

Inclusion: Classroom Teachers' Perspectives and Experiences in a Bourdieusian Framework

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## **Abstract**

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Inclusion: Classroom Teachers' Perspectives and Experiences in a Bourdieusian Framework  
(Under the direction of Dr. Kathleen M. Brown)

This dissertation research adds to the literature base by exploring the attitudes of regular education teachers about the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Consistent with the framework of Pierre Bourdieu, the school was conceptualized as a field of struggle. The investigation focused on fifth grade general classroom teachers as the unit of study. A mixed-methods design was used to examine both qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher conducted one semi-structured interview with each of the 24 participants using an interview protocol. The semi-structured interview format identifies differences in the beliefs that teachers hold about the nature of disability as lying along a continuum from social model beliefs to medical model beliefs. Qualitative analysis using the Bourdieusian framework provided a more rich narrative of the struggles by and among teachers on a daily basis. Bourdieu's concepts provided a theoretical and empirical framework for the critique of classroom practices and prevailing standards practices including curriculum, pedagogy and instruments of assessment. Overall, fifth grade teachers in this study held a variety of perspectives about inclusion, including positive, hesitant or ambivalent, and resistant. In this research, habitus was viewed as teachers' deeply rooted dispositions that operate only through and by interaction with events and actions. Habitus manifested itself in choices (the roots of which are not wholly conscious) and the identification of opportunities and strategies within the field. Specifically, for the teachers in this study, when resources were scarce, there was a tendency to view the neediest students as

the problem and there was incentive to sort them away from the mainstream. Findings of this research revealed that inclusive teaching meant breaking down the barrier between teacher habitus and student habitus. To promote emancipatory practices, inclusive democratic educators must become more aware of the many political and social practices that sustain social division and devaluation. The challenge of school personnel is to provide an educational environment that empowers all students to be successful. This involves a cultural transformation that critically investigates standard procedures in school concerning curricular access and instructional practices, and classroom milieu.

## **Dedication**

I humbly dedicate this research to the teachers interviewed in this study. It has been a privilege to hear their experiences and learn from their stories. Each demonstrated dedication to the craft of shaping the lives of the most important people, children. The teachers that participated in this study are truly confident, patient, passionate, proud, skilled, perseverant, consistent, leading, creative, knowledgeable, and inspiring human beings!

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# **CHAPTER I**

## **Introduction**

Growing numbers of previously excluded students are being integrated into the general classroom. However, these students need more than mere placement in the general classroom. In particular, students need to be included as an equal and valued member of the classroom. The general classroom teacher must allocate resources and exert the effort to assess instructional needs, adapt instruction, and provide support to all students. In order for classrooms to be organized heterogeneously, the support of general classroom teachers is critical. Therefore, to investigate inclusive classrooms, the general classroom teacher needs to be the basic unit of focus.

To teach effectively in the midst of the diversity that exists in all schools, teachers must come to understand their beliefs, values, assumptions and positioning – the predispositions that the teachers bring with them to the school each day. The successful implementation of inclusive educational programs has been linked to teacher attitudes towards inclusion (Moody, Vaughn, Hughes, & Fisher, 2000). To create and maintain truly inclusive schools, teachers must see themselves as active change agents, willing and able to confront and challenge stereotypes and oppressive, discriminatory behavior. Teachers must become critical consumers of their own environments and of the materials they encounter. It is important that teachers believe they can make a difference. Deductively, classrooms teachers who feel powerful and effective in school are far more likely to install empowerment and the students they serve. Creating classrooms that honor and respect all children and all of their differences is an ongoing, time-consuming challenge. Despite best

efforts, all classroom teachers will continue to struggle with their own language, teaching, and curriculum in attempts at inclusiveness, fairness, and respect. The most important thing teachers can do is explore their own understandings, values, and beliefs about disability. This includes his or her acceptance of previously excluded students as equal and valued members of the class. If the teacher does not value the child and does not want him or her in the class, there probably will be major difficulties in achieving successful inclusion. Only by exploring our own personal histories and experiences can we attempt to understand and challenge the effects of our upbringing so that we may create inclusive classrooms that model social justice and equality.

A costly and growing categorical program is special education, as defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004). Historically, students found eligible for services under IDEA have been served in separate program models according to their handicapping conditions. Recent trends in law have provided an impetus for those students to return to the general classrooms settings. However, these changes have received ambivalent responses from teachers and slow changes in practice (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004; Cook, 2001; Gibbs, 2007; Jobling & Moni, 2004; Kavale & Forness, 2000, McLeskey & Waldron, 2004; Rea, Mclaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Villa & Thousand, 2003).

This study utilizes Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field, and doxa for conducting an analysis of school practices that effect students with disabilities. Specifically, this study will investigate general classroom teachers' perspectives of their roles in the practices of classification of students into the special education program, the inclusion model for serving students, and compliance with federal laws. The classroom teacher was the basic unit of focus and the school district was conceptualized as a field. Within the field, teachers have

varying curricula, reputations, and types and levels of resources. They compete with one another on all these fronts and attract different types of prestige and reputation. Research and practice in education must take account of the position of any given teacher in relation to peers to critically consider the perspectives of teachers regarding their students. Each of Bourdieu's concepts has practical implications for teachers, professors, and administrators.

### **Context of the Problem**

Over the years, the practice of segregating students because of disability has come under increased scrutiny. Beginning in the late 1980s, advocates for inclusion have demanded that children with disabilities be put in mainstream general education classes. Researchers have documented conflicting results in their evaluation of inclusive programs, and experts in the field remain divided over the issue of placement for students with special needs (Kavale, 2002; Rieser, 2006; Villa & Thousand, 2003). The topic of inclusion is controversial even within the professional education community. The fact remains that all students, including those with disabilities, have the right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), as the current law (IDEIA, 2004) states (Yell & Katsiyannis, 2004). This mandate requires that students with disabilities be educated, to the maximum extent appropriate, with their typically developing peers. Therefore, students with disabilities are only to be separated into self-contained settings when they are unable to receive educational benefit even with the use of supplementary services and supports, in the general education classroom (Yell & Katsiyannis, 2004). Thus, there is a clear legal impetus for the least restrictive environment, which essentially should translate to inclusive practices. Therefore, inclusion has received significant endorsement as a best practice in special education.

Despite the legal impetus, the practice of inclusion was poorly accepted in the schools, and the majority of students with disabilities continued to be taught in segregated settings. As a result, special education became an increasingly separate institution, with its own practices, regulations, certifications and staff (Armstrong, 2002; Skiba, Simmons, Ritter, Gibb, Rausch, Cuadro, & Chung, 2008). The National Center on Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that, since the first special education law (PL94-142, 1975) passed in the United States, greater numbers of children with disabilities have enrolled in schools among all age groups and grade levels from pre-school to high school (USDOE, NCES, 2006). According to the “*Twenty-Seventh Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*,” almost half of all students with disabilities spend the majority of their school day in general education environments (US Department of Education [USDOE], 2007). In some disability categories, the reported percentage of students placed in the general education classroom is even greater. For example, during the 2003-2004 school year, 88% of children with language and speech disorders were educated in the general education environment (USDOE, 2007). Furthermore, the past ten years have revealed an increasing trend in all disability categories for placement in inclusive settings (USDOE, 2007). The percentage of students ages 6-21 with disabilities who are educated in the general education classroom for most of their school day was reported to be over 77% currently (USDOE, 2007). Furthermore, 96% of students with disabilities spend some time in general education classrooms (USDOE, 2007). Placement in general education settings differs based on disability category as Table 1 shows:

Table 1: Percentage of Time Students with Disabilities in the United States are Educated Outside the General Education Classroom

<b>Disability Categories</b>	<b>Time Outside General Education Environments</b>			
	<21% of the Day	21-60% of the Day	>60% of the Day	Segregated
<u>Sites</u>				
Specific Learning Disability	48.8%	37.3%	13.0%	0.9%
Language and Speech Disabilities	88.2%	6.8%	4.6%	0.4%
Mental Retardation	11.7%	30.2%	51.8%	6.3%
Emotional or Behavioral Disorder	30.3%	22.6%	30.2%	16.9%
Multiple Disabilities	12.1%	7.2%	45.8%	24.9%
Hearing Impairment	44.9%	19.2%	22.2%	13.7%
Orthopedic Impairment	46.7%	20.9%	26.2%	6.2%
Other Health Impairment	51.1%	30.5%	15.0%	3.5%
Visual Impairment	54.6%	16.9%	15.6%	12.8%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	26.8%	17.7%	43.9%	11.6%
Deaf-Blind	22.2%	13.9%	33.6%	30.3%
Traumatic Brain Injury	34.6%	29.9%	27.1%	8.4%
Developmental Delay	51.2%	28.2%	18.6%	2.0%
All Disabilities	49.9%	27.7%	18.5%	3.9%

Source: U.S. Department of Education. Office of Special Education Programs. Data Analysis System (DANS), OMB #1820-0517: "Part B. *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Implementation of FAPE Requirements." 2003.

However, general classroom teachers are ambivalent, at best, about the trend to integrate disabled students into general education classrooms. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) found that two thirds of teachers favor inclusion in principle, but less than one third believe that inclusion can be successful with the resources available to them. Teachers' ambivalence about inclusion increases as they become more concerned with teaching subject matter, and as the stakes for student achievement become more prominent in secondary schools (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). One of the most influential factors in the successful implementation of inclusive practices is the attitude of teachers (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). In fact, teacher attitude is reflected in the teacher's interactions and attachment or rejection of children with special needs. This relationship is particularly problematic because students with disabilities require intensive instruction through high quality interactions (Moody, Vaughn, Hughes, & Fisher 2000). Furthermore, teachers report



widespread concern about their ability to effectively teach students with special needs (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walter-Thomas, 2002). In Cook's (2001) study, some teachers rejected the children with special needs because they felt unprepared to help them. While teachers often recognize that accommodations are valuable for students with special needs, they do not often have the skills or the time to implement them (Kavale, 2002). For example, current legislation emphasizes accountability by requiring students with disabilities to participate in high stakes assessment each year and schools to make adequate yearly progress (NCLB, 2001); teachers must therefore cover more curriculum standards than ever before during their school year, leaving little time for extra remediation.

The methods of service delivery for students with disabilities have come under increased scrutiny for two major reasons: first, troubling educational outcomes and, second, disproportionate representation. Historically, participation in special education has yielded poor academic results. Students with disabilities are especially vulnerable to dropping out. Table 2 indicates the Dropout Rates by Disability Type for the 2000-01 school year. For the 2000-2001 school year, no national data source was available to compare dropout rates for IDEA and general education students. However, among 37 states, dropout rates ranged from about 3 percent to 9 percent (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2003). Also, when students enter special education, they do not tend to catch up to their peers. Educational outcome studies have revealed that students who enter special education with reading levels that were two or more years below their same-age peers can be expected to maintain that disparity or fall further behind (Denton, Vaughn, & Fletcher, 2003).

Disproportionality studies have revealed evidence that efforts to homogenously track students leads to a disproportionate numbers of students from the lowest social-economic

groups in the lowest tracks, while children from higher socioeconomic levels have been found to be consistently over-represented in higher tracks. Despite this history of almost continual attention, recent national reports indicate that disproportionate minority placement remains a serious and significant problem (National Association of Black School Educators, 2002; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002). Historically, special education has been over-

Table 2: High School Completion and Dropout Rates by Disability Type, 2000-01 School Year

<u>Disability Categories</u>	<u>Drop Out Rate</u>
All IDEA students	29
Emotional disturbances	53
Learning disabilities	27
Mental retardation	25
Other cognitive disabilities	13
Speech/language impairments	26
Orthopedic impairments	18
Sensory impairments	14
Other health impairments	23
Multiple disabilities	17

Source: GAO analysis of data from the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (2003).

represented by certain groups, including children of racial minority, children from ethnic minorities, working class and poor children and boys. Furthermore, when these markers of identity occur simultaneously, there is an increased likelihood that such children will be given a label of disability. Recent research indicates significant disparities between special education referral and placement rates for European Americans and Asian Americans compared with African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans (Harry & Klingner, 2006; Losen & Orfield, 2002). African American students remain three times as likely to be labeled intellectually disabled as European Americans, twice as likely to be labeled emotionally disturbed, and almost one and a half times as likely to be labeled learning

disabled (Parrish, 2002). In fact, African American students remain the most overrepresented of all racial groups in nine of thirteen disability categories, a fact that contributes to the restrictiveness of their school placement (Harry & Klingner, 2006; National Association of Black School Educators, 2002).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The school is one of the critical sites where forms of cultural capital are produced, transmitted and accumulated and where dominant systems of classification and evaluation are inculcated (Swartz, 1997). For Bourdieu, a key issue has been the persistent inequalities of privilege and power that exist without conscious recognition or public resistance. Deductively, Bourdieu's work seems like a fertile research framework for investigating the historically poor outcomes for students with disabilities in the public schools. The poor outcomes for students with disabilities are well documented over the past two decades, but change continues to be elusive.

The purpose of this research study was to apply Bourdieu's cultural reproduction framework to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general classroom. Specifically, the study investigates how a teacher's beliefs and instructional practices support the delivery of special education services to students with disabilities. In their role as instructional agents, teachers play a significant role in the lives of their students. Fundamentally, teachers' beliefs shape their professional practice. Therefore, teachers' beliefs about the nature of disability may be related to favorable academic outcomes. Until recently, disability studies have been primarily interested in the cognitive and educational deficits of students. Teachers have viewed disability as pathology within the student. However, a more recent turn in disability theory in the last decade or more has contested

this view and argued for more emphasis to be put on the social context of learning (Finklestein, 1988; Oliver, 1996; Reiser, 2006). The social perspective of disability can be viewed as an interaction between social structure and individual agency.

### **Relevance of the Study**

Although it is easy to see how special education has been problematic, it is undeniable that the passing of the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004) resulted in many benefits for students with disabilities. The IDEA was designed to expand access and educational rights for students with disabilities, and it largely achieved its goal of ensuring greater access to schooling and increased provision of services. Yet, paradoxically, the intent of special education legislation and policy may be to ensure access and equitable services to students with disabilities, but in actuality be a mechanism for sorting and marginalizing students with less cultural capital. Special education presents an excellent field to understand the way that cultural capital is reinforced, rewarded, and acquired in schools. The role of education in Bourdieu's view (1990) is to convert social hierarchies into academic hierarchies, playing a legitimization function to perpetuate the social order. Students' cultural resources, given that children of the same class are exposed to broadly similar socialization influences, are differentiated according to class origins. Accordingly, cultural capital is considered the main determinant of school success. Students' performance is not evaluated according to (class) neutral standards. On the contrary, pedagogical practices and assessment procedures are related, to a significant extent, to the culture of the upper class. In this manner, special education becomes a vehicle for classifying and legitimizing the processes for marginalizing students from underprivileged groups.

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, cultural capital, field and distinction suggest possibilities for schools and teachers to improve educational outcomes of marginalized students, including students with disabilities. In the context of schooling, teachers are institutional agents with particular patterns of conduct. Some will seek to preserve the status quo while others will aim to change it. By broadening the types of cultural capital that are valued in the classroom, teachers can act as agents of transformation rather than reproduction.

### **Literature Related to Study**

Efforts to include disabled children in the general education environment have been gaining momentum for over 15 years. During this time, many complex philosophical, legal, and educational issues have been raised for schools, courts and society. While the field of special education developed to serve more students with increasingly complex needs, data on pullout special education programs for students with disabilities yielded results that were unsatisfactory in terms of student achievement or long term benefits (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995; Lloyd & Gambatese, 1991). Factors identified as barriers to student success were lowered expectations, uninspiring and restricted curricula, and negative student attitudes resulting from school failure and stigmatizing segregation (Andrews, Carnine, Coutinho, Edgar, Forness, Fuchs, Jordan, Kauffman, Patton, Paul, Rosell, Rueda, Schiller, Skrtic, & Wong, 2000). Two decades of disappointing research has prompted radical reconsideration of the special education delivery system.

Teachers have been faced with apparently disparate messages about inclusive education. On the one hand, they are told that they are to meet teaching quality objectives by raising class averages in student achievement, while on the other hand told that they are to

be responsible for diversifying instruction to meet a range of learner needs. It is no surprise, therefore, that teachers express ambivalence about including students with disabilities in their classes. Educators' reactions to the inclusive movement are varied and often polarizing (Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002). Many disagreements about the merits of inclusion hinge on the lack of empirical evidence (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002). However, there is a growing body of research regarding the academic achievement and social outcomes of students with disabilities that participate in the general classroom educational environment. For example, in a study of 11,000 students in the United States, Blackorby, Wagner, Cameto, Davies, Levine and Newman (2005) found that students with disabilities who spend more time in regular classrooms had higher scores on achievement tests, were absent less, and performed closer to grade level than their peers who were withdrawn for instruction. Overall, students with disabilities performed less well on achievement tests than those without disabilities. Yet, students with disabilities in inclusive settings outperformed their segregated peers with disabilities.

Inclusion is an issue that educators will face now and in the future. Most teachers will teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom at some point in time (CEC, 2007). A factor that impacts implementation of inclusion that is germane to this study is teachers' beliefs about inclusion. Research suggests that the attitude of teachers is a critical factor in the effectiveness of inclusive environments (e.g. Antonak, 1980; Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Scheer, 1999). Furthermore, attitudinal beliefs may be a strong influence on teachers' behaviors, affecting the way teachers interact with their students in an inclusive environment (Antonak & Livneh, 1988).

While teachers' beliefs are complex and vary from one specific situation to another, teachers may also hold generalized system of beliefs. The beliefs system contains assumptions or principles about the nature of disability and about their roles in working with students with disabilities. The medical-social model continuum is one binary for describing teacher beliefs about disability. One end of the belief system is defined by assumptions that the disability is a structural, organic or neurological condition, which is internal to the student. For this study, this end of the continuum is termed "medical model" beliefs. Teachers who hold the medical model perspective tend to believe that the disability condition is a pathological attribute of the learner, can be reliably named and identified by traditional standardized assessment instruments. The medical model perspective reflects a traditional set of beliefs that have been variously termed medical, deficit or pathology-based (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999).

On the other end of the continuum is the social model set of beliefs. These are characterized by the understanding that the teacher is responsible for all students and that all students can profit from learning and instructional opportunities, irrespective of their individual differences. Learning difficulties are understood to be amenable to instructional accommodations for which the teacher is responsible. This view of disability is termed the social perspective (Finkelstein, 1988; Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999; Oliver, 1996).

For this study, the opposing beliefs systems of social model and medical model will be investigated in terms of doxa. The medical model represents the orthodoxy; the incumbent force that is preserved by some agents in the field. On the other hand, the social model represents the heterodoxy or the new paradigm that challenges the current practices

of delivering special education services. While some educators will endeavor to maintain the status quo, other educators struggle to transform existing hierarchies and practices. The messiness of a changing paradigm can be best described for the purposes of this article, in the theoretical constructs of Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990).

## **Research Questions**

Educational research is the systematic inquiry into a research question of interest. What generally differentiates educational research from other types of rigorous inquiry is, most typically, the problem on which the work is centered. Although the field of education is broad, leaving much room for rigorous analysis of a wide variety of questions under one umbrella, ultimately all such studies carry with them an assumption of benefiting education. This study will be the systematic inquiry into the following three research questions:

1. Does the Medical-Social Model continuum of beliefs about disability apply to the general education teachers?
2. To what extent are Bourdieu's concepts related to the social-medical model continuum?
3. How does exclusion persist in special education without conscious recognition or public resistance?

Ultimately, the inquiry driven by the above listed research questions will yield useful information for analysis. Specifically, the analysis will have implications for guiding the development of effective inclusive practices, such as influencing teachers' beliefs about the nature of ability and disability, and their roles and responsibilities in teaching students with diverse needs.



## **Assumptions**

Clearly, the approach to this study was influenced by the researcher's experiences as a school psychologist and special education administrator. The researcher defines himself as both part of the problem and part of the solution. The researcher strongly believed that these personal experiences with school psychology and special education leadership helped the researcher in understand the experiences articulated by the participants in this study. The researcher also assumed that the teachers in the study are capable of articulating their experiences as instructional agents and that they will respond objectively and accurately.

## **Benefits of Study**

Special education is not beyond criticism. The United States has a history of poor outcomes for students with disabilities. Finding ways to improve outcomes for students with disabilities has been identified as a priority of the State of North Carolina. The intent of this research is to explore and document effective teacher practices that can be used to support teachers that are striving to achieve better outcomes for students with disabilities in their own schools.

## **Definition of Terms**

An operational definition based on the literature in the field is provided for key terms used throughout this research investigation. The purpose is to clarify terms and provide readers with a reference that removes any ambiguity.

Attitudes refer to an individual's prevailing frame of mind or spirit. Therefore, the term covers physical, emotional, and intellectual components that may affect a person's opinions, beliefs, and actions (Webster, 1987). In the context of the current study, attitudes

about inclusion referred to the participant's perspectives, opinions, beliefs, and actions about the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

Compliance Model of accountability in special education is intended to solve the problem that is inherent in policy implementations which rely upon delegation of authority. The compliance model can also serve to provide protection against litigation because the process provides less ambiguity and may tolerate less variety.

Cultural capital, developed by Bourdieu as a partial explanation for the less tangible or less immediately visible inequalities, is related to the class-based socialization of culturally relevant skills, abilities, tastes, preferences, or norms that act as a form of currency in the social realm (Bourdieu, 1970; Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, 1990).

Distinction refers to one's ability to move both within, and outside of, a certain field (e.g. public education) to broaden one's possibilities to achieve needed resources to reach certain goals. Clusters of individuals in social space each develop cultural peculiarities which mark them out from one another.

Doxa refers to the fundamental deep founded unthought beliefs that agents take as self-evident. For Bourdieu (1990), "agents never know completely what they are doing and that what they do has more sense than they know" (pp. 68–69). Routinization of beliefs and dispositions yields (and builds upon) doxa.

Field is the contextual environment in which people exist and go about the business of their daily lives, the complexity of which is magnified by the interaction of social structures such as institutions, rules, and practices. The field determines the properties, internalized as dispositions and objectified as economic or cultural goods, that are valid,

active, or pertinent in a given social setting (Bourdieu, 1970; Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu, 1990). A field is not universal; many fields exist. A field is class based and often takes the objectifiable form of a school or a family. It is only within a particular field that cultural capital holds value, produces an effect, or even exists. Consistent with the perpetual discord between classes or statuses in conflict theories, a field is a “space of conflict or competition” (Horvat, 2001, p. 207), the space where people compete for which practices are valued over others.

Habitus is the cumulative collection of dispositions, norms, and tastes that “functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions” (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 82–83). Habitus becomes a generative practice, the meaning that is given to one’s perceptions. It is the capacity to produce classifiable practices and the capacity to differentiate and appreciate practices and products. Important to the notion of habitus is that it ultimately functions below the level of consciousness and language. The socialization toward a particular habitus begins in early childhood (Swartz, 1997) but continues well into adulthood as individuals internalize, perhaps without explicit consciousness of having done so, the “rules” that govern the field of interaction and their place in it.

Inclusion is not defined by the federal government; however, federal law does mandate in the least restrictive environment requirement that students with disabilities be educated in the setting closest to that of typically developing peers to the maximum extent appropriate (IDEA, 2004). The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the largest international professional organization dedicated to improving the educational success of individuals with disabilities defines inclusion as: “a term used to describe the ideology that each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, should be educated in the school and classroom he or she

would otherwise attend. It involves bringing support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students)” (CEC, 2007).

Marginalized describes the phenomenon whereby the preferences, strengths, and needs of some groups, based on demographic characteristics such as disability, race/ethnicity, socioeconomics, and so forth, are deemphasized or ignored by members of the dominant group.

Medical Model focuses on the impairment rather than the needs of the person. The assumption is that there is something wrong with the child and that whatever is wrong with the child can be identified and labelled.

Social Model of disability views the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating in any situation as what disables them. The “social model” arises from defining impairment and disability as very different things. “The social model” holds the view that disabled people and the discrimination against them are socially created (Rieser, 2006).

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

One area that this current study spends some time discussing will be the political culture at the federal level. The scope of this study is delimited to the federal laws germane to students with disabilities and some discussion as to the mechanism of compliance for ensuring federal laws are translated to local practices. The study does not purport to be a study of state-level education policy systems or deeply study the role of political cultures and prevailing public values in policy making. Also, a number of interesting research questions that could have been asked but were not pursued, such as cultural capital theory with other postulations besides the students with disabilities. Another clarification is that the

study focuses on the general education teacher as institutional agents; therefore, questions about how public schools are affected by different policy choices on the district or state level are beyond the scope of the research. For example, an interesting research question could look more globally at how differential policy choices evidence themselves in different educational outcomes among public school students. These questions were not pursued in this particular study because (a) the focus of the inquiry will be on the field of struggle at the teacher level rather than policy systems work and (b) the inclusion of these questions, while interesting, would have been beyond the reach of the researcher, given limited time and money for conducting the study.

The study investigates Bourdieu's concepts, including habitus. However, all of habitus is not conscious but is unconscious. This research relies on data derived from interviews with teachers. However, not all of habitus can be expressed verbally so that is a limitation. Consequently, empirical analysis will rely on the investigation of the semiotic forces and effects among actors as a proxy for habitus.

A limitation of the study is the positionality of the researcher. The researcher is pursuing a line of inquiry related to special education programs, but is also the administrator of special education programs. This brings up limitations of the study related to respondent bias and induced bias. Respondent bias refers to the possibility that respondents might respond to interview in a manner to impress the interviewer. Induced bias refers to personal prejudices of researcher, who is both the designer of the study and the data collector, which may tend to induce bias (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Therefore, positionality will be discussed in the methods section and reflexivity will be practiced in data analysis.

An obvious limitation would relate to the ability to draw descriptive or inferential conclusions from sample data about a larger group. A further limitation of this study is that it was conducted in one small, suburban, school district. This study will be based on data from one grade level of teachers from one school district. If the study included a finding that differences in general education teachers' beliefs and practices for students with disabilities were strongly related to outcomes for students with disabilities, it might be legitimate for the researcher to speculate that similar findings would accrue from a study of other marginalized groups in other school systems, but such an inference would be purely speculative. Replication of this study in a variety of current settings, at different grade levels, and with students in other disability categories would be useful. Results of such studies could help determine the broader impact of inclusion, disability and cultural capital across a wide spectrum of student and program characteristics.

