

UNSEEN THREADS:  
WEAVING THE STORIES BETWEEN TEACHER BELIEFS AND CLASSROOM  
PRACTICE

by  
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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative research study examines the relationship between three teacher participants' beliefs and their classroom practices as it relates to the ongoing implementation of inclusive education and Manitoba's regulated Bill 13 (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth *Appropriate Educational Programming* 2007). Semi-structured interviews provide personal narratives of beliefs about learning, inclusion and disability. Classroom observations provide an opportunity to examine the influence on practice. Additionally, the study determines if self-described beliefs match observed classroom actions. Findings suggest that there are varying degrees of commitment to inclusive practice which are determined by individual frustrations, teacher confidence, teacher skill levels and understandings of role and responsibility. The conclusion proposes that we continue to have a gap between teacher knowledge and professional actions. It further suggests that inclusion's implementation will be reliant on individual teacher commitment to fostering inclusive practice in addition to systemic structural reform which supports the ideals of inclusion in relevant and pragmatic ways.

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No master thesis is the work of the student alone. It begins with a passion that creates a curiosity fuelled by a desire and a willingness to embark on a journey that searches for answers to important questions. Although, the journey is influenced by many players long before it begins, its direct impact is reflected by the final words and ideas on the page.

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## **DEDICATION**

*To my students who showed that inclusion is not about if, but about how.*

*To my family Jim, Chris and Michelle*

*In appreciation for your unyielding support, encouragement and love*

*Even when you weren't sure what it was all about.*

*To my friends, Kathy, Wenda, Patti and Jacqueline who never let me quit.*

*And to my mom and dad who taught me the importance of learning, actions, values and  
that anything is possible!*

*“The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a little longer”*

*(Anonymous).*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Manitoba teachers face increasingly diverse classroom communities. Influenced by immigration patterns, societal trends and an increased number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, teachers are now faced with a rapidly growing range of learning and abilities within the classroom (Jordan, 2007, p. xi). Discouraged from using segregated or exclusionary practices, teachers have an increased responsibility to seek out ways to instruct all students in the regular classroom. However, regular education was not originally designed for exceptional learners and, as identified by Jordan (2007), teachers tend to focus their instructional plans on a relatively homogeneous group of students and distance themselves from students they find difficult to teach. Thus, confronted with the heterogeneity of the current student population, the complexity of delivering appropriate education, and the need to ensure that learning goals are met for all, student learning needs become the challenge for classroom teachers.

Response to this student diversity has driven inclusion to the top of the educational agenda. Inclusion, a philosophical approach which values student belonging, personal achievement, and meaningful involvement, emphasizes instructional practices which allow a wide range of learning needs to be taught together effectively (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth [MECY], 2007). In Manitoba, provincial educational policy has embraced inclusion as a foundation principle (MECY, 2007). Its philosophy

provides the context for the education of all students and its values and beliefs guide Manitoba educators in their classroom practice.

Throughout the world, too, education legislation calls upon educators to ensure that all students receive appropriate programming in their local school. *The Salamanca Statement* and the *Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* (cited in Jordan, 2008, *the Salamanca Statement*, UNESCO, 1994, p. 6) represented international consensus in favour of inclusive education. Canadian human rights legislation (*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 1985, section 15) presented the parallel national view and Manitoba's 2004 Amendments to the *Public Schools Act* and subsequent regulations offers a similar provincial legislative requirement. Given this legal and social policy framework, it is fair to conclude that inclusion is a world-wide movement that has some permanence.

But can mandated policies be a catalyst for educational change and shifts in teacher beliefs and practices? Scrugg's and Mastropieri's (1996) meta-analysis of American attitude studies reported that far more teachers support the concept of inclusion than are willing to teach it. Additionally, they found that only 40% of teacher respondents believed that inclusion was a realistic goal for most children. In a study conducted by Monahan, Marino and Miller (2000), only 41% of teacher respondents surveyed felt that students with special needs have the basic right to receive their education in the regular classroom. In fact, Jordan, Schwartz and McGhie (2008) indicate that popular opinion among regular classroom and subject teachers suggests that inclusion of students with special needs in their classes is a policy doomed to fail. Teacher complaints about policy included that teaching students with special needs requires specialized skills that teachers

are not trained to deliver the specialized instruction that students with special needs require; and that students with specialized needs detract from the teachers' instructional time. Clearly, legislated policy without institutional support creates conditions which do not allow beliefs to change. As Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) suggest, diverse student populations require systemic change that rethinks and redesigns school organization, classroom support and the basic principles of learning itself. Unfortunately, it appears that constraints have increased without change to the systemic structures. Thus, regulations alone do not change teacher beliefs and attitudes.

In provincial classrooms this educational philosophy requires that the regular classroom teachers take inclusive education beliefs and turn them into actions. Alghazo and Naggar Gaad (2004), in their study of teacher acceptance of inclusion of students with disabilities, found that, although the teacher's skill and the severity of the student's disability were important factors, teacher attitude was a critical predictor of successful inclusion and influenced the teachers' willingness to differentiate instruction. Interestingly, Manitoba educators have been expected to accept the philosophy of inclusion and its practices without much consideration given to their personal beliefs and attitudes or the need for institutional restructuring. Provincial implementation strategies have neglected to engage classroom teachers in a process to develop new understandings and appear to have resulted in what Fullan (2001) describes as "superficial, episodic reform"(p. 36). Additionally, this lack of attention to teacher beliefs may have resulted in instructional practices that Goodman (1995) calls "change without difference" (p.1). Earl and Katz (2006), in their "theory of action," suggest that political policy cannot serve as a motivator for change. They indicate that results from this type of external motivation will

not be sustainable and will not change beliefs. McLeskey and Waldron (2000) indicate that inclusion works only to the extent that teachers believe it is beneficial for students and that this is achieved only through self-examination of personal attitudes about disability, inclusion and learning. As Fullan (1999) notes, people cannot be forced to think differently and develop new skills. Liberman (cited in Snyder, 1999, p.174) describes inclusion's implementation as a "wedding in which we forgot to invite the bride". This oversight in policy implementation and the neglect of individual teacher beliefs, regrettably, may contribute to a situation where politically correct ideas may be expressed but in reality are not part of the teacher's philosophy in action. Thus, the possible result in many Manitoba classrooms may be incongruence between inclusive education's legislated policy, teacher stated beliefs and classroom practices.

### **The Nature of Inclusion**

Interest in inclusive education and the implementation of its practice in general education classrooms has sparked a great deal of controversy. From debate over the definition, to disagreement regarding student diversity, teacher beliefs about disability, and the effectiveness of instruction (Jordan, 2007), inclusive education has been fraught with confusion, misunderstanding and contradiction. Strong support in the professional literature has not lessened the turmoil or changed teacher beliefs. Therefore, inclusion's shift into classroom practice has been met with mixed success (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000).

Central to the issue of the congruence between teacher beliefs and classroom actions is the lack of agreement with the definition itself. Entrenched in the broader human rights movement (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002), inclusive education aligns with

legislation that directs educators to provide appropriate educational programming for all students and is contingent upon social policies that define education not as a privilege but as a human right (*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 1985). Often confused with terms such as mainstreaming and integration, inclusive education gets lost in its own history with the ambiguity of the concepts further adding to the misunderstanding. Its lack of precision is illustrated, for example, through Specht, Currie, Killip, King, Burton, Eliav, Lambert, and Thornton's (2001) broad definition which describes inclusion as a philosophy that views the classroom as involving all children, to Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth's (2001) explanation of inclusion as a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued and safe. Plagued with inconsistencies and a lack of clarity, classroom teachers, who are responsible for implementing this phenomenon, differ widely in what they implicitly understand about inclusive education. What results is the emergence of two competing perspectives, each of which have a profound influence on teacher beliefs and instruction (Jordan, 2007).

Each perspective has assumptions and beliefs that influence teacher behaviour and instruction (Jordan, 2007). In Canada, the belief that every student has the right to an education and to fulfill his/her potential is central to section 15 of the federal *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1985). Teachers subscribing to this human rights perspective, which is often called an "interventionist" viewpoint, express the belief that they have the responsibility for instructing all students (Jordan, 2007). In opposition is the "pathology mindset" which sees the child as having an internal condition that is beyond the teacher's expertise and will not be changed (Jordan, Schwartz & McGhie, 2008). Regardless of the

view, research indicates that what teachers perceive will have a profound influence on how they teach (Brownell, 1999).

Further to this issue of the alignment between beliefs and classroom actions, is extensive research linking differences in student disability to differences in teacher beliefs about the success of inclusive education. Although it, too, differs in definition from place to place and from organization to organization, Jordan (2007) delineates the term “disability” under five main categories with 13 subcategories. These categories include: intellectual, communicational, behavioural, physical and multiple disabilities. Canadian prevalence rates indicate that school systems identify from 9% to 15% of their school population as meeting the category descriptions (Jordan, 2007). Research from Ward, Center and Bochner (1994) indicates that teacher attitudes are influenced by the type of disability and their perceptions of which students would be successful. For example, Alghazo and Naggar Gaad (2004) suggested that classroom teachers were more accepting of physical disabilities and that variances in teacher attitudes were related to the severity of the disability. Forlin (1995) found that educators included a child with a physical disability more readily than a child with a cognitive disability.

Additional, teacher variables have been found to impact attitudes towards inclusive education. Avramidis and Norwich (1994) found that professionals who were more removed from the classroom situation such as administrators and consultants expressed more positive attitudes towards students with disabilities than the classroom teachers. Findings by Alghazo and Naggar Gaad (2004) indicate that gender may also influence beliefs. When interviewed about their acceptance on the inclusion of students with disabilities, male respondents in their study had less positive attitudes towards



including persons with disabilities in the regular classroom than that of their female counterparts. Research suggests that teaching experience, too, may influence attitudes. Berryman (1989) found that teachers new to the profession were more accepting while Forlin's (1995) work seemed to suggest that the more experience teachers had, the less accepting they were of inclusion. Even though the research is layered with multiple variables and contradictions, the research remains clear about the powerful influence that teacher attitudes have on the successful implementation of inclusion.

Little is known about how skills for effective inclusion are developed or how teachers' beliefs about disability are reflected in their practice (Jordan, Schwartz & McGhie, 2008). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) suggest that teachers may endorse general statements of inclusion but it is another matter entirely how willing they are to make adaptations for these children when they are members of their classroom community. McLeskey and Waldron (2000) describe the pervasive and unrecognized role of attitudes and beliefs as barriers to change. Research acknowledges that beliefs are the products of our experiences and environment. The difficulty appears to reside in understanding that the teacher is central to policy implementation and that inclusion's success is reliant on changing internal thinking. However, this shift in thinking requires structural supports which advocate for thoughtful inclusionary practice and minimize constraints. Such attention to restructuring the education system in more inclusive ways will help to foster new thinking and create conditions for structural change.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to look at the complex interplay between teacher beliefs and behaviours as they relate to inclusive education. This look creates a timely

context for an examination into the world of the general classroom teacher. This exploration causes us to wonder if there is there a gap among provincial inclusionary policies, school organizational structures, and teacher classroom practices, because the literature is replete in its support of the incongruence between individual classroom teachers' beliefs and their behaviours. Any emergence of conflict between beliefs and practices forces us to use a form of social analysis or in Thomas Skrtic's (1995) terms, an "immanent critique," which is a methodology that allows contradictions between values and practices to surface and permits us to understand the dissonance and the contextual reality.

The primary intent of this research, therefore, is to explore teacher beliefs about disabilities, their perceptions about inclusive education and to determine how differences in beliefs affect differences in instructional practices. Recognizing that there are multiple layers to this inquiry, this research acknowledges that many factors may influence the implementation of inclusion. However, the intent of the study is to focus on a concentrated investigation of the work of classroom teachers and their narratives in order to describe how they make sense of inclusion policy. Departing from previous research done in this area, the study will not rely on self-reported data alone but will include observations of actual teacher classroom practices and explore the relationship between these practices and the teachers' described beliefs.

To achieve its purpose, the research will investigate three important questions:

1. What are three teachers' stated beliefs about learning, disability and inclusion within the context of their school environment?

2. How do teachers perceive that their beliefs affect their instructional practice?
3. Are teacher self-reported beliefs about learning, disability and inclusion congruent with their observed teaching practices?

### **Methodology**

All research methods have their strengths and limitations. However, the goal of any study is to consciously enter into the process considering the many factors that have influence on the outcomes (Bogdan & Knopp Bilken, 2007). The primary criterion for judging credibility of qualitative research is the believability and trustworthiness of the research (Bogdan & Knopp Bilken). Triangulation, “the use of different methods of gathering data” is a common technique used for this purpose (McMillan, 2008, p.296). This study’s research design used two different methods for gathering data, an interview and an observation instrument. Data was collected using three teacher participants in a repeated interview format. Further credibility can be noted in the variation of the study’s samples and settings. The purposeful use of different classroom situations and student populations increased the opportunity to further understand context and to offer a more plausible analysis.

Reliability of this study focused on the accurate recording of interview conversations and the detailed descriptions of field note observations. This study used tape recorded interviews with transcripts. As well, member checks were used, requiring the participants to review the transcripts and field notes for accuracy.

Essential to this study are the similarities that connect the two instruments. Both methods surface data that assists in answering the research questions. The interview

focused on stated teacher actions in relation to the observation which was an opportunity to view the actions in context. The overlap provides the needed information to further examine the congruency between stated beliefs to classroom actions.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

The need to delimit the parameters of the study in order to make it manageable, also contribute to its limitations. The one-time classroom observation period was one such factor. Ideally, multiple visits and prolonged periods in the classroom setting would be best. However, the access and time constraints of the researcher prohibited that from occurring. Additionally, the small participant sample (three teachers) did not allow the researcher to make generalizations. Yet, the clearly defined focus on three teachers and their classrooms did allow for a depth of understanding regarding participant views and practices.

As the researcher, my own background and experience as both a school administrator and resource teacher was both a limitation, in terms of the potential bias I brought to the topic, and strength, in terms of my awareness and consideration of complex issues when implementing inclusive education. The impact was minimized through my reflective declaration of preconceived ideas and expectations (outlined in chapter five). The nature of observational data in general, can be a limitation because it is influenced by what individual observers choose to make their primary focus. For this reason, clear guidelines regarding instructional practices and classroom interactions that promote inclusion were established for classroom observations. As the participants were volunteers and they were aware that the study was about inclusive educational beliefs and practices, there was the potential to recruit only participants with strong pro-inclusionary

tendencies. What the findings revealed, however, was the complexity of the issues and that teachers who perceive themselves as inclusive, may not implement practices that support such beliefs.

### **Definitions**

Although numerous concepts emerge in this examination, several key definitions both pedagogical and practical should be noted.

“Inclusion” in this study’s approach refers to a philosophy or belief system in which all individuals are valued and belong. It is not about a location or placement but rather refers to values that promote social interaction, friendship and participation (Proactive, 2006). Additionally, “inclusive education” incorporates initiatives that are related to the supports and opportunities that are provided to students within the system which will assist them in becoming participating members of their school communities (MECY, 2007).

Important to this study’s research questions as well, are the recognized instructional practices that support the principles of inclusive education (Villa & Thousand, 1995). The study’s observation focuses on principles of constructivist learning, the use of flexible classroom groupings, the nature of teacher/student interactions and the use of high quality strategies as described by Kame’enui and Carnine (1998). These practices create actions which were used to align with teacher comments about beliefs.

Learning, as described by the study’s field notes, focuses on the physical classroom environment, student accommodations and the form of teacher talk used

during the classroom observation. These included conversations related to classroom management, learning and motivation.

Concepts and ideas of disability are also important to define. Historically, a disability definition focuses on a student's lack of ability in one or more of five distinct areas which include: communicational, intellectual, behavioural, physical and multiple disabilities. However, as cautioned by Sarason and Doris (1979, in Jordan, 2008 p. 39), defining students by narrow categories of disability neglects diversity and uniqueness which is an essential element to any examination of inclusion. Barton (2003) suggests that how we define disability is extremely important, as it influences our expectations and how we interact with disabled people. More importantly he adds that disability is not a fixed definition and is open to various interpretations. This study presents disability from two opposing viewpoints – one that interprets disability as pathology while the other assumes an interventionist description. As mentioned previously, people who hold pathology beliefs view disability as an internal problem that will not be responsive to change (Jordan 2008, p. 79). At the other extreme individuals with interventionist views believe that it is their responsibility to reduce barriers and create access for the disabled.

Finally, the term “belief” as used in this work relates to a set of assumptions used by people in everyday practices (Jordan, 2006). These assumptions produce a personal acceptance or a belief regardless of theoretical correctness. Within this research, teacher beliefs refer to the perceptions and judgements that teachers hold with regard to disability, learning and inclusion. Additionally, differences in beliefs are linked to how teachers differ in the following areas:

- Willingness to take responsibility

- Efficacy
- Philosophy, and
- Instructional practice

As much of the literature suggests, although receptive to the concept of inclusion, teacher attitudes do not necessarily align with the philosophical principles of inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Attitudes defined as feelings and emotions additionally influence responses.

All definitions create an infrastructure for the methodology, provide some parameters and offer an understanding of the researcher's intended meaning.

### **Conclusion**

This research becomes important as it recognizes that inclusion is a call to action. It examines classroom teachers' beliefs with the hope that in doing so, teacher practice may be affected such that learner needs can be met, and the educational system can become more genuinely responsive to its increasingly diverse student population. Inclusive practice and teacher attitudes about inclusion are intermeshed. In their ongoing complexity one is always affecting the other. Thus educators must move from a theoretical agreement in an inclusion philosophy to one that is grounded in teacher action.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

A synopsis of current educational literature assists in supporting and informing the present study. As well as grounding the study's purpose in current research, this review provides a context for the study's eventual findings and conclusions. The review begins with an examination of the origins of inclusion and outlines the circumstances that have contributed to the current ideology for the education of students with special learning needs in Manitoba. This background serves as an important starting point, as the literature review and indeed the study itself are framed within the context of inclusion with a particular focus on Manitoba. More importantly however, this starting point highlights several big ideas that have contributed to the division, confusion and tension surrounding inclusion and its practical implementation into the regular classroom.

As might be expected, the body of the literature regarding teacher attitudes is extensive. Therefore, the bulk of this review narrows the focus on issues that may underlie teacher attitudes and shape teacher beliefs; efficacy as well as resistance is considered. Emerging from the examination are two predominating discourses, the pathognomonic viewpoint and the human rights perspective. Assumptions and prevailing teacher attitudes within each discourse are further explored. Interestingly, it is the surfacing of these attitudes that provides the deeper understanding of teacher beliefs regarding learning, disability and inclusion. As well, the possible dissonance between policy, beliefs and practice is noted. Crucial too, are research findings related to inclusionary classroom instruction. The review outlines critical instructional practices and



cites research that offers important considerations for understanding teacher beliefs in relation to classroom practice. This discussion of key strategies offers classroom observation criteria that could be used in the methodology of the present study.

Teacher attitude/belief research methodology has predominantly used self-reporting formats as evidence of teacher beliefs. This review concludes with an examination of the gap that occurs when these types of methods are used and suggests a framework to further probe the relationship between what educators say and what they do. As indicated in the preceding paragraphs, this synopsis of current understandings and research provide the framework for the study's methodology.

### **Factors that Influence Teacher Beliefs and Inclusive Classroom Practices**

#### ***The Historical Development of Inclusion***

In educational circles the word inclusion continues to elicit passionate debate (Kavale & Forness, 2000). Whether seen as a way of establishing a collaborative, supportive and nurturing community of learners which gives students the services and accommodations they need to learn (Salend, 2001) or offered as a catalyst to change attitudes and reconsider practices for students with special needs (Rose, 2001), the ideology implies that educators are required to provide quality education to all learners and are to include all students to the greatest extent possible within their classrooms (UNESCO, 2005).

