Exploration of Social Integration of People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace

By

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A thesis submitted to the School of Rehabilitation Therapy in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

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Kingston, Ontario, Canada

January, 2008

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to explore social integration of people with intellectual disabilities (ID) in the workplace and to identify the characteristics of positive workplace culture for them. An in-depth qualitative case study was conducted at two worksites to explore the process of social integration. Sources of information included company documents, on-site observations, and interviews that were conducted for the following purposes:

1. to describe employees with IDs’ perceptions and needs of social integration and their experiences of social relationships in work settings;

2. to explore co-workers’ perceptions of and relationships with employees with ID; and

3. to identify what characteristics of workplace culture contributed to or detracted from social integration for people with ID.

One workplace was an educational organization where four workers with ID were employed, the other a restaurant franchise where one worker with ID was employed. The participants with ID from both worksites believed people with and without disabilities should work together and felt they were included in their workplaces. The co-workers interviewed had positive opinions of fellow employees
with ID. Several characteristics of workplace culture had an impact on social integration for employees with ID, including a job structure that promotes social interactions, work pace within the work setting, group or individual employment, culture of acceptance within the work setting, and a supportive managerial approach.

The results of the current study have provided strategies to enhance social integration for employees with ID, and highlighted a number of potentially beneficial workplace conditions that merit additional study. Service providers can act as advocates to help create a work environment that emphasizes acceptance and respect for workers in this population.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my dear friend, Peter Papastratis, who has been very supportive and patient during my master’s program. No matter how stressed I can be you are always there to encourage me. Thank you for your support.

I would like to thank the participants of this study. I am grateful to have had the chance to be in two workplaces, participating in the work and social activities and hearing the individuals’ voices. Thank you for providing me this great learning experience.

I would also like to thank my advisory committee: Dr. Rosemary Lysaght (supervisor), Dr Margaret Jamieson (advisor) and Dr. Terry Krupa (advisor). I appreciate your time and thoughtful assistance to the thesis and to my learning.

Finally, I would like to thank the South Eastern Ontario Community-University Research Alliance in Intellectual Disabilities which provided the funding for the study and additional resources throughout the process.
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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Context

The value of work goes beyond a paycheque to meet basic needs. People value work not only for the financial security it provides to meet basic needs but also the opportunities for developing self-identity, a sense of self-worth and social relationships. These values of work are no different for people with disabilities. In one study, for example, employees with intellectual disabilities (ID) viewed employment as a means first, to meet basic needs, second, to fulfill responsibilities, third, to learn new things, and fourth, to develop a social network (Li, 2004).

Since supported employment programmes for people with ID were established in the early 1980’s, increasing numbers of people with ID have obtained employment in competitive and integrated work settings (Braddock, Rizzolo, & Hemp, 2004).

Supported employment was defined for the first time in the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-527) in the U.S. as: “(i) paid employment which is for persons with developmental disabilities for whom competitive employment at or above minimum wage is unlikely and who, because of their disabilities, need intensive ongoing support to perform in a work setting; (ii) is conducted in a variety of settings, particularly worksites in which persons without disabilities are employed; and (iii) is supported by any activity needed to sustain paid
work by persons with disabilities, including supervision, training, and transportation” (p. 2665). The Alberta Association for Supported Employment has a similar definition of supported employment which is, “real work in an integrated setting with ongoing support provided by an agency with expertise in finding employment for people with disabilities” (Alberta Association for Supported Employment, 2004). Besides financial benefits, social integration of people with ID is also one of the critical outcomes and concerns of supported employment (Storey, 1993).

1.2 Problem Statement and Relevance

Social integration of workers with and without disabilities is a defining element of supported employment. However, coming to a common consensus on a definition, and a measure, for social integration has been elusive. Currently, there is still a lack of systematic evaluation for the level of social integration of people with disabilities in the workplace. It is important for service providers to understand the multifaceted nature of social integration in the workplace so strategies to improve it, and to meet individual needs, can be effectively developed and tested.

1.3 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the process of social integration
for people with ID in the workplace. The following research questions were posed:

1. What are employees with IDs’ perceptions and needs of social integration?
   What are their experiences of social relationships in work settings?

2. What are co-workers’ perceptions of and relationships with employees with ID?

3. What characteristics of workplace culture contribute to or detract from social integration for people with ID?
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to the Literature

The purpose of this review was to seek a definition of social integration in the workplace as well as current knowledge on the elements of social integration regarding people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace. Intellectual disability, mental retardation, developmental disability, social integration, inclusion, relationship, workplace and co-worker were the key words used in EBM reviews, AMED, CINAHL, EMBASE, PsycINFO and MEDLINE databases to locate the relevant studies. Reference lists from the articles identified through the computer search were also reviewed in order to locate additional studies.

2.2 Definition of Intellectual Disability

The terms, ‘intellectual disability’, ‘developmental disability’, and ‘mental retardation’ are sometimes used interchangeably. According to American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disability (2002), intellectual disability is a disability characterized by “significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills.” The disability manifests before age of 18. Intellectual functioning is
usually measured by standard intelligence quotient (IQ) test scores. With regards to the diagnosis of intellectual disability, it is generally considered to be present if an individual has an IQ test score of approximately 70 or below. The individual also has limitations in several adaptive behaviour skills, such as self-care, communication, health and safety, work, and leisure.

2.3 Definition of Social Integration

Social integration is a complex social phenomenon and its definition in the literature has been vague. According to the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-527) in the U.S., integration is defined as “…participation by persons with developmental disabilities in the same community activities in which non-handicapped citizens participate, together with regular contact with non-handicapped citizens…” (p. 2664). Four components were used by Storey (1993) to describe the integration of people with disabilities in employment settings:

1. “Physical Proximity” in the work settings, which is the first step of integration.

2. “Social Interaction” consisting of conversations and communications.

3. “Relationship” which can range from being formal to being intimate.

4. “Social Network” which involves frequent contact with certain persons.
Parent, Kregel, Wehman, & Metzler (1991) and Wehman (2003) indicated that an employee’s participation in social relationships with co-workers plays an integral role in the quality of his/her working life. The authors identified four elements of the work setting that must be considered when defining vocational integration and developed the Vocational Integration Index to measure the social integration of supported employment workers according to these elements:

1. **Company factors**: several features of the company are important indicators of overall opportunities for integration at a particular job setting such as the number of workers with and without disabilities that are employed by the company, the availability of formal and informal supports, and any company sponsored social activities etc.

2. **Worksite factors**: working in the same environment ("proximity") and participating in common experiences ("similarity") can promote the establishment of interpersonal relationships among co-workers; for example, working at the same location, working the same hours, wearing the same uniforms, taking lunch and breaks at the same time, and attending the same staff meetings can give employees the opportunities (proximity & similarity) for social interactions.

3. **Worker factors**: the interactions and activities of the employees dictate the
degree of social integration available at a particular job setting. Active involvement in any social events that include the employees of the company such as potluck lunches, birthday parties, weddings, happy hour and movies could contribute to feelings of membership and being an equal participant in the social network of the job setting.

4. Benefit factors: receipt of wages and benefits in exchange for jobs performed is one value of work. This is as true for workers with disabilities as for other people. The receipt of company benefits/perks can also provide a shared topic for conversations among workers; hence, if a supported employee is not receiving benefits, s/he might lose many opportunities to join in social interactions and activities topical to those benefits with co-workers. In addition, inconsistent treatment could promote a negative image (that of being different) for the employee with a disability, and have a negative impact on her/his relationships with co-workers.

The Vocational Integration Index consists of two scales: the Job Scale identifies the available resources and opportunities for integration in the workplace, and the Consumer Scale assesses the degree to which an employee with a disability is engaged in the available resources and opportunities for integration.
The literature shows that social integration of employees with ID in the workplace has been examined in the following areas: (i) social interactions and relationships in the workplace, (ii) perceptions and needs of social integration, and (iii) workplace culture.