## CHAPTER II

### Literature Review

Students with disabilities that had previously been served in special education are increasingly being served in general education classrooms (USDOE, 2007). However, teachers, both in general and special education, report feeling unprepared for inclusive environments (Cook, 2001). Furthermore, teacher attitudes are a critical factor in the success of inclusive educational programs (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). This chapter will provide the theoretical framework that grounded the current study, provide relevant background information about the topic of inclusion and accompanying teacher attitudes, and report on a systematic review of the literature about the attitudes teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. This paper intends to employ Bourdieu's concept of capital to help understand how teacher beliefs about the nature of disability. The use of Bourdieu's full theoretical structure in qualitative research implies that the research, located in the micro-level interpretations of everyday lived experiences, should be linked to the larger social structure in which it occurs. Carspecken (1996) maintains that this criterion is not only possible but vital to making qualitative research explanatory of oppressive forces. To do so means contemplating current and historical inequalities in the larger social structure and the way that these inequalities might influence participants' experiences. Therefore, prior to investigating teacher dynamics in the classroom, the larger context of an increasingly centralized, hierarchical U.S. public education system needs to be described.

## **Broader Field of Power**

First, service delivery methods for students with disabilities must be understood in the context of two very powerful federal laws: The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001). During the past decade, accountability has loomed large in reform initiatives as numerous state and local government agencies have implemented mechanisms that hold schools accountable for student performance. At the core of these initiatives is an attempt to fundamentally change authority patterns in schools to motivate teachers to more effectively educate students in U.S. public schools.

Second, this section will describe a relatively popular causal model, the compliance model, to explain how a state or local government agency can induce an agent (in this case, teachers and schools) to change behavior if they mobilize incentives or sanctions that matter to that agent. However, even if these are the causal mechanisms at play, it is not clear what happens once a school district manages to get a school's attention via the mobilization of rewards and sanctions. The manner in which such policy levers work on and in schools remains something of a black box.

### **The Individual with Disabilities Education Act.**

Reauthorizations of IDEA have evolved through a variety of dynamics that are rooted within political, cultural and social contexts. The history of special education is a dynamic process that has not followed an orderly and progressive pathway. The landmark federal legislation, also known as Public Law 94-142, evolved from the need to overhaul how children with disabilities were educated in the United States. Unfortunately, the statute's



vague language left many of its terms open to various interpretations, thus inviting litigation. Therefore, change in the procedures for the implementation of IDEA has occurred in concert with court decisions (Armstrong, 2002). Since 1975, the courts have walked a thin line between supporting anti-discrimination rights of children while avoiding an invitation to prescribe educational policy for schools (Armstrong, 2002). In general, the courts have generally placed the burden on schools to justify the segregation of the students with disabilities from regular classrooms. School personnel must provide documentation of efforts to accommodate the child with special needs in a classroom setting with non-disabled peers prior to removing a child to a more restrictive learning environment. In the current litigious society and hyper-legalized world of special education, each child holds a legally enforceable right to a free and appropriate public education.

The Education of All Handicapped Children Act changed its name to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act then to Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and has been reauthorized seven times, most recently in 2004 (IDEA, 2004). According to Turnbull (2005), IDEA legislation engineers society and shapes behavior in three basic ways. First, IDEA is an educational reform law, because it serves a redistributive function authorizing the expenditure of federal funds for students with disabilities. Secondly, IDEA is a civil rights law, because it grants rights to student and their parents. Language from IDEA parrots the 14th amendment by ensuring equal opportunity (equal protection) for students with disabilities to full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency. Thirdly, IDEA could be considered a welfare reform law by extending the basic message of personal responsibility that was the core of welfare reform. IDEA mandates that

all disabled students be provided a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) regardless of the school district's ability to pay for those services. IDEA provisions require that students with disabilities develop mentally, physically, emotionally, and vocationally through the provision of an appropriate individualized education in the least restrictive environment. Each disabled child must have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that details the range of services to be provided and where a student's education is to take place. LRE mandates that the student be served with non-disabled peers to the maximal extent appropriate. The law also mandates that the school system establish procedures for ensuring that parents are involved in the development of each IEP, and that they have opportunities to challenge a district's decision about the range of services it will provide (due process).

The program that implements the legal mandates of IDEA is often referred to as special education. Program implementation is driven by what is written on each child's IEP. An IEP is a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, at least annually, by a team of professionals knowledgeable about the student and the parent. The plan describes the strengths of the child and the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child, and when, where, and how often services will be provided. The IEP is required by IDEA for all students who meet guidelines of IDEA eligibility and must include specific information about how the student will be served and what goals he or she should be meeting.

Student enrollment in special education has almost doubled from 3.6 million students in 1976-1977 to 6.7 million in 2006-2007 (NCES, 2008). Over the same time period, the total student population has increased by only 4.4% (NCES, 2008). Schools continue to

struggle to meet the needs of youth with disabilities who are also youth of color, from low socioeconomic backgrounds, and/or from immigrant families who are dominant in languages other than English. While 62.5% of European American students with disabilities (across all 13 disability categories included in the IDEA) graduate with high school diplomas, the same is true for only 49.2% of Latinos and 39.2% of African Americans (USDOE, 2002). The story behind the increased enrollment statistics is open to interpretation, but Freedman, Bisbicos, Jentz, and Orenstein, (2005) posited three potential reasons. First, millions of children with disabilities were not in school in 1976, so their addition to the rolls has made a big impact. Second, special education enrollment may have risen due to the ability of professionals to identify reasons that students struggle and to find ways to get extra help for children. A third explanation is the strides in medicine that have sustained life for underweight babies as well as victims of tragic accidents or chronic illnesses.

### **No Child Left Behind Act.**

When NCLB was signed into law in 2002, it ushered in some of the most sweeping changes the American educational system had seen in decades. New requirements introduced in NCLB were intended to raise the achievement of all students, particularly those with the lowest achievement levels. Prior to NCLB, students with disabilities were not included in academic accountability systems. NCLB required every state to implement annual assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in grades 10-12. Science assessments were required beginning in 2008. The assessments were aligned with the rigorous state academic content standards and academic achievement standards set by each state. The requirement that all students, including those

with disabilities, participate in the accountability system is a key part of NCLB. An assumption of the NCLB was that if schools are required schools to include all students in the accountability assessments, then the performance and progress of all students would be of equal importance. Too often in the past, students with disabilities were excluded from assessments and accountability systems, and the consequence was that they did not receive the academic attention and resources they deserved. Now, results of this testing must be reported for the overall school and must also be disaggregated, or broken out, by specific groups of students that historically underachieve. Examples of subgroups are students from ethnic minorities groups, students with disabilities, students who are economically disadvantaged, and students for whom English is a second language. A student's performance data are included in every applicable subgroup. The performance of subgroups is only reported if the number of students in the subgroup meets or exceeds the minimum set by the state. The minimum size of each subgroup varies greatly among states. However, with the addition of the disaggregated data requirement of the NCLB, students with disabilities appear to be doing better academically and also appear to be graduating with diplomas and certificates higher than in prior years (Swail & Brand, 2008).

**The compliance model.**

Hatch (2006) noted that early modernist organization theorists believed “bureaucratic rationalization would promote technical efficiency” (p. 31). Max Weber described a bureaucracy as a network of “rational-legal domination,” a hierarchically structured organization in which the power comes from the top-down, is linear, and compliance is expected. This power is applied along lower regions by various personnel acting in accordance with clearly defined laws, stringent codes of conduct, and strictly controlled

regiments of procedures and sequence. Therefore, within the hierarchical power scheme of a bureaucratic organization, consensus is not agreement but a moment of leveraged compliance (Danforth & Rhodes, 1997).

The compliance view of accountability is deeply entrenched in the history, theory, and practice of government involvement in special education in the United States despite recent efforts to “reinvent” special education by focusing more on educational results (Wolf & Hassel, 2005). Schools and districts must follow laws and regulations designed to support the rights of students to access the educational environment. Special education has been focused on compliance with a multitude of state and federal laws and regulations. In terms of compliance, effectiveness tends to be defined in terms of whether or not procedural regulations were satisfied, the proper steps taken, and the right paperwork processed correctly and on time.

The compliance model of accountability in special education is intended to solve the problem that is inherent in policy implementations that rely upon delegation of authority. Specifically, policies are made by lawmakers that are far away from the classrooms where their policies are implemented. Therefore, the formulators of the policy must depend on overseers of policy implementation. The formulators and overseers of policy must delegate the task of actually implementing the policy to subordinates. Obviously, some delegates may follow the policy in a manner that is less divergent from the goals of the policy’s intention. However, the issue of compliance is required to avoid situations where delegates “subvert” the policy goals in order to further their own purposes or “shirk” responsibility. To solve this problem, the designers and overseers of policy need to operate an accountability system that will mitigate the supposed tendency of subordinates to shirk,

subvert, and steal (Wolf & Hassel, 2005). The compliance model essentially deals with an accountability problem. Because the operators who actually deliver services to people might not do so in the “proper” way if left to their own devices, a system is designed to compel their proper behavior or force them to account for improper behavior.

Unfortunately, the accountability provided by the compliance model is not without its costs. The level of paperwork associated with special education has increased significantly with each re-authorization of IDEA. One of the most frequently reported barriers to quality teaching was the oppressive amount of paperwork necessitated by federal and state regulations (Chambers, 2008). Some indications of the adverse conditions that educators face were recently reported by the Council for Exceptional Children in its report *Bright Futures for Exceptional Learners: An Agenda to Achieve Quality Conditions for Teaching and Learning* (Kozleski, Mainzer, & Deshler, 2000). While special educators applaud the important role of IEPs, they struggle with the amount of clerical work the process requires. The average length of the typical IEP is between 8-16 pages, with an estimated 4 hours of pre-meeting planning time going into each IEP conference. The majority of special educators report spending one day or more per week on paperwork, and 83% report spending one half to one and a half days per week on IEP-related meetings. IEPs, however, are just the beginning of paperwork responsibilities for educators. Many teachers reported that they are expected to do considerably more record keeping today to keep the school system out of a lawsuit (Chambers, 2008).

Also, critics suggest the compliance with federal mandates may be superficial. For example, practitioners may follow the letter of the law through symbols and ceremonies (IEPs, IEP staffing, mantras such as “access to the general curriculum”) that are largely

decoupled from the meaningful practice (Skrtic, 2005). Unfortunately, experienced and novice special education teachers alike are not prepared and, hence, frustrated, by the competing and increased technical and political demands in implementing federal policy mandates (Marshall & Patterson, 2002; Skrtic, 1995).

In some cases, special education professionals seem to spend as much time on paperwork as delivering services to students. Excessive paperwork has actually been cited by some teachers as their primary reason for leaving the special education teaching profession (Chambers, 2008). Administrators must complete a copious amount of paperwork in order to justify their operations and be reimbursed by the state for their services. Many administrators will commiserate with a director who says (Wolf & Hassel, 2005):

The amount of paper we generate for accountability purposes to the county and state is enormous...But I don't know if it's effective because I have no idea...what they are using it for, you know what I mean? ... I present them with a [budget] packet that is an inch thick every year...I don't know...who does what to it all. And I always wonder, 'is it being used?' (p. 61)

With each reauthorization, IDEA continues to evolve in complexity, causing stakeholders to grow ever more entrenched in paperwork and regulations. In 2004, Congress reauthorized the IDEA and promised paperwork reduction. In doing so, however, it promulgated seven new required documents in addition to the existing 814 state and local federal monitoring requirements already in place (Freedman, Bisbicos, Jentz, & Orenstein, 2005).

Critics contest that IDEA has evolved into the most prescriptive law by telling teachers, parents and administrators what to do and triggering adversarial relationships and a lack of trust among stakeholders. These conditions entrap policy implementers while confusing and angering parents (Wolf & Hassel, 2005). Reportedly, IDEA is now the fourth

most litigated federal statute (Freeman, Bisbicos, Jentz & Orebnstein, 2005). The compliance model can also serve to provide protection against litigation because the process provides less ambiguity and may tolerate less variety. Specifically, civil rights tend to be defined in terms of procedures that included language such as "equal access," "due process," "appropriate education" and "least restrictive environment." Therefore, special education policy implementers may seek procedural safeguards of the compliance model as protection against legal claims of impropriety. Because disputes over the operational definitions of these ambiguous terms tend to be settled by courts, or the threat of going to court, implementers seek legal protection by engaging in compliance model process regulation (Armstrong, 2002).

According to the compliance model, effectiveness is largely defined in terms of the prescribed expenditures of resources and the execution of correct processes and activities that are mandated by special education laws and regulations. Major assumptions of the compliance model are as follows (Wolf & Hassel, 2005):

- The operation of the special education "process" implies actual "progress" for special-needs students.
- Regulations and documentation of compliance with regulations ensure that public funds and programs are not being misused.
- Documents provide an accurate public record of what is being accomplished regarding the education of students with special needs.
- The compliance model does not prescribe a pedagogical approach or specific technology.



Without consensus between freely choosing parties, the compliance model reflects the bureaucratic system's requirements that students be defined and processed within a power network of procedures and formulae.

Despite legal mandates to minimize the impact of segregation and marginalization, some predict the laws may have the opposite effect. As Lucas (2001) argues, when access to a given level of education becomes universal, as has occurred with high school in the United States, the socioeconomically advantaged switch their focus from securing quantitative advantages (e.g. completing high school versus not) to seeking out qualitative advantages within that level of education. As access to more years of education continues to widen, students' possession of high-status cultural capital could well assert itself as an important tool for the maintenance of socioeconomic inequality in high schools, with subtle differences in cultural experiences between students becoming increasingly consequential markers of distinction.

For Bourdieu, analysis of the state and federal mandates would not be sufficient to understand that dynamics of power at the school level. Bourdieu does not see the state (or economy or social classes) as directly determining the school's role in the transmission of social inequalities. Schools are neither neutral nor merely reflective of the broader set of power relations, but play a complex, indirect, mediating role in maintaining and enhancing them (Swartz, 1997). The remainder of the study will investigate Bourdieu's notion of schools as part of the system of reproduction that "cannot easily serve egalitarian functions" (Bourdieu, 1990). In the U.S., the predominant ideology is that schools are the ladder to success and that school is the great equalizer. However, despite legal mandates, egalitarian goals seem elusive. For Bourdieu, the real success of educational institutions, although often

implicit, is in how many students the system sorts out with the effect of establishing and maintaining “distinctions as cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 163). In Bourdieu’s framework, the real success of educational institutions from the perspective of the dominant groups is in how many students the system filters away from it (Swartz, 1997). Therefore, there remains a place in educational research for examining extent that cultural capital impacts daily activities. Indeed, as educational access has expanded to larger numbers of students, the struggles within the field may play an increasingly prominent role for sorting students.

### **Schools as a Field of Struggle**

A field is an arena of struggle, the site of more or less openly declared struggle for power and influence between dominant and dominated who are unequally endowed with in the objects and weapons of struggle: capital. Relating the concept of field to the notion of conflict between classes, Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) note, “A field is simultaneously a space of conflict and competition . . . in which participants vie to establish monopoly over the . . . effective capital within it” (p. 17). It is through the theorizing of field and the conflict inherent in it that Bourdieu underscores the fact that cultural capital is a social relationship. Those cultural dispositions, skills, abilities, norms, or preferences that are considered “cultivated” (high-status socioeconomically) in a particular social setting are valid only in relation to a particular field.

School districts must operate within the context of the macro-level power dynamics of the broader field of power. The previous section discussed some macro-power dynamics including the federal laws and the compliance model. The next section will transition to the identification of two conflicting struggles within the field: the sorting mechanism and the

inclusion model. First, the sorting mechanism will be discussed as a force that influences teachers to sort difficult to teach students out of their classrooms. Second, the influence of the inclusion model will be discussed as an approach to include students in the general education environment. Both influences will be analyzed through the theory of cultural reproduction systems. In this context, the assumption is that schools facilitate the acquisition of cultural capital. The issue is the extent that the capital is distributed equitably across student populations. For Bourdieu, education does facilitate the acquisition of some cultural capital, but those students who are able to acquire the forms of cultural capital valued by the dominant groups will be more highly rewarded while students who are not able to acquire the valued capital will be marginalized (Bourdieu, 1990). Educational institutions then reward those students who are already equipped with the cultural and social capital (through their social origin) that the system presupposes and legitimates through the process of making it appear that the reproduction of social hierarchies is based on gifts, merits, or skills (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977).

**“Huge classificatory machine.”**

The application of how cultural capital operated in the field of public schools provided a better understanding of how sorting helps to maintain educational advantages for some students while, conversely, marginalizing others. For Bourdieu, the perpetuation and rewarding of cultural capital in educational institutions may occur unwittingly to students, teachers, and parents. In the preface to the 1990 printing of *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1970), Bourdieu concluded that the study

sought to propose a model of the social mediations and processes [that] tend, behind the backs of the agents engaged in the school system—teachers, students and their parents—and often *against their will*, to ensure the

transmission of cultural capital across generations and to stamp preexisting differences in inherited cultural capital with a meritocratic seal of academic consecration by virtue of the special symbolic potency of the *title* (credential) (pp. ix–x).

In this way, the school imposes seemingly “legitimate exclusions and inclusions [that] form the basis of the social order” (p. x). Thus, this “huge classificatory machine,” as Bourdieu called it, may work despite or amid the best intentions of those in it. Scholars have argued that contemporary mainstream educational systems closely reflect the knowledge, values and interests and cultural orientations of White, middle-class cultural groups (Delpit, 1995; King, 2005). Education that fails to teach the codes and rules necessary for successful cultural contexts does not connect knowledge produced in schools to students’ lived experiences or ignores the fundamental role of culture in knowledge production (Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Alternatively, non-mainstream epistemologies, paradigms, discourses and research orientations have been systemically devalued or silenced (Delpit, 1995).

The sorting mechanism follows a positivist line of argument: (a) teachers are motivated to limit the variance among students in their classroom by grouping like students with like skills in separate settings (b) student attributes are used as criteria for sorting in to groups; (c) Special education is a beneficial place to separate the lowest performing students away from the higher performing students. The labeling and categorization practices in special education have been deeply rooted within the need to view reality as objective and subject to universal scientific laws (Skrtic, 1995). Within this paradigm, is the belief that something is wrong with the student which requires “fixing.” In other words, the concept of disability within this paradigm becomes reified, or made into a thing that the student has,

therefore requiring remediation by specially trained teachers or other experts (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999). When a student is deviated from the dominant group, there is incentive to track and marginalize the student away from the mainstream. Unfortunately, the number of students that are sorted away from the “regular education” norm group is increasing (CSEF, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Zhang & Katsiyannis, 2002). Programs such as special education, Title 1, English as second language (ESL) are intended to be of educational value; however, the act of separateness, which results in oppression, may subtract more socially and emotionally than may add academically (Frattura & Topinka, 2006). Such programs use the label to determine placement in classrooms with other students of like deficits for part or all of the day.

The complex array of factors that contribute to the sorting mechanism were highlighted in a qualitative case study involving interviews with teachers, principals, school psychologists, and administrators regarding their perspectives on special education and culture (Skiba, Simmons, Ritter, Kohler, Henderson, & Wu, 2006). Teachers reported feeling highly challenged to meet the needs of students with disabilities also reported that they were given insufficient resources to meet those needs. Perceiving special education as the only resource available for helping students who are not succeeding, classroom teachers were quite willing to err in the direction of over-referral if it meant access to more resources for their neediest students.

### **Inclusion.**

Historically, educational access has been a battle for many groups of students. Female youth gained access to education during the 1920s, students of color gained access during the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s, and children with disabilities gained

access in the 1970s (Kavale & Forness, 2000). However, such access often resulted in practices of separateness as illustrated in the *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954 that determined that separate was not equal for children of color. In response to the *Brown* decision, advocacy groups in the field of special education eventually extended its stance against segregation into the field of special education. In fact, Dunn (1968) suggested that segregation was not effective and therefore fewer “special” classrooms (i.e. self-contained classrooms) were called for. The Dunn article became a driving force as educators began studying classroom placement and educational programming for students with disabilities (McLeskey, 2004). Other forces such as the Regular Education Initiative by the secretary of education (Will, 1986), drove educators to consider educational access for children with disabilities beyond the segregated classroom, and into general education environments. First called mainstreaming, and later redefined as inclusion, advocates believed that inclusion was an ethical and moral imperative (Kavale, 2002). For example, Baglieri and Knopf (2004) explained that inclusive education is a right and not something students must earn. In addition, one of the roles of education is to prepare students for the world in which they live. Current society is increasingly diverse and students must be prepared to embrace such differences as “different” becomes more and more “normal” (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004).

Then, in the 1980s, as a result of reform movements, mainstreaming evolved into inclusionary practices (Ainscow, 2007). From these practices stemmed such terms as inclusion, full inclusion and the regular education initiative. Inclusion extends beyond service delivery and location, to a notion that is embedded in the philosophy that all children belong and can learn in the mainstream of school and community life. Inclusion is defined

in a variety of ways (Ainscow, 2007) as are the other terms often referred to in discussions about special education. The following terms are generally referred to and clarified in the literature (Ainscow, 2007): mainstreaming, inclusion, full inclusion, and regular education initiative. Mainstreaming, unlike inclusion, does not allow special education services to be fully provided in the arena of the general/regular education classroom (Ainscow, 2007).

There tends to be a subtle distinction made between inclusion and full inclusion whereby inclusion denotes that a student does not have to spend every moment of his/her school day in the regular education classroom. However, to the maximal extent possible, there is a commitment to educating the student in the classroom he/she would otherwise attend if not disabled (Ainscow, 2007). While full inclusion, on the other hand, connotes that every child can and should be educated in the same educational settings and classes (Ainscow, 2007). The premise of full inclusion is that there exist the necessary supports and practices to enable the student with special needs to attend the classroom in his/her neighborhood school (Ainscow, 2007). It is important to note that IDEA does not mandate that all students with disabilities be included for all of their school day. It instead requires that they be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.

Although inclusive education began in the 1970s and 1980s, it continues to face changing circumstances today. More and more children with special needs are served in general education classrooms for the majority of their instructional day (USDOE, 2007).

In the Twenty-Seventh Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (USDOE, 2007), states reported that over half of all children with disabilities receive education in the general education environment for at least 51% of the school day. The Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education (SPeNSE)

(Office of Special Education Programs, 2001) report indicated that 96% of general education teachers report that they have taught or are currently teaching students with disabilities. Yet, general and special education training, settings, and instructional strategies have traditionally been kept separate, particularly in teacher preparation programs (Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey, & Simon, 2005). Results from the SPeNSE report (Office of Special Education Programs, 2001) also indicate that: (a) fewer than one-third of teachers who had been teaching six years or less had received training in their teacher preparation program related to collaborating with special educations, (b) less than half had received any training in adapting instruction, and (c) one third did not receive any training in managing behavior.

Inclusion is an issue that educators will face now and in the future. Most teachers will teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom at some point in time (CEC, 2007). However, enhanced training and preparation may improve attitudes and increase the likelihood of successful outcomes for students in inclusive settings. Research suggests that the attitude of teachers is a critical factor in the effectiveness of inclusive environments (e.g. Antonak, 1980; Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, & Scheer, 1999). Furthermore, attitudinal beliefs may be a strong influence on teachers' behaviors, affecting the way teachers interact with their students in an inclusive environment (Antonak & Livneh, 1988).

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) conducted a research synthesis of 28 surveys between 1958 and 1995 that included over 10,000 teachers. In their synthesis, the authors found that teacher attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom were generally favorable. However, their synthesis suggested that attitudes varied



“due mostly to the *degree of intensity* of mainstreaming, and the *severity* level of students with disabilities who are mainstreamed” (p. 62). Across the surveys, teachers generally supported the idea of inclusion; however the practical realities of instructing students with emotional or behavioral disorders, or severe sensory or intellectual disabilities challenged their views and drew more reluctance to include students with these types of disabilities in the general education classroom. The pressures of time and accountability may contribute to the finding that more special education teachers were more supportive of the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom than general educators (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

Attitudes of practicing teachers have been found to predict or correlate with their classroom practices. Buell et al (1999) reported that teachers who had more positive attitudes about inclusion also believed they could improve their students’ educational outcomes. In addition, teachers with positive views of inclusion made more adaptations to classroom materials and procedures. Bender, Vial, and Scott (1995) found similar results with the practicing teachers they studied. Those teachers with negative attitudes about inclusion reported less use of research-based instructional strategies for students with disabilities. Furthermore, practicing teachers overwhelmingly believe their training was inadequate for the inclusive classroom (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Interestingly, both special and general educators who participated in the studies synthesized by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) reported insufficient preparation. However, teachers did feel that if they had additional preparation, they would better be able to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Teachers felt coursework in their teacher

education programs would help increase their awareness, skills, and knowledge for working with students with disabilities.

Johnson (2000) found that training in about inclusion that focused on beliefs and attitudes, and the creation of a specific action plan led to increased outcomes for students with special needs. Furthermore, when teachers participated in ongoing professional development about inclusion, they were more willing to teach children with disabilities in the general education classroom, and they were more willing to participate in collaboration between general and special education professionals (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002).

McLeskey and Waldron (2002) suggested that training in instructional strategies to improve the skills of teachers, and providing specific training in the benefits of inclusion was needed in order to promote positive teacher attitudes. According to the SPeNSE (Office of Special Education Programs, 2001) report for example, 99% of practicing teachers who participated in professional development hours related to working with special educators felt successful after the training.

Teacher education programs have historically been departmentalized, creating two separate preparation tracks; one system for general educator preparation and another system for special education (Jobling & Moni, 2004). More recently, education professionals are advocating for more collaborative programs hoping that the needs of diverse populations such as students with disabilities would be addressed in general education as well as special education (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). Indeed, if educators are unprepared for the complex context of today's diverse classrooms, negative attitudes will likely follow (Jobling & Moni, 2004).

Research suggests that negative attitudes acquired early in one's career are difficult to change when subsequent experiences are filtered through a negative bias (Murphy, 1996). Thus, if teachers leave their teacher education programs with negative attitudes about the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, they will be resistant to change in the future and less likely to promote positive outcomes for students with disabilities in inclusive environments (Murphy, 1996).

### **Teachers as Actors in the Field of Study**

Bourdieu's cultural capital theory explicitly acknowledges complexities resulting from the interaction of individuals and societies, rather than focusing on the individual as an autonomous actor in a decontextualized environment (Harker, 1990). As more students with disabilities are included in general education classrooms, educators need to look critically at how new models of special education service delivery impact outcomes for students with disabilities. Most students with disabilities enter school undiagnosed and are referred by regular education teachers for evaluations that may lead to special education identification and placement. Although physicians tend to identify most visible disabilities, the majority of children in special education are referred by their classroom teacher. The mechanism of sorting students away from general education and into special education must encompass not only special education itself, but also the teachers that act as institutional agents.

