service delivery in band operated schools and provincial schools; 2) uncover and describe factors that may contribute to, or hinder, the interdependence between K-12 general and special education and; 3) use this understanding to describe a conceptual framework for the reorientation and coordination of student support services in band operated schools. Student support services usually include multiple layers of supports for high and low incidence special needs¹.

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the aspects of a provincial hybrid² model of student support services which may be consolidated and reconciled with First Nation contexts to increase the effectiveness of band operated student support systems. This is not to say, however, that an understanding of the historical failure of

¹ Low incidence and high incidence special needs delineate less and more frequent occurrences of disability in the general population (Manitoba Education, 2000).

² This hybrid school is jointly governed by the First Nation, a provincial school division, and the Federal government.

past colonial educational systems on First Nations is not important or should be discounted. This study examines with a critical lens, a process which is more detailed in the methods section, and from a student support perspective and an inclusive philosophy the pieces of the puzzle that make up the big picture of on-reserve K-12 education. A major piece of the puzzle is the historical impact colonialism has had on the educational underachievement of First Nation students.

By contextualizing and enhancing administration of inclusive student supports, First Nation schools may help to address some of the underlying causes of systemic problems as well as treat their symptoms, which manifest as poor academic performance and poor social-emotional adjustment for many students (Gillespie & Murdock, 2001; Grant, 2001; Proactive, 1999). Because these root causes may partially stem from school-based and organizational issues, an assumption for this study is that student problems do not reside solely within the student; they may reside within and be a function of systems within our schools. Moreover, special education service delivery, the system intended to mediate more success for underachieving students is, in the opinion of some, the area of mainstream schooling most rooted in Western educational theories and

colonial practices (Chrisjohn, 2000; Skrtic, 2000). As a bureaucratic system with organizational rationality and functionalist approaches, it has a long history of marginalizing First Nations and other minority students and may actually contribute to low achievement (Skrtic, 2000; Chrisjohn, 1999).

As I discuss and imply throughout this thesis, student learning and achievement problems also are a function of wider sociological and political problems for indigenous peoples in Canada. I therefore extend the argument, premised on the logic outlined in the literature (Bell et al, 2004; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999), that by providing holistic and inclusive layers of student support, First Nation schools can indigenize and de-colonize special education service delivery. Moreover, complementary and holistic services that are preventive and proactive, may prevent or lower the incidence and frequency of inappropriate special needs identification (Skrtic, 2002; Stainback & Stainback, 1999; Garter & Lipsky, 1989; Wang & Reynolds, 1997). In our First Nation schools, inappropriate special needs identification is often a symptom of deeper problems in assessment, instruction, administration, and a lack of support for western-based, psycho-educational interventions or indigenous therapeutic approaches. It also is a direct

result of an exclusionary high cost special education funding system, which I discuss in more detail in chapters 2 and 3.

In the school under study, I looked for evidence of how systems of general and special education complement (or fail to complement) one another to meet the needs of all students. Learning how the two areas are interdependent - or the extent to which there is a divide or dichotomy - and articulating how this interaction may be relevant to the First Nation schools is part of the purpose for this research. My initial conceptions of this interdependent relationship involves the way MECY (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth) planning and administration procedures, divisional planning, school-based planning, and community factors interact to form a framework for inclusive programming and supports. How these procedures and guidelines are reflected in the school and how they are consolidated within First Nation contexts are examined in this study. MECY procedures and guidelines, as well as the divisional procedures and guidelines, are detailed more thoroughly in the findings section of Chapter 4 of this thesis.

I chose the school for my study for its exemplary services (which I describe in later sections), and because

of its amalgamation of federal, provincial, and Band authorities for K-12 education. This school has the benefit of divisional and school-based student support services, which are relevant for their implications for the conceptual framework and First Nation school board type services I propose in recommendations area of Chapter 4. All of these factors, along with the sense of the cultural and historical connection I have for the community, contributed to my decision to conduct this study in this particular community.

Using critical ethnography and inductive analysis, I describe and examine the context and nature of student support in this hybrid school. I triangulate narrative data, observations, and document analysis to provide a summary of the findings in relation to the research questions and purpose and in relation to their implications for band-operated schools.

Colonialism and its Effects

For this study, I have to also consider the effects of colonialism on First Nations peoples, because colonialism's patriarchal remnants and neo-colonial oppression are pervasive, affecting all dimensions of contemporary Ininew life. More importantly, I have to consider these effects, which manifest as poverty and dispossession for First

Nations, because they are partially sustained through contemporary school systems and their guiding principles. State schooling, in addition to sustaining a workforce and perpetuating a political ideology, is the catalyst for sustaining imperialism and its supporting structure of colonialism (Alfred, 2005; Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999).

Linda Tuhiwai-Smith writes:

For many indigenous peoples the major agency for imposing this positional superiority over knowledge, language, and culture was colonial education...universities were established as an essential part of the colonizing process, a bastion of civilization and a sign that a colony had 'grown up' (p. 64).

Western knowledge, traditions, and culture based on the enlightenment and post modern thought are taught as the superior culture and the epitome of civilization (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). This presents a dilemma for indigenous researchers who attempt to de-colonize settler school systems and indigenize curriculum. Linda Tuhiwai-Smith examines this dilemma thoroughly from a Maori perspective

and offers an indigenous epistemology for research practice and decolonizing methodologies:

...decolonization of research does not mean a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather it is about centering our concerns and world views and coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspective and for our own purpose
(p. 39)

I have therefore attempted to develop the purpose and research questions in the context of de-colonizing methodologies, as well as in the context of the challenges posed to First Nations schools and communities by the effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism. These effects are illustrated in past government policies of extermination and assimilation, as well as indigenous and natural resource exploitation.

Research Question

Although the influences of the settlers and the effects of their colonial school systems are pervasive and persistent, they are not the only challenges faced by First Nation educators. As I have mentioned, and detail in later sections of this thesis, student support services in band

operated schools in Manitoba also are underdeveloped for reasons related to the adoption of the pathological, clinical-disease model of special education services, an unrealistic paradigm imposed by the high cost special education funding agency, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). This is in addition to being under-resourced due to funding inequities, isolation, and jurisdictional issues, complex issues over which schools have little control at the local level. However, teachers and administrators have more control over their immediate school-wide, classroom based, and individual student programs. They have very specific ideas for innovative practices as well as valued perceptions of how First Nations may enhance inclusive service delivery.

Consequently, I have developed the research questions in relation to the purpose and to consider two levels of concerns: 1) the practical level of developing the capacity of First Nation schools to provide and sustain innovative procedures and programming for student support services and, 2) the systemic level that considers the socio-political impacts and jurisdictional concerns in First Nation K-12 education.

The main question for this inquiry is:

How can innovative administrative and programming aspects of a provincial student services model be consolidated within First Nation contexts and epistemologies to reorient and enhance inclusive programming in band operated schools and for the development of institutional service providers?

Secondary questions, which also were used in an initial study, include: a) to what degree are the principles of inclusive education and a consultative-collaborative model of special education service delivery complementary to First Nation environmental, cultural, linguistic, and attitudinal factors and; b) what exactly is the arrangement between Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), the School Division, and the First Nation's Education Authority for the governance of the school under study?

Tati Nikaniyak

A First Nations' epistemology for this inquiry, which is an extension of a beginning study on inclusion and a consultative-collaborative (C/C) approach for special education service delivery, originated with a project I led

on developing a support document for resource teachers in First Nation schools in 2003 (MFNERC, 2006). This project was conducted in collaboration with a representative working group of Manitoba First Nation educators intent on developing a document that would provide guidance to resource teachers working in First Nation schools.

Before developing content and deciding who would contribute what material, some members of the development team drafted a vision statement to guide our work. What these seasoned educators developed struck me as very holistic and global, transcending K-12 education to encompass social, political, and spiritual dimensions of First Nation children, youth, and society. The title of our document is *Tati Nikaniyak*, Cree³ for Moving Forward Together. Our project was guided by the following vision:

"While acknowledging the uniqueness and varied gifts of our children and the importance of the history of our First Nations people, our vision is to move towards an enriched and empowered future for our children through a learning environment that: a) celebrates

³ The document title also is translated into Dakota, Ojibway, Dene, and Island Lake Dialect.

differences and similarities, b) is inclusive and holistic and, c) advocates for education rights, including those in the Treaties.⁴"

This vision represents for me the purpose, the topics of study, as well as the parameters of this thesis. This vision underscores the interdependence of special and general education within a framework of inclusion and a culturally effective paradigm for student support services. At another level of interpretation, the vision contributes to a First Nation epistemology in relation to inclusive education and student support services. This vision also represents an indigenization of Western educational constructs and may serve as part of a de-colonization process for First Nation schools.

To create a student support system congruent with First Nation realities and contexts and to further indigenize settler school systems, there must be a cultural and linguistic framework from which to work and one in which communities can identify. Such a framework also may

⁴ Basic Kindergarten to Grade 12 education is a treaty right as outlined in the Indian Act (INAC, 1983). Technically, post-secondary education is not a treaty right; however, First Nations assert that treaty rights for education cover all levels of education.

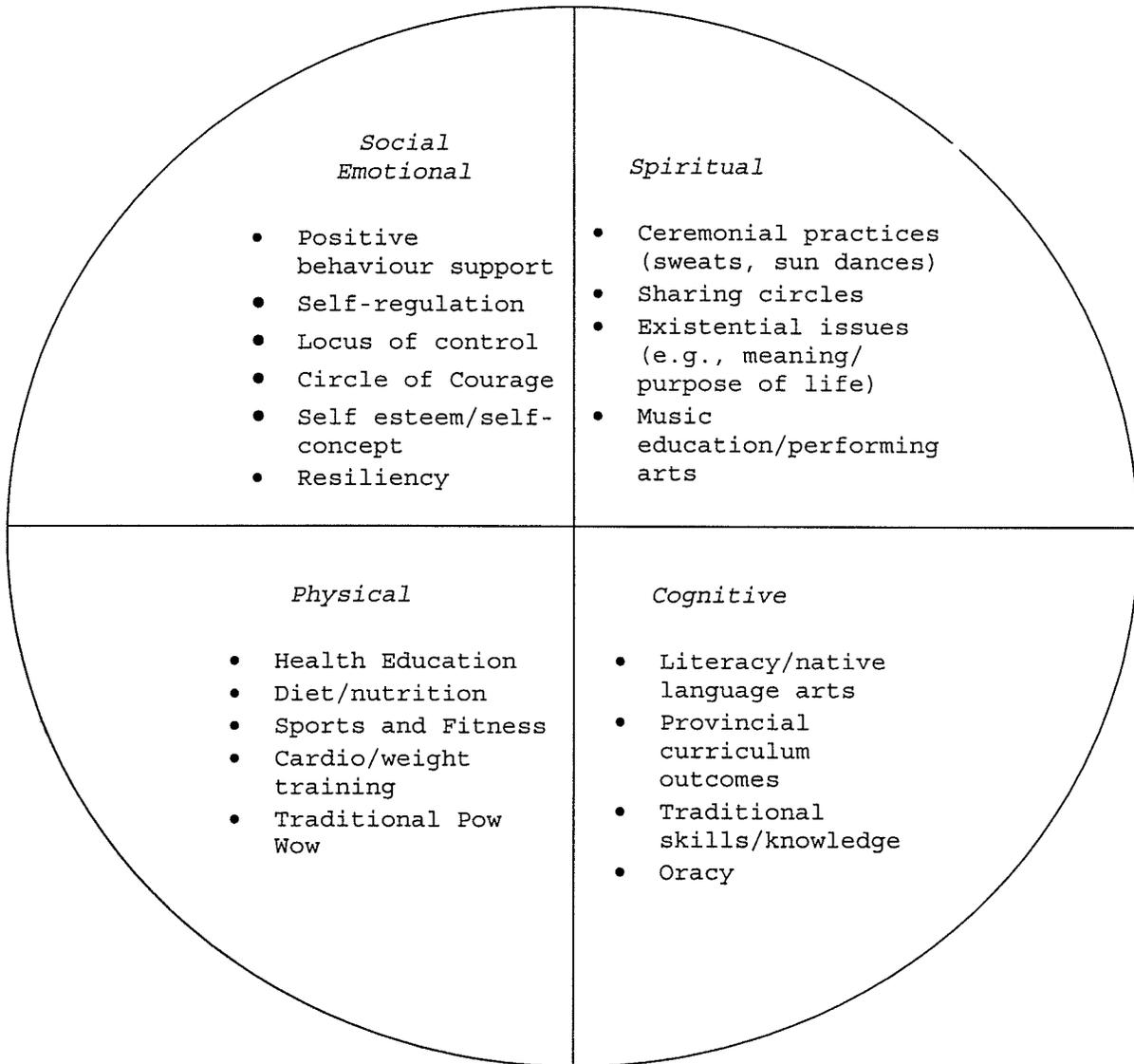
provide a First Nation philosophy for addressing the special education identification and placement issues that I discuss in later sections. Because the whole child, with all his or her strengths, gifts, and unique characteristics is considered, *Tati Nikaniyak* provides this cultural/linguistic framework as well as serving as a philosophical framework for this study.

The Medicine Wheel⁵ construct can also be used to supplement a framework for First Nations' conceptions of inclusion and student support services. Figure 1 illustrates how inclusion and student support services can be represented in the four quadrants of the Medicine Wheel (Benton-Benai, 1988). The supports and topics outlined in this construct overlap into different quadrants; they are not an exhaustive list of supports that may be provided, but are merely some examples outlined within a Medicine Wheel format to illustrate a First Nation ontology on inclusion and student support services⁶. The quadrants only represent services and supports for students in the cognitive, affective, and physical domains and not the

⁵ The Medicine Wheel construct is pervasive in First Nation world views and can illustrate many diverse cultural and spiritual traditions.

⁶ Positive Behaviour Support (PBIS, 2006) and the Circle of Courage (Brendtro, Brokenleg, et al, 2001), referenced in the social-emotional quadrants, are frameworks for the development of social skills and self-esteem.

Figure 1: Inclusive and De-colonizing First Nation Student Support Services



Adapted from Benton Benai, 1988

administrative and organizational components and procedures that would be necessary to establish such a service delivery model.

In the findings section of Chapter 4, I build on this programming framework incorporating data and findings from this study to form a conceptual framework for institutional development. This ethnographical and cultural framework, as well as the following sections on a prior study, have informed my thinking and provided the underpinnings for this thesis.

Background

Initial Study

This thesis is an expansion of an initial study that I conducted in the winter and spring of 2003 - 2004 to partially fulfill requirements for the University of Manitoba course, *Qualitative Research Methods for Education*. In this initial study, I practiced using qualitative methods, such as a case study design and analytical induction, to conduct an inquiry into special education service delivery in one of the larger Anicinabe (Ojibway) school systems in Manitoba (Mallett, 2004). I conducted this study from the theoretical orientation of inclusive education (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1989) and a consultative-collaborative (C/C)

model of resource teacher programming (Freeze, Bravi, & Rampaul, 1989).

The research questions for this study were: to what degree were the practices and concepts of inclusive education and the C/C model being implemented, and to what degree were these models and concepts influenced by Anicinabe cultural, linguistic, and community factors? I also wanted to get a sense of the role participants' perceptions of and attitudes towards inclusion and the C/C approach played in the delivery of inclusive special education services.

My analysis methods in this beginning study did not include triangulation of different sources of information. The main sources of data were approximately 7 hours of taped interviews that yielded 60 pages of transcribed interviews. Analysis of the transcripts revealed the areas for further study which are developed and drafted in this thesis and study.

I conducted this initial study within the three schools of a southeast Anicinabe (Ojibway) community⁷. In this community there are separate schools for elementary, middle, and high school students. Interviews were conducted

⁷ This community is approximately 100 km. northeast of Winnipeg but is considered to be in the south by First Nations and Federal agencies.

with five participants: three resource teachers from each of the schools, one elementary classroom teacher, and the principal of the elementary school. In speaking with the five participants and in analyzing the transcripts, I learned many things about special education services and about the relationships and dynamics within the community that affect this particular school system as a whole.

I was concerned with how identification (including referral, standardized assessment, and labeling) placement, and programming procedures were being conducted within the framework of inclusion, the C/C approach, and local First Nation's contexts and perspectives. For this initial study, special education services were defined as including administrative procedures, resource teacher programming, and clinician services, and their associated guiding principles and philosophies.

I found that the degree to which inclusion and the C/C model were supported and implemented varied within the three schools. As well, the themes that emerged from the narrative data indicated that community and cultural factors both negatively and positively influenced service delivery. In general, I found that the informants valued the concept of inclusion, but one or two expressed concerns related to its practicality and implementation

difficulties. One participant said: "we throw around terms like *inclusion*, but do we really know what it means?" For me, this comment implied that teachers in First Nation schools may need more on-going professional development on the grounding theory of inclusive education and how the intersection of theory and practice result in advanced methods of assessment and instruction.

Comments made by the principal related to the need for all teachers in First Nation schools to attain their Special Education Certificates through post-secondary training and the Provincial teacher certification process. Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth student services policies and procedures are critiqued in later sections of chapters two and three. This suggested the need to begin a process for the formation of a culturally appropriate model of student support services, a single unitary system combining creative special and general education approaches that provide a continuum of supports and services for all students within the school.

Regarding cultural factors, I found that three of the five informants integrated traditional Anicinabe cultural knowledge, skills, and perspectives into administration and programming of special education delivery. Examples of this included ceremonial and spiritual practices for students

conducted in the Turtle Lodge, a community teaching lodge staffed and organized by elders. This integration of cultural practices facilitated differentiated instruction and resulted in inclusive programming. This is my extrapolation, and I am not sure if the participants were aware that these are some of the suggested strategies outlined in *Success for all Learners* for learning outside the classroom (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 1996).

Overall, I found that the participants attempted to apply the theoretical foundations and practical aspects of inclusive special education service delivery to their specific contexts, but often were faced with barriers to effective practices and implementation. These barriers involved community conflicts, lack of professional development, and a lack of internal and external support such as administrative direction and leadership, consultative support, clinician support, and funding support.

The informants spoke of conflicts within their community that related to contentious local politics, third party management⁸, Traditional versus Christian beliefs, and

⁸ Third party management is an agreement between Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) and a First Nation for the administration of band finances and programs. It involves an outside agency being contracted

nepotism and favoritism in the staffing of the schools. Consistent themes throughout the narrative data that I found particularly important related to the lack of coordination of supports and services at the level of the education authority (i.e., leadership and administration) as well as at the level of the three schools.

In this initial study, I did not look closely at the demographics of low incidence disability, such as disability categories or the number of funded students. I focused on the 85-95% of students *without* low incidence⁹ disability, a portion of whom were categorized by the educators interviewed as hard to teach, low achieving, unmotivated, resistant, and troubled students without any formally diagnosed disorder. One has to be careful when using these labels to describe students because they can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies and low expectations. The factors related to low achievement for the other 5-15% of students might have been found in the areas of the spectrum disorders such as fetal alcohol disorder (FASD), autism (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity (ADHD), emotional behavioural disorder (EBD), or obsessive

for exorbitant fees by INAC to take over the financial affairs of a band deemed to be in financial difficulty.

⁹ Low incidence disability refers to the generally low percentage or incidence of particular physical or sensory disabilities in the overall population.

compulsive disorder (OCD) (Proactive, 2000). Psychiatric illness such as depression or bi-polar disorders also may have been precipitating factors for special needs, but etiology or formal diagnoses of these disorders was not a part of the focus for this initial study. Within the context of inclusion and a C/C approach, I was more focused on primary and universal prevention and intervention systems that are appropriate for the 85-95% of children without disabilities, many of whom are low achieving, but not due to any disorder.

Through analytic induction, patterns emerged that led me to infer that the incidences of low achievement, or high incidence special needs, may have been symptomatic of a mismatch between teaching approaches and learning styles, ineffective discipline systems, and a lack of continuity and sustainability of support systems for students' learning and behavioural needs. The informants in the study centred learning difficulties within the student rather than on a combination of the above environmental and student factors. This resulted in a perception that the most pressing special needs were related to under-achieving, at risk, resistant, and unmotivated student characteristics and profiles.

Related and Extenuating Issues

In sum, the three over-riding issues that provide underpinning for this current study include: a) the need to develop a better grasp of the interrelatedness of student support services and overall school improvement planning and reporting, b) the need to better conceptualize the coordination of First Nation inclusive special education services at a provincial and regional level and, c) the need to critically understand colonial impacts and how service delivery may be reconciled with community and cultural factors.

To reiterate, low incidence special needs may be considered mild, moderate, severe, and profound. These may encompass the spectrum disorders such as autism, tourettes, attention deficit hyperactivity, or obsessive compulsive disorder; or they may include complex lifelong physiological and medical needs (Proactive, 2000). In this more focused study, I am considering more closely, within the concept of inclusion and the most enabling setting, instances of secondary and tertiary systems for the 5-15% of students who require more intensive, individualized supports and interventions. The *most enabling setting* is a broader conception and framework for inclusion as outlined by Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth (MECY, 1999).

This construct recognizes that, while most students with special needs are most enabled through support for their full participation in the regular classroom of their community school, some students may benefit from part-time participation in self-contained, low enrollment, therapeutic settings.

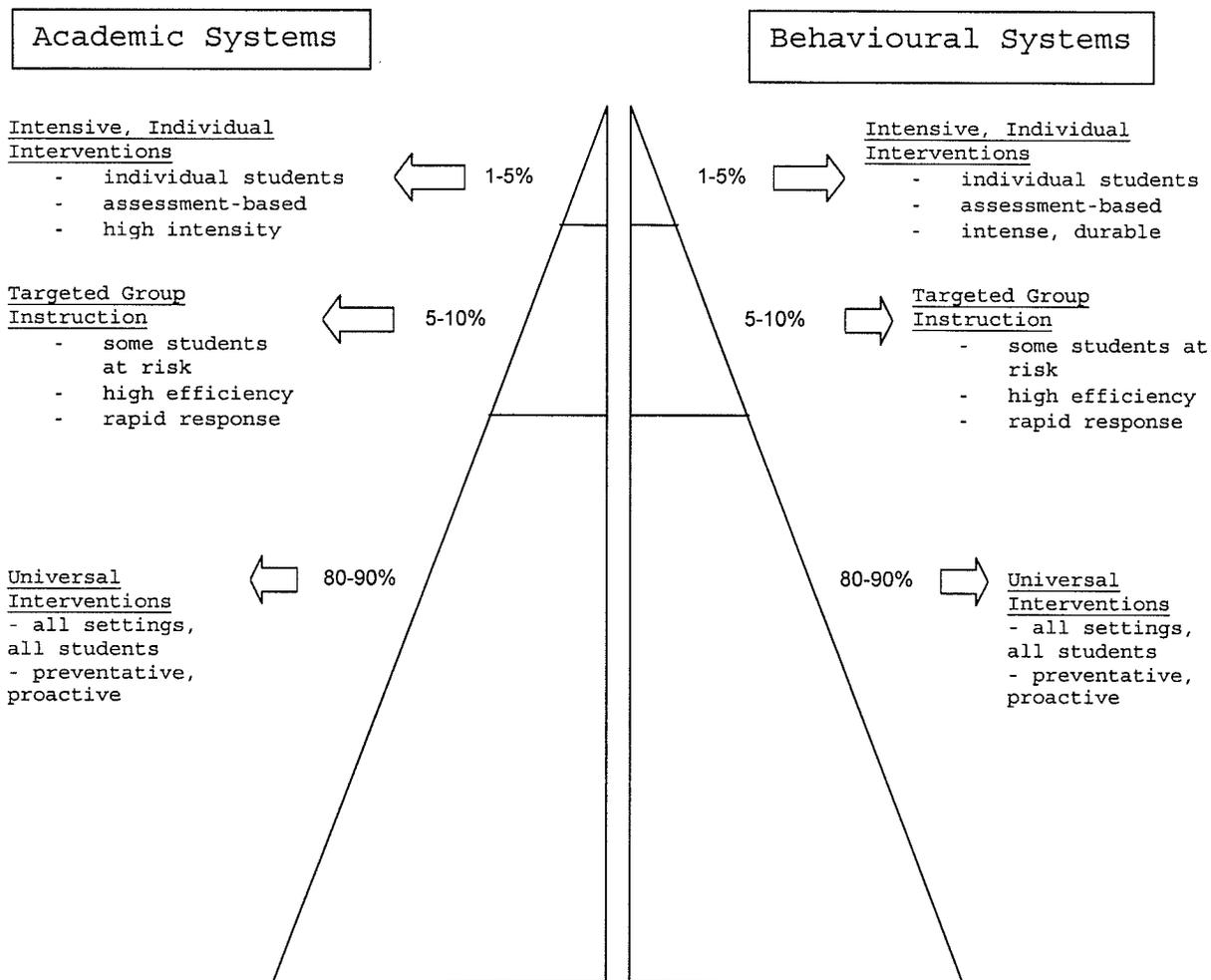
Programs that may be considered within the realm of the most enabling setting are self-contained Learning Assistance Centres for students with emotional behavioural disorder, or self-contained programs for students with developmental or intellectual disabilities. These secondary and tertiary interventions, which may include the above self-contained settings, may be supported by the systemic implementation of a primary prevention - intervention approach such as Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

I consider UDL as an example of a primary or systemic instructional approach within a service delivery framework. In this thesis, I suggest that an inclusive instructional model such as UDL, along with a holistic belief and attitude, is necessary for supporting the practice and philosophy of inclusion in First Nation schools. How this model is consolidated with a reserve setting and student special services and how it is reflected in the reality of the school under study is what I hope the data will reveal.

One can make the argument that UDL can be generalized from intensive individual interventions for students with disabilities to universal interventions for all students that are preventative and proactive for academic domains, which in turn may prevent problem behaviour and classroom disruptions. Figure 2 illustrates one example of a framework for primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention and intervention (Sugai & Horner, 2005). More importantly, it illustrates the parallels between and co-relation of effective behavioural supports and academic achievement. Used in conjunction with holistic First Nation guiding principles, it may contribute to a strategy of early prevention and intervention in order to decrease drop out rates.