2.4 Employees with IDs’ Social Interactions and Relationships in the Workplace

Chadsey and Beyer (2001) described two types of social interactions that can occur in the workplace: task-related and non-task-related. Task-related interactions are conversations related to the work at hand such as receiving/providing instructions, receiving/providing feedback regarding performance, and requesting assistance. Non-task-related interactions are those unrelated to job duties, including behaviours such as teasing and provoking, as well as sharing information about personal interests and family. These types of non-task-related interactions provide chances to develop close social relationships. Three types of relationships were also identified by the authors: work acquaintances, work friends and social friends. Work acquaintances are the persons with whom the employee only interacts during work and the topics of conversations are merely task-related. Work friends are the friends with whom the employee interacts socially during lunch and breaks but not after work. Social friends are the co-workers with whom the employee participates in activities outside
Hughes, Kim, and Hwang (1998) systematically reviewed twelve research articles, published from 1985 to 1995, studying social interactions of employees with ID and their co-workers without disabilities. The investigators in these studies all used direct observation to assess interactions in a competitive work setting. What these studies consistently found was that in terms of function of interaction, employees with ID initiated more interactions with other employees with ID than with other co-workers without disabilities. In the same way, employees without disabilities started more conversations with other co-workers without disabilities. Studies also showed that employees with ID engaged mostly in superficial interactions such as greetings or receiving instruction. On the other hand, employees without disabilities participated frequently in joking and personal conversations. Direct observation methods such as narrative-recording, interval-recording and behaviour-checklist were used in these studies to provide important information regarding the similarities and differences between pattern and frequency of social interactions of employees with and without disabilities. However, caution should be exercised when generalizing the research findings from these studies as many contextual variables were not taken into account such as job types and support strategies. Moreover, the time spent in the observation of each employee was very
short in all the studies. Additionally, the quality of interactions and social acceptance were not reported in the results.

Rusch, Wilson, Hughes, and Heal (1994) used the Co-worker Involvement Index to evaluate the interactions between supported employees and their matched co-workers without disabilities in food service, light industry, service occupations and other non-categorized jobs. Employees with and without disabilities had similar levels of interaction in terms of physical integration (i.e., the employee works, takes lunch and breaks in the same areas), social integration (i.e., the employee has opportunities to interact with co-workers during work and breaks), support, providing feedback and information; however, the two groups had significant differences on Item 6 of the Index which is “Befriending”. The study showed that non-disabled workers had more interactions with each other than with their co-workers with disabilities outside of work. When comparing social interactions of supported employees with different types of jobs, as well as placement approaches (i.e., individual or group), the researchers found the fewest opportunities for social interactions occurred in individual placements in light industry in jobs such as assemblers. The authors suggested the reason may be that industrial settings are noisier, with work stations that are more scattered. The questionnaire was filled out by the employees’ supervisors; hence, the quality of the interactions was not taken into
account by this study.

Ohtake and Chadsey (1999) did a survey to compare the relationships 21 participants without disabilities had with other non-disabled co-workers and with their co-workers with ID. The depth and breadth of self-disclosure in these relationships were also measured. The study found all participants without disabilities had at least one work acquaintance with whom they only interacted in the course of work but only forty percent of them considered their co-workers with ID as work acquaintances. Ninety-one percent of the participants had at least one work friend with whom they interacted socially during the workday; however, only 62% of them identified their co-workers with ID as work friends. Nearly seventy-three percent of the participants had at least one social friend with whom they participated in social events after work but none of them viewed their co-workers with ID as social friends. Furthermore, participants disclosed themselves much less to co-workers with ID than to co-workers without disabilities. This study relied on self-report data; consequently, the participants may have answered the questions in a socially desirable way. There is also a need to explore and compare co-workers’ perceptions of employees with ID with actual behaviours that they display while interacting with them at work. Employees with IDs’ experience of social relationships should be explored as well.

Li (2004) conducted in-depth interviews with 18 employees with ID in Hong
Kong. The study found that the quality of the participants’ work experiences was strongly associated with their social relationships in the workplace and with employers’ and co-workers’ attitudes toward them. Eight participants had experienced discrimination in their workplaces; in one example, a participant was not able to get compensation for a work injury. Strategies identified for improving social acceptance and integration in the workplace included: (i) assistance from professionals regarding employment, such as implementation of natural support; (ii) disability education at work and in public settings; (iii) training programmes to improve individuals’ work capacity and social skills; and (iv) self-advocacy for people with disabilities.

2.5 Workplace Culture

The workplace culture shapes the type of and way that social interactions happen. Hatch (1993) defined workplace culture as the meanings, expectations, values, and assumptions that are shared and practiced by its members. Workplace culture has great impact on employee job satisfaction and job retention. Studies have shown that a failure to fit in socially is a primary factor for job loss (Kennedy, 1980, cited in Hagner, 2000). A closer examination of workplace culture and its adaptation in settings where persons with ID are employed is very important in the development of
supported employment programmes. Hagner (2000) identified 31 workplace culture elements (e.g., gathering places, shared tasks, social times, and group customs) that can be examined in order to gain an understanding of the culture of a supported employment setting.

Fillary and Pernice (2005, 2006) used Hagner’s (2000) Workplace Culture Survey to evaluate eight workplaces hiring people with ID in New Zealand. The purpose was to identify the inclusive elements in these work settings and to compare integration levels of workers with ID and their matched co-workers without a disability. The researchers found that in all cases the supported workers received a lower inclusion rating than their co-workers without a disability. For instance, all workplaces had regular staff meetings, and all workers without a disability participated in these meetings, but only two employees with ID were included. It was also observed that supported workers who received a higher level of attention from the employment support agency were less ‘included’ in the workplace. Moreover, workers who worked full-time shifts seemed to have higher inclusion levels than workers who worked part-time. Lastly, the participants in the study indicated several factors that had assisted their inclusion in the workplaces, such as relaxed and supportive managerial style, a sense of teamwork, and positive staff attitude. The researchers concluded that the Workplace Culture Survey seemed to be
a useful tool for assessing the workplace culture, identifying the inclusive characteristics of workplace environments and the levels of inclusion of workers with ID. This study relied on semi-structured interviews with employers, and employees with and without ID. Additional and more in-depth investigations of the characteristics that make up workplace culture and quality of inclusion are still needed.

Chadesy, Shelden, Horn De Bardeleben, and Cimera (1999) did a survey to compare 10 pairs of supported employees with ID who were judged by their employment agencies as either successfully or unsuccessfully integrated into the work settings. The researchers investigated what social integration variables differentiated the two groups and found: (i) those who were successfully integrated worked in businesses that had or did employ multiple individuals with disabilities. On the other hand, half of the unsuccessful group worked in businesses where there were few or single workers with disabilities (in 4 out of 10 unsuccessful cases, there was only one employee with a disability hired in the workplace); (ii) the majority of those with successful integration worked in settings where most employees shared the same work schedule; (iii) compared with the paired unsuccessful cases, successful ones worked in settings where employees had more opportunities for non-task-related conversations with their supervisors; (iv) in half of the pairs, successfully integrated workers were
employed in settings where employees participated in social events outside of work more often; and (v) successfully integrated workers worked in environments that were seen as being more relaxed. The study used a self-report instrument filled out by the supported employment agents and therefore relied on their subjective perceptions. A closer examination of workplace characteristics and factors that contribute to social integration for people with ID is still needed.