In considering how to help educational systems become more inclusive, the nature of teachers' beliefs and how beliefs relate to their consequent actions need to be understood (Gibbs, 2007). Many experts suggest that the success of inclusion depends on the knowledge, instructional skills, and especially attitudes and beliefs of educators and in particular, the attitudes and beliefs of general classroom teachers toward the inclusion of

students with disabilities (Bender, Vail & Scott, 1995; Cook, 2001; Jordan & Stanovich, 2003; Jordan & Stanovich, 2004; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Potentially, teacher beliefs have a major influence on shaping what teachers perceive, notice and therefore know, and this in turn affects what they draw from their experiences and how they teach (Bender, Vail & Scott, 1995; Cook, 2001; Jordan & Stanovich, 2003; Jordan & Stanovich, 2004). Further, teacher beliefs seem to be relatively stable, self-perpetuating and immune to evidence that is contradictory, which makes them problematic for those who seek to effect change through teacher preparation and training programs (Bender, Vail & Scott, 1995; Cook, 2001; Jordan & Stanovich, 2004).

**Doxa: Heterodoxy v. Orthodoxy.**

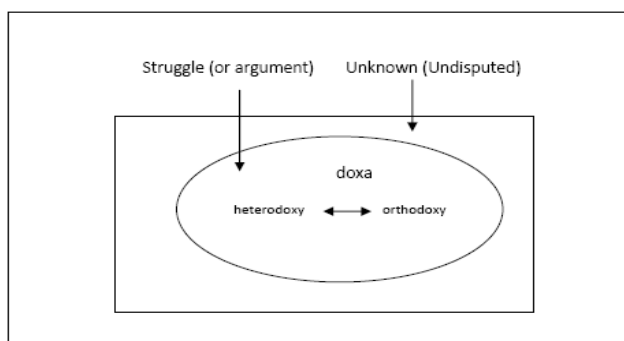
In a Bourdieusian framework, field analysis directs the researcher's attention to a level of analysis capable of revealing the integrating logic of competition between opposing viewpoints. It encourages the researcher to seek out sources of conflict in a given domain, relate that conflict to the area or power, and then identify the underlying shared assumptions by opposing parties (Swartz, 1997). For this study, the larger area of power was the special education program as directed by the federal laws related to students with disabilities. The level of analysis, for this paper, was the classroom teachers that serve the students with disabilities. Obviously, these teachers do not represent a tightly coupled heterogeneous group. The scope of this paper is to analyze their approaches to serving students with disabilities in their classrooms. Within that specific line of duties, teachers will have varying, likely contrasting, views of their duties and services.

Within a field, Bourdieu depicts a conflict between those who defend the "orthodoxy" and those who generate "heterodoxy." Comparable to Thomas Kuhn's concept

of “paradigm shift,” (1962), the two opposing strategies are dialectally related; one generates the other. The struggle is between “curators of culture” who reproduce and transmit legitimate bodies of knowledge and “creators of culture” who invent new forms of knowledge. Both the dominant establishment, orthodoxy, and the subordinate challengers, heterodoxy, share a tacit acceptance that the field of struggle is worth pursuing. Therefore, the actions of the actors is not separate from the field; rather, the field may impose the struggle on the actors. Bourdieu refers to this deep structure of fields as doxa, for it represents a tacit, fundamental agreement on the stakes of struggle between those advocating heterodoxy and those holding to orthodoxy (Swartz, 1997).

According to (Deer, 2008), doxa refers to pre-reflexive, shared but unquestioned opinions and perceptions mediated by the field. In Figure 2, doxa is represented by the area within the oval. Doxa is comprised of two dialectically related but opposing strategies called heterodoxy and orthodoxy. The figure helps depict the fact that these struggles are bounded. According to Swartz (1997), entry into the field requires tacit acceptance of the rules of the game in the field. Thus, participation in the professional field limits the struggle to forms and terms that are considered legitimate professional procedure.

Figure 2: Doxa



For this study, the heterodoxy is the incumbent practices of identifying and serving student with disabilities. Generally, the current standard procedures and accepted practices can be described as pursuant of the medical model. On the other hand, new approaches may be described as consistent with the social model. Both models will be described in the following section in order to address a key question emanating from Bourdieu's work.

The struggle within the field that stems from the doxa contributes to the selection mechanisms and cognitive classifications that can be used by individuals and groups to perpetuate their positions of power. Implicit in the two models is that cultural capital is typically measured and interpreted in the educational research literature from the dominant group's perspective, which, perhaps unwittingly, calibrates "normal" as the dominant, often the high-status, cultural capital. On the other hand, the "abnormal" (those who do not necessarily associate with high-status groups or high-status capital) becomes deficient, even if unwittingly on the part of those scholars identifying the dominant cultural capital. Schools adopt sorting and ranking mechanisms, often relying on powerful binaries to make distinctions between students, and apply the official taxonomies with quasi-legal authority (Swartz, 1997).

The medical-social model continuum is one such binary for describing teacher beliefs about disability. The medical model approach refers to the tendency to frame disability as an abnormality that should be diagnosed, then treated through specialized services provided by specially trained personnel. Special education programs is traditionally guided by medical model thinking. Everyday decision-making is surrounded by diagnosis, labeling, and treatment. Proponents of the social model of disability devise their arguments from social

constructionism and tend to depict special education as segregationist and discriminatory (Anasasiou & Kauffman, 2011).

### **The medical model.**

The medical model of disability typically relies on defining and identifying human characteristics; therefore, it must rely on binaries such as “normal” and “abnormal” for informing decisions. Inferred is a biological ideal of what is a “normal” body and mind that is then compared in relation to those characteristics associated with “abnormal.” According to Rieser (2006), the medical model of disability sees the disabled person as the problem. Students are to be adapted to fit into the world as it is. If this is not possible, then students with disabilities are segregated into specialized institutions or separate classrooms, where only their most basic needs are met. The emphasis is on dependence, backed up by the stereotypes of disability that call forth pity, fear and patronizing attitudes.

In the medical model, the focus is on the impairment rather than the needs of the person. As scientific knowledge increased and medical discourses took firmer hold, special education became entangled in the medical model. The power to help students seems to lie within the medical and associated professions, with their rational-technical discourse of cures, normalization and science. Often, lives of disabled people are handed over to the specialists (Rieser, 2006). Special education has expanded as a discipline with a proliferation of jargon, specialists and categories. Skrtic (1995) identifies the discourses in public education that led schools to embrace the medical model. First, early schools promoted administrative practices consistent with the scientific management approach. The precept of scientific management emphasized the increased rationality of the organization and, correspondingly, the location of pathology in the students. Special education emerged

as a process for maintaining order, particularly the social order, in the rational and efficient school operations. Educators were expected to have the specialized knowledge and professional acumen required to run an efficient organization. Therefore, if the system is inherently rational, then it follows that the failure in the system must be attributable to the one who failed (Skrtic, 1995):

From a structural perspective, the institutional practice of special education is an organizational artifact that emerged to protect the legitimacy of a non-adaptive bureaucratic structure faced with the changing value demands of a dynamic democratic environment...the instructional practice of special education and special needs program generally distort the anomaly of school failure ... reinforcing theories of organizational rationality and human pathology ( p. 216).

Organizational rationality and human pathology approaches has contributed to the growth of experts that identify the differences between individuals. The identification, categorization, and labeling have contributed to the emergence of sets of power relations based on the privileging of certain forms of knowledge above others (Frattura & Topinka, 2006).

“Others” (usually non-disabled professionals) assessments of students with disabilities are used to determine where the disabled go to school, level of support, type of education, where to live and work after school years are over (Rieser, 2006). The power embedded in professional knowledge and practices has been, and continues to be, the bedrock of special education. The processes and procedures found in the identification, categorization, labeling and treatment of students with disabilities are fraught with jargon and acronyms. The evaluation of eligibility for special education services (in the forms of psychological tests, medical assessment, Response-to-Intervention) remains the key technical knowledge of power, and at the same time, the coercive and arbiter of “truth” through which the naming, sorting, and placing of pupils takes place (Skrtic, 1995).



The evaluation process for eligibility into the special education program promotes a deficit model. Implicit in the deficit model is that it holds that children with school problems have discrete disorders that are internal to the child (Heshusius, 1989; Kovaleski, 1988). This practice was accurately portrayed by Kaplan and Kaplan (1985), who asserted that special education identification procedures ignore “the social context and...proceed to locate emotional disturbance...and learning problems *within* the child...the impact of environmental conditions, other people, and societal values remain in the background” (p. 323). These practices promote a blame-the-victim orientation that ascribes fault primarily to the child. The child is often victimized by referrals that frequently arrive with three distinct but unspoken assumptions (Prilleltensky, 1994):

(a) that there is something ‘wrong with the child,’ (b) that the psychologist can find whatever is wrong with the child, and (c) that the clinician can recommend either special education placement or treatment. Conspicuously absent from many referrals is the expectation to modify certain aspects of the child’s human or educational environment. Simply put, the referral reads: ‘change the child or place him or her elsewhere; don’t change us.’ (p. 152)

One of the potential dangers of the medical model is that cultural capital may come to be defined, increasingly, in terms of physical or internal attributes. This might mean that distinction, hierarchy and power reactions could deepened the prejudice, exclusion and oppression that disabled people have experienced throughout modernity. Medical model thinking about disabled people predominates in schools where special educational needs are thought of as resulting from the individual who is seen as different, faulty and needing to be assessed and made as normal as possible. Critics of the medical model argue that all children have the right to belong and be valued in their local school (Rieser, 2006). To overcome the powerlessness of children, educators should look at what is wrong with the

school rather than colluding with adults in applying labels and making children acquiesce (Braginsky & Braginsky, 1974; Prilleltensky, 1994; Skrtic, 1995).

### **The social model.**

On the other end of the continuum is the social model of disability. Finkelstein (1988) and Oliver (1996) are often credited with the formulation of the “social model of disability” as a challenge to the hegemony of the medical model. The social model of disability views the barriers that prevent disabled people from participating in any situation as what disables them. The social model arises from defining impairment and disability as very different things. The social model holds the view that disabled people and the discrimination against them are socially created (Rieser, 2006). Unlike medically based cures, which focus on the individual and their impairment, this is an achievable goal and to the benefit of everyone.

The social model suggests that disabled people's individual and collective disadvantage is due to a complex form of institutional discrimination as fundamental to society as sexism, racism or heterosexism. The social model values the subjective, experiential accounts of persons with disabilities and their families. Also, it refocuses inquiry toward the social processes, economic structures, and environmental obstacles that create and sustain disablement as a form of political oppression. From a social model perspective, inclusive democratic educators become more aware of the many political and social practices that sustain social division and devaluation. The tasks and strategies of inclusive education involve the active demystification of ossified conventions concerning identity, curricular access, instructional practices, and classroom geography (Rieser, 2006).

### **Comparing and contrasting the medical and social models.**

A premise of Bourdieu's sociology is that the human mind thinks in oppositions. His sociology tries to see both sides and give the relationship a sense or a context. A summary of the differences between the medical model and the social model are summarized in Table 3. Teachers with predominantly medical model beliefs tend to place the blame on the students themselves and/or on their families for inability to progress. Consequently these teachers spend little time and effort working with their included students with disabilities and those who are at risk of academic failure, compared to the rest of the students in their classes. They prefer delivery models that withdraw students from their classes, and their concepts of instructional accommodations feature homework to be completed by the student with parents, and curriculum delivered in a resource or segregated class setting (Jordan, Glenn, & McGhie-Richmond, 2010).

At the other end of the continuum, teachers with social model beliefs view disability as created in part by a society that is designed for the able, and that creates barriers for those who have disabilities. Such teachers see their responsibility as being to create access to learning, by reducing barriers to learning through accommodations that increase access and by working longer and at greater levels of intensity with their students with learning difficulties (Jordan & Stanovich, 2001; Jordan, Glenn, & McGhie-Richmond, 2010). It should be noted that beliefs are not dichotomous, but are represented as a continuum, with about half of the teachers interviewed expressing components of both views, and varying from one classroom and school situation to another.

In considering how to help educational systems become more inclusive, the nature of teachers' beliefs and how beliefs relate to their consequent actions need to be understood

Table 3: Major differences in the assumptions and beliefs about medical and social models (Wilson & Silverman, 1991)

	Medical	Social
<b>Roles</b>	<p>Special education teachers are specialized to deal with learning difficulties. Curriculum for exceptional pupils is specialized and different from regular classroom.</p> <p>At-Risk pupils should be referred as soon as possible for special education. Minimal or no pre-referral intervention</p> <p>The criterion for referral is centered on the child (search for pathology)</p>	<p>Teachers all contribute to collaboration solutions. Curriculum is standard but modified in level, rate, and delivery for exceptional children.</p> <p>Referral is the final step after regular classroom resources have been unable to meet the at-risk pupil's need.</p> <p>The criterion for referral is that efforts to resolve difficulties with local resources have been unsuccessful.</p>
<b>Assessment</b>	<p>Deficits exist primarily within the pupil.</p> <p>Norm-based criteria confirm exceptionality.</p> <p>Categorical labels designate child and guide the delivery of services.</p> <p>Conducted annually.</p>	<p>Difficulties may stem from environmental factors including interactions between instruction and learning opportunities.</p> <p>Curriculum-based assessments assist in identifying program alternatives.</p> <p>Effects of program and services are monitored for enhancement of opportunity for child to learn.</p> <p>Conducted at intervals as instructional goals dictate.</p>
<b>Delivery Model</b>	<p>By categorical label</p> <p>Press to segregation: Specialized help given to pupil in small group setting,</p>	<p>By availability of resources identified as needed for instruction.</p> <p>Press to integration: Resources and help given to classroom teachers to maintain progress of pupil.</p>

(Gibbs, 2007). Teachers cope with competing professional demands and their responses influence who they teach and how effective they are in meeting the range of student needs in their classrooms. The focus of this study is to investigate teachers' beliefs about their roles and professional priorities in promoting learning in inclusive classrooms and how these beliefs relate to their practice.

## CHAPTER III

### Methods

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, teachers must be prepared to maintain high standards with increasing heterogeneity in their classrooms. Federal legislation, in particular NCLB and IDEA, has been the impetus for the trend to serve students with disabilities within the general education classroom. However, at the local level, teacher responses to the inclusion movement have been mixed. As more students with disabilities have been included in general education classrooms, the examination of the relationship between teacher beliefs about disability and outcomes for students with disabilities has become increasingly important. For this study, the varying belief systems of the social model and the more medical model were investigated in terms of doxa. The medical model represented the orthodoxy; the incumbent force that has been preserved by some agents in the field; that is, that a child's diagnosis or label is primary, and conveys what one needs to know about the potential of a particular student. On the other hand, the social model represents the heterodoxy; the new paradigm that challenged the current perspectives about and current practices of delivering special education services. While some educators have endeavored to maintain the status quo, other educators have struggled to transform existing hierarchies and practices.

Attitudes represent a latent construct because they cannot be seen directly; instead behaviors, choices, and responses manifest underlying attitudes (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995). In this examination, interviews and quantitative data analysis were used to uncover the attitudes of teachers based on their recall of specific experiences while teaching a

student with disabilities. However, interviews were only able to measure that which they ask; that is, they may not fully uncover the latent construct of attitudes. In order for the attitudes of teachers to be further understood, qualitative data was used to enrich and explain the quantitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Thus, the combinations of qualitative and quantitative analyses have provided an in-depth examination of the teachers' attitudes.

### **Research Design**

This study employed Bourdieu's concept of capital to understand how teacher belief's about the nature of disability impact outcomes for students with disabilities. The study was a mixed methods design with the quantitative research being preliminary and qualitative research being the dominant research paradigm. Specifically, teacher interview data were used to investigate how accountability policies regarding students with disabilities from the broader fields of power were negotiated by teachers in the local field. Within the field, teacher's beliefs about disabilities were analyzed with respect to the doxa of the local field. Ultimately, the analysis has lead to practical implications for teachers, professors, and administrators.

The first research question asked if the medical-social model applied to the general classroom teachers in the study. In order for the medical-social model to have any value as descriptive and exploratory technique, it must explain the variance among the teacher and discriminate different beliefs among the teachers. Next, the total scores for the 24 teachers were correlated with five demographic variables to distinguish any sub groups among the teachers.

The second research question asked how Bourdieu's concepts related to the medical social model continuum. To answer the second question, the teacher interviews were coded to flesh out, extend and test emerging categories. The researcher identified units of meaning within the interviews and labeled them to reflect individual understandings of the data. Ultimately, the researcher analyzed the emergent themes using Bourdieu's concepts as a lens. There was a need to investigate several of Bourdieu's concepts because they are so interlinked and related. To analyze Bourdieu's concepts section, qualitative case study methodology was used to further explain the teachers' attitudes and influences. The researcher analyzed the qualitative data for themes apply Bourdieu's framework to give a lens for interpreting the data to explore struggles in the field. For the third research questions, the application of Bourdieu's approach demonstrated the potential usefulness of his framework for shedding light on power dynamics related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in heterogeneous classrooms. Ultimately, this lead to discussion of strategies utilized by teachers to address and even overcome the struggles in their field. Of particular interest were emergent themes regarding the emancipatory forces in the field. The analysis took into account of the position of each teacher in relation to peers to critically consider the perspectives of teachers regarding their disabled students.

### **Population and Sample**

At the time of the study, the district under study had an enrollment of about 20,500 students with the following racial make-up: Caucasian – 91.12%; Hispanic - 3.53%; African-America - 2.73%; Asian - 1.02%; and other - 1.32%. The district was located in a predominantly rural area outside the city limits of a large city and two smaller cities. The district had 18 elementary schools employing 59 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers.



Only one district and one grade level of teachers was used for the study because the researcher wanted to establish the equivalence of as many factors as possible to increase the ability to attribute differences within the field. There were several reasons for selecting fifth grade level teachers. As opposed to middle and high school teachers, elementary school teachers are with the students for the entire day and teach all core subjects. A concern at the middle and high school level was that students have different teachers for each of the core areas; therefore, a student with a learning disability in reading but with average math skills may be seen differently by the different core teachers. Only one district is used for the study. If two or more districts were used, then differences could be attributed to differences in the manner that a district adopts federal and state policies.

Other factors the researcher wanted to account for are the degree of disability, type of disability and amount of experience of each of the teachers. Therefore, each of the teachers that will be asked to participate in the student must meet the following criteria:

1. Teach fifth grade students;
2. Have at least two years experience in current position;
3. Have at least one student with a disability in a regular setting (at 75% of the day with non-disabled peers);
4. The disability of the student will be either Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) or Other Health Impaired (OHI).

The district has 18 elementary schools that employed 59 fifth grade teachers. To obtain a representative sample, the researcher will conduct interviews with a minimum of 24 eligible teachers.

## **Data Collection**

Prior to recruiting participants, permission was obtained from the appropriate central office staff in the school district (Appendix A - District Permission Letter). Once permission was granted, the researcher followed these steps for recruiting subjects and obtaining consent. First, the principals at the 18 elementary school were notified that teachers in their building were to be recruited (Appendix B - Principal Notification Letter). Next, all 5th grade teachers in school system were recruited. E-mail addresses were obtained from district web site. Each teacher was sent an e-mail (Appendix C – Teacher Notification Letter) that described study and asked for their interest in participation. The e-mail included the consent form (Appendix D – Consent to Participate in Research Study) as an attachment and the inclusion/exclusion criteria. The e-mail explicitly stated that not everyone one who gives consent may be selected to be interviewed, due to time constraints. The e-mail also described how recruitees would know whether or not they have been selected.

Once responses from potential participants were received by the researcher, the researcher contacted each potential participant via email for interview availability. Interviews were conducted over a three month period (November 24, 2010 through February 23, 2011). At the time of interview subject(s) were required to complete a “Consent to Participate in Research Study” form (Appendix D). During the interview, the voluntary nature of participation was reiterated, any questions from participants were addressed, and informed consent was obtained for all parts of the qualitative phase prior to the beginning of the case study. Interviews were conducted individually at a time and place that was most convenient to the teacher. This helped the researcher establish rapport with

the participant. Participants were reminded that their answers would be held confidential and the importance of the research was re-emphasized. These interviews provided participants an opportunity to speak openly, while still being guided and focused by the researcher. Interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes and were audio-taped. Interviews were transcribed verbatim for data analysis, which allowed the researcher to obtain accuracy in the data about teacher experiences with a student with disabilities over the course of the school year thus far.

The researcher conducted one semi-structured interview with each of the 24 participants using an Interview Protocol (see Appendix E). Interviews were completed over a three month period. However, due to the nature of qualitative research, the protocol was used in a flexible way in that the researcher modified the order and presentation of the questions as the interview proceeded. The purpose of the interview protocol was to ensure that the interview questions were “reasonable, clearly worded, not leading, appropriate and sufficient for exploring domains of interest” (Brantlinger, et al., 2005, p. 202). That is, the researcher modified and added to the interview questions as participants’ perceptions emerged until the data were saturated (Brantlinger, et al., 2005).

### **Description of instrument.**

In considering how to help educational systems become more inclusive, the nature of teachers' beliefs and how beliefs relate to their consequent actions need to be understood (Gibbs, 2007). A potentially powerful measure of attitudes and beliefs has been developed by Jordan and colleagues (Jordan & Stanovich, 2003; Jordan & Stanovich, 2004; Jordan, Glenn, & McGhee-Richmond, 2010; Stanovich and Jordan, 1998). The semi-structured interview format identifies differences in the beliefs that teachers hold about the nature of

disability as lying along a continuum from social model beliefs to medical model beliefs. The instrument is a narrative interview between the teacher and researcher in which the teacher recounts the sequence of events for the student with whom the teacher has worked. The interview is coded according to a Scoring Format (Appendix F) comprised of 16 items. For the first two of the 16 items, a score of 1 to 5 was assigned to each. The remaining 14 items received a score of one to three. Total scores for each teacher can be placed on a continuum of beliefs from social model (higher scores) to medical model (lower scores). A more thorough description of the scoring procedures is described in the scoring procedures section.

The medical-social model format is not dichotomous but continuous. In other words, teachers may not display exclusively social model or medical model beliefs. In previous studies Jordan et al (2010) found that approximately 25% of the teachers interviewed held medical model beliefs, 20% of teachers have beliefs that favor the social model, and 55% of the teachers interviewed expressed 'mixed' beliefs system composed of both views and varying from one classroom and school situation to another. Teachers with scores on the medical model end of the continuum tended to view disability as an internal, fixed, and pathological condition of the individual that is not amenable to instruction. As a result, these teachers emphasize the label or designated disability as the explanation for underachievement, and deem students with disabilities and those who are underachieving to be the source of their own learning difficulties. Teachers with predominantly medical model beliefs tend to place the blame on the students themselves and/or on their families for inability to progress. Consequently, teachers with beliefs on the medical model end of the continuum tend to spend less time and effort working with their included students with

disabilities and those who are at risk of academic failure, compared to the rest of the students in their classes. They prefer delivery models that withdraw students from their classes, and their concepts of instructional accommodations feature homework to be completed by the student with parents, and curriculum delivered in a resource or segregated class setting (Jordan, et al., 2010; White, 2007).

At the other end of the continuum, teachers with social model beliefs view disability as created in part by a society that is designed for the able, and that creates barriers for those who have disabilities. Such teachers tend to see their responsibility as being to create access to learning, by reducing barriers to learning through accommodations that increase access and by working longer and at greater levels of intensity with their students with learning difficulties (Jordan et al., 2010; Jordan & Stanovich, 2003; Jordan & Stanovich, 2004; White, 2007).

### **Reliability and validity.**

Using the semi-structured interview format, Jordan- Wilson and Silverman (1991) demonstrated that attitudes on the social-medical model continuum can be assessed reliably and validly. Inter-rater reliability between raters independently scoring the transcripts of the interviews was reported as .88 (Jordan, et al., 2010) and .91 (Stanovich & Jordan, 1998). Stanovich and Jordan (1998) reported a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  co-efficient of .89 for the scoring criteria.

### **Scoring procedures.**

The semi-structured Interview Protocol (Appendix E) asked teachers to 'tell their stories' about their experiences over the course of the school year with a student identified as having a disability. Teachers were asked to describe interventions they have used with their

identified student. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Data from the interview were scored using the Interview Scoring Form (Appendix F). There were 16 items to be rated on the scoring form. The first two items were two holistic ratings: attribution and responsibility. These two items were rated on a scale of 1 to 5 and represent an overall impression of how the teachers attribute blame and how they see themselves as responsible. The remaining 14 items were scored on a three-point scale with a score of 1 representing a medical-model perspective, a score of 3 a social-model perspective, and a score of 2 indicating a mixed perspective. The total score on the measure was the sum of the scores on the individual items. A higher score indicates more of a social model perspective. The maximum possible score was 52.

### **Data Analysis**

For the first research question, (Does the Medical-Social Model continuum of beliefs about disability apply to the general education teachers?), total scores were analyzed with respect to the variance across the medical-social model continuum. To investigate whether the 24 teacher comprised a homogenous group, the relationship between total score of rating scale and five teacher demographic variables were analyzed using a correlation matrix. The five teacher demographic variables were: (1) the number of years experience teaching; (2) a local scheduling strategy called ‘clustering’ (for the cluster variable, a 1 indicates that the teachers have a cluster of 4 or more students with disabilities in their classroom; a cluster score of 0 indicates that there are one, two or three students with disabilities in her classroom); (3) school size; (4) number of students in the teachers’ classroom; (5) Title 1 is a nominal variable (for Title 1, a score of 1 indicates the teacher works in a school that has title 1 status; A score of 0 indicates the teacher works at a school that is not Title 1). For the

first research question, Table 4 provided a summary of the research questions, theoretical framework and quantitative measure being used.

For the second research question (To what extent are Bourdieu’s concepts related to the social-medical model continuum?), interview transcripts were coded using the constant comparative method, advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a means to yield concepts grounded in data. Coding, a sorting and categorizing process that assigns labels to

Table 4: Research Question x Theoretical Framework x Quantitative Measure

Research Question	Theoretical Framework	Quantitative Measure
Does the Social–Medical Model continuum of beliefs about disability apply to the general education teachers?	Doxa  Medical-Social Model	Interview Scoring Form

meaningful regularities in the data, was an inductive, recursive process. Coding began early in data collection in order to direct efforts to flesh out, extend and test emerging categories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ultimately, the researcher identified units of meaning within the interviews, labeling them to reflect individual understandings of the data. Each of Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus, distinction and doxa were analyzed as described in Table 5.