Figure 2

Designing School-wide Systems for Student Success



Adapted from Sugai & Horner, 2005

An Inclusive and Culturally Effective Continuum of Needs and Supports

Although academic and behavioural systems are very much interdependent and easy to illustrate, they are much more difficult to develop, implement, and sustain without the necessary infrastructure. In this section, I outline some of the inherent challenges in effectively delivering inclusive student services in First Nation schools. Given the sometimes overwhelming challenges related to infrastructural needs, geographical isolation, and the administrative nature of locally controlled schools, the move to a culturally and socially responsible paradigm of inclusive special education service delivery in First Nation schools is likely to be a complex and long-term process. Systemic discrimination also plays a role in these challenges and I come back to and highlight this issue in later sections.

These challenges are in addition to a long history of educational failure within settler school systems. Nonetheless, some ground work has been done with the establishment of the Manitoba First Nation Education Resource Centre Inc. (MFNERC) and the indigenous and de-colonizing programs and services that it provides. Within the MFNERC service delivery model, complementary

behavioural and academic systems are contextualized for the development of First Nation education systems within Manitoba.

Adding to the complexity of understanding the overall First Nation educational system and the underlying causes of the problems it faces, is the fact that the frequency of low incidence special needs in children on reserve is reported to be as much as three times above the national norm, as reported by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN, 2000; AMC, 2006). The underlying race-related, health-related, social, political, economic, and pedagogical reasons for educational problems in First Nations schools are discussed throughout this thesis and extensively detailed based on many perspectives drawn from many studies and reports (AFN, 2000; Chrisjohn, 1999; Philips and Cranwell, 1985; Hurton, 2001; Murdock, 2001).

The incidence of medical/physiological and psychological disabilities that result in severe to profound special educational needs for children on reserve is significantly higher than non-First Nation children in the wider society (AFN, 2002). The lack of, or gap in, medical and health services in comparison to non First Nation communities contribute to the etiology of some of

the special needs. This means the frequency of high and low incidence special needs is identified at a higher rate in First Nation schools (Hurton, 2002). Consequently, in this study, I investigate and describe a continuum of high incidence and low incidence special needs in the school and examine the corresponding range of supports and interventions, such as UDL, that facilitate inclusion and benefit all children on the continuum.

Within the assumptions of a culturally effective continuum and a de-colonizing paradigm (i.e., such as Cree terminology for inclusive ideology and Cree philosophy interwoven within a framework of student support services) I looked for examples in the data of secondary and tertiary individual and classroom-based assessment and instructional approaches for students with severe to profound special needs. In this thesis, I suggest that these secondary and tertiary interventions, along with a cultural basis and an inclusive belief and attitude, are necessary for more comprehensive student support systems in First Nation schools. Looking for patterns and describing how this assumption is reflected in the data is an objective of analytical induction.

Professional Relevance

In addition to the obvious reasons related to the urgency of addressing the unacceptable educational outcomes for students in Band operated schools, I have pragmatic reasons related to my place of employment for pursuing this type of study. The findings of a study of this nature have the potential to influence institutional development. The findings have the potential to assist my employer, the MFNERC, in meeting its Federal obligations for providing "deliverables" and identifying "performance indicators." This study, therefore, is applied research.

The Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc. is mandated by the Education Authorities of 52 First Nations in Manitoba, with support from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), to deliver second and third level support to band-operated school systems¹⁰. The MFNERC, in order to meet reporting requirements and receive ongoing Federal funding, is accountable to INAC for providing work plans that identify "deliverables" and "performance indicators" (INAC, 2002). Examples of deliverables in the area of discipline include a 50% increase in the number of teachers trained in

¹⁰ Second and third level service refers to administrative, curriculum, and special education support. However, the Special Education Unit of the MFNERC provides direct or first level support to children.

Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS, 2004). Indicators of effectiveness may include fewer student suspensions and fewer office referrals. Other deliverables and performance indicators in the work plan are in the areas of curriculum, assessment, administration, and parental engagement (MFNERC, 2006).

These deliverables and indicators may be drawn from data bases and baseline measures and they require effective data management systems to adequately monitor and measure the effectiveness of programs and systems. Currently, data management systems at the MFNERC include the consolidation of filing systems, data bases, spreadsheets, and financial and student records. An explanation of how the data are used to target areas of need, focus resources to these areas, and measure the effectiveness of programs or progress towards goals is outlined in the work plans (MFNERC, 2006).

As the current *INAC Education Action Plan* (INAC, 2005) for First Nations education stresses, measurement of student and school progress must be a driving part of school reform. It goes on to say that the inadequate and unacceptable educational outcomes of First Nation children justify, or at the very least suggest, the need to rethink and reform procedures, policy, and management frameworks so

that a move to an enhanced model of culturally effective student support services may be realized for on-reserve students. The *INAC Education Action Plan* (INAC, 2005) indicates that this may require renewed and strengthened partnerships between First Nation communities, Federal beauracracies, and Provincial institutions. By incorporating objectives of the action plan and aligning research and findings with my thesis, the management and policy frameworks for First Nation institution development may be strengthened. Current partnerships that fulfill this mandate include agreements and memorandums of understanding between the MFNERC and various provincial government agencies, post secondary institutions, and school divisions.

Chapter 2: Definitions and Assumptions

First Nations

This thesis is being drafted under ever changing political circumstances and ongoing evolution of educational direction for First Nations. However, there are some consistencies in terminology and assumptions that underlie this thesis. For this study, I use the First Nation designation rather than the term *aboriginal*. This qualification is necessary because this study focuses on the educational systems of First Nations and not on the systems of other nations within the "aboriginal" construct. According to First Nation and government agencies, First Nations are a segment of what is referred to by Canada as the *aboriginal* population. The *aboriginal* population in Canada is made up of the Inuit, Métis, non-status, and treaty-status peoples (INAC, 1993; AFN, 1999). This distinction also is important for political reasons, as I explain later as having to do with being identified in terms of colonial parameters and criteria.

The following *First Nations* definition is drawn from national and regional political tribal organizations, including the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC), as well as from the INAC definition of First Nations (INAC, 1983). First Nation

peoples in Canada have treaty status, and/or are registered members of constitutionally recognized bands as described in the Indian Act (INAC, 1983). We are descendants of the indigenous population of this country and descendants of the signatories to the numbered Treaties¹¹ with the colonial powers or with the Canadian Government that guaranteed First Nations' Treaty Rights in exchange for a sharing of the land and resources (INAC, 2005). We are not only defined in terms of our social and political constructs; we also are defined in terms of our cultural and spiritual traditions.

Although many First Nations have embraced the term, "aboriginal," for many more the term is inappropriate and perhaps even offensive. It is perceived by some to be a legal, social, and government construct meant to extinguish our rights and assimilate us as another ethnic group in Canadian society so that questions of Indigenous land title are no longer an issue. Taiiaiaike Alfred refers to this construct and the process as "aboriginalism," and argues that for First Nations to accept the term would mean that we have been co-opted and defined in terms of white and colonial parameters. For Indigenous peoples to accept this

¹¹ Dakota Nations are not signatories to Treaties in Manitoba and there are no numbered Treaties in British Columbia (R-CAP, 1998).

term would be more harmful than all the past genocidal practices, according to Alfred (2005). Alfred argues that we should use our own spiritual, social, and political traditions to define ourselves as Inineew, Anicinabe, or Dakota and not use government (or anyone else's) parameters or criteria to define us a people.

First Nation Schools

In this study, First Nation schools are defined as band-operated or locally controlled schools, as opposed to Provincial schools that may be governed within the policies and regulations of collective school divisions. A band-operated school simply means that a First Nation has exercised its right to local control of education in accordance with INAC funding agreements. As discussed earlier, local control is actually a misnomer because educational funding and policy authority for each of the 62 communities actually resides with INAC. In this form of limited local control, a local education authority has been established with the support of INAC and local leadership for the administration and programming of a school located on reserve.

In contrast, provincial schools, some of which may be located on reserve and jointly operated by the First Nation and a provincial school division, are mandated by

Provincial legislation and the Manitoba Schools Act to deliver curriculum and provide educational supports and services to students in the school of their choice (MECY, 2006). In Manitoba, for example, some First Nations - approximately 10 - have a tuition agreement in place with Frontier School Division and are under the jurisdiction of both provincial and federal authorities. There is a similar arrangement with the school under study in this thesis. The vast majority, 52 out of 62 First Nation communities, have local control of education.

For true First Nation jurisdiction over education to occur in all 62 First Nations, a tri-partite agreement with First Nations, INAC, and the Provincial government would have to be in place for this arrangement to be effective and for it to evolve on a wide-spread basis to other First Nation circumstances. This would be an interesting arrangement because of the existing jurisdictional tension between the province and the federal government. The provinces are adamant that First Nations are a social, economic, and political responsibility of the Federal Government (Alfred, 2005; Dickason, 1997).

Approximately five or six First Nations in Manitoba have had this form of local control over education for thirty years, ever since the advent of *Whaubung* (1975), the

seminal First Nations manifesto on social, political, and economic justice in Manitoba. These communities were the first to manage their own schools and are mainly located in the southern parts of the province. As a result of having the experience that goes with a long history of local control, these schools tend to have more developed programs and better access to resources than the more remote schools that have more recently come under local control.

Educational Constructs

Indigenous and Western-based Theory and Practice

The First Nation schools that have access to both indigenous and Western-based educational resources are more up to date with programming and administration. However, the more remote fly-in communities do not have access to the latest resources for "best practices", and it is these schools which present the greatest challenges for capacity building and infrastructure improvement. The educational constructs outlined here may assist these schools in contextualizing Western-based theory and practice for First Nation capacity building.

An assumption of this study is that inclusive service delivery frameworks - with a supporting First Nations vision - can be extended from school-based environments to the levels of provincial and regional service delivery. The

Western-based educational theory and practice underpinning this study come from the research and literature on inclusive special education (Gartner & Lipsky 1989; Skrtic, 2001). Secondary theory and practice within inclusive special education include developmental and educational psychology, curriculum design, instructional approaches, and assessment techniques (Gartner and Lipsky, 1989). This means this study is partly conducted within the theoretical framework of inclusive service delivery and a consultative collaborative model for planning and programming at different system levels, from resource teacher programming to school planning, to planning at the level of the education or regional authority.

Student Support Services

Concepts within the interview guide (see appendix A), described fully in the methods section of this thesis, are related to the structure and nature of models of student support services. The concepts and associated assumptions are that student support services encompass mostly special education services and constitute one administrative and programming department of a larger school system. Special education services within student support services may include guidance and counseling, clinician services, inclusion and behaviour support specialists, and support

for self-contained programs for students with behavioural or developmental exceptionalities. Usually, personnel from within student support models are part of an external support team that plans and provides individualized programming for students with severe or profound special needs.

Specific support services may include consultation and professional development for: a) individual education planning (IEP) and behavioural intervention planning (BIP), b) specialized strategies for academic achievement and social-emotional support and, c) support for categorical funding procedures. Support services also may include support for school-wide interventions, vocational programs, and programs for students who need challenges and extensions of the curriculum (MECY, 2002).

The main beliefs within student support services models have to do with recognizing that all or most students will have special needs at some time or other during their school lives (MECY, 2002). Thus the term, *special needs*, rather than *special education*, is a more inclusive construct or designation within a service delivery model that considers a range of needs experienced by all or most children at some time during their school lives, and one that provides the supports and services that

benefit all children. Ideally, a legislated policy as well as a broad philosophy of inclusion provides the foundation of such service delivery (MECY, 2002).

Identification and Placement

I also assume, based on prior experience facilitating training sessions and conducting workshops, that students in band controlled schools are, in many circumstances and for many reasons which are alluded to throughout this thesis, inappropriately over-identified for special education services and categorical funding. In addition to the challenges within resource teacher programming and classroom programming, the main reason students are over-identified may have to do with the categorical funding system used by INAC and First Nation education authorities. As I have discussed earlier, although the categorical funding system may have economic and student support benefits, it also may contribute to the systemic problems within First Nations schools and educational organizations.

Some school psychologists and identification systems within functionalist special education service delivery have been known to indiscriminately label First Nation students as "intellectually deficient," "borderline," "mentally retarded," with "frontal system inefficiencies," and "executive dysfunction," as well as with a whole host

of acronyms associated with pathological disabilities (Chrisjohn, 1999; Bird, 2005; AFN, 2000). Although the incidence of intellectual disability, spectrum disorders, and sensory and physical disability are slightly higher per capita due to gaps in health care in First Nations, these conditions often are diagnosed inappropriately (Chrisjohn, 1999; Bird, 2005; AFN, 2000).

As a result of the categorical funding system imposed by INAC, students are identified using inappropriate testing instruments strictly for the purpose of acquiring level II and III categorical funding. Without an awareness of the long-term social and political implications of such psycho-educational practices and without procedural and ethical guidelines, student services models may perpetuate the oppression that has been inflicted on First Nation and other minority children through school systems of the past and present (Chrisjohn, 1999; Wang & Wang, 2000; Skrtic, 2002; Yellsdyke, 2003; Popham, 2002; Bogdan & Biklen, 2002)).

Inherent in the special education identification and placement process is the fact that off-reserve First Nation children make up a disproportionate number of students identified and served by provincial student support systems (Proactive, 1999; McBride, 2000; Chrisjohn, 1999). This is

relevant because part of the reason for this may lie with the quality of student support services provided by First Nation schools. Other reasons for this may have to do with the misuse and misunderstanding by some service providers of provincial special education identification and placement procedures. Disproportionate identification and over-representation in provincial jurisdictions may be a result of endemic poverty and many complex interrelated factors. It, however, also may be a function of inadequate instructional and support services at the level of the locally controlled school and, for that matter, at the level of the provincial school. Some First Nation students migrate between jurisdictions and their success in provincial schools may be linked to the quality of instruction and support services originating with the First Nation school. It also is important because this would indicate that there may be a need to strengthen alliances and partnerships between First Nation and provincial schools in order to develop capacity in both jurisdictions. The Consultative-Collaborative model (Freeze, Bravi, & Rampal, 1989) for special education service delivery may be a vehicle for strengthening these alliances.

The Consultative-Collaborative Model

The Consultative-Collaborative approach (C/C model) is founded on a number of underlying assumptions. The most significant assumption of the model is that special education service delivery is *non-categorical*. Its primary goal is to provide equitable, non-exclusionary classrooms in which *all* students can succeed. This model does not focus on students in terms of impairments, disabilities or developmental differences but rather on the whole child with all of his or her unique skills, abilities, feelings, interest and aspirations. This model asserts that the primary responsibility of special educators is to provide *indirect service* to students by supporting the classroom teacher who works directly with all children. Another assumption of this model is that the most enabling environment for all students is almost always the regular classroom.

This model is based on an *ecological* approach to assessment. Rather than assuming that the child is the sole owner of the problem, it views teaching-learning problems as a function of a number of environmental variables as well as individual student characteristics. This means assessing factors such as classroom climate, class management, teacher and peer attitudes, curriculum content,

instructional materials and strategies, evaluation methods, and societal and family environments. These factors are assessed in order to help teachers bring about an environment that is more in harmony with student characteristics.

The C/C approach focuses on systemic interventions that are beneficial to all learners, rather than solely on targeting individual students. This model of service delivery is based on ongoing home-school partnership and collaboration and emphasizes the ongoing professional development of the classroom teacher. The resource teacher plays an important role in this regard by suggesting staff in-servicing needs and priorities. The model is based on several levels of service delivery to students, which altogether form part of a team to resolve teaching-learning problems in classrooms.

The C/C model is a framework that provides for planning to support student needs at various levels, from the broader level of administrative policy development in schools, to the level of individual student program development. The following sections illustrate a series of stages to apply the C/C model to individual student program development. The first stage in the C/C process is

identifying the student's needs. The chart in Figure 3 outlines some questions that may serve as a checklist for Figure 3: Describing Student Needs

-
- a) Who are the people directly involved with the student? (Classroom teacher, paraeducator*, administrator, Elder, resource teacher, etc.)
 - b) What will be the role of each of the team members? (Assessment, instruction, collaborative co-teaching, case management, consultation, advice, advocacy, etc.)
 - c) What process will the team follow?
 - d) What type of external support is required for the student? (Psychology, speech - language therapy, occupational therapy, counselling, etc.)
 - e) What additional information do the team members require? (Functional Behaviour Analysis, background, medical details)
 - f) How have we defined the student's needs? (Consensus on academic, behavioural and social-emotional needs)
 - g) What are our shared expectations and goals? (Reasonably high long-term and short-term goals)
-

* The term *paraeducator* is used throughout this document to refer to teaching assistants or educational assistants.

h) What are some possible assessment procedures?

(Environmental assessments, work sample analysis, academic testing, reading running record and miscue analysis, interviews, curriculum-based, or standardized tests, etc.)

i) When will assessment take place?

j) Who will conduct assessment?

k) How will record keeping be done, and by whom?

(Arrange for formal and informal records and a system for sharing information with all team members)

this part of the process. Once the team has described the student's needs, they must then select and conduct the appropriate assessment procedures. This should involve a variety of formal and informal means and should consider all aspects of the student's well being. It is important that resource teachers bear in mind the limitations of formal conventional testing methods, which are often the result of cultural, linguistic or educational approaches that may be intimidating or non-inclusive for First Nations learners. Assessment of student needs does not serve the same purpose as assessment in the formal development of an IEP (Individual Educational Plan). Rather than assigning a

disorder label to a student, the role of assessment here is to gather accurate information so as to develop a clear picture of the student's learning or behaviour challenges, as well as his or her strengths. Information may be gathered from a number of sources, including the examples listed in the chart in Figure 4. At this phase the team members, including the Resource Teacher, student, classroom teacher, paraeducator, and parents, collaborate to develop an individualized program.

Figure 4: Assessing Success and Error Patterns

-
- a) In-class observations: anecdotal observations, checklists recording target behaviours, parental input and observations
 - b) work sample analysis: writing, spelling, oral reading, and mathematics, student learning portfolios
 - c) curriculum-based testing: General Learning Outcomes and Specific Learning Outcomes in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science
 - d) behavioural recording: environmental assessments, Functional Behaviour Analysis, and ABC records
 - e) academic and informal interviews with the student
 - f) analytic teaching: miscue analysis, cloze exercises
 - g) curriculum analysis: adaptation strategies based on curriculum outcomes
 - h) checklists and learning style inventories: auditory, visual, verbal, kinaesthetic
-

The program development phase is summarized in the chart in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Program Development

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- a) Review assessment information
 - b) agree on the big picture or broad goals of the program
 - c) set short-term learning and behaviour objectives
 - d) determine measurement methods
 - e) set criteria for success for each objective
 - f) develop teaching methods and materials
 - g) develop a behaviour management plan or motivational strategy
 - h) conduct trial teaching
 - i) work out the relationship to ongoing classroom instruction
 - j) schedule a sequence of instruction
 - k) develop a formal record keeping system
 - l) outline liaison with support services if needed
 - m) agree on a timeline for program implementation
-

Program implementation is the phase of putting the program into action in the classroom. It may involve the tasks which are listed in the chart in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Program Implementation

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- a) demonstration teaching
 - b) ongoing materials support for differentiated instruction
 - c) team teaching or cooperative teaching
 - d) training and ongoing support of paraeducators
 - e) managing of ongoing systemic support, such as peer tutoring or technology-assisted instruction
 - f) continuous observation, assessment and record-keeping
 - g) monitoring sequence of instruction and criteria for success
 - h) fine tuning the program and supports as necessary
 - i) communicating information to all team members
-

The team must evaluate the mastery of program objectives at regular intervals according to the target dates set. If the program has been successful, the resource teacher should communicate this success to the student, the family, and all persons involved. The team should then agree on measures to monitor ongoing success or to build on the program gains in other areas. If, however, the program

has not been successful, this too should be communicated to the student, family, and support team. Together the decision must be made either to do further diagnostic assessment, with the benefit of the experience acquired, or to refer the student to another level of support services.

It is important to continuously monitor a long-term program to maintain and build on what has been achieved, and to regularly communicate updated information on the results of the process to the student, the family, and all of the school team members. The consultative-collaborative model is a flexible process that involves making adaptations to programming as required at each phase of the process.

If the program has been successful, and the student has reached a level of independent functioning in the learning environment, his or her ongoing performance should continue to be monitored informally. Measures also may be put in place to share the professional learning that has occurred through the consultative-collaborative process with other educators.

The C/C model also allows for assistance requests, assessment and programming related to problem-solving that is independent of a student referral. For example a teacher may request support services support to implement

literature circles or the *Circle of Courage* (Brendtro, L & Brokenleg, M, 2001) in his or her classroom, targeting all or many students.

The consultative- collaborative model requires effective ongoing communication, not only among internal and external support people, but also with parents. Part of the communication plan should involve regular parent meetings and the ongoing use of tools such as an agenda book to communicate details about the day-to-day progress of the student. This involves both the student and the parents in sharing ownership and responsibility for the action plan that is developed.

The consultative-collaborative approach provides a model for the cooperative skills we wish to develop in our students, and fosters active commitment on the part of resource teachers, classroom teachers, and school administrators. As an interdisciplinary approach, it is grounded in the belief that cognitive, behavioural, social and emotional factors are all interdependent dimensions of the child's overall development (MFNERC, 2006).

Finally, the process of collaboration and consultation requires values that place the emphasis on "building" consensus rather than "winning" support, "sharing" responsibilities rather than "protecting" traditional

interests, and "overcoming" resistance to change rather than "surrendering" to pessimism and inaction in the face of the changes that challenge us in our professional lives (Freeze, 1989).

Inclusive (Special) Education

A model of de-colonizing First Nation student support services needs to be based on a clear understanding of the origins and intent of inclusive programming and supports. In the last few years, I have developed a general perception supported by anecdotal evidence that the concept and practice of inclusive education has become pervasive in the great majority of provincial school systems in Manitoba (Winnipeg School Division, 2002; 7 Oaks School Division, 2004). Along with this pervasiveness, there also seems to be a generalization and vagueness to the original meaning of inclusive education. For clarification of the original intent of inclusive education, I am providing a summary of inclusive educational theory and practice from both the provincial perspective and the wider Western academic perspective. The theory and practice of inclusive education as summarized here comes from Skrtic (2001), Gartner and Lipsky (1987), Stainback and Stainback (1999), McLeskey and Waldron (2000), and Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth (2004).

Figure 7 is from McLeskey and Waldron (2000) and it succinctly summarizes values, beliefs, and understandings of inclusive program development, as well as the assumptions underlying this construct. These assumptions imply that inclusive education is more than a continuum of supports and a series of placements. It also is a set of beliefs and attitudes that allows all students, in particular those with disabilities, to feel valued, accepted, and safe. The idea of inclusion then comes from research conducted in the field of disability studies. These ideas originated with the normalization movement (Power-Defur & Orelove, 1996) and the social role valorization movement (Wolfensburger, 2000) and have been generalized to educational settings.

Figure 7: Inclusive Education

What Inclusion Means (And Does Not Mean)
<p>Inclusion Means...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with disabilities attend their neighborhood school or the school they would attend if they were not disabled. • Each child is in an age appropriate general education classroom. • Every student is regarded as a full and valued member of the class and school community. • Special education supports are provided within the context of the general education classroom. • All students receive an education that addresses their individual needs. • A natural proportion of students with disabilities attend any school and classroom. • No child is excluded on the basis of type and degree of disability. • The school promotes cooperative/collaborative teaching arrangements. • There is building-based planning, problem solving, and ownership of all students and programs.
<p>Inclusion does not mean...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Dumping" students with disabilities into general education classes without careful planning and adequate supports. • Reducing services or funding for special education services. • Overloading any classroom with students who have disabilities or who are at risk. • Teachers spend a disproportionate amount of time teaching or adapting curriculum for students with disabilities. • Isolating students with disabilities socially, physically, or academically within the general education classroom. • Jeopardizing the achievement of general education students through slower instruction or less challenging curriculum. • Special education teachers are relegated to the role of assistant in the general education classroom. • Forcing general and special education teachers to team together without careful planning and well-defined responsibilities.

Social Role Valorization

Some of the thinking underpinning the practice of inclusive schools arises out of the theories and practices within the disability field such as social role valorization (Wolfensburger, 2000), a theory that promotes and supports, among other things, the full participation of people with disabilities in the larger society. Most importantly, social role valorization theory promotes and supports socially valued roles for people who are devalued in other people's eyes. Although Wolfensburger's ideas pertain mainly to the social and political implications of disability, they are important to education because they also speak to political, socioeconomic and educational justice of marginalized First Nation segments of society. Without early support and awareness of social and political implications of identification and placement from K-12 educational systems and student services models, First Nation children, with and without disabilities, may in adulthood, be further marginalized, excluded, and devalued in the larger society.

A First Nations' Ontology on Inclusive Education

Although I make the assertion that inclusive education in the wider context has become generalized and watered down and no longer connected to its origins and purpose, I

also make assumptions related to First Nations' perceptions of inclusive education. In essence, I believe there exists a First Nations' "way of knowing" or a First Nation conception of inclusion, and that this perspective may be more global and holistic in nature than the one usually discussed in other educational contexts. This conception is illustrated in the vision statement for the resource teacher support document, *Moving Forward Together* (MFNERC, 2006) in the quadrants of the Medicine Wheel, and in the teachings of the Anicinabe clan systems. It is based also on my experiences working in First Nation schools, on speaking with First Nation teachers, and on leading working groups for project development over the last 8 years.

Whenever I have facilitated discussions on inclusion and the C/C approach, the discussion usually transcends educational contexts to include aspects of cultural teachings such as the 7 teachings of the Anicinabe Clan System. To briefly summarize clan teachings, the Crane clan's teaching is Belief, the Fish clan's teaching is Truth, the Loon clan represents Faith, the Hoof clan's is the Gift of Life, the Bird clan's is Knowledge, the Marten clan's teaching is Honour and Respect, while the Bear clan represents Strength (Roseau River Self Government Initiative, 1992).

As well as illustrating a holistic approach to inclusion, these universal values may be used to form the vision and mission of an administrative and programming (instruction and assessment) framework for a First Nation student support services model. Meetings and informal discussions in which I have participated have revealed how First Nations have historically practiced inclusion within a communal society, and how these cultural and historical perspectives have contributed to contemporary First Nations' conceptions of inclusion (AFN, 2000; Chrisjohn, 1998).

Taiiaki Alfred (2005) writes that, listening and an inclusive-collaborative approach is the true indigenous way of conveying knowledge:

...learning is transformative and involves critical reflection and a positive view of change; it is participatory and involves working with others in the learning process; and knowledge comes from learning traditions within a society of thoughtful people (p. 199).