Butterworth, Hagner, Helm, and Whelley (2000) conducted participant observations and interviews at eight work settings hiring transition-age young adults with ID. Each worksite was observed on a total of six occasions for 1.5 hours each time. The researchers observed social and supportive interactions, as well as social events and activities in the workplaces. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees’ supervisors. This study demonstrated that physical proximity does not necessarily amount to true integration, as one participant worked closely with his co-workers but never participated in their conversations. By comparing the differences between worksites that were more integrated and those less integrated, the researchers identified four features of the work environments that were associated with high-level workplace interactions and support: (i) opportunities for extended relationships outside of work; (ii) specific opportunities and common areas for interactions; (iii) personal and team-building management style; and (iv)
interdependent job designs which provide chances for interactions between employees.

Limitations in this study were (a) that the time spent in observations was short, so participants may have behaved differently in the presence of the researchers they were not acclimatized to, and (b) needs and expectations of employees with ID in terms of integration were not considered.

2.6 Summary of Literature and Implications for Research

Social integration is still the large stumbling block in the widespread adoption and success of supported employment programmes. Employment support and workplace relationships can and do impact on an employee’s quality of life and how, or if, they can achieve their goals. What was revealed in the literature review is that employees with ID did interact socially with their non-disabled co-workers; however, the conversations were typically superficial and mainly job-related, and the interactions were in large part restricted to within the work setting. Characteristics that identified an inclusive workplace environment included having a common area for social interactions, opportunities for non-work-related activities, and interdependent (or shared) work designs. These studies suffered from some limitations that made arriving at a conclusion on the complex topic of social integration impractical. Often the observations were superficial, the triangulation of
measures was not considered, and in the majority of the studies only a few components of social integration were considered.

The biggest challenge in supported employment is social integration. One reason is that the workplace is a dynamic system. It is very important for service providers to have a range of comprehensive knowledge so strategies to improve social integration for employees with ID can be effectively developed. Considering the limitations of previous research studies, this investigator aimed to apply a qualitative case study methodology to explore the process of social integration for people with ID in the workplace.
3.1 Research Objectives

The primary objective of the present study was to obtain comprehensive knowledge of the process of social integration from selected workplaces and to identify the characteristics of positive workplace culture for people with ID. The secondary objective of the study was to provide exploratory data gathered from the review of the institutional and social environments of the workplaces studied that can lend itself to the development of new strategies, or amend current strategies, to enhance social integration in the workplace for persons with ID.

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are employees with IDs’ perceptions and needs of social integration? What are their experiences of social relationships in work settings?

2. What are co-workers’ perceptions of and relationships with employees with ID?

3. What characteristics of workplace culture contribute to or detract from social integration for people with ID?
3.2 Research Design

A qualitative case study was conducted to explore social integration of people with ID in integrated work settings. A case study is defined by Stake (1995) as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). Creswell (1998) described it as “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). In this study, a case was a work setting that hired individuals with ID and was therefore able to provide insights into the process of social integration for employees with ID. The investigator framed the research as a collective case study (studying a number of cases to investigate a phenomenon or general condition), by selecting two work settings hiring people with ID to explore the complexity of the process of social integration (Stake, 1995). Three defined case study data sources were used (Yin, 1994): documentation/policy review, observations and in-depth interviews were conducted at the work sites.

3.3 Case Selection

Companies employing individuals with ID were identified through the recommendations of researchers from the South Eastern Ontario
Community-University Research Alliance in Intellectual Disabilities organization.

“Convenience sampling,” where the researcher chooses samples that are easy to access (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003), was used. The investigator contacted the managers of all identified workplaces and those who expressed interest were considered for the study. It was decided to include two cases in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the issue. Usually the sample size of a collective case study is four or less (Creswell, 1998). From the worksites contacted, two agreed to participate in this study: one an educational organization where four workers with ID were employed, the other a restaurant franchise where one worker with ID was employed. The investigator gained access to the educational organization through the department supervisor, and to the restaurant franchise through the store manager. The investigator then established rapport with the employees of each company independently. During the research, the restaurant franchise underwent a renovation and during this time the employee with ID was transferred to another franchise for several weeks. The investigator continued observing the employee’s work and social relationships at the new location.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection in a case study emphasizes the use of multiple sources of
information (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 1994). In this study, three stages of data collection were conducted at the worksites:

- stage one: document review,
- stage two: observations of social activities & employee interactions in the workplace,
- stage three: in-depth interviews.

Stage two overlapped stage three as the investigator planned to use initial observations to obtain a general picture of the workplace and then interview the participants.

Initial interviews were followed up by more observations to compare the participants’ words and behaviours with earlier assessments. All the data collected and stored in file folders were organized by work site, types of data, and date of data collection. The time frame for the data collection was 4 months, covering the two locations in tandem.

### 3.4.1 Stage one: document review

For the educational organization this investigator reviewed the organization’s employee policy, each employee with ID’s job description and a long letter of nomination for an award that three of the participants with ID received in 2002.

During the period of study, the participants with ID showed the investigator their pay
slips as well as pictures of themselves participating in local sporting events and social activities.

For the restaurant franchise, the company’s website and posted policies were reviewed. The review of the website, newsletter, and policy documents aimed to answer questions such as:

- Did the company sponsor any social activities for employees?
- Did employees with ID receive any benefits from the company?
- Did employees with ID have opportunities for promotion?
- Did employees with ID follow the same work schedule as others?
- Did the company provide formal orientation to new employees?
- Were there any specific arrangements for training of employees with ID?
- Were there any employee meetings, and who was included in them?

3.4.2 Stage two: observations

The purpose of the observations was to gather in-depth knowledge of social activities and integration in each workplace. In the educational organization observations were conducted one day per week for four months for a total of sixty three hours. In the restaurant franchise, observations occurred three days a week for one month for a total of thirty two and a half hours. Observation notes recorded:
a) a description of the participants with ID and the physical environment of
the work settings;

b) work activities;

c) interactions between employees with ID with their co-workers and
supervisors;

d) participation or exclusion of employees with ID in any social events and
activities, and group meetings inside and outside of the workplace; and

e) this investigator’s own reflections and impressions on these issues.

3.4.3 Stage three: in-depth interviews

In the educational organization semi-structured interviews were conducted with
the four employees with ID, their current supervisor, two professors, three librarians,
one project planner, one student and two janitors. In the restaurant franchise the
interviews were conducted with the worker with ID, the director of HR for this
workplace, the manager and the supervisor at the original franchise, and one interview
with a co-worker at the new branch. The average length of the interviews was one
hour, ranging from 15 minutes to two hours. The interview with the employee with
ID focused on his interpretation of social integration and his social relationships
experience in the workplace. An interview protocol (see Appendix A) was designed
to match the individual’s level of comprehension. The interviews with co-workers (see Appendix B) explored their perceptions of, and relationships with, employees with ID. The purpose of the interviews with employers, managers or supervisors (see Appendix C) was to explore their perceptions of social integration and their strategies to improve it in the workplace for employees with ID. At the end of each interview, the investigator restated the important issues that arose during that interview for the purpose of clarity. All the interviews were audio taped.

3.5 Data Analysis

Each in-depth interview was transcribed verbatim and reviewed for accuracy of transcription. All in-depth interview transcriptions and observation notes were entered into QSR (Qualitative Solutions and Research) NVivo data analysis software for data management. Within the software the investigator developed a matrix of data categories (e.g., work site, and types and sources of data) for the gathered evidence. Initially the investigator read through all information gathered (e.g.; field notes, document reviews, interview transcriptions) to gain a sense of the overall information. In addition, the investigator recorded reflective notes and memos (e.g., ideas, key concepts) in the margins of the field notes and transcripts. The investigator then performed line-by-line hand coding and using QSR for each
transcript and observation note. The major themes or issues were identified and grouped, first within each interview and observation and then among all the interviews and observations.