During coding, the researcher assigned words to segments of text, condensed text into analyzable segments, sorted coded text segments that were similar, compared and contrasted coded segments looking for patterns, and generated analytic concepts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The researcher searched for data where issue-relevant meanings emerged and coded those instances by interpreting the meanings, looked for patterns among other data collected,

compared units of data deemed meaningful to generate tentative categories and developed an overall framework. This analysis took into account the position of each teacher in relation to peers to critically consider the perspectives of teachers regarding their disabled students (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Specifically, teacher beliefs about their role with students with disabilities and conceptions of themselves as professionals were analyzed for patterns of correspondence.

Table 5: Bourdieu’s concepts as related to the social-medical model continuum

Bourdieu’s Concept	Interview Question
<b>Habitus</b> explains the human subject as a social being who is situated in historical and cultural contexts. Habitus is the dispositions and understandings that inform an individuals’ knowledge of how to behave, think and even feel in the various social contexts of everyday life.	1,2,9
<b>Doxa</b> refers to fundamental, deep-founded beliefs that agents take as self-evident.	10
<b>Distinction</b> refers to one’s ability to move both within, and outside of, a certain field (e.g., public education) to broaden one’s possibilities to achieve needed resources to reach certain goals.	11

For the third research question (How does exclusion persist in special education without conscious recognition or public resistance?), the application of Bourdieu’s approach demonstrated the potential usefulness of his framework for shedding light on power dynamics related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in heterogeneous classrooms. Ultimately, this lead to discussion of strategies utilized by teachers to address and even overcome the struggles in their field. Of particular interest were emergent themes regarding the emancipatory forces in the field. The analysis took into account of the position of each



teacher in relation to peers to critically consider the perspectives of teachers regarding their disabled students.

### **Ensuring Trustworthiness**

In order to ensure trustworthiness of the researcher and the qualitative research design, this study followed the frameworks provided by Shenton (2004). Shenton described four criteria that each have a reference to a construct in quantitative research: credibility (in preference to internal validity); transferability (in preference to external validity); dependability (in preference to reliability); confirmability (in preference to objectivity). Each of these criteria were briefly described as well as how this study purported to meet each criteria.

Credibility refers to an investigator's attempt to demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny is being presented. Another measure of credibility and trustworthiness in the current study was the use of member checks. Participants reviewed transcripts of their interviews and the observational field notes collected, and verified the accuracy (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Member checks were sought by send the appropriate participant a transcribed copy of their interview with an accompanying cover letter (Member Check Cover Letter – Appendix G). This was important in order to validate the transcript itself, as well as the researcher's interpretations and conclusions. Another way to ensure credibility was the development of an early familiarity with the culture of participating organization. For this study, the investigator has 15 years experience working in the field of special education. As practitioner, the investigator has experienced the day-to-day operations of the field and has credibility among other practitioners in the field. The

researcher is acutely aware of both the great benefits the special education program has to offer as well as its potential short-comings.

Transferability indicates that the investigator provides sufficient detail of the context of the fieldwork for a reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar and whether the findings can justifiably be applied to the other setting (Shenton, 2004). This study will endeavor to accurately describe the members of organization relevant to the study and where the study is based as well as describe the data collection methods that was employed. To the maximum extent possible, the researcher provided reflection as to the *reasons* behind the analysis or conclusion provided.

Dependability criterion is difficult in qualitative work, although researchers should at least strive to enable a future investigator to repeat the study (Shenton, 2004). In quantitative work, reliability techniques to show that, if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained. This task is somewhat more challenging in qualitative work. This study provided the operational detail of data gathering including addressing the minutiae of what was done in the field. As the study progressed, the investigator appraised the project reflectively, evaluating the effectiveness of the process of inquiry undertaken.

Finally, to achieve confirmability, the researchers took steps to demonstrate that findings emerge from the data and not his own predispositions. In this study, confirmability was executed by admission of the researcher's beliefs and assumptions as well as recognizing the shortcomings in the study's methods. Also, every effort was made to

provide in-depth methodological descriptions to allow integrity of research results to be scrutinized by the reader.

### **Statement of Positionality**

The goal of the researcher for this project was, in the words of Bourdieu, “not to take sides... but to make the struggle itself the object of investigation” (cited in Swartz, 1997, p. 259). Despite the aim of impartiality, the purpose of describing the researcher’s positionality to provide the reader a perspective of the researcher background that could impact the researcher’s lens of analysis. Bourdieu (1990) poses a mostly rhetorical question: “How can we (as critical sociological scholars) claim to engage in the scientific investigations of presuppositions if we do not work to gain knowledge of our own presuppositions? (p. 608)” Qualitative research traditionally acknowledges the role of the researcher as a filter through which data are collected, analyzed, interpreted and presented. Because of this, it was important to consider the subjective researcher role and its effects on the research process.

Positionality in research involves reflection on self, process, and representation, and critically examining power relations and politics in the research process, and researcher accountability in data collection and interpretation (Hurd, 1998; Moss, 2002). Critical reflection upon the researcher’s positionalities reveals that who the researcher is as a person was heavily influenced by two life experiences: professional and personal. Professionally, the researcher’s occupation is Director, Programs for Exceptional Children for a large school district. On a more personal note, he is the father of an 12-year old boy who suffers from attention-deficit disorder, dyslexia and central auditory processing disorder.

As a qualitative researcher, the researcher’s learning curve has been steep. The study began when the researcher experience with qualitative methods was in the formative stages.

Previously, the researcher published a brief paper (McOuat, 2008) called “An Investigation of Agency and Marginality in Special Education” that is the pilot for the current study. The finding of the article was that, as long as the concept of “handing off” children reigns supreme in public education, then both special education students and the teachers that teach them will be marginalized. Data collected for the article supported the premise that special education accomplishes the functionalist purpose of sorting “misfit” students away from the standard education and tracked towards the lowest tracks. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number of students from the lowest social-economic groups comprise the lowest tracks while children from the higher socioeconomic tracks have been found to consistently over-represent the higher tracks.

The study pointed out that not only are the students marginalized, but the teachers that teach them are also marginalized. Special education self-contained classes were found to be larger than advanced placement accelerated classes. Special education teachers reported that administrators seldom visited the special education classrooms. Special education teachers reported that students with disabilities were neglected to be invited to class trips. Teachers indicated that they received hand-be-down instructional materials from their regular education colleagues. Some teachers even reported that they felt special education programs inadvertently enable lower performing students to become “lazy.” In other words, the special education services may be provided with the best intention, but, in actuality, help shape marginality.

As educators, we need to ask if the need for specialized programs makes it difficult for public schools to empower their students so that there is a chance for the students and teachers to recognize and resist the hegemony maintained in the machine bureaucracy

conditions. Efforts must be made to analyze the tendency of specific programs to meet the economic goals of education: to sort and select talent for the labor market, develop human capital and plan economic development (Spring, 1994). Leaders in education need investigate the extent that the top-down, assembly line management of school programs, such as special education, is actually the perpetuation of the dynamic of sorting and dominating subaltern groups referred to by Bourdieu as social reproduction.

As an administrator for programs for students with disabilities, the researcher views himself as both part of the problem a part of the solution. Likely, the challenge of making district change cannot be met through isolated programs; it requires a systemic response. The researcher suspects that the issue is that the traditional practices of education were never designed to enable all students to achieve at high levels. On the contrary, schools tend to be sorting and tracking machines that are hardwired against serving all students. Traditional instructional delivery models were structured (intentionally or not) to perpetuate inequities that exist in the wider society within which school systems operate. Based on studies so far, the researcher would suggest that the inequities are glaringly evident in the allocation of instructional resources, including the most critical of human resources in education; the teachers. Hence, previous research interest for this paper has led to the researcher's current interest to interviewing the general education teachers about their experiences with students with disabilities.

## CHAPTER IV

### Findings

The Findings section details the results of the data analysis described in the Methods section in order to answer the three research questions. The first research question asked if the medical-social model applied to the general classroom teachers in the study. In order for the medical-social model to have any value as a descriptive and exploratory technique, it must explain the variance among the teachers and discriminate different beliefs among the teachers. Next, the total scores for the 24 teachers were correlated with five demographic variables to distinguish any sub-groups among the teachers.

The second research question asked how Bourdieu's concepts related to the medical-social model continuum. To answer the second question, the teacher interviews were coded to flesh out, extend and test emerging categories. The researcher identified units of meaning within the interviews and labeled them to reflect individual understandings of the data. Ultimately, the researcher analyzed the emergent themes using Bourdieu's concepts as a lens. The research question investigated several of Bourdieu's concepts because they are so interlinked and related. In the Bourdieu's Concepts section, qualitative case study methodology was used to further explain the teachers' experiences and perspectives. To facilitate the interpretation of the teacher interviews, Bourdieu's framework provided a lens for exploring teachers' struggles within the field.

The third section, Exclusion, entailed the application of Bourdieu's approach to demonstrate the potential usefulness of his framework for shedding light on power dynamics related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in heterogeneous classrooms.

Ultimately, this led to a discussion of strategies utilized by teachers to address, and even overcome, the struggles in their field. Of particular interest were emergent themes regarding the emancipatory forces in the field. The analysis took into account the position of each teacher in relation to peers to critically consider the perspectives of teachers regarding their students with disabilities. To facilitate readability of the Findings section, most supporting quotations from the teachers' interviews were end-noted.

### **Research Question 1: The Medical-Social Model Continuum**

The first research question asked “Does the Medical-Social Model continuum of beliefs about disability apply to the general education teachers?” In order for the medical-social model continuum to have any value as a descriptive and exploratory technique, it must explain the variance among the teachers and discriminate different beliefs among the teachers. Total scores were correlated with demographic variables. The researcher analyzed the relationships among demographic variables in the study with the teachers' overall scores on the medical-social model scoring form. Next, a frequency of codes chart was to enable the reader to see the emergent themes as well as the participants that endorsed them.

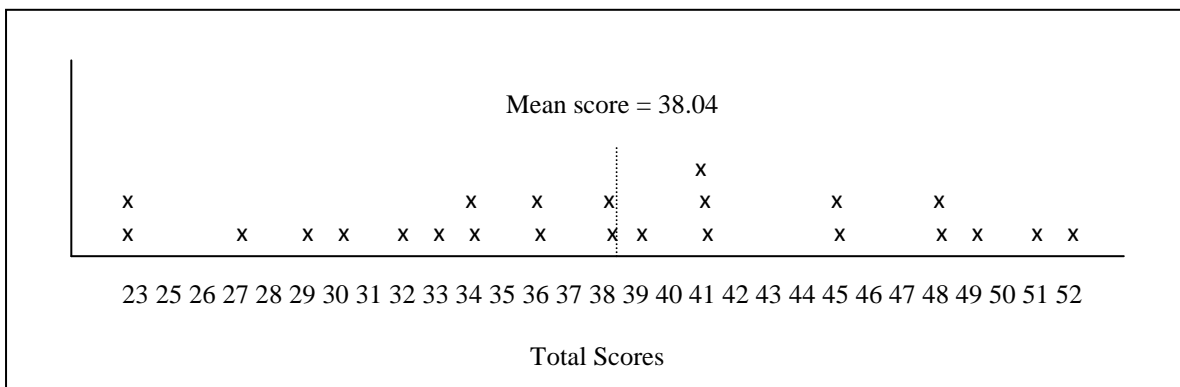
#### **Total scores on the continuum.**

First the researcher must introduce the participants in the study. These 24 teachers represent the basic unit of analysis for the study. To help illuminate some background factors for the participants, each participant was asked how they decide to become a teacher. The responses were divided into five categories (with frequency of each response): Life long goal - 12; Decided in college – 4; Parent influenced – 2; Inspired by teacher – 3; Alternative certification/decided later in life – 3. The reasons that the participants became a teacher were diverse. Motives ranged from inspiration drawn from a favorite teacher of their

own to a sense purpose into their daily occupation. The most compelling reason to become a teacher was the desire to work with children. All teachers related a fundamental interest in children, and, even the teachers that decided later in life, indicated that a desire to work with children was a primary reason for being a teacher. This finding is important because subsequent findings explore power dynamics among teachers and students and it is important to remember that the teachers came to schools with their devotion to children as their primary motivation.

Next, teacher interviews were scored as described in Chapter III on the medical-social model interview instrument. The format was designed as a narrative interview between the teacher and researcher in which the teacher recounts the sequence of events for a student with disabilities in the teacher’s classroom. Individual teachers were identified in this study by their respective Total Scores on the Interview Scoring Form. If more than one teacher received the same score, then the score will follow a letter (a,b,c) depending on how many teacher have the same score. Figure 2 provides a visual display of total scores over the medical-social model continuum.

Figure 2  
Distribution of Scores over Medical-Social Model Continuum





The distribution of the total scores reveals a full range of scores along the medical-social model continuum. Participants, in this case the fifth grade teachers, gravitated in the direction of one or another of these opposing strategies. Scores ranged from 23 to 52, with 52 being the highest possible score. The mean total score for all participants on the Interview Scoring form was 38.04 ( $sd= 8.289$ ).

In order for the medical-social model to have any value as a descriptive and exploratory technique, the continuum must explain the variance among the teachers and discriminate different beliefs among the teachers. To analyze the discriminative value of the continuum, the responses to a common theme from two different teachers on opposite ends of the continuum were compared. In other words, do teachers on opposite ends of the continuum respond to the same situation differently? The common situation that was analyzed was the occurrence of a student that did not take his medication. Several teachers struggled with this situation. However, would a teacher with a lower total score (representing a medical model leaning belief) respond differently than a teacher with a higher total score (representing a social model belief)? Obviously, it is not the intention of the researcher to say that no student should be on medications. The decision-making about whether students require medicine is beyond the scope of this research. The issue is the response of the teacher associated with the student not taking his medicine. The two responses are as follows:

One of the biggest obstacles in working with him is whether he has his medications. We have gotten the parents to agree to let us give it to him at school. So that has made a big difference just because if he does not have his medication, then it is a total waste for that day ... just because he can't focus and pay attention or sit still even on his medicine. He still has a hard time with that. (36b)

I think he got comfortable enough with me. I said I'm not going to get upset if you did or didn't. I just want to know. So now, he will tell me, occasionally, he'll say "I forgot to take it, can I call home, because I know it helps me focus better." And I never really say a lot about that. Twice he called home and they were not able to bring it. And I'll say "its okay we'll get through it, it's fine." I can deal with the hyperactivity-ness. It's just that, when he is without it, it is very difficult for him. I have to redirect him a lot. He'll even apologize to me and say "I'm sorry, I'll fix it." "It's okay; I'll keep bringing you back on track and remind you." Even when, he doesn't have it, he wants to work hard and do well. (52)

The first teacher indicates that the entire day was a waste. Notice the fatalism associated with the student not taking his medicine.<sup>1</sup> Compare that response to a social model responder who had a student that occasionally misses his medicine.<sup>2</sup> She addresses the occurrence with the child, contacts the parent, and changes her instructional delivery to address his needs.

### **Emergent themes.**

Emergent themes in the interviews were used to determine the discriminative value of the medical-social model. Teacher interviews were coded for emergent themes. Table 6 provides the frequency of codes for each code. Table 6 permits an analysis of teachers relative to their total scores on the continuum relative to common themes. Analysis of Table 6 identifies which themes discriminated the social-model-leaning teachers (higher scores) from the medical-model-leaning teachers (lower scores). Teachers with medical model beliefs tended to have response patterns that relied heavily on standard operating procedures. For example, they tended to provide student progress data at routine times (report cards, nine-week grades, etc) and did not make other efforts to communicate student progress with parents. When discussing students' academic difficulties, the medical model

teachers were more likely to make references to attributes within the student (lazy, low IQ) or background factors (family is unsupportive, negligent, adversarial). Teachers all across the medical-social model had a tendency to remark about learning attributes internal to the student. Of note is that at the more medical model side of the continuum, the references were more blatant, whereas teachers with more social-model leanings made references that were more related to processing skills that could actually be diagnostic in helping the teacher in teaching the student.

Table 6: Theme x Frequency of Codes x Teacher

<u>Student factors</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Attribution - instruction	3	32,38,48a
Attribution - Internal	28	23a,23b(6), 27,30,34a(2)
36a,36b(4),38a,38b(3),41a(5),51(3)		
Background/home issues	19	27(2),29(2),32,33(3),38a(3),38b,39,41a(2),41b,41c,48a,51
Negative experience	2	41c,45a
Social - student acclimation - positive	9	23a,27,33,34a,36b,41a,41c,45a,52
Social - student acclimation - negative	11	30,32,36a(2),38b,39,41b,41c (2),48a,51
<u>Field of struggle</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Bureaucracy/NCLB	12	23a,23b(8),34b,39,48a
Global/society	2	23b(2)
Grading Dilemma	6	23b,38a,39(2),45a(2)
Overwhelming job demands	4	23b,36b,38b,48b
Sorting	7	23a,29,41a(2),41b,41c,51
Variance	6	36b,38,41b,41c,49,51
Curriculum expectations - individualized	11	36b,41a,41c(2),45a,48a(2),51(2),52(2)
Curriculum expectations – low	5	23a,23b,27,29,41a
<u>Struggle among actors</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
EC specialized knowledge	8	29(2),34a,36a,38a,38b,45a(2)
EC/Regular education function separately	29	23a,23b(3),27,29(4),32(3),33,34b,36a,38a,38b(2),39,41a(4),41b(2),48a(2),48b,51
Scheduling issues	13	23a,23b(2),30,36a,36b,38a,41a,41c,48a,48b,49,51
Staff support – negative/absent	5	23a,32,33,48b,52
<u>Emancipatory factors</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
Staff support - positive	24	27(2),29,30,34a(3),34b,36a,36b,39(2),45a(2),48(3),51,52(4)
EC/Regular - integrate/collaborate	20	27,30,32,33,34a,36b,38(2),39(2),41c(4),48b(2),51,52(3)
Personal knowledge of student	34	27(2),29,30,32,33,34a,34b,36a,36b(2),38a,38b,39,41a(2),41b(2),41c,48a(2),48a(2),48b(2),49,51(4),52(4)
Peer helpers - Sheppard	4	36a,36b,48a,39
Relevance	8	41b,41b(2),49,51,52(3)

Within the medical model paradigm is the belief that something is wrong with the student that requires “fixing.” Teachers with medical model beliefs reported feeling highly challenged to meet the needs of students with disabilities and also reported that they were given insufficient resources to meet those needs. Subsequently, teachers with medical model beliefs focus their efforts to sort the more challenging students into groups, often with the students with disabilities being serviced away from the rest of their peers.

Teachers interviewed that held medical-model beliefs (lower scores) related that disability is an internal, fixed, and pathological condition of the individual that is not amenable to instruction.<sup>3</sup>

I have a student that is Hispanic. She has IEP specifically in written language, reading comprehension, and math reasoning. She was retained. On top of having these disabilities, if you want to call them that, her IQ is low. It is probably, I don't know what is, I've never looked it up, but I've been told by the EC teacher that it is lower than average. (23b)

The response shows that the attributions regarding the child are ascribed by the teacher to the child with minimal effort to familiarize with the student. The response shows minimal effort to understand the child or individualized knowledge of the child. Simply, the child is a low performer due to internal attributes. Again, within the medical model is the belief that something is wrong with the student which requires “fixing.” Implicit in the sorting model is that “normal” as the dominant, often the high-status, cultural capital. On the other hand, the “abnormal” (those who do not necessarily associate with high-status groups or high-status capital) are viewed as deficient.

The concept of disability within this paradigm becomes reified, or made into a thing that the student has, therefore requiring treatments by medical experts.<sup>4</sup>

In fact this year has been kind of interesting because they have been kind of switching up his medicines to see which symptoms are more Aspergers and which symptoms are more ADHD. So they are kind of playing around with that to see which is the main cause of some the problems that we have been having this year as far as academic problems. (36a)

Even more social model leaning teachers were susceptible to practices that promote a blame-the-victim orientation that ascribes fault primarily to the child. The teacher may also use the child's exceptionality designation to justify their non-involvement or exception from responsibility.<sup>5</sup>

So, as long as you can keep him on his medication, then he wants to learn and he can learn (36b)

The remark indicates that the teacher believes the student can learn, but with the caveat that someone out there, outside her classroom, keeps him on his medication. While teachers should acknowledge the biological sources of various forms of disability, teachers also must recognize that students respond to external conditions. At times, under certain conditions and possibly illicitly rather than overtly, teachers may engage in biological reductionism. Notice how that description is vastly different from a more social model leaning teacher.<sup>6</sup>

That's the thing I try to instill in them. Let's work really, really hard, so that our class is the best. So if you know something, that's good. But then go and help somebody else who doesn't, because they need to know it, too, for our scores to be really, really good. So that's your job to help everybody. So I try to make it more community, community-friendly. He's fine. (41c)

Teachers who tended to endorse the social model approach were more likely to emphasize individual time spent with the student, personal knowledge of the student's strengths and needs based on individual assessments. Instruction is most effective when it is personalized and relevant. Specifically, teachers were able to articulate instructional practices that responded to the students' interests, curiosity, strengths, and contributions. For example,

when asked about how she was meeting the student's needs as well as meeting curriculum expectations, one teacher responded that her instructional practices fell into place as she established a relationship with the child.<sup>7</sup> Some teachers were able to find specific duties within the classroom environment to help the child feel empowered and valued.<sup>8</sup> A theme that seemed to heavily differentiate the social model teachers was the theme of relevance. Teachers with social model leaning beliefs found individualized ways to make class assignments relevant to the specific child that maintain student engagement.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, assessments were not given to confirm the student's deficit or disability; rather assessments helped the teacher guide her instruction in a way that is relevant and individualized for the student.<sup>10</sup>

#### **Correlations with teacher demographic variables.**

Next, teachers' total scores were analyzed relative to the five demographic variables. A correlation matrix was used to examine the correlation among demographic variables as well as the relationships of the demographic variables with the teachers' total scores on the social-medical model rating form. The demographic variables were (1) number of years teaching experience (2) whether or not the teacher had a cluster of students with disabilities (3) school size as measured by total student enrollment (4) teacher's current class size and (5) Title 1 status of school. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) assesses the extent to which the quantitative variables are linearly related in a sample. Table 4 (In Appendix H) presents the correlation matrix indicating the relations among the Total Score and the demographic variables. Total score was not significantly correlated with any of the demographic variables. Therefore, the group of teachers can be treated as a homogenous

group and the variance among the teachers' total scores was independent of the individual's demographic variables.

Table 7 lists the 24 teachers' total scores and their demographic variables. Column 1

Table 7: Teacher Demographic Variables

Total Score	Years Teaching	School Cluster	Size	Class Size	Title 1
23a	10	1	399	28	1
23b	10	1	505	24	0
27	15	0	603	27	0
29	11	0	880	27	0
30	37	1	337	21	1
32	9	0	420	25	1
33	4	0	558	23	0
34a	3	0	513	27	0
34b	6	0	399	29	1
36a	4	1	880	26	0
36b	14	1	407	20	1
38a	10	0	572	26	1
38b	6	1	505	23	0
39	13	0	407	24	1
41a	7	0	420	26	1
41b	8	0	639	27	1
41c	13	0	399	24	1
45a	12	1	513	27	0
45b	3	1	449	19	1
48a	5	0	639	27	1
48b	13	0	665	26	1
49	21	0	337	23	1
51	8	1	545	27	0
52	17	1	468	22	1

is the teachers' total score on the medical-social model continuum. Column 2 is the number of years experience teaching. Participating teachers ranged in years experience from 3 to 37

years. The mean for all participants for total years was 10.28 (sd=7.344). Each teacher was asked about how he/she became a teacher. Column 3 is related to a local scheduling strategy called 'clustering.' For the 'cluster' variable, a 1 indicates that the teachers have a cluster of 4 or more students with disabilities in their classroom. A cluster score of 0 indicates that there are one, two or three students with disabilities in his/her classroom. For this sample, 8 of the 24 teachers have cluster classes. The clustering class strategy will be discussed at more length under the Research Question 3 section. The next column is school size. Teachers work in schools ranging from total enrollment of 337 students to 880 students. The average enrollment is 519.12 students. The fifth column is the number of students in the teachers' classroom. Class sizes range from 20 to 29 with an average class size of 24.92. Title 1 is a nominal variable. For Title 1, a score of 1 indicates the teacher works in a school that has title 1 status. A score of 0 indicates the teacher works at a school that is not Title 1. Of the 24 teachers in this sample, 15 work in Title 1 schools.

The first research question asked "Does the Medical-Social Model continuum of beliefs about disability apply to the general education teachers?" First, teachers' total scores ranged from 23 to 52 indicating the continuum explains a wide variance of beliefs among the teachers. Second, the finding that responses from teachers on the medical model end of the continuum differed from the responses of teachers on the social model end of the continuum provides support that the continuum has value as a descriptive and exploratory technique. Third, teacher total scores were not significantly correlated with any of the demographic variables. Therefore, the group of teachers can be treated as a homogenous group and the variance among the teachers' total scores was independent of the individual's demographic variables.



## **Research Question 2: Bourdieu's Concepts**

The second research question asked “To what extent are Bourdieu’s concepts related to the medical-social model continuum?” To answer the second research question, the researcher had to look at the interview data through a new lens. The data was generated using the medical-social model interview and scoring protocol. However, to relate the interview data to Bourdieu’s concept required viewing the units of meaning through the lens of Bourdieu’s concepts. For the current research, Bourdieu’s concepts were not set a priori, but emerged from the data. In other words, prior to the teachers being interviewed, the researcher did not have a pre-conceived notion of what the teachers would value or what they would be exchanging in cultural marketplace. The following section starts out to identify the existence of a common capital (knowledge, abilities, power, etc.). To identify capital, values in the marketplace had to be determined indirectly. Next, to identify habitus, the teacher interviews were analyzed for the struggle to appropriate this capital. Since all of habitus can not be expressed verbally, habitus is understood as condition of operation and principle of structuring the logics of practice within the field. Lastly, to identify distinction, interviews were analyzed for a hierarchy that was formed between those who hold the capital and those who aspire to do so.