These First Nations cultural and spiritual constructs form the basis of any support and service initiative within

our communities. It is natural for business and social agencies such as education and child and family services to incorporate these teachings and values as the foundation for service delivery. As with research methodologies, First Nation organizations do not totally disregard Western traditions with respect to inclusive education. One such framework, based on Western traditions in architecture and intended to facilitate inclusion for students with special needs, is Universal Design for Learning.

Universal Design for Learning

The Universal Design movement, an approach which is being adapted more and more to general educational contexts, was founded by architect Ron Mace. In the 1970s, Mace developed the first code for building accessibility in the nation, and in 1989, he started the Center for Universal Design (Center for Universal Design, 1998). He was a lifelong advocate for people with disabilities, and he promoted the idea that products and built environments should be designed from the outset to be aesthetically pleasing and usable by everyone, to the greatest extent possible, regardless of ability (Center for Universal Design, 1998). Educational applications of Universal Design involve the design of curriculum for the maximum number of users. To ensure the widest possible use, users of the

curriculum are involved early in the design and provide feedback and suggestions for development. Because it is developed first for those who need programming flexibility and consideration for intellectual or physical exceptionalities and then generalized to the wider audience, Universal Design remains the theoretical and practical underpinning for instruction within a model of student services. According to the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), Universal Design is described: "As a new paradigm for teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum development, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) draws upon and extends principles of universal design as used in architecture and product design (<http://www.cast.org/udl/index.cfm?i=7>, 2005)." Architects practicing universal design create structures which accommodate the widest spectrum of users possible.

In universally designed environments, adaptability is subtle and integrated into the design. Designing for the divergent needs of special populations increases usability for everyone. The curb cut is a classic example. Although they were originally designed to help those in wheel chairs negotiate curbs, curb cuts ease travel for those pushing carriages, riding skateboards, pulling suitcases, or simply walking (CAST, 2004).

UDL shifts old assumptions about teaching and learning in four fundamental ways: a) students with disabilities fall along a continuum of learner differences rather than constituting a separate category, b) teacher adjustments for learner differences should occur for all students, not just those with disabilities, c) curriculum materials should be varied and diverse including digital and online resources, rather than centering on a single textbook, and d) instead of remediating students so that they can learn from a set curriculum, curriculum should be made flexible to accommodate student differences. The central practical premise of UDL is that a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and appropriate for individuals with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities, and disabilities in widely varied learning contexts. The "universal" in universal design does not imply one optimal solution for everyone. Rather, it reflects an awareness of the unique nature of each learner and the need to accommodate differences, creating learning experiences that suit the learner and maximize his or her ability to progress (CAST, 2004).

The Center for Universal Design at the University of North Carolina describes the architectural basis for Universal Design. The Center outlines seven principles of

Universal Design: 1) equitable use, 2) flexibility in use, 3) simple and intuitive, 4) perception information, 5) tolerance of error, 6) low physical effort, and 7) size and space for approach and use (Orkwis, 2003).

Although both Centres have slightly varied approaches to UDL, they both state that instructional and assessment approaches originally intended for students with learning disabilities have been found to be effective for other learners without disabilities. UDL have been generalized to all students, using digital and multimedia methods and materials such as mp3 audio, digital video, digital projectors, digital cameras, and internet resources. Even within these various digital resources there are built in accommodations for people with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities.

A less technologically advanced example of UDL application is the sound field FM system. Sound field FM systems amplify the teacher's voice through small microphones, amplifiers, and speakers. They were originally intended to support students with hearing impairments in classrooms. However, teachers noticed that the slight increase in the volume of teacher directions had a positive effect on non-hearing impaired students. When the FM systems were removed when a hearing impaired student left

the school, teachers found that students were not following directions as readily or as carefully as they did when the FM system was in use. Teachers also reported more strain on their voices once the FM systems were removed (Mystery Lake School Division, 2000).

In sum, it is a fact that First Nation students in both First Nation and Provincial jurisdictions are overly and sometimes inappropriately identified for special education placement. The definitions, and their related assumptions, around First Nations, the inclusive education constructs, and the identification issues underpin this thesis. The following literature review contains a further discussion on the issues related to the categorical funding process and its functionalist assumptions. As well, I provide a description of the findings that highlight the successes of First Nation and aboriginal student supports.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

Government, First Nations and Media Reports

There is a dearth of empirical research conducted in band-operated schools that addresses student support models and the short-term and long-term impacts of special education systems, interventions, and practices on First Nation students. However, the prevalence and incidence of low achievement levels of students in band-controlled schools have been extensively documented in various government-sponsored reports, First Nations and other research projects, and mainstream media (INAC, 2005; AFN, 2005; Chrisjohn, 2000). In most cases, none of these reports or articles mentions a lack of coordination between student support services and general education as one of the contributing causes of inadequate student learning outcomes. Although some of these reports and documents may frame the issues and challenges in terms of colonial impacts, they do not specifically mention root causes originating in student support services and the resulting student underachievement.

The reports and documents summarized here are mainly from Canadian government sources, including: a) INAC and Auditor General reports and documents, b) First Nation

reports and studies and, c) provincial documents related to reporting and school planning requirements.

The most important reports for First Nations education in Canada have come from the Federal Auditor General, Sheila Fraser. These reports address K-12, as well as post-secondary education. Politically, they are important because they affirm and uphold INAC's fiduciary responsibility for education. The 2000 Auditor General's Report harshly criticized INAC for inadequate funding, substandard educational programming, and nonexistent measures of school improvement (Auditor General of Canada, 2000). One of the main messages of the 2000 Report was that students in First Nation schools were so far behind their Provincial peers that it would take "27 years for First Nation school systems to close the achievement gap" (p.1).

The 2004 Auditor General's Report repeated the same criticism and indicated that students were slightly worse off than in 2000. In fact, the 2004 report estimated that it would now take 28 years for First Nation students to be on equal educational footing with their provincial counterparts (Auditor General of Canada, 2004). While there may be questions as to the accuracy of the data and the

validity of the standardized measurement techniques¹² used to determine achievement levels, there is consensus among First Nation educators that these assertions are largely accurate and very relevant.

Constructs related to special education, student support services, inclusion, and the C/C approach also have not been extensively detailed in the literature from the perspectives of First Nations' socio-economic and cultural factors. Most of the studies and literature pertains to the wider aboriginal spectrum. That is, the literature pertains more to Métis, urban, non-status circumstances, and not specifically to on-reserve First Nation contexts. Consequently, these studies are only indirectly relevant to my study.

Useful critiques of the relationship of student support services and overall school planning in poverty circumstances come from Gartner and Lipsky, who advocate for a single, unitary system of programming and services (Gartner and Lipsky, 1989); and Thomas Skrtic, whose dissertations involve a radical and complete reorganization of special and general education for post modern contexts (Skrtic, 2002). Both of these perspectives propose

¹² There may be some question as to whether standardized tests used with First Nations may actually be tests of socioeconomic status rather than academic achievement (Popham, 2004).

flexibility in order to consolidate and contextualize Western paradigms within local First Nation circumstances. Therefore, their ideas provide a theoretical framework for the study I discuss here. As well, the Provincial support documents on school planning and reporting (MECY, 2004) and the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development publication, *Inclusive Schools in Action* (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000), provide more local perspectives and practical frameworks for strengthening the relationship between special and general education.

Testing and Identification

On reviewing the reports and concept papers from First Nation sources, the themes that resonated with me related to issues in the psycho-educational testing of First Nations children (Chrisjohn, 1999; Hurton, 2002; Bird, 2004). These issues are related to inherent biases in some testing instruments, such as older versions of the Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children (WISC-R), which in turn affect validity and reliability of interpretations (Buros Institute, 2006). Life long labeling also can result from psychological testing. Society and people then come to identify already marginalized people in terms of deviant labels and not in terms of human characteristics. Psycho-educational testing is the main

determinant of disproportional representation of First Nation students identified as requiring special education services (INAC, 2006). It is mainly used to assign a disorder label for categorical funding purposes.

Two other reports examine the over-representation of aboriginal and First Nations students identified and serviced by special education systems (McBride, 2001; Proactive, 2000). Both the McBride report and The Manitoba Special Education Review indicate that the overrepresentation was due to many aboriginal students being identified as having emotional behavioural disorder, which leads to the further question of why so many First Nation students are perceived to have EBD?

Reports on Jurisdiction

In terms of specific First Nations examples of institutional development and management of Regional Managing Organizations for special education services, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) in British Columbia and The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) in Quebec provide good models for similar institutions in Manitoba. They provide similar services to the MFNERC but have been granted RMO status by INAC and, therefore, more authority to develop, implement, and monitor special education policy. More significantly, they

have the authority to allocate and monitor high cost special education funding as well as base funding for First Nations in their regions. In fact, RMO status has led to overall First Nations jurisdiction over education in British Columbia. First Nations in British Columbia, in partnership with FNEESC, INAC, and the B.C. Ministry of Education, have negotiated a tri-partite agreement for curriculum development, teacher licensing, and graduation requirements for First Nation schools (FNEESC, 2006).

To provide a chronology of key reports that have advocated for jurisdiction, the report of the Minister's Committee on First Nations Education (INAC, 2002), the National Special Education Program manual (INAC, 2002), and a report commissioned by INAC on the *Current Context* of special education service delivery in First Nations are summarized here (Hurton, 2002). Because it is one of the latest frameworks for First Nations educational reform and will be spurring direction for the next few years, the INAC Action Plan for Education in response to the Auditor General's recommendations is first highlighted and discussed (INAC, 2005).

INAC Action Plan

In response to the Auditor General's recommendations, INAC, in consultation with regional and national First

Nations bureaucracies, has developed an Action Plan addressing the five policy areas outlined by the Auditor General, Sheila Fraser. These five policy areas include: 1) Strategy and Planning, 2) Roles and Responsibilities, 3) Funding, 4) Accountability, and 5) Performance Measurement and Monitoring and Reporting. These policy areas are being developed through two interdependent measures: A First Nations Education Policy Framework and a First Nations Education Management Framework. Currently, regional INAC offices throughout Canada are in consultation meetings with First Nation education stakeholders to work out the details of these frameworks and policy areas (INAC, 2005).

These policy and management frameworks are intended to result in full jurisdiction over education for First Nations. As part of this process, the INAC Action Plan refers specifically to the need for student support services:

INAC recognizes that this vision can only be achieved through an education system that puts the learner's achievement at the centre of all decision making and embraces a culture of learning. Improving the education outcomes of First Nation students, at all levels, requires

the pursuit of three broad but complementary goals:

- 1. Enhance the quality, accessibility and relevance of educational programs and supports for First Nation students.*
- 2. Strengthen the planning, management and accountability of First Nation education programs and supports, based on effective and meaningful First Nation education systems.*
- 3. Foster interconnections and collaboration between First Nation educators, federal provincial/territorial governments and other stakeholders (p. 10).*

The timeline for the implementation is over three years, 2004 - 2007 (INAC, 2005).

Minister's Committee on Education

In 2001, the Minister's Committee on Education¹³ was struck to draft a position paper to help address the issues identified in the Auditor General's Report, and it summarizes the challenges and triumphs in First Nation education over the last 30 years (INAC, 2002). This position paper reiterates the problems outlined by the

¹³ The Minister's National Committee on Education is a committee comprised of educators representing regional First Nations throughout Canada.

Auditor General, reaffirms the aspirations and educational vision of *Whaubung*¹⁴, and offers recommendations. The position paper is consistent with the INAC Action Plan in that they both emphasize and recommend in different ways the need for First Nations to be adequately funded for full jurisdiction over educational policy and management.

The Mass Media

Other media sources have reported on the perceived problems in First Nations' schools. One particularly stinging piece was published by the *Globe and Mail*. This article was written as part of a series entitled, *Canada's Apartheid*, and highlighted the "pitiful" conditions of schools, and the "misery" of students and staff in a First Nation's school in Manitoba's Interlake¹⁵ (Stackhouse, 2001).

The article is useful in that it may have given Canadians a sense of urgency regarding the educational needs in First Nation communities. However, it does not provide a complete picture of the state of affairs in First Nations' educational systems, nor does it give an accurate portrayal of life in First Nation communities. As with most

¹⁴ *Whaubung: Our Tomorrows*, published in 1974, is the seminal document outlining First Nation conditions and aspirations for local control of education.

¹⁵ This piece was part of series by the national *Globe and Mail* that compared Canada's treatment of First Nations to the Apartheid system in South Africa.

outsiders who purport to offer an objective view on First Nations, the writer's middle class values colour his final analysis of the educational system.

I have been to the schools mentioned in the article and, while there are real infrastructural needs, what I see when I go to isolated First Nations is not quite the same as perhaps what other visitors see. I see communities with a strong language base where young primary students speak Dene, Island Lake Dialect, Ojibway, and Cree fluently¹⁶. I see places where traditional skills and knowledge are sustained and taught, and where traditional cultural and spiritual practices are nurtured and passed on to the next generation. I see people strongly connected to the land and who choose to live close to or on the land, while functioning within current societal trends and influences. Many live authentic indigenous existences and remain uncolonized and unassimilated. For a First Nation observer, these are the positive aspects of community life and perhaps give a more balanced, alternative view of the situation. This is what many First Nation leaders have been championing for many years, going back several hundred years. They have always wanted youth to live authentic

¹⁶ I cannot speak to the fluency of Dakota children because I am not as familiar with these communities.

indigenous lives, while gaining the skills and knowledge for economic and political power in the post-modern world and in the information age.

Whaubung: Our Tomorrows (1973, MIB), the landmark declaration and assertion of First Nations conditions for quality and justice in social reform, was drafted by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, the predecessor to AMC. It outlines treaty obligations for self governance, land, and social programming, including education, not met by Canada. The chapters on education are an indictment and condemnation of INAC policy and funding of education for First Nations. Up until 1974, there were less than 8 First Nations grade 12 graduates in Manitoba on a yearly basis. Calling this completely unacceptable and appalling, *Whaubung* called for immediate and adequate INAC funding for local control of education.

INAC supported the concept which resulted in the beginning of local control of education for First Nations in Manitoba. The Manitoba Indian Brotherhood at that time also demanded the establishment of an educational institution that would provide consultative and administrative support for the schools under local control. Not only was there no funding for an education resource centre and a lack of capacity development for managing

schools, we have come to learn by first hand experience that local control of education has been under funded from day 1 over 30 years ago (MFNERC, 2003).

Only since the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) in the 1990's has there been the establishment of an educational resource centre for on reserve schools in Manitoba. This institution is the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc..

Considering the history of local control of education and the experiences of the communities that have had it, it will be interesting to learn how the school and community under study have faired over the years by not using local control.

Sharing our Success

A recent study entitled, *Sharing our Success* (Bell, et al, 2004), with particular reference to the effects of multiple layers of student support services, highlighted the successes of ten schools with large or exclusively First Nation and aboriginal populations. A couple of these schools were under local control, with the majority under provincial jurisdiction. But they all had the same seven major elements that contributed to their success. These elements included: 1) strong leadership and governance structure, 2) high expectations of students, 3) focus on

academic achievement and long-term success, 4) secure and welcoming climate for children and families, 5) respect for aboriginal culture and traditions to make learning relevant, 6) quality staff development and, 7) a "wide range of programs and supports for student learning" (Bell, et al, 2004). The finding that a wide range of programs and student supports contributes to overall school improvement validates the research question for my study. However, the exact types of student supports are not outlined.

Trends in Special Education Service in First Nations

In his report for The Minister's National Working Group on Education, Hurton (2002) outlines an international and national history of trends in special education service delivery. He then relates these trends, which have to do with the evolution of service delivery from segregated to inclusionary settings, to First Nation contexts. In general, Hurton indicates a lack of fiduciary and personnel capacity and infrastructure to effectively develop student support service models. In terms of recommendations, he suggests some very general approaches to special education policy development (actually procedures and guidelines), research funding, and professional development (Hurton, 2002). These recommendations, while not evidence-based or revolutionary, reiterate the need for increased federal

funding and the mandate for First Nation jurisdiction leading to the establishment of a culturally effective system of student support services.

There also are provisions in the National Special Education Program (SEP) guidelines for the establishment and support for a First Nation Regional Managing Organization (INAC, 2006). The Regional Managing Organization (RMO) would assume responsibility from INAC for the administration and distribution of the regional SEP budget. It is anticipated, although not guaranteed, that the MFNERC will become the RMO for the National Special Education Program sometime in the near future. According to the terms and conditions for RMO authority, any First Nation organization in Manitoba has the potential to become the RMO. To the decision makers and First Nation Education Directors, however, the logical choice would be the MFNERC because of existing systems and personnel. Should the MFNERC or any other First Nation organization become the RMO, I hope to contribute information gleaned through this study to the development and management of the RMO and SEP. As a pre-cursor to the development of a RMO, a critique of existing service delivery is necessary.

Evolving Educational and Political Context

Deconstructing Service Delivery

In my travels to approximately 75% of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba, it has been my experience that our educational philosophies and conceptions often do not emphasize the interrelated and interdependent nature of special and general education, or more specifically, inclusive student support services and broad areas of school administration and curriculum. There seems to be a mindset of division and separation. This attitude, which I often have encountered in our schools, can be captured or inferred through the following unspoken statement: "*those teachers for those kids.*"

This infers that special education and resource teachers and their students are a separate entity apart from the main population. This unspoken belief supports the axiom held by people with disabilities: societal attitudes are more disabling than any actual physical, sensory, or psychological impairment (Gartner & Lipsky, 1989). Sadly, this is sometimes the reality in some of our First Nation schools as evidenced by makeshift, segregated classes set up in basements or in janitorial and maintenance rooms. These issues form part of the backdrop for this thesis and the intent is to point out the underlying assumptions and

resulting attitudes that may allow First Nation students to, even unintentionally, be portrayed within and by school systems as separate from and different than other children. The categorical funding system and its associated procedures, which are examined in more detail at the end of this chapter, also may contribute to exclusionary practice in First Nation schools. The prevalence of exclusionary practices and attitudes of the school under study is revealed from various perspectives through data derived from a variety of sources and described in Chapter 5.

Symptoms and their Underlying Causes

To frame First Nation schools in terms of "symptoms and "underlying causes" implies that band operated schools are "sick." This is perhaps not the most accurate way to portray First Nation schools. Many of our accessible schools are effective, with dedicated and highly skilled administrators and teachers. This framework may appear to contradict the holistic model discussed in here and further pathologize our schools and students. I use this analogy to simply imply that ineffective schools and low student achievement may be a function of deeper social issues and underlying causes.

The high percentage of students identified as having high incidence special educational needs may be symptomatic

not only of socioeconomic conditions and categorical funding requirements, but also may reflect larger systemic problems in First Nation general education. This is in addition to a prevalence of disabling attitudes, low expectations, and functionalist approaches. At the deepest level, the underlying causes of systemic problems are due to the residual and ongoing effects of colonialism: oppressive government policies, systemic racism, poverty, effects of the Indian Act, residential schools, and the loss of language and culture (Whaubung, 1973).

Most professionals concerned with the day-to-day operation of First Nation schools usually have little or no control over these root causes that are encased in historical and contemporary colonial and neo-colonial oppression (Alfred, 2005; York, 1989). These larger societal issues cannot be excluded from the discussion because they impact not only the educational systems of First Nation communities, but the everyday existence of First Nation peoples. While many First Nation people believe that these structural issues are best addressed by their political leadership through the government-to-government relationship with Canada, there are many other First Nation radicals who believe otherwise. In their view, the negotiations, which are from a position of weakness for

First Nations, to correct and compensate for the injustices of past policies and practices have resulted in the dispossession of indigenous lands (Alfred, 2005; AFN, 2004). For many indigenous peoples, these negotiations are the *politics of pity*, because they result in only what the state is willing to give and not in what is just and inherent.

There is a new movement and new generation of First Nations leaders who do not believe in the politics of pity, which is what the land claims procedures, self government negotiations, treaty issues, and other compensatory deals are all about. They do not believe in negotiating with the Canadian government on their terms and using their colonial systems. They believe that the state has co-opted and funded First Nation beauracracies to become the colonizers and oppressors of their own people. They would rather take action using truly indigenous politics and an indigenous philosophy to re-claim and re-generate the independence of the original people of this land (Alfred, 2005).

However, there also are some educators in First Nations schools who coordinate program development to use First Nation's issues and politics to drive their teaching units and inform the curriculum. This approach may be a personal and pragmatic way to address the societal and

colonialist issues and influence future generations of leaders and warrior societies. Alfred and Lowe write that "warrior societies" are a means by which indigenous peoples take direct action against colonization and the history of their dispossession (Alfred, T; & Lowe, L, 2005). To engage students in meaningful ways, teachers may base programming on "issues," whether they may be related to the environment, global warming, homelessness, or poverty. For First Nations, the issue is de-colonization, and this process starts in the elementary classroom and continues into adulthood and the philosophical and political realms of identity and an authentic indigenous existence. The ultimate purpose of education for First Nations may be to de-colonize and regenerate the independence of the indigenous population (Alfred, T; & Lowe, L, 2005).

School-based Indicators

In terms of the day-to-day operations of schools, there is another strata of underlying problems that may contribute to inadequate student outcomes and inappropriate special education identification, and these are the problems over which teachers have more control and the ones which are relevant to this study. These root causes, which were uncovered or alluded to in the initial study (Mallett, 2004), may have to do with: a) unsustainable support and

leadership for differentiated instruction and other innovative instructional approaches for classroom teachers, b) uncoordinated and ineffective leadership and support for behaviour and classroom management and, c) a lack of systemic and systematic support for teacher professional development and retention in small remote communities.

As was inferred in the initial study (Mallett, 2004), at the administrative level, systemic problems may be due to a lack of support for evidence-based and data driven decision making and planning. This may result in principals, directors, and school boards having difficulty with the coordination and consolidation of educational philosophy, school finance policies, INAC reporting requirements, and for melding these organizational requirements with First Nations' perspectives and realities.

Systemic problems also may be related to a lack of support and direction for training in cross-cultural competencies and community sensitivity for non-First Nation leaders and teachers working within the schools. These factors, over which educators have more control, are related to the primary and secondary questions, the purpose, and the issues and assumptions that form the context of this study and give direction to the examination

of the role student support services plays in overall school improvement planning.

Political Considerations

It is internationally acknowledged that First Nation communities within Canadian society have great needs in terms of civic and community infrastructure, physical facilities, administrative and programming systems, and human and business services (York, 1989; Dickinson, 2000). This lack of infrastructure is reflected in the lack of capacity of many First Nation schools to support and sustain programming and services. Compounding issues of sustainability and capacity building is the fact that the majority of communities are isolated by great distances and governance structures vary greatly between schools. Isolated and divergent governance structures, whether organized under school trustees, superintendents, or education directors, form the basis for the semi-autonomous control that 52 of the 62 First Nations in Manitoba have over education¹⁷. This means that there are no collective or aggregate systems for First Nations education authorities. They operate independently of one another with the resulting consequences of disjointed and uncoordinated

¹⁷ 10 First Nations have not exercised their right to local control of education and have opted to have their schools co-managed by Frontier School Division.

administration and programming (INAC, 2006). Without a collective organizational structure similar to a school division, First Nations education authorities are required to report to many "red" and "white" bureaucracies. They report simultaneously to Chief and Council and INAC. Should First Nation education authorities require bureaucratic support, they also may be required to report to regional or national Political Tribal Organizations (PTO). The national organization is the Assembly of First Nations and the main provincial PTO is the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. Southern Chiefs Organization and the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. are two of the larger regional PTOs within Manitoba. They represent First Nations in the South and North, respectively and work in concert with the AMC and AFN. Figure 8 illustrates the educational funding and reporting relationship between government, PTOs, chief and council, education authorities, the MFNERC, and schools within Manitoba.

Jurisdictional Control

The issue of jurisdiction over education is closely tied to self-determination and the self-government aspirations of First Nation peoples in Manitoba, even though the self-government process is largely dictated by the government of Canada. Control over educational funding,

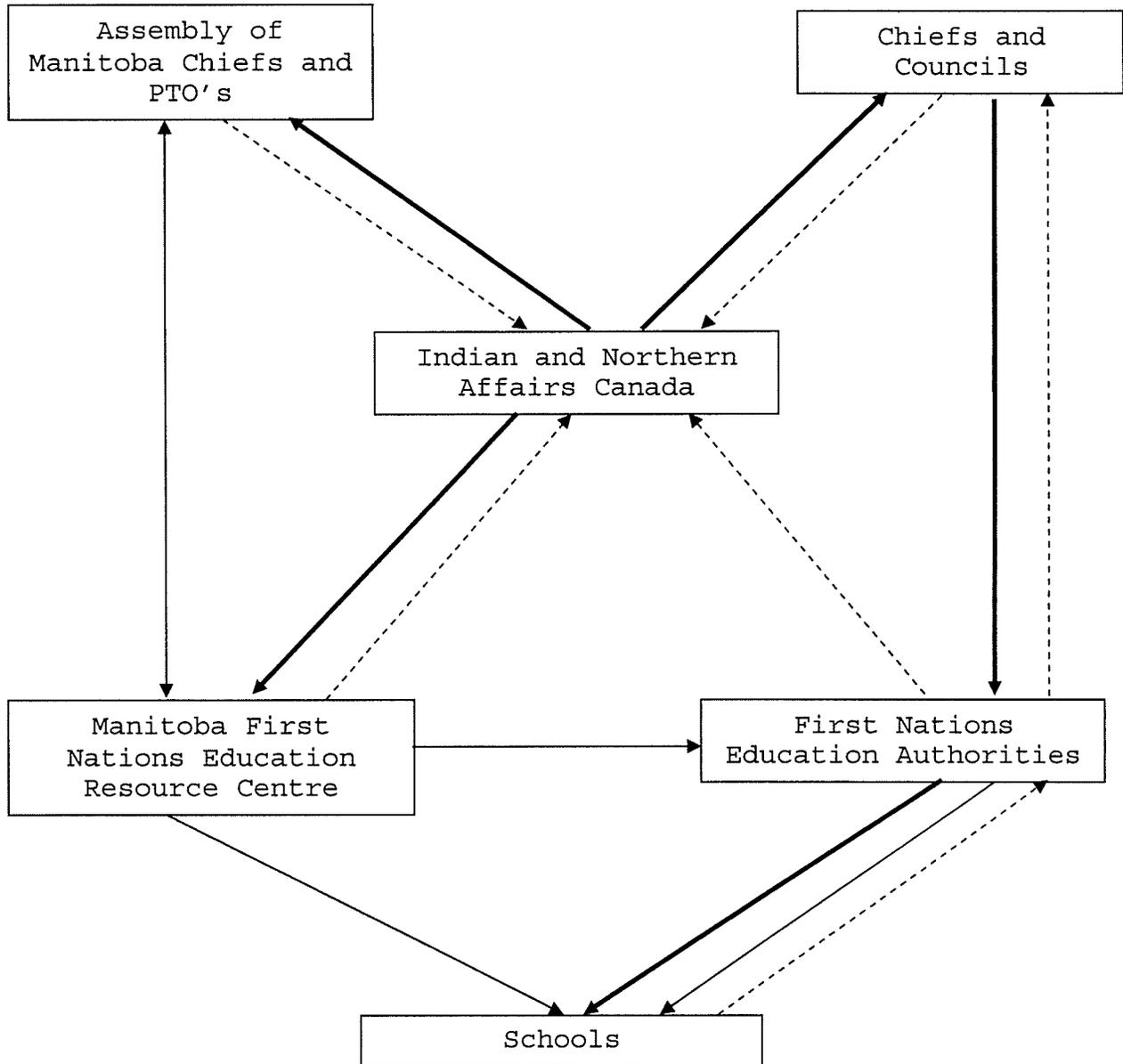
Figure 8: Flowchart of Relationships for Funding, Reporting, and Service Delivery

Key:

—————▶ = Base, New Paths, Low Cost, Special Education Funding

-----▶ = Reporting, SEP, and work plans

—————▶ = Educational services and supports



policy, administration, and programming is seen by First Nation political leaders as a major step in the direction of overall self determination (AMC, 1998). Thus, the development and administration of a student support services model within a Regional Managing Organization must evolve within the context of First Nations' self determination. It also must evolve with sensitivity to local control of education, while following the terms and conditions set out by INAC. This means that for INAC to designate RMO status to a First Nation entity, the organization, as well as the concept, would have to be supported by the AMC through band council resolutions (BCR)¹⁸, and it would have to meet the terms and conditions as outlined in the National Special Education Program Guidelines (INAC, 2003).