In Manitoba and throughout the world, inclusion provides the context for the education of all students. UNESCO's (2005) international voice describes this inclusionary approach as one in which the school system collectively redefines itself to meet the needs of all learners:

Inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children. (UNESCO, 2005 p.13)

Central to Canadian human rights legislation (*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 1985, section 15) is the belief that every child has the right to an education that fulfils his/her potential to grow. The Research Alliance for Children with Special Needs (2001), a Canadian research consortium, refers to inclusion as a practice whereby the individual learning needs of all children will be met and children with disabilities will develop meaningful social relationships. This Canadian human rights context lays the framework for provincial legislation which parallels these broad views and serves as a guide for policy development at the local school division level.

Within the province, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (2007) describe inclusion as a “way of thinking and acting” which promotes acceptance and belonging. It asks educators... “to ensure that students receive appropriate educational programming that fosters the students’ participation in both the academic and social life of the school” (MECY, 2004, p.1).

What becomes apparent when reviewing the literature is the political authorship of inclusive education ideology. Its emphasis on inclusion as a belief system rather than a set of actions (Stockall & Gartin, 2002) leads to the mandating of social constructs and

the legislation of values, an approach that does not easily translate into action in the classroom. Additionally, this focus on the social dimension leaves the notion of inclusion open to numerous interpretations, and the definition becomes problematic when attaching meaning and subsequent actions to the philosophy. Stockall and Garten (2002) argue that the complexity of the definition requires “dynamic renegotiation of meaning” (p. 172) and ongoing clarification of the actions that reflect inclusion. Thus, the definition itself creates an unclear message that intensifies the controversy and causes educators to confuse inclusion with terms such as mainstreaming and integration (Proactive, 2006). Because of these political origins within layers of interpretation, inclusive education’s implementation has confounded classroom practice.

Philosophies regarding the education of children with special needs have changed dramatically over the years (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Historically, special needs students were served in specialized programming delivered in settings separated from the regular classroom (Kavale & Forness, 2000; Monahan, Marino & Miller, 2000; Snyder, 1999). With the introduction of legislation that includes the 1975 *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (Monahan et al., 2000), now known as the *Individuals with Disabilities Act* (1990), students with disabilities increasingly spent time in regular classrooms. This access to the regular classroom for specified periods of time became known as mainstreaming. With its inception, controversies emerged as educators struggled to determine if students with special needs benefitted from this type of arrangement (Kavale & Forness, 2000). Following the *Warnock Report* (1978), “integration” became the buzz word (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). This assimilation approach required students to change in order to fit into the unaltered classroom

environment and time in the classroom was considered time in mainstream education (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Winter, 2006). With the *Salamanca Declaration* (UNESCO, 1996), which represented worldwide consensus in developing schools for all, inclusive education emerged as the foundation for educational policy. Its success no longer limited decisions to access issues but required positive attitudes, accommodations and adaptations (Kavale & Forness, 2000; Stainback & Stainback 1996; Winter). Clearly, school systems would now be required to change if practice was to respond to inclusive ideology and educational policy (Skrtic, 1995). However, in retrospect, what has occurred appears to be an ideological divide (Kavale & Forness) with challenges and confusion fuelled by political and philosophical ideas that are remnants of past concepts. Additionally, Skrtic (1995) suggests problems arise because the values that underlie inclusive education philosophy require school organizations to make fundamental changes which contradict the values of their prevailing paradigm of practice (p. 215). The multidimensional aspects of the definition combined with the historical ideologies and legislation have anticipated (and perhaps assumed) that classroom practice would have kept pace. Yet the shift in special education philosophies from location, to access, to full participation may in reality have created widely disparate opinions and left classroom teachers with uncertainty and a reluctance to change. Bandura (2001) suggests that organizations have to be fast learners as “slow changers become big losers” (p. 11). Herein may lie a layer of disconnect as fundamentally school structures have not changed even though philosophy has shifted. As noted by Skrtic, teaching practices are passed on from one generation to another. There is nothing correct or incorrect about them. School organizations may have added programs or specialists to help support teachers, but they

have not dealt with the structural change necessary to respond to such a great philosophical shift.

Noteworthy in this discussion, is a brief examination of the Manitoba context. The origins of inclusive education in Manitoba can be traced to 1967 when legislation required school divisions to provide special education programming (Proactive, 2006). In 2005, encouraged by recommendations from the *Manitoba Special Education Review*(1998), the province enacted Bill 13, *An Amendment to the Public Schools Act* (Appropriate Educational Programming) (MECY, 2007; Proactive, 2006) and subsequently established regulations and published supporting policy. This context of legislated policy created the framework that directs the provision of education of all students in Manitoba (MECY, 2007). In an effort to operationalize the definition, Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth produced documents to assist teachers in moving the belief into action. These include but are not limited to:

- *Supporting Inclusive Schools: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (2005)*
- *Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba: Standards for Student Services (2006)*
- *Appropriate Educational Programming: A Handbook for Student Services (2007)*

Armed with these resources it appeared that classroom teachers were ready to implement the philosophy of inclusion into practice. Yet, teachers continue to feel unprepared and are concerned that they lack the skills to teach students with disabilities in the regular classroom (Kavale & Forness, 2000; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Winter, 2006). This

reluctance and apprehension further contribute to the gap between policy, philosophy and classroom practice, and may add to the resistance to change.

Over the last several decades, inclusion's history has been based on agendas that appear to have neglected classroom teachers' beliefs and attitudes which are key to implementation. From value based roots and a human rights perspective, political agendas have mandated inclusion as "...an outcome for achieving social justice and equity in our society" (York-Barr, Schultz, Doyle, Kronberg & Crossett, 1996, as cited in Winter, 2006, p. 85). Social policy, noble in motives, is open to vagueness and has contributed to a patchy implementation and inconsistency in teacher attitudes. In all inclusion definitions, teachers are charged with the responsibility to implement this social policy into practice. Fullan and Stager (1992) suggest that the development of the personal moral purpose of individual teachers is crucial to educational change and, as Winter (2006) further proposes, current teacher attitudes and beliefs indicate a degree of reluctance that must be addressed if policy is to be successful.

### ***Teacher Efficacy***

Teacher beliefs are influenced by many factors, that are enmeshed in personal and professional values as well as the prevailing culture in which they work. Educators and researchers assert that teacher efficacy plays a prominent role in instructing students. As Brownell and Pajares (1999) note, "Teachers' self-efficacy is a context-specific self-judgement of their individual capability in a particular instructional endeavour" (p. 11).

Much of the work on self-efficacy has drawn on the work of Albert Bandura (1997) and his notions of self-efficacy. With roots in Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy has emerged as a belief in one's personal capabilities. Bandura proposes that

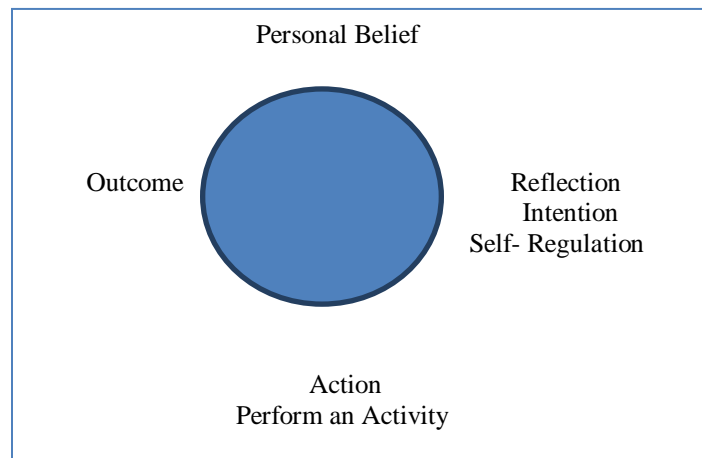
“individuals pursue activities in which they feel competent and avoid situations in which they doubt their capabilities to perform successfully” (p.154).He further suggests that individual beliefs affect responses to situations.

Central to Bandura’s social cognitive theory is the pivotal role that self-regulatory and self-reflective cognitive processes play in adaptation and change. He further clarifies this with suggestions that “human functioning is the product of dynamic interplay of personal, behavioural and environmental influences” (Pajares, 2004, p.8). People, he suggests, are not only products of their environment, but are also the creators of situations as well. The ability to produce personal theories and self-manage confidence allows individuals to regulate their behaviour and plan actions. This control over the situation, he proposes, creates a stronger incentive and motivation to act(Pajares).

This belief in one’s own capabilities is part of a broader context of social cognitive theory known as the agentic perspective (Bandura, 2001). Bandura suggests that individuals intentionally act to make things happen. He further postulates that forethought uses individual perceived abilities and personal standards to provide direction for actions and that these actions rarely change because of external influences. Beliefs systems, along with self-regulatory and reflective cognitive processes, determine action and activities. This cyclical interplay between beliefs, actions and results can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Cyclical Interplay among Beliefs, Actions and Outcomes

from Bandura. 2001



Additionally, a distinctive feature of self-efficacy suggests that it can determine how much effort is put forth, how long individuals will keep trying, and the degree of resiliency they exhibit when they meet with failure (Bandura, 2001). Of interest to this work, is the idea that people with high self-efficacy attract support from others; this reinforces their ability to cope. From this perspective, it would seem that self-efficacy is important in moving the concept of inclusion into action and that a teacher who is resilient and collaborative is likely to be inclusive.

Research additionally indicates that efficacy beliefs can influence a teacher's willingness to accommodate learning for students. Brownell and Pajares (1991) suggest that instructional practices in inclusive classrooms are closely related to teacher beliefs about learning and their personal theories about student differences and disabilities. In their study they hypothesized that teachers with high efficacy beliefs would be more accommodating to students with learning and behavioural difficulties. Their survey of 200 teachers found that higher efficacy beliefs resulted in increased teacher reports of student success and that quality interaction with colleagues, relevant in-services and



support from building administrators influenced teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach.

Efficacy beliefs can also influence classroom teacher student interactions. Jordan, Lindsay and Stanovich (1997), in their work in Canadian classrooms, found evidence that suggested teacher beliefs strongly influence classroom interactions, as well as the type of teacher/student conversations that occur. The results of their observations of nine grade 3 classrooms suggest that, in classrooms where teachers had well designed lessons, established routines and clear student roles and responsibilities, there was a great deal of instructional engagement and extended dialogues with students. Teachers in less effective classrooms had minimal contact with all students, and conversations and interactions focused on routines and inappropriate behaviour (Jordan et al., 1997). These results highlight that teachers who were unsure of their abilities spent an increased time in superficial interaction as compared to the deeper cognitive processing activities necessary for learning.

Gibson and Demo (1984, as cited in Brownell and Parjares, 1999, p. 16), found that teachers with high efficacy beliefs provide students with learning disabilities more assistance than teachers who have low efficacy beliefs. Their work further suggests that teachers with low efficacy beliefs give up on students with difficulties, take a negative view of students' motivation, maintain strict classroom rules for behaviour and rely on extrinsic rewards to motivate students to learn (Brownell & Parjares, 1996).

Villa and Thousand (1995), in their book *Creating an Inclusive School*, suggest that, unless educators believe they have the skills to respond, the outcome will be teacher anxiety rather than student success. They further set out that any innovation implemented

at the practical level must attach personal and professional significance, as well as perceived relevance for students and learning.

In the work of Minke, Bear, Deemer and Griffin (1996), attitudes towards inclusion and perceptions of self-efficacy, competence and teaching satisfaction are compared between teachers involved in a collaborative co-teaching inclusive situation, and classroom teachers in a traditional setting. Results indicate that respondents in inclusive settings have high perceptions of self-efficacy, confidence and satisfaction. Once more this provides evidence that teacher confidence and ability plays a major role in creating an inclusionary setting.

Much of the research regarding teacher attitudes and beliefs suggests that the success of inclusion is dependent on teacher confidence. Jordan (2007) describes this teacher confidence as the effects of personal efficacy and teacher efficacy. She further suggests that teacher efficacy can be defined as confidence in one's teaching ability and its effect on students. Her work probes deeper by providing a self-efficacy quiz for teachers and by questioning how an individual's belief in personal efficacy remains intact in the face of opposing attitudes.

These cited studies clearly support that teacher efficacy has a powerful influence on understanding of policy, classroom practice and beliefs about learning. Additionally these studies suggest that efficacy is an important factor to be included in the data analysis of this study.

### ***Resistance to Inclusion***

Despite world-wide policy, mandates, and legislation, some educators persist in concluding that inclusion does not enhance student well-being and is a fad destined to be

part of the educational revolving door. Monahan et al.(2000), in their survey of teacher attitudes towards inclusion, found that 57% of respondents believed that inclusion would not succeed because of too much resistance from regular classroom teachers. As Jordan (2007) infers, maintaining personal efficacy amongst nay-sayers and negative attitudes can be problematic and that, “in a profession as large and complex as teaching, there will be differences of perspective” (p.33).

Villa and Thousand (1995) note additional barriers to inclusion. They describe the unrecognized role of personal theories, presuppositions and abstract constructs (values, beliefs and attitudes) that can be deep barriers to the implementation process. Mamlin (1999) found that inclusion has met with resistance not only because of issues of receptivity but because its practicalities have not met with systemic school change. Some teacher resistance can be attributed to the origins of inclusion itself with additional evidence relating to lack of clarity in philosophy and definition (Kavale, 2000). However, predominately the literature suggests that teacher resistance to inclusion is associated with teacher skill, inadequate pre-service preparation and poor leadership (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Villa & Thousand; Winter, 2006).

### ***Teacher Training***

Winter (2006), in her work regarding teacher views about pre-service training related to students with special education needs, found that a combined 89% of the teachers she randomly surveyed, as well as those who participated in her focus groups, felt they did not have the necessary preparation to teach in inclusive settings. She further suggests that this lack of training may create a lack of teacher confidence to differentiate instruction. This notion appears to be supported by her data which indicate that teachers

preferred students with special needs be educated elsewhere. Additionally, 75% of survey participants in Monahan et al.'s (2000) survey felt that regular education teachers did not have the instructional skills or educational background to teach students with special needs. Snyder (1999) found that 70% of the regular classroom teachers she interviewed had never attended an in-service/workshop related to students with special needs. Brownell and Pajares (1996) in their study of teacher beliefs found that specific special education course work positively influenced teacher attitudes toward students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Their work suggested that the number and quality of additional training experiences increased teachers' positive perceptions about the education of students with disabilities in the regular classroom.

### ***School Leadership***

Poor leadership is an integral component in perpetuating teacher resistance. McLeskey and Waldron (2000) indicate that the most important person in the development of an inclusive school is the principal. If the administrator is unsupportive, inclusion will fail. Snyder (1999), in her work with classroom teachers at Coastal Carolina University, found that, regardless of grade level taught, 75% of her respondents felt unsupported by their administration. Concerns were expressed in terms of poor communication, little involvement and no on site in-servicing. Additional evidence can be found in Hammond's and Ingalls' (2003) survey of 343 classroom teachers. They found that 94% of their participants felt inclusion would fail if strong leadership and administrative support were absent.

Teacher resistance and negative attitudes are significant to the actions that occur in regular classrooms. Whether related to training, current skills or leadership, evidence

suggests that teacher attitudes influence the effective implementation of inclusion in the classroom.

### ***Competing Discourses around Disability***

Two competing discourses emerge from literature on beliefs about inclusive education. At one end is a traditional instruction view, emphasising the internal traits of the learner. In contrast is the human rights/inclusive school view concerned with the social condition that impedes participation (Jordan, Glenn & McGhie-Richmond, 2008;McLeskey &Waldron, 2000). Within each discourse assumptions emerge that have a profound influence on teacher beliefs and instruction (Jordan, 2007). Relevant to this study are the teacher participants' views regarding disability and the assumptions that are part of each discourse.

***Pathognomonic view.*** The first predominating perspective is the traditional instruction discourse. This perspective, also called a pathognomonic viewpoint, places the focus on the pathological characteristics of the learner (Jordan, 2007). Within the complex profile of students with disabilities, teachers with this view focus on an internal condition (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). Assumptions within this discourse see the child as having a condition that is fixed and beyond the teacher's expertise (Jordan, Schwartz & McGhie, 2008). Thus, internal attributes of the student are used by the teacher as an explanation for how they learn. Fuelled by legislative funding policies that require a diagnosis, the student is labelled by an expert and responsibility shifts from teacher to child (Jordan, 2007). This way of thinking is perpetuated in jurisdictions that require evidence of the disabling condition in order for the school system to access additional

student supports. As well, it undermines an inclusive approach to education. (MECY, 2007).

Teachers subscribing to this system refer students to supports outside the classroom; they often expect parents to undertake the major responsibility of teaching in a remedial catch-up situation (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). Additionally, teachers with this pathology mindset make statements such as “Students with disabilities don’t belong in my classroom; I’m not trained to teach kids with these kinds of difficulties” (Jordan, 2007, p. 25). McLeskey and Waldron further describe teachers with this belief set as seeing children who fail as deficient and that their return into the regular classroom is contingent on the student’s ability to do the work that everyone else does.

In this discourse, special education becomes a location. The teacher sees a need for special services which includes a highly trained specialist delivering specific programming in areas other than the regular classroom (Villa & Thousand, 1995). Monahan, Marino and Miller’s (2000) survey of teachers in Southern California, provides evidence of these attitudes, with results that indicated that 67% of their respondents preferred sending students to special education classrooms rather than the special education teacher collaborating in the regular classrooms. Traditionalists believe that this type of service delivery allows classroom teachers to be more equitable in their attention to all of the students (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). Hammond and Ingalls (2003), in their survey of rural teachers, found that 60% of participants felt inclusion takes valuable instruction time away from nondisabled students. Clearly the historical roots of special education are pivotal in teacher views about roles and responsibility.

***Interventionist view.*** The human rights perspective aligns with legislation that directs educators to provide appropriate educational programming for all students. In Canada, the belief that every student has the right to an education and to fulfill his/her potential is central to the federal *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, section 15, 1985). Teachers subscribing to this broader perspective, which is often called an interventionist view, express beliefs that they have the responsibility for instructing all students (Jordan, 2007). McLeskey and Waldron (2000) suggest that teachers within this discourse believe that they reduce barriers by adapting instruction, accommodating how students respond and providing multiple opportunities for students to learn. They further suggest that teachers subscribing to this perspective would see labelling students as unnecessary. Jordan and Stanovich (2003) indicate that teachers with interventionist beliefs seek out additional information from parents and colleagues, work more collaboratively with educational assistants and keep detailed track of student progress.

Additionally, this approach considers the issue of inclusive schools. As Friend and Cook (2007) indicate, teachers subscribing to this framework believe that all students can learn and that no one is perfect. The philosophy embraces ideology that supports students attending their neighbourhood school, classroom placements that are age and grade appropriate, and services that are provided within the context of the regular classroom.

There is much variance in teacher beliefs across discourses. These differences additionally contribute to the varying teacher beliefs around inclusion and how it is put

into practice. Determining the teacher participants' perspectives around disability will be essential to the study's efforts to determine the relationship between beliefs and actions.