### **Capital.**

Bourdieu used capital to represent value and vested interest in a field of struggle. In the fields, agents use capital to make the position of the agent clear in its field. By their ability to use capital well, agents are able to exercise more power and influence in a certain field.

Capital is complex and variable with its value being highly dependent on the field in which it

is being studied. Within a field, the behavior, preferences and dispositions of actors conform to a market system with its own logic and its own specific form of capital. The concept of capital was described as “institutionalized, i.e. widely shared, high-status cultural signals (attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, goods and credentials) used for social and cultural exclusion” (Lamont & Lareau, 1988, p.156). This definition emphasizes two of the key components of the concept: that cultural capital is institutionalized and that it is used to maintain group advantage.

The first step for analyzing teacher data related to capital is to logically sketch out what capital would look like for teachers in a schoolyard. As agents of the institution of school, teachers that are more likely to accumulate cultural capital are more likely to maintain their monopolization of scarce resources. This scarcity dilemma construes the struggle within space that each of these teachers encounters everyday at work. Teachers function in a marketplace of scarce resources and high demand for their time and efforts. So, their decisions about how to allocate their time would likely be more allocated towards consumers of their services that are more responsive. When a student is highly responsive to their instruction, then a student is more likely to make large increases in performance to relatively small increases in effort. Students that are more likely to be responsive to teacher effort would be high performers, such as AIG students. Conversely, students with disabilities would more likely to be perceived by teachers as requiring an increased amount of effort while yielding minimal increases in performance. Therefore, teachers are likely to feel willingness to sacrifice an increase in effort for lower performing students, such as special education students. In the field of public schools, students that are highly unresponsive to increases in teacher efforts are often described as ‘at-risk’ or disabled. In the field, teachers

would be less interested in having these students in their class; therefore, the students are ascribed with less capital in the eyes of the teacher. These students may be less desirable in the symbolic market place of the school yard.

Once the mechanisms of cultural capital are identified, the next step is to analyze the teachers' responses for themes that are related to the above illustration. With regard to the current sample of teachers, each teacher in this study voiced to some extent the perceivably unlimited demands placed upon them while having limited resources to meet these demands. In the research design, there was no specific line of questioning that asked teachers what they valued or what are they invested in. Values in the marketplace had to be determined indirectly. Obviously, once teachers had their rosters of their students, they all dutifully described their valuing of all students on their roster. However, insights regarding values within the field were derived indirectly from the interview question related to "Tell me what happened when the student first came to your attention." This question provided insight into what teachers saw and valued prior to any students being assigned to their roster. The district is small and intimate. Most of the teachers were from the district and taught older siblings of the students. One insightful situation came from a teacher describing students in the schoolyard.<sup>11</sup>

Well last year, this is kind of a funny story, on the playground you see these kids and you are going "No, please don't put that one in my class. Not that one. Not that one." Then you hear the name, you hear judgments, you hear things about that particular child, and you pray that that is not going to happen. As soon as I got my list, lo and behold it happened, and I was like "Oh my gosh, there he was." So I geared myself up. (49)

The insight provided by this teacher provides the mental image of teachers at recess, scouting out more challenging students (high investment, low responsiveness) in the lower

grades. Again, in a small, intimate elementary school, a student's reputation will precede him.<sup>12</sup> These exchanges among teachers can clearly value and de-value a prospective student in the marketplace. For example, one teacher viewed her decision to obtain background information from a previous teacher as a harbinger of bad news.<sup>13</sup>

So I talked with his last-year teacher and that helped some but in a way, it made me almost more fearful because I hear this story and that story. Then I thought, was that a good idea or not? (52)

Once the market value was ascertained, then the researcher could identify the system of exchanges. A teacher indicated that she accepted the 'challenge' of having the student on her role as a personal request by the principal.<sup>14</sup>

I knew that that he had been exited from the program but they were still working with him behaviorally and then it was when (principal) asked me about having the student in my classroom and I said sure I will take on any challenge. (34b)

Likely, the student was construed as having low capital in the field of fifth grade teachers. Such deal-making in the marketplace builds distinction for the teacher in the eyes of the administrator. One teacher acknowledged that the exchange of information among teachers is commonplace, but makes efforts to avoid participation in the bartering.<sup>15</sup>

I don't go to the previous classroom teacher for a reason. I do not want to prejudge the student. That is like my big no-no. I hate it when teachers come around and ask me, "Who do you have on your list?" I say, "We are not going to do that because the child may perform differently for me than they did for you." (41)

School yards are arenas in which a struggle for control of resources takes place. Bourdieu sees these resources as invested and symbolic. Bourdieu extended the sense of the term capital to a wider system of exchanges where assets of different kinds are transformed and exchanged within complex cultural networks (Moore, 2008). The example above illustrated

that capital may take complex and variable constructions. At one level of reading this would be to state that there could be as many forms of capital as there are types of people. However, this may be an overly simplistic view of capital. More likely, classroom teachers may be construed as competing for resources (teaching effort, distinction) when those resources are limited relative to the demand (for individual student achievement).

### **Habitus.**

Teachers do not make decisions regarding students in a vacuum. Habitus changes and modifies according to the fluctuations of the conditions in fields. Habitus links social dispositions of the actors with their specific opportunities in the fields of action. Consequently, empirical analysis can be conducted by investigation of the semiotic forces and effects among actors. In the field of public education, students from more privileged backgrounds have a habitus that matches the values of the school and teachers. These students are therefore more comfortable interacting with teachers than other students, and the teachers see these students as more motivated than their peers. Just as students were capable, whether consciously or unintentionally, of making themselves more or less attractive to teachers with a thousand subtle behaviors, teachers were also variably responsive to students. Some students naturally and easily acclimated socially into the regular classroom milieu. On the other hand, some students have internalized beliefs that manifest in actions (cutting class, not studying, acting out) that lead to self-fulfilling prophecies, reproducing the current class structure. One teacher provided an example of a student that transferred from an urban school to her rural school. Her initial impression of the child was based on background and cultural factors. Ultimately, the teacher developed

her own relationship with the child and was able to overcome her initial faulty impression of the child.<sup>16</sup>

She came from kind of a tough background. She is now living with her aunt; her and her mother just didn't get along. That's her background. I think she went to sort of a rough school. I think she was identified at that school as a.... Troublemaker. She came here and I have had absolutely no trouble. (48a)

In fact, the teacher, over time, discovered that the background factors she had originally thought would be a liability, turned out to be an asset:<sup>17</sup>

She (aunt) makes sure that she reads every night; she signs her folder; she looks at things in her agenda; so that I know she is paying attention to what's going on in her school life. Again I have invited her to tutoring, which means she has to be picked up separately, she rides the bus now, and she agreed to do that. Her aunt, that is who I always talk to, her uncle came to one of the IEP meetings, but her aunt in particular, has been very helpful and eager to do whatever it takes to help her. (48a)

According to Bourdieu, students benefit from a privileged habitus by way of school-based processes, in which schools implicitly value and reward cultural capital. Many scholars invoke teachers' relationships with students in particular as the explanation for how habitus affects academic outcomes. According to this argument, students benefit academically from cultural capital because they are able to communicate effectively with teachers and understand the implicit "rules of the game" better than students without cultural capital (DiMaggio 1982; Lamont & Lareau, 1988; Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell 1999).

According to Bourdieu, practices are generated by the habitus so all practices offer evidence of the structures that generated them. So, although habitus can not be directly observed, the task for the researcher was to analyze practices to capture their relational structure among a range of possible structures (Maton, 2008). For example, students

described as rule abiding, non-challenging, flexible and polite seemed to be more endearing to the teacher and more socially accepted by their peers.<sup>18</sup> Some students have strong compensation skills that permit them to acclimate into the classroom milieu with little effort from the teacher.<sup>19</sup> The teacher believes the social needs of the student are important and acts to integrate the student socially. Most common methods were assigning a peer buddy (or shepherd), co-operative group roles, and including the student in class routines or activities. Several teachers assigned students to model or be a peer leader during transition activities or instructional activities. This teacher described the type of student he looks for in a peer buddy.<sup>20</sup>

So I usually sit the students with a student that, in my mind, do the school thing real well. They don't necessarily have to be the absolute smartest kid in the class but they have to understand how school works. They are that teacher pleaser, the little class-pet type person who gets school; they kind of shepherd her a lot of time when she's kind of lost. (39)

Likely, this would entail, in the terms of Bourdieu, the teacher selecting a student with a comparable habitus to guide a second student from a different habitus.

One factor that seemed to contribute to teachers expressing difficulty accommodating a particular student in class was negative social skills. Often, students with disabilities were portrayed by teachers as different from the rest of the students and therefore they had difficulty acclimating socially into the classroom milieu. For Bourdieu, this could represent a conflict of habitus. For example, one teacher provided an illustration where fellow students were clearly aware of the student's naivety, and that shared understanding was a wedge between the student and her peers.<sup>21</sup> Some students had substantial social skill issues that contributed to them being ostracized by peers or even physical conflicts; hence, an

added challenge to the teacher.<sup>22</sup> Experience was a very powerful theme for the teachers. A negative experience with a student who wasn't successful in the classroom contributes to the teacher's beliefs about inclusive practices. This teacher describes a particularly negative experience with the student.<sup>23</sup>

So she really can't get with her too much in fact one incident, in the beginning of the year, she had an accident. I sent to the office, her dad was called to bring a change of clothes. The longer she sat there waiting for her dad; she just started to fall apart. She was in hysterics. And every since then, confidence has been an issue with her it's to the point where every time she finishes reading a page she says "I finish the page, what should I do now?" "Turn the page, go to the next one." That incident has really created a downward spiral in her confidence. (45)

Similarly, a previous experience with a perceivably similar student could lead to apprehension, although this particular teacher was able to overcome her anxieties by getting to the student as the year progressed.<sup>24</sup>

But with my prior experience in B.E.D., I was very scared when they told me he had a B.E.D. label. That's why I went to the third grade teacher and the fourth grade teacher and I was looking up anything I could. Because the last time that I had had a B.E.D. child, I was pregnant and we had the sheriff come out and it was in (neighboring school district), two of them. The deputies took him off the premises. He was throwing the desk and books and hitting me and everything. It was just really, really bad. And I was actually a resource teacher. I taught gifted and so he was in the gifted class. It was an accident. But he was in the gifted class. That was my prior experience, so I was pretty terrified whenever I found out I had a B.E.D. kid and I was pregnant again and it was like "Oh, no. Repeat, repeat." (41)

As described above, general education teachers in the current study related various reasons for apprehension or even anxiety about working with students with disabilities. For example, teachers indicated that they didn't have the professional knowledge necessary to manage the academic, social, and behavioral challenges of the students. Others reported that they personally felt unprepared for teaching students with disabilities. One teacher indicated that



she had just one course about special education in her program of study. For Bourdieu, these rationales could represent a conflict of habitus.

Findings of this research revealed that some teachers were able to break down the barrier between teacher habitus and student habitus. Specifically, teachers that were able to promote inclusive settings accentuated the need for individualized, child-centered instruction. These teachers were able to interpret the student's academic challenges as communication about the student's respective needs. Subsequently, teachers were able to select and implement positive support strategies that could improve the student's performance. The positive support strategies tended to contribute to a positive working relationship between the student and the teacher. Some teachers were able to approach instructional design as a problem solving task. They were able to actively familiarize themselves with the students needs, and then formulate an appropriate instructional strategy to engage the struggling student. Teachers described fine tuning these strategies over time based on individual informal assessments with the student.<sup>25</sup>

By reading one-on-one and small group interaction - I needed him to get comfortable with me - so that I could get a true reading of where he was at. So, spending time with him, finding out his interests, trying to find books that he's interested in, because we don't usually like what we have difficulty doing. So, I see what genre he liked and what his interests are and making sure that I had plenty of those materials accessible to him. (48b)

A dialogue with the student regarding the student's academic challenges provides valuable feedback about what he or she is thinking and about the quality of the instructional strategies. Some teachers used dialogue and conversation to both assess the child's needs as well as promote an individualized instruction.<sup>26</sup> At times, these informal, individualized assessments led to a discovery about a child's strength that previously may not have been in the student's record or folder.<sup>27</sup> For a student that was particularly active, and, at the time, a

behavioral challenge, this teacher was able to find individual tasks to make the student feel included and engaged.<sup>28</sup>

What he requires - he wants to know that he's being helpful. I let him do stuff. I give him responsibilities - bringing stuff up to the office. He goes and checks the mail at 2 o'clock every day. When he knows that he is being needed and being responsible that's really the best thing for him. He has anger issues. When he gets mad, I just have to sit him down and talk to him. It doesn't take long just to let him know that you are listening and that you care. That's the main thing for him. (32)

Intensive efforts to understand the underlying cause of the student's disruptive behavior resulted in providing the teacher with could be used to implement support and positive teaching strategies.

General classroom teachers make innumerable decisions per day. Teachers are the ones that decide which ability groups to place the students into, whether to hold a student back, and how much time to spend with each student which in turn may exacerbate the educational inequalities that already exist. Often these decisions are made under the duress of high demands on their time and with scarce support of resources. However, the teachers in the previous examples were able to grant their students with disabilities an opportunity to define for themselves who they are prior to the teacher making judgments regarding the student's needs. This value calls for a momentary suspension of judgment to allow diverse students to articulate their diverse needs. Suspending judgment does not come easily to professionals who are supposed to be in the driver's seat and expected to tell others how to live their lives.

Bourdieu (1977) argued that teachers used cultural capital as a way of promoting students, while maintaining the appearance that students were being evaluated on their abilities: "By making social hierarchies and the reproduction of these hierarchies appear to

be based upon the hierarchy of ‘gifts,’ merits, or skills established and ratified by its sanctions, or in a word, by converting social hierarchies into academic hierarchies, the educational system fulfills a function of legitimation . . .’ (p. 496). Bourdieu’s theory implies that elementary school teachers will rate students who have cultural capital as more skilled than those who lack it. Habitus can be seen in these examples as extended and representing deep rooted ‘dispositions’ that operate only through and by interaction with events and actions, manifesting itself in choices (the roots of which are not wholly conscious) and the identification of opportunities and strategies. This might mean that distinction, hierarchy and power reactions could deepen the prejudice, exclusion and oppression that students with disabilities have experienced throughout modernity. Although some students have habitus that permits them to be more successful in the field, the ultimate responsibility for emancipating oppressed groups should reside with the adults.

### **Distinction.**

One important theme in the teachers’ beliefs presented in this research refers Bourdieu’s theoretical construct of distinction. For Bourdieu, distinction had multiple meanings. For this research, distinction refers to one’s ability to move both within, and outside of, a certain field (e.g., public education) to broaden one’s possibilities to achieve needed resources to reach certain goals (Bourdieu, 1990). The researcher analyzed teacher interviews for social incidences or exchanges where teacher recognition was affirmed. For example, a teacher that had a class of students that obtained high scores on high stakes accountability tests may lead to distinction. When instructional resources are limited and fixed and “excellence” is measured by high test scores, the incentive will be for teachers to

implement practices that maximize the mean. Less responsive students would be considered less desirable in a market where high mean test scores are valued.<sup>29</sup>

You have to look at her chance of passing this EOG. I hate to keep bringing up that test because it is really more about growth than about passing it. I have to get past that. But at the same time we are being judged as professionals on how we move these kids or how successful they are. To me, I know they are EC kids, but they expect us to work miracles with very little resources. (23b)

However, high scores on accountability measures were not the only means to distinction. The building principal represents a powerful authority in the field that can provide legitimacy and distinction to teachers. Below is one example of principal ascribed distinction. By bringing attention to the efforts of a teacher, a principal can give a teacher distinction within the field.<sup>30</sup> However, it is clear that teachers struggle for distinction within their field. At times, the ascribed distinction of a principal can turn into a struggle within a field.<sup>31</sup>

Then they (administrator) kind of said, “OK. Here’s your best teachers. Go observe this part of their lesson and this part of their lesson. There’s a lot of friction that comes from that.” (query). Some teachers felt they were , this is how I perceived it, it was never stated but you could just kind of tell with behaviors that there were teachers that felt that they were not doing as well as they thought they were, or they thought they were doing better, or doing well enough that they should have been selected. That kind of thing. (45)

This exchange explains the profitability of a teacher accumulating and maintaining capital. If a teacher is perceived by his/her peers as having capital, then the possessor of capital is capable of transforming all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections. They are sought after for their capital and, because they are well known, are worthy of being known (‘he was selected,’ ‘He is doing well’); they will have power within the field.

For Bourdieu, actors are ‘species of capital’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 97) who accrue a wide range of resources in order to climb positions of relative power within the field.

Positions within the field must be analyzed by their distinctive profiles of capital associated with them. Within any given field, different specific actors will engage in the ongoing struggles within the field for greater advantages in the field. The purpose of the contestation among actors is to gain the capacity to produce recognition of the legitimacy of this capital distinction among contending actors (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005). In other words, the person with the most capital gets to make the rules about how to get more capital.

The second research question asked “To what extent are Bourdieu’s concepts related to the medical-social model continuum?” The schoolyard is a marketplace where a common capital exists. Teachers engage in transactions to legitimize their position among the other teachers. Students with disabilities represent low capital that could be construed as an obstacle to accruing power and influence in school. During the process of pupil assignments, teachers bargained with the administrator to gain distinction in the eyes of the principal. Teachers with a cluster of students with disabilities may engage in subversion strategies with colleagues over capital. Classroom test scores, affirmations from the principal, and deal-making were means to distinction. Unfortunately, students with disabilities occupy the most dominated position in the field and are the least suited for the contestations in the field. Although some students have habitus that permits them to be more successful in the field, the ultimate responsibility for emancipating oppressed groups should reside with the adults.

### **Research Question 3: Exclusion**

In this section, the analysis transitions towards Bourdieu’s central question: “How stratified social systems of hierarchy and domination persist and reproduce inter-generationally

without powerful resistance and without the conscious recognition of its members” (Swartz, 1997, p. 6). Research question three applies Bourdieu’s central question to special education: How does exclusion persist in special education without conscious recognition or public resistance? The focus of this section, therefore, was to investigate the relatively autonomous field of conflict that interlocks teachers in a struggle over valued resources. To answer this question, the researcher examined the social interconnectedness of the teachers in the field of struggle and how they pursue strategies to achieve their interests within the field (Swartz, 1997). Therefore, to define the field is to identify the terrain of contestation. In the following section, the researcher sought to go beyond more observable phenomena to explore dynamic or conflictual actions in the social lives of the teachers.

Bourdieu’s framework assumes that social agents do not have innate knowledge of what they are and what they do; more precisely, they do not necessarily have access to the reason for the discontent or their distress. Therefore, the most spontaneous declarations can, with no intention of dissimulation, express something quite different from what they are apparently saying (Swartz, 1997). The field of fifth grade teachers provides an illustration of how Bourdieusian field analysis might be constructed. This inquiry commenced by analyzing the space of delivering special education services to students with disabilities. The intent of the analysis was to demonstrate how the approach might lead to alternative ways of understanding inclusive systems and practices.

### **Pressures of high stakes tests.**

The rise of accountability policies, such as IDEA and NCLB, reflect a change in the institutional field of education that has implications for the social order of the school. However, the responses of the teachers indicated that these implications are not given;

rather, they are negotiated through social interactions among actors in the field. Factors related to NCLB such as the special education subgroup and the high stakes testing emerged from the participants' responses. At the most global level, all teachers hold beliefs about the purpose of schooling. For some teachers, NCLB requirements for high stakes accountability testing contributed to the tension and struggle within the field. A national trend is that teachers' performance is tied to student performance on end-of-year high stakes accountability tests. One teacher expressed how this trend contributed to a negative climate related to clusters of students with disabilities being placed into teachers' classrooms.<sup>32</sup> A teacher pointed out that the impending end-of-grade exams induce a sense of stress and frustration in students with disabilities.<sup>33</sup> Clearly, the classroom teachers struggle on a daily basis to supply high quality of instruction with minimal resources but seemingly unlimited demands. Another teacher perceived the district's push to tie IEP goals to standards on the curriculum as encroaching on the teacher's discretion as a profession:<sup>34</sup> "This has shifted since our County has towards a more regimented, controlling of the classroom teacher." (39)

The pressures of time and accountability may contribute to the finding that teachers expressed ambivalent support of the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. The following teacher related the amount of time that was needed to plan for and then implement services to all students in the classroom.<sup>35</sup>

Impossible to do every single one of them. I do no planning at school. I do no grading at school. That all goes home, because, when I'm at school from the time I walk in until the time I leave - almost - I am with students and helping them. Somebody always needs something. There's always something to do. (48b)

Teacher interviews frequently highlighted the serious obstacles that they face on a daily basis in providing equitable services to all students in their classrooms. Obstacles could be translated into struggles with their grade level colleagues as well as with their counterparts in the special education department for distinction and acquiring limited resources. The next section describes strategies for understanding the field's organization in particular, the tendency of actors within a field to value different capitals to an actor's own benefit. These strategies of valuation, called subversion strategies (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005) served to grant validity to the overwhelming demands of the teacher's daily duties while subverting the capital of other competitors in the field.

### **Separate Programs.**

This section analyzes the tendency to create fragmentary solutions to systemic problems. The charge of fragmented programs served to alleviate the individual teacher's accountability to serve the child while deferring responsibility towards another teacher in the building. For these teachers utilizing this subversion strategy, the separate programs of special education and regular education were perceived by teachers to be operating in total disjointedness from each other. Some examples were provided by general education teachers drawing a separation in role from the special education teacher's role. Several participants shared that the special education teacher and regular education teacher have separate roles. A general education participant described her struggle to collaborate with the special education teacher.<sup>36</sup> If there is a lack of communication, it also stands to reason that there is a lack of coordination of services. In these next two cases, the fragmentation contributed to the teacher espousing her loss of accountability for the student.<sup>37 38</sup>



It would be nice if we could have the EC teachers plan with us and collaborate more about what they are doing in class because we get no grades from them and to be honest we get no work from them. (41a)

I really don't know what she is working on to be honest. As far as what I am working on, I go and tell her "we are working on this, can you work on this with so-and-so?" One week we were doing cause and effect. So, for her students, I said "look at these tests - they don't get it -can you go over this with them?" She'll tell me whenever they are working on some writing stuff but as far as... I don't know what she is doing in reading with her. (32b)

One teacher presented that the roles are so dichotomous that it is impossible to have both the special education and regular education teachers to perform their remote duties in a single day with a single child.<sup>39</sup>

Here, they are so hung up on their individual goals, I mean I don't know the legalness, I am sure there is some legality to make sure that they get their individual roles, but to me it is unrealistic to expect the EC teacher to come here and work with a specific grade level and then work on the individual goals of the student. (23b)

All of the teachers discussed wanting to do what was best for their students, but at times, the teachers were conflicted with the needs of the one student versus the needs of the whole class. At times, especially in response to struggling students, the teachers questioned their capacity or professional knowledge to provide the appropriate services. These moments of uncertainty seemed to promote the tendency that the child should be in a different classroom; a classroom where a teacher with specialized knowledge can teach the student.

On the other hand, some teachers did not use the fragmented programs as a subversion strategy. These teachers were active and assertive in their service delivery as to not allow the separate programs to result in a loss of accountability. A contributor to teachers' beliefs included the cultural norm of the school, and may result from teachers'

experiences in collaborating with colleagues in working with students with disabilities, such as resource teachers and school leaders, and possibly with the parents of the students. One teacher with a particularly challenging student found support in the fact that she could call on anyone in the building if she needed help.<sup>40</sup> When one teacher was asked how she worked with the special education teacher, she replied “I really feel good about how much we talk and plan otherwise I don't ... I think it would be impossible to try” (52). Many teachers believed it was critical to have formal and informal opportunities to collaborate with other professionals to support their efforts to meet the needs of students with disabilities in an inclusive setting.

Some participating teachers expressed favorable experiences including students with disabilities when they felt supported by the special education teacher. Specifically, the teacher described a positive collaborative relationship with special education teacher.<sup>41</sup> As presented earlier, some teachers believed that the time spent on the individual goals of the IEP was time taken away from working on grade level curriculum. However, as opposed to having individualized goals being an obstacle to teaching the majority of the students, one teacher found that the IEP goals on one student’s IEP were helpful for teaching the entire class.<sup>42</sup> This, in fact, is the strongest case of overt universal design. Good teaching is good teaching. The above teacher found that if one student requires direct instruction in an area, likely, the teacher could turn the teaching point into a lesson that could benefit everyone in the classroom.

A variety of social and educational forces result in the traditionally dichotomous relationship between general and special education. A review of Table 6 indicates that teachers across the medical-social model continuum struggled with the fragmentation of

duties between special education teachers and general education teachers. There were 29 incidences of teachers coded on the “EC/Regular education function separately” theme with total scores ranging from 23 to 51. However, some teachers, especially those on the social model end of the continuum, made concerned efforts to reduce the gap between the two delivery systems. Specifically, there were 20 incidences of teachers coded on the “EC/Regular - integrate/collaborate” theme with 14 of the 20 having a score above the mean score (38). Clearly, there is a need for better collaboration among service providers regardless of service delivery model. Some teachers, generally on the social-model end of the continuum, were much more accomplished and assertive about making sure that information was being shared among the two or more service providers for a student. Others, more likely on the medical model end of the continuum, were more willing to be passive and draw lines between responsibilities among the teachers’ roles.

### **Clustering.**

Obstacles among practitioners contributed to the tendency to utilize strategies of valuation, called subversion strategies (Emirbayer & Williams, 2005). Subversion served to grant validity to the overwhelming demands of the teacher’s daily duties while subverting the capital of other competitors in the field. Subversion strategies were utilized between departments as well as among teachers within the same department. Subversion strategies were evident as teachers discussed a local scheduling approach termed ‘clustering.’ Clustering refers to the tendency to place a larger than expected group of students with disabilities in the same general education classroom. The intended benefit of the scheduling strategy was that a single special education teacher could provide co-teaching services with a

single general education teacher rather than have to deliver services among many grade level classrooms. However, the clustering strategy also had some negative repercussions. Specifically, special education students were not distributed equally among the grade level teachers, so the teacher with the cluster described being overly burdened by challenging students compared to their colleagues. For example, one teacher in the fifth grade level might have five or six students with disabilities while her/his neighbor has none.