Moving to an alternative or enhanced model of First Nation student support services requires taking all the above political and institutional issues into consideration, not to mention a deconstruction of existing paradigms of service delivery within First Nation schools and the MFNERC. A quote that illustrates the complexity of providing province-wide support to First Nation schools and

¹⁸ BCRs are bi-law procedures within chief and council systems for establishing and enforcing local regulations.

that reflects the potential difficulties associated with this broad study, was recently made by a senior administrator from the MFNERC: *"...it's like working with 52 separate school divisions"* ... when working with First Nation schools. This quote also implies that the MFNERC service delivery could be more efficient if there were more coordination and agreement within education authorities for systemic solutions rather than the piecemeal approach that is currently in place.

But education authorities can hardly be blamed for fractured and disjointed organization, a lack of aggregation, and for protecting their territory. For a typical First Nation, education funding is the second largest overall budget item behind the administrative budget. For example, for a community such as Fisher River Cree Nation (approximate total on and off reserve population, 3000) this means that over 8 million dollars per fiscal year is dedicated to elementary, secondary, and post secondary education (FRCN Annual Report, 2006). If aggregation meant that First Nations would have their budgets re-calculated or that they would have to share any of this budget, it is understandable that they would be hesitant to participate in aggregation of schools.

INAC and First Nation representatives have long talked about aggregation on a regional or political-tribal level where First Nation schools share policy, resources, support services, and funding. In fact, aggregation is an assumption for the main policy and management frameworks being developed within the INAC Education Action Plan. As I discussed earlier in the literature review, the national policy priority areas leading to First Nation school board type services and policy authority requires aggregation at some level (INAC, 2005). For enhanced local control of education to occur First Nations require jurisdiction over policy and funding (Minister's National Working Group, 2004).

If and when the INAC Action Plan is fully developed and implemented to the satisfaction of First Nations, then perhaps First Nation schools in Manitoba can be organized into collective systems with more jurisdiction and control, separate from INAC authority. If this were to occur, then provincial First Nations educational support organizations could deal with, and systematically target resources to support, several schools with common challenges and solutions rather than 52 separate entities.

As I alluded to earlier, there is a recent precedent in B.C. for aggregation and for First Nation jurisdiction

over education. First Nations there have recently negotiated a tripartite agreement with the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), the B.C. Ministry of education, and INAC for policy and funding jurisdiction over schools (FNESC, 2006).

The National Special Education Program Guidelines

As was the case in B.C., movement to jurisdictional control in Manitoba may first occur through the transfer by INAC of the National Special Education Program (SEP) funding authority to First Nations authorities, a process which is outlined as a regional goal in the SEP manual (INAC, 2002). The SEP budget for the Manitoba region is divided into two funding streams: categorical funding represents 75% of the total budget and 25% is for indirect services, which is allocated to the MFNERC for program development (INAC, 2006).

Because it is mainly a funding agency and not a provider of programming, INAC has perpetuated the current two-tiered system within First Nation schools by using a provincial categorical funding model intended for use with communities with an economic and tax base to flow high cost special education funding to First Nations. Because it supported the two-tiered system, the categorical funding system within the SEP also may have been an underlying

cause of low educational outcomes for K - Gr.12 First Nation students. Although the document is being phased out, the high cost special education funding guidelines outlined in the INAC document, *Rising to the Challenge* (INAC, 2006), are still being used and are essentially the same ones used by the province of Manitoba. The categories of funding are the same. For example, there are level II and III categories for severe and profound emotional behavioural disorders, severe and profound multiple handicaps, autism spectrum disorders, and sensory impairments (hearing impaired/deaf, blind). However, these categories and funding procedures are not constructed and administered within the same philosophy as the province. That is, the province has an inclusive schools philosophy and the funding process is purportedly conducted within the context of supporting inclusive schools. Moreover, MECY has the authority to consolidate and coordinate legislation, funding, and programming.

One of the reasons the provincial system is difficult to adapt to band operated schools is that it is partly a property tax based system. Approximately 50% of a typical provincial school division's funding comes from the school tax levy. Embedded to different degrees within tax-based communities are checks and balances for fiduciary and

program accountability. Tax payers hold policy makers and administrators accountable for establishing systems for measuring progress and for the sustainability of social systems such as education. Tax payers are a very vocal interest group and have a monetary stake in their educational systems. As such, they have the right to demand quality and accountability and the right to expect a return on their tax investment.

Generally, there are no such similar checks and balances in First Nation education systems, mainly because there are no federal or provincial tax systems in First Nations. Other than perhaps being employed within the system, stake-holders have no monetary or economic connection to the education system. Thus, we have little influence (or incentive) in ensuring accountability, quality, and standards of service delivery. Currently, the only systems of accountability are the INAC compliance regimes, reporting requirements, and terms and conditions for funding (INAC Education Reporting Handbook, 2005).

Categorical Funding

Through the modified categorical funding system, First Nation schools are financially rewarded for identifying students with level II and level III special needs. To receive the much needed funding, schools are required by

INAC to have students assessed by clinicians using standardized assessment instruments that may be biased and therefore invalid and unreliable for use with First Nation students (Chrisjohn, 1999; Popham, 2002; Bird, 2004). To meet categorical funding requirements, schools and resource teachers spend an extraordinary amount of time identifying students for high cost special education funding and considerable effort on the application process. The only people in the system who may be benefiting from the funding process are the school psychologists who charge approximately \$600.00 per assessment (MFNERC, 2000).

The high cost special education budget represents a large proportion of the school's overall budget and it could have cascading or spin off effects within the community in terms of employment and economic development. High cost funding may be used to hire teaching assistants from within the community and may result in more money staying in the community. Because of these far-reaching implications, it is incumbent upon resource teachers and administrators to devote an exorbitant amount of time and effort to the process in order to bring the much needed funding into the school and community. The result of so much time spent on the funding process may be that criterion referenced or authentic assessment and effective

programming for many students is marginalized. The amount of time spent on low incidence funding procedures is part of the focus within the question guide for this study.

While the categorical funding system is incompatible with First Nation socioeconomic realities, a modified version, nevertheless, may have a place within a First Nation student support services model. This modified version may help to standardize procedures and promote accountability. Through document analysis and personal dialogue in this study, I will investigate the provincial categorical funding procedure to determine its benefits and drawbacks.

At this time the regional INAC office is phasing out the majority of the categorical funding model and replacing it with an "Intervention Based" funding model. The reasons for this have to do with recognizing that the categorical funding system is ethically and financially problematic (INAC, 2006). A working group of First Nation and federal stakeholders was formed to determine the pros and cons of such a model (INAC, 2006). If this INAC initiated model is based on the assumptions of inclusive education and can facilitate higher standards of service delivery and higher standards of student achievement, it may be adaptable to a student support system under First Nation jurisdiction.

Currently, MECY provides categorical student services grants with built-in accountability mechanisms for at-risk youth to provincial school divisions. For example, the emotional behavioural disorder (EBD) grant, which is an optional rather than a mandatory process for schools, is based on socioeconomic and demographic data as well as a documented need by schools. Other categorical grants available to provincial schools include the Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant, Early Behaviour Initiative Grant, Early Childhood Development Initiative, Early Literacy Intervention Initiative, and the Early Numeracy Initiative (MECY, 2005). Perhaps First Nation student support systems with a policy and programming mandate may consider a combination of student services grants and categorical funding.

*Institutional Development for First Nation Student Services
Regional Managing Organization*

Movement to a First Nations student support services model (or RMO) may include the development of alternative funding and service models which would be more sensitive and flexible to the social and economic conditions experienced by First Nation schools. The RMO may operate under the pre-supposition that student support services on First Nations require a more centralized administrative

office with highly skilled leadership and support personnel; and coordinated identification, placement, and programming supports and procedures. This central office, with perhaps regional offices, would provide and coordinate a range of student support services for First Nations in different regions of the province. As I alluded to earlier, INAC's terms and conditions for First Nation RMO status would have to be considered, along with the recent developments surrounding the Action Plan.

Following the thinking of Skrtic (2002), the organizational rationality, the functionalist approaches, and the bureaucratic assumptions of special education service delivery would be replaced with a more pragmatic service delivery model, or what Skrtic refers to as an "adhocracy" (Skrtic, 2002).

My initial thinking is that the RMO would be based on the assumptions of an "adhocracy." That is a structured, yet responsive and flexible student support services model. These assumptions are based on a culturally appropriate paradigm, a philosophy of inclusion, and a clear vision and mission of how student services is related to and supports overall educational planning and reform in First Nation schools. This RMO model would be closely aligned with overall school improvement planning and curriculum

development. In addition to providing multiple, interdisciplinary layers of supports for all students, an RMO might model, establish, and support accountability, high standards and consistent procedures for identification, placement, and programming for students with low incidence and high incidence special needs.

This may mean a move away from the organizational rationality of "special education" and all the connotations associated with it. That is, the images of a pathological, clinical, and disease based model (Skrtic, 2002). First Nation students do not need to be further marginalized or degraded by the assumptions within this type of service delivery model. A culturally appropriate service delivery model may require a student services institution to replace the job title of "Special Education Specialist" with "Student Support Specialist" or even "Inclusion Specialist."

Issues and concerns related to service delivery in First Nation schools may be consistent with Provincial systems in that there are concerns about the procedures for identifying students with special needs, efficacy of supports, and the long-term social impacts of First Nation students being identified and served by special education systems (Proactive, 1999). Through this study, I explore

these practical and theoretical issues within the context of the school community under study.

It is not the purpose of this study to look at the long-term social impacts of First Nation students being identified and served by traditional and functionalist¹⁹ special education systems. However, I think it is important to consider the long-term social, political, and economic implication of First Nations students identified and served by special education systems. These structural implications are important because there may be a correlation between involvement with special education and future rates of incarceration, dependency on social services, or even inter-generational cycles of poverty.

The themes that emerge from the narrative and other sources of data may have implications for future research into culturally appropriate service delivery that provides for the needs of all children in First Nation schools. If the resulting themes are useful and relevant, this model of service delivery may resemble one unitary system that breaks down the barriers between the current two tiered system of special and general education in First Nation schools.

¹⁹ Skrtic has identified six paradigms of service delivery: the functionalist approach, the structuralist approach, interpretivism, the humanist approach, the holistic approach, and the pragmatic approach.

This organizational construct appears to be consistent with my conclusions in the initial study. However, this framework may have to be re-formulated, or may even be incorrect, when held up to the data in this study. How a consolidation between First Nation circumstances, student services and general education would take place is what I intend to understand through this study. It is not my intention to prescribe a pre-determined solution to the complex challenges. I merely envision a general framework of what components might be considered as part of a First Nation model for student support services.

Research Design

Qualitative Principles

Qualitative principles and critical research methods may be used to bring about systemic change and to address inequality and injustice in educational programming and policy (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Qualitative research methods and critical ethnography have a long history of giving voice to the marginalized and examining the viewpoints of the oppressed, especially as they relate to issues of social and political justice (Bogdan & Biklen, 2002). Along with a de-colonizing methodology described by Tuhiwai Smith, these ideological and political aspects of

qualitative research make it especially suitable to study First Nations' perspectives and contexts.

For example, the naturalistic approach of qualitative research reveals context and helps the observer to see how behaviour is influenced by setting. In this case, the school and northern community setting for this study may offer some very revealing insights into the nature of student support service delivery. The descriptive data have the potential of providing clues that might "unlock a more comprehensive understanding (p.5)" of special education constructs, First Nation contexts, and student support services play in the overall school planning process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Through a concern with the interview process and careful attention to how people construct meaning, I resisted the temptation to put together a "puzzle whose picture I already know." I hoped to construct a "picture that takes shape as I collected and examined the parts" (p.6) of the puzzle (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Critical Ethnography

Critical ethnography, a branch of anthropology where the outsider's point of view takes precedence, focuses on and emphasizes the point of view of lived experiences of the insider to construct for the outside researcher a

critical understanding of the essential components of the systems or culture under study. Critical ethnography is concerned with power relationships and has a social change and a social justice agenda. In the context of social change for First Nations through educational reform, critical ethnography is a useful and relevant research methodology. The researcher is a participant observer and central to the area under study and contemporary ethnographers are expected to make room for a personal reflective voice, which examines their own position in relation to the research (Goldstein, 2003). Because I have ancestral and cultural connections to the community but belong to another First Nation community, and because I have a background in working with First Nation schools and communities, for this study I am both an insider and outsider. I describe in later sections of this chapter my personal connections to the community and beliefs in relation to progress and reform in K-12 First Nation schooling. This personal connection allows me to situate myself within the data collection process so that I offer a personal reflective voice and examine my own position in relation to the research.

For the applied nature of this study, I use critical ethnography, a case study design and analytical induction

to construct a framework for an interdependent and culturally effective paradigm for student support service delivery in First Nation schools. Although similar in qualitative structure and purpose to the initial course assignment, this study is different in many key aspects. The main differences involve the applied nature of this study and revision of the interview guide. Revisions to the interview guide reflect implications for institutional development, the broader parameters of the research questions, the unique nature and circumstance of this northern community, and the different governance structure of the school.

As with the initial study, I follow the same case study design and qualitative research methodology to explore the participants' perceptions of and attitudes towards the school division's student support services and the general educational environment, inclusion, and the C/C approach. To ensure validity, observation and narrative data is triangulated with analysis of school and provincial documents and procedures. The usefulness or value of this investigation is to contribute to the First Nation knowledge base regarding student support and to advance the theory and practice in First Nation special education.

A goal of qualitative research is to understand and predict using descriptive accounts and similarities and contrasts. Qualitative design focuses on a holistic view of what is being studied and data are collected in their natural occurrence (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Reporting of data is for the purposes of developing a conceptual structure; and to look for patterns, consistencies, repetitions, and manifestations pertinent to the research questions. Through this case study, consistencies may be found with the initial study and, therefore, predictability of school behaviour may be determined.

This study is also ethnographic in nature and will use "thick description" (Geertz, 1994) to examine the educational environment in its cultural context. When culture is examined from this perspective, the researcher is faced with a series of interpretations of life, of common-sense understandings, that are complex and difficult to separate from each other. The researcher's goals are to share in the meanings that the cultural participants take for granted and then to depict the new understanding for the reader and outsider. The ethnographic researcher is concerned with representation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Mino Pimatisawin (First Nation Ethics)

Broadly translated, *Mino Pimatisawin* in English means to "live a good life." It is the World View of Cree and other First Nation peoples and a whole life-long teaching and learning philosophy. The phrase and principle embodies all aspects of the physical universe and all dimensions of a human. I am not in a position to thoroughly discuss *Pimatisawin*, nor is this thesis an appropriate forum to delve into the deeper philosophical and spiritual details of our World View. For the purposes of this study, however, I can relate some basic tenets of *Pimatisawin*, which include teaching, learning, and the notion of respect.

When I think about research ethics and protocol in First Nations' contexts, I think of aspects of *Pimatisawin*²⁰ (MFNERC, 2005) as ethical protocol for my study. Because of the past reputation and negative perception of research practices in First Nation communities, I believe it is important to consider the history and impacts of such practices within this study (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; Piquemal, 2000; Kirkness 1995), and to help to balance these historical trends using First Nations ethics and *Mino Pimatisawin*. Without acknowledging the negative outcomes of

²⁰ The principle of *Pimatisawin* has recently been adopted by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) as part of its mission statement.

well-intentioned research of the past, I am concerned that this research project may not help to counter the negative perceptions of research in First Nations. As Piquemal (2002) points out:

In particular, the problem ... arises from researchers, who, working in Native communities, have been widely criticized for their disregard of local ethics, adhering only to the conventions of scientific research. This critique comes from two general perspectives. First and foremost is the opinion of many Native American people that researchers have been guilty of misappropriation of knowledge (p. 3).

The interview guide (see appendix A and later discussion) is structured so that informants have the opportunity to voice their perceptions, articulate their concerns, and speak to what they perceive as the solutions. This is consistent with MFNERC research protocol which states that any research project conducted through the MFNERC or in partnership with institutions should be community driven²¹. The MFNERC's protocol is referenced here

²¹ The MFNERC takes its direction from the communities. This includes research agendas and program and policy development.

because findings from the study may have implications for its service delivery model.

First Nations' perspectives also may include First Nations' protocol for conducting research. A culturally sensitive context for conducting research may include use of First Nations' language, which is Cree for this particular study. A cultural context also may consider First Nations' perspectives on the concepts of inclusion, instruction, learning, and disabilities. An appropriate protocol for conducting research in First Nations' communities involves ethics not only from the perspective of University ethics boards, but from the point of view of the informants (Piquemal, 2002).

Piquemal (2002) and others (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; Bogdan & Biklen, 2002) have written about how ethics considered only from the perspective of the researcher creates the "other." In the past, the "other" has been created in the way anthropologists have represented native peoples. This "other" not only affects rapport with informants, and thus the quality and sincerity of the participants' responses, but these representations can be connected to repressive colonial practices (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; Bogdan & Biklen, 2002). In this way, qualitative research has been misused to contribute to the

marginalization of native peoples, creating the "other" and making it easier to discriminate against and oppress a people different from those in power (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; Bogdan & Biklen, 2002).

As a First Nation person it would be difficult for me to create or consider the participants in the study as the "other." However, I believe it is useful to underscore these and other historical factors that have been associated with qualitative research and indigenous populations. As researchers, we need to balance the needs and protocols of Universities and funding agencies with the needs and protocols of First Nation informants.

Reciprocity

Other key aspects of protocol include concepts of non-interference and issues of reciprocity. Research, reciprocity, and respect have been issues of concern for First Nations for some time. Kirkness (1995) has argued that First Nations have often received little in exchange for participating in education-related research and, for that matter, research projects in other fields. First Nation peoples have not often benefited from being the subjects of research. In many instances, First Nation peoples have been outright exploited and left with nothing

more than the paper on which the research report is written and with no means for following up with recommendations.

It is usually the researchers who have been rewarded financially or who have had their careers advanced. Bogdan & Biklen (2002) state that:

researchers write dissertations that lead to career advancement or books that result in promotion or royalty cheques. What the subjects get from this arrangement is not as clear (p.47).

I addressed issues of reciprocity and help to balance ethics by sharing the findings and recommendations from this study with participants, while attempting to provide relevant advice and practical support for following through with any recommendations.

Noninterference

Noninterference in a cultural context refers to the non-confrontational, non-judgmental nature of many First Nation peoples. This cultural factor often is misinterpreted by the dominant society as shyness, apathy, a lack of (English) verbal ability, or just a lack of cognitive ability (Piquemal, 2002). The principle of noninterference is often at odds with the confrontational, critical conversational style of people raised and trained in the Western tradition (Piquemal, 2002). Traditionally

and historically in First Nation societies, people were not criticized even if what they said was considered to be worthless (Piquemal, 2002).

Another aspect of noninterference involves child rearing and general First Nation societal norms and interactions. Noninterference has to do with the notion that you cannot make anyone do anything. What you can do is offer them choices and state the consequences of choices. In all aspects of this study, principles of noninterference have been at the forefront, particularly in the interview process and in the analysis of the transcriptions.

Community Protocol

An appropriate protocol at the community level, depending on the community and the context, also may involve traditional or ceremonial customs such as the offering of tobacco, traditional sharing circles, smudging, prayers, honour songs, or consultation with an Elder (Piquemal, 2002). Because it is a major part of qualitative methods, my primary concern is the protocol for the recording of stories. The recording of particular stories and ceremonial customs is disrespectful and should only be done with the consent and approval of elders.

For this particular community, although aspects of the study are holistic and cultural in nature, traditional and

ceremonial protocols are not required. In the letter seeking approval, however, I did consult with the community and informants as to a local protocol for accessing people, recording of conversations, and sharing of information. It is within this First Nations' milieu of *Mino Pimatisawin* and culturally appropriate ethical considerations for conducting research that I submit this thesis.

For me, it was important that this study be undertaken with consideration and respect for cultural traditions and indigenous knowledge. As a participant-observer, an educator, and First Nation person, I have my own perspective on educational progress in First Nation contexts. It would be easy to articulate what I think needs to be done. However, one of the characteristics of qualitative research is to give voice to those not usually heard, in particular the marginalized and excluded segments of society. The perspectives of the informants are used to construct and articulate a First Nations' perspective on a culturally effective paradigm for student support services.

The open-ended nature of qualitative research allows for the possibility of learning something not originally planned or finding out something unexpected. In this sense, the research plan for this study was a guideline or roadmap of how I intended to conduct the study and it described a

bare minimum of what I expected to learn and encounter. If I had one expectation, I had hoped to find out what needs to be in place to allow for the integration of inclusive special education and cultural appropriateness within a framework of a student services model so that all students' needs are met. The ultimate outcome of this study and proposed model would be to help students achieve or realize *Mino Pimatisawin*.

Chapter 4: Findings, Implications, and Critical Ethnography
Community and School Profile

I first visited the community where I conducted my study on December 11, 2004. There were some feelings of anticipation visiting for the first time the community where my ancestors originated. As I drove north, I wondered who I might be related to and how I might be perceived as one of the descendants of the "boat people," a term of endearment for the break-away group who left this northern community in the late 1800's for a farming life in the south and to establish what is now known as *Ochekwi Sipi Ininew*, or Fisher River Cree Nation (INAC, 1919). I have been back to the community four times since then, including the data collection trip of May 31, 2007, and have met many educational and community leaders. After I informed one of the local historians of where I was from, he said, "welcome home," and we talked about the connections between our communities, joked about the unsuccessful "farming" venture in Fisher River, and found out we were related through marriage.

Driving around the reserve on the night of my first visit and enjoying the Cree language on the local radio station, I had a reminder of what is for me a prevalent issue in inclusive special education: the use of

exclusionary language. I listened to the announcer on the local radio station announce in Cree and English the schedule of performances for the Christmas concert at the local school. After announcing the performances of the elementary and middle school classes, she then announced in English that the "special education class" would perform. After getting over the initial disappointment of hearing such terminology, a few thoughts occurred to me: I wondered why she did not use a Cree term for "special education" and what was meant by, "special education class". Was it a behaviour support class? Was it a developmental class for students with intellectual disabilities? Whatever type of class it was it sounded exclusionary. I wondered how the listening audience, students and parents in particular, felt about the use of the term and about being publicly designated as a "special education class"?

As I reflected on this experience, I knew that the subtleties of some English terms and their associated concepts do not translate easily for first language Cree speakers. It is also true that there are no Cree words for some English concepts and that some Cree concepts and worldviews cannot be adequately described in English (MECY, 1996). Something may have been lost in the translation and

language differences, and this may have contributed to my perceptions of exclusionary sounding language.

In addition to the language issues, these first impressions of the community taught me that in many band controlled schools, as in many provincial schools, there may be similar assumptions and conceptions of differences and separation that are may be associated with special education services. These assumptions and related exclusionary attitudes may have been illustrated by the school personnel who provided the announcer with the concert schedule.

In my experience as a special education specialist for First Nation schools and as a teacher in provincial schools, I have noticed that personnel in both jurisdictions do not use enough inclusive, person-first language. Perhaps this attitude, which is unconscious for the most part, contributes to the two-tiered system in place in many school systems, a divide between general and special education that may impede an inclusive and consultative-collaborative approach (Gartner & Lipsky, 1989; Skrtic, 2002). In this sense, provincial schools and First Nation schools may be more alike than different. Perhaps through the observation and interview process and an analysis of the various data, the reasons for the use of

exclusionary language will be revealed. Further investigation may reveal that the "special education class" may sound more exclusionary than it actually is.

The Community

This study involves the community elementary school, which is one of the feeder schools for the large high school which was recently opened and named in recognition of a slain community member. This community has opted to not exercise its right to local control of education in the usual way. I outline the specific arrangements for the administration and governance of the school in later sections of this chapter. The reasons for this, as well as the perceived benefits and drawbacks of such an arrangement, is examined in this study.

The community is approximately 800 km. north of Winnipeg. In keeping with qualitative principles²² for not studying your immediate and extended workplace, this community is not formally serviced by my employer, the MFNERC. As per its mandate, the MFNERC provides services to locally controlled schools. Services for other First Nation

²² Studying your immediate work environment is not recommended in some traditions of qualitative research because of ethical considerations related to privacy and obtaining trustworthy data. It is, however, appropriate in other traditions such as action research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

schools not under local control are provided when time and resources allow.