Case study objectives guided the case study analysis (Yin, 1994). In this study, the investigator focused on data from interviews with the employees with ID, their supervisors and company documents reviewed to answer the first research question “what are employees with IDs’ perceptions and needs of social integration?” In order to understand co-workers’ perceptions of and relationships with the employees with ID, the investigator focused on the data received from interviews with co-workers and employees with ID as well as from observations of social activities in the workplace. The final phase focused attention on all data gathered in order to identify the constituent characteristics of a positive workplace culture for people with ID.

Stake (1995) defined two strategies that researchers can apply to reach new meanings about cases: in “categorical aggregation”, the researcher collects instances from the data until something can be said about them as a whole, and in “direct interpretation”, the researcher seeks to draw meaning from a single instance. In this study, data analysis started with a detailed description of each case and its context. Then within each case the investigator analyzed data for developing categories/themes,
aggregating multiple forms of information into ideas, and providing details that support the categories/themes. A thematic analysis across the case studies then followed by examining categories/themes to discern similarities and differences among them (Creswell, 1998). By this analysis the investigator sought to define the employees with IDs’ definitions, and needs, of social integration in the workplace; to understand co-workers’ relationships with the employees with ID; and to detect the elements of a supportive workplace culture versus a non-supportive one. The investigator provided a detailed interpretation of the lessons learned from the two cases of social integration in the written report.

3.6 Ethics

The Queen’s University Research Ethics Board (REB) approved this study on October 11, 2006 (see Appendix H). The REB was provided with, and subsequently approved, the interview protocols.

This study aimed to explore the social integration of employees with ID in the workplace. The information was collected from two workplaces that employed people with ID. The investigator sought to gain the confidence of participants so the presence of the investigator was accepted. At all times, the investigator also made sure the observations and interviews did not interfere with the productivity of the
workplace. Other ethical issues of the research included:

1. Free and informed consent:
   a. Workplace representatives understood the purpose of the study and provided the opportunities to collect data from their employees (please see Appendix D for invitation letter and consent form for the workplace).
   b. All the participants were fully informed and provided free consent to participate in the study (see Appendix E for consent form for employees with ID and Appendix F for consent form for co-workers).
   c. Interviewees were also asked to provide consent to participate in interviews and to be audio taped. Observation consent was also obtained every time the investigator was present in the workplace (see Appendix G for the observation consent form). Participants in the study were able to withdraw at any time during data collection.

2. In-depth interviews involved participants in self-disclosure and could lead to/cause psychological distress. Questions were overly invasive, and participants were free to refuse any questions.
3. Vulnerable persons: persons with ID are vulnerable due to the cognitive challenges they face. All the information provided and language used was matched as best possible the individual’s level of comprehension.

4. Privacy and confidentiality: the anonymity of companies and participants were protected in field notes, interviews, and study report. All consent forms and data were stored separately in locked files and were only available to the investigator and advisors.

3.7 Ensuring Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research

Trustworthiness of qualitative research refers to the accuracy and quality of the study and is judged based on the following criteria (Krefting, 1991):

Credibility: refers to the accuracy of the representation of data, and establishment of confidence in the research process, findings and interpretations.

Transferability: refers to the degree to which the results of the research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts.

Dependability: emphasizes the researcher’s ability to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs.

Confirmability: is concerned with the extent to which the researcher has influenced the process and findings as qualitative study tends to assume that each
Creswell and Miller (1997), cited and summarized in Creswell (1998), identified eight verification procedures to enhance the quality of qualitative research and recommended that researchers apply at least two of them in any given studies. These eight verification procedures are summarized in Appendix I. For the purpose of the research, the following five verification strategies were employed to ensure the quality of this study: prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer review, member checks, and rich/thick description.

**Prolonged engagement** in the field: Prolonged engagement includes building trust with study participants and learning the culture of study settings. In the field, the researcher makes decisions about what is prominent in the study and relevant to the objective of the study (Creswell, 1998). In the current study, the investigator was able to establish trust with all participants once on site. The investigator spent one day a week for four months at Workplace 1, and three days a week for one month at Workplace 2. The investigator immersed herself in the workplaces until the point of “data saturation” was reached – meaning no new insights would be obtained (Ritchie, Lewis, & Elam, 2003).

**Triangulation:** Triangulation refers to “the use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence” (Creswell,
To enhance the trustworthiness of the current study, triangulation of qualitative data resources (i.e., comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information obtained at different times and from different data sources; Patton, 2002) - was employed. In each workplace, the data derived from the review of documents, interviews with the supervisor/the manager and the participants with ID were confirmed against the employee policies and benefits that employees with ID received. The consistency between observations versus interviews was checked to validate workplace culture and the social relationships the participants with ID had in the workplace.

Peer review/debriefing: Peer review provides an external verification of the research process. It involves peer reviewers asking the researcher hard questions regarding the research methods, meanings, and interpretations. In the current study, the investigator’s supervisor and advisory committee members assumed the role of reviewers. Two peer debriefing sessions were conducted through the period of this study. In each session, the investigator reported the study’s progress and the reviewers asked questions about study methods and interpretations to enable the investigator to consider alternative interpretations of the study results.

Member checks: In member checks, the researcher requests study participants’ views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations. In the current study, the
investigator always asked for clarification if there were any discrepancy between interviews and observations. Also, at the end of each interview, the investigator restated the important issues that arose during that interview for the purpose of clarity.

Rich/Thick description: Rich/thick description allows readers to determine transferability of the study results. It involves the researcher providing detailed information about study participants and settings for readers to determine whether the study findings can be transferred to other settings. The current study provides descriptions of the two workplaces in detail and quotes of participants’ exact words, including observation notes in the study finding. Readers can determine the accuracy of the interpretation and transferability of the study results.

The credibility of the researcher can also affect the way the study findings are received. Patton (2002) explains as the researcher is the instrument in qualitative research, a study report should include some information about the researcher’s experience, training, and perspective. By providing the information, the researcher allows readers to understand his/her position and any assumptions that might impact the study. In terms of my experience and perspectives regarding the study issue, I had two years of experience providing supported employment for individuals with mental illness. Most of my clients were not able to sustain a job longer than one year. The difficulty my clients faced in their workplaces was not because they could not
fulfill the job demands but the prejudices their co-workers held towards them. I strongly believe if my goal is to improve my clients’ job retention and integration in a workplace I need to address the social and institutional environments of the workplace. In terms of my qualitative research experience, it comes from studies at McMaster University in 2004. I conducted a short ethnography in a workshop for individuals with severe mental illness, interviewing workers with severe mental illness and observing their work. While taking my master’s degree at Queen’s University, I followed courses in “Research Method in Rehabilitation” and “Qualitative Methods in Health Research.” Both courses provided knowledge of theoretical frameworks, designs, data collection and data analysis of qualitative research. In the “Qualitative Methods in Health Research”, I also had the opportunity to conduct a case study with a single mother to understand her occupations. These experiences contributed to my preparation to conduct the current study.
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

In presenting the results of the study, pseudonyms will be used to protect both workplaces’ and all the participants’ identities. First, an overview of Workplace 1 will be provided. Following the overview, the first and second questions will be answered for this workplace. The same overview and questions will then be discussed for Workplace 2. Finally, the cultural environments of both workplaces will be examined, compared, and contrasted in order to answer the third research question.

4.1 Workplace 1: The Educational Organization

4.1.1 Case description

Workplace 1 was a department within a large university that offered programmes of study in teaching. This department had more than one hundred and fifty employees. There were four employees with ID; three, “David”, “Jason”, and “Gary”, worked as a team in the mail room; one, “Albert”, worked as a janitor.