### *Effective Instructional Practices*

Educational systems have underestimated the critical change that is required when teachers implement inclusive education and strive to meet diverse learning needs. Rapid technological advances, dynamic social conditions and changing immigration patterns have forced teachers to adjust their instructional practices to meet a varied and changing range of student needs. Skrtic(1995) surmises that “society is a constant source of pressure on schools, and when values and priorities in society alter, additional demands are placed on schools to change what they do” (p. 214). Unfortunately, if teachers don't see the need for substantive change that transforms and improves education, then inclusion may be viewed as nothing more than an additional demand to be superficially incorporated into classroom practice. As Skrtic further suggests, at times society requires fundamental educational change that is not an add-on but rather demands professionals do something other than what they were standardized or acculturated to do (p. 214). Legislation has misrepresented inclusivity as the replacement of the segregated model of disability with a more integrated approach to programming; a type of pedagogical revolution. In essence, inclusive education is about social reform that necessitates an individual's fundamental belief to change. Broderick, Mehta-Parekh and Reid (2004) suggest that including disabled students in regular classrooms and providing access to the regular curriculum requires a shift in the instructional focus of general education teachers. This premise suggests that, as beliefs are redefined, matching teaching behaviours will emerge. This significant shift in thinking is difficult to



accomplish and in some cases individuals may be stuck in a belief system that conflicts with the newly required paradigm of practice. This educational response to the current reality therefore becomes not about changing the system's response to students with special needs, but in fact, is about the education of all students. Thousand and Villa (1995) propose that changes that occur in general education parallel what is necessary for successful inclusion. McLeskey and Waldron (2000) indicate that an add-on approach to instruction will not work and that a dramatic change is needed to assist teachers in educating students of such diversity.

McLeskey and Waldron (2000) advocate that "good teaching is good teaching" (p. 55). Broderick et al.(2004) further add that "disabled students benefit from good instruction just as all students do" (p. 200). Stanovich and Jordan (2000; 2004) add that effective teaching parallels effective inclusion and that teaching skills that are good for students with disabilities benefit all students (cited in Jordan, Glenn & McGhie-Richmond, 2008, p.11). This research is significant as it refutes the necessity of "experts" and seems to indicate that classroom teachers do not require specialized expertise to be an inclusive teacher but rather a good teacher will be inclusive by default. Additionally, patterns of inclusive practices must embrace the pedagogy that good instruction is based on the interaction and engagement of the people in the classroom and that these patterns are more important than the expertise of the teacher and complexity of the subject (Jordan, 2007) Therefore, as educators ponder the pathway to effective inclusive education, instructional practices that meet all students' needs must be paramount in their thinking (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000).

The link between teacher instruction and inclusion is broad and multi-dimensional. Unmistakably, however, this link is a powerful one that is critical to the purpose of this study. Research in the area is extensive; therefore, this discussion examines common instruction at both the pedagogical level and practical level to discover patterns, provide descriptions and determine what good teachers do. What emerge are clear indications of patterns of practice in inclusive education giving further evidence of the depth of the instruction/inclusion relationship.

***Principles of good instruction.*** Important principles of good instruction abound in the literature. Monahan et al.(2000) describe inclusive schools as flexible learning environments that use teaching strategies like cooperative learning, peer-mediated learning and collaborative teaching. Broderick et al.(2004)advocate that differentiating instruction is an approach that provides multiple options for students to reach clearly articulated goals and engage in meaningful and challenging educational activities. Stockall and Gartin (2002) believe that varied instruction, active participation and frequent feedback are paramount to an inclusive educational environment. Again, important to the work of this review are the common patterns of good instruction and the evidence of these principles when they are in action in the inclusive classroom.

McLeskey and Waldron (2000) support the above examples and offer two tenets of good instruction that are important for successful inclusion—constructivist learning and flexible groupings. Both broad ideas require fundamental instructional change and make the assumption that learners create meaning and make connections through cooperative/collaborative groups. Additionally, this pedagogy recognizes that working groups change depending on purpose, context and activity.

Thousand and Villa (1995) identify several approaches that foster inclusive education. Evident in their work is the resurfacing of patterns of practice which they have identified as constructivist learning, authentic assessment, flexible grouping, peer-mediated instruction, collaborative teaming and the use of technology in the classroom. The authors suggest that together these ideas have the potential to create a “unified philosophy” of educational practice. Their work further supports earlier researchers who identified similar principles of good instruction.

*High quality strategies.* Kame’enui and Carnine (1998) and Kame’enui and Simmons (1999) (as cited in Jordan, 2007, p.138) replicate previous research findings and add to the support of patterns of practice. Their work identifies six principles of good instruction. This framework suggests that “excellent” teachers use six high quality instructional tools when planning for instruction and that these principles engage all learners who are in the regular classroom. Instructional tools identified include: primed background knowledge, big ideas, conspicuous strategies, scaffolding, integrating strategies and judicious review. These findings suggest that it is important to include these high quality instructional tools in the study’s methodology as there is a strong connection between good instruction and inclusive philosophy. Descriptions of these practices are further described in Table 1.

Table 1. Chart of Critical Pedagogical Principles in Quality Instruction

from Kame'enui and Carnine (1998) and Kame'enui and Simmons (1999)

Primed Background Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners have an awareness of the upcoming material.</li> <li>• Learners connect new material to what they already know.</li> <li>• Learners know why the new material is important.</li> </ul>
Big Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners are focused on the important ideas.</li> <li>• Learners are focused on concepts that are broad and deep and that connect to smaller details and facts.</li> <li>• Learners use big ideas to formulate important questions.</li> <li>• Big ideas are applied to other situations and contexts.</li> </ul>
Conspicuous Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learners talk about the thinking processes that are needed for a particular task.</li> <li>• Learners talk about how to think.</li> <li>• The teacher models the thinking that is need to accomplish the outcome.</li> </ul>
Scaffolding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multiple-stepped process that initially supports the learner and gradually decreases this support as the learner becomes more independent with the skill.</li> </ul>
Integrating Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies where the learner transfers understandings from one lesson and apply them to another.</li> </ul>
Judicious Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent purposeful planning for students to recall and apply their new learning.</li> </ul>

At a provincial level, Manitoba's *Success for All Learners :A Handbook on Differentiating Instruction*(MECY, 1996) recognizes the increasing diversity of provincial classrooms and the need for a deliberate use of strategies that respond to the needs of all learners. The document recognizes that students need to make sense of new information through connections to prior knowledge and experiences and to gain the ability to apply this knowledge to new situations. Through the role of teacher as

facilitator, a spectrum of choices becomes critical to the learning as does flexible groupings which vary according to instructional purpose. Thinking processes and learning strategies are explicitly taught and mastery is attained through teaching support that is intense initially and gradually decreases as the learner becomes more proficient at the skill. The document recognizes that the use of technology in the classroom is integral to student engagement. It mirrors previous literature review discussion on key principles, supports patterns of practice ideology and identifies teaching behaviours indicative of the pedagogy in practice.

Further evidence of effective instructional practice can be seen in the meta-analysis work of Robert Marzano. Marzano (2003) who identifies three factors that identify an effective teacher-use of instructional strategies, well-established classroom management and purposeful classroom curriculum design. Within the compilation of research he identifies key categories of instructional strategies that affect students' achievement. These include feedback and corrective instruction as crucial strategies for understanding. As outlined in the work of Jordan and Stanovich (2004), Marzano, too, identifies the importance of routines and procedures as well as teacher-student interactions. He cautions, however, that good instruction does not operate in isolation and that pedagogy and practice is a complex back and forth process.

Teacher supervision documents provide additional "snapshots" of instructional practice. For example, *The Louis Riel School Division, Supervision of Professional Staff, Teacher Supervision Document* (Louis Riel School Division, 2003) identifies key indicators of good practice. The indicators are organized around five categories, each of which has descriptors to be used for focused observations in the classroom. Identified are:

classroom management, instructional processes, interpersonal relationships, student evaluation and classroom learning environment. Again, what is apparent is the alignment of these principles to previously cited research. Clearly there is significant consensus regarding good instructional practice.

***Student/teacher interaction.*** The success of implementing change is the carrying out of belief into action. So how are the principles of quality instruction and successful inclusion evident in regular classrooms? Jordan, Lindsay and Stanovich (1997), in their study of “teacher talk” in nine Grade 3 classrooms, observed the interactions that occurred between teachers and students over several lessons. Their premise was that clear routines, well understood roles and planned lessons with an obvious beginning, middle and end conserved instructional time. This saved time allowed the teacher to use more frequent and cognitively engaging dialogues with all students. Their work identified four levels of interactions. These include:

- Level 1: no interactions between students and teachers
- Level 2: the teacher observes, checks, circulates and then moves on to another student
- Level 3: the teacher observes, checks, circulates and tells student what to work on, how to correct it and then moves on to another student
- Level 4: the teacher observes, checks, circulates and asks students questions about the lesson concepts and elicits responses about their learning.

Results of their work indicate that the more effective the teacher is at preserving instructional time, the more frequent are meaningful teacher/student interactions. This

research becomes important to this study's methodology and data collection as the teachers' use of instructional time suggests how they engage and interact with learners.

Additionally this study led Stanovich (1994,cited in Stanovich& Jordan, 1998) to develop a more broad observational instrument that would assist in identifying behaviours that are indicative of good teaching. Based on literature relevant to effective teaching and the previous work of Englert, Tarrant and Maraige (1992), Stanovich developed an observational tool known as the Classroom Observational Scale (COS). Connected to the work of Van Tassel-Baska, Quek and Feng (2007) who used the COS-R, both observational checklists provide evidence of classroom practice and the reality of the classroom experience. Stanovich's scale follows from the work of her previous study, and groups teaching behaviours into three areas – time management, classroom management, and lesson presentation. The results, based on the observations of 65 educators over five years, indicate that effective teachers offer frequent error correction and feedback, state expectations at the beginning of the lesson, and plan for recurrent review of lesson material. This observational instrument is crucial in linking key practices to teaching behaviours in the classroom. It offers a means to link stated beliefs to observed practice.

Without a doubt, the relationship between inclusive education and instruction must become part of the repertoire of the classroom teacher. Emerging similarities that include prior knowledge, constructivism, flexible groupings, technology, scaffolding, collaboration, peer-mediated learning and metacognition must be part of regular, everyday classroom practice. The overlap across the research is unquestionable; patterns of practice reflect good instruction which is linked to successful inclusive education.

Study analysis must include these identified similarities as there is a strong link between effective teaching and the ability to be inclusive. Good instruction is good instruction and benefits all.

### **Research Methodology**

While the evidence suggests that teacher attitude is key to the successful implementation of inclusion, much of the research is limited to investigations that have respondents self-report their belief or attitudes (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). Likert-type inventories that identify the degree to which respondents agree or disagree are frequently used. This agree or disagree methodology often reflects traditional categories that limit participant responses and researcher understanding (Avramidis & Norwich). Other study designs use questionnaires or surveys that require participants to agree with statements about inclusion. These paper and pencil measures rely on the assumption that respondents' answers and beliefs would also be expressed in their classroom practice. Furthermore, this methodology poses a risk as participants may answer with politically correct ideas that have been mandated through legislation and policy, but in reality have no connection to their actual classroom practice or instruction. As indicated in Avramidis and Norwich, alternative research designs are important in probing beyond surface ideas and uncovering underlying attitudes.

The primary intent of this research was to explore teacher beliefs about disabilities, their perceptions about inclusive education and to determine if differences in beliefs were associated with differences in practices. Departing from previous research done in this area, the study does not rely on self-reported interview data alone but included classroom observations. The observation analysis linked with the literature and



used the similarities found in the research as important markers for the classroom observation. Flexible groupings identified as a tenet of good instruction by Thousand and Villa (1995) and McLeskey and Waldron (2000) was used as part of the classroom observation framework. The type and number of groupings within the observation period were recorded. Additional research similarities which included constructivism, collaboration and metacognition were noted in the field note observations. Research which highlighted high quality instructional tools as identified by Kame'enui and Carnine (1998) and Kame'enui and Simmons (1999, as cited in Jordan 2007, p.138) were important to classroom observations as well. Quality instructional strategies were identified and counted during the classroom observation period. Additionally, the teacher talk research of Jordan, Lindsay and Stanovich (1997) was applied. Field notes described the type of talk (organizational, learning or motivational) and tallied the number of observed teacher and student interactions.

Narrative interviews posed questions that linked to the predominating discourses and required teacher participants to describe their perception of disability and inclusion. Interview responses were linked to research that described efficacy, confidence, roles and responsibility. A compare and contrast approach was used among individual participants and between participants in an effort to determine the connection of belief to practice.

### **Conclusion**

The translation of inclusive policy into everyday regular classroom practice is a challenging venture; in reality it demands massive social change that necessitates fundamental shifts in teacher thinking and practice. Incidental or add-on change is unproductive (Skrtic, 1995) in creating an effective response to the diversity of the

classroom. Unfortunately, policy makers often overlook factors that impede implementation and work against the change. Winter (2006) suggests that regrettably minimal attention is given to the key players and the classrooms in which they work. Whether hampered by an unclear message or conflicting layers of interpretation, inclusion has not moved easily into the regular classroom. Literature indicates that teacher efficacy and skill set are strong contributors to the resistance.

Vital to the purpose of this review however, is the established link between teacher beliefs, effective instructional practices and successful inclusion. The research methodology moves from the acceptance of teacher stated beliefs to an analysis of personal theories and attitudes in conjunction with observations of instructional practices. This exploration may lead to further insights into teacher thinking and actions and sharpen the image as to 'next steps' in achieving educational equity and excellence for all children.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND STUDY METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

The research design in this qualitative case study is framed to explore teaching behaviours in natural settings where they would typically occur. The data collection in this research is concerned with: understanding behaviours and attitudes from the participants' frame of reference; analyzing data to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this relationship; and exposing the extent of variation among individuals' responses and behaviours. Rich, detailed descriptions are required and study methodology must be purposefully planned, well thought-out and highly organized in order to offer "credible answers" or "convincing evidence" about the problems under investigation (McMillan, 2008; Thomas & Brubaker, 2008). Matching appropriate methods to research questions is vital to uncovering understanding.

The current study is centered on key questions and areas of inquiry. The investigation examines the interplay between teacher beliefs and teaching behaviours as they relate to inclusive education. This focus further explores the relationship between teacher beliefs about disabilities and their perceptions about inclusive education in order to determine how differences in beliefs affect differences in instructional practices. Three critical questions frame the investigation:

1. What are three teachers' stated beliefs about learning, disability and inclusion within the context of their school environment?
2. How do teachers perceive that their beliefs affect their instructional practice?

3. Are teacher self-reported beliefs about learning, disability and inclusion congruent with their observed teaching practices?

The examination between beliefs and practices requires an experimental design that investigates the teaching behaviours, teacher/student interactions, and instructional strategies of teachers in the classroom setting. Within this study's methodology teacher-participants will have the opportunity to tell stories, express individual beliefs about inclusive education and demonstrate approaches to students and learning. Linked by the subsequent data analysis, these activities provide sets of comparison for the examination of expressed beliefs to actions.

### **Role of Researcher**

The background, interest and possible bias of a study's researcher are important influences on an investigation's observations, interpretations and conclusions. Important to this research are the experience, skills and professional involvement that I bring to the study. My background includes experience as a Kindergarten to Grade Nine classroom teacher, resource teacher, keynote presenter/conference facilitator, and school administrator. I have participated in action research projects in second language learning, literacy, differentiated instruction and metacognition and am intrigued with the implementation of brain research into classroom practice. My professional involvement has included leadership roles in two provincial associations in Manitoba: the *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development* and the *Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children*. Given these experiences, I would be described as an interventionist, pro-inclusion school leader, committed to ensuring all children reach their potential.

Essential to this study, also, are my skills and experience in classroom observation and teacher supervision. As a resource teacher I developed expertise and observational skills focusing on classroom practices that promote belonging and student learning. My experience as a school administrator has further enhanced these skills and, as a result, I am well versed in classroom indicators of good practice. I know what to look for, how to collect the data, and how to link what I have observed with established patterns of practice. I have experienced inclusive education through four distinct roles and have become passionate about the responsibility that educators have to help all students learn. These various roles also influenced my expectations for the study. I entered this research with the belief that many educators struggled with the implementation of Manitoba's inclusive education policy. I believed that policy implementation and mandated compliance had paid little attention to engaging classroom teachers in a process of understanding the philosophical base of inclusion. Thus, many teacher attitudes, beliefs and practices remained unchanged. My assumption further held that teacher participants in my research would express politically correct statements but that these words would not translate into inclusive actions in the classroom. Throughout the process of data collection and analysis I was mindful of these assumptions and expectations, but remained open to the new information that I was gathering.

## **Study Methodology**

### ***Selection of Participants***

The participants in this study were three urban elementary classroom teachers and their students. In order to avoid the ethical problem of power of position, none of the teachers, students or workplaces were connected to the researcher. Additionally, for the

purpose of this study, classroom observation was better achieved in an elementary setting. Elementary classroom teachers tend to remain with their students for most of the day. This extensive time in the classroom offers a more efficient environment to collect a complete set of data. Furthermore, elementary classrooms have a high probability of being composed of a broad range of students. This factor assists in providing a more realistic snapshot of the classroom context and the student diversity faced by educators (Proactive Information Services Inc., 2006).

In response to a general query for participation, one city school division indicated a willingness to take part. This division's schools are situated in several urban communities and serve almost 16, 500 students.

Following the division's protocol for conducting research, a multi-step participation selection process was developed. It included:

1. Seeking verbal permission from the Assistant Superintendent in charge of educational research.
2. Follow-up written request to the Assistant Superintendent as per school division approval process (see Appendix A).
3. Letter of invitation to participate sent to elementary schools in the division(see Appendix B).
4. Principals and teachers wishing to volunteer were to contact the researcher directly.
5. Teachers representing different schools were to be selected. In total, three teachers, one from each school was to be selected on a first-come basis.

6. Written consent as well as the assent form from teachers and guardians of students was obtained prior to commencement of the research study (see Appendix C).

Implementation of the selection protocol had the senior divisional administrator send correspondence to 10 of the division's Early Years principals to determine teacher interest in participation. Three principals indicated a positive response from their staff with one teacher from each school willing to take part.

This non-probability, convenience sampling was used in order to choose volunteer classroom teachers who were willing to have an additional adult in the classroom. However, some cautions must be taken with this type of sampling. Voluntary participants frequently have characteristics that, although extremely positive, may be of concern for researchers. Often volunteers are pleasers, see themselves as experts and are conformists (McMillan, 2008). This runs the risk of skewing the data and rendering the sample not typical and difficult to generalize to the larger population. Although teacher opinions were solicited, this study also included observational data, which mitigates issues of volunteer selection, though it could be presumed that those who volunteered were predisposed to having a personal philosophy of inclusion given the nature and title of the study. Consequently, the study's results must be interpreted carefully.

### ***Description of Participants and Sites***

Three female teachers from three different schools in the division volunteered to participate. Each teacher was employed at a different school and taught a different elementary grade level. Although unified under the divisional framework and policies, each school was unique in context and community. To provide background relevant to

this study each school setting will be described generally. Each school will be identified as either school A, B, or C. Then information with regard to each teacher participant and her physical classroom will be described. Experience, training and philosophy will be noted. Teacher participants will be identified by using the corresponding school letter.

*School A.* School A is a kindergarten to grade 5 facility which is situated in a middle income community in the north-east area of the division. There are approximately 350 students from several countries of origin. Additionally, a high percentage of students who have English as their second language attend School A. This diversity in experiences, language and ethnic backgrounds has been described by the principal as bringing a great richness to the school. The school is comprised of 25 teaching staff. Interestingly, 40% of the total school staff are paraprofessionals.

Using the services of the resource teacher for segregated programming is not an option at School A. Teacher A indicates that the school is extremely focused on differentiation. The resource teacher's role is to assist teachers in planning for differentiation and to guide professional conversations around this topic. According to Teacher A, differentiation is a school wide implementation goal. The school sees it as successful pedagogy in addressing diverse student learning needs. Teacher A described it as the "most effective way to make things the same."

*Teacher A.* Teacher A teaches a grade two class of 25 students. She is 47 years old and has been teaching for seven years. Previous to this she was a school library clerk who, with encouragement from a previous principal, attended Weekend College to obtain her Bachelor of Education degree. She self-describes herself as a passionate and committed educator and attributes "her professional success to being an adult learner."