Unlike some First Nation communities, there is a strong language base, with most community members speaking the Swampy Cree language, "n" dialect (INAC, 2005). In terms of population, this community is the second largest First Nation in the province with approximately 5000 on-reserve residents. There also is an adjacent non-treaty community where approximately 1000 Métis and non-First Nation people reside.

There is a rich history of the community contributing to the early development of the fur trade and the Hudson's Bay Company (this also may be looked at as leading to the economic infrastructure and resource exploitation for the colonization and settlement of the province of Manitoba). In terms of economic and social progress, this community is considered to be one of the more progressive First Nations not only in the north but in the province as a whole. As with all First Nation communities, however, the standard of living is well below that enjoyed by most other Canadians, in spite of social and economic progress during the last twenty years.

In terms of economic development, the community has many amenities such as a large shopping mall with banking

services, a Northern Store, several restaurants, and other retailers. In addition to the mall, there is a new hotel and a large community complex with many facilities for sports and recreation located on the reserve. This large complex also houses a restaurant, a video lottery establishment, various offices, and the local radio station. The economic base also includes the usual industries associated with the north: tourism, trapping, fishing, and logging industries. The Federal Government, Manitoba Hydro, the band office, and educational institutions provide employment to many community members. Unemployment statistics for this community remain around 70% (INAC, 2004).

The non-treaty side of the community provides additional employment opportunities and has many businesses including hotels, stores, and gas stations.

Complementing a new school is a strong educational infrastructure, including a Brandon University teacher education program, The University College of the North, Keewatin Community College, and the administrative sub-offices of the provincial school division.

The Schools

The main school, which opened in September of 2004 and is one of the largest and best equipped facilities located

anywhere in the province let alone a First Nation, serves a mainly high school student population. It is an impressive building, designed in the shape of an eagle and engineered according to principles of Universal Design in order to be accessible by all community members. It is home to beautiful artwork depicting Cree and community values, site of centuries old artifacts representing community history, and location of the administrative sub-offices of the school division area. The school and the two other schools in the immediate vicinity make up one Area of the provincial school division. The elementary school, where three of the four initial interviews took place, is approximately 10 kilometres from the larger school. It is an older two story building, well maintained much like some of the schools in the inner city of Winnipeg.

In terms of administration, the area has a superintendent, student services coordinator, several principals and vice-principals, and several resource teachers. For the 05-06 school year, the total student population was 1236. K - Gr. 3 students numbered 246, gr. 4 - 8 students numbered 489, and gr. 9 -12 students numbered 512 (INAC, 2006).

The Interview Guide

I had hoped to interview special and general education personnel, such as a divisional administrator, divisional consultant, school administrator, clinician (preferably a psychologist), and at least one resource teacher, classroom teacher, teaching assistant, and parent depending on who was interested and available (see Appendix A, Recruitment Letter). I would also have preferred to interview more than one teacher at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Unfortunately, there were no classroom teachers available for the interview process. Interviews were with two resource teachers, the FASD coordinator (who was also the previous Coordinator of Student Special Services for the school division), and the Principal of the elementary school. They took place within the main school building and within the offices of the FASD coordinator, and each interview lasted approximately one hour. The informant's identities are protected by pseudonyms in the analytic induction section of this chapter.

The interview guide stemmed from a main question of the relationship between special and general education and includes sub questions with probes, along with open ended questions to elicit commentary on general perceptions of student support models; and perceptions of and attitudes

towards identification, placement, and programming. The interview guide also was used to elicit commentary on and perceptions of inclusion and the C/C model, on cultural and linguistic influences on service, and on general concerns regarding special education service delivery. Additionally, the interview guide contains general questions on demographics and statistics, such as the school's nominal roll²³, funded students, budget, staffing, administration, etc. To uncover or interpret educational philosophy, the question guide includes questions related to the values and beliefs on which service delivery is based.

Analysis of the transcripts yielded information on procedures and programming and on the impact of community factors (cultural and socioeconomic) on service delivery. With the two administrators, I asked more probing and higher level questions related to the social impacts of identification, placement, and programming (see Appendix B, Question Guide). Member checking was conducted for clarification and to validate and ensure the accuracy of the narrative data.

To ensure the data are trustworthy and a true and full picture of the constructs under investigation, interviews

²³ INAC uses a Nominal Roll funding formula to determine the amount of base funding a school receives. Nominal Roll is the number of students registered in the school on September 30 (INAC, 2006).

and observations were triangulated with analysis of documents. Procurement and analysis of school and divisional documents revealed consistencies between policies, procedures, plans, and records at the school level and the divisional level. Particular documents under study included the annual division action plan, provincial report on student support plan, divisional student support policy, and school-based policy and procedures for identification, placement and programming. Procedures for document analysis involved the use of a checklist for: a) cultural integration, inclusive theory, and practice; b) consistency with provincial legislation on special needs and; c) reference to overall school improvement planning.

Supplementary sources of data include observational data using field notes and pictures. Procedures and practices under observations, conducted within most areas of the two schools, include student placement options, social and emotional supports, instructional and assessment factors, code of conduct and discipline issues, and the general educational environment within the school.

Narrative Data and Analytic Induction

The first interview took place with "Cheryl", the first of two resource teachers I interviewed for this study. Cheryl is the primary-early years resource teacher

for Nursery to Grade 2. At the time of the interview she was just completing her first year as a resource teacher, a position for which she had not had any formal training. I would never have known this if she had not told me, because she spoke very knowledgeably about her role and about the underlying assumptions of resource teacher programming. In terms of the relationship between special and general education, Cheryl spoke about how kids on IEPs (individual education plans) work on separate programs that are "interwoven" within the regular classroom program and that classroom teachers adapt instruction and assessment for these students.

Cheryl stressed that there are no segregated programs, but there is a Kindergarten to Grade 1 transition program for students with delays in written and oral English language:

"There is no special ed. class. They are all integrated. We have one special program that we call a K-1 transition room. And that is because we find, I mean we find when our kids come into nursery, our testing shows that they have delays, huge delays, in mostly language, oral language and concept, often of two or more years."

It is possible that some students, instead of having "huge delays" in English, they are simply at an appropriate level of learning English as an additional language. Because of funding adjustments for socio-economic factors, all students within the school are considered to have level I special needs and the funding that is attached to this category is used for "growth plans", and for some students this is in addition to their IEPs. Some specialized programming for students with IEPs includes the "Gross Motor Program" with the physical education teacher who, interestingly, has a resource teaching background. This program provides extended group physiotherapy support for students who are on the divisional Physiotherapist's caseload. These are typically students with FASD or with other physiological needs. Other diagnostic and assessment procedures include the use of DIAL (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning) screening, observation surveys, running records, and standardized assessment instruments such as the Brigance Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills - Revised (Brigance Publishing, 2006).

Early identification is a re-occurring theme and all informants spoke of its importance for preventing later school failure. Cheryl indicated that teaching assistants

are a crucial part of the instructional team, along with the classroom teacher, for implementing the early intervention plans, the individualized supports, and the growth plans. The classroom teacher and the resource teacher are responsible for developing the goals and objectives, selecting the materials and strategies, and for measuring progress.

The referral process for resource teacher assistance involves continuous monitoring of student's growth plans, "red flags" and concerns raised through screening in Kindergarten, and assistance request forms describing severity and type of problem.

A typical day for Cheryl is "crazy and really, really busy". She was just on her way out to supervise a field trip when I interviewed her. We had to cut it short to about 35 minutes so that she could catch the bus. She spends a lot of her time overseeing teaching assistant schedules, ensuring teaching assistants are a good fit for particular students, and attending student support team meetings with other resource teachers and administration. There are two full time resource teachers and one half time resource teacher for 350 K-Gr.5 students. This is not including the principal who has extensive formal training in the area of inclusive special education. Divisional

supports and personnel include a behaviour clinician, a deaf and hard of hearing consultant, and a speech and language pathologist (SLP).

Programming developed by the speech and language pathologists includes games that involve songs and rhyming as well as the "LIFT" program. LIFT is an acronym for listening fitness and it addresses central auditory processing issues using microphones and headsets. Teaching assistants are trained in speech and language interventions and they work one-on-one or with small groups of students with severe to profound communication disorders to implement these strategies.

In spite of her lack of formal training, Cheryl spoke with a lot of authority on the subject of inclusive special education. She said that inclusion can work, but indicated that teachers were "scared", for instance, to have an autistic student in their class. Cheryl "comforts" and "holds the hand" of classroom teachers while going over the supports and strategies outlined in the student's IEP. To strengthen the environment for inclusive education, teachers need "loads and loads" of PD (professional development) on the principles, assumptions, and implementation of inclusive special education. The administrative personnel, whom I interviewed at the end of

the day, are "very supportive of the philosophy of inclusion and will find the money for teachers to carry out programming" that facilitates inclusion.

"Nancy"

The second resource teacher with whom I spoke is responsible for grades 3-5. "Nancy" is one of four teachers from this community who have formal resource teacher training through the RISE (Resource and Inclusive Special Education) program. Two graduates of the RISE program work at this school and two more work at the high school. The RISE program is for First Nation teachers working in First Nation schools and was funded, coordinated and delivered in partnership with the University of Manitoba and the MFNERC.

On the relationship between special and general education, Nancy spoke of the evolution and the differences that she has seen during her teaching career and even during her own school years. The main difference is that students with special needs are now included in age appropriate classrooms with the proper supports. Whereas in the past, Nancy had observed and experienced exclusion and segregation of First Nation students who were difficult to teach for various physical, sensory, or psychological exceptionalities. There are more inclusive supports in place in schools these days, but in this particular

community there are no supports in place for students once they leave school. This was echoed by the two senior administrators with whom I later spoke.

To enhance inclusive programming and to strengthen the philosophy of inclusion, teachers discuss inclusive strategies with resource teachers during grade group meetings and presenters and speakers are brought in to provide more inclusive strategies. There also is early dismissal for "Thinking Thursdays", where staff debriefs and plans for professional development, school improvement, and curricular and student support programming.

Some of the identification processes that Nancy talked about included Tele-health support from the Clinic for Alcohol and Drug Affected Children in Winnipeg and an arrangement with the Awasis Agency, the child protection and family services agency for northern communities, for attendance support and monitoring.

In terms of school board politics, it is very "political" with the First Nation school board members influencing the overall policy and direction of the school division. As far as local control and the Band taking over the administration and programming of the schools located on reserve, that proposal was voted down because the community members did not have confidence in the political

and educational leadership and were concerned about financial mismanagement. However, Nancy did indicate that the Band will eventually move to local control when the community is "good and ready", independent of the school division. For local control of education to become a reality, the community needs more young educated people, which Nancy indicated is occurring on a steady basis.

Nancy's day-to-day activities include managing a caseload of 17 level II and III students, working with a small group of grade five boys for reading and social skills; as well as all the paperwork associated with IEPs, scheduling teaching assistants, and selecting supplies and material for programming.

Interestingly, the Seven Teachings of the Ojibway Clan System is one of the ways that the school consolidates traditional teaching approaches within an inclusive philosophy. As part of implementation, Nancy is in a group of teachers who tell stories to the students and community that relate to the Seven Teachings. These stories are broadcast over the local radio station in the evening in order for the students to understand the traditional concepts of respect and truth in all areas of their lives. To begin implementation, a presenter was brought into the school to do a workshop on the Seven Teachings. All

teachers and participants in the workshop were provided with resource binders that contained, among other things, suggestions for reinforcing the Seven Teachings through monthly assemblies and for involving the community. This is interesting because The Seven Teachings of the Ojibway Clan System originated in the south in Anicinabe territory. However, these teachings and values are universal and can apply to any First Nation context, northern Cree communities or otherwise.

Some barriers to inclusion involve resistance on the part of teachers from the Eastern provinces. They often come from middle class backgrounds with no experience working in First Nation schools. Nancy said that they are sometimes judgmental and their collaborative skills are lacking:

"...that's what I was just going to comment on- like some of these teachers we have in our community they don't know. Some of these teachers come from (the) east. They don't know the background of, like what that kid goes through at home, like the social factors this kid is facing, maybe (their) parents are alcoholics or they're under poverty. There's (sic) a lot of factors out there with these

kids and sometimes teachers don't tend to look into the backgrounds before they start making judgments. I think that's one of the barriers I see - like they're not the same race and they don't know. They don't know the difference."

Nancy spoke extensively about the socio-economic conditions that impact the school. From overcrowding and inadequate housing, to the intergenerational effects of residential schools, to the health and diet issues that affect community members, there are many issues related to poverty that the school must consider and accommodate.

Areas within the student services model that need to be enhanced include more special services consultants, more support for differentiated instruction and sensory stimulation; and more support for the Cree language, story telling, and Elder involvement.

"Colleen"

The third informant, who was the previous Student Special Services Coordinator for the Area, is presently Coordinator for the Fetal Alcohol Project. Four years ago, "Colleen" initiated this collaborative effort between the school, Child and Family Services (Awasis Agency), the school division, and Manitoba Education Citizenship and

Youth. This program has been a model for other First Nation communities and has resulted in a preventative FASD curriculum for grades 5-8. There also is a teacher's handbook that outlines strategies for alcohol affected students. The curriculum and the handbook help to increase awareness of programming considerations and acceptance of students with FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum of Disorders).

The school has become a more secure, safe, and accepting environment, and students with FASD have a greater sense of belonging due to the establishment and maintenance of the FASD Project. However, inclusive programming becomes more of a problem in high school because high school teachers are more subject oriented and do not see the inclusion of students with special needs as their responsibility.

Inclusion works very well in the elementary school under study and, according to Colleen, one gets a "good feeling" when going into the school:

"They have lots of good support services over there and they've got a philosophy in that school of inclusion and of all kids working together. You can feel it when you walk in a building and get sort of an atmosphere of the place. You get a good feeling or you get a

tense feeling or whatever? When you walk into (the) school, it's a good, friendly feeling. The kids talk to you. You have kids that come up to you in the hallway, 'Hi, how are you today.' <laughs> It's nice. It's a good school."

The FASD program also includes training on other spectrum disorders sometimes associated with FASD, such as ADHD or EBD. Colleen pointed out that the strategies intended for students with spectrum disorders are also very effective and relevant to students without any diagnosed condition or disorder.

In terms of governance of the school, there are 11 members of the school board from both the treaty side and non treaty side of the community. However, there are more appointed and elected members from the treaty side and they tend to dominate in terms of policy initiatives. There is a tuition agreement in place with INAC, the Band, and the school division that allows for the governance and administration of the school. But the school board hires personnel for all positions and has the final say for policy decisions for the school division.

Although it receives federal funding for the operation of several First Nation schools, the school division is

very dependent on the federal funding it receives for this particular community. It is dependent because this is the largest community with the largest schools and student population. It is therefore in the school division's best interests to support the First Nation school board members and any policy direction that they choose to pursue.

Colleen however, indicated that she was not aware of all the educational funding programs that are provided by INAC, or whether the school division receives this funding. The *New Paths* funding, for example is a basic program that is provided to all First Nation schools, whether they are under local control or under the control of a provincial school division (INAC, 2002).

I asked Colleen for her thoughts on a First Nation authority or mandate for student services in band-operated schools. She has conducted school evaluations on a contract basis, which are to be conducted every five years according to INAC funding agreements, for First Nations in the past. During the evaluation process she was struck by the "lack of accountability". She also found during the evaluations that high cost funding for First Nation schools is "adequate, but whether that funding gets to the child is questionable".

Accountability, of course, is a basic principle of any funding organization and Colleen indicated that a "bigger organization" with policy authority would have to have checks and balances to ensure transparency and to ensure the public funding does translate into specialized materials and resources for students with special needs.

"...so if you had an organization of resource teachers or Special Education Board or something that worked with all fifty two schools, then you would have the clout to be able to say, or to ask the questions even, "Where's the money for this wheelchair" or "Why don't you have a sign language program in your school when you have three deaf children and we're giving you money for this. Why isn't it happening?" They need somebody who could ask those questions and get proper answer for it."

The school division has a "structure" and systems for accountability and transparency. Colleen said that a First Nation authority would need to provide extensive professional development around interagency planning for students with level III special needs. Many of these students have pervasive and persistent emotional and

behavioural difficulties and require "Circle of Care" plans, which in itself is a very First Nation oriented process (MECY, 2000). Classroom teachers also would require training on the consultative collaborative process and its underlying assumptions.

In speaking more about identification and referral, Colleen indicated that identification of students with special needs has quadrupled due to "refined and improved" procedures. This does not mean, however, that the system cannot be improved and some students are misdiagnosed or undiagnosed and "fall through the cracks". Other factors that contribute to the high rate of identification include better teacher training and lower teacher-student ratio. Psycho-educational assessments also are used for more than acquiring level II or III funding. The school psychologist provides follow-up and input to the IEP process, as well as input into the development of programs for self-esteem and emotional well-being.

Student support team meetings made up of the principal, special services consultant, and the guidance counselor are not as coordinated as they once were when Colleen was with the school division:

"resource teachers and special services consultants were looked upon for many

years as educational leaders, but they no longer have the support and authority to make decisions and to take a leadership role. This is too bad because they are master teachers, team leaders, and liaison people for not just special needs kids but for all kids and all teachers".

There seems to be a lack of leadership for interdependent planning with resource teachers and this leads to a break down in the child-centered planning process and to team members not having confidence in one another.

A First Nation authority hinges on the approval of administration. All principals from all 55 schools need to be behind it: "The principals are key because you need to do the groundwork and look at it as a long-term project. People need to see the big picture and that's where you run into problems". People tend to work in isolation and not concern themselves with systemic progress.

"Debra"

One person involved with many systemic initiatives within the school division is the principal, who is my final informant for this thesis. "Debra" has been the principal here for three years. Prior to this position she

was the school's vice-principal. She also was one of the RISE students in 2003-2004. Debra reiterated many of the other informant's comments about early intervention, divisional supports, and the need for professional development. She elaborated more on data gathering and measuring the effectiveness of various programs. According to the charting and analysis of data and assessment results, there has been marked improvement in all the areas targeted for intervention (e.g., early intervention for social skills and English language enrichment).

Because the data indicated a great number of students with level I special needs and students with significant delays in academic and social learning, they were used to inform and rationalize the early intervention initiatives. The data also are informing the overall school improvement plan:

"...so that's what we do, we use data to get to our school plan, and then as a matter of fact, we're planning for next year already, June 11th, so by the end of June, I'll know exactly what next year's going to look like. You know, because-- Yeah, from our plans and (analysis) of the data."

Objectives and strategies within the school plan include training for teaching assistants in the implementation of speech and language interventions and the use of psychological services on a school wide basis. Examples of school wide psychological services include clinician input into the development and implementation of social skills training, behaviour intervention planning, and programs for self esteem and self concept.

The community rather than the school division provides direction and support for early intervention for English language development and social skills. The school holds regular conferences with parents, and staff presents and demonstrates activities and strategies for English language enrichment at home. In turn, the parents advocate on behalf of the school to the community leaders for additional funding for early intervention.

Debra echoed the same jurisdictional issues and arrangements as the other informants. The community brings in more funding for the school division than any other community; therefore, they have "a lot to say" in what programs are initiated. For instance, Chief and Council have "dictated that a character building initiative" be developed and implemented for the schools located on the reserve. This is in response to a perceived notion in the

community that youth are straying away from community teachings and values.

For character building, the schools tried the "Virtues Project" program, a program co-founded by the American psychotherapist, Linda Kavelin-Popov but, because of linguistic, social, and academic factors, it was difficult for the kids to grasp. Instead, Debra decided that the elementary school would adapt and concentrate on the Seven Teachings in order to develop character (Benton-Benai, 1988):

"...and it's a really good program, you know, on paper. But when it comes down to apply, it's really, really difficult for young kids to grasp it, right? So I had to kind of make- - for me, I like to try out programs, once, and if they don't really work then I try and find a way to make them work. So the virtues were a good idea, and they didn't really work in the school the way I had hoped, so what I did was I said well, let's concentrate on the Southern 7 Teachings, so now we do the Southern Teachings to develop character. So it's going really well; I find the kids are more ... the kids are great, and they seem to

be more respectful, they have more empathy, their social skills are way better than they were last year.

At the time of the interview the school was dealing with bullying using the Seven Teachings. Every month, the school focuses on one of the teachings. The month of the interview it was "Truth", and in the following month the teaching was to be "Honesty". To Debra, the Seven Teachings make more sense than the 52 or so virtues outlined in the Virtues Project program.

Debra spoke of inclusion as being more than special needs students "just being in the school"; they are included as part of the day-to-day activities as much as possible. The school creates a climate of acceptance and belonging and students with severe special needs are provided with appropriate supports and accessibility, such as a wheelchair accessible playground structure:

"I find the kids-- and it's not even where they're in the school and just sitting them in the corner, that's, to me, that's no inclusion. To me, it's them being part of the day-to-day stuff as much as possible. Now, I understand that they can't be part of everything, but they are part of most of the day, and that's good,

depending on the student, of course. And for me inclusion is seeing that, and seeing the students communicate with them, and making sure those kids are not teased, and that they are a part of it. Making sure that they are not treated differently, that's my biggest thing, because, you know, they should never be treated differently. And, you know, one of the things we're fund raising for is a play structure where some of our wheelchair kids can get on to. Very costly, though, it's taking us a long time to fund raise, but eventually..."

Educational assistants are used to create independence, rather than dependence, for students who require extensive individualized programming.

The school has the flexibility to use high cost funding for programs that facilitate inclusion for students with severe disabilities and, at the same time, benefit all students in the school. For example, the school will be hiring a music teacher as part of its early intervention program for English language enrichment. The music program will be provided to all students in the school.

The school mission and vision statement is currently being updated with community input to reflect an inclusive

philosophy and the direction of the current school leadership. Debra's professional beliefs became very evident as the interview went on:

"I think every (educational) administrator should have a special education background."

I asked Debra if she saw anything wrong with the way kids are identified and funded in the provincial system. She said the level II and III funding process can be stigmatizing because the school "has to paint such a horrible picture of a student in order to get funding". At the same time, however, Debra can see the point of the funding agency and can understand that a rationale has to be established and that there has to be a system of checks and balances. As the previous informant said, the identification of special needs keeps growing and there needs to be a more comprehensive and a more holistic process for providing student support services in First Nations. She sees the MFNERC initiatives for speech and language and resource teacher training as a crucial step in the development of an effective model for student support services for First Nation students. There are approximately 50 level II and III funded students in the school out of a total population of 350, this represents 15% of the total

student population identified and funded for severe to profound special needs.

The early intervention programs for English language enrichment and social skills that all informants spoke of are intended to reduce future referrals to the resource program. The major factors for low emergent literacy and school readiness are a lack of English language enrichment and stimulation in the home and, sadly, the increasing loss of the Cree language by the younger generation. Because of a wide range of abilities and the low literacy levels, teachers do a lot of small group instruction where they use differentiated instruction techniques.

When we talked about the establishment of a First Nation organization for student services, Debra suggested that a needs assessment may need to be conducted and that a team may need to be developed to increase awareness of the need for, and the types of, services such an organization can provide. This team can present the needs assessment data to INAC for the purposes of seeking support and adequate funding. Meetings should also take place with an organization such as the Child Guidance Clinic in order to establish policy and programming and to create alliances and mutually beneficial relationships. A data base would need to be established in order to track and analyze type,

frequency, and management of services. Looking at the types of student services models that are in place in First Nation communities, such as Frontier School Division's regional model, should be a part of the development process. Finally, a presentation to INAC and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs should be made with a strong message of, "we're all in this together and we need to help each other".

Implications for Band-operated Schools

A critical analysis of the data and support services must be conducted in the context of the study's purpose and initial research question, as well as its underlying assumptions of inclusion, interdependence, and indigenous practices. I think it also is relevant to do an analysis in reference to the new provincial legislation on Appropriate Educational Programming (MECY, 2007). It makes the most sense for me to use the following questions to organize this analysis:

- i) How does the data address or contradict the initial research question and its underlying assumptions?*
- ii) Does the data outline a clear consolidation of indigenous and de-*

colonizing practices with western-based educational constructs?

iii) Are the data reflective of initial assumptions around holistic services and First Nation epistemologies?

iv) How does the feedback from the two senior administrators help to construct a conceptual framework for inclusive, institutional services?

v) In terms of Appropriate Educational Programming, does school programming include mandated IEPs and BIPs, a Safe Schools Charter, and regulations for suspension and expulsion of students?

vi) Is the provincial funding that the school has access to comparable to funding for Band-operated schools?

The research question again was:

How can innovative administrative and programming aspects of a provincial student services model be consolidated with First Nation contexts and epistemologies to reorient and enhance inclusive programming in band operated

*schools and for the development of
institutional service providers?*

The patterns and reoccurring themes in the narrative data re-affirm and address the research question, as well as contradict some of its assumptions. Comments by three of the four informants address aspects of the research question and clearly illustrate a consolidation of Western and First Nation approaches for student support and school planning. Programming and administration are consistent with MECY policies and regulations for inclusion, while the political influence of the community members for educational programming, and a strong interdependence between general and special education further underscore this consolidation. Interdependence and inclusiveness are exemplified by the growth plans for all students, the early intervention programming, and the specialized services that are intended for students with severe special needs but benefit all students as well. I appreciated what Cheryl had to say regarding how individual or separate programs are "interwoven" with the regular curriculum and within the regular classroom.

One of the systemic supports was the Seven Teachings initiative, a good example of culturally responsive student support that is adapted to different degrees for different

exceptionalities. The Seven Teachings appears to have been implemented in a very systematic manner because staff was in-serviced and provided with follow-up to ensure sustainability of the program. While cultural programs such as the Cree language and Elder programs mentioned by Nancy are usually not considered within the realm of inclusive special education, it does not mean that they are outside of a student services model that is interrelated to overall school programming and improvement. I feel it is safe to infer that these cultural supports are all very good examples of how multiple and holistic levels of supports can facilitate inclusion and improved learning outcomes for all students.

The identification and placement process that was consistently mentioned also is inclusive and allows for early intervention so that students' social, emotional and academic needs are addressed early in order to prevent future problems. The process is perhaps reflective of the training and experience of the principal in inclusive education, and the consultative collaborative approach for resource teacher programming. This process is consistent with the procedures outlined in the School Handbook and reflects the divisional special needs policy for referral and identification.

Contradictions

Colleen's statements on *adequate funding and improved identification* are contradictory to my original assumptions. One of my main assumptions had to do with the fact that for many students special education identification is a function of inadequacies in general education and school-wide and classroom-based programming. My other main assumption is that Band-operated schools are under-funded in comparison to schools in provincial jurisdictions.