According to the institution’s employee policy, the university was committed to achieving employment equity and diversity in its workforce. Its employment equity plan was designed and instituted according to the criteria established by the Federal
Contractor Plans. The basic principle to which the university adhered was to remove discriminatory barriers and to create diversity in its workforce that reflected the diversity of the Canadian population. The educational organization showed a range of diversity in terms of its employees’ ages and also reflected gender equity.

All participants with ID were employed full-time, from 8:00am to 3:30pm. They had a one hour lunch break from 12:00pm to 1:00pm, and a fifteen-minute break in the morning and another fifteen-minute break in the afternoon. They all shared the position title of ‘Building Assistant’. David, in his early 40’s at the time of this study, had worked at the organization for twenty years. He can read and write well, which allowed him to take on many responsibilities. He was very outgoing and participated in many sports events outside work, such as curling and bowling. Jason, in his mid-30’s, started the job in 1992. He can also read and write, but not as well as David. Jason was generally quieter and more shy. He spent most of his time in the mail room. He enjoyed listening to music, playing with his cat and going shopping in his leisure time. Gary, in his early 20’s, started working in the organization in 2001. He can not read or write but did recognize numbers; he faced an additional challenge in that his speech was often difficult to understand. Gary had two voices; one was high-pitched while the other was low-pitched, and he sometimes had conversations between the two voices. Gary liked interacting with people and also
participated in many sports events, such as curling and bowling. Albert, in his mid-40’s, had worked in the organization for 20 years. He did not talk much and seldom initiated conversations. Albert can read and write, and he often read newspapers and napped during his break or his lunch hour. He had diabetes and had to be careful about what he ate.

All the participants with ID received disability benefits from the Ontario Disability Support Program. The organization paid each of them roughly one hundred and ninety-six dollars per month (1.10 dollar per hour). In terms of benefits, each of them received a monthly bus pass, a pair of steel-toed shoes every year, and extended holidays; for instance, David and Albert each had about thirty vacation days per year. The three participants with ID who worked in the mail room as a team received the university’s Staff Award in 2002. More than thirty employees in the organization submitted their letters of support. The Award was presented to them in December, 2002. The three participants with IDs’ names and group picture were published in a newspaper, and each of them received a framed certificate. After the Award, Albert, the janitor, was recognized for his work in a ceremony held by the organization.

There had been three supervisors since David, Albert and Jason started their jobs. Over the years, the employees with IDs’ duties had also changed. The first
supervisor, who left the position in 1996, helped recruit employees with ID.

Originally, David, Albert and Jason worked in the organization temporarily for a job placement. The first supervisor was determined to help people with ID and suggested that the organization needed to hire three participants with disabilities. The school agreed it was a good idea to provide people from this demographic with opportunities, and thereafter, it was decided that three participants with ID were to be employed permanently. At that time, the three new employees mostly followed the first supervisor’s direct orders to complete their work. However, once the second supervisor took over the position, the three participants with ID started assuming more responsibilities. The second supervisor developed each participant with ID’s job description and nominated David, Jason and Gary for the Staff Award. She left the position in 2002 but still maintained a close relationship with all three of them. The third, and current, supervisor had had all participants with ID assume even more responsibilities. His aim was to further develop their working relationships and to make himself very approachable for them. More aspects of the managerial approach will be discussed in an upcoming section.

The mail room was located in a corner of the building. David, Jason and Gary were the only employees in the mail room and their names were written on a board beside the office door. They each had their own desk with their name tag on it.
There were two computers, one printer, a fridge, a microwave, a coffee machine, a toaster, and an audio system in this office for their use. David, Jason, Gary and Albert also each had a locker amongst the lockers along the hallway outside of the mail room.

The primary job duty of the mail room team was receiving and shipping mail and parcels. Every morning around 8:30, David and Jason received and sorted all the incoming mail together: one of them sorted and put all the incoming mail into two carts with file holders which had all the employees’ names and room numbers on them, and the other employee recorded all the mail in a computer. Jason also sorted and labelled all the day’s incoming parcels. He maintained a parcel-received database and created the “Receiving Goods Records” for parcel recipients to sign. During the rest of the day, Gary went about delivering all the mail and parcels throughout the building. He had several master keys which he used to open office doors. All the mail and parcels had room numbers on them and had been previously sorted and labelled by David and Jason, directing Gary to which room the mail or parcel belonged. Gary had recipients sign the “Receiving Goods Records” and at the same time, he collected their outgoing mail. Most employees in the building came to the mail room to drop off their outgoing parcels. Jason was the worker responsible for collecting these, sending them out and recording the transaction in a shipping
The other mail room duty was delivering audiovisual equipment. It was usually carried out by David and Gary: David received requests for audiovisual equipment and Gary delivered it from the storeroom to classrooms. After its use, Gary was tasked to return the equipment to the storeroom. David responded to equipment failure problems. Once a week Gary had to check the overheads in each classroom to make sure their light bulbs worked.

Another important responsibility the mail room team assumed was the purchasing and delivering of office supplies. Employees in the building would call or write emails to David to request office supplies. David checked the prices from several companies and ordered the supplies online. After placing the orders, he updated the office supply inventory. He, sometimes with Gary as well, delivered the office supplies once they had arrived. If there was any problem with the order it was David’s responsibility to call the company to solve it. David and Gary also restocked paper to the offices and photocopy rooms.

Another of Jason’s job duties was to deal with the rental of lockers. Most of the lockers were rented to students. New students came every September and they went to Jason to rent the lockers. Jason invoiced, received rental fees and maintained locker rental records. When the summer arrived and the students went on break,
Jason needed to clean the lockers out for autumn’s incoming students. Behind David’s desk there were two boxes which held the keys for all facilities in the building. It was David’s responsibility to maintain the inventory of keys. He also issued keys for a facility upon authorization from their supervisor.

Albert was responsible for collecting all garbage in the building and removing it to exterior bins twice a day, once in the early morning and once in the afternoon after he finished his work. He swept and mopped all the stairwells and cleaned the glass of entrance doors. When the weather allowed, he swept the exterior entrances to the building several times daily. In the summer he also washed the windows. When required, Albert helped to move furniture.

Although the four participants with ID each had distinct job descriptions they helped each other where necessary. For instance, when David and Gary were absent for two days participating in a sporting competition, Albert and Jason helped deliver audiovisual equipment and mail. Another example of this was when Jason was absent due to a migraine headache for two days, David completed Jason’s job duties.

The participants with ID were never left out of social events in the organization; for example, Albert and David were on a baseball team with other employees. There was a potluck luncheon organized by teachers every month, a summer barbeque for incoming students every August, and a staff recognition breakfast each year.
Furthermore, the participants with ID always received birthday cards and small gifts for their birthdays from co-workers. During Christmas holidays, the participants with ID received cash, gift cards and movie cards from other employees. They were also invited to retirement parties, wedding showers and baby showers. The second supervisor came by and took David, Jason and Gary out for lunch once a month. She also celebrated each participant with ID’s birthday. There was a professional developmental group in the organization which ran workshops for its staff and which the four participants with ID all attended. The four participants with ID were invited to the organization’s annual meeting, but generally, David was the only employee with ID who attended. The supervisor did not hold formal meetings with the four employees with ID but did call them together when work-related issues needed to be discussed. The director of the organization also went to the mail room regularly to discuss the participants with IDs’ concerns with them.

4.1.2  Research question one: what are employees with IDs’ perceptions and needs of social integration? What are their experiences of social relationships in work settings?