And so I thought about it and then I waited for my youngest to get to be a little bit older. Then we decided as a family that I would do that because it is a family commitment; it wasn't just me. So when I went into the program, it was because that's what I really, really wanted to do. It took commitment, from the family and money and all the rest of it but it was something that I really wanted to do so I was really serious about it. A lot of adult learners are. That is how we are, right?

Additionally, Teacher A enjoys professional development and is an avid reader. Currently, she is the Early Years team leader at School A. This group is completing a book study based on two of the writings of Debbie Miller, *Teaching with Intention: Defining Beliefs, Aligning Practices and Taking Action K – 5*. As well, she has taken *The Alert Program* training and uses the strategies and language in her classroom. Teacher A has spoken at conferences and has been part of a divisional video which highlights exemplary Early Years practices.

Teacher A's classroom is an open area room. The physical arrangement of the room includes a designated teaching area with an easel and a chair. The design also includes specified areas for math, science and reading. Students do not have assigned seating and are expected to begin the morning learning without waiting for instructions. Wall displays include student expectations, an "Our Promise Statement" and additional interactive math and language displays. Teacher supports included a grade 12 student

who is part of the division's career program and a male paraprofessional, both of whom remained in the classroom the entire three hour observational period.

**School B.** School B is a kindergarten to grade 6 facility with an enrolment of approximately 200 students, again located in the north-east area of the division. Much of the enrolment draws from a newer upper-middle income housing development. The school population has few English as an Additional Language (EAL) students and is actually struggling with declining enrolment. Limited in diversity, Teacher B indicates that the school has a fairly involved and vocal group of parents who frequently advocate for their own children. The school offers site-based learning opportunities. Again the focus is on differentiated instruction. Divisional learning sessions are also available. These sessions are optional or invitational. School B has 13 full-time equivalent professional staff, with five paraprofessionals. In this school, paraprofessionals compose 28% of the total staff.

**Teacher B.** Teacher B has been teaching for many years. She took time off to raise her children and then returned to the division as a substitute. She has been at School B for 3 years in a permanent, full-time assignment. She has a Bachelor of Education Degree although she indicated that since obtaining it she rarely participates in professional development activities.

You know I fly by the seat of my pants sometimes, lots of times. I haven't gone to a lot of training. They've been different every year. But I do some professional reading; we have a great library here at the school.

Teacher B teaches a combined class of 19 grades 5 and 6 students. The room is a closed classroom with a configuration that includes desks in groups of four and one group of three. Interactive problem solving activities as well as the school pledge and homework assignments were displayed.

*School C.* School C is a dual-track kindergarten to grade 6 Early Years school located in the north-east section of the school division. The current enrolment is 450 students with 318 of those students attending the English-German Bilingual Program. As a result of the popularity of this program, the school draws from a wider area. Many students are bussed from other school communities in the division. Interestingly, students who live in the immediate area of the school come from Manitoba Housing Complexes or low income rental properties that are often used by immigrant newcomers. There are a great number of EAL students. Enrolment figures indicate that these students participate in the regular English program where Teacher C teaches.

The teacher indicated that chronic absenteeism is problematic. She highlighted one student who has been away for 65 days. Additionally, she indicated that many students come in the morning but do not come back to school in the afternoon. As well she felt that when weather was bad students stayed away. Several times she had only 15 students in attendance because of the cold weather. Clearly, this breadth of diversity creates many school-wide challenges.

*Teacher C.* Teacher C has been teaching for 25 years. She has a Bachelor of Education Degree along with a Post Baccalaureate Diploma (one-year specialized certificate). Ten years ago she was part of a teacher exchange program and taught in New Zealand for two years. Currently, she has requested to take a leave of absence to teach at

an International School in Thailand for the next two years which has been approved. She has been highlighted in a divisional video of exemplary early practice.

Teacher C instructs grade 1 regular English Program students. She has 32 students and has one fulltime paraprofessional to assist her in the classroom. The classroom is small; desks are arranged into six groups with five students to each group. There is an area with a carpet that is designated for formal instruction. The room is filled with lots of books both levelled and unlevelled. Wall displays include “Reading Strategies”; “Our Promises to Each Other”; a visual schedule and a “Human Uniqueness Collage”. There are number lines and alphabets on student desks as well as numerous math manipulatives that are readily available.

All three teachers had experience with students who received Special Needs Categorical Funding (Manitoba Education, 2011) as well as students who have difficulties with learning and required adaptations. At the time of this research each classroom had students with the above descriptions.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

This research study consists of two data collection methods. One method, a half day classroom observation, gathered information about the teacher’s instructional practice and teaching behaviours. A second procedure, a narrative interview, provided an opportunity for teachers to express individual beliefs and attitudes about inclusive education and their approaches to students and learning. Subsequently, beliefs in words are compared to beliefs in action.

Important to this study, is the work of Dr. Anne Jordan. Dr. Jordan’s research, at the University of Toronto, sought to answer research questions related to effective

inclusionary practice. She has developed several data collection instruments for use in her studies. One instrument, the Pathognomonic-Interventionist (P-I) Interview, departs from typical interview questions related to inclusive education and focuses the conversation on classroom actions related to programming and collaboration for students with special needs (McGhie-Richmond, Lupart, Whitely & Jordan, 2008). For the purpose of this study, this instrument has been adapted with her permission and can be found in Appendix D.

### ***Classroom Observation***

Sampling teacher behaviours through an observation process provides an excellent database for research analysis. It provides opportunity to access actual classroom experiences that are integral to teaching and learning (VanTassel-Baska, Quek, Feng, & Xuemei, 2007). Reliance on sharp skills, attention to details, and a mutual understanding of the researcher/participant relationship are critical features of any observational methodology (Thomas & Brubaker, 2008). In this study, the researcher commenced the data collection through engaging in direct classroom observations for half a day. This observation occurred in the morning in each of the teacher participants' classrooms. Although limited by three classroom observations, combining the data across the three examples provides a snapshot that informs the study's questions.

As noted in the literature, the relationship between the observer and the observed is crucial to research objectivity and the degree of observer participation is dependent on the task (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2007; Thomas & Brubaker, 2008). This study used a

participant/observer format that required little involvement with the teacher or students. The researcher is an onlooker, free to gather information pertinent to the study.

Each observation was unstructured (McMillan, 2008) and although not formal categories or checklists were used, the researcher's experience with supervision directed her attention to classroom interactions, instructional strategies and teacher talk. The researcher recorded what was seen and heard using field notes. These handwritten notes taken at the time of each observation also included background information that had been shared with the researcher. This information contained school enrolment, class size, grade level, the physical classroom arrangement, wall displays, and classroom personnel. Once the observation began, a continuous recording format described what was occurring in each classroom every several minutes. Times were recorded. For example Teacher B's observation field notes included the following:

9:30 AM Opening Exercises. The teacher introduced the observer and collected forms for school pictures. She reviewed the homework and asked for students to turn in their work. While all of this occurred many students were writing in their journal.

9:40 AM Teacher put "Time for Talking Triangles" worksheet on the overhead. Teacher did a review of the directions and asked if there were any questions.

Throughout the field notes conversations were quoted, teacher/student actions were described, classroom events were depicted and instructional practices were identified. Reflective side bars allowed the researcher to record her thoughts and feelings.

Additionally field note transcripts provided an opportunity for the researcher to highlight data using a colour coding system. Eventually, field note information categories emerged and were transferred to charts for comparison. These categories will be further discussed in the analysis.

### ***Semi-Structured Interview***

The P-I Interview is a research instrument used to focus conversation on individual teacher classroom actions (see Appendix D). Originating from a biological interview that was developed by Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee in 1978 and further adapted by Stanovich and Jordan, (1998) and Jordan and Stanovich (2001, 2004), this chronological narrative format elicits a description of practice that allows teachers to express their approaches to students and learning.

The semi-structured interview format requires teachers to describe their work over the last school year with two students. The participant first describes a student who is recognized as having special needs, has an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) and receives extensive support. Then the interview is repeated for a second student that the classroom teacher would self-describe as academically at risk. Each teacher participant describes the students' characteristics and talks about the decisions they have made, the support network they have accessed and the instructional practices they have used. Five target questions provide the framework for the interview and follow-up probes elicit justification and rationale. Questions include "Tell me what happened when (student A) first came to your attention" and "Did you do anything special for the student in your program?" (Stanovich & Jordan, 1998, p. 2). The interview's focus on teacher approaches to specific students eliminates broad based, leading questions about inclusion; it requires

participants to relate their experience rather than give their opinion. However, the information gained from such an approach may rely too heavily on researcher interpretations of teacher beliefs. Therefore, for the purpose of this study several direct questions have been added to Jordan's original format. These include: "Whose responsibility is it to program for students with special needs?" and "What has equipped you to deal with students with special needs? Do you feel this is adequate?"

The discussion lasted about one hour and teacher perspectives on four areas were discussed. These included referrals, programming, communication and classroom supports. To obtain comparable data, the same interview format and questions were used for all participants. The interview was tape-recorded and then transcribed (Jordan, Glenn & McGhie, 2008).

Within this interview there are two levels of data collection, each piece having a separate purpose. The use of the narrative process elicited information that explores stated beliefs in a more detailed way. The use of direct questions confirmed the researcher's interpretation of these stories and helped to keep any bias in check. Alongside the observation, the interview provided points of comparison in order to determine the relationship between teacher-stated beliefs and their beliefs in action.

### **Procedure**

To examine the consistency between stated beliefs and actions, this study's procedure was designed with two data gathering instruments. Each is integral to the outcome of the study. Study methods are as follows:

1. Participant Selection - Once study participants were determined in accordance with the previously mentioned procedures, then the data collection phases occurred.



2. Classroom Observation - The half-day classroom observation occurred at a mutually agreed time. Each observation took place in the morning. Observations were recorded through detailed observer field notes and were used for post-observation data analysis. Classroom observations occurred in all three participants' instructional settings. The primary focus of observations was on the teacher – her words, actions, and interactions with students.

3. The Semi-Structured Interview - The interview occurred after the classroom observation in the afternoon. Although the discussion was to last approximately one hour, in all three interviews the conversations lasted much longer. The interview surfaced ideas about decisions, support networks and instructional practices that have been used with regard to students with special needs.

### **Data Analysis**

In qualitative research, it is difficult to separate data collection from data analysis. Both exercises are woven together to provide an understanding of the questions under study (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 2007). The instruments used for data collection in this research have been carefully selected to provide narrative descriptions and observed classroom actions. This purposeful use of the two instruments lays a foundation to begin to answer the critical questions of the study.

In examining the consistency between stated beliefs and actions, two sets of comparison were used. The first point of comparison at the individual teacher level occurred between the teacher interview data and the classroom observation.

***First Point of Comparison – Individual Teacher Level***

***Interview.*** The interview provided an opportunity for participants to talk about their specific work with individual students as well as their classroom practice and personal theories in more general terms. Although prepared questions were used, often the researcher probed for more details and referred to events that had been observed in the classroom observation. These additional details added depth to the initial responses and provided insights that assisted in interpretation.

Once transcribed, the interview was reviewed many times. Initially the transcripts were studied to determine how teacher participants described disability. The researcher looked for comments that would suggest whether the teacher participant was approaching disability from a pathology perspective or a human rights view. Perspectives were colour coded in an effort to determine what the predominant perspective was. Next the transcripts were examined to identify the participants' thoughts about learning. Again comments related to learning were colour coded. Identified were comments that might indicate constructivist learning, metacognition, student accommodation or pedagogical approaches. Finally the transcripts were studied to decide which responses were indicative of thoughts about inclusion. Response to questions about roles, responsibilities, communication, training and the student services team were scrutinized. Although these categories aligned with the first research question, they were too broad. Subsequently, these classifications were merged into more specific subgroups supported by guiding questions which assisted the researcher with reorganizing the interview data into a *Categories of Comparison for Teacher Interviews* chart. (See Table 2.)

Table 2. Categories of Comparison for Teacher Interviews

Thoughts about Disability	Thoughts about Learning			Thoughts about Inclusion		
Pathology or Interventionist Approach	Classroom Environment	Instructional Strategies	Tally of Teacher Talk	Quality of the Classroom Experience	Ownership and Responsibility	Collaboration and Relationships
<i>How does the teacher talk about children with special needs?</i>	<i>How does the teacher describe the physical environment for learning?</i>	<i>How does the teacher accommodate for learning?</i>	<i>What is the frequency of talk related to organization learning and motivation?</i>	<i>Does the teacher create participation and accessibility? and acknowledge diversity?</i>	<i>Does the teacher take responsibility or does she distribute responsibility to others?</i>	<i>How does the teacher view: paraprofessionals the principal the resource team</i>

The data was then transferred from the transcript and placed under an applicable subcategory on the chart. Similar ideas were with the subcategory were highlighted. For example, comments that were reflective of a medical model were highlighted in gold, while responses that were more interventionist were highlighted in green. This method of categorizing allowed the researcher to examine both the categories and their respective subgroups. Through this multi-step process, teacher beliefs and attitudes became more distinctive. This process was repeated for each interview and all three participant interview charts were placed side by side on a wall to allow for an isolated as well as a more overall examination.

Teacher participant interviews were also reviewed for comments related to responsibility. For example, Teacher B in her interview states:

She (the resource teacher) definitely takes the lead but on the other hand, if I approach her about something, she's right there to help me. Yes, it's my responsibility but it definitely comes from feedback from the resource teacher.

Teacher C comments;

Yes, the resource teacher tells me where he is at.... I can do my own assessment if I chose to when I have him in the fall. But basically the resource teacher has said to the paraprofessionals here are the things he has to work on in the course of the day.

All responsibility comments were highlighted in orange.

Additionally efficacy statements were identified in all of the interviews. These included comments from teacher participants such as "I worried all summer long and it made me so anxious." Or "I did some reading that wasn't directed by them." Teacher A's comments included "I like kids understanding what kind of learner they are and that they feel good about themselves: I am an advocate for kids." Efficacy comments were highlighted in yellow.

Interestingly, a second reader also perused the interviews for efficacy and responsibility statements. Both the researcher and the reader identified similar efficacy and responsibility comments.

Finally, a *Commitment to Inclusion Chart* was developed based on the work of Jordan and Stanovich(2001). (See Appendix L.) This chart acknowledged four categories important to inclusive education. These categories included student acceptance, programming adaptations, collaboration, responsibility and assessment. Aligned with the

categories were descriptions of teaching behaviours that would be seen as inclusive and non-inclusive in each area. Interview comments were aligned with the descriptors and teacher participants were eventually described as having an inclusive commitment or a less inclusive commitment. Direct quotations from all three participants were used to portray feelings and thoughts. Pseudonyms were used for all students in this study.

*Classroom observations* .Classroom observations provided descriptions of teaching behaviours, teacher/student interactions, and instructional strategies gathered through the use of field notes. First, all field notes were transcribed. Then they were reviewed for categories that had been identified as important in the literature review. This included the high quality instructional strategies, the type of talk the teacher used and the interaction between teacher and students. However, all three categories were too general and required further delineation. Before any further analysis could take place the researcher established rubrics for each of the subgroups. These rubrics included a *Rubric for High Quality Instructional Tools to Involve Diverse Learners*, (see Appendix E) based on the work of Kame'enui and Carnine (1998), a *Rubric for Teacher Talk; Categories and Examples* (see Appendix F) adapted with permission from Jordan (2007) and Jordan and Stanovich (2001) and a third rubric, *Teacher Patterns of Listening and Interacting with Students in the Classroom* (see Appendix G). These descriptions provided a framework for the grouping of multiple observations of similar behaviours. They delineated criteria for observations and provided a method for greater consistency. Additionally, they provided a common language for discussion and peer review.

Data were placed into categories using the above rubrics. Information was transferred from field notes onto individual teacher participants' tables. These charts

included a *Table of High Quality Strategies Versus Other*. On this chart, the type of instructional strategy was identified as well as the number of times it was used.

Field note analysis additionally identified the type of conversations that occurred between the teacher and students. These categories included talk related to learning, motivation and management. The *Rubric for Teacher Talk; Categories and Examples* was used to determine into which category data would be placed.

Finally, teacher interactions with all students, including those with special needs were documented using the *Rubric for Teacher Patterns of Listening and Interacting with Students in the Classroom*. The use of these categories served as a basis in determining the degree of congruence between teacher participants' words and actions.

### ***The Second Point of Comparison – Across Teacher Participants***

The second point of comparison of the data occurred across participants. This level examined data across all subjects and used comparison as a tool to come to some conclusions around patterns of responses and observations. The constant comparative method of analysis allowed the researcher to look at the data from the individual level and then used the same data and examined it across all participants. This comparison used numerical descriptions and tallied data in several categories. Additionally, numerous quotations were used. This comparison offered a process that allowed the researcher to identify similarities, differences and relationships that were based on the established categories of the individual level. Comparison across the participants also helped to determine trends and patterns around the critical questions.

Data analysis is the spirit of inquiry. Qualitative researchers do not gather information to prove or disprove hypotheses, rather they synthesize data inductively to

generate trends or patterns (McMillan, 2008). This inductive analysis approach was an opportunity to interrogate the data and to unlock understandings to key questions. In the final analysis, marrying stated beliefs to beliefs in action, surfaces data that may be unanticipated, insightful and additionally may offer dominant impressions about inclusive education practices in Manitoba classrooms.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Findings and Thematic Analysis

This chapter provides a summary of the data collected during classroom observations and through the teacher interview process. As indicated by Thomas and Brubaker (2008), data has no significance until meaning is assigned to it. McMillan (2008) further suggests that data collection and analysis are frequently interwoven and often influence one another. Here too, outcomes are closely connected to the original research questions. This link provides an opportunity to attach meaning, develop themes and observe patterns that offer answers to the study's central questions. However, unanticipated findings which arose during the course of conducting the research were also examined. Both were influential in understanding the connection between beliefs and actions.

As previously stated this research investigated the interplay between teaching behaviours and teacher beliefs as they relate to inclusive education. The study explored how differences in beliefs might affect differences in instructional practices. Three focal questions framed the data collection and therefore the data analysis:

1. What are three teachers' stated beliefs about learning, disability and inclusion within the context of their school environment?
2. How do teachers perceive that their beliefs affect their instructional practice?
3. Are teacher self-reported beliefs about learning, disability and inclusion congruent with their observed teaching practices?



As stated in the previous chapter a compare and contrast analysis was used. In this type of analysis, meanings emerge as two or more phenomena are recognized as alike or different (Thomas & Brubaker, 2008). This study uses two sets of comparisons: the individual teacher level and data across the three teacher participants.

The first point of comparison at the individual teacher level occurred between the teacher interview data and the classroom observation. This level of comparison provides a reference point to examine individual teacher stated beliefs in relation to the teacher's classroom actions. As well, it serves as a basis to determine the degree of congruency between the teacher's words and actions.

The second point of comparison was across participants. This comparison looked at the observation and interview data across all three subjects and used it as a tool to come to some conclusions. Identifying similarities, acknowledging differences and determining relationships among the categories at this level created themes that became the essence of the research and lead to some possible answers to the critical questions. Interestingly, it was the richness of unsolicited responses that provided the most insights. These narratives provided detailed descriptions that added to the understanding of the context. Additionally, they frequently captured what was observed. These additions affirmed the complexity of the research questions and offered more accuracy in determining the degree of congruency between beliefs and actions.

### ***Classroom Observations***

In this study, the researcher commenced the data collection through engaging in direct classroom observations for half a day in each of the three classrooms. Categories for comparison began to emerge. Initial broad categories were broken into subgroups.