Within the field, teachers that had clusters of special education students tended to use the trials and tribulations that they face in teaching a large group of students with disabilities as subversion strategies. Crucial to understanding the dynamics of the field of fifth grade teaches is the distinction between “cluster” class scheduling and “non-cluster” class scheduling. Teachers without the cluster were clearly aware that they had an advantage related to teacher performance accountability factors related to student performance. Teachers also tended to resent the ability of teachers without the cluster of students with disabilities in their classrooms. Their complaints about the asymmetry assignments of the students with disabilities cluster served to subvert their counterparts who did not have as many students with disabilities assigned to their classrooms.<sup>43</sup>

One teacher that I work with, in my grade level, she has the AIG cluster. She is an excellent teacher, I mean regardless of whatever type the student she has. However, she has more time to plan. I mean, it is so ironic that we have the lower students but we don't have the time to think of more individualized instruction. She has the time because she has the higher kids. I mean, it's like, with her having AIG cluster, they go to the AIG teacher for reading. If you have six AIG kids, they leave your room, so if you have a class of 24 then you only have 18 kids to do a reading group. For me and (other 5th grade teacher with cluster), we have to teach reading for our whole class. So we have six extra kids that we have for reading group. (23b)

Conversely, a teacher without a cluster lamented a fellow teacher's chance of having proficient classroom performance results on the accountability test because she had a cluster of students with disabilities.<sup>44</sup>

I do feel for Ms. (5th grade teacher with EC cluster) because of like assessments and things, she's already got the deck stacked where she is not going to perform as well. So there are some flaws in that too. (39)

Several general education teachers expressed their worries of being unable to meet the needs of all the students because the teacher may have to focus more attention on the students with disabilities. A related struggle was finding a balance between meeting the needs of the student with disabilities while simultaneously meeting the needs of the entire class. One teacher discussed the conflicts of having to make decisions about where to focus his efforts in the classroom.<sup>45</sup>

I like the inclusion, but the hesitant thing about it is that there have been some years where I have had large amounts of EC students... And it becomes a kind of struggle about where is your energy going in your classroom. Because I just have one this year, it is sort of a special situation, it doesn't impede me that much. But years where I have had clusters of 6 or 7 EC students, then I may have the AIG students as well, it becomes very difficult to juggle all those balls because you want to provide all of your students with what is challenging, but it is difficult. So I don't think EC students should be ability grouped, or put in class for this level kid or that level kid. But I do think, a lot of times, our programs seem geared towards those students, and I worry about pulling time away from your mainstream student or our gifted student because you are putting a lot of energy into helping the EC student. But again this year, that is not really an issue for me. But in the past I have felt conflicted...(39)

Including students with disabilities in the classroom and providing them with the supports necessary to be successful was clearly a challenge. At some point during the year, all the teachers struggled with how to best handle curriculum requirements while making inclusion

work. A second factor was that the classroom is comprised of students of a wide variety of skills and needs. One teacher called her classroom a 'bipolar classroom' because she had been assigned a group of students with such widely variant skill levels:

That has been a challenge having the AIG and the EC together. (query). I have 40% of my children are at risk; I have 17%'s on grade level; and I have 43% above grade level. That is the makeup of my class this year. I call it the 'bipolar class,' lightly speaking, but seriously it is. (49)

The next section investigates the tendency for teachers to view teaching special education students as requiring unique pedagogical knowledge and skills beyond their training as general education teachers.

### **Unique pedagogical knowledge and skills.**

Some participants in general education believed their training was insufficient for inclusion. This finding is consistent with the SPeNSE report (OSEP, 2001) that indicated that less than one-third of teachers who had been teaching six years or less had received training in their teacher preparation program related to collaborating with special education and less than half had received any training in adapting instruction. For many of the teachers in this study, the provision of services to students with disabilities was portrayed as a body of specialized knowledge that general educators do not have.<sup>46</sup>

I would also like to have more training and I know that's hard. I mean we are trained in everything, but it always seems like EC is the one I haven't had much training. A lot of that is just things I've read on my own or the (EC teacher) tell me, tell me, tell me, everything they know. I'd like to be able to know all the specifics that she knows and she is getting me there. I don't feel like there's enough of that. We get a lot of technology training which is great; we get a lot of training in reading, which is good; but if I counted up all the training for EC ... on one hand. I'm ashamed. Because I think I could do a lot better when I'm doing right now right now. I'm feeling my way around with (EC teacher) holding my hand. (52)

Similar to the charge of fragmented programs, the subversion strategy served to alleviate the individual teacher's accountability to teach the child while deferring responsibility towards another teacher in the building.

At times, the support needed from the special education teacher was minimal and specific; serving as a validity check for the regular education teacher to make sure she is on the right track.<sup>47</sup>

Sometimes, it's the next step to take with her. Sometimes, it's just to confirm that what I'm doing is best and in her interest for an LD child since that's not my background. (45a)

Other teachers expressed profound deficits in their training program. This particular teacher obtained her teaching credential through an alternative program for people who already had a bachelor's degree. However, she was quick to describe her lack of training early in the interview; almost as a defensive mechanism or pre-emptive strike against any questions that might challenge her existing professional knowledge.<sup>48</sup>

I will tell you that through that program, I never had any special education training. They never offered special education so I had no special training coming into the classroom. None whatsoever; not a special education class; nothing to do with special education. I've never heard of an IEP. (36a)

Same teacher later in interview attributed her difficulties working with a student to her lack of preparation in her teacher training program.<sup>49</sup>

I don't know enough about it. Like I said I never had that class. I don't know enough about it to... I have never done it before.... I don't know what else they do besides what I saw (EC teacher) do. (36a)

Capper and Frattura (2009) posit that, in order to promote inclusive environments, regular education teachers can no longer concede or defer their power or expertise to so-called experts down the hall, at another school, or in another district. In addition, the student

services staff (typically referred to as the "experts" for particular students, e.g., special education, bilingual, or reading teachers, to name a few) no longer view themselves as only responsible for meeting the needs of particular students or subject areas. Instead, these educators must view their primary roles as developing the capacity of each other to teach a range of students in the classroom. In that sense, though they may work with individual students in partial classrooms, in every single teaching situation, their primary focus shifts to sharing expertise. However, for a teacher, a challenging student may be perceived as potentially stretching those already thin resources even thinner. This dynamic contributes to the theme that effort to gain capital occurs within a zero-sum game.

**Zero-sum game.**

A zero-sum game is a situation in which a participant's gain or loss is exactly balanced by the losses or gains of the other participants. If the total gains of the participants are added up, and the total losses are subtracted, they will sum to zero. There was a theme among the teachers that the struggle by teachers to serve students with disabilities was a zero sum game. In this perspective, a teacher could only provide finite amount of effort and instructional services in one classroom. With scarce resources and limitations in instructional efforts, a teacher must make decisions on how to best allocate instructional services among a variety of students. In a zero-sum game, limited resources become a constraint by which teachers must determine their behavior. The range of academic performance levels among students that a teacher can effectively accommodate seems to be an issue. If unsupported, the teachers become overwhelmed with the wide variance among students in their classrooms.<sup>50</sup> An obvious trend was that teachers seemed to allocate copious amounts of instructional time to promote individual student performance by



spending extensive individual time with the student with disability.<sup>51</sup> Teachers reported concern that they were giving disproportionate amounts of their time to some students at the expense of other students. There was a concern that while a teacher is focused on individualizing for one student, the other students are neglected.<sup>52</sup> Logically, it follows, to start prioritizing resources and focus on strategies that maximize capital. Therefore, the tendency to default more challenging students away from the norm group us a natural, but unfortunate, consequence.

### **Sorting.**

When a student differs from the dominant group, there is incentive to track and marginalize the student away from the mainstream. Unfortunately, the number of students that are sorted away from the “regular education” norm group is increasing (CSEF, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Zhang, & Katsiyannis, 2002). The theme of sorting emerged from the data. Sorting refers to the tendency or incentive to track and marginalize the student away from the mainstream. Sorting generally was related to placing students with disabilities into classrooms with other students of like deficits for part or all of the day.<sup>53</sup>

One thing I liked was they grouped them by level and that helped a lot. Like they were together a lot of the day ... They would have all the kids in the morning come together and the teacher would do an activity. Then other kids would go to other rooms by level, and the teacher would work with them all day. Like the really high performing; the group we worked with was the low; they were mostly Spanish and African American. You had to teach them how to learn to read in third grade because they still didn't understand stuff. (41a)

From the Bourdieusian perspective, it is interesting to note the teacher’s illicit inference that the disabled and minority populations are intricately interlinked. The same teacher referred

to sorting as a solution to help cope with the large variance of student needs within his/her class.<sup>54</sup> One participant shared her ambivalence with a concern that inclusive placements were not beneficial for some students who are unable to maintain the pace of the standardized grade level curriculum.<sup>55</sup>

For special education, when you have all children in one classroom; by all students I mean EC, your regular ed and your AIG kids, I think it is hard to reach all kids because your AIG kids are bored, your EC kids don't get it, and then you are left with your regular ed students. So I think if you could group students more: getting your EC cluster together and getting your regular education cluster together and your AIG cluster together, you could find teachers that specialize in those certain areas. They would use totally different strategies to reach totally different groups of kids. I think those strategies, I am repeating myself here, your EC teachers, they would work on reading strategies aren't getting the kids reading levels up compared to the AIG teachers would give those students more of a challenge that the EC kids couldn't handle or some of the regular Ed kids couldn't handle. So that might be something different. (29)

Another teacher wanted to protect students with disabilities from the negative social implications of being included with their peers and the potential impact on the student's self-concept.<sup>56</sup>

I think sometimes the mainstreaming hurts. If I could do it, I would change some of the mainstreaming stuff, because for some kids that are just so far behind, I think that they get very disgusted and discouraged and their self esteem is just really torn at, because they can't get to where their classmates are and they feel that they are just dumb. I think that if they were in a setting where they were made to feel more successful - I know that if the classroom teacher can try, that they still can see those peers and they judge themselves up to what those peers are doing. I think that I would base it on what their classroom teacher feels, if they were being mainstreamed, and just decide from there what would be the best setting. (41c)

These responses reflect a general theme that teachers have scarce resources but a high demand for their time. Clearly, if teachers are left in isolation to serve a class full of students

with diverse needs, then the teachers tended to conceptualize the students with disabilities as requiring too much teacher attention that take time away from other students.

Research question 3 asked “How does exclusion persist in special education without conscious recognition or public resistance?” These teacher interviews demonstrate that diversity from “the norm” may be perceived as problematic in schools. Those students that exhibit significant deviations from the norm are sorted away from their peers. Because teachers perceive these classifications to be academic, they employ them as legitimate labels without full awareness of their social consequences. Through socialization, they have been incorporated as practical instruments that actors employ without conscious reflection. Yet, these academic judgments are also social judgments that ratify and reproduce social class distinctions (Swartz, 1997). The dominant framework for understanding disability in the modern period has been the medical model. The importance of the medical model perspective for this analysis is that it frames the problem of school failure and ultimately of students who have defaulted from the normed group. If education, as an institution, continues to slot and categorize students that do not meet dominant criteria, then educators, whether purposefully or tacitly, will continue to marginalize groups of people. When examining the entire sorting mechanism in the schools, the medical model framework seems to fall short because it fails to address the broader fields of power that are active in the field. The teachers in this study do not overtly prescribe to either model, social or medical, but tend to function within a field of struggle on a daily basis.

Federal and state accountability programs pressure teachers to meet proficiency scores on high stakes standardized accountability tests. Instruction is predominantly driven by a standardized state curriculum. However, teachers are constrained by a scarcity of supports

and instructional resources available in the field. In order to prioritize their efforts, students are sorted into classrooms with other children of like deficits for parts or all of the day. Often, the criterion for sorting students was based on deep rooted 'dispositions' that operate only through and by interaction with events and actions. Too often, these decisions lead down a path towards separateness and potential oppression. General classroom teachers, if left to overwhelming demands and scarce resources, will tend to sort students towards default programs.

Bourdieu is adamant that actors are not automatons. Actors actively pursue capital that they value. All actors do not have the same values, so a researcher should avoid a linear interpretation of capital. In other words, more of one kind of capital is better and all agents are simply trying to accumulate the most capital. Within a Bourdieusian framework, teachers' preferences and predispositions would fall into the realm of doxa. Given the empirical evidence that teachers' attitudes and behaviors influence successful academic and social-emotional inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms, it is important that teachers have positive attitudes and behaviors toward students with disabilities. The field of fifth grade teachers was a space ripe with tensions and mutually opposing strategies of action. However, it is worth noting again that all of the teachers involved in this study, regardless of their partial position they occupy within the field, were heavily invested in the work of helping students, including those students with disabilities. The current findings revealed that teachers with supports demonstrated the capacity to change the circumstances and prevent the development of an oppressed subgroup. These emancipatory themes emerged that serves as a basis for discussion in Chapter V. Discussion in Chapter V recapsulates the struggles in the field and focuses on emancipatory themes;

factors that contributed to teachers overcoming the standard operational procedures of the school to promote an inclusive environment that successfully met all students' needs. A concern to be addressed in this study is to what extent special education can be viewed as a legitimizing instructional practice that, in effect, shifts the blame for school failure to students through standard and objectifying discourses, while reducing diversity by implementing exclusionary practices. A hypothesis for this study is that organizational sanctioned capital, or more broadly, the placement of the student with disability along a continuum between good and challenging, emerges from the cumulative impressions that teachers develop of a student in response to the students 'fit' within current delivery system.

## CHAPTER 5

### Discussion

The purpose of utilizing a Bourdieusian approach in this paper was to go beyond the identification of environmental forces of struggle and oppression. The unequal distribution of all forms of capital is related not only to class but also to dynamics of racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, and, germane to this study, disability. These perpetual conditions of discrimination are located within public service organizational cultures and have persisted despite long drawn out attempts to promote equalities. Within the field of education, special education has been subject to criticism due to poor outcomes for students with disabilities. Despite decades of legal impetus for equal rights for students with disabilities, the outcomes for students with disabilities are persistently poor. Students with disabilities are especially vulnerable to dropping out. Outcomes have been even more dismal for students that are both disabled and of color (Harry & Klingner, 2006). While 62% of European American students with disabilities graduate with high school diplomas, the same is true for only 49.2% of Latinos and 39.2% of African Americans (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Also, despite legal requirements for least restrictive environments, students are increasingly being placed into special education and being served in separate classrooms. Advocates of inclusion have pointed to the disproportionate labeling of minorities as an indicator that something has been wrong (Harry & Klingner, 2006). Another bothersome tradition has been that although teachers have continued to refer students to special education, there has been a lack of positive results from pull-out services. Examining the aforementioned inequities associated with students with disabilities has been integral to the purpose of this

study. Bourdieu's central question of "how do inequities of privilege and power persist without conscious recognition or public resistance?" seems to apply well to the field of education and the struggles to educate students with disabilities.

### **Medical-Social Model Revisited**

In the medical model, the premise that school failure is located within the child's brain and it impairs the child's ability to do well in school, is an obstacle that needs to be overcome. Those students that exhibit significant deviations from the norm are sorted away from their peers. Often, the label of disability has been socially constructed (Brantlinger, 2004; Rice, 2002) through a narrow vision of what counts as acceptable and what counts as acceptable ways of demonstrating knowledge. These narrow views are propagated by a society that is fixated on normalizing populations and standardizing education. Special educators have "embraced the construct of intelligence" (Reid & Valle, 2004, p. 469). There is a prevailing but irrational premise that all children should be at least average and students who fall below the standard deviations that surround the statistical average should be labeled as at-risk or disabled (Brantlinger, 2004). However, by the very nature of distributing a population normally (e.g. applying a bell curve), some students will always exist in the "below average" range. It is impossible for all of the population to be "average" or "above average" in all areas. This normative process of identifying students who are academically capable (a narrowly defined) inherently embraces "domination through 'Othering'," where the dominant group "considers itself normal and able" and the "Others become abnormal and disabled" (Brantlinger, 2001, p. 1). Brantlinger (2004, p. 491) proposed, "instead the norm of...variation should be expected." What is the rationale behind measuring how far students vary from a norm? Who benefits from such practices?

The current research supports the answer that the institution of school benefits. Locating the learning obstacle within the individual student offers the school a convenient explanation for student failure. The concept of labeling serves the purpose of swaying the spotlight of responsibility away from the school by offering an explanation that does not call instructional practices into question (Skrtic, 1995; Varenne & McDermott, 1999). It serves to absolve the school of the need to reflect upon and possibly alter the environments (physical, social, emotional and academic), in which the child's learning experiences take place. The fault is placed within the child rather than within the schooling system. Using this perspective, identifying children as disabled "can be viewed as the means by which the failure of the system and the exclusionary pressures within it are transformed into the failings of students" (Booth, 1998, p. 83).

The construct of disability in schools was born from and is sustained by pervasive cultural and historic ideologies of schooling, including individualism (effort and ability) and competition with others (Dudley-Marling, 2004; McDermott, 1993). Schools are the primary means for inculcating American culture in children (Reid & Valle, 2004). The predominant assumption has been that success in school can be achieved through an individual's effort, ability, and hard work. However, when students do not succeed, the school has an incentive, likely on an illicit and insidious level, to attribute the failure to the internal disability. The school has less incentive to attribute failure to factors related to the learning context and environment, such as a mismatch between the learner and the task, inadequate instruction or inadequate social and emotional support structures.

When a child's ways of "doing school" (*habitus*) is "noticeably different from that of the school, educators may question a child's...competence and use standardized tests to



‘diagnose disability’” (Reid & Valle, 2004, p. 469). Thus, “dominant ideological practices and discourses” in schools become rituals that serve to “shape our vision of reality” and sustain the status quo (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 440). Thomas Hehir (2005) offered the following pertinent questions for us to ponder:

Is our role simply to comply with law or to comply with the spirit of the law?  
Are we providers of service, or do we produce results?...Are the only  
important results of our efforts performance on standards-based tests, or do we  
have a more robust agenda? Do we accept dominant negative societal  
attitudes toward disability, or do we seek to change the world through  
education? (p. 9)

Heir’s question raises a paradoxical purpose for special education. The IDEA law was enacted to protect students with disabilities. However, the compliance and service delivery associated with the law has lead to some unintended consequences.

### **Special Education Paradox**

This research presents a paradox. The IDEA was designed to expand access and educational rights for students with disabilities and it largely achieved its goal of ensuring greater access to schooling and increased provision of services. Although the intent of special education legislation and policy was to ensure access and equitable services to students with disabilities, this research suggests the possibility that, in actuality, special education may be a mechanism for sorting and marginalizing students with less cultural capital. While born from intent to support struggling students and thus meant to be “productive aspects of power” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 439), special education guidelines and practices often serve as “oppressive acts of power” (Kincheloe & McLaren,

1994, p. 439) that encourage labeled students and their parents to “consent to domination” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994).

Deductively, the next question becomes “how do we fix the law?” However, Falvey (2005, p. 4) posits that “such changes in attitude toward people with disabilities will not come as a result of legislation, litigation, or even government paving the way but rather through daily contacts and interactions with people with disabilities and their families.” In a Bourdieusian framework, change will likely be at the doxic level, not at the federal level. Lawmakers, however so competent, may never scribe a legal code that makes teachers embrace inclusion. Rather, on a doxic level, teachers must realize that they have enormous influence over how children feel about themselves and how they perceive others. Teachers must celebrate each student’s growth in the cognitive, emotional, social and physical realms. Classrooms and schools need to be places that embrace and foster cooperation and teamwork, rather than competitiveness. Educators must require and “model respectful interactions that allow children...to be who they are and to achieve their greatest potential” (Falvey, 2005, p. 4). Educators must each work diligently to become aware of and to eliminate practices and policies that support deficit thinking, deterministic thinking and sorting mechanisms.

### **Bourdieu Revisited**

Emirbayer and Williams (2005) posit that any Bourdieu-inspired analysis entails thinking systematically in terms of fields. Bourdieu employed a very wide definition of field. In going beyond ‘defined’ institutions as fields, Bourdieu drew specific attention to the difficulty of defining limits to ‘fields.’ By using the ‘broadest possible range of factors that

shape behavior rather than delimit a precise area of activity' (Swartz, 1997), Bourdieu's boundaries of particular 'fields' were not seen in any way as being precise. Indeed the boundaries of 'fields' may themselves represent particular areas of struggle within a wider view of competing forces. For Bourdieu, the fields operate as relatively autonomous social universes, each with its own rules and sense of the game. It is within these fields that the specific conflicts unfold between those agents involved. Education, bureaucracy, religion, science and art, to name a few, are all specific fields. This means that they are structured according to those characteristic conflicts in which different perspectives are pitted against each other, each struggling to prevail.

Bourdieu's framework explicitly acknowledges complexities resulting from the interactions of individuals and societies, rather than focusing on the individual as an autonomous actor in detextualized environments (Swartz, 1997). Examining the ways in which the acquisition and use of capital are mediated by social interaction has been an important step in understanding the contextual factors that affect successful or unsuccessful implementation of inclusive practices in heterogeneous classrooms. What follows is a discussion of the findings as they build upon the current literature base. In addition, the discussion is linked to Bourdieu's theoretical framework that underpinned the study. Ultimately, the findings of this paper can be used to promote emancipatory practices for students with disabilities.

### **Doxa.**

According to (Deer, 2008), doxa refers to pre-reflexive, shared but unquestioned opinions and perceptions mediated by the field. According to Swartz (1997), entry into the field requires tacit acceptance of the rules of the game in the field. Thus, participation in the

professional field limits the struggle to forms and terms that are considered legitimate professional procedure. In the field of public education, much of the impetus behind the inclusion movement has been externally imposed by federal mandates IDEA and NCLB. As a result of inclusion, general education teachers are facing students' academic and behavioral issues that formerly would have been addressed in special education classrooms. Compliance with these powerful federal laws is neither linear nor consensual. There is much variance among local practitioners and local educational agencies in response, both professionally and emotionally, to the inclusion movement. Both IDEA and NCLB represent a subtle shift in thinking but, in default mode, revert easily to a model that situates disability squarely in the lap of the individual. Once the teachers have intervened with their greatest efforts and the students are not responding, the deficit model can find its way back into the schools again.

Bureaucratic mandates focus on rational-legal authority and increase centralized administrative scrutiny, but authentic change appears to be more likely when emphasis is on the doxic level. Admittedly, accountability mandates, such as NCLB and IDEA, emphasize formal authority and the compliance model can not be reversed. School professionals will likely always be subjected to top-down ties to broader fields of power. However, informal social interactions among actors in the field are fundamental to the social order of the school. School-based professionals may encourage horizontal social linkages across teachers and student groups that are necessary to spread information and innovation.

So, what is doxic change? The goal of a teacher as agent should be to modify individual practice by unpeeling layers of accumulated social custom and dismantling the

obstacles to full participation and dignity. Teachers are not always conscious of their power and may be threatened or mystified by anyone calling attention to it. Teachers must recognize consciously that the most vulnerable populations may be the most threatened when teachers protect their turf.

To overcome habitually oppressive practices, strong schools need strong teachers. A well organized school provides all the members with crucial feedback on their practices. Healthy social networks can multiply the efficacy of intervention by serving as partners in the development process. A great weakness of teaching is that teachers are not required to justify their teaching methods, course designs, and assessments against a set of learning principles. Indeed, in some academic settings, this point could be viewed as an assault on academic freedom. As a result, many well-intentioned teachers end up in the grip of unexamined habits of teaching. The inherent and perpetual isolation of individual staff members in schools only makes matters worse. Without regular opportunities to consider, observe, and analyze best practice and receive helpful, non-evaluative feedback, how likely are teachers to engage in critical analysis of their own teaching practices? Unfortunately, as a profession, teachers tend to be remarkably hyper-sensitive to feedback from students, parents, colleagues, and supervisors. When students fail to learn, some teachers end up blaming the students, without an honest investigation of where student fault ends and teacher responsibility begins.

Bourdieu's concepts provided a theoretical and empirical framework for the critique of classroom practices and prevailing standard practices including curriculum, pedagogy and instruments of assessment. For Bourdieu, "...everything is up for grabs. It appears as if

everyone is free to play, everything is negotiable. If it were not, the 'rules' of the games themselves would not be accepted. Everyone plays, but differential structures ensure that not everyone is equal" (Grenfell & James, 1998, p. 25). This research has illuminated the need to vigorously and continually question "the rules of the game" in name of learning even if the questions cause a level of discomfort. Educators have a tendency to become comfortable with their habits without awareness of potential unintended consequences or shortcomings. Educators need to continually ask the following questions: For whom is school currently not working as a place for learning? Why? How can we improve learning for all?

### **Habitus.**

This study found teachers had the tendency to view the inclusion of students with disabilities as a zero-sum game. When high needs students were introduced into the classroom, then there was the perception that other students would lose. However, Bourdieu's capital theory can provide some insight. Capital theory has the potential to help researchers and education professionals to step away from the tendency to examine the individual as the center of the problem. Importantly, 'habitus' is linked with what is practically achievable. According to Bourdieu (1977), habitus entails the practical evaluation of the likelihood of the success of a given action in a given situation. Therefore, habitus encourages actors to adopt forms of conduct likely to be successful based on past experience and current resources. In this research, habitus has been viewed as teachers' deeply rooted dispositions that operate only through and by interaction with events and actions. Habitus manifested itself in choices (the roots of which are not wholly conscious) and the identification of opportunities and strategies within the field. Specifically, for the

teachers in this study, when resources were scarce, there was a tendency to view the neediest students as the problem and there was incentive to sort them away from the mainstream.

Bourdieu's ideas provide insight into understanding these inequalities. Including students with disabilities is not a zero-sum game, and exchanges are not limited to zero-sum equations for multiple reasons. First, capital is subjective in amount and kind according to individual understandings of value. There cannot be a fixed amount of capital in a field if the capital that matters to each person is subjectively different. Certainly, there are resources that are not overly subjective in the way we experience them like time, effort, books, technology. Those resources are not interchangeable depending on who you are. However, there exists a vast difference in value in the subjective realm of capital. Much of what is often called capital is cultural or social, such as art and science. Ideas or concepts have values that are even more subjective. Within the field of education, individual human capacities and abilities count as capital and those are certainly not measured economically. But their value to each of us does vary, and it is subjective, depending on who we are.

Another reason the zero-sum equation does not apply is that capital can be created. Gains can be made, society will progress, and the pie can get bigger. Technology, art, literature, and the material goods are substantially different now than they were hundreds of years ago. The issue is that the zero-sum game can be a realistic constraint in the short-term. On any particular day, a teacher must deliver services solely with the resources in hand on that day. That includes her professional knowledge, skill set, professional development as well as material goods. However, over time, those resources can be increased or modified.