All the participants with ID expressed that they loved their job and felt included in the workplace. When asked about their perceptions and needs of social integration,
two participants with ID were able to provide their definition of social integration: in sum, “People with disabilities should not be labelled”. It was evident that they felt this standard was being met, as they did not feel they were labelled by employees without disabilities and, rather, felt themselves to be well-integrated in the organization:

“I think for working and talking... just working with other people as an equal... people are so understanding here... they’re kind of good here because they make you feel equal, you know, like everyone else. It’s good to get that feeling.” (Interview-Jason-February 27)

“They don’t treat us here as people with disabilities. We are treated here as we are like any other employee... Not only in this place but in other workplaces I don’t think an employee... employer I should say, who has a person with a disability, should label them as disability because they are very capable of... people with disabilities are very... capable of doing things... There is a person doing work. Maybe the person has a disability. It doesn’t matter... I am a regular person. I am 40 years old. And I am doing my job.” (Interview-David-February 13)

In terms of their social relationships in the workplace, they spent most of their time with each other but they were also able to interact with employees without disabilities and had developed relationships with some of them. The four participants with ID knew each other very well and were best friends. They helped and supported each other at work; for instance, when Gary was first hired, David and Jason spent many weeks taking him around, introducing him to other employees and teaching him how to deliver mail by recognizing room numbers. The three workers in the mailroom usually watched a movie together during their lunch time. They also
participated in many activities together after work. David and Jason would go for dinner and have haircuts together once in a while. Albert and Gary sometimes went bowling together. David and Gary both participated in a leisure programme in town for people with intellectual disabilities. David knew Gary’s family and was very close with them.

The four participants with ID did not associate with employees without disabilities or the students outside of work but had many opportunities to socialize with them during work hours. They had both work-related and non-work-related conversations with the majority of employees and students they knew in the organization. Here are two examples from the observations:

“While we were talking outside a lady said to David, ‘You are still wearing the medal!’ David said, ‘Yes, my coach told me I should wear it.’ ‘For sure, if I were you I would show it off too!!!’” (Observation-February 06)

“Gary delivered the parcels. A student greeted with him and asked him, ‘Are you curling this weekend? How is the practice going?’ Gary said the practice was going pretty well and they gave each other a high five.” (Observation-January 23)

How did the four participants with ID perceive their experiences of social relationships in the organization? A big reason they loved their job was their relationships in the workplace, which they found to be positive. They all reported that they enjoyed working with their colleagues and interacting with other people in the organization. They felt they were well integrated and that people treated them
like family:

“I think the people you work with make all the difference... I like all my co-workers I work with. They are really good. They are the best people to work with... It's fun working with students. I think I really enjoy students’ interactions... I think the students, and faculty, and staff here have been really good. They are really good to work with... They treat us really good. Actually they treat us like family here.” (Interview-Jason-February 27)

“I like it (my job) because I can get along with you guys... They (people in the building) treat me right.” (Interview-Albert-February 27)

4.1.3 Research question two: what are co-workers’ perceptions of and relationships with employees with ID?

The four participants with ID were well recognized in the organization. Although they were viewed as a team in terms of their work, each participant with ID was valued as an individual. The majority of their co-employees had developed close relationships with each participant with ID. They knew each participant with ID well: his life experiences and personality, and what he liked to talk about. Here are two examples of many similar statements from co-workers:

“With David, sometimes it’s about his health. Sometimes it’s his family. He tells me a lot about, he has people that he visits in Quebec and he has a really good friend around here. Sometimes the two of them get on the train and off they go. And then I hear about the train and how long it took and what they did when they were there and who they saw. Talk about the presents that he got and... racing! He’s big on racing—NASCAR. So he knows all the drivers and he can tell you everything about that that you want to know. Yeah, he chats a lot about a lot of things... I don’t go down there often enough to talk to him (Jason), but when he’s up here and delivering things, we have great conversations. He’s got a funny sense of humour! ... And we talk about... He’s always telling me about
his cat and the heat and getting a new computer... and so he had to get his dad or somebody to come to his apartment to set it up properly but now it's set up. And 'I can do the email and I can do the Internet'... So it's just incidental goofy stuff. Or I'll sometimes say, 'What are you having for supper tonight? What are you, what are you going to make for supper?' ‘Oh, I don't know! Have to look in the fridge.' “... He (Albert) doesn't talk a lot. But he has to be in the mood to talk. Quite often when I'm coming in, he's taking garbage out in the trolley. ‘Hi Albert, how are you?’ ‘Good.’ ‘What's the weather like today? You’re going to get wet out there!’ ‘Yeah.' So, there's no feedback..., in the hallway, it's just short and to the point. ‘I have a job to do. Boom! I'm out of here.' And he doesn't stand around and chitchat. But if he's in a different setting or if he's at the barbecues and things, and you happen to sit beside him, he'll just chat away like no tomorrow;... if you want to get him talking, talk about his bike. Ask him about his bike. Like, has he got his bike ready? Because he loves his bike and he rides his bike all summer every day. So his bike is his baby and if you want to get him talking, that's usually a good opening.” (Interview-Co-worker 1-March 27)

“Hockey is big with Gary. So when it gets toward the play-off time, people are always teasing them, because it's the Maple Leafs—I think—that Gary likes. So there's always a big thing, people saying, “Oh, those Maple Leafs going” or, so, yes, hockey is always a big thing with Gary. Or, but also, often depending on Gary’s mood when he comes to the library, he’ll look sad or he’ll not say anything. And if you say “Why? What’s wrong today, Gary?” he’ll tell you whatever it is or... I think his sister got married or had a baby and he was really happy. He told everybody about that. Things that happen in Gary’s life, he will often tell us about when he comes for the mail.” (Interview-Co-worker 2-March 13)

Stories from personal lives did not only come from the participants with ID to other employees: As several observations demonstrated, many co-employees also enjoyed sharing their stories with the participants with ID. Here are two examples:

“Gary talked to a female employee. The employee told him that she was going for lunch with other employees. She also told him that she and her husband bought a new house. Gary asked why they needed to buy a new house. She explained that she needed a bigger house in order to have babies. Gary was very happy for her and hugged her.” (Observation-March 08)
“A female worker came to the office to ask if her courier package has arrived. David checked it on the website. While waiting she showed him her ring. The design of the ring was a carrot. She told David her husband bought her the ring for their 20th anniversary. She said, ‘Isn’t it cute?’”

(Observation-March 20)

In terms of the participants with IDs’ work performance, their co-employees thought they were competent, reliable, helpful, and were always willing to work extra time. Here are two examples:

“...Jason is great. He will follow up and make sure everything happens...
Because usually it is something special that you’re asking Jason for..., for us, a courier is special because we don’t normally do that. Sending out packages, so of course we’re always concerned that it gets done..., but once we give it to Jason, we feel really comfortable that it’s going to be taken care of.”

(Interview-Co-worker 2-March 13)

“There’s probably some higher up supervisors that would probably prefer having those people over having regular people that didn’t have disabilities because I would think like Gary and Jason and David and everybody... They know what their job is. These are the boundaries, and they’re not going to sway out. They come to work and this is what they’re going to do. But there’s probably employees that don’t have disabilities that come to work and they’re doing this, that, and the other, and they’re not doing their work. I’m one of those! (laughter)...”

(Interview-Co-worker 3-March 28)

There were some incidences of the workers with ID making mistakes in their work; for instance, once Jason put a mailing address label in the wrong order so a delivery did not arrive at its destination. Because the participants with ID genuinely sought to do, and usually succeeded in doing a good job, when mistakes occurred they did their best to solve the problem:

“... they make mistakes, like when I went to Jason and I said ‘You made a mistake. Look what happened!’ and he said ‘I’ll check it with the supervisor and make sure it’s right’ I said ‘Fine, you know? No problem. I know you will
and I know it’ll be right this time’ because they’re very conscientious. He felt really badly. He apologized to me... but if you stand back objectively and look at the small number of things where they make a mistake, it probably wouldn’t be any more than anybody else does in their job around here. And I think on the whole, people recognize that.” (Interview-Co-worker 4-April 17)

Some participants with IDs’ behaviours were not appropriate in a workplace; an example was Gary following female students around in the building. However, most people in the organization were very understanding and tolerant of the behaviours.