### ***Teacher Interviews***

The teacher interview provided an opportunity for participants to report information about themselves. This chronological narrative format elicited a description of practice that allowed teachers to express their approaches to students and learning. Although the interviewer used prepared questions, often follow-up queries were required. These provided some added depth to the issues related to the research questions. More importantly however, the responses allowed information to easily be placed into categories associated with the study's critical questions (Thomas & Brubaker, 2008).

#### **First Point of Comparison – Individual Teacher Level**

##### ***Teacher A: Observation Findings***

***Teaching behaviours.*** Teacher A used a number of activities to meet her instructional objectives throughout the morning observation period. Examples included Ten Frames Flash, Morning Message, and math partner work. She had established clear routines and had well designed lessons that had a beginning, middle and end. As Jordan, Glenn and McGhie-Richmond (2008) note, this planning allowed her to see students who were at risk and those with disabilities more frequently. Field notes describe Teacher A's structure with the following description.

Five students go to the teaching area and one sits in the folding chair. This student grabs a stack of ten frame cards and shows the patterns to the other students. These students are required to identify the pattern. Gradually more students join in and eventually all students are sitting in this area

responding to the cards. Just prior to opening exercises the teacher takes the place of the student and continues the questions about the ten frames.

This use of routine was readily evident in the morning's organization. Identified were ten distinct learning activities. These included activities such as Morning Message, Readers Workshop, Guided Reading, Shared Reading, etc. Within each activity a variety of instructional groupings and strategies were used. For example, field notes indicate that Readers' Workshop used whole class, individual and pair groupings. Field notes provide this example.

Teacher says, "The goal is to understand what you have read." The whole class is sitting on the floor around the teacher who is on a chair. Another boy joins the group on the floor. He has a sit fit cushion. Students are given the choice of a book to read. Today it is expository material which connects to the themes and areas under study in science. As the teacher hands out books to pairs she comments: "Too easy, just right, you have been waiting for this book, I knew you would like this one. This is brand new from the library. Hands up! Who is on task remember your job is to be on task." Teacher takes a small focus reading group to the teaching table.

Throughout the morning's observation Teacher A moved from whole group instruction and discussion, to individual and pair work, as well as small focus groups. No independent seat work was provided to the class for completion. (See Appendix H.)

***Instructional strategies.*** Teacher A also used a large number of high quality instructional strategies. These included primed background knowledge, big ideas and integrating strategies.(See Appendix I.) For example Teacher A began the morning using a conspicuous strategy approach.

Teacher is reading a counting story. She points to picture. How many are there? How did you count them Jane? Who did something different? That was really efficient Susan. How did you group them Kathy? Teacher restates Kathy's strategy? Students are given bread tags and are asked to find eight efficient ways of counting the tags.

Of the 25 strategies that were used in the three hour observation, 83% of them were reflective of High Quality Strategies identified by Kame'enui and Carnine (1998) and Kame'enui and Simmons (1999).As well they matched the criteria outlined in the *Rubric for High Quality Instructional Tools to Involve Diverse Learners*. While Appendix I, provides a numerical description, Table 3 demonstrates the variance in strategies that Teacher A used. Some exemplified below include judicious review, conspicuous strategies, big ideas and scaffolding.

Table 3. Teacher A. Types of Instructional Strategy Used

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Number of Times Used</b>
Judicious Review	3
Conspicuous Strategies	3
Big Ideas	2
Scaffolding	4
Integrating Strategies	3
Primed Background Knowledge	4

*Student/Teacher interactions.* As Teacher A progressed through the morning's activities, field note data indicated that students were highly engaged. For example during a discussion of the ten frame flashes, all students provided a response which was recorded. This included a student who had chosen to isolate himself from the other students and who appeared disengaged. He participated when called upon and volunteered his involvement as well. Field note data describes this:

Jack is asked to share the interesting things he learned about tarantulas. He takes the book from the paraprofessional and gives the book back when he is finished. Although this student was not initially part of the larger group he did give a response from the table where he was sitting.

Another student with special needs joins the class with a paraprofessional. He is transferred from his wheel chair to the reading group on the floor: “The paraprofessional moves the wheelchair to the back of the classroom and joins the group assisting the student with word study. Teacher A walks this student to the sharing area when it is time for the larger group to reconvene.”

About midway through the morning observation a third student with special needs enters the classroom. Initially he joins the large group activity and sits beside a little girl. The teacher says, “Put your arms around his belly. He likes it.” The little girl does that but the student becomes aggressive and tries to hurt the children. Teacher A blocks the student from hitting another student:

Children start to sing and Bob hits the teacher three times on the leg. Teacher puts hand out to stop Bob from hitting. Bob turns around and pulls girl’s hair and girl starts to cry. Bob is taken from room by paraprofessional.

Teacher A was extremely effective at listening and interacting with all the students. She always addressed students by name and was extremely interested in the metacognitive part of their learning. Data indicate that 49% of the observed time her talk with the students related to instruction and learning (Appendix J).

Observational examples include:

Teacher asks students to pick the most efficient strategy, the one you like the best. Teacher takes strategies and records them on the easel. For example, “Clever, how did you do that?” and “Sounds like you were off task. What did you do to get back on?”

Additionally she spent a great deal of time motivating students. She often gave feedback and used specific praise statements. Her interaction with students involved circulating, providing direct response, and feedback, as well as questions related to lesson concepts and learning. For example:

Madison, I noticed that you worked better when you were at the table than on the floor. Tell us about that. Claire what were you doing today? Would you like to read us the poem you were reading? To another student ... Do you want to make a little adjustment?

As illustrated in Appendix K, this type of interaction occurred with all students (Appendix K).

Teacher A’s behaviours indicate that she takes responsibility for her students and sees herself as efficacious, able to handle difficult situations and diverse learner needs.

### ***Teacher A Interview Findings***

***Thoughts about disability.*** The interview process presented data which were suggestive of Teacher A’s opinions about disability and her role with students who have diverse needs. As Jordan (2008) indicates the distinction between medical perspectives

and interventionist models are complex. Individuals do not exclusively subscribe to one or the other. Rather they fluctuate on a continuum of thoughts about disability. Teacher A's data support this concept. Teacher A does make several references to student level, funding and medication. For example, she describes one child's day in relation to his medication.

Medication is important. Bumpy times are a function of the medication. He doesn't always come with his dose. Afternoons are better because we guarantee he gets his medication at school at lunch time.

However the majority of discussions in this category are descriptions of students which are reflective of an interventionist perspective. Comments such as "Before he arrived in my class I talked to different people who worked with him so I could figure him out", or "You have to know your kids so you can do a good job."

Her description of a student with special needs further supports the interventionist viewpoint.

He knows even if he had a rough morning we can have a good afternoon. He loves science, he loves experimenting and he loves to draw. He struggles with readers' workshop and has a hard time staying focused but we are now able to have discussions together. I want him to like school. Every kid should come to school and like it.



Additional evidence can be found when she describes another student with special needs. Her description includes:

I had to kind of learn his language so I could get what he was saying on the first or second try and not on the fourth because he just escalates if you don't understand. You can't blow it off and pretend that you do because he'll say to you - "what did I just say?" You can't fool him he is a very bright boy.

A final statement in support of this conclusion is when she describes a third student by saying: "Sometimes he looks like he is not paying attention but you ask him a question and he is bang on."

These findings suggest that Teacher A does not express fears about disability and that she feels she is capable of making a difference in her students' lives.

***Thoughts about learning.*** Teacher A's response to interview questions explores her views regarding teaching and learning. Her discussion of pedagogical decisions, comments regarding the classroom environment and the frequency of talk about learning supports the notion that good teaching is good teaching and that teachers must strive to meet the needs of a diverse range of students (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). Much of the interview discussed strategies. Comments reflect her effective use of scaffolding, integrating, as well as accommodating for the learner. For example, she describes one student's learning in this way:

He can't read directions. If I give him a math problem to solve he can't read it and that's a problem. So I sit and tell him what the problem is. To me that is an adaptation for a kid who needs it. It doesn't mean he can't do the work because I have others who can't do the work, cognitively. Cognitively he can do the work; he just can't read the problem. Sometime you know, I might want other kids to do four of them he might have to do two and that's okay.

McLeskey and Waldron (2000) suggest that teachers who subscribe to an inclusive school discourse believe that "fair" is about providing every student with what they need. Teacher A appears in support of this viewpoint:

This afternoon the students are going to do a retell of a story. I know that he can't write; so the substitute will sit and she will scribe what he is saying. He'll have a bang-on retell. So if I was assessing writing then fine I should expect him to do some writing but I'm not; I am assessing comprehension. So to have him tell that to somebody and have somebody else write it, that's fair. I think being intentional about what you are assessing is huge.

Both the interview's discussion and the teacher's classroom actions indicated purposeful planning, a great deal of knowledge and a willingness to assist everyone with learning.

*Thoughts about inclusion.* Data analysis suggested that Teacher A's interview comments indicated a commitment to an inclusive classroom setting. Her responses show a belief that all individuals have value and merit and that her job is to make learning possible for all students (Burnette & Peters-Johnson, 2004). She sees herself as responsible:

Yeah, that's my job. So how can I get to them right? Because if they were all the same, the job would be a breeze but they are not and the class gets more different as every year goes by. The face of the classroom is changing; my teaching has to change to accommodate that. I think every kid should come to school and love it here. Every kid!

This commitment is also evident in the accessibility she creates and the participation she designs. She is attuned to all of "her" students and their needs. For example:

Today the best place for him was in the classroom because he was on task and he was on his game.

Additionally, her interview discussed the importance of the classroom culture. She described her classroom as a "positive place where we share a lot and congratulate each other." Her classroom emphasizes acceptance:

I think it is about empowering kids and getting them to feel okay with who they are, the kind of learner they are and that we are going to help each other and feel good about where we are and where we are going.

However, frustrations emerged when additional queries about student services supports were discussed. At times her voice became stiff and tensions between the system and her personal ideas became evident. For example, she indicated that the IEP was a collaborative effort of input written by the resource teacher; however day to day programming, compilation and design of materials, scheduling and paraprofessional training was her responsibility.

This confusion is further delineated when she says:

I had to go shopping. I had to go to Wal-Mart and BJ Toys and buy all this stuff that was recommended. I sat at the computer and blocked out his days. The resource teacher sat and helped me. But I mean is that my job? I don't know – he's my student, so how could it not be my job, right. But you would think that it is a resource job.

She indicated that she was responsible for communicating both the IEP information and the report card information to the parent. The interview data was unable to ascertain if classroom programming worked in isolation or if it meshed with IEP expectations.

As well, Teacher A indicated that at times she was annoyed with outside clinical services that lingered in her classroom only for a “snapshot” yet provided her with numerous additional outcomes to work on. This was evident by her comments,

Sometimes the occupational therapist comes in and she's wonderful but she comes in and she has got 99 good ideas for me. You know what, give me three and I'll do them. Sometimes they come in for a snapshot and say he really needs to do this or that. I live in this community all the time. He doesn't really need to do that, so sometimes I feel I should be able to trump someone else.

Frustrations became notably escalated when she discussed paraprofessional support. She indicated that their lack of experience, training and inconsistency were concerns. For example, she describes the communication as the following:

The paraprofessional starts at nine so we don't see each other before the day starts. I usually can talk to him at quarter to twelve when he is taking him to get his pill and getting his lunch buddy set up, and then I will talk to him as we walk down the hall. This all happens, before the paraprofessional goes to his afternoon school.

Lack of training is described in the following statement:

I'm lucky because we've all had paraprofessionals where it's like... get her out of here. I don't know how else to put it. You can train, train, train but not everybody gets it. Not everybody is built to work with kids who are special.

The teacher additionally highlighted the frequent turnover of paraprofessional support staff. She indicated that the school division offers no training for these support people. She comments “I’ve had a new paraprofessional, new paraprofessional, new paraprofessional, and new paraprofessional, since October and that has been really frustrating.”

### ***Summary Teacher A***

In comparing and analyzing Teacher A’s data, there was a high degree of consistency between the interview and the observation. Additionally it appears that interview findings are similar to observed teaching behaviours (Table 4). This consistency was sufficient enough to determine that Teacher A has a high degree of commitment to inclusion (Appendix L).

Table 4. Teacher A: Comparison of Observation Data to Interview Data

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Frequent talk about learning	49% of the observed time talked about learning with students
Frequent talk about students individual learning needs	Equal amount and type of interactions with class and students with special needs
Programming adaptations were discussed	Programming adaptations were visible Student with earphones on head Sit fit cushions Scripting Alert strategies
Predominantly interventionist viewpoint Acknowledgement of diversity	Teacher worked with all students during the observation
Teacher takes responsibility	Teacher takes responsibility
Teacher describes classroom environment as accepting, accessible and structured	Environment is organized, accepting
Collaboration	Observed collaboration with four paraprofessionals, volunteer high school student, resource teacher, other teachers
Flexible groupings Partners small group Playground buddies	Teacher uses: individual, partners, small groups, whole group
Frequent talk about instructional strategies	83% of time used high quality strategies

### ***Teacher B. Observation Findings***

***Teaching behaviours.*** The classroom observation began with Teacher B collecting forms, school picture money and homework assignments upon student entry into the classroom. Some students wrote in their journals while others chatted to each other. The morning's instruction included math, literature circles and science. Within these subject

areas five broad learning activities were noted. They included a Talking Triangles Assignment, math games, silent reading, literature circles and labelling a science diagram.

Although several instructional groupings were noted, the majority of the time students worked independently at their desks while the teacher circulated and answered any questions (Appendix H). This type of procedure occurred in four out of the five general learning segments. Prevalent was her use of independent seat work and large group instruction. Large group instruction was frequently utilized to review assignments and deliver task directions:

Teacher put “Time for Talking Triangles” worksheet on the overhead. This was an assignment from the day before and the teacher did a quick review of the directions and what the students were to do. Then students were asked to complete the assignment. Each student had a Talking Triangles worksheet of their own. Work was completed on it. The worksheet asked the students to measure the vertices, measure the angles, and identify the type of triangle. Students were to get protractors and students who required assistance were to let the teacher know.

This type of procedure was also observed when the teacher moved on to the next learning segment:

T: (to whole class) Loosen up. When you are done the triangle assignment take out your math activities.



Students go to different math activities that are located in files in a container marked math activities. The games/ activities are set up according to the math strands (i.e. statistics, probability). Names of some of the activities include: Random Removal, Connect 3 Scatter Plots and What Am I? Additional activities are located around the room.

A final example of this grouping is in the transition to Literature Circles. Here the teacher continues with this style as evidenced when she says,

T: I am going to give you some time to do some reading. Does anyone need help with the double sided journal entries?

Teacher makes an office for a student to sit in. Student gets piece of carpet to sit on. Teacher circulates around the room.

Appendix H provides the entire range of groupings during the morning interview. It is important to note that large group instruction was used together with independent seat work.

*Instructional strategies.* Teacher B used a limited number of high quality instructional strategies. These include examples of primed background knowledge, the conspicuous strategies approach, indicating what the lesson's big ideas were and scaffolding assignments. For example,

As the teacher is circulating she stops at one group and asks, “What are your strategies? What did you use?” Responses were limited as the teacher motioned to the paraprofessional that a student needed a partner. Teacher leaves group and talks with paraprofessional.

Additionally the teacher gathers the class to get feedback from a partner discussion that took place earlier in the week. Interestingly this strategy was completed within five minutes.

11:00 What went well? How can you improve next time? You need to say more than good? You need to be more precise.

11:05 I am going to give you some time to do some reading? Does anyone need help with the double sided journals?

Of the 15 strategies that were identified in the three hour observation, five strategies or 33% of them were reflective of High Quality Strategies(Appendix I) and matched the criteria outlined in the *Rubric for High Quality Instructional Tools to Involve Diverse Learners*(Appendix E.).Table 5 indicates that no strategy dominated the morning instruction.

Table 5. Teacher B. Types of Instructional Strategies Used in the Observation Period

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Number of Times Used</b>
Conspicuous Strategies	1
Big Ideas	1
Scaffolding	2
Primed Background Knowledge	1

Jordan, Glenn and McGhie-Richmond (2008) suggest that how teachers use instructional time is related to how they engage students in learning. The number of “other” strategies observed in the lesson created some question as to the degree of learning that was taking place. For example, the field notes describe the following which continued for 45 minutes with children becoming increasingly disruptive:

Teacher takes out overhead. “Grade 5’s we will be labelling our skeleton and grade 6’s you are to complete the questions in your booklet.”

Teacher puts on overhead of a skeleton and shows how to label the various parts. She asks students to identify the various parts of the system she points to or she says a word and they are to come up to the overhead and point to the part. Then she asks them the purpose of that part.

Nick comes up and points.

T: What is the purpose of our skull?

Cranium is the right word. Thanks, Billy. You can put it down.

Janelle comes up and points to the jaw bone.

T: What does it protect? Have you got that down Josh?

Billy interrupts and teacher redirects him to the task.

T: No spelling mistakes. It is right in front of you.

*Student/Teacher interactions.* As Teacher B progressed through the morning's activities, field note data indicated that all students spent a great deal of time working independently and that this approach offered limited interactions (Appendix J). Circulating data suggests there was minimal interaction between Teacher B and her students. Noteworthy as well was the lack of interaction with the teacher and specific students. For example, during math class field note data indicated that:

Teacher goes to the front of the room and checks on a male student. This student is by himself and not in a group. He faces the blackboard with the rest of the students behind him. There is no talk between adult and child.

Student on an IEP has his head down on his desk. Teacher goes to him but a paraprofessional comes into classroom, teacher leaves and paraprofessional begins to talk to this child.

Interestingly, the type of talk used by the teacher during the observation period matched the grouping and lesson delivery format. As noted earlier, Teacher B spent a great deal of time giving instructions to the whole class:

Students are called back and asked to put their math activities away. Make sure your stuff is where it belongs. Put your stuff away and let's get out our science.

Appendix J reflects in chart form the percentage of time Teacher B spent on organization and classroom management talk.

Appendix K indicates that Teacher B at times had no interaction with the class. Field note data suggests that she spent more time with the class as a whole, organizing and managing than with students with special needs.

### ***Teacher B Interview Findings***

***Thoughts about disability.*** The interview process presented data which were suggestive of Teacher B's opinions about disability and her role with students who have diverse needs. Although she did speak about a student in terms of his strengths (e.g., "He's good academically. He's a 'techie' kid, anything to do with technology and electronics."), throughout much of the interview students were labelled and described in terms of their lack of ability.

For example, when describing a student that has some specific needs she said the following:

He is in grade five this year. He is on an IEP for behaviour and to be honest with you I really don't know what it entailed back a few years ago, but it was quite lengthy. He has ADHD and he's medicated and apparently was on the same dosage for a long, long time. Last year he was reassessed and put on a higher dosage because he has gotten much bigger.

When describing a regular student she stated:

There's another boy in my room - The one you saw me with at the front. I had to move him. He just plays, he just makes glue balls, so he knows that when I move him it's not because he is being punished but he just needs to be where I can keep a closer eye on him. He's not funded but he could be. I see a lot of the same learning characteristics or lack of that I see in the funded student – a lot of the same issues but he's not funded.

When asked about how she felt when she learned that a student with special needs would be in her class she commented,

I knew there would be support... that he came with a paraprofessional so there would be that. Every year I have had one or two that had special needs of some kind, so I was alright with it.

Teacher B appears to use disability as a description and identifier of her students.

*Thoughts about learning.* Teacher B's interview responses provide minimal discussion and details about her thoughts with regard to learning. The physical classroom environment was not mentioned and references to accommodations and strategies were limited as well. However some examples did emerge. These included comments such as:

- “Workload maybe shortened if it is going to be a bad day.”
- “I keep anecdotal records, but mostly it's up here.”
- “I don't do anything differently. Just lighten the load.”

When asked about her own professional learning she said,

I haven't gone to a lot of training; they have been different every year.