Improved Identification

Colleen indicated that identification of special needs has quadrupled within the community over that last few years. As I alluded to earlier, special needs identification is usually higher in schools in lower socioeconomic circumstances, which obviously includes Band-operated schools. To receive much needed special education funding, these schools are forced to identify students who may be under-achieving due to gaps or mismatches between learning and instruction, rather than any formally diagnosed disorder. These schools are under-serviced for student support, programming and administrative support, which can also result in inappropriate referral and identification for high cost special needs and below

average student achievement scores. At the same time though, teacher skill and knowledge for assessment procedures have improved in Band-operated schools, while the incidence of physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities is higher in communities with gaps in health care services and low levels of education. Therefore, it may be more a combination of these factors rather than any one particular reason that have led to increased identification of level II and III special needs.

The perceived lack of accountability mentioned by Colleen, and how this sometimes results in special educational funding being misappropriated, is perhaps an inaccurate conjecture. Although some educational funding may be used for emergency purposes, this may not be so much a question of accountability; rather, it may be more a result of educational funding having to be re-profiled by Chief and Council to other areas of operations that are under-funded to begin with. Expenditures for base education funding are at the discretion of Chief and Council. However, high cost funding is targeted funding and there are compliance and auditing procedures that monitor and track specific high cost special education expenditures (INAC, 1996). Colleen was perhaps unaware of this.

First Nation schools have special education policies in place but most of them, for a variety of funding, technical and governance reasons, are not as comprehensive as the school division's. First Nation Special Education policies are intended to protect the interests of the public and the most vulnerable members of the community, as well as ensure transparency and accountability. Should First Nations ever achieve jurisdictional control over special education policy and funding, local policy should be better resourced and more comprehensive.

Adequate Funding

The school is much better funded than Band-operated schools because they have access to several provincial grants. These include categorical grants for: transportation; special needs (level II and level III); English as an Additional Language; Aboriginal Academic Achievement; Early Childhood Development Initiative; Early Literacy Initiative; Early Numeracy; and Middle Years Experiential Learning. In addition, most provincial schools receive the following: Base Support; Equalization Support; Capital Support; and several other sources of revenue and funding (MECY, 2008).

This particular division may not receive base funding from MECY because INAC nominal roll funding goes to Chief

and Council who then disburse it to the Division. However, the other categorical grants and streams of funding are available to the Division, in addition to the funding it receives from INAC through Chief and Council.

According to INAC terms and conditions for funding for band operated schools, schools are mandated to provide programming and services similar or equal to the nearest provincial jurisdiction (INAC, 2007). This appears to be an unrealistic expectation in light of the existing inequities in nominal roll (base) and high cost funding for band operated schools. How can First Nation schools be expected to provide the level of services similar or equal to provincial schools when we are not provided with funding that is similar or equal to these same schools?

It is generally accepted that Band-operated schools are under-serviced and under-funded in comparison to provincial schools. It is for this reason that INAC, in consultation with National and Regional First Nation stakeholders, has initiated a Band Operated Funding Formula (BOFF) review with the intention of addressing these funding inequities (INAC, 2005).

Document Analysis and Provincial Reporting

The School Handbook for 2006-2007 includes a large section on teacher responsibilities and procedures for

students with mild, moderate to severe special needs. These procedures are very important for illustrating the interrelatedness of general and special education. I want to therefore emphasize as many of them as possible as an example of how inclusive theory and paradigms of service delivery are translated into practice. Taken directly from the School Handbook, these responsibilities include:

Teacher Responsibilities RE: L1, L2, L3 STUDENTS

- a) Modify/adapt exams, tests, assignments to meet needs of student.*
- b) Ensure that students with special needs are supervised at all times (i.e. lunch, recess, transition between classes, going to the bus).*
- c) Develop, implement, and monitor lesson plans that reflect the IEP or growth plan (option A)*
- d) Develop Option B's with the other grade group teachers. Option B means an alternative plan for what EAs (educational assistants) can do when the student they are assigned to is absent. This may be completed with the other teachers in the grade group so that the needs of all students can be considered.*

These are just some of the responsibilities for classroom teachers that are outlined in the Handbook.

Other responsibilities have to do with accepting responsibility for teaching all students, asking for information and training related to students' special needs, and implementing strategies suggested by specialists.

Responsibilities for educational assistants (EAs) and resource teachers also are outlined.

Responsibilities for EAs include understanding their role in fostering independence and inclusion, documenting student progress, participating in the IEP process, and following conflict resolution procedures.

Resource teacher responsibilities include:

- a) *Coordinating grade group meetings.*
- b) *Communicating with classroom teachers about their role regarding EAs.*
- c) *Act as a liaison between teachers and specialists.*
- d) *Manage the IEP process.*
- e) *Complete and/or update medical action plans for students assigned by their grade group.*
- f) *Know the curriculum attached to their grade-group.*

- g) Provide information and material support to teachers and educational assistants for students within their assigned grade group.*
- h) Provide direct service to students*
- i) Collect the information and prepare the funding applications for students requiring L-2 or L-3 funding.*
- j) Implement the referral/assessment process.*

The referral/assessment process is a whole other subsection of resource teacher responsibilities, and these include:

- a) Resource teachers are responsible for ensuring that the process is followed and that any suggestions and recommendations are implemented. Resource teachers report the referral summary at the SST (student support team) meetings.*
- b) Staff other than teachers (including administration, counseling, parents, or specialists) can initiate referrals. It is important that the resource teacher respond by contacting the student and having a face-to-face interaction with the teacher.*

- c) *Resource teachers can assist with screening students within a classroom, and if further testing or resource involvement is required, a referral needs to be completed and signed by the parents.*
- d) *Teachers are expected to contact parents via phone or face-to-face contact to communicate the need for resource assistance.*
- e) *Resource communicates to administration regarding, i) students who require follow-up and, ii) instances where the teacher may not be following up with a referral.*
- f) *The teacher initiates an academic referral to the resource teacher. The resource teacher creates a file.*
- g) *The resource teacher observes the student in a variety of settings.*
- h) *The resource teacher interviews the student.*
- i) *The resource teacher meets with the classroom teacher to discuss observations and findings.*
- j) *Based on the above findings, decisions regarding further assessments by resource or referral to specialists will be determined.*

k) If decision is made to for further assessment by resource, then that is completed and a meeting with the resource teacher, classroom teacher, and parents is conducted to determine which of the following will be implemented: growth plan, further strategies implemented, or clinician referral.

School-based forms (e.g., IEP and BIP forms, referral and assistance request forms, and consent/release of information forms) for resource teacher programming and school improvement planning complement provincial and divisional policies for Appropriate Educational Programming.

These classroom teacher and resource teacher roles and responsibilities reflect the principal's priorities and inclusive special education background. The school handbook reflects the main and secondary research questions. It addresses the area of inquiry around innovative administrative and programming procedures; it helps to contextualize Western educational theory within First Nation contexts, as well clearly reflecting the interdependent nature of special and general education. The school improvement plan further underscores the above areas

and serves as a good model for inclusive programming and school planning for band-operated schools.

School Improvement Plan

The school plan consists of several elements that include school-based priorities, divisional policy, and Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth priorities.

Element 1 is the school mission statement:

"Minisowin School" is committed to the development of self-reliant individuals in a progressive society. We strive for excellence by providing the children of today with challenging educational opportunities in a nurturing and tolerant environment. Within this context "Minisowin School" is committed to produce the community leaders of today and tomorrow.

This mission statement underscores an inclusive philosophy and implies an overarching goal of First Nation independence and capacity building.

The second element of the school plan consists of a consolidation of school-based and MECY priorities. The school-based priorities are for increasing attendance, curriculum and subject area implementation, and social and citizenship growth. These priorities also are consolidated

with indigenous and community customs. For instance, priorities for Environmental Citizenship, Social Studies, and Social Citizenship all involve Elders, on-the-land experiences, and cultural programming for self esteem and emotional well-being.

These priorities are then translated into strategic goals. Strategic goals are organized into outcomes, strategies, indicators, data, and results and reporting areas. One strategic goal that may illustrate interdependence between general and special education is:

*All students will be provided with
appropriate educational programming*

However, the outcomes for this strategic goal do not reflect the elements of the MECY regulations for Appropriate Educational Programming. The school's interpretation and strategic goals for Appropriate Educational Programming involves increasing attendance, improving homework skills/habits, and student participation in the fine arts. These outcomes are not consistent with MECY regulations on Appropriate Educational Programming (MECY, 2007).

Divisional Policy

In examining the school division's Student Services Handbook, there are detailed procedures for identification,

referral, assessment, placement, and programming for students with identified special needs. For example, MECY's philosophical statement, which translates into regulations and policy, on inclusion as a grounding value for providing student support programming is the opening statement in the preface to the divisional Student Services Handbook. Regulations for level II and III categorical funding include the usual assessment and IEP requirements, as well as a requirement for PHIA and FIPPA²⁴ procedures.

In terms of Appropriate Educational Programming, the Division does mandate IEPs and BIPs, a Safe Schools Charter, and regulations for suspension and expulsion of students. When I did the data gathering in June 2007, the Appropriate Educational Programming regulations were just being implemented and this may have been the reason that they were not fully reflected at the level of the local school. In November of 2007, MECY released the final document, *Appropriate Educational Programming: A Handbook for Student Services*, that compiles and sets forth the legislation and regulations that have been in development for the last several years.

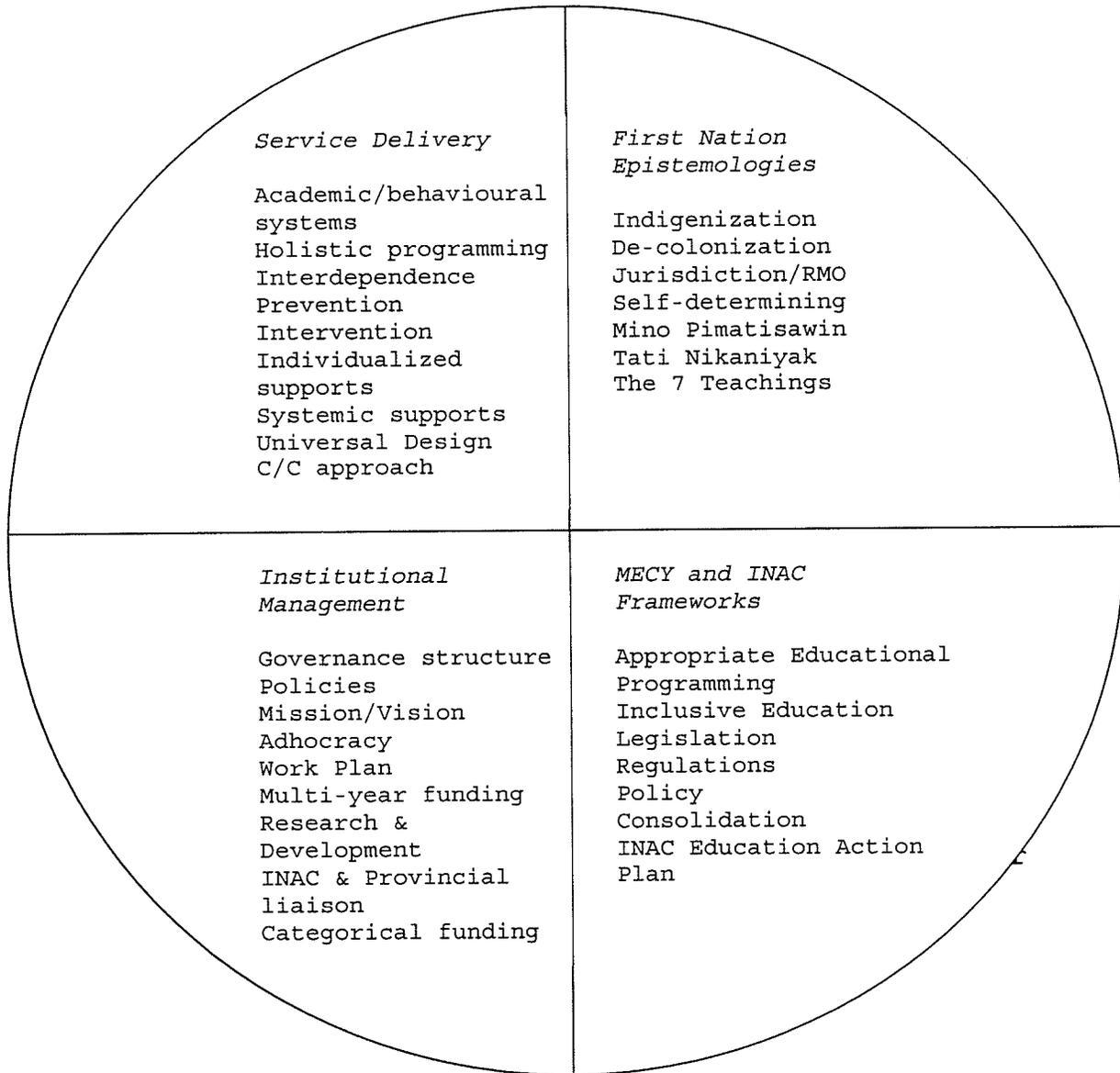
²⁴ Personal and Health Information Act and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Implications for Institutional Development

I believe the perspectives of the informants, along with the incorporation of MECY regulations and INAC initiatives, need to be used to construct and articulate a First Nations' perspective on a culturally effective paradigm for student support services. Figure 9 illustrates this framework of how inclusive theory and paradigms of service delivery may be transformed into practice. As well, it complements the programming framework presented in the introductory section of this thesis. The right side of figure 9 represents the philosophical foundations of service delivery. The two left quadrants represent the technical aspects of organizational management and areas of service delivery. Figure 9 is intended to be interpreted in a clockwise fashion, starting in the upper right.

For institutional development, there needs to be an intersection of First Nation epistemologies, MECY and INAC initiatives, institutional management considerations, and service delivery components. This framework depicts a consolidation of the literature review and the findings from both the initial and current study. It has a foundation of First Nation methodologies and epistemologies. It is based on a philosophy of educational jurisdiction and self-determination through a process of

Figure 9: Conceptual Framework for Institutional Development



indigenization and de-colonization of Western Educational constructs. This process may involve aspects of *Mino Pimatisawin*, *Tati Nikiniyak*, and the 7 Teachings in their various formats. First Nation philosophies complement MECY and INAC regulations in terms of Appropriate Educational Programming and the INAC Education Action Plan. For Institutional Management, there needs to be a governance structure based on a relevant vision and mission, as well as on principles of organizational theory. Technical details would include long term and short term work plans outlining strategic goals and objectives, research and development priorities and partnerships, and INAC and Provincial interconnections and liaisons. One of the main purposes of this framework is to gradually take over control of the high cost categorical funding program from INAC. The governance and management structure may help to facilitate this process.

Areas for school based Service Delivery include holistic, interdependent academic and behavioral systems. These supports and interventions would be preventative, as well as systemic and individualized. Interventions, whether they are individual or systemic, need to be provided in a consultative-collaborative manner. These interventions are

provided using principles and strategies that are based on Universal Design for Learning.

Debra's comments and suggestions for institutional development were very useful and addressed this important aspect of the research question. Her ideas of a needs assessment, a working group, and the presentation to the Chiefs and INAC all were very relevant. Her ideas for partnerships with provincial organizations such as Frontier School Division and the Child Guidance Clinic, and the need for a data base to track and analyze information are very practical administrative suggestions that complement the holistic model of programming and administration that I illustrated in figure 9.

Colleen also had some very sound advice for developing a structure with checks and balances for accountability and transparency. She recommended extensive professional development for teachers and administrators on interagency planning and the consultative collaborative approach in order to plan for students with severe to profound emotional and behavioural difficulties.

I found the suggestions from these two insightful and experienced administrators very interesting because I had not anticipated some of their comments in relation to institutional development. I found the suggestions for the

development of a team to initiate the process and a needs assessment to establish a data base on which to base service particularly interesting.

Conclusion

The open-ended nature of qualitative research allows for the possibility of learning something not originally planned or finding out something unexpected. In this sense, the research plan for this study was a guideline or roadmap of how I intended to conduct the study and it described a bare minimum of what I expected to learn and encounter. However, the narrative data and document analysis re-affirms or addresses the purpose and research question. The data are reflective of initial assumptions around holistic services and First Nation epistemologies, as well as demonstrate a consolidation of indigenous and de-colonizing practices with provincial and Western-based constructs. While participants' comments refuted some assumptions for this study, I used the feedback from the two senior administrators to help to construct a conceptual framework for inclusive, institutional services. Following the advice of informants and principles of organizational theory for special education, I described the implications for band-operated schools and for institutional development. An institutional service provider would follow principles of

an adhococracy to form or complement one unitary, holistic entity, and band operated schools would strategically incorporate student support services into school improvement plans.

Taken together, the data and findings from both the initial study and this current study form a more complete picture for me on the interconnections between special and general education. The importance of student support services within overall school improvement planning was a strong theme from both the northern and southern schools. Informants strongly indicated the need for First Nation jurisdiction over K -12 education, for the need to form alliances with educational partners, and for the need to gain the support and confidence of educational and political leaders.

The most important finding from this study was the revelation that the "special education class" was not as exclusionary as it sounded on the community radio announcement. In fact, this school is a model for inclusive theory and practice. As I disseminate this study, an ultimate outcome for me would be to facilitate Appropriate Educational Programming in band-operated schools and to help all students in band-operated schools achieve or realize *Mino Pimatisawin*.

Epilogue

The June 11, 2008 apology from the Prime Minister and Government of Canada to First Nations for the Residential Schools policy and its long term impacts on survivors provides a good opportunity to reiterate the discourse contained in this thesis on decolonization and cross-cultural issues. For some First Nations, "the apology" and the Truth and Reconciliation Process is part of a decolonizing process. However, *decolonization* can mean different things to different First Nations peoples.

To describe a decolonization process it is important to understand colonization (and neo-colonization) from the perspective of this thesis. In this thesis, colonization has overarching goals of empire-building and subjugation of indigenous peoples.

The prime example of the colonization process for many First Nations peoples may be the residential schools policy. For these people, "the apology" may have been part of a decolonization process, because it validated the suffering that most experienced and may have helped with personal reclamation of spirit and culture and with collective healing.

The meaning of decolonization in this thesis includes the notion of reclamation, but it is also meant to be a

kind of self-actualizing process for First Nations students where they become aware of the ways that the State has implemented policies aimed at eradicating indigenous worldviews, cultures, and spirituality. This eradication is done in order to exploit and extract the natural resources within traditional territory without compensation and to de-legitimize indigenous land title, a concept with legal and moral authority that is upheld by the United Nations in their Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

In this thesis, building on the writing of Alfred (2005) and Tuhiwai-Smith (2000), I stated that First Nation education systems play a crucial role in the decolonization process. As discussed here, the purpose of education for First Nations is to decolonize the minds and hearts of the People so that they may see the truth behind government agendas and policies. This process is long-term and the educational resources developed solely by the MFNERC and in partnership with government and higher education may be used as one avenue to an authentic indigenous existence for First Nations students. These resources are holistic and have a strong spiritual basis. Strengthening the mind, body and spirit is the main technique, or theme, in these resources for decolonizing the mind and spirit of the youth

in the face of unrelenting pressure from the influences of popular culture and mass media.

In this thesis I also state that understanding research methodology and ethics may be a part of the decolonizing process for indigenous scholars. Indigenous researchers need to come to terms with the way anthropologists have exploited indigenous peoples and misappropriated indigenous knowledge. We need to understand and use Western research methods for our own purposes and for cross cultural circumstances and alliances.

I've also written from the perspectives of indigenous scholars who believe that the negotiations that have led to the settlements and compensations for past injustices are the "politics of pity" that really do nothing to advance the decolonization process and the economic and political agenda of First Nations. These negotiations and reconciliations, in the opinion of some, are conducted using neo-colonial systems and structures by co-opted and discredited Chiefs motivated by protecting their own personal interests. The residential schools settlement and apology are, for these First Nations, the epitome of the politics of pity and the ultimate example of the victimization model espoused by the national organization, the Assembly of First Nations.

This victimization model will no doubt absolve many residential school survivors of any personal responsibilities for past transgressions. Granted, there are racist and genocidal forces in mainstream society over which First Nations have no control. In the opinion of some First Nation philosophers, this does not justify abdicating responsibility for not attempting to overcome personal shortcomings and undisciplined lifestyles. However, not all residential school survivors have rationalized or excused personal dysfunction through the residential school experience or absolved themselves of personal responsibilities. Many of them, including many members of my family, recognize the role personal decisions, and the consequences of their choices, play in the attainment of personal self fulfillment.

The decolonization process can mean different things to different First Nations. For some, it means accepting personal responsibility for strengthening the mind, body, and spirit through physical, intellectual, and ceremonial practices. Rather than accepting pity, they would rather establish a spiritual and truly indigenous resurgence to take their rightful share of economic and political power from the colonial establishment.

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Appendices

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Inclusive Special Education Service Delivery

Appendix A

Approval Certificate



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

OFFICE OF RESEARCH
SERVICES

Office of the Vice-President (Research)

CTC Building
208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Fax (204) 269-7173
www.umanitoba.ca/research

01 February 2007

TO: Curtis D. Mallett
Principal Investigator

FROM: Stan Straw, Chair
Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

Re: Protocol #E2006:115
"Special Education Service Delivery in a Provincial First Nation
School"

Your above-noted protocol was reviewed by members of the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. A few concerns were noted and are listed below:

1. It is not clear how "divisional and school-based" documents are going to be acquired. Exactly what are these documents? Are the documents in the public domain? Whose permission will be sought to access these documents? These need to be clarified, and, if necessary, a letter of consent to the appropriate person/s should be written to seek permission to access these documents. Are any student records being accessed? If so, then there needs to be permission sought from the parents/guardians.
2. Having school/division administration aid with the recruitment of subjects may seem (to potential subjects) as coercive. The description states that "They [potential subject] will self select with support from the administration. . ." What the process is exactly needs to be clearer. Will school administration know who is and who is not a subject? It would be better if personnel were contacted independently of the administration so that the administration has no knowledge of who is a subject in the study. Furthermore, the letter of consent for participants indicates that a copy will be sent to the Area 5 Superintendent. Does this mean a copy of the blank letter will be sent? Or does this mean that the superintendent will be made aware of who is and who is not participating in the study?

3. It is not clear what the "observations" associated with the interviews are of. Are observations going to be made of teachers' classrooms? Will children be present? Will observations be of resource teachers' resource rooms? Will observations be of principal's offices? Exactly what is being observed and what is being looked for needs to be explained more clearly.
4. Following up on #3 above, it is not clear when and where the interviews will take place. Will they take place on school property? Will they take place during school time? If so, then the administration of the school and division need to be very clear that this is so.
5. It is not clear how the researcher will obtain the telephone numbers of potential subjects. This needs to be clarified. This information should not come through the school division administration.
6. Will there be any preamble to the interview? If so, then the script for that needs to be provided to the committee.
7. In the letter of consent:
 - ◆ There needs to be a place where participants can request a copy of a summary of the results of the study. Typically, a tear-off sheet is used so that the subject can give his/her name and address (either e-mail or snail-mail) where the summary can be sent.
 - ◆ There needs to be reference to the Education & Nursing Research Ethics Board, and the full reference information (name, address, e-mail, phone) for the Human Research Ethics Secretariat need to be included.
 - ◆ If direct quotations from the interviews are going to be used in reporting the study, then subjects needs to be made aware of that in the letter of consent.
 - ◆ The letter needs to indicate who will be doing the interviewing of the subjects.
 - ◆ The letter states in the last paragraph: "If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons . . ." Who are these persons? What is their contact information?

Approval is pending your response to the above items. Your written response, **including a cover letter which addresses each of the above items, and includes any revised forms (with revisions highlighted, if possible)**, should be sent to Margaret (Maggie) Bowman, Human Ethics Coordinator, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road (CTC Building) or by e-mail to margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. **(Please note that there is no need to re-submit the entire submission, just those pertinent sections.)** If you have any questions you may contact me directly at 474-9074.

February 27, 2007

To: **Stan Straw, Chair**
Education/ Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

From: **Curtis Mallett**
Principal Investigator

Re: **Protocol #E2006:115**
“Special Education Service Delivery in a Provincial First Nation School”

Thank you for your feedback letter dated February 1, 2007. Your concerns for the above noted study are quoted and addressed in the order they were received

1. *It is not clear how “divisional and school-based” documents are going to be acquired. Exactly what are these documents? Are the documents in the public domain? Whose permission will be sought to access these documents? These need to be clarified, and, if necessary, a letter of consent to the appropriate person/s should be written to seek permission to access these documents. Are any student records being accessed? If so, then there needs to be permission sought from the parents/guardians.*

The *Divisional Student Services Handbook* will be requested directly from **the Student Services Coordinator and/or the Divisional Superintendent**. This policy document will be reviewed for special education identification, placement, and programming procedures and guidelines. This document is in the public domain. School-based documents include **IEP (individual education plan) templates and behaviour support planning forms**, excluding actual IEPs containing personal student information. Other forms and templates will include **referral and assessment forms for psychology and clinical services**, excluding any actual student information. These forms and templates are internal school documents and I will seek permission from the Student Services Coordinator for access to these documents. I anticipate that school administrators will offer access to **various public brochures and pamphlets** describing programs and school-based services. I have revised the letter seeking approval to clarify to administrators the purpose and process of access to documents.

2. *Having school/division administration aid with the recruitment of subjects may seem (to potential subjects) as coercive. The description states that “They [potential subject] will self select with support from the administration. . .” What the process is exactly needs to be clearer. Will school administration know who is and who is not a subject? It would be better if personnel were contacted independently of the administration so that the administration has no knowledge of who is a subject in the study. Furthermore, the letter of consent for participants indicates that a copy will be sent to the Area 5 Superintendent. Does this mean a copy of the blank letter will be sent? Or does this mean that the superintendent will be made aware of who is and who is not participating in the study?*

Following the above suggestions, I have revised the letter seeking approval to more clearly state the process for recruitment. I will make phone contact with potential participants seeking their **agreement independent of Divisional administration**. Divisional administration will approve the study, but **they will not necessarily be aware of staff** who is participating. A **blank sample consent form not identifying participants** will be provided to the Area 5 Superintendent for her records.