Here is a statement illustrating how one employee perceived Gary’s behaviour:

“...he’ll tell me if he likes a girl... He’ll get in trouble for that... I think... Because he gets crushes on girls in the hallway, so he follows them around... I don’t think he’s a nuisance... He’ll tell me the odd time if we’re out in the hallway and he sees a girl that he likes, he’ll come and tell me that he loves this girl, loves that girl... They’re really good with him, though, because they’re all teacher candidates so they’re really good to him and I think he’s never bothered anyone. And most people seem to know how to deal with him.” (Interview-Co-worker 5-March 22)

In an upcoming section, how other employees of the organization dealt with inappropriate behaviours from the workers with ID will be discussed in detail.

The four participants with ID not only did good work for the organization, their personalities and life experiences also enlightened and inspired other people in the workplace:

“...I find that they’re kind of inspiration when they come because they’re usually in a good mood when they come with the mail and if something’s going on that’s really taken over their life and they’re all excited about it, and they get everybody in a good mood in the workplace... I guess really it is just not that you learn from those guys but that they give you the emotional support during the day too... he (Gary) brings a lot more than just the work that he does into the workplace. He brings the whole positive approach to life and to making... Yeah, encouraging, caring, in the workplace, in a way that you can’t
define. But he does it by being who he is.” (Interview-Co-worker 2-March 13)

“...those three guys in particular who work in the mail room have taught me a lot, a lot about life..., there are a lot of people in this building and this institution who have, you know, very high credentials..., those three guys in the mail room have taught me, in some cases, just as much about life and important things about life as anybody else has... They never try to hurt anybody. It’s the beauty of their presence in this building. If everyone is like them in the world it would be very great.” (Interview-Co-worker 6-March 20)

Many co-workers had indicated that the participants with ID were part of the big family, as one employee stated:

“...we kind of consider them, I would say, more as extended family than as a worker... I’m one of the lucky ones. They all talk to me and I feel very blessed to, you know, be able to be friends with all of them because they bring something special to this place,... And they’ve really grown to be such a part of us!... I will feel terrible when they retire. And I feel really badly when they’re not well. And I know they tend to get a bit more sickness than the rest of us.” (Interview-Co-worker 1-March 27)

Each of the employees with ID performed an important role in the organization and they made a solid contribution to its function. Many people in the organization were very proud of them, and believed that the workers with ID, as well as the organization, set up a good model for the society:

“I remember the year we nominated them for a staff award... And people were so excited that they were getting the award. And it was really interesting because, umm, I don’t know if any other person with a disability in the university-a visible disability-who ever got a staff award in all the time I’ve been here. There might be people in other departments who have a job like theirs. I don’t know, but I’ve never seen anyone, if there is, get an award.” (Interview-Co-worker 4-April 17)

“I think that they are a real plus to our workplace and I’m glad I work in a building that they work in. And it is – as I say – so much nicer than McDonald’s and more challenging than that kind of a job. I hope that there are
lots of opportunities. I don’t know if there are other places across these campuses that has a program like that but you can see from what these guys do that they have the capability to do good work…” (Interview-Co-worker 2-March 13)

4.1.4 Summary description of Workplace 1

Workplace 1 was an educational organization that offered programmes of study in teaching. There were four employees with ID working here; David, Jason, and Gary worked as a team in the mail room and Albert worked as a janitor. They were employed full-time and were paid 1.10 dollar per hour. The educational organization provided several benefits to the employees with ID, including a monthly bus pass, safety shoes, and extended holidays. The four participants with ID carried out important functions within the organization and were viewed as dependable, competent workers by other staff. It was expressed by the other personal that the participants with ID also inspired other employees in the organization and enlightened the workplace. In terms of their social relationships in the workplace, the four participants with ID were never left out of social events, but were only included in one staff meeting. They were very close to each other, and also had work-related and non-work-related conversations with other employees. They were viewed as a part of the community/family by their co-workers without ID. In the next section, the same overview and questions will be provided and discussed for Workplace 2.
4.2 Workplace 2: The Restaurant Franchise

4.2.1 Case description

Workplace 2 was a part of a national chain of restaurant franchises. It was situated in a suburban area. There was one employee with ID, “Benjamin”, who was employed part-time. As previously mentioned, during the time the study was conducted, the restaurant underwent a renovation and Benjamin was transferred to another franchise for several weeks. The investigator continued observing his social relationships at the new location.

According to the director of HR, there was no official policy to include employees with disabilities in the restaurant franchises. However, this director of HR had previously shown interest in workplace integration, and had collaborated on a few pilot projects with several work-placement agencies in the region to include people with disabilities in several restaurant franchises. A position at the workplace was usually modified to accommodate the skills and requirements of a placed individual. The company also claimed that it hired employees with a diversity of backgrounds and also valued these differences. The company provided several benefits to its employees, including advancement opportunities and incentive programs. In terms of diversity in a workplace, this restaurant franchise’s workers reflected a range of ages, from 20 to 50 and visible minorities.
At the time of this study, Benjamin was in his early 20’s. He cannot read or write but he spoke well. He entered the job through an employment agency and worked at the restaurant for one year, but due to a personal reason, he then took a year off. He resumed work again three months before the investigator met him. Benjamin received disability benefits from the Ontario Disability Support Program. In order to avoid having his income cut off or reduced by the government, he chose to work only four hours a day, three days a week. Benjamin was very friendly and outgoing, and liked keeping himself busy. When he was not working he visited his parents and his friends outside of work, went to movies, and participated in many sports, such as bowling, swimming and biking.

Benjamin was treated like any other employee of equivalent title. He earned a competitive wage, eight dollars per hour at the time of the study, and was entitled to a yearly raise. He was included in several workplace benefits; for example, a programme existed which rewarded an employee monthly for good performance such as showing up for all the shifts, etc. Once the employee gained a certain number of points in the programme, the points could be cashed in, either for a paycheque or a gift certificate. In addition, each day Benjamin worked he could have up to two breakfast sandwiches and a chocolate milk.

The restaurant infrastructure consisted of three main areas: the dining area, the
counter area and the kitchen. There were usually eight employees working any given shift. Benjamin’s job was to keep the restaurant proper: he wiped down dirty tables and counters, washed dishes in the kitchen, brought dishes and trays to the counter after they were washed, took out garbage, did recycling, swept the parking lot, and cleaned the washroom. He also shovelled the restaurant’s outside area during the winter. If other people asked, he helped to fill up the soft drink machine, make coffee or prepare orders behind the counter. According to the director of HR, the primary job responsibility of all the workers in the restaurant was to serve customers and their secondary job responsibility was to keep the restaurant clean. Benjamin did not serve customers at the counter because he did not like handling the stress of having to work fast or count change. Hence, the job responsibility was modified to accommodate his skills and need. Benjamin enjoyed that his job duties allowed him to follow his own pace and he also liked that he walked around in the restaurant more than other employees. However, as he completed most of his job duties independently and moved around a lot, he had fewer opportunities to interact with his co-workers and customers compared with the other employees.

The restaurant held at least one staff meeting per quarter. Benjamin had not participated in any of them. During the period of the research, the first store held a quick meeting to discuss what would happen during the renovation. Benjamin did
not show up at the meeting. According to the store manager, there were not many social events going on at the restaurant, as most employees’ work hours had been cut off and their salary had decreased; however, they still tried to organize some social activities periodically. For example, sometimes employees went out together for a night of bowling. During this study, one employee got married and was going to have a wedding reception. Benjamin was among several employees invited to the wedding reception and was very excited about it.