You know I think I fly by the seat of my pants sometimes, lots of times.

You know I have been teaching a long time.

**Thoughts about inclusion.** Teacher B's comments reflect opposing beliefs and ideas within the same interview. Within this section of the analysis, tension, frustrations and disgruntlement with the system emerged. This pattern was reflected in observations which, as previously mentioned, described minimal interactions, the type of talk she engaged in with the class and the limited number of high quality strategies she used. Although extremely positive in tone, her comments in the interview situation reflected the opposite. When further analysed, her responses would be described as behaviours that would indicate less inclusive commitment. (See Appendix L.)

For example, when queried about responsibility she said:

In my opinion, I think if they are funded, there has to be a lot of resource input because I think they are specialist in that area, so I really depend on their input and then from there I plan an academic plan based on his needs.

The resource teacher we have now is really good at saying we need to meet and talk about this. She definitely takes the lead.

I think if I became an expert in all those fields that I would become a resource teacher, would I not? So if I start thinking that way. Oh my gosh!

Her comments suggest that she comes from the perspective of the resource teacher as the expert model.

Responses related to the quality of the classroom experience did not acknowledge diversity and did not speak to participation that would parallel regular involvement. For example, when asked about managing the diversity in her classroom she commented,

I just do the best I can and just try to learn along the way. That's what I do, yeah I think it would be really overwhelming if you tried to be an expert in all those areas because I mean there are so many.

When queried about portfolios, she indicated that the student had a portfolio but it was not shared with anyone because he would not be able to do that. As well, she acknowledged the isolation of a student at the front of the classroom. Interestingly the observation notes revealed that she did her whole class instruction behind him.

When asked about the reporting process she specified that the IEP went home with the report and that she commented with "see IEP."

The most notable area of negativity, however, appeared in response to questions around paraprofessionals and resource teachers:

I don't have a voice. I get what I get. And that is actually an issue I have – if they are funded half time then I should have someone in my room for half the time but you saw today I had her 45 minutes. How come I have to



share her with other kids? That's a concern I have. It always comes down to we are waiting for funding or money whatever...

My student is funded half time so his paraprofessional comes into the class but unfortunately I don't have her half the time because she is needed somewhere else. That's another story.

Her last comment of the interview was the most powerful!

I haven't experienced a resource teacher that was accessible before. I wasn't quite sure what they were doing or why they were getting paid so much money because I wasn't getting any help.

### ***Summary Teacher B***

In comparing and analyzing Teacher B's data, interview comments were reflected in the classroom observations as noted in Table 6.

Table 6. Teacher B: Comparison of Observation Data to Interview Data

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Minimal talk about learning	27% of the observed time talked about learning with students
Minimal talk about students' individual learning needs	Disproportionate amount of time and type of interactions with class and students with special needs
Programming adaptations were discussed Laptop and lightened workload	Programming adaptations were not visible
Pathological viewpoint	Teacher circulated and checked
Minimal acknowledgement of diversity	No observable acknowledgement of diversity
Teacher does not take responsibility	Paraprofessional takes responsibility
Negative perspective of collaboration	Observed collaboration with paraprofessional
Teacher does not talk about groupings	Teacher uses individual, whole group
No talk about instructional strategies	33% of time used high quality strategies

Teacher B interview statements changed within the interview itself. Although several comments suggested that she views herself as inclusive other comments strongly indicate that she comes from a pathological perspective. For example when asked who is responsible for programming she indicates that she plans a special needs student's academic program based on his needs. However she goes on to indicate that the IEP is behavioural and that he is fine academically. As well, when asked about roles she indicates the following:

Roles overlap when we are planning for his needs but then you know, it is my responsibility to design an academic program for him and to carry through with whatever he needs to be successful. That's my job.

Observation of Teacher B's classroom demonstrated numerous behaviours suggestive of a less inclusive commitment. Here too, she fluctuated between brief moments of good instruction to exclusionary practices and seating arrangements in the classroom. There was somewhat of a mismatch within each data collection tool itself however predominantly she was less inclusive and her words and actions linked.

### ***Teacher C: Observation Findings***

***Teaching behaviours.*** Teaching is a multidimensional, complex activity. However key actions can result in a classroom environment that is more inclusive and welcoming to student diversity. Teacher C's physical set up and visual displays created this mindset immediately. Field notes describe wall displays which have been both teacher and student designed. They include: a Human Uniqueness Collage, a We are the Same and We are Different Poster, What is our Promise to Each Other chart and a visual schedule for the day. Leveled and unlevelled books were easily accessible and manipulatives were organized into areas that were readily available to students.

Teacher C began the day with home reading book exchange. She used numerous signals to gain attention and students were extremely aware of what they needed to do and when they needed to do it. There were five general activities that comprised the morning's observation. These areas included a story read aloud, and retelling, student story writing, picture clue retell and guided reading lessons:

Okay grade ones, can you join me at the carpet. I want you to listen to the story because I want you to retell it later. Think about the beginning. (She uses information posted on the wall about criteria for retelling.) Keep that in mind. When I am done you are going to work on the retelling. This story is Crow Boy. It is an award winning story. I remember reading it when I was little and I have some connections. (Teacher shares connections.) What are your connections?

Additionally, several instructional groupings were noted. These groups facilitated the needs of the various learners. For example, during literacy time,

It is literacy time! Mrs. Penner, Can you take this group out of the room? Do they have pencils? Jane, Doug you can go with Mrs. Douglas. Book Club people sit here. (There are six groups for literacy, two have been taken out, three are working on their own and one group is working with the teacher at the purple table.)

Within the observational period, partners, small groups and large group instruction occurred (Appendix H).

Teacher C had well designed lessons that had intentionally provided for a variety of learners. She demonstrated flexibility and, although many things were happening, her prior organization facilitated continual learning. For example within a 25 minute time frame as the children were called to the carpet to work on a teacher directed activity, one

paraprofessional prepared work for the next activity, a second paraprofessional sat on the floor beside a student with special needs listening to the story, the reading recovery teacher took a third student out of the classroom and the speech language pathologist took a fourth student out of the room as well.

*Instructional strategies.* Often embedded within one grouping was a strategy that used another grouping. For example, as the teacher was reading the story *Crow Boy* to the large group, she stopped and said, “Has anybody said something to you and you said I didn’t know that. Who else might say something like that? Turn to your elbow partner and tell them about a time when someone said nice things?” Field notes indicated that, as students discussed this in pairs, the teacher guided the discussion with a student who had special needs.

As noted with the previous teacher participants, within the broad areas of the morning’s instruction, numerous strategies were used. These instructional strategies referred to challenges and caused students to reflect on and articulate about their learning (Appendix I). For example, as a story was being read, students were asked to think about important ideas and remember any connections they had made. Immediate feedback was frequently given to students. This was observed when the teacher said, “Grade ones can I stop you? I am noticing in Tyson’s work he is using some connector words. Good memory Tyson, excellent!” These instructional strategies were used throughout the observation with Teacher C using High Quality Strategies 97% of the time (Appendix I). Additionally, she used a variety of these strategies. As can be discerned from Table 7, primed background knowledge was extensively used in the morning instruction.

Table 7. Teacher C. Types of Instructional Strategies Used in the Observation Period

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Number of Times Used</b>
Conspicuous Strategies	4
Big Ideas	2
Scaffolding	3
Primed Background Knowledge	7
Judicious Review	1

*Student/Teacher interactions.* Students were engaged in the morning activities. There was a high degree of interaction between the teacher and all students in the class. Teacher C often required the students to make personal connections to their own experiences. These questions were received eagerly and met with a large amount of volunteered student input. Field notes examples include:

The teacher says, “I had a teacher when I was little who helped me get confidence. Does anybody have a connection like that?” One student replies, “My dad says I am good at jump rope.” Another student declares, “My dad says I am good at soccer.” And a different student responds with, “My mom says I am a blooming reader.”

This student/teacher interaction is demonstrated additionally during writing. Data describes the following:

While students are working in partner groups, the teacher works with two students at their table. Then she moves to work with a table group sitting between the student pairs. All the while she is scanning the room. A paraprofessional is working with a Level 2 funded student. They are working on the same writing activity. When it is complete they review the daily planner. Finally the teacher calls all students to the carpet and she provides what she has seen in the students' writing. Interestingly one student raises his hand and says "I can't wait for you to see my story." The teacher responds with, "I can't wait to see it either!"

During guided reading a paraprofessional took a group of six children. Another paraprofessional took a student out of the room and across the hall. The Reading Recovery teacher took a student out of the room while the classroom teacher worked with a group of three struggling readers. The rest of the students were using a phonemic phone and reading different books to a partner. When the teacher completed her work, she circulated and went to all groups.

Appendix K indicates that Teacher C spends a great deal of time interacting with all her students. She interacts at a number of levels with both the class and with students who have special needs. Most of these interactions require the students to extend and elaborate their thinking.

### **Teacher C Interview Findings**

**Thoughts about disability.** The interview analysis presented data that was not in sync with Teacher C's observational data. As stated by Jordan (2008) distinction between

disability models is complex. Often teachers cannot be described as subscribing to one perspective or another, however, Teacher C's interview data situates itself clearly towards the medical perspective end of the disability continuum.

She described both regular students and those with special needs according to a diagnosis. Conversation focused on medication. This can be seen in the interview transcripts when she says:

He has been diagnosed with autism and it took a long time. Autism seems to be his formal diagnosis and that is where they have pigeon holed him at this point anyway. He is delayed in terms of social and emotional needs. He doesn't have the same skills as kids his age. I worried about him coming in and how disruptive he would be.

I don't know how to teach someone how to hold a pencil or make an X. I don't know how to teach those kids how to do those things so I worried about not having the knowledge to program for them.

He's like fingernails on a chalkboard. He drives you crazy.

Transcript data also supports her allegiance to more a traditional discourse where specially trained people, working in specially designed programs can remediate the problem (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000).



It would be a lot easier if resource would come and take him away and fix him. Teachers want them out of the room because they get in the way of everyone else's learning. You have to find a part of them even if they drive you crazy.

Interestingly, this mismatch between observation and interview comments occurs within the interview itself. She talks about finding connections with all children and that the classroom climate must be accepting and reflect the student diversity. She indicates that she feels responsible from day to day that "this little guy" is still learning even though "you just want to have him at the back of the room and ignore him". It seems that her disparity stems from a fear and worry about her ability to work with students with special needs. She is unsure about the school service delivery model, she feels she is lacking the knowledge to program and frequently feels that she has no input into students with special needs learning or participation in her classroom. These concerns permeated the interview.

**Thoughts about learning.** Interview transcripts support observational data that suggested that Teacher C used many high quality strategies and had a great deal of interaction with all students. She believes that planning for learning is about being intentional and that good teachers are good kid watchers. She talks about her use of visual schedulers and agendas. She indicated that she made changes to the classroom's physical space to meet student needs. She pointed out that she focuses on specific students every day and makes sure that she speaks with them and notices what they are doing. Her adaptations included a play plan for a student where five students take turns playing with

and modelling appropriate interactions for another student. As well, she talked about learning activities that were the same for all students although the context may differ.

When Teacher C spoke of assessments for students who had special needs, however, frustrations became very evident. She spoke of a student's IEP and the lack of accountability within the system to meet the goals. She described the situation by saying, "The IEP indicates he is to be 50% in classroom by Christmas. He is not in the room 5%." She becomes quite agitated and continues,

I'm not sure how things are monitored. They come to me and say... Well, how's he doing, is he initiating play 50% of the time. No I think he is doing it 30% of the time. Based on what... I pulled that out of my ear...I have no evidence...so they mark it down, I don't know. It's like the education lottery. I don't know how they come up with the number.

Teacher C is herself a learner. She described her professional growth passionately. She talked about her learning in terms of her participation in the education systems in New Zealand and Thailand. Unfortunately, much of her interview was clouded by an attitude of blaming the system with an "us" against "them" mentality. This attitude continued throughout the entire conversation process.

**Thoughts about inclusion.** It is in the interview conversation related to aspects of inclusion that Teacher C's strongest attitudes surface. These attitudes do not place her in a position that is unsupportive of an inclusionary commitment but rather put her in opposition to the school's resource program and its mandates for children. It appears that

through their work with children in Teacher C's classroom, they have alienated her, disregarded her professional input and minimized her expertise. These feelings towards the resource program arise early in the interview with comments such as,

The resource department basically plans for Isaac. I was not given the responsibility of having to plan for him, even though I offered to do that. He is my student, he is on my list, he is in my classroom and I want to be part of that. Isaac doesn't have friends because he is out of the room so much, he has never been to a birthday party, and kids don't choose to play with him.

I just want them to know that when we are writing he can be writing, when we are doing printing practice, he can be doing printing practice. It's not like he would be a warm body sitting there, that's not fair. There are times of the day when he deserves to get exactly what he needs but the paraprofessional is supposed to take him out of the room and walk him across the hallway and work in his little cave by himself.

She clearly felt disconnected and more importantly sensed that she was not part of the child's team. She verbalized these feelings in her comments, "I guess I am one of the team, but I don't feel like part of the team because I really don't have a voice."

Heightened discontent occurred at the end of the interview with her final comments,

I don't have the answers by any stretch of the imagination, but you'd think that if you want classroom teachers to take ownership for kids that you would give them the responsibility not just the ownership.

### *Summary Teacher C*

Robyn Jackson (2010) in her book, *Never Work Harder Than Your Students*, suggests that teaching can be a complicated and sometimes messy business. This is exemplified in the findings related to Teacher C. Both observational and interview analysis indicated a commitment to inclusion (Table 8). However, the interview at times was overtaken by tensions, disagreement and alienation that required the researcher to dig deeper to understand Teacher C's prevailing attitude.

Table 8. Teacher C: Comparison of Observation Data in Relation to Interview Data

<b>Interview</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Minimal talk about learning	28% of the time talked about learning with students Used High Quality Strategies 94% of the time
Talk about students' individual learning needs	Equal amount of time and type of interactions with class and students with special needs
Programming adaptations were discussed	Physical space Visual schedulers Levelled books
Pathological & Interventionist viewpoint	
Acknowledgement of diversity	Acknowledgement of diversity
Negative perspective of collaboration	Observed collaboration with multiple adults
No talk about instructional groupings	Teacher uses flexible groupings

### **Second Point of Comparison: Across Teachers**

The first point of comparison provided individual participant data that investigated the interplay between teaching behaviours and beliefs as they relate to inclusive education. This level provided evidence that supported the notion that differences in beliefs affected differences in instructional practices. Interestingly, it also provided the researcher with multiple readings of the data. This interaction with the text demanded that the data analysis be expanded and that the comparison method be used across participants not just at an individual level.

Ryan and Bernard (2003) suggest that theme identification is one of the most fundamental tasks of qualitative research. Although many techniques can be used to identify themes, the compare and contrast approach is still a viable method in this second examination of the data. The approach allowed the researcher to develop breadth and it assisted the investigator in discovering patterns which existed across all observations and interviews.

More importantly however, it caused the researcher to generate additional analysis questions which asked, “How is this observation/interview different from the previous participants? What kinds of things are mentioned in both? Are there unusual word usages? How do unsolicited responses relate to the theme?”

#### ***Observations***

Observational data provided a comparison of teaching behaviours. *Points of Comparison* looked at specific criteria that had been established in the study’s methods. These included instructional grouping; use of high quality strategies; teacher talk; and

teacher interactions. This analysis, although limited by size allowed the data to be viewed from another perspective. It also provided substance to the narratives.

Appendix H which identifies instructional groupings, illustrated that both Teachers A and C used numerous groupings. Additionally both of these teachers used a high percentage of high quality strategies. This was not reflected in the behaviours of Teacher B (Appendix H & Appendix I).

### ***Interviews***

Theme discovery can be a difficult task, however multiple readings and a further examination of the rich, complex, narratives from another perspective presented additional insights. Often identified initially as similarities, these insights developed into themes.

Three key themes were discovered in this research. These themes were indicative of ideas discussed in the literature review but were particularly interesting because they appeared to be the reality in this study's small sample. The identified themes include teacher responsibility, teacher efficacy and substantial distress with the practice of the "system". These three themes appear to have a significant impact on all of the participants' attitudes regarding disability, learning and inclusion.

### ***Responsibility***

Confusion as to roles and responsibilities highlighted in the review of the literature was paralleled in this study's findings. In all inclusion definitions, teachers are charged with the responsibility to implement this social policy into practice. The data presented in this study indicate that, although all three teachers had an accepting attitude towards the general philosophy of inclusive education, the question lingered as to whose

responsibility it was to ensure and implement the philosophy. Regardless of the individual teacher's beliefs about learning or assumptions about disability, all participants identified confusion around roles and responsibilities. In practice their implementation was often messy, contradictory, inconsistent and usually unclear.

As D'Andrade (cited in Ryan & Bernard, 2003, p. 86.) notes, the frequency with which an individual repeats the same concept or idea can be telling. All teacher participants acknowledged the responsibility for teaching a wide diversity of students. Additionally, all three indicated that they were in charge of academic programming. One teacher stated, "He is my student, he's on my list, and he is in my classroom. We take care of his academic needs." Similarly another teacher stated, "It's my responsibility to design an academic program for him and to carry through with whatever he needs to be successful – that's my job." The third teacher stated that, "On a day to day basis, what I want him to be doing, I look after that." However, as the interview progressed, contradictions emerged. Dissatisfaction with the type of support and its availability appeared to influence the teachers' attitudes towards their responsibility. Workloads, ineffective programming and disregard for professional expertise were cited. These situations created responses in opposition to direct interview questions about responsibility and roles. For example, Teacher A commented that on one occasion because of repeated and extensive changes in paraprofessional supports the principal arranged for her to have three half days off to get programming in place.

Teacher B paralleled Teacher A's interview with numerous contradictions vacillating between taking responsibility and giving ownership to the resource teacher. She viewed resource teachers as the experts. When asked directly about responsibility she

responded with “in my opinion” and at the end of her interview she emphatically indicated that she hasn’t had a very positive experience with resource in the past. As well, Teacher B provided the researcher with some written ideas to take with her. Here again the need for more supports from specialists was mentioned.

Teacher C was even more contradictory between practice and ideology. Her issues appear to revolve around inconsistency. She indicated that she was told Tim was her responsibility but at times she was not allowed input. Similarly she was to program for him but was unable to implement the plan because of excessive student pull out. All of this cumulated into her final interview statement, “Why tell teachers to take ownership if you don’t give them the responsibility in practice?”

Most notable was an unsolicited comment to the researcher indicating that she felt that there was a great deal of misconception about what resource people do. This misunderstanding was clouded in resentment. Statements such as, “I have to do report cards and paper work at home; they should have to do that too.” And, “Resource hasn’t been in my room all year. They wrote the AP’s (adapted plans) and I wasn’t allowed to make changes.” These statements added more evidence to the confusion around teacher’s implementation of inclusive policy.

Thus the question regarding a classroom teacher’s role really was unanswered and regardless of attitudes and beliefs about learning and disability, the question still remains –who is responsible?

***Confidence: The Influence of Teacher Efficacy.***

The degree of confidence that classroom teachers have in their ability to teach diverse learners has long been noted as a critical influence in the successful



implementation of inclusive education (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000; Monahan, et al., 2000; Villa & Thousand, 1995). Research further suggests that resistance to teaching students with disabilities relates to fears that the teacher has about her competence in meeting that student's particular needs.

This study identified teachers' confidence as an important theme and supported previous finding in this area. Each teacher participant talked about her skills and abilities. It appeared that those who felt more competent provided rich narrative descriptions to support what they were doing, and why they were doing it. They appeared intentional and well planned. Confidence or efficacy presented itself in numerous forms but existed in all of the teacher interviews.