- 3. It is not clear what the "observations" associated with the interviews are of. Are observations going to be made of teachers' classrooms? Will children be present? Will observations be of resource teachers' resource rooms? Will observations be of principal's offices? Exactly what is being observed and what is being looked for needs to be explained more clearly.*

Observations will **only occur in association with the interviews in the resource teacher room and offices**. These observations will be on room arrangement, assessment and programming materials and recorded in field notes. In other locations of the interviews, whether in the principal's office or coordinator's office, **only narrative data and not observational data will be collected**. Observations of the school will be more **general in nature and will involve the physical condition, characteristics and layout of the school facility**.

- 4. Following up on #3 above, it is not clear when and where the interviews will take place. Will they take place on school property? Will they take place during school time? If so, then the administration of the school and division need to be very clear that this is so.*

The interviews will take place **during school hours and** the majority will take place in the **larger main school building**. One or two interviews will be conducted in the **smaller middle school located 5 kms off the main campus**. The only location that is important for observations is the **resource teacher area/room**. These details are clarified in the revised letter of approval.

- 5. It is not clear how the researcher will obtain the telephone numbers of potential subjects. This needs to be clarified. This information should not come through the school division administration.*

I have informally spoken to 2 staff about this study. **I will first seek their consent and ask them for the names and contact information of other potential participants. I have stated this in the revised letter to the administration.** I will then phone potential participants to seek their verbal consent and follow up either through phone or email to confirm participation, times and locations of interviews, and to clarify and address concerns, issues, and any questions that they have.

6. *Will there be any preamble to the interview? If so, then the script for that needs to be provided to the committee.*

A preamble has been developed as part of the interview process and is outlined in the revised interview guide.

7. *In the letter of consent:*

- *There needs to be a place where participants can request a copy of a summary of the results of the study. Typically, a tear-off sheet is used so that the subject can give his/her name and address (either e-mail or snail-mail) where the summary can be sent.*
- *There needs to be reference to the Education & Nursing Research Ethics Board, and the full reference information (name, address, e-mail, phone) for the Human Research Ethics Secretariat need to be included.*
- *If direct quotations from the interviews are going to be used in reporting the study, then subjects needs to be made aware of that in the letter of consent.*
- *The letter needs to indicate who will be doing the interviewing of the subjects.*
- *The letter states in the last paragraph: "If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons . . ." Who are these persons? What is their contact information?*

The above noted suggestions are **addressed and highlighted in the attached revised letter of consent.**

As per your instructions, please find the relevant sections of the protocol attached for your review. Should you require further clarification, please contact me at 229-6940.

C.c. Rick Freeze, Academic Advisor
Laara Fitznor, Graduate Committee
Clea Schmidt, Graduate Committee

Inclusive Special Education Service Delivery

Appendix B

Ethics Protocol Submission



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Fort Garry Campus Research Ethics Boards
CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Phone: (204) 474-7122
Fax: (204) 269-7173

Protocol # _____
(Assigned by HES Admin.)

FORT GARRY CAMPUS RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD PROTOCOL SUBMISSION FORM

Psychology/Sociology REB Education/Nursing REB Joint-Faculty REB

Check the appropriate REB for the Faculty or Department of the Principal Researcher. This form, attached research protocol, and all supporting documents, must be submitted **in quadruplicate** (original plus 3 copies), to the Office of Research Services, Human Ethics Coordinator, CTC Building, 208 - 194 Dafoe Road, 474-7122.

Principal Researcher(s): Curtis D. Mallett

Status of Principal Researcher(s): (please check): Faculty Post-Doc Student: Graduate
Undergraduate WRHA Affiliate Other Specify: _____

Address (to receive Approval Certificate): 301-1225 Leila Ave. Winnipeg MB. R2P 2Y6

Phone: 204-229-6940 Fax: _____ Email: cmallett@mts.net

Project Title: Special Education Service Delivery in a Provincial First Nation School

Start date: January, 2007 Planned period of research (if less than one year): January, 2007

Type of research (Please check):

Faculty Research

Self-funded Sponsored
(Agency) _____

Administrative Research

Central
Unit-based

Student Research

Thesis Class Project
Course Number: _____

Signature(s) of Principal Researcher(s): _____

For student research: This project is approved by department/thesis committee. The advisor has reviewed and approved the protocol.

Name of Thesis Advisor: Dr. Rick Freeze
(Required if thesis research)

Signature _____

Name of Course Instructor: _____
(Required if class project)

Signature _____

Persons signing assure responsibility that all procedures performed under the protocol will be conducted by individuals responsibly entitled to do so, and that any deviation from the protocol will be submitted to the REB for its approval prior to implementation. Signature of the thesis advisor/course instructor indicates that student researchers have been instructed on the principles of ethics policy, on the importance of adherence to the ethical conduct of the research according to the submitted protocol (and of the necessity to report any deviations from the protocol to their advisor/instructor).

Ethics Protocol Submission Form (Basic Questions about the Project)

The questions on this form are of a general nature, designed to collect pertinent information about potential problems of an ethical nature that could arise with the proposed research project. In addition to answering the questions below, the researcher is expected to append pages (and any other necessary documents) to a submission detailing the required information about the research protocol (see page 4).

1. Will the subjects in your study be UNAWARE that they are subjects? ___ Yes X No
2. Will information about the subjects be obtained from sources other than the subjects themselves? ___ Yes X No
3. Are you and/or members of your research team in a position of power vis-a-vis the subjects? If yes, clarify the position of power and how it will be addressed. ___ Yes X No
4. Is any inducement or coercion used to obtain the subject's participation? ___ Yes X No
5. Do subjects identify themselves by name directly, or by other means that allows you or anyone else to identify data with specific subjects? If yes, indicate how confidentiality will be maintained. What precautions are to be undertaken in storing data and in its eventual destruction/disposition. ___ Yes X No
6. If subjects are identifiable by name, do you intend to recruit them for future studies? If yes, indicate why this is necessary and how you plan to recruit these subjects for future studies. ___ Yes X No
7. Could dissemination of findings compromise confidentiality? ___ Yes X No
8. Does the study involve physical or emotional stress, or the subject's expectation thereof, such as might result from conditions in the study design? ___ Yes X No
9. Is there any threat to the personal safety of subjects? ___ Yes X No
10. Does the study involve subjects who are not legally or practically able to give their valid consent to participate (e.g., children, or persons with mental health problems and/or cognitive impairment)? If yes, indicate how informed consent will be obtained from subjects and those authorized to speak for subjects. ___ Yes X No

- 11. Is deception involved (i.e., will subjects be intentionally misled about the purpose of the study, their own performance, or other features of the study)? ___ Yes X No

- 12. Is there a possibility that abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered in the course of the study? If yes, current laws require that certain offenses against children and persons in care be reported to legal authorities. Indicate the provisions that have been made for complying with the law. ___ Yes X No

- 13. Does the study include the use of personal health information? The Manitoba Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) outlines responsibilities of researchers to ensure safeguards that will protect personal health information. If yes, indicate provisions that will be made to comply with this Act (see document for guidance - <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/phia/index.html>). ___ Yes X No

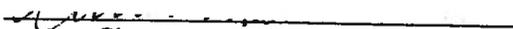
Provide additional details pertaining to any of the questions above for which you responded "yes." Attach additional pages, if necessary.

In my judgment this project involves:

- minimal risk
- more than minimal risk

(Policy #1406 defines "minimal risk" as follows: "... that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater nor more likely, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in life, including those encountered during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.")

24/ 11/ 06
dd /mm /yr



Signature of Principal Researcher

Ethics Protocol Submission Form
(Required Information about the Research Protocol)

Each application for ethics approval should include the following information and be presented in the following order, using these headings:

1. **Summary of Project:** Attach a detailed but concise (one typed page) outline of the **purpose** and **methodology** of the study describing precisely the procedures in which subjects will be asked to participate.
2. **Research Instruments:** Attach copies of all materials (e.g., questionnaires, tests, interview schedules, etc.) to be given to subjects and/or third parties.
3. **Study Subjects:** Describe the number of subjects, and how they will be recruited for this study. Are there any special characteristics of the subjects that make them especially vulnerable or require extra measures?
4. **Informed Consent:** Will consent **in writing** be obtained? If so, attach a copy of the consent form. (see guidelines on informed consent). If written consent is not to be obtained, indicate why not and the manner by which subjects' consent (verbally) or assent to participate in the study will be obtained. How will the nature of the study and subjects' participation in the study be explained to them **before** they agree to participate. How will consent be obtained from guardians of subjects from vulnerable populations? If confidential records will be consulted, indicate the nature of the records, and how subjects' consent is to be obtained. If it is essential to the research, indicate why subjects are not to be made aware of their records being consulted.
5. **Deception:** Deception refers to the deliberate withholding of essential information or the provision of deliberately misleading information about the research or its purposes. If the research involves deception, the researcher must provide detailed information on the extent and nature of deception and why the research could not be conducted without it. This description must be sufficient to justify a waiver of informed consent.
6. **Feedback/Debriefing:** Describe the feedback that will be given to subjects about the research after they have completed their participation. How will the feedback be provided and by whom? If feedback will not be given, please explain why feedback is not planned. If deception is employed, debriefing is mandatory. Describe in detail the nature of the post-deception feedback, and when and how it will be given.
7. **Risks and Benefits:** Is there any risk to the subjects, or to a third party? If yes, provide a description of the risks and the counterbalancing benefits of the proposed study. Indicate the precautions taken by the researcher under these circumstances.
8. **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Describe the procedures for preserving anonymity and confidentiality. If confidentiality is not an issue in this research, please explain why. Will confidential records be consulted? If yes, indicate what precautions will be taken to ensure subjects' confidentiality. How will the data be stored to ensure confidentiality? Will the data be destroyed, if so, when?
9. **Compensation:** Will subjects be compensated for their participation? Compensation may reasonably provide subjects with assistance to defray the costs associated with study participation.

Ethics Protocol Submission Form

Review your submission according to this:

Checklist

Principal Researcher: Curtis D. Mallett

T	Item from the Ethics Protocol Submission Form
X	All information requested on the first page completed in legible format (typed or printed).
X	Signatures of the principal researcher (and faculty advisor, or course instructor if student research).
X	Answers to all 13 questions on pages 2-3 of Ethics Protocol Submission form.
X	Detailed information requested on page 4 of the Ethics Protocol Submission Form in the numbered order and with the headings indicated.
X	Ethics Protocol Submission Form in quadruplicate (Original plus 3 copies).
X	Research instruments: 4 copies of all instruments and other supplementary material to be given to subjects.
X	Copy of this checklist.

NOTE: For ease of reviewing it would be much appreciated if you could number the pages of your submission (handwriting the numbers is quite acceptable)

University of Manitoba
Ethics Submission Form
(Required Information about the Research Protocol)

1. Summary of Project

The purpose of this research project is to study student support services and special education service delivery in a Provincial jurisdiction for its implications for policy and practice in band-operated schools in Manitoba. I will conduct this study using qualitative methods including, gathering and analysis of interviews, observations, and divisional and school-based documents. The **Divisional Student Services Handbook** will be requested directly from the Student Services Coordinator and/or the Divisional Superintendent. This policy document will be reviewed for special education identification, placement, and programming procedures and guidelines. This document is in the public domain. School-based documents include **IEP (individual education plan) templates and behaviour support planning forms**, excluding actual IEPs containing personal student information. Other forms and templates will include **referral and assessment forms for psychology and clinical services**, excluding any actual student information. These forms and templates are internal school documents and I will seek permission from the Student Services Coordinator for access to these documents. I anticipate that school administrators will offer **various public brochures and pamphlets** describing programs and school-based services. The letter to administrators seeking approval outlines the purpose and process of document procurement. Since these documents are public and do not contain student information, **no letter of consent is necessary**. Document and narrative analysis contained in my thesis will uncover reoccurring and relevant patterns of special education administrative and programming behaviour and practice.

To seek approval for this study, contact will first be made by telephone with the Area 5 Superintendent of Frontier School Division. An overview of the research plan will then be e-mailed to the Superintendent (see attached recruitment letter). **If the Superintendent's office approves this research, two or three potential participants, whom I have already informally spoken to regarding this project, will be contacted to seek their consent. They will be provided with an overview of this research project and asked to provide contact information for other potential informants. Should potential participants give verbal consent to participating, they will be provided with a copy of the consent form to carefully read. They will sign the consent form immediately prior to the interview. I will follow up by telephone to confirm dates and locations of interviews, review the interview process, and answer any questions that they may have pertaining to the research.**

The design of this study will involve 6-7 participant interview/observation periods of one hour. The great majority of

the allotted periods will involve a semi-structured interview with the personnel noted in No. 3 of this form. The observations will occur simultaneously and prior to the informant interview and will be related to general environmental factors such as room setup and resource materials. Systematic observations will **only occur in association with the interviews in the resource teacher room and offices**. These observations will be on room arrangement, assessment and programming materials and recorded in field notes. In other locations of the interviews, whether in the principal's office or coordinator's office, **only narrative data and not observational data will be collected**. Observations of the school will be more general in nature and will involve the physical condition and characteristics, as well as the layout of the facility. The interviews will take place **during school hours** and the majority will take place in the **larger main school building**. One or two interviews will be conducted in the **smaller middle school located 5 kilometers off the main campus**. The only location that is important for observations is the **resource teacher area/room**. Member checking will follow should any responses need to be clarified.

In this study, student support services include special education service delivery, administrative duties, the resource teacher program, clinician services, self-contained classrooms, and developmental programs. Particular elements of student support services under study include a philosophical foundation for service delivery, the relationship (if any) to general educational systems, identification, pre-referral, referral, resource teacher programming, placement, interventions/supports, and high cost funding procedures.

2. Research Instruments

The data would be gathered as unobtrusively as possible using a tape recorder for interviews and a note pad for field notes and observations. This data would then be transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted for the thesis requirement for my Master's degree in Inclusive Special Education. Should further clarification of responses be required, follow-up will be conducted by telephone and email.

3. Study Subjects

The 6-7 key informants will include resource teachers, special education teachers, clinicians, classroom teachers, administrators, teaching assistants, or special education coordinators. It would be ideal to interview each of the above personnel; however, the informants may be limited to the resource teacher, principal, classroom teacher (s), depending on assigned personnel and organization within the school. If the above administrative and support personnel are not available, then alternative informants may include the principal, resource

teacher, and three classroom teachers from different grade levels.

4. Informed Consent

Informant signature on the consent form indicates that they have understood to their satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive informant's legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. Informants are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions they prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Continued participation should be as informed as initial consent, so informants should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout their participation. This research will be approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If informants have any concerns or complaints about this project, they may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122. A copy of the consent form (see attached) will be provided to them for their records and reference.

5. Deception

There will no element of deception for this research.

6. Feedback/Debriefing

Feedback and debriefing to the divisional administration and informants will be provided by the principal researcher once the research is completed. Feedback will include an explanation of the finding on student support services within the schools and how these findings are related to the development of student support services in band-operated schools. This may done through formal and informal presentations

7. Risks and Benefits

There will be no element of risk for the participants in this research project. Benefits may include enhanced student support services for the school division should they choose to follow recommendations.

8. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Confidentiality would be of utmost importance and as such would be fully protected using pseudonyms. Only university professors would have access to the information. Only my advisor, Dr. Rick Freeze, will have access to the typed transcripts and audio tapes. The transcripts, audiotapes, and field notes will be

locked securely in a filing cabinet. Electronic data will be secured in a laptop computer with finger print identification software. The audio tapes will be erased and the field notes destroyed once the research is completed.

9. Compensation

There will be no monetary compensation for informants in this research project.

Inclusive Special Education Service Delivery

Appendix C

Letter Seeking Approval for Research

Curtis Mallett 301-1225 Leila Ave, Winnipeg Manitoba, R2P 2Y6
(204) 229-6940 c.mallett@mts.net

March 12, 2007

Brianna Williams
Area 5 Superintendent
Frontier School Division
PO Box 790
Helen Betty Osborne Ininev Education Resource Centre
Norway House, MB
R0B 1B0

Re: Approval for Research on Student Support Services in First Nations Schools

Tansi. My name is Curtis Mallett, and I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba working on the thesis requirement for my Master's degree in Inclusive Special Education. To complete my thesis, I would like to conduct a research project on student support services in your two K-12 schools. I am seeking your approval for this research. The purpose of this research project is to study student support services and special education service delivery in a Provincial jurisdiction for its implications for policy and practice in band-operated schools in Manitoba. I will conduct this study using qualitative methods, including gathering and analysis of interviews, observations, and divisional and school-based documents. Of particular interest to me is your *Divisional Student Services Handbook*. This policy document will be reviewed for special education identification, placement, and programming guidelines. Only documents, forms, and templates in the public domain will be requested, excluding any student information.

The data would be gathered as unobtrusively as possible using a tape recorder for interviews and a note pad for field notes and observations. Observations will only occur in association with the interviews in the resource teacher room and offices. These observations will be on room arrangement, assessment, and programming materials and recorded in field notes. In other locations of the interviews, whether in the principal's office or coordinator's office, only narrative data and not observational data will be collected. Observations of the schools will be more general in nature and will involve the physical characteristics and layout of the facility. The data would then be transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted for my thesis on student support services. Document and narrative analysis contained in my thesis will uncover reoccurring and relevant patterns of special education administrative procedures and programming guidelines and practice applicable to band-operated schools.

The design of this study will involve 6-7 participant interview/observation periods of one hour. The interviews will take place during school hours and the majority will take place in the larger main school building. One or two interviews will be conducted in the middle school located off the main campus. The only location that is important for observations is the resource teacher area/room. Member checking will follow should any responses need to be clarified.

The 6-7 key informants will include resource teachers, special education teachers, clinicians, classroom teachers, administrators, teaching assistants, or special education coordinators. It would be ideal to interview each of the above personnel; however, the informants may be limited to the resource teacher, principal, classroom teacher (s), depending on assigned personnel and organization within the school. I will follow up with participants by telephone to confirm dates, review the interview process, and answer any questions that they may have. If the above administrative and support personnel are not available, then the informants could be made up of the principal, resource teacher, and three classroom teachers from different grade levels. Participants may be provided with a copy of the consent forms and interview guide prior to agreeing to participate. You also may request a copy of the research instruments for your records, as well as a summary of the findings of this study.

If the Superintendent's office approves this research, **two or three potential participants on staff, whom I have already informally spoken to regarding this project, will be contacted to seek their consent. They will be provided with an overview of this research project and asked to provide contact information for other potential informants.** Should potential participants give verbal consent to participating, they will be provided with a copy of the consent form to carefully read prior to the interviews. They will sign the original consent form immediately prior to the interviews. I will follow up by telephone to confirm dates and locations of interviews, review the interview process, and answer any questions that they may have pertaining to the research.

In this study, student support services include special education service delivery, administrative duties, the resource teacher program, clinician services, self-contained classrooms, and developmental programs. Particular elements of student support services under study include a philosophical foundation for service delivery, the relationship (if any) to general educational systems, identification, pre-referral, referral, resource teacher programming, placement, interventions/supports, and high cost funding procedures.

Confidentiality would be of utmost importance and as such would be guaranteed in the consent form and fully protected using pseudonyms. Only my advisor, Dr. Rick Freeze, will have access to the typed transcripts and audio tapes. The transcripts, audiotapes, and field notes will be locked securely in a filing

cabinet. Electronic data will be secured in a laptop computer with finger print identification software. The audio tapes will be erased and the field notes destroyed once the research is completed. This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Education & Nursing Research Ethics Board for the Human Research Ethics Secretariat. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, you may contact Dr. Rick Freeze at 204-474-6904 or email, rfreeze@umanitoba.ca. Feedback on the findings of the research will be shared with all participants and stakeholders. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in this research project. Please print this letter for your records and provide me with a checked and signed copy of the agreement below. Contact me directly should you require further clarification. Ekosi!

Yours truly,

Curtis Mallett

CC Norway House Education Director
Student Services Administrator
Principals

This student research proposal has been reviewed by the Frontier School Division.

Approval is provided for data collection

Approval is not provided for data collection

Superintendent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Curtis Mallett 301-1225 Leila Ave, Winnipeg Manitoba, R2P 2Y6
(204) 229-6940 c.mallett@mts.net

April 2007

Participants/Informants

Re: Informed Consent for Participation in Research on Student Support Services in First Nations Schools

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. The purpose of this research project is to study student support services and special education service delivery in a Provincial jurisdiction for its implications for practice in band-operated schools in Manitoba.

I will conduct this study using qualitative methods, including gathering and analysis of observations, interviews, and divisional and school-based documents that are in the public domain. The data would be gathered as unobtrusively as possible using a tape recorder for interviews and a note pad for field notes and observations. This data would then be transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted for the thesis requirement for my Master's degree in Inclusive Special Education. The analysis contained in my thesis will uncover reoccurring and relevant patterns of special education administrative procedures and programming guidelines and practice.

The design of this study will involve 6-7 participant interview/observation periods of one hour. Key informants will include resource teachers, special education teachers, clinicians, classroom teachers, administrators, teaching assistants, or special education coordinators. **I will conduct the interviews with each of the personnel mentioned above and they will take place during school hours.** The majority will take place in the larger main school building. One or two interviews will be conducted in the middle school located off the main campus. **I may use direct quotations from the interviews.** Member checking will follow should any responses need to be clarified.

Observations will only occur in association with the interviews in the resource teacher room and offices. These observations will be on room arrangement, assessment and programming materials and recorded in field notes. The only location that is important for the observations is the resource teacher area/room. In other locations of the interviews, whether in the principal's office or coordinator's office, only narrative data and not observational data will be collected. Observations

Participants Signature

Date

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

Date

Cc.

Area 5 Superintendent

Norway House Director of Education

High School and Elementary Principals

Student Services Administrator

Request for Study Finding and Contact Information

Participants may have a study summary e-mailed or mailed to the following address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Interview Guide

Special Education Service Delivery in a Provincial First Nation School

Preamble:

"Thanks for agreeing to participate in this interview process. I'm trying to understand the nature of student support and special education services in your school, and how they fit into the overall planning and organization of the school. I have some questions here that are related to these areas. These questions are a guideline for discussion and don't feel that you have to provide an in-depth answer to each and every question."

Questions for administration, classroom teachers, clinicians, and teaching assistants:

Question 1: General and Special Education.

How would you describe the relationship, if any, between special and general education?

- A. If so, how are the systems interdependent/interrelated?
- B. What are your general thoughts/perceptions of student support services/special education practices and procedures, i.e., identification, placement, programming, in your school?
- C. How familiar are you with the referral process? How are students with special needs identified?
- D. Are there environmental, cultural - linguistic factors that need to be considered in identification, placement, and procedures? How do these factors affect programming (service delivery)?

Question 2: Governance and Jurisdiction

How do you feel about First Nation jurisdiction over education?

- A. How does the arrangement between the education authority, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the

School Division work for the management and operation of the school?

- B. How much authority does the band have? Does the band have representation on the school board?
- C. How does this arrangement (band controlled in conjunction with provincial jurisdiction) affect service delivery (student support)? Are there positive or negative aspects of this arrangement?

Question 3: Personal Experience/Perceptions

What is a typical day like for you?

- A. What do you think of the way special education/student support services are provided? What are your opinions of special education practices as they relate to your specific professional practice and situation?
- B. How have you been involved in providing or accessing services? What works and what doesn't?

Question 4: Inclusion: General (global) Perceptions

What are your general thoughts around inclusion?

- A. Is there a First Nation definition for Inclusion?
- B. Do you have any thoughts for the development of more or better student support services for First Nations schools?
- C. What are your thoughts of the concept of inclusion as it generally relates to First Nations schools and students?
- D. Is inclusion a good idea? Do students benefit from inclusion?
- E. What factors facilitate? What hinders inclusion in First Nations schools?
- F. Do environmental, cultural, or linguistic factors need to be considered?

- C. What specific supports do you require to provide for the instructional/learning, social/emotional, and behavioural needs of ALL your students?
- D. Can you think of any interventions or programs that might be useful for your school, for your classroom, or for individual students.
- E. Is assessment or support for assessment a concern for you?

Question 8: Suggestions for Programming and Administration

What would have to happen for a First Nation organization to provide student support services?

- A. Who are our leaders in the change process? Why?
- B. How can your student support services (provincial, divisional, and school-based) best provide these supports within limitations of budgets, personnel?
- C. What can the leadership in your division and school do to strengthen student support services?
- D. How can the leadership in your division and school support inclusion?
- E. What specific approaches, supports, interventions, models, theories, e.g., the consultative collaborative model, etc. would be practical for your school?

Question 9: Universal Design

- A. How familiar are you with Universal Design? What does Universal Design mean to you?
- B. Does your school or Division implement or consider Universal Design for Learning as a priority for instruction or curriculum design?
- C. If yes, what are your perceptions of Universal Design as a useful approach for First Nations students?

Inclusive Special Education Service Delivery

Appendix D

Signed Informed Consent Forms

Curtis Mallett 301-1225 Leila Ave, Winnipeg Manitoba, R2P 2Y6
(204) 229-6940 cmallett@mts.net

April 23, 2007

Briana Goesen - Williams
Area 5 Superintendent
Frontier School Division
PO Box 790
Helen Betty Osborne Ininev Education Resource Centre
Norway House, MB
ROB 1B0

Re: Approval for Research on Student Support Services in First Nations Schools

Tansi. My name is Curtis Mallett, and I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba working on the thesis requirement for my Master's degree in Inclusive Special Education. To complete my thesis, I would like to conduct a research project on student support services in your two K-12 schools. I am seeking your approval for this research. The purpose of this research project is to study student support services and special education service delivery in a Provincial jurisdiction for its implications for policy and practice in band-operated schools in Manitoba. I will conduct this study using qualitative methods, including gathering and analysis of interviews, observations, and divisional and school-based documents. Of particular interest to me is your *Divisional Student Services Handbook*. This policy document will be reviewed for special education identification, placement, and programming guidelines. Only documents, forms, and templates in the public domain will be requested, excluding any student information.

The data would be gathered as unobtrusively as possible using a tape recorder for interviews and a note pad for field notes and observations. Observations will only occur in association with the interviews in the resource teacher room and offices. These observations will be on room arrangement, assessment, and programming materials and recorded in field notes. In other locations of the interviews, whether in the principal's office or coordinator's office, only narrative data and not observational data will be collected. Observations of the schools will be more general in nature and will involve the physical characteristics and layout of the facility. The data would then be transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted for my thesis on student support services. Document and narrative analysis contained in my thesis will uncover reoccurring and relevant patterns of special education administrative procedures and programming guidelines and practice applicable to band-operated schools.