4.2.2 Research question one: what are employees with IDs’ perceptions and needs of social integration? What are their experiences of social relationships in work settings?

The participant with ID’s perception of positive social integration in the workplace was that people with disabilities and people without disabilities “should all work together in whichever way.” Benjamin felt that people treated him well and that he was integrated in the workplace; however, at the same time, he was very aware of his disability and strongly believed that he was different from other people. He believed people did not like him because of his disability; as a result, he cannot trust other people easily. Also, he did not participate in any staff meetings because he believed people did not approve of his inability to read or write.

“Like if I asked one of these people to just go out to have a chat, I know it
would be ‘no’ because I’m a different person and I have a handicap and people, umm people are different than I am. So and I respect that. Like yes they can be... Like I was saying earlier... You can never trust a person when you talk to them because you never know what they want to say behind your back... you would notice me if you knew me, but you won’t notice me if you didn’t know me. You’d just notice my disability... I have a good personality, but people will be in the back laughing at me.” (Interview-Benjamin-March 30)

At both franchises, however, Benjamin interacted socially with other employees during work hours and at his break. He joked with and talked about his favourite sports with them. The co-worker who invited him to her wedding reception was the person with whom Benjamin talked the most at work. He did not want to disturb his relationships at work so he chose not to associate with any of his co-workers outside of work. Most of his friends outside of work were people who also had disabilities.

When asked what should be done to improve his relationships with other people Benjamin reported it was time for people without disabilities to try to understand people with disabilities and not to label them as their disabilities:

“'I think people need to improve themselves... They don’t see it as the way we are... Like I’m a tremendous bowler and I can swim and that. They don’t see those qualities... there’s half, 75% of the world that needs to understand people like us. They’ve got to get to know... We’ve tried already to... It’s now their turn to try for us. The world should understand that they shouldn’t laugh at us. I think the world needs to, umm, sit back and watch and accept, accept us.” (Interview-Benjamin-March 30)
4.2.3  Research question two: what are co-workers’ perceptions of and relationships with employees with ID?

Most employees at the workplace were very friendly to Benjamin. Although their conversations were mainly job-related, some employees and Benjamin would discuss their favourite sports and share what they would do during the weekends with each other:

“Oh yeah, I often talk to him (Benjamin). We talk about, he likes hockey and wrestling so, I am also a fan of hockey and wrestling so I talk about that stuff with him... He often tells me, he told me he lives on his own and he just bought a TV and stuff, but other than that, other than outside of work we don’t really have any conversation.” (Interview—a co-worker at the new franchise-April 26)

In terms of Benjamin’s work performance, his co-employees thought he was an excellent worker who was always willing to go the extra mile:

“He goes beyond, like coz whatever you ask him to do, if I was telling him to go sweep the parking lot he will go do it. And anytime we ask him just to shovel here, well, he shovels all the way along... He goes beyond and he does it very well... He is awesome. I would rather have him than some of the workers here. That’s awful to say but, it’s true.” (Interview—the supervisor of the original franchise-April 03)

Many employees also thought Benjamin had a great personality. He was always pleasant and had a great sense of humour. They enjoyed having conversations with him:

“I think he is a great guy. I think he is funny, hard-working. He comes here, does his job, never complains about it, jokes around, you know. I think, I know he has mild disability but I don’t see him that way, like talk to him that way anything, so I am not going to judge him anything like that. And yes, I think he is very funny.” (Interview—a co-worker at the new franchise-April 26)
Benjamin’s co-workers reported that they really enjoyed working with him.

When the original franchise was beginning to renovate, the staff members there asked him to come back afterwards. After he had worked at the new restaurant for a while the staff members at the new restaurant wanted to keep him:

“He is very friendly and very outgoing. I enjoy working with him. I am gonna miss him when we start the renovation. I told him, ‘You better come back!’”
(Interview-the supervisor of the original franchise-April 03)

“He is a good worker. He gets, he makes the store look really nice. On the days just we are very busy he is right there to help us, willing to do the extra stuff. And we really appreciate that. Me and my boss actually joked around and told him, ‘You can stay and don’t go back. We want to keep you here.’”
(Interview-a coworker at the new franchise-April 26)

4.2.4 Summary description of Workplace 2

Workplace 2 was a part of a national chain of restaurant franchises. Benjamin was the one employee with ID at this branch. He was employed part-time and was paid eight dollars per hour. He was also entitled to the same benefits as any other employee of equivalent title. Benjamin was viewed as an excellent worker. His co-workers enjoyed working and conversing with him. However, Benjamin chose not to participate in any staff meetings and did not associate with his co-workers outside of work because he believed that people do not approve of the fact that he had a disability.
4.3 Summary of Research Questions One and Two

In summary of research questions 1 and 2, which explored the employees with IDs’ perceptions and needs of social integration in the workplace as well as their co-workers’ perceptions of and relationships with them, several similarities existed at both work sites. The participants with ID from both sites stated that they felt there was inclusion at their workplaces. For their perceptions of social integration, the participants with ID reported that it is very important for people with ID and without ID to work together. They felt that it is easier for people without disabilities to dismiss persons with disabilities rather than acknowledge their developed capacity to fulfill the job’s demands and other skills, such as participating in competitive sports.

At both worksites employees without ID who were interviewed had positive opinions of the participants with ID. The participants with ID from both worksites were viewed as workers who were adept, devoted, and hard working. In terms of their social relationships at work, the employees with ID at both sites had task-related and non-task-related conversations with all their co-workers. However, except the worker with ID from Workplace 2 who was invited to his co-worker’s wedding reception, they did not regularly associate with the employees without ID after work.

In the next section, the two environments will be compared, and the characteristics of workplace culture that contributed to or detracted from social
integration for the employees with ID will be discussed.

4.4 Research question three: what characteristics of workplace culture contribute to or detract from social integration for people with ID?

In order to answer the research question three, the investigator began with reviewing all the information from Workplace 1 and identified themes pertaining to the question. The same process was applied for Workplace 2. The two workplaces were then compared to detect similarities.

The cross case analysis shows that in both workplaces it was consistent that the participants with IDs’ job duties promoted their interactions with other people. In the educational organization, the mail room duties provided the three participants with many opportunities to interact and establish close relationships with the employees without disabilities. When David and Gary delivered mail and office supplies throughout the building they had both work-related and non-work-related conversations with their co-employees. When employees came to the mail room to drop off courier packages and when students came to rent lockers they also had both kinds of conversations with Jason, Gary and David. Albert’s job duties often required him to walk around in the building. Although he did not initiate conversations, when other people passed by they usually greeted him and often had a
short conversation with him as well. The followings are some examples that illustrate how the four participants’ job tasks promoted interactions:

“At 10:50am, Albert mopped the stairwell... Two employees passed by and stored tables under stairs. They talked to Albert, ‘what are you doing?’ Albert said, ‘What do you think I am doing? I am mopping the stairs.’ ‘Are you doing a good job?’ ‘Of course I am doing a good job.’” (Observation-February 13)

“Gary delivered mail to a male professor. He showed the professor his necklace and said, ‘I got this from my girlfriend.’ The professor said, ‘Which girlfriend? Is she the one you mentioned before?’ Gary said, ‘Yes.’ The professor tapped Gary’s shoulder and said, ‘Gary, this is really good!’” (Observation-January 30)

At the restaurant, Benjamin’s job duties also provided him with opportunities to discuss work and have some general conversations with his co-workers:

“Benjamin came to the counter and talked to two female co-workers. He danced with one of them and all of them laughed. Another female co-worker asked him if he could wash a milk jug for her. Benjamin said sure. On his way to the back he played with another female employee and they both laughed.” (Observation-