Teacher A began with her commitment to efficacy with the statement, "I needed to learn how to figure him out." Her interview offered extensive descriptions of student learning, instruction and intentionality. She discussed adaptations and indicated that her assessments were one-on-one interviews and "that is not stressful for anybody". Most importantly she describes her passion for learning and professional development. She noted that education is constantly changing and that she must change too. There were many examples of this confidence.

Teacher B did not directly indicate any lack of confidence; however she repeatedly made statements that indicated that the expertise was outside of the classroom and that she did not have the instructional skills or educational background to teach students with special needs. She talked about learning along the way yet did not attend professional development. She indicated that she was doing the best she could but her statement always returned to the idea of the resource as the expert. She did not offer

information about instruction and learning and her interview was noticeably shorter with less descriptive details.

Teacher C, although skilled in the classroom and in pedagogy, doubted her skills. When questioned in the interview, her comments suggested that she was unsure if she had the right skills to respond to students with special needs and this created some *anxiety for her*.

*I worried about it, because I thought, I don't know how to look after him, I didn't understand what his needs were going to be and I didn't know what I was going to do with him.*

*Teacher C provided detailed descriptions; however, it appeared that her current experience with resource had also shaken her confidence. She said:*

*I worried that I did not have the knowledge to program for him but when I saw he had a few skills already; I knew it was going to be okay plus he had the same paraprofessional and she knew him very well.*

Her exclusion from the planning and decision making, which was previously noted, also added to this lack of confidence.

### ***Dissatisfaction with the Larger System.***

Another key theme reflected in the data indicated a fragile relationship between resource and/or outside services and the classroom teacher. As well, disgruntlement with

the distribution of paraprofessional support and the inconsistency and training of these personnel was significant. Lack of communication was a factor that was also noted.

These concerns significantly influenced teacher interview responses, and attitudes. More importantly they seemed to affect teacher willingness to accept students and take ownership of students with special needs.

Descriptions of resource supports include the following:

Right now I have a documentation book. I have a bit of ammunition when I go to resource with some things I have seen. I hate having to bully them but the resource teacher needs to take the lead.

In discussion about paraprofessional, all teachers described inconsistency. For example Teacher C describes the following:

Original paraprofessional didn't get the job. A new level 3 paraprofessional got sent to us. She broke her leg and then the first paraprofessional got to stay until the 2nd one was well enough to come back to work. We couldn't do anything because she has that position because of the unions. It wasn't a decision about what is in the best interest of the student but really a "union decision".

Teacher A states:

Bob, he's a Level 2 student, and he has a paraprofessional in the morning. There's been a little bit of a struggle with that because this is the third paraprofessional that Bob has had this year. And this paraprofessional's wonderful with him but there was one who got a Level 3 job and another one who was part time so it's not that they didn't like working with him or me. It's just that something else kind of came along.

You know, the paraprofessional goes to another school in the afternoon and we really want him here full time next year.

Paraprofessional training is also discussed:

If I want somebody to come into my class and work as part of our community, then I need to spend time with them and teach them that. So I do. It's hard to find time to communicate that.

The division doesn't provide training at all – and because I want that to be a really productive time, the paraprofessional sat and watched my guided reading lesson. He sat through a lot of my guided reading lessons before, so he knows what they look like because I don't want him just to do random things there. I want him to be doing it kind of the way I do it.

In a system based on underpinnings that revolve around collaboration and team work, the pattern of language used by the teacher participants to describe student services and students was significant. Terms such as: “we” the classroom teacher vs. “they” the resource department indicate adversarial relationships. In addition, phrases such as “You kind of know who they are”, when talking about students with special needs, was also noted.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to analyze individual teacher data as well as data between teacher participants. Through this process key trends have been identified and have allowed the researcher to interpret and assign meaning. The findings offer some answers to the critical questions but more importantly, they provide ideas which have implications for future study. The next chapter explores these ideas.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

As I have indicated, when I began this study I held the idea that many classroom teachers struggled with Manitoba's provincial educational policy on inclusion. I further believed that my research would illustrate a disconnect between what teachers said and what they did. I naively assumed that the situation was simple and straightforward. Adjustments would correct current practices and then underlying beliefs could translate into inclusive actions. However, it quickly became apparent during the course of this work, that there was nothing simple about beliefs, actions and compliant practice. In fact, the concept of inclusion became additionally complex, loaded with contradictions and many gray areas.

This final chapter is an attempt to derive clarity from confusion. Through the process of analyzing the data, meaning was determined and interpretations emerged in relation to the outcomes of this study. The organization of the chapter arranges the study's important findings with the specific research questions. At times however, the complexity of the concept emerges and creates overlaps in the data, creating a more elaborate response.

As well, this discussion situates the findings within current research and literature. Conclusions have been highlighted and implications for future practice along with questions for additional study are included.

### **Summary of Findings**

This qualitative research study examined the intricate connection between teacher beliefs and actions. Interviews with three experienced female classroom teacher participants in this study and classroom observations provided an opportunity for the researcher to be a non-participant observer in their classrooms for a three hour period in May, 2009. This experience, which was followed by individual semi-structured interviews, allowed data collection to be not only about stated beliefs but also about their execution in the classroom setting. This format presented interplay of teaching behaviours and teaching beliefs as related to inclusive education. The study was intended to examine a) what three teachers believe about disability, learning, and inclusion; b) how these beliefs affect their practice; and c) whether their beliefs are congruent with their practice.

Not surprisingly each narrative was unique; however, several patterns and ideas were woven throughout all three interviews. These provided some important findings which were aligned to the research questions.

#### ***What are Teacher Participants' Beliefs about Disability, Learning and Inclusion?***

All three teachers in this study were inconsistent within their interview responses when discussing disabilities. At times their comments indicated that they framed disability as pathology and other comments indicated an opposing view consistent with characteristics of the human rights perspective. These discrepancies regarding descriptions of disability created a variation that later was interpreted as a predominant way of thinking. Findings suggest that, although teachers do not subscribe to one model, they may have a core way of typically viewing disability. This range of thinking about

disability is also seen in the research (Jordan, 2008). Kugelmass (2001) suggests that if the teacher's predominant model of disability comes from a deficit basis, the inclusion of children with learning challenges, disabilities, and other impairments into a regular education classroom will be difficult. In this study, Teacher A predominantly views disability from an interventionist perspective. Teacher B's comments indicate a strong alignment with beliefs that are pathological. As mentioned in the previous chapter some of her comments began with an inclusive approach but quickly the narrative turned pathognomonic in nature. Teacher C vacillated between the two although her responses were more frequently from an interventionist perspective.

Beliefs about learning were harder to discern from the teacher participants. Findings suggest that only two of the three teachers spoke about learning with any frequency. When discussed, Teacher A and Teacher C did talk about learning in terms of intentionality. Key words such as "meeting needs," "metacognition," "meaningful," and "connectedness" were used. As indicated in the literature these phrases are key principles of inclusive education. Teacher A and C strived to make the learning relevant to their students. This was exemplified in the high percentage of quality strategies they used.

Research indicates that a constructivist model of inclusive education embraces these tenets of learning as well. McLeskey and Waldron (2000) suggest that inclusive education is a meaning-making process, where the learner makes connections and creates new cognitive structures. As indicated above this description parallels the thoughts of Teachers A and C.

Again, however, noticeable inconsistencies clouded any clear cut understandings. These overlaps were frequent and similar in content. They included responses that



enmeshed learning with inclusion, participation, paraprofessionals and resource support. What this study's findings did indicate was that learning was not a stand-alone item but rather one that was spoken of in terms of its relationship with other factors.

Interview responses indicated all three teachers had differing degrees of commitment to inclusion. All three teachers articulated a commitment to cutting edge instruction, diversity and the inclusion of children with special needs. Teacher A met criteria that would suggest a high degree of commitment to inclusion. Teacher B would be described as less committed and fall at the opposite end of the commitment continuum, while Teacher C would be placed somewhere in the middle. Observations supported these variances in commitment. For example, Teacher A conducts planning with resource/special education which is carried over into the classroom. At times she initiates and implements planning for students with special need herself. Additionally she feels that she has a better understanding of her students and does not require all the suggestions from outside services. Teacher B talks about what she needs to do and there is evidence of accommodations for students with special needs in her classroom however she indicates that she spends a great deal of energy and time at odds with the school's resource department.

Although all three participants appeared to support an inclusive philosophy they also described a high degree of concern and confusion surrounding the concept. Questions around responsibility, tensions between system rhetoric and reality as well as pressures with accountability fuelled mistrust and hindered a complete acceptance of inclusion.

### ***How do Teacher Participants' Beliefs Affect Practice?***

Teacher beliefs are of paramount significance in shaping the inclusion experience in their classroom. Beliefs move understanding from a surface level to a more purposeful, planned instruction which is mindful of the “why” of the teaching behaviour (Zollers, Arun, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999). Additionally findings in the Zollers et al. study indicate that teacher beliefs about inclusion are ambiguous and this uncertainty causes numerous difficulties with implementation. All three narratives pointed to individual experiences that had developed the teachers’ personal understandings of inclusion. Both the interview and the observation described contradictions and features that supported the confusion. (Appendix M.) As Avramidis and Norwich (2002) note, this vagueness translates into practice, and becomes a “bewildering concept which can have a variety of interpretations and applications” (p. 158).

Unfortunately, this doubt additionally affected teacher efficacy and created individual uncertainties about their skills and effectiveness. This reservation regarding abilities was identified in interview statements from all three teachers. Although Teacher B and Teacher C were more vocal with their concerns, Teacher A’s comments acknowledged this fear as well. For example Teacher A commented that,

Fortunately his grade one paraprofessional came with him in the beginning and she had a lot more knowledge of him than I did. I realized that she was the one that knew him and I didn’t and I had things to learn about what made this kid work.

Efficacy was both explicitly stated and implied. In every case it was possible to make an interpretation that pointed to a tension between the system and individual experiences of inclusion. This tension has also been noted in the literature (Sikese, Lawson & Parker, 2007). The expression of concerns regarding efficacy and uncertainty of skills were frequently followed by statements of blame. These blame statements offered more evidence to support the complexity of the concept and the tensions. Comments related to ineffective and limited classroom supports, infrequent interventions by the resource teacher and uncooperative families usually shifted the responsibility from the classroom teacher to others who were seen as more expert. In all three narratives resource personnel were deemed the experts and were the source of any unsuccessful and ineffective practice. Teacher A indicated more confidence in her abilities and spoke less of frustrations. Teacher B indicated concern about her skill level but had intentionally abstained from additional professional development. She talked a great deal about her dissatisfaction with the system and its lack of support. Teacher C wavered between statements of confidence and worries about skills. She spoke in great detail about her concerns with the system and service delivery.

Efficacy as described in the interviews linked closely with classroom observations. Teacher A saw herself as efficacious. In her practice there was minimal pull-out and she had a high degree of interaction with all students. Teacher B viewed resource as the expert and felt that she did not receive enough support. Pull-out was frequent and was the way that programming was delivered. The paraprofessional in her classroom had the majority of interactions with students with special needs and Teacher

B's students were minimally engaged. Teacher C was unsure and wavered between being capable and blaming the supports.

***Are Teacher Participants' Beliefs Congruent with Teaching Practice?***

In all three participants there existed a link between their beliefs and their classroom practice. Although the degree of commitment to inclusive practice varied between individual teachers, there was a discernable link between observations and personal interviews. Teacher A's interview indicated that she had a high degree of commitment to inclusion and her practice exemplified high quality instruction with frequent positive student interaction patterns. With Teachers B and C however, the link was more complex. Teacher B's interview indicated less commitment and increased tension. This was reflective of her classroom practice and paralleled research by Sikesa et al. (2007) who found that policy and reality were tenuously, if at all, linked. Teacher C's practice indicated a high degree of inclusive commitment, however her interview indicated some hostility and anger at the system. However, in practice, Teacher C exhibited a general congruency between beliefs and practice which was not damaged by her irritation and annoyance with service delivery concerns.

In this study teachers' accounts were unique and personal. Each reflected complexities, dilemmas, constraints, as well as possibilities. Accounts focused on the human and practical aspects of day to day involvement with individual pupils and the system in which each teacher worked. Observations demonstrated congruence; however the link was complex and required a deeper understanding of individual teacher experiences, emotions and context.

Kulgelmass (2001) suggests that when one triangulates stated values and beliefs with those embedded in conversations and observed interactions, one begins to gain insights into a more implicit way that beliefs operate. This study used this suggested research methodology to unmask patterns that indicated the profound influence of the interpersonal and intrapersonal values that affect actions.

### **Conclusions**

This study set out to examine the relationship between three teachers' beliefs about learning, disability and inclusion, and their classroom practice. Guiding the investigation were three critical questions. Though the study's findings resemble the inconsistency and confusion surrounding inclusive education that other researchers have collected (Proactive, 2006), four prominent areas of resonance have been identified in this study. These areas include:

- the varying degree of commitment that each participant had towards creating an inclusive environment
- the frequent overlaps in interview comments related to responsibility and efficacy
- the relationship between the richness of interview descriptions and the participants' feelings of efficacy
- the amount of frustration and tension relative to the participants' commitment to inclusion.

These conclusions offered data that posed potential answers to the initial questions.

#### ***Degree of Commitment.***

It is not surprising that conflicting orientations toward school inclusion emerged in this study. Jordan (2007) describes a continuum of beliefs about disability where

pathological perspectives and interventionist principles lay end to end. She further suggests that confusions stem from the differences in beliefs that mark each end of the continuum. This study suggests that in addition to Jordan's continuum of perspectives on disability there is a spectrum of teachers' commitment to inclusion. Whereas the disability continuum uses the characteristics of each of the disability models, the commitment scale used teacher efficacy and responsibility to plot the teacher's degree of commitment.

Characteristics used to describe efficacy in this study included broad areas such as professional growth, knowledge, professional development activities, additional training and course work. The teacher participants' predominant model of disability and their talk about learning were also used. This study's proposed spectrum would determine a range from high to low commitment based on the frequency of the descriptors in the interview conversation. Based on this methodology Teacher A would sit at one end of the spectrum (high responsibility), Teacher B would be at the opposite end (low responsibility) and Teacher C would be mid-range. This range of commitment is significant because it helps put order to the confusion and attempts to make beliefs and values clearer.

### ***Overlaps in Efficacy and Responsibility in Interview Statements***

Irrespective of individual differences there was often an overlap of statements that were identified as efficacious or responsible. When teacher participants felt less effective and skilled, there were fewer overlaps and a significant number of negative efficacious/responsibility statements regarding inclusive practice. (Appendix M.) When teacher participants didn't feel efficacious there was also an increase in the number of contradictions in the interview comments. For example, Teacher B indicates that she was

okay with having a student with special needs in her room. Then she indicated that most days when the paraprofessional comes in she pulls him out of her room to do work on his IEP goals. Additionally she indicated that she doesn't participate in professional development but yet she states that she just learns along the way.

### ***Richness of Interview Descriptions and Responses***

All narratives in this study provided thorough accounts of each teacher participant's work with students with special needs. However, each interview varied in length and richness of detail. This study found that the teacher participants who felt more confident and responsible provided extensive, rich, detailed interview explanations. They offered accounts of not just what students were doing but also why they had them doing it. For example Teacher A provides several detailed accounts of professional learning and why she feels they are important to her students.

Debbie Miller talks about teaching with intention and that is what I am working on – Slowing down and doing fewer things but doing them way better. Regie Routman talks about inspiring students and getting them really engaged in reading. I am trying to do that as well.

This move beyond the surface level allowed the study to identify additional beliefs about inclusion that were held by these teachers.

### ***Tension and Frustration***

All teacher participants expressed a degree of frustration in their attempts to put into practice an inclusive philosophy. These frustrations could be categorized into

informal clusters of high, medium or low. Although frequency played a major role in the groupings, use of words and intensity of feelings also offered criteria for categorization.

This study found that the higher the degree of frustration the less commitment to inclusion and the less evidence in practice. Teacher B and Teacher C stated frequently in the interview their displeasure with their schools supports, the amount of paraprofessional time they received and their exclusion from the child's team. They used words like ammunition, tokenism, and education lottery. Conversely, Teacher A's interview was considerably more positive. It appeared that the lower the frustration the more inclusive the teacher's practice.

### **Implications**

Theoretically, this study presents a framework for a deeper understanding of individual teacher beliefs and experiences as they pertain to teaching children with disability. Additionally this research highlights the important dynamics of the individual relationships between stated beliefs, implied beliefs, and classroom practice with three classroom teachers. It was never the intent of this qualitative study to generate findings that could be applied to all teachers in all school settings. However, the findings confirm to some extent the results of previous literature. This includes the notion that competence and attitude are linked; that Manitoba shares issues with the broader educational context; and, that teachers need more than policy to guide them to change their practice.

There are also several specific considerations worthy of note. Unfortunately, these suggestions are not new and sadly they seem to haunt inclusive attitudes and their



implementation. Yet I am optimistic that continued research in inclusive education will eventually transform these obstacles into possibilities that will bring about change.

### **Communication and Responsibility**

The findings suggest that the roles and responsibilities of classroom and resource teachers need to be clarified. Murky and inconsistent at best, schools need to move past inclusive jargon and implement a structure that facilitates extensive, ongoing, meaningful communication. Through this communication, school personnel will realize that each one of them is responsible for the instruction of all students.

Although making adjustments for students with special needs has traditionally been the primary responsibility of the resource teacher, in a collaborative inclusive environment, planning, assessing and implementing should be a joint venture (Hoover & Patton, 1997 in Smith & Leonard, 2005). Communication must be a consistent part of the teaching schedule and include discussions related to all aspects of teaching and learning. In addition, classroom teachers need to have input into decision-making and they need resources to enable their decisions to be put into practice.

### **Paraprofessionals**

This study's findings suggest that the use of paraprofessionals should be examined more closely. Teacher participants indicated that paraprofessionals need to be better trained. This may involve a more school wide approach to paraprofessional training. Building capacity through more knowledge and skills is important, however, before this can have an impact the school division needs to develop a more stable approach to paraprofessional placements. As indicated by all participants, the frequent turnover and change of paraprofessionals during the course of a school year is

detrimental to students and teachers alike. Additionally, the types of paraprofessional supports for individual children needs to be clarified. Jordan (2008) indicates that the role of the paraprofessional and the expectations of the teacher for the role need to be understood and agreed upon by all parties.

### **Teacher Skill Level**

Regardless of outside perceptions, increasing individual teacher's skills and their confidence in those skills will bring about change in attitudes and practice. School systems need to cull and develop classroom teachers' skills in the principles and strategies that matter most. Overload and fragmentation can no longer be part of what happens in the school (Fullan, 1999) and teaching cannot continue to be a private matter hidden behind the classroom door. John Hattie (2009), in his book *Visible Learning*, suggests effective teaching and learning is not hidden. He urges educators to use the research that exists and focus their energy on what matters. His appendix rank orders the most effective strategies and the degree of impact they will have on the learner. Skills need to be developed with this in mind.

According to the literature, the primary reasons for limited commitment to inclusion were inadequate teacher skills and preparation (Snyder, 1999; Winter, 2006), and poor leadership (McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). The findings from the current study support this work and reflect similar reasons for resistance towards inclusionary practice.

### **Future Research**

Practically, this study utilizes methods in terms of classroom observation and interview protocols that can be replicated to further explore the belief-practice

connection. More importantly however, the study generated questions for further consideration. They included the following wondering:

- Does the tension experienced by teachers hinder a commitment to inclusion, teaching or learning?
- Can teachers move past frustrations and tensions to focus on learning?
- How do teachers' attitudes towards teaching in general compare with teaching inclusive education?
- What factors influence the relationships between teachers, paraprofessionals, and principals?
- What structural supports would foster (or hinder) inclusive environments?
- What effects do teacher beliefs have on student learning or student efficacy?
- What leadership practices promote inclusion?
- What teacher preparation most effectively supports interventionist teacher attitudes?