In the long term, capital does not have to be finite, it can be created. Over time, resources can be expanded and effort can reap greater rewards.

### **Overcoming deterministic thinking.**

The medical model of disability is, and has been, strongly associated with the potentially reactionary theme that biology is destiny, and thus embedded in popular culture by the naturalization of the view that natural aptitudes determine life changes. However, teachers within this study that ascribed medical model determinism (low IQ, lazy) to a child were also likely to ascribe deterministic thinking based on the broader social fields of power (NCLB, bureaucracy). Just as medical model may lead to deterministic thinking, the influence of these powerful social forces in the field may tempt professionals to see society as unresponsive to disabled populations. The social model could be perceived as trade-off of biological determinism for a social determinism.

Bourdieu's theory of reproduction has been deemed to be over-deterministic because of the impression that individual social actors behave solely according to social structures. In applying this critique to students with disabilities, it would be fatalistic to trade the biological determinism of the medical model for a structural determinism related to the social forces within the field of education. According to Deer (2008) in his analysis of heterodoxy and orthodoxy, Bourdieu concentrates heavily on the forces of domination at the expense of studying the power of agentic actions. However, Deer (2008) goes on to say that:

Doxa makes possible —the misrecognition of forms of social arbitrariness that engenders the unformulated, non-discursive, but internalized and practical recognition of that same social arbitrariness (p. 119).



In other words, you cannot fight what you don't understand. Any effective action against the predispositions and presuppositions of doxa depends on the ability to identify the social relations, structures that underlie the unquestioned doxic categorization.

This research sought to illuminate the underlying doxa of the medical model, as well as the unintended consequences of the social model, a means of transcending the dualism of the social-medical debate altogether. Bourdieu adamantly argued against the dualistic thinking by insisting his theory was in fact a distinct alternative to both structuralism determinism and phenomenological individualism (Swartz, 1997).

Bourdieu could be considered a critical structuralism. He recognizes the premise of structuralism, that independent structures in the social world may delimit in a specific way the behavior of the social actor. However, in Bourdieu's structuralism, individuals are able to build and adapt social phenomena through their thinking and their actions. So in the end he leads his own position away from the path of structuralism and towards constructedness. For Bourdieu, "If worlds are constructed, then they can be re-constructed in other ways and in other words" (Schubert, 2008, p. 196). So, although Bourdieu reinforces structures as an autonomous realities, he does not view subjective agents as passive holders of forces that form structures. Bourdieu promotes an interactive model where the structures influence the agent, but the structures are composed by human will. The social world is constantly constructed by agents with their own practices in the normal daily life. Society is the product of human actions: choice, judgment, meanings attributed to the lived world of individual agents.

### **Implications**

Students with disabilities are the recipients of layers of personal, social and

institutional decisions. These decisions are the final product of a vastly complex array of social dynamics that are both overt and illicit. Educators have the capacity to change circumstances. Teachers in this study were an inspiration that change can occur. This study found teachers that have overcome the obstacles in the field of struggle and have delivered inclusive services to students with disabilities. However, to make emancipatory practices more widespread, there is a lot of work to be done. The following section delineates some changes that would benefit the delivery of instructional services to students with disabilities as well as all students.

### **Teacher education.**

Among practitioners, services need to be shared rather than fragmentary. Among practitioners, this research identified frustrations with providing a concerted, child centered, instructional delivery system. One obstacle of locating the obstacle within the child was that it legitimizes the need for multiple special education personnel, including special education teachers, paraprofessionals, school psychologists, and speech and language therapists, to participate in instructing the child. It is assumed that these professionals are needed in order to provide “special” (not regular) services and interventions to “special” (not regular) children.

However, some teachers in this research, most notably, the teachers with social-model leaning scores, were able to share expertise. When the teachers shared expertise with the special education teacher, the emphasis was no longer on conceding or deferring their power or accountability for the child’s performance to so-called experts down the hall, at another school, or in another district. In addition, the special education staff (typically referred to as

the "experts" for special education students) could no longer view themselves as only responsible for meeting the needs of particular students or particular instructional goals. Instead, these educators must view their primary roles as developing the capacity of each other to teach a range of students in the classroom. In that sense, though they may work with individual students in partial classrooms, in every single teaching situation, their primary focus shifts to sharing expertise (Frattura & Topinka, 2006).

Just as expertise needs to be shared among service providers, there is a need to change the traditional balance of power between users and professionals. The 'deficit model' has led to the perspectives and contributions of people with students with disabilities and their families being underestimated and devalued, a tendency that has been further reinforced by traditional notions of professional knowledge and expertise.

The findings of this study provide insights for faculty and staff in teacher preparation programs and there are several implications to consider. Teacher education programs have historically been departmentalized, creating two separate preparation tracks; one system for general educator preparation and another system for special education (Jobling & Moni, 2004). More recently, education professionals are advocating for more collaborative programs hoping that the needs of diverse populations such as students with disabilities would be addressed in general education as well as special education (Blanton & Pugach, 2007). Indeed, if educators are unprepared for the complex context of today's diverse classrooms, negative attitudes will likely follow (Jobling & Moni, 2004).

Research suggests that negative attitudes acquired early in one's career are difficult to change when subsequent experiences are filtered through a negative bias (Murphy, 1996). Thus, if teachers leave their teacher education programs with negative attitudes about the

inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, they will be resistant to change in the future and less likely to promote positive outcomes for students with disabilities in inclusive environments (Murphy, 1996).

One practical implication of this research is the need for better communication among professionals regardless of the service delivery model. Some teachers were much more accomplished and assertive about making sure that information was being shared among the two or more service providers for a student. Others were more willing to be passive and draw lines between responsibilities among the teachers' roles. However, if services are truly child centered, then special education and regular education can no longer be divided. Special education teachers will require more training on standardized curriculum and exposure to grade-level content in regular education classrooms. Conversely, regular education teachers will need training to provide individualized instruction and become more familiar with the requirements of each student's individualized education plan (IEP). Thus, teacher preparation programs should carefully consider the settings in which special education and general education are instructed while attending school. For teachers to work together out in the schools, they should have more collaboration and cross-training while in their university training program.

### **Special education.**

To promote doxic change, professionals must be mindful that education is not an orderly system of structures, categories and services that lends itself easily to a simple review of historical events. While heavily rooted within the medical model of disability, special education is also an increasingly complicated arena in which legal, psychological,

scientific, social, cultural, historical and a host of other discourses compete. Special education is a field replete with tensions and contradictions and much debate. For education professionals who are attempting to implement emancipatory practices while simultaneously navigating everyday decision-making issues related to diagnosis, labeling, and treatment can be difficult since these decision making issues are traditionally guided by medical model thinking. Professionals with no interest in sorting are daily placed into the sorting role. Schools are social communities that craft their own realities, their own truths, and therefore their own local spin on disability. As professionals dedicated to working with students with disabilities, special educators will need to continue inquiring into the nature of disability. Special education continues to be embedded in popular culture that natural aptitudes determine life realities.

Ultimately, services should be based on the professional skills and knowledge of the teachers rather than based on the ascribed attributes of the student. Special education teachers that work in a school culture that reflects an ethos of shared expertise, open communication, and critical analysis of pedagogy are more likely to promote emancipatory practices. Also, discourse on the nature of disability needs to be integrated into the field of special education regarding the arbitrary nature of objectivity in naming disability.

### **General classroom teachers.**

First and foremost, teachers' beliefs have profound impact on classroom life. Teachers' beliefs are layered, multi-dimensional, sometimes implicit, and difficult to change. Teachers who fail to examine their beliefs may bring about unanticipated consequences in the classroom (Davis & Andrzejewski, 2009). Without intending to, teachers may set aside

valuable curriculum, overlook or marginalize students who need them, misinterpret students' motives or behavior, and limit their potential as professionals. Conversely, teachers who are willing to explore their beliefs, and how their beliefs relate to practice and the professional knowledge base, can capitalize on the beliefs they hold to promote students' intellectual growth, autonomy and reciprocity, and equity in their classrooms. Moreover, they create spaces for their own growth as they identify and revise beliefs that do not serve them, their students, or their schools.

Educators who wish to bring lasting and significant changes to their school settings have to ask themselves “How can I reform a system of which I am a part?” Professionals who want to bring change into their profession need not only the skills to implement change but also the resolve and courage to apply those skills. Likely, external, federally imposed change will not be successful. Practitioners need to be aware of power dynamics including the heterodoxy and orthodoxy within the field of struggle.

### **Future research.**

There is much yet to be learned about the developing attitudes about inclusion of regular education teachers. While this dissertation sought to add to the literature base about teacher attitudes about inclusion while teaching a student with a disability, there are multiple directions for future research in this area. In addition, the current study did not investigate the role of personal beliefs in philosophy, epistemology, or view of disability. In addition, ethnographic views of the regular education teacher's relationship with the special education teacher and the roles the student teacher plays in the classroom would be beneficial.

These are important variables that would require the researcher to spend more time in the classroom context. More research investigating the influence of the cooperating teacher is warranted. The relationship between the regular education teacher and the cooperating EC teacher is important to consider and future research needs to be conducted in this area to further the results of the current study. In addition, the Bourdieusian framework would shed some interesting light on relative capital among the two types of teachers. Are regular education teacher more likely to have capital within the field than the EC teachers? Or Vice versa?

A possible principle for analysis that is likely influential in the field is the racial composition of schools. Clearly, research supports the disproportionate racial composition of special education as a concern regarding special education. However, the district teachers and students in the school system of the current study are predominately white; only one teacher interviewed was non-Caucasian. Therefore, racial composition could be a demographic variable that could be considered in future research.

Another fertile ground for research would be to tie teacher beliefs and attributions to teacher performance measures and student outcome measures. The researcher did not have access to teacher evaluations to see if teachers with proven track records had more or less inclusive beliefs. Finally, beliefs may not necessarily be calibrated with actual behaviors. For future research, classroom observations could be used to link teacher's beliefs with actual teaching behaviors in the classroom. Similarly, student outcome measures, such as performance on high stakes tests, grades or achievement benchmarks could be correlated with teacher beliefs.

Of course, not all students with disabilities are the same. The category of students with disabilities comprised an exceedingly heterogeneous population and is very difficult to characterize. Certain students with disabilities did not lack all forms of capital. The students might be described as having positive social skills, supportive parents, a willingness to comply with directions, and a track record for completing school and home assignments. Also, some teachers were able to articulate a specific positive experience with a student that made the student more endearing to the teacher. Clearly, the manner in which the student interacts with the teacher plays an important role in determining the student's capital. Teacher attitude is a multidimensional construct. However, to the extent that student variables impact teacher variables would be beneficial for future study. For example, introducing the predictor teacher efficacy in the study design may help generate a teacher profile that aids in selecting teachers who may successfully carry educational reform into their classroom.

## **Conclusion**

This research addressed the struggles of teachers in the field in addressing the needs of students with disabilities in heterogeneous classrooms. Within the field of schools, there exists a constructed normed group of students called "regular education students" and a defaulted other group that could be called "non-general education students." However, teachers also expressed a variety of strategies that contributed to the successful inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms. In response to the day-to-day struggles, some teachers were able to overcome the obstacles to address their concerns and frustrations. All teachers sampled were cognizant of the struggles to include students with disabilities, but



there were also teachers that felt successful in their efforts. Themes of emancipation were evident through the narratives. Some teachers were able to overcome the sorting framework and serve students with disabilities in a way that promotes dignity and high expectations. Most importantly, various related factors emerged that supported an emancipatory framework. In the previous section, the line of argument was that if the teacher was left alone to face an overwhelming demand of needy students, then the teacher promoted the tendency to default the student from the norm group. However, some teachers were able to be successful in providing inclusive environments.

Educational institutions present an excellent location to understand the way that cultural capital is reinforced, rewarded, and acquired. As programs like No Child Left Behind attempt to make sure that all students meet particular educational standards, it will be important to determine which kinds of activities and practices give an advantage to students, either helping some to overcome their less privileged backgrounds, or generating a barrier that secures the position of those at the top of the social class ladder. Continuing to explore the concept of habitus, as well as trying to refine the concept of cultural capital may eventually facilitate strong, mutually beneficial relationships between student and teacher. Cultural capital theory provides a useful mechanism to examine the ways in which inequities are reproduced, withstanding the ideological stance that educational attainment is a powerful equalizer (Collins, 1993). Educators have inseparable roles as agents of social and professional change; therefore they should strive to create a special education that works for, and not against the oppressed (Braginsky & Braginsky, 1974; Prilleltensky, 1994; Skrtic, 1995). Research and scholarship should expand beyond the traditional individual deficit or medical model of disability to investigate across the many dimensions of the social model of

disability embraced by the field of disability studies in education (Finkelstein, 1998; Oliver, 1996; Rieser, 2006). The social model values the subjective, experiential accounts of persons with disabilities and their families. Also, it refocuses inquiry toward the social processes, economic structures, and environmental obstacles that create and sustain disablement as a form of political oppression. To promote emancipatory practices, inclusive democratic educators must become more aware of the many political and social practices that sustain social division and devaluation. The challenge of school personnel is to provide an educational environment that empowers all students to be successful. This involves a cultural transformation that critically investigates standard procedures in school concerning curricular access and instructional practices, and classroom milieu.

## Appendix A

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
Consent to Participate in a Research Study  
School District Approval Form

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a doctoral student in educational leadership at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and with your permission I wish to gain consent to interview faculty at Davidson County Schools. The purpose of this research study is to learn about how a teacher's beliefs and instructional practices support the delivery of special education services to students with disabilities. Teachers will be asked to take part in an interview about their beliefs and instructional practices for students with disabilities in their classrooms. The focus of the investigation is link teachers' practices and beliefs with favorable service delivery models for students with disabilities.

I intend to interview and audiotape, with informed consent, 24 teachers in your school district. Each interview will last approximately 60 minutes. To protect the privacy of participants in this study all quantitative data that is collected will be coded, for example, the teachers will be known as teacher A, teacher B, teacher C, etc. School districts will not be identified. In addition, participants (administrators and teachers) will be identified only by position and not name, age, gender or grade-level. Information from individual participants will not be directly shared with other study participants, for example, the teachers will not have access to information shared by other teachers.

No direct benefits for research participants are anticipated apart from the opportunity for them to share and reflect on their own experiences and contribute to a developing body of research related to favorable outcomes for students with disabilities. However, by exploring and documenting effective programs and practices, a research-based guide will be available for leaders striving to nurture and/or achieve excellence and equity in their own schools.

Please contact me by phone or email if you require additional information about my study. Finally, please read and return the Participant's Agreement.

Kind regards,

Robert C. McOuat  
mcouat@email.unc.edu  
xxx-xxx-xxxx

### **Participant's Agreement:**

I have read the information provided above. I give permission to Robert McOuat to approach the teachers in Davidson County Schools to seek consent from him/her for participation in the study.

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Signature of School District Representative

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Date

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Printed Name and Title of School District Representative

## APPENDIX B

### Principal Notification Letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a doctoral student in educational leadership in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I am also the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children in the Davidson County Schools. I am asking for permission to invite classroom teachers to participate in an individual interview as part of a research study for my dissertation. The purpose of this research study is to learn about how a teacher's beliefs and instructional practices support the delivery of special education services to students with disabilities. The focus of the investigation of teachers' beliefs and perspectives of inclusive service delivery models for students with disabilities.

I would like to interview and audiotape, with informed consent, 24 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in your school. Each interview will last approximately 60 minutes. To protect the privacy of participants in this study, no individual identifiers will be used; teachers and schools will only have ID codes, such as A, B, C, etc. on their audiorecordings and the transcripts of those audio recordings. The school district will not be identified. In addition, the grade level of the teacher participants will not even be used in writing up this study.

No direct benefits for research participants are anticipated apart from the opportunity for them to share and reflect on their own experiences and contribute to a developing body of research related to favorable outcomes for students with disabilities.

However, by exploring and documenting effective programs and practices, I may be able to provide the field with information that could be helpful to school leaders striving to nurture and/or achieve excellence and equity in their own schools.

Please contact me by phone or email if you require additional information about my study. If you are unwilling to give me permission to recruit teachers from this district for this study, please contact me at your earliest convenience. I have attached a copy of the approval from UNC's Institutional Review Board for this study, and a copy of the teacher consent form which details their rights and the protections regarding their privacy.

Kind regards,

Robert C. McOuat  
mcouat@email.unc.edu  
xxx-xxx-xxxx

## Appendix C

### Initial Participant Recruitment Notification Letter

Dear Mr/Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_,

As you may, or may not, know, I am currently serving as the Director of Programs for Exceptional Children in Davidson County Schools. More importantly for this email, I am also a doctoral student in the School of Education, in educational leadership, at UNC-CH and I am currently working on my dissertation. My study intends to explore how classroom teachers' instructional practices and beliefs have supported students with disabilities in their classes. I am sending this email to all 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers in this school district.

Participation in my study will not be time consuming for participants as it would involve just one individual, private interview with you (approximately 60 minutes). All participation is confidential and no risk to participants is anticipated. **Please see the Participant Consent Form that is attached to this email for additional information.**

I assure you that I am truly open to simply learning what the teachers think and what the data says. Ultimately, I want to be able to convey the results appropriately, and in ways that many schools and school districts can use to support both students with disabilities and the teachers who teach them.

Teachers that will be asked to participate in the study must meet the following criteria:

1. Teach fifth grade students.
2. Have at least two years experience in current position.
3. Have at least one student with a disability in a regular setting (at 75% of the day with non-disabled peers).
4. The disability of the student will be either Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) or Other Health Impaired (OHI).

Your participation in this study will be much appreciated. If you meet the criteria and have read the Consent Form, please let me know by email or phone if you are willing to participate in this study. I have received school district approval to conduct this study. I can interview at a facility of your convenience. Feel free to email or phone me with any questions you may have about my study and/or your potential participation.

Kind regards,

Robert C. McOuat  
mcouat@email.unc.edu  
xxx-xxx-xxxx

## Appendix D

**University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  
Consent to Participate in a Research Study  
Adult Participants  
Social Behavioral Form**

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**IRB Study # 10-2095**

Consent Form Version Date: 11-12-10

Title of Study: Classroom Teachers' Experiences and Perspectives on Their Students with Disabilities

Principal Investigator: Robert C. McOuat

UNC-Chapel Hill Department: School of Education, Educational Leadership

UNC-Chapel Hill Phone number: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Email Address: [mcouat@email.unc.edu](mailto:mcouat@email.unc.edu)

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kathleen Brown, [brownk@email.unc.edu](mailto:brownk@email.unc.edu); xxx-xxx-xxxx

Study Contact telephone number: xxx-xxx-xxxx

Study Contact email: [mcouat@email.unc.edu](mailto:mcouat@email.unc.edu)

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**What are some general things you should know about research studies?**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. To join the study is voluntary.

You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.

Details about this study are discussed below. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. You should ask the researchers named above, or staff members who may assist them, any questions you have about this study at any time.

**What is the purpose of this study?**

The purpose of this research study is to learn about how a teacher's beliefs and instructional practices support the delivery of special education services to students with disabilities.

All 5th grade classroom teachers in this district may be eligible, and are receiving a copy of this consent form. To participate in the study, you need to meet the following criteria:

1. Teach fifth grade students.
2. Have at least two years experience in your current position.
3. Have at least one student with a disability in a regular setting (at 75% of the day with non-disabled peers).

4. The disability of the student will be either Specific Learning Disabled (SLD) or Other Health Impaired (OHI).

Not all teachers who meet these criteria and are willing to be in the study may be interviewed.

**How many people will take part in this study?**

There will be approximately 24 teachers in this research study.

**How long will your part in this study last?**

The interview will take approximately 60 minutes.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**

You will be asked to take part in an individual interview related to your beliefs and instructional practices for students with disabilities in your classroom. Questions are constructed to encourage discussion regarding your concerns about supports you feel are necessary for students with disabilities and to enable you to share your personal experiences and opinions regarding services for students with disabilities.

You can say as much or as little as you like in response to the questions, and can choose to skip over any questions you do not want to answer.

The interview will be audiotaped so the researcher will be able to capture accurately your thoughts. The audiorecording will be transcribed, and then the recording itself will be destroyed. No names will be used in the transcription.

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. You may not benefit personally from being in this research study. However, you may appreciate the opportunity to share your experiences and perspectives, and to contribute to the field.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**

There are no known risks. You should report any problems to the researcher.

**How will your privacy be protected?**

This study will protect your privacy in several ways, so you can feel comfortable saying whatever you want to say.

The individual interview will take place in a private location, such as your classroom or other room in your school that you select; no one else will be present or able to hear what you say.

Interview recordings and transcripts from the interview, and any other descriptive data will use ID codes, such as A, B, etc., for names of teachers and schools.

No real identifiers will be used when this study's results are written up, so no one will be able to identify teachers or schools, or any of the students that teachers talk about, or even the school

district.. Even the grade level you teach will not be in the description. No one in the district, including your principal, will know which teacher said what.

All data, audio recordings and subsequent transcriptions will be stored and locked in a filing cabinet in the researcher's office which is locked when he is not present. Completed consent forms will be stored separately from all other data.

**What if you want to stop before your part in the study is complete?**

You can withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty. As noted above, you can also skip over any question you do not want to answer.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**

You will not receive anything for taking part in this study.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**

There will be no costs for being in the study. The researcher will meet you wherever you choose.

**What if you have questions about this study?**

You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, complaints, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**

All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB\_subjects@unc.edu.

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**Title of Study: Classroom Teachers' Experiences and Perspectives on Their Students with Disabilities**

**Principal Investigator:** Robert C. McOuat

**Participant's Agreement:**

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Research Participant



## Appendix E

### Teacher Interview Protocol

TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_ SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Introduction:**

As you recall, I will be recording our conversation today, so I can be sure that I have an accurate record of your thoughts and your experiences.

Today I'd like to talk about a one of your students. We will trace your experiences with the student from the point that you first learned that the student would be in your class to the present time. I will ask you about what happened over the past 3 months with the students, your opinions about what happened, and the reasons you have for making the decisions and taking the actions that you did. There aren't any right or wrong answers – we are just interested in your experiences and your perspectives about the student.

**1. First, tell me a little bit about you. Tell me about how you became a teacher.**

**2. Please provide me a sketch of your life as a teacher**

Number of years teaching,

Number of students in your class during the 2010-2011 school year

Number of students with an IEP, and number of referrals you made to the pre-referral team

Now, I would like you to select a student from your class list for us to talk about. 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. Please do not use the student's name, but if you do happen to do so, I will be deleting that when I transcribe this recording.

**3. What is the student's background? Tell me a bit about him/her. How is he/she currently doing?**

**4. Tell me what happened when the student first came to your attention.**

What records did you check?

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

Did you actively seek to familiarize your self with him/her?

Assessment – did you request/conduct any?

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

With whom did you confer? (parents, resource, previous teacher)

How many times? When?

What did you hope to find out?

Was that what you expected?

What did you decide to do?

**5. Did you do anything special for this student in your class?**

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) needs?

Did you accommodate for other areas? How, how often?

Describe his social needs? Self concept?

**6. How do you keep track of (student)'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?

**7. Do you work with any other teachers on staff? – School counselor, special education teacher, administration? (not Teacher Assistants – 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)? For you? As a source of advice? Support?

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

Who else do you work with?

**8. Do you work with a Teacher Assistant for (student)?**

How does that happen? – fit with program?

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

How useful is this for your work with (student)?

What else do you do?

**9. How do you work with (Student)'s parents (guardians, family)?**

When did you meet the 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?

**10. If you had the power necessary, how would you “do” special education?**

**11. At your school how is a superior teacher distinguished from an average teacher?**

**12. Many thanks for taking the time to discuss the student. I hope you found the experience positive – we don't often get time to reflect on what we do. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about how inclusion/ delivering services to students with IEP's works here?**

## Appendix F

### Interview Scoring Form

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SCORE: \_\_\_\_\_

	Scale	
1.	<b>Overall rating of Primary Attribution</b>	
	1 point - Teacher attributes cause of student's difficulties to characteristics internal to the student (ability, motivation, IQ, disability, designation/label)	1
	3 points - Teacher attributes student's difficulties to parental, cultural, second language and other exogenous factors.	3
	5 points - Teacher attributes student's difficulties to previous and/or current school and instructional factors and lack of opportunity to learn	5
2.	<b>Overall Rating of Responsibility</b>	
	1 point - Teacher uses child's exceptionality designation to justify own non-involvement and exemption from responsibility.	1
	3 points - Teacher accommodates student but limits it to activities associated with child's designation, not to needed functional objectives (e.g. accommodates time to learn, 'lowers expectations')	3
	5 points - Teacher describes efforts to understand child's disability/difficulties and how they influence other aspects of learning. Justification/explanations of interventions seen as being own responsibility in order to meet broad set of individual student needs.	5
3.	<b>Teacher's priority for finding out about the student with a disability</b>	
	1 point - Teacher does not familiarize him/herself with the characteristics of the incoming student upon entry to the class	1
	2 points - Teacher reads/examines information routinely delivered to him/her (e.g. IEP, summary of information from previous grade)	2
	3 points - Teacher actively investigates characteristics of incoming student (e.g. cumulative records, IEP, previous teachers, parents, resource teacher)	3
4.	<b>Formal Assessment</b>	
	1 point - Teacher understands purpose of formal assessment (psycho-educational, normative) to be to <i>confirm</i> student's disability category	1
	2 points - Teacher vacillates between understanding assessment as confirmatory of deficit and as instructionally useful	2
	3 points - Teacher expects formal assessments to uncover information that is useful for instructional planning and adaptation (e.g. learning characteristics and preferences, entry-level skills)	3

5.	<b>Grade level vs. functional curriculum</b>	1 2 3
	1 point - Teacher does not identify individual student's entry point for learning but uses curriculum expectations set for the grade level	
	2 points - Teacher relies on information in the cumulative records or IEP information or regularly scheduled board-wide tests to identify student's entry point for learning (grade level identifiers)	
6.	<b>Goals and Objectives</b>	1 2 3
	1 point - Teacher does not use individual goals and objectives in planning and implementing classroom instruction for the student.	
	2 points - Teacher occasionally but not systematically refers to individualized goals and objectives in relation to classroom instruction for this student	
7.	<b>Social needs</b>	1 2 3
	1 point - Teacher is not aware of the social/friendship needs of the student and does not do anything to assist the student to integrate socially in the class	
	2 points - Teacher is aware of the student's social needs but does not act to integrate the student socially in the class	
8.	<b>Accommodations</b>	1 2 3
	1 point - Teacher understands instructional accommodations to mean "lowering expectations" (reducing quantity of work, lowering performance standards). In the case of modified objectives, teacher expects others will implement them (Teacher Assistant, parents, or Special Education teacher)	
	2 points - Teacher makes accommodations for the student which lower expectations but provides opportunities to work beyond the expectations	
9.	<b>Monitoring Progress</b>	1 2 3
	1 point - Teacher judges student performance in relation to grade-level criteria set for total class, or grade level criteria set for modified program	
	2 points - Teacher judges student performance by compromising between grade-level expectations and student's efforts to meet them	
	3 points - Teacher judges student performance in terms of individualized achievement criteria designed in tandem with the student's IEP.	