The design of this study will involve 6-7 participant interview/observation periods of one hour. The interviews will take place during school hours and the majority will take place in the larger main school building. One or two interviews will be conducted in the middle school located off the main campus. The only location that is important for observations is the resource teacher area/room. Member checking will follow should any responses need to be clarified.

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If the Superintendent's office approves this research, two or three potential participants on staff, whom I have already informally spoken to regarding this project, will be contacted to seek their consent. They will be provided with an overview of this research project and asked to provide contact information for other potential informants. Should potential participants give verbal consent to participating, they will be provided with a copy of the consent form to carefully read prior to the interviews. They will sign the original consent form immediately prior to the interviews. I will follow up by telephone to confirm dates and locations of interviews, review the interview process, and answer any questions that they may have pertaining to the research.

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Confidentiality would be of utmost importance and as such would be guaranteed in the consent form and fully protected using pseudonyms. Only my advisor, Dr. Rick Freeze, will have access to the typed transcripts and audio tapes. The transcripts, audiotapes, and field notes will be locked securely in a filing

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Yours truly,

Curtis Mallett

CC Norway House Education Director
Student Services Administrator
Principals

This student research proposal has been reviewed by the Frontier School Division.

Approval is provided for data collection

Approval is not provided for data collection

Superintendent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Curtis Mallett 301-1225 Leila Ave, Winnipeg Manitoba, R2P 2Y6
(204) 229-6940 cmallett@mts.net

April 2007

Participants/Informants

Re: Informed Consent for Participation in Research on Student Support Services in First Nations Schools

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of the schools will be more general in nature and will involve the physical condition, characteristics and layout of the facility.

Participants may be provided with a copy of the consent form and interview guide prior to agreeing to participate. I will follow up with participants by telephone to confirm dates, review the interview process, and answer any questions that they may have. Participants may request a copy of the findings of this study using the attached form.

For this study, student support services include special education service delivery and student support, administrative duties, the resource teacher program, clinician services, self-contained classrooms, and developmental programs. Particular elements of student support services under study include a philosophical foundation for service delivery, the relationship, if any, to general educational systems, identification, pre-referral, referral, resource teacher programming, placement, interventions/supports, and high cost funding procedures.

Confidentiality would be of utmost importance and as such would be fully protected using pseudonyms. Only university professors would have access to the information and feedback on the findings of the research would be shared with you. Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. Only my advisor, Dr. Rick Freeze, will have access to the typed transcripts and audio tapes. The transcripts, audiotapes, and field notes will be locked securely in a filing cabinet. Electronic data will be secured in a laptop computer with finger print identification software. The audio tapes will be erased and the field notes destroyed once the research is completed.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact Dr. Rick Freeze at 204-474-6904 or email, rfreeze@umanitoba.ca; or the Education & Nursing Research Ethics Board for the Human Research Ethics Secretariat, 208-194 Dafoe Road (CTC Building), Winnipeg, MB., R3T 2N2. A copy of this consent form has been given to you for your records and reference. Thank you.

Participant/s Signature

Date

May 31/07

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

Date

May 31/07

Request for Study Finding and Contact Information

Participants may have a study summary e-mailed or mailed to the following address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Interview Guide

Special Education Service Delivery in a Provincial First Nation School

Preamble:

"Thanks for agreeing to participate in this interview process. I'm trying to understand the nature of student support and special education services in your school, and how they fit into the overall planning and organization of the school. I have some questions here that are related to these areas. These questions are a guideline for discussion and don't feel that you have to provide an in-depth answer to each and every question."

Questions for administration, classroom teachers, clinicians, and teaching assistants:

Question 1: General and Special Education.

How would you describe the relationship, if any, between special and general education?

- A. If so, how are the systems interdependent/interrelated?
- B. What are your general thoughts/perceptions of student support services/special education practices and procedures, i.e., identification, placement, programming, in your school?
- C. How familiar are you with the referral process? How are students with special needs identified?
- D. Are there environmental, cultural - linguistic factors that need to be considered in identification, placement, and procedures? How do these factors affect programming (service delivery)?

Question 2: Governance and Jurisdiction

How do you feel about First Nation jurisdiction over education?

- A. How does the arrangement between the education authority, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the

School Division work for the management and operation of the school?

- B. How much authority does the band have? Does the band have representation on the school board?
- C. How does this arrangement (band controlled in conjunction with provincial jurisdiction) affect service delivery (student support)? Are there positive or negative aspects of this arrangement?

Question 3: Personal Experience/Perceptions

What is a typical day like for you?

- A. What do you think of the way special education/student support services are provided? What are your opinions of special education practices as they relate to your specific professional practice and situation?
- B. How have you been involved in providing or accessing services? What works and what doesn't?

Question 4: Inclusion: General (global) Perceptions

What are your general thoughts around inclusion?

- A. Is there a First Nation definition for Inclusion?
- B. Do you have any thoughts for the development of more or better student support services for First Nations schools?
- C. What are your thoughts of the concept of inclusion as it generally relates to First Nations schools and students?
- D. Is inclusion a good idea? Do students benefit from inclusion?
- E. What factors facilitate? What hinders inclusion in First Nations schools?
- F. Do environmental, cultural, or linguistic factors need to be considered?

Question 5: Inclusion: Personal Experiences/Perceptions

- A. Are there professional development needs for teachers on inclusive special education?
- B. What has been your experience with resource teacher programming and student services?
- C. What are your thoughts of inclusion as it relates specifically to your practice and situation? What has been your experience?
- D. What (school-wide) administrative and instructional factors support inclusion of students in your class?
- E. Is it practical? What needs to be in place to support and facilitate inclusion for you? What needs to be in place to make it practical and "doable?"

Question 6: Personal Experience with identification and Programming

What has been your experience with inclusion?

- A. What do you see your role as in identification (assessment), referral (to resource/student services), and programming for students with special needs or for students who are struggling?
- B. What do you think about your school's systems and procedures for identification? What do you think of standardized assessment requirements? Are you comfortable speaking about assessment?
- C. Do you feel you have meaningful involvement? What do you contribute in each of the above areas?

Question 7: Instructional/Assessment Supports

What instructional approaches have worked for you?

- A. How do you think student services or special education should provide supports for all students?
- B. Should student services address broad areas such as retention, achievement, and graduation rates? How so?

- C. What specific supports do you require to provide for the instructional/learning, social/emotional, and behavioural needs of ALL your students?
- D. Can you think of any interventions or programs that might be useful for your school, for your classroom, or for individual students.
- E. Is assessment or support for assessment a concern for you?

Question 8: Suggestions for Programming and Administration

What would have to happen for a First Nation organization to provide student support services?

- A. Who are our leaders in the change process? Why?
- B. How can your student support services (provincial, divisional, and school-based) best provide these supports within limitations of budgets, personnel?
- C. What can the leadership in your division and school do to strengthen student support services?
- D. How can the leadership in your division and school support inclusion?
- E. What specific approaches, supports, interventions, models, theories, e.g., the consultative collaborative model, etc. would be practical for your school?

Question 9: Universal Design

- A. How familiar are you with Universal Design? What does Universal Design mean to you?
- B. Does your school or Division implement or consider Universal Design for Learning as a priority for instruction or curriculum design?
- C. If yes, what are your perceptions of Universal Design as a useful approach for First Nations students?

Curtis Mallett 301-1225 Leila Ave, Winnipeg Manitoba, R2P 2Y6
(204) 229-6940 cmallett@mts.net

April 23, 2007

Briana Goesen - Williams
Area 5 Superintendent
Frontier School Division
PO Box 790
Helen Betty Osborne Ininev Education Resource Centre
Norway House, MB
R0B 1B0

Re: Approval for Research on Student Support Services in First Nations Schools

Tansi. My name is Curtis Mallett, and I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba working on the thesis requirement for my Master's degree in Inclusive Special Education. To complete my thesis, I would like to conduct a research project on student support services in your two K-12 schools. I am seeking your approval for this research. The purpose of this research project is to study student support services and special education service delivery in a Provincial jurisdiction for its implications for policy and practice in band-operated schools in Manitoba. I will conduct this study using qualitative methods, including gathering and analysis of interviews, observations, and divisional and school-based documents. Of particular interest to me is your *Divisional Student Services Handbook*. This policy document will be reviewed for special education identification, placement, and programming guidelines. Only documents, forms, and templates in the public domain will be requested, excluding any student information.

The data would be gathered as unobtrusively as possible using a tape recorder for interviews and a note pad for field notes and observations. Observations will only occur in association with the interviews in the resource teacher room and offices. These observations will be on room arrangement, assessment, and programming materials and recorded in field notes. In other locations of the interviews, whether in the principal's office or coordinator's office, only narrative data and not observational data will be collected. Observations of the schools will be more general in nature and will involve the physical characteristics and layout of the facility. The data would then be transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted for my thesis on student support services. Document and narrative analysis contained in my thesis will uncover reoccurring and relevant patterns of special education administrative procedures and programming guidelines and practice applicable to band-operated schools.

The design of this study will involve 6-7 participant interview/observation periods of one hour. The interviews will take place during school hours and the majority will take place in the larger main school building. One or two interviews will be conducted in the middle school located off the main campus. The only location that is important for observations is the resource teacher area/room. Member checking will follow should any responses need to be clarified.

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If the Superintendent's office approves this research, two or three potential participants on staff, whom I have already informally spoken to regarding this project, will be contacted to seek their consent. They will be provided with an overview of this research project and asked to provide contact information for other potential informants. Should potential participants give verbal consent to participating, they will be provided with a copy of the consent form to carefully read prior to the interviews. They will sign the original consent form immediately prior to the interviews. I will follow up by telephone to confirm dates and locations of interviews, review the interview process, and answer any questions that they may have pertaining to the research.

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Confidentiality would be of utmost importance and as such would be guaranteed in the consent form and fully protected using pseudonyms. Only my advisor, Dr. Rick Freeze, will have access to the typed transcripts and audio tapes. The transcripts, audiotapes, and field notes will be locked securely in a filing

cabinet. Electronic data will be secured in a laptop computer with finger print identification software. The audio tapes will be erased and the field notes destroyed once the research is completed. This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Education & Nursing Research Ethics Board for the Human Research Ethics Secretariat. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, you may contact Dr. Rick Freeze at 204-474-6904 or email, rfreeze@umanitoba.ca. Feedback on the findings of the research will be shared with all participants and stakeholders. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in this research project. Please print this letter for your records and provide me with a checked and signed copy of the agreement below. Contact me directly should you require further clarification. Ekosi!

Yours truly,

Curtis Mallett

CC Norway House Education Director
Student Services Administrator
Principals

This student research proposal has been reviewed by the Frontier School Division.

Approval is provided for data collection

Approval is not provided for data collection

Superintendent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Curtis Mallett 301-1225 Leila Ave, Winnipeg Manitoba, R2P 2Y6
(204) 229-6940 cmallett@mts.net

April 2007

Participants/Informants

Re: Informed Consent for Participation in Research on Student Support Services in First Nations Schools

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Confidentiality would be of utmost importance and as such would be fully protected using pseudonyms. Only university professors would have access to the information and feedback on the findings of the research would be shared with you. Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. Only my advisor, Dr. Rick Freeze, will have access to the typed transcripts and audio tapes. The transcripts, audiotapes, and field notes will be locked securely in a filing cabinet. Electronic data will be secured in a laptop computer with finger print identification software. The audio tapes will be erased and the field notes destroyed once the research is completed.

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[Signature] 11/07/31, 2007
Participant's Signature Date

[Signature] 11/07/31, 2007
Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature Date

Request for Study Finding and Contact Information

Participants may have a study summary e-mailed or mailed to the following address:

Name: [Signature]
Address: Box 295 Norway House, mb
ROB 180

E-mail: _____

Interview Guide

Special Education Service Delivery in a Provincial First Nation School

Preamble:

"Thanks for agreeing to participate in this interview process. I'm trying to understand the nature of student support and special education services in your school, and how they fit into the overall planning and organization of the school. I have some questions here that are related to these areas. These questions are a guideline for discussion and don't feel that you have to provide an in-depth answer to each and every question."

Questions for administration, classroom teachers, clinicians, and teaching assistants:

Question 1: General and Special Education.

How would you describe the relationship, if any, between special and general education?

- A. If so, how are the systems interdependent/interrelated?
- B. What are your general thoughts/perceptions of student support services/special education practices and procedures, i.e., identification, placement, programming, in your school?
- C. How familiar are you with the referral process? How are students with special needs identified?
- D. Are there environmental, cultural - linguistic factors that need to be considered in identification, placement, and procedures? How do these factors affect programming (service delivery)?

Question 2: Governance and Jurisdiction

How do you feel about First Nation jurisdiction over education?

- A. How does the arrangement between the education authority, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the

School Division work for the management and operation of the school?

- B. How much authority does the band have? Does the band have representation on the school board?
- C. How does this arrangement (band controlled in conjunction with provincial jurisdiction) affect service delivery (student support)? Are there positive or negative aspects of this arrangement?

Question 3: Personal Experience/Perceptions

What is a typical day like for you?

- A. What do you think of the way special education/student support services are provided? What are your opinions of special education practices as they relate to your specific professional practice and situation?
- B. How have you been involved in providing or accessing services? What works and what doesn't?

Question 4: Inclusion: General (global) Perceptions

What are your general thoughts around inclusion?

- A. Is there a First Nation definition for Inclusion?
- B. Do you have any thoughts for the development of more or better student support services for First Nations schools?
- C. What are your thoughts of the concept of inclusion as it generally relates to First Nations schools and students?
- D. Is inclusion a good idea? Do students benefit from inclusion?
- E. What factors facilitate? What hinders inclusion in First Nations schools?
- F. Do environmental, cultural, or linguistic factors need to be considered?

Question 5: Inclusion: Personal Experiences/Perceptions

- A. Are there professional development needs for teachers on inclusive special education?
- B. What has been your experience with resource teacher programming and student services?
- C. What are your thoughts of inclusion as it relates specifically to your practice and situation? What has been your experience?
- D. What (school-wide) administrative and instructional factors support inclusion of students in your class?
- E. Is it practical? What needs to be in place to support and facilitate inclusion for you? What needs to be in place to make it practical and "doable?"

Question 6: Personal Experience with identification and Programming

What has been your experience with inclusion?

- A. What do you see your role as in identification (assessment), referral (to resource/student services), and programming for students with special needs or for students who are struggling?
- B. What do you think about your school's systems and procedures for identification? What do you think of standardized assessment requirements? Are you comfortable speaking about assessment?
- C. Do you feel you have meaningful involvement? What do you contribute in each of the above areas?

Question 7: Instructional/Assessment Supports

What instructional approaches have worked for you?

- A. How do you think student services or special education should provide supports for all students?
- B. Should student services address broad areas such as retention, achievement, and graduation rates? How so?

- C. What specific supports do you require to provide for the instructional/learning, social/emotional, and behavioural needs of ALL your students?
- D. Can you think of any interventions or programs that might be useful for your school, for your classroom, or for individual students.
- E. Is assessment or support for assessment a concern for you?

Question 8: Suggestions for Programming and Administration

What would have to happen for a First Nation organization to provide student support services?

- A. Who are our leaders in the change process? Why?
- B. How can your student support services (provincial, divisional, and school-based) best provide these supports within limitations of budgets, personnel?
- C. What can the leadership in your division and school do to strengthen student support services?
- D. How can the leadership in your division and school support inclusion?
- E. What specific approaches, supports, interventions, models, theories, e.g., the consultative collaborative model, etc. would be practical for your school?

Question 9: Universal Design

- A. How familiar are you with Universal Design? What does Universal Design mean to you?
- B. Does your school or Division implement or consider Universal Design for Learning as a priority for instruction or curriculum design?
- C. If yes, what are your perceptions of Universal Design as a useful approach for First Nations students?

Curtis Mallett 301-1225 Leila Ave, Winnipeg Manitoba, R2P 2Y6
(204) 229-6940 cmallett@mts.net

April 23, 2007

Briana Goesen - Williams
Area 5 Superintendent
Frontier School Division
PO Box 790
Helen Betty Osborne Ininew Education Resource Centre
Norway House, MB
R0B 1B0

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Christine Argyle _____ May 31, 2007
Participant's Signature Date

Christine Argyle _____ May 31/07
Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature Date

Request for Study Finding and Contact Information

Participants may have a study summary e-mailed or mailed to the following address:

Name: Christine Argyle
Address: _____, Norway House, MB

E-mail: _____

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April 23, 2007

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Area 5 Superintendent
Frontier School Division
PO Box 790
Helen Betty Osborne Ininev Education Resource Centre
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R0B 1B0

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The 6-7 key informants will include resource teachers, special education teachers, clinicians, classroom teachers, administrators, teaching assistants, or special education coordinators. It would be ideal to interview each of the above personnel; however, the informants may be limited to the resource teacher, principal, classroom teacher (s), depending on assigned personnel and organization within the school. I will follow up with participants by telephone to confirm dates, review the interview process, and answer any questions that they may have. If the above administrative and support personnel are not available, then the informants could be made up of the principal, resource teacher, and three classroom teachers from different grade levels. Participants may be provided with a copy of the consent forms and interview guide prior to agreeing to participate. You also may request a copy of the research instruments for your records, as well as a summary of the findings of this study.

If the Superintendent's office approves this research, two or three potential participants on staff, whom I have already informally spoken to regarding this project, will be contacted to seek their consent. They will be provided with an overview of this research project and asked to provide contact information for other potential informants. Should potential participants give verbal consent to participating, they will be provided with a copy of the consent form to carefully read prior to the interviews. They will sign the original consent form immediately prior to the interviews. I will follow up by telephone to confirm dates and locations of interviews, review the interview process, and answer any questions that they may have pertaining to the research.

In this study, student support services include special education service delivery, administrative duties, the resource teacher program, clinician services, self-contained classrooms, and developmental programs. Particular elements of student support services under study include a philosophical foundation for service delivery, the relationship (if any) to general educational systems, identification, pre-referral, referral, resource teacher programming, placement, interventions/supports, and high cost funding procedures.

Confidentiality would be of utmost importance and as such would be guaranteed in the consent form and fully protected using pseudonyms. Only my advisor, Dr. Rick Freeze, will have access to the typed transcripts and audio tapes. The transcripts, audiotapes, and field notes will be locked securely in a filing

cabinet. Electronic data will be secured in a laptop computer with finger print identification software. The audio tapes will be erased and the field notes destroyed once the research is completed. This research has been approved by the University of Manitoba Education & Nursing Research Ethics Board for the Human Research Ethics Secretariat. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, you may contact Dr. Rick Freeze at 204-474-6904 or email, rfreeze@umanitoba.ca. Feedback on the findings of the research will be shared with all participants and stakeholders. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation in this research project. Please print this letter for your records and provide me with a checked and signed copy of the agreement below. Contact me directly should you require further clarification. Ekosi!

Yours truly,

Curtis Mallett

CC Norway House Education Director
Student Services Administrator
Principals

This student research proposal has been reviewed by the Frontier School Division.

Approval is provided for data collection

Approval is not provided for data collection

Superintendent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Curtis Mallett 301-1225 Leila Ave, Winnipeg Manitoba, R2P 2Y6
(204) 229-6940 cmallett@mts.net

April 2007

Participants/Informants

Re: Informed Consent for Participation in Research on Student Support Services in First Nations Schools

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. The purpose of this research project is to study student support services and special education service delivery in a Provincial jurisdiction for its implications for practice in band-operated schools in Manitoba.

I will conduct this study using qualitative methods, including gathering and analysis of observations, interviews, and divisional and school-based documents that are in the public domain. The data would be gathered as unobtrusively as possible using a tape recorder for interviews and a note pad for field notes and observations. This data would then be transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted for the thesis requirement for my Master's degree in Inclusive Special Education. The analysis contained in my thesis will uncover reoccurring and relevant patterns of special education administrative procedures and programming guidelines and practice.

The design of this study will involve 6-7 participant interview/observation periods of one hour. Key informants will include resource teachers, special education teachers, clinicians, classroom teachers, administrators, teaching assistants, or special education coordinators. I will conduct the interviews with each of the personnel mentioned above and they will take place during school hours. The majority will take place in the larger main school building. One or two interviews will be conducted in the middle school located off the main campus. I may use direct quotations from the interviews. Member checking will follow should any responses need to be clarified.

Observations will only occur in association with the interviews in the resource teacher room and offices. These observations will be on room arrangement, assessment and programming materials and recorded in field notes. The only location that is important for the observations is the resource teacher area/room. In other locations of the interviews, whether in the principal's office or coordinator's office, only narrative data and not observational data will be collected. Observations

of the schools will be more general in nature and will involve the physical condition, characteristics and layout of the facility.

Participants may be provided with a copy of the consent form and interview guide prior to agreeing to participate. I will follow up with participants by telephone to confirm dates, review the interview process, and answer any questions that they may have. Participants may request a copy of the findings of this study using the attached form.

For this study, student support services include special education service delivery and student support, administrative duties, the resource teacher program, clinician services, self-contained classrooms, and developmental programs. Particular elements of student support services under study include a philosophical foundation for service delivery, the relationship, if any, to general educational systems, identification, pre-referral, referral, resource teacher programming, placement, interventions/supports, and high cost funding procedures.

Confidentiality would be of utmost importance and as such would be fully protected using pseudonyms. Only university professors would have access to the information and feedback on the findings of the research would be shared with you. Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. Only my advisor, Dr. Rick Freeze, will have access to the typed transcripts and audio tapes. The transcripts, audiotapes, and field notes will be locked securely in a filing cabinet. Electronic data will be secured in a laptop computer with finger print identification software. The audio tapes will be erased and the field notes destroyed once the research is completed.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact Dr. Rick Freeze at 204-474-6904 or email, rfreeze@umanitoba.ca; or the Education & Nursing Research Ethics Board for the Human Research Ethics Secretariat, 208-194 Dafoe Road (CTC Building), Winnipeg, MB., R3T 2N2. A copy of this consent form has been given to you for your records and reference. Thank you.

Participant's Signature

Date

May 31/07

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature

Date

May 31/07

Request for Study Finding and Contact Information

Participants may have a study summary e-mailed or mailed to the following address:

Name: Lia Braun

Address: Wps MB

E-mail: _____

Interview Guide

Special Education Service Delivery in a Provincial First Nation School

Preamble:

"Thanks for agreeing to participate in this interview process. I'm trying to understand the nature of student support and special education services in your school, and how they fit into the overall planning and organization of the school. I have some questions here that are related to these areas. These questions are a guideline for discussion and don't feel that you have to provide an in-depth answer to each and every question."

Questions for administration, classroom teachers, clinicians, and teaching assistants:

Question 1: General and Special Education.

How would you describe the relationship, if any, between special and general education?

- A. If so, how are the systems interdependent/interrelated?
- B. What are your general thoughts/perceptions of student support services/special education practices and procedures, i.e., identification, placement, programming, in your school?
- C. How familiar are you with the referral process? How are students with special needs identified?
- D. Are there environmental, cultural - linguistic factors that need to be considered in identification, placement, and procedures? How do these factors affect programming (service delivery)?

Question 2: Governance and Jurisdiction

How do you feel about First Nation jurisdiction over education?

- A. How does the arrangement between the education authority, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the

School Division work for the management and operation of the school?

- B. How much authority does the band have? Does the band have representation on the school board?
- C. How does this arrangement (band controlled in conjunction with provincial jurisdiction) affect service delivery (student support)? Are there positive or negative aspects of this arrangement?

Question 3: Personal Experience/Perceptions

What is a typical day like for you?

- A. What do you think of the way special education/student support services are provided? What are your opinions of special education practices as they relate to your specific professional practice and situation?
- B. How have you been involved in providing or accessing services? What works and what doesn't?

Question 4: Inclusion: General (global) Perceptions

What are your general thoughts around inclusion?

- A. Is there a First Nation definition for Inclusion?
- B. Do you have any thoughts for the development of more or better student support services for First Nations schools?
- C. What are your thoughts of the concept of inclusion as it generally relates to First Nations schools and students?
- D. Is inclusion a good idea? Do students benefit from inclusion?
- E. What factors facilitate? What hinders inclusion in First Nations schools?
- F. Do environmental, cultural, or linguistic factors need to be considered?

Question 5: Inclusion: Personal Experiences/Perceptions

- A. Are there professional development needs for teachers on inclusive special education?
- B. What has been your experience with resource teacher programming and student services?
- C. What are your thoughts of inclusion as it relates specifically to your practice and situation? What has been your experience?
- D. What (school-wide) administrative and instructional factors support inclusion of students in your class?
- E. Is it practical? What needs to be in place to support and facilitate inclusion for you? What needs to be in place to make it practical and "doable?"

Question 6: Personal Experience with identification and Programming

What has been your experience with inclusion?

- A. What do you see your role as in identification (assessment), referral (to resource/student services), and programming for students with special needs or for students who are struggling?
- B. What do you think about your school's systems and procedures for identification? What do you think of standardized assessment requirements? Are you comfortable speaking about assessment?
- C. Do you feel you have meaningful involvement? What do you contribute in each of the above areas?

Question 7: Instructional/Assessment Supports

What instructional approaches have worked for you?

- A. How do you think student services or special education should provide supports for all students?
- B. Should student services address broad areas such as retention, achievement, and graduation rates? How so?

- C. What specific supports do you require to provide for the instructional/learning, social/emotional, and behavioural needs of ALL your students?
- D. Can you think of any interventions or programs that might be useful for your school, for your classroom, or for individual students.
- E. Is assessment or support for assessment a concern for you?

Question 8: Suggestions for Programming and Administration

What would have to happen for a First Nation organization to provide student support services?

- A. Who are our leaders in the change process? Why?
- B. How can your student support services (provincial, divisional, and school-based) best provide these supports within limitations of budgets, personnel?
- C. What can the leadership in your division and school do to strengthen student support services?
- D. How can the leadership in your division and school support inclusion?
- E. What specific approaches, supports, interventions, models, theories, e.g., the consultative collaborative model, etc. would be practical for your school?

Question 9: Universal Design

- A. How familiar are you with Universal Design? What does Universal Design mean to you?
- B. Does your school or Division implement or consider Universal Design for Learning as a priority for instruction or curriculum design?
- C. If yes, what are your perceptions of Universal Design as a useful approach for First Nations students?