A broader survey of teachers representing a variety of school settings would be necessary to explore these questions and the extent and nature of the complexity that exists. In addition, future research should explore not only individual teachers' views and practices, but also look at some of the systemic factors that influence the implementation of classroom and school activities related to inclusion. In particular, studies addressing the relationship and roles of teachers and paraprofessionals in the classroom; the decision-making process of student support teams; and the influence that school administrators have on inclusive practice are needed.

## Conclusion

Defining inclusion is a controversial task. Putting it into practice is onerous. As noted in the introduction, inclusion is a vaguely defined concept in government publications and in the literature, and in essence is an attitude that is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to legislate. Sikesa et al (2007) suggest that while policy may shape the broader institutional contexts it is teachers' personal day to day experiences that create their beliefs about inclusion and its action in the classroom.

Initially, this study's focus was to see how inclusion worked in three teachers' classrooms. However the tensions, frustrations and discontent from all participants indicate that there are many influences determining success or contributing to the confusion. Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) remind us that existing school structures do not enable teachers to respond to diversity. They go on to say that school organization remains stuck in an add-on version of reorganization. This lack of structural change does not move inclusion forward but actually stalls the process and overwhelms teachers.

Villa and Thousand (2002) indicate that change influences many unseen barriers and offers opportunities to increase commitment and inclusive practice. They identify that change will: create conflicts but these tensions can be managed through strong communication; redefine role and responsibilities of the stakeholders; increase the need for more classroom resources and teacher skill building; and create a commitment based on a positive inclusive experience. These recommendations parallel those of this study which identifies communication, responsibility and teacher skill development as essential in an action focused future.

There is a shared responsibility to ensure all children receive a culturally appropriate, effective education and are fully included, successful, valued members of society (Bevan-Brown, 2006). A strong connection between belief and practice is necessary in order for inclusion to become a reality for students (Villa & Thousand, 1995). What I have learned is that the dynamic interplay between belief, classroom practice, and the system structures create intricate possibilities. These intertwined relationships develop stories that are as unique as the individuals involved in them. As presented, each story is self-contained, yet composed of multiple layers which can fit together to create the larger picture.

While compliance with legislation is imperative, there is nothing simple about translating principles into practice. Manitoba has one of the most eloquently crafted inclusion statements; however, that does not ensure Manitoba teachers carry out the most inclusive practices. Ultimately, policy makers need to understand that, while inclusion can be crafted from a larger vision, its implementation occurs by individual educators who need support to take action. As Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) suggest, “Hope, optimism and self-belief among teachers are the vital well springs of successful learning” (p.1). Armed with these passions, individual teachers will create their story not because of policy but because they have connected the unseen threads and truly embraced the philosophy of inclusive education.

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**APPENDIX A****Letter to Senior School Division Administration**

Assistant Superintendent

School Division

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear (Name of Assistant Superintendent),

I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba, in the Faculty of Education. I am currently conducting research for my thesis under Dr. Charlotte Enns, and was hoping that you might permit me to further my investigation in your school division. My thesis is entitled "Teacher Perceptions of the Belief/Practice Connection" and it explores teacher perceptions of inclusive education in relation to their actions in the classroom. I am writing to you to request your help in inviting staff in the \_\_\_\_\_ School Division to participate.

My research involves a half day classroom observation along with a 60 minute interview with three teacher participants. No students are directly involved, however, they will be present during the classroom observation. Therefore, informed parental consent will be required and will be obtained prior to the commencement of any observations. I have attached the parent consent form for your perusal.

My project involves one half day classroom observation in each of the three teacher participants' classrooms. Observations will be recorded through the use of field notes all details will be treated with confidentiality and at no time will participants, the division or schools names be used in any written form. Pseudonyms will be used in final versions with notes will be kept confidential, in a locked office and destroyed at the end of the study.

Additionally, the research involves conducting one interview with three school division teachers. Participants will be involved in a 60 minute semi-structured interview, arranged at a convenient time and location which will discuss educators' perceptions about inclusive education. Participants are free to disregard interview questions or may withdraw entirely from the interview process at any time should they feel uncomfortable. I will use an audio recording for each interview. It is my plan to use direct quotations in my final interpretive research report; however all participant conversations will be treated with confidentiality and at no time will participants, the division or schools names be used in any written form. This will include the transcriptions of audio

conversations which will use pseudonyms and be transcribed by the researcher. All notes will be kept confidential, in a locked office and destroyed at the end of the study.

To be mindful of good research procedures I would ask that you send the attached information letter to all of your divisional teachers. If they are interested in participating they are to contact me directly to make arrangements for an interview. In this way their participation is voluntary. Selection will be on a first come basis with written consent to participate obtained prior to conducting any interviews. Although consultant identities will be known to me at the time of the interviews, this information will be kept strictly confidential.

Included is a copy of the information letter to participants as well as a copy of the consent form draft that has been submitted for ethics review. Should you require more information please contact me by phone at XXX-XXXX or by e-mail at\_\_\_\_\_. Final project information is available upon request.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca). A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

Sheena Braun  
Enclosures (2)

\*

**APPENDIX B**

Date:

Dear Teacher:

I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba, in the Faculty of Education, Inclusive Education Program. I am currently conducting research for my master's thesis under the guidance of Dr. Charlotte Enns. I was hoping that you might consider being part of this exploration. My thesis is entitled "Teacher Perceptions of the Belief/Practice Connection" which explores teacher perceptions of inclusive education in relation to actions in the classroom. I am very interested in finding out how teachers implement inclusive education policy into their classrooms.

If you would be willing to participating in a 60 minute interview and have me as an observer in your classroom for one half day please contact me at XXX-XXXX or at \_\_\_\_\_ . If you agree to be involved, all observations and interviews will be conducted at a time that is convenient for you. Although, an audio recording device will be used for the interview and written field notes will provide the data for the observation notes, all participant conversations will be treated with confidentiality and at no time will participants, the division or schools names be used in any written form. This will include the transcriptions of audio conversations which will use pseudonyms and be transcribed by the researcher. All notes will be kept confidential, in a locked office and destroyed at the end of the study.

It is important for you to know that participation in this project is voluntary and selection will be on a first come basis. Supervisors are not informed of your participation and you may refrain from answering specific questions or withdraw from the interview process at any time.



I hope you will consider being involved in this project as your input is extremely valuable in understanding inclusive education's journey from words to actions in the classroom. If you require any further information about the project please contact me at \_\_\_\_\_.

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca). A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sheena Braun

## APPENDIX C

### Consent Form for Children

Research Project Title: Teacher Perceptions of the Belief/Practice Connection

Researcher: Sheena Braun

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.

I am a graduate student at the University of Manitoba, in the Faculty of Education. I am currently conducting research for my thesis which is entitled “Teacher Perceptions of the Belief/Practice Connection” under the direction of Dr. Charlotte Enns. This study explores teacher perceptions of inclusive education in relation to their actions in the classroom. My interest is in seeing what this phenomena looks like in a classroom setting.

My research involves one half day classroom observation that will be prearranged with the classroom teacher as well as a 60 minute teacher interview. No students are directly involved, however, they will be present during the half day classroom observation. Therefore, I am seeking your permission, for your child to be part of this observation phase.

The observation’s purpose is to see, the variety of instructional methodology, classroom routines, and adaptations used in your classroom. This data will be recorded through the use of written field notes. All details in these notes will be treated with confidentiality and at no time will participants, the division or schools names be used in any written form. Pseudonyms will be used in final versions with notes that will be kept confidential, in a locked office and destroyed at the end of the study.

It is important for you to know that participation in this project is on a voluntary basis.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to your child being part of the observation.. 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; 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. Please contact the following people should you have any questions.

Sheena Braun \_\_\_\_\_

Dr Charlotte Enns \_\_\_\_\_

This research has been approved by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at 474-7122, or e-mail [margaret\\_bowman@umanitoba.ca](mailto:margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca). A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

**APPENDIX D****Interview Protocol**

Adapted with permission

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer Guidelines:**

1. Before the interview get to know the delivery model and the school organizational structures. Get to know the terminology used for – resource teachers, special education classes/placements,
2. Record the interviewee name, date, school and time, and your name, and check that recorder is functioning.
3. LABEL the tape as well as the tape box, with date, names, and school.
4. During the interview, establish eye contact. Aim for open ended questions, lots of "why" "what made you think that..." "What were you hoping might happen?" "What did you have in mind when you did that?"

**Introduction:**

Today I'd like to talk about a couple of your students. We will trace your experiences with them from the point that you first learned that they would be in your class to the present time. I will ask you about what happened over the past year with these students, your perspectives about the experience and the reasons you have for making those decisions and taking the actions that you did. I am just interested in your experiences and your perspectives about these students.

First I would like you to select a couple of students from your class list for us to talk about. They must be ones for whom we have received a parent consent form. Would you pick one who might be recognized as having special needs, who is working from an IEP, and perhaps has had a number of special education provisions put in place ( Student A).

The second student you choose should be one about whom you have some concerns not necessarily having been formally recognized, but who is having difficulties and whom you think may not reach his or her potential (Student B).

**Let's talk about each student in turn. Begin with Student A. Then repeat for student B**

- 1. Tell me a bit about Student A/B . How is he/she currently doing?**

*What cued you in that there was something that needed additional attention?*

*(Student B)*

- 2. Thinking back to the point where you learned that student A/B required help how did you feel about that?**

- 3. How did you think student A/B would do in your classroom?**

- 4. Has this perception changed?**

- 5. Is the structure in your school conducive to having special needs students in the classroom?**

- 6. Whose responsibility is it to program for students with special needs in your school?**

- 7. Tell me what actions were taken when student A/B first came to your attention.**

What records did you check?

What steps did you take to learn about him/her?

Assessment – did you request/conduct any?

How did you establish what entry point in the curriculum he/she was at?

**Why did you do that?**

What did you hope to find out?

Was that what you expected?

What did you decide to do?

**Who was involved?**

With whom did you confer? –parents, resource, previous teacher? –  
frequency

**8. Did you do anything special for this student in your program?**

What did you try? –*Why did you do that?*

How did you deal with curriculum expectations?

Did you do instructional accommodations? – What did you hope  
he/she would achieve?

What do you think are the kinds of accommodations that (student's  
name) needs?

Did you accommodate for other areas? – How, how often? Social  
needs Self concept?

**9. Were these accommodations different than what you have done for other  
students in your room? If yes, how so?**

How does that impact on your time?

**10. What has equipped you to deal with student A/B's special needs?**

Do you feel this is adequate?

**11. Do you feel the school has supported you in your learning?**

**12. What would make it easier to deal with student A/B in the classroom?**

**13. How do you keep track of student A/B's progress?**

Do you do anything to keep track of his/her individual progress?

Why do you do that? -For what purpose? How often?

Do you monitor progress on the IEP? - Who else is involved? \

**14. How is evaluation and communication of student learning done in your school?**

What type of self assessment is the student involved in?

Who writes the report card?

Who is at the conference?

**15. Do you work with any other teachers on staff? – Resource, principal? (not EAs – they are next)**

How does that happen? – fit with program?

Why do you do that? – Can you explain how it works?

How useful did you find this for (Student's name)? –

- for you – as a source of advice? Support?

Who keeps track of the IEP part of Student A's progress?

Who else do you work with?

**16. What is the difference between your role and theirs?****17. Do you work with an Educational Assistant?**

How does that happen? How does this fit with your program?

Why do you do that? – can you explain how it works?

How useful is this for your work with student A/B?

What else do you do?

**18. How do you work with student A/B's parents (guardians, family)?**

When did you meet initially?

For what purpose?

Did you or the parent initiate the meeting?

How often do you meet them now? - For what purposes?

Who initiates these meetings?

What do you see as the parents' responsibility in working with you? Why do you think that is so?

**19. Last thoughts**

(Follow protocol for Student B)

**Many thanks for taking the time to discuss these students. I hope you found the experience positive – we don't often get time to reflect on what we do.**



## APPENDIX E

**Rubric for High Quality Instructional Tools to Involve Diverse Learners  
Adapted from the work of Kame'enui and Carnine (1998)**

Principle/Strategy	Description
Primed Background Knowledge	Learners are “in” on the upcoming material Review and emphasis of key concepts Learners understand how the concept links to what they already know Connections are discussed Students who may have difficulty catching on are monitored closely Teacher highlights parts that were discussed earlier. Teacher frequently piques student interest.
Big Ideas	Focus on the essential principles of learning Focus on the concepts that are broad and deep and that anchor smaller ideas, facts and details Central ideas Organizing principles Rich explanatory power Predictive power
Conspicuous Strategies	Talk about how you think Model and describe the steps that are needed to accomplish the task Self-talk Think aloud Metacognitive processes Teacher labels the actions being performed
Scaffolding	Multi-stage process that guides the students from the initial introduction of a new concept to the point where they can apply the concept independently. <i>Vgotsky's Zone of Proximinal Development.</i> It is a plan that has group instruction, set work and small group tasks which support the differences in individual student understanding.

Integrating Strategies	A plan that links big ideas across units and lessons. Links of related concepts Taking essential information learned in one context and applying it to new contexts and more complex ideas.
Judicious Review	Opportunities for students to recall and apply newly learned information during or at the end of a lesson. Review big ideas or main concepts Summary of student accomplishments Lesson ends by recognizing accomplishments of individual at all levels of success.

**APPENDIX F**

**Rubric for Descriptions of Teacher Talk**  
**Adapted from Jordan (2007) and Jordan and Stanovich (2001)**

Category	Examples of Teacher Behaviours
Talk related to Classroom Organization and Management	Gains student attention States how to set up the task States behavioural expectations Gives directions and where to find resources Repeats directions Gives support for how to start the assignment Provides time frame for the lesson Discussions re misbehaviours Talks about rules
Talk related to Instruction and Student Learning	Provides students with a mental set that helps them anticipate what they will be learning in the lesson. Gives information about the lesson topic Activates prior experiences and knowledge Models and demonstrates concepts, learning strategies and procedures Extends student thinking Points out distinctive features of new concepts Uses examples Provides instructional assistance The teacher does not supply answers or comments on the correctness or incorrectness of a student response. Points out relationships Models task specific learning strategies and self-talk that will help students with the task. Uses questions to evaluate student mastery Gives a summary of lesson content and connects it to other experiences

Talk related to Motivation	Summarizes the lesson accomplishments of individuals or the group Feedback is immediate and highly structured using specific points or examples Uses specific praise statements The teachers uses descriptors about their own experiences
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**APPENDIX G****Rubric for Teacher Patterns of Listening and Interacting with Students in  
the Classroom**

Adapted with permission from Jordan and Stanovich (2001)

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Level 1 No Interactions	No interactions with students on lesson content
Level 2 Observing and checking	Teacher circulates; checks work briefly and then moves on
Level 3 Observing Checking and Extending	Teacher circulates directing responses Teacher tells students what to work on, how to correct it and then moves on
Level 4 Observing, Checking, Extending and Elaborating	Teacher asks students questions about the lesson concepts. Elicits responses about their learning. There is engaging interaction

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\*Each level includes the interactions of the previous level. It is based on a concentric circle idea.

**APPENDIX H**

**Comparison of Type of Instructional Groupings Observed in the Classroom**

<b>Type of Instructional Grouping</b>					
	Individual	Partner	Small Group	Large Group	Independent Seat Work
<b>Teacher A</b>	1	3	3	8	0
<b>Teacher B</b>	0	1	0	4	3
<b>Teacher C</b>	1	3	4	5	0

**APPENDIX I****Comparison of Percentage of High Quality Instructional Strategies versus****Other**

As Described by Carmine and Kame'enui

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Number of Strategies in Observation Time</b>	<b>Number of High Quality Strategies</b>	<b>Number of Other Strategies</b>	<b>Percentage of High Quality Strategies Used</b>
<b>Teacher A</b>	25	19	6	76%
<b>Teacher B</b>	15	5	10	33%
<b>Teacher C</b>	18	17	1	94%

**APPENDIX J****Comparison of Type of Teacher Talk during Classroom Observations**

<b>Category of Talk (%)</b>					
	<b>Number of Observed Interactions</b>	<b>Classroom Organization and Management</b>	<b>Instruction/Student Learning</b>	<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Other</b>
Teacher A	35	4/35 11%	17/35 49%	13/35 37%	1/35 3%
Teacher B	30	22/30 73%	8/30 27%	0	0



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Teacher C	36	20/36 56%	10/36 28%	5/36 14%	0
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**APPENDIX K****Comparison of Teachers' Pattern of Interaction with the Class**

<b>Number of Interactions</b>				
	Level 1 No Interactions	Level 2 Checking	Level 3 Extending	Level 4 Elaborating
<b>Teacher A</b>			1	8
<b>Teacher B</b>	3	6	2	4
<b>Teacher C</b>			1	7

**Comparison of Teachers' Pattern of Interaction with Students with Special Needs**

<b>Number of Interactions</b>				
	Level 1 No Interactions	Level 2 Checking	Level 3 Extending	Level 4 Elaborating
<b>Teacher A</b>		3	2	4
<b>Teacher B</b>		2		3
<b>Teacher C</b>		4	3	4

**APPENDIX L****Commitment to Inclusive Practices**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description of Behaviour</b>	
	<b>Inclusive Commitment</b>	<b>Less Inclusive Commitment</b>
Student Acceptance	<p>The relationship among students and teacher is one of respect</p> <p>There is acceptance of difference whether physical, cognitive emotional or social</p> <p>Respect is evident through discussion of wall charts and classroom displays</p> <p>Teacher reminds students about respectful behaviour towards each other.</p> <p>Focus on student strengths</p>	<p>Teacher identifies student through a label.</p> <p>Teacher looks for an alternative service delivery method to address student needs</p> <p>Teacher feels that students with special needs takes her away from the other students</p>
Programming Adaptations	<p>Teacher conducts planning with resource/special education to carry over programming into the regular classroom.</p> <p>Teacher follows individual program objectives. Teacher monitors student progress in order to adapt, update or guide instruction.</p> <p>Student progress is checked frequently. The classroom teacher makes one or more accommodations for</p>	<p>Teacher does not work with resource/special education to carry out programming in their classroom.</p> <p>Teacher does not monitor student progress.</p> <p>Teacher does not adapt teaching techniques or make accommodations.</p>

	<p>students with special needs. (Flexible groupings, peer pairings, seating arrangements, classroom and furniture layout)</p> <p>Teacher adapts teaching techniques.</p>	
<p>Collaboration and Responsibility</p>	<p>Teacher works cooperatively with resource and special education teachers</p> <p>Teacher meets at regular intervals with special education/resource teacher to discuss progress of student.</p> <p>There is an exchange of information about progress of student.</p> <p>Classroom teacher keeps their own records</p> <p>Teacher contacts parents frequently by phone calls, notes home, annotations to student work to which parents are asked to respond.</p>	<p>Teacher works alone. Teacher does not collaborate with staff</p> <p>Teacher contacts parents only at times required for reporting such as report card time.</p> <p>No coordination between of reporting is done.</p> <p>Teacher contacts parents only when students exhibits major problems</p>
<p>Assessment</p>	<p>Teacher conducts informal assessments and observations</p> <p>Teacher uses a variety of sources to assess the student current level.</p>	<p>No pre referral activities are done by the classroom teacher prior to a referral to resource.</p>

**APPENDIX M****Comparison of Teachers Efficacy and Responsibility Statements**

Frequency in Interview	Teacher A 19 page interview	Teacher B 10 page interview	Teacher C 13 page interview
Efficacy	62	10	15
Responsibility	52	16	15
Overlaps	26	2	2
Negative Statements	1	19	31