10.	<b>Formal vs. Regular reporting</b>	
	1 point - Teacher believes that student's progress need only be reviewed at formal reporting times (e.g. when required to report to parents, report cards etc.)	1
	2 points - Teacher believes in ongoing monitoring of student progress, but does not do so systematically (too little time, too many to track, anecdotal records not kept up)	2
	3 point - Teacher believes that student progress needs to be regularly monitored and has a variety of ways of doing so (anecdotal records, check sheets, individual notes and communications with others)	3
11.	<b>Individual vs. Collaboration (with special education teacher, colleagues)</b>	
	1 points - Teacher sees resource/special education (if student part-time in class) teacher as primarily responsible for working directly with student. Teacher does not integrate own program with others'.	1
	2 points - Teacher values collaboration with resource/Special Education teacher as useful and informative but does not integrate own program and expectations for this student with others	2
	3 points - Teacher values collaboration, uses it to share common expectations, use resources to increase opportunity for student to achieve in class.	3
12.	<b>Tracking Progress</b>	
	1 point - Teacher assumes resource teacher and/or others are keeping track of student's progress in their respective pieces of the student's program.	1
	2 points - Teacher assumes resource teacher and/or others are keeping track of student's progress in their respective pieces of the student's program, and that checking in with each other is needed occasionally.	2
	3 points - Teacher values frequent conferencing and planning with resource and other teachers and expects that resource will support student learning objectives in the classroom (e.g. pre-teaching vocabulary, concepts, scribing, helping with accommodations)	3
13.	<b>Planning and Implementation with Special Education Teacher</b>	
	1 point - Teacher views special education teacher as primarily responsible for planning and implementing accommodations and learning objectives	1
	2 points - Teacher views guiding the special education teacher as important in designing and implementing instruction, but then leaves special education teacher to implement.	2
	3 points - Teacher views self as primarily responsible for instruction, engaging in ongoing planning, and implementation with special education teacher.	3

14.	<b>Collaboration with Special Education Teacher</b>	
	1 point - Teacher views special education teacher as primarily responsible for monitoring student's progress, assumes that he/she will keep track and update program as needed. Checks in at formal reporting times	1
	2 points - Teacher views guiding the special education teacher as important but expects special education teacher to monitor progress and work independently, checking in as needed.	2
	3 point - Teacher expects to meet special education teacher regularly, receive progress report and guide further development of intervention based on student progress.	3
15.	<b>Parent Role</b>	
	1 points - Teacher does not appear to respect parent's knowledge and role in supporting the child's learning.(e.g. sees parents as part of the problem, interfering or neglectful, having nothing to contribute).	1
	2 points - Teacher values the parents' role but seldom or inconsistently draws upon it.	2
	3 points - Teacher respects parent's role as a co-partner in supporting child's learning. Teacher believes that parents are part of the team and contacts them frequently.	3
16.	<b>Parent Responsibility</b>	
	1 point - Teacher does not see self as responsible for involving parents beyond required reporting duties (report card times, getting signature on IEP).	1
	2 points - Teacher sees self as responsible for informing parents through notes home, in student agenda, e-mails, etc. when student's performance is notable.	2
	3 points - Teacher believes he/she has the responsibility to involve parents in meaningful ways that relate to the student's progress (invitations to participate in decision making, frequent meetings in school and by phone).	3

## Appendix G

### MEMBER CHECK COVER LETTER

Hi \_\_\_\_\_.

First of all, thank you once again for your time for participating in my study.

I wanted to send you a copy of the interview we did together. Enclosed is the transcription based on our taped interview. My purpose of sending this to you is:

1. So you can make sure what is written is what you meant to say.
2. If you have anything you would like to add, please do so. Possibly, you have thought of things you wish you said during the interview, but didn't. Or possibly, upon reading the interview, you will think of additional things you would like to add, elaborate or clarify.

If you have nothing to add or change, you do not have to send back anything to me. If you would like to add or change anything, I would love to hear about it. Put your comments in writing and send them via courier to me at Palmer House.

Also, if you noticed any spelling errors or any identifying information, please let me know.

Thank you! If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call (xxx-xxxx) or email me (mcouat@email.unc.edu)

Sincerely,

Robert McOuat

## Appendix H

### Correlation Matrix

The Pearson correlations range in value from -1.00 to +1.00. The coefficients range from in value from -1.00 to +1.00 and indicate the degree that low or high scores on one variable tend to go with low or high scores on another variable.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix – Demographic Variables with Total Score

		Years	Cluster	School Size	Class Size	Title 1	Total Score
1	Years of Teaching Experience	1.00	.222	-.227	-.418	.277	.145
2	Cluster of SWDs	.222	1.00	-.031	-.213	-.161	.190
3	School Size	-.227	-.031	1.00	.262	-.533*	-.013
4	Class Size	-.418	-.213	.262	1.00	-.223	-.193
5	Title 1	.277	-.161	-.533*	-.223	1.00	.189
6	Total Score	.145	.190	-.013	-.193	.189	1.00

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note: The correlation between the school size and Title 1 status was significant,  $r = .533$ ,  $p < .05$ . At first, this result did not seem relevant. However, from a broader perspective, a plausible rationale for the link between school size and Title status is intriguing. First, it is important to remember that Title 1 status could be a proxy for poverty - Title I is an important source of funding for many high-poverty districts and schools. Title I is designed to help educate disadvantaged children—those with low academic achievement attending schools serving high-poverty areas. Analysis of the school size variable, it is notable that two of the largest schools in the school district are not Title 1 schools. Both schools have attendance that exceeds school capacity. So, without too much conjecture, a possible explanation for the correlation could be that the more desirable schools are the two affluent schools located on the suburban outskirts of the district that serve as ‘bedroom community’ for parent that commute into the larger cities outside the school district. On the other hand, the poverty areas in the district have smaller schools due to less desirable living areas for the more mobile and affluent.



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## Supporting Quotations

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<sup>1</sup> One of the biggest obstacles in working with him is whether he has his medications. We have gotten the parents to agree to let us give it to him at school. So that has made a big difference just because if he does not have his medication, then it is a total waste for that day ... just because he can't focus and pay attention or sit still even on his medicine. He still has a hard time with that. (36b)

<sup>2</sup> I think he got comfortable enough with me. I said I'm not going to get upset if you did or didn't. I just want to know. So now, he will tell me, occasionally, he'll say "I forgot to take it, can I call home, because I know it helps me focus better." And I never really say a lot about that. Twice he called home and they were not able to bring it. And I'll say "its okay we'll get through it, it's fine." I can deal with the hyperactivity-ness. It's just that, when he is without it, it is very difficult for him. I have to redirect him a lot. He'll even apologize to me and say "I'm sorry, I'll fix it." "It's okay; I'll keep bringing you back on track and remind you." Even when, he doesn't have it, he wants to work hard and do well. (52)

<sup>3</sup> I have a student that is Hispanic. She has IEP specifically in written language, reading comprehension, and math reasoning. She was retained. On top of having these disabilities, if you want to call them that, her IQ is low. It is probably, I don't know what is, I've never looked it up, but I've been told by the EC teacher that it is lower than average. (23b)

<sup>4</sup> In fact this year has been kind of interesting because they have been kind of switching up his medicines to see which symptoms are more Aspergers and which symptoms are more ADHD. So they are kind of playing around with that to see which is the main cause of some the problems that we have been having this year as far as academic problems. (36a)

<sup>5</sup> So, as long as you can keep one his medication, then he wants to learn and he can learn (36b)

<sup>6</sup> That's the thing I try to instill in them. Let's work really, really hard, so that our class is the best. So if you know something, that's good. But then go and help somebody else who

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doesn't, because they need to know it, too, for our scores to be really, really good. So that's your job to help everybody. So I try to make it more community, community-friendly. He's fine.

<sup>7</sup> You are just trying to get to know them based on some assessments and someone one-on-ones. Then when the relationship starts and they start telling you about their life. Things start to fall in place the start of it to either address you start building on that. (52)

<sup>8</sup> What he requires - he wants to know that he's being helpful. I let him do stuff. I give him responsibilities - bringing stuff up to the office. He goes and checks the mail at 2 o'clock every day. When he knows that he is being needed and being responsible that's really the best thing for him. He has anger issues. When he gets mad, I just have to sit him down and talk to him. It doesn't take long just to let him know that you are listening and that you care. That's the main thing for him. (48)

<sup>9</sup> I think it's because I keep them so active. I try to make it as interesting and real for them as I can and connect it to their world. I think that is what helps. That is what gets them engaged. Like today, he has been asking me all day if he can start this next social studies project. He is very interested in military. He was so excited about the last social studies project we did which was a poster and they did research and added pictures. They had to have a handout. You can be as simple as my example or you can be elaborate as you want. Whatever your style is. I just want you enjoy doing it. He was the first one to come in with it; he was so interested in it. I could tell he did it completely on his own which is ... I like to see that more than anything else. Yes he is already wanting to do the next side project just on US military, like, World War I, then World War II. (52)

<sup>10</sup> Sometimes when I am doing a whole class, and I do, some kids get lost. So, when I have him in that small group, when we are face-to-face, we can dig deeper into it. He is better than what I thought at like, inferential thinking. I wouldn't have known that with the whole class setting assessments. I mean I do that too, but the small group has really opened my eyes. He knows more than what I thought he knew that sometimes the problem from here to here analyze different kinds of assessments sometimes paper and pencil; sometimes it's a verbal kind of assessment. (52)

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<sup>11</sup> Well last year, this is kind of funny story, on the playground you see these kids and you are going "No, please don't put that one in my class. Not that one. Not that one." Then you hear the name, you hear judgments, you hear things about that particular child, and you pray that that is not going to happen. As soon as I got my list, lo and behold it happened, and I was like "Oh my gosh, there he was." So I geared myself up. (49)

<sup>12</sup> I knew him because we have a small school. I knew him because he used to get in trouble (23a).

<sup>13</sup> So I talked with his last-year teacher and that helped some but in a way, it made me almost more fearful because I hear this story and that story. Then I thought, was that a good idea or not? (52)

<sup>14</sup> I knew that that he had been exited from the program but they were still working with him behaviorally and then it was when (principal) asked me about having the student in my classroom and I said sure I will take on any challenge. (34b)

<sup>15</sup> I don't go to the previous classroom teacher for a reason. I do not want to prejudge the student. That is like my big no-no. I hate it when teachers come around and ask me, "Who do you have on your list?" I say, "We are not going to do that because the child may perform differently for me than they did for you." (41)

<sup>16</sup> She came from kind of a tough background. She is now living with her aunt; her and her mother just didn't get along. That's her background. I think she went to sort of a rough school. I think she was identified at that school as a.... Troublemaker. She came here and I have had absolutely no trouble. (48a)

<sup>17</sup> She makes sure that she reads every night; she signs her folder; she looks at things in her agenda; so that I know she is paying attention to what's going on in her school life. Again I have invited her to tutoring, which means she has to be picked up separately, she rides the bus now, and she agreed to do that. Her aunt, that is who I always talk to, her uncle came to one of the IEP meetings, but her aunt in particular, has been very helpful and eager to do whatever it takes to help her. (48a)

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<sup>18</sup> Socially, he fits right in with the rest of the kids. He gets along well with them. He's always playing on the playground; playing sports with the rest of the boys. No one really seems to ... They know he's older but no one really seems to tease him about that or hold it against him in any way. (33)

<sup>19</sup> Yes, he wants to make sure he sticks up for the person that is getting made fun of. He is very big. He's a big kid. He has been retained in the past, I don't know if I told you that. He is built like a rock; you don't want to mess him. He doesn't use that, he doesn't intimidate with his physical presence, you just know you don't want to. He has a lot of common sense. Which really helps a lot with his education. He compensates well, he will try to fit in. And he just listens to what people say. He has a lot of coping mechanisms. (23a)

<sup>20</sup> So I usually sit the students with a student that, in my mind, do the school thing real well. They don't necessarily have to be the absolute smartest kid in the class but they have to understand how school works. They are that teacher pleaser, the little class-pet type person who gets school; they kind of shepherd her on a lot of time when she's kind of lost. (39)

<sup>21</sup> There is a little bit of naivety that she has and the other kids are aware of that. No one bursted out laughing or nobody said "Santa's not real" people just sort of winked and nodded at each other. (39)

<sup>22</sup> Socially, he just doesn't have any concept of how to make friends or how to keep friends. It's really bad ... in fifth grade, I feel like everyone wants to have friends and be around people. As far as some of the other fifth graders in the class, I think they try to understand that he is different and try to be his friends. When they see him do things that they don't understand so they just don't want to associate with him at all. He'll just say things, I think it is part of the Asperger's, he will say things that he is thinking. Like, for example, he did this yesterday. He'll say when someone is doing something dumb; he'll say "Man, that was really dumb." He says exactly what he is thinking. So a lot of the kids don't know how to take that and they don't take it very well. You know, in fact it can even ... on Friday, he almost got into a fight with another student because he said something that was inappropriate to that other student and it made the student mad. So there is a part of me that I worry about, socially with him going into middle school next year, that if he can't get that social piece together ... if says the wrong thing to someone, I don't know what would happen. (36)

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<sup>23</sup> So she really can't get with her too much in fact one incident, in the beginning of the year, she had an accident. I sent to the office, her dad was called to bring a change of clothes. The longer she sat there waiting for her dad; she just started to fall apart. She was in hysterics. And every since then, confidence has been an issue with her it's to the point where every time she finishes reading a page she says "I finish the page, what should I do now?" "Turn the page, go to the next one." That incident has really created a downward spiral in her confidence. (45)

<sup>24</sup> But with my prior experience in B.E.D., I was very scared when they told me he had a B.E.D. label. That's why I went to the third grade teacher and the fourth grade teacher and I was looking up anything I could. Because the last time that I had had a B.E.D. child, I was pregnant and we had the sheriff come out and it was in (neighboring school district), two of them. The deputies took him off the premises. He was throwing the desk and books and hitting me and everything. It was just really, really bad. And I was actually a resource teacher. I taught gifted and so he was in the gifted class. It was an accident. But he was in the gifted class. That was my prior experience, so I was pretty terrified whenever I found out I had a B.E.D. kid and I was pregnant again and it was like "Oh, no. Repeat, repeat." (41)

<sup>25</sup> By reading one-on-one and small group interaction - I needed him to get comfortable with me - so that I could get a true reading of where he was at. So, spending time with him, finding out his interests, trying to find books that he's interested in, because we don't usually like what we have difficulty doing. So, see what genre he liked and what his interests are and make sure that I had plenty of those materials accessible to him. (48b)

<sup>26</sup> if it is something that he is really interested in he goes really overboard with it and really likes talking about it. (query). Anything nonfiction. He loves it. He loves learning facts about animals. He makes connections to things; he will talk... that is strength of his... Will talk and talk and talk and tell you everything, everything he knows, and he will tell you about a book that he read that has something in the book that he read now that he remembers from something else. So he has really good recall with that too. (41b)

<sup>27</sup> I found out he's really a phenomenal artist and loves graphic novels. So I've been buying graphic novels; informed the lead teacher about the high interests that there is from a wide variety of students in my class. So they've been working on filling the book from a

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graphic novel. I try to read with him in small group, as often as possible, and one-on-one. (48b)

<sup>28</sup> What he requires - he wants to know that he's being helpful. I let him do stuff. I give him responsibilities - bringing stuff up to the office. He goes and checks the mail at 2 o'clock every day. When he knows that he is being needed and being responsible that's really the best thing for him. He has anger issues. When he gets mad, I just have to sit him down and talk to him. It doesn't take long just to let him know that you are listening and that you care. That's the main thing for him. (32)

<sup>29</sup> You have to look at her chance of passing this EOG. I hate to keep bringing up that test because it is really more about growth than about passing it. I have to get past that. But at the same time we are being judged as professionals on how we move these kids or how successful they are. To me, I know they are EC kids, but they expect us to work miracles with very little resources. (23b)

<sup>30</sup> So every now and then she'll make a comment or a compliment about something that someone is doing well in the school. I'd walk by and see what they are doing. To me, that is the superior teachers who are trying to keep their principal happy, and doing what they're supposed to be doing. (41a)

<sup>31</sup> Then they (adminstrator) kind of said, "OK. Here's your best teachers. Go observe this part of their lesson and this part of their lesson. There's a lot of friction that comes from that." (query). Some teachers felt they were , this is how I perceived it, it was never stated but you could just kind of tell with behaviors that there were teachers that felt that they were not doing as well as they thought they were, or they thought they were doing better, or doing well enough that they should have been selected. That kind of thing. (45)

<sup>32</sup> You have to look at her chance of passing this EOG. I hate to keep bringing up that test because it is really more about growth than about passing it. I have to get past that. But at the same time we are being judged as professionals on how we move these kids or how successful they are. To me, I know they are EC kids, but they expect us to work miracles with very little resources. I mean I do the best I can. I have a teachers assistant for an hour a day. I share her with kindergarten because kindergarten has her 75% of the time and I have her for 25% of the



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time. So I do a lot of one-on-one with those children. ... I have two lowest EC kids. (Other 5th grade teacher) has one that is really low too. But I have the two lowest in the fifth-grade. I have the two lowest in the fifth-grade. They have a 1% chance of passing the EOG. We get all that data from the central office; they have a 1% chance of passing. I mean, what are you supposed to do? I try not to even look at those numbers because you don't want to get to the point where you are not going to even try to work with the student and get them to where they need to be. (23b)

<sup>33</sup> They fail since the third grade. They are set up for failure. They are never going to pass. They are told every year, at least 8 times a year that they are going to fail. (Query) Benchmarks, EOG, another EOG and then another EOG. Then the whole year is looming over them like the SAT used to for us. I mean, if we are going to have, in the future, we are supposed to be focusing on them graduating from high school, so why are we focusing on them failing everything every year. (23b)

<sup>34</sup> This has shifted since our County has towards a more regimented, controlling of the classroom teacher. (39)

<sup>35</sup> Impossible to do every single one of them. I do no planning at school. I do no grading at school. That all goes home, because, when I'm at school from the time I walk in until the time I leave - almost -- I am with students and helping them. Somebody always needs something. There's always something to do. (48b)

<sup>36</sup> There's not a lot of communication. This year I've not had that issue because I just got that one and he doesn't go out much. ... A lot of communication about what's going on in both classrooms. What is working well and what is not working, what needs to happen to help him. It's as much my fault as it was anybody's fault last year, but there was just no communication. So you don't know what's going on -- how they are doing in there. Sometimes they are doing something totally different in there. (49)

<sup>37</sup> It would be nice if we could have the EC teachers plan with us and collaborate more about what they are doing in class because we get no grades from them and to be honest we get no work from them. (41a)

<sup>38</sup> I really don't know what she is working on to be honest. As far as what I am working on, I go and tell her "we are working on this, can you work on this with so-and-so?" One week

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we were doing cause and effect. So, for her students, I said "look at these tests - they don't get it -can you go over this with them?" She'll tell me whenever they are working on some writing stuff but as far as... I don't know what she is doing in reading with her. (32b)

<sup>39</sup> Here, they are so hung up on their individual goals, I mean I don't know the legalness, I am sure there is some legality to make sure that they get their individual roles, but to me it is unrealistic to expect the EC teacher to come here and work with a specific grade level and then work on the individual goals of the student. (23b)

<sup>40</sup> I feel like everyone here has been really supportive of him. They know the situation and they know his case like. If I called the school counselor and say that he is having a problem, she will come in no time and help him work through his emotions. If he is angry, she will try to help him get settled back down. Our principal also is very familiar with him, so if I need something or if he is having a problem, I can call her and she will come down here. I feel like everyone knows his case and they are very supportive of his case and try to help him as much as they can. (36a)

<sup>41</sup> When the EC teacher comes in and I think that works better because they are still in the classroom they are still getting what I'm getting; we can communicate better and can collaborate better because she is in the room with me. If there is one or two other students, sometimes, she'll work with one other student that is not understanding it too so that is not singling them out. So I kind of like that a little bit better, at least in my experience this year. (33)

<sup>42</sup> And actually, to tell the truth, I base a lot of my lessons, whole group, just what's in some of their IEP's. I mean they all have to do it. I have pacing guides but still my mini-lessons, I really try to hit that hard because that's something they all need anyway. So I got the notebook, one for math and one for reading and one personal one. So for each day for reading, I can open it up, and I'll have five minute, we'll do something, I'll give a teaching point, we'll talk about it. Like I was telling him today "I notice you done this or that, so what you need to do is try to do this." (52)

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<sup>43</sup> One teacher that I work with, in my grade level, she has the AIG cluster. She is an excellent teacher, I mean regardless of whatever type the student she has. However, she has more time to plan. I mean, it is so ironic that we have the lower students but we don't have the time to think of more individualized instruction. She has the time because she has the higher kids. I mean, it's like, with her having AIG cluster, they go to the AIG teacher for reading. If you have six AIG kids, they leave your room, so if you have a class of 24 then you only have 18 kids to do a reading group. For me and (other 5th grade teacher with cluster), we have to teach reading for our whole class. So we have six extra kids that we have for reading group. (23b)

<sup>44</sup> I do feel for Ms. (5th grade teacher with EC cluster) because of like assessments and things, she's already got the deck stacked where she is not going to perform as well. So there are some flaws and that too. (39)

<sup>45</sup> I like the inclusion, but the hesitant thing about it is that there have been some years where I have had large amounts of EC students... And it becomes a kind of struggle about where is your energy going in your classroom. Because I just have one this year, it is sort of a special situation, it doesn't impede me that much. But years where I have had clusters of 6 or 7 EC students, then I may have the AIG students as well, it becomes very difficult to juggle all those balls because you want to provide all of your students with what is challenging, but it is difficult. So I don't think EC students should be ability grouped, or put in class for this level kid or that level kid. But I do think, a lot of times, our programs seem geared towards those students, and I worry about is that pulling time away from your mainstream student or our gifted student because you are putting a lot of energy into helping the EC student. But again this year, that is not really an issue for me. But in the past I have felt conflicted about...

<sup>46</sup> I would also like to have more training and I know that's hard. I mean we are trained in everything, but it always seems like EC is the one I haven't had much training. A lot of that is just things I've read on my own or the (EC teacher) tell me, tell me, tell me, everything they know. I'd like to be able to know all the specifics that she knows and she is getting me there. I

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don't feel like there's enough of that. We get a lot of technology training which is great; we get a lot of training in reading, which is good; but if I counted up all the training for EC ... on one hand. I'm ashamed. Because I think I could do a lot better when I'm doing right now right now. I'm feeling my way around with (EC teacher) holding my hand. (52)

<sup>47</sup> Sometimes, it's the next step to take with her. Sometimes, it's just to confirm that what I'm doing is best and in her interest for an LD child since that's not my background. (45a)

<sup>48</sup> I will tell you that through that program, I never had any special education training. They never offered special education so I had no special training coming into the classroom. None whatsoever; not a special education class; nothing to do with special education. I've never heard of an IEP. (36a)

<sup>49</sup> I don't know enough about it. Like I said I never had that class. I don't know enough about it to... I have never done it before.... I don't know what else they do besides what I saw (EC teacher) do. (36a)

<sup>50</sup> I would say that, with my class that I have this year, I go home in tears a lot. Just because it's impossible for one person to meet the needs of all the kids that I have. The needs are so varied and spread out everywhere. (36a)

<sup>51</sup> Part of my constraint is that I really need to be going about half the speed I'm going now and I can't because of all the curriculum expectations. Fifth-grade curriculum is ridiculous when it comes to what we're supposed to be doing from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. And these kids are just not ready for it. I have some kids who are finishing their assignments, working in a group; they have people in their group that can't read what they are doing. I have got students who are finishing and I don't want to give them additional assignments because I'm giving them in enrichment kind of work, which has proved to be extremely difficult this year because of the ranges. (36b)

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<sup>52</sup> Because I feel that strong need to do what that document (IEP), then the other kids in the classroom have to find something to do while you're trying to take care of an accommodation. Somebody's losing. (41c)

<sup>53</sup> One thing I liked was they grouped them by level and that helped a lot. Like they were together a lot of the day ... They would have all the kids in the morning come together and the teacher would do an activity. Then other kids would go to other rooms by level, and the teacher would work with them all day. Like the really high performing; the group we worked with was the low; they were mostly Spanish and African American. You had to teach them how to learn to read in third grade because they still didn't understand stuff. (41a)

<sup>54</sup> To me it would be ideal to have the EC children bunched together in the room. Like in the grade level, to where the teacher could work, specialized, towards that. There is an assistant or someone else in the room; they could work with the other children that are included in the classroom. Almost like the class was made for the EC. (41a)

<sup>55</sup> For special education, when you have all children in one classroom; by all students I mean EC, your regular ed and your AIG kids, I think it is hard to reach all kids because your AIG kids are bored, your EC kids don't get it, and then you are left with your regular ed students. So I think if you could group students more: getting your EC cluster together and getting your regular education cluster together and your AIG cluster together, you could find teachers that specialize in those certain areas. They would use totally different strategies to reach totally different groups of kids. I think those strategies, I am repeating myself here, your EC teachers, they would work on reading strategies aren't getting the kids reading levels up compared to the AIG teachers would give those students more of a challenge that the EC kids couldn't handle or some of the regular Ed kids couldn't handle. So that might be something different. (29)

<sup>56</sup> I think sometimes the mainstreaming hurts. If I could do it, I would change some of the mainstreaming stuff, because for some kids that are just so far behind, I think that they get very disgusted and discouraged and their self esteem is just really torn at, because they can't get to where their classmates are and they feel that they are just dumb. I think that if they were in a setting where they were made to feel more successful - I know that if the classroom teacher can try, that they still can see those peers and they judge themselves up to what those

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peers are doing. I think that I would base it on what their classroom teacher feels, if they were being mainstreamed, and just decide from there what would be the best setting. (41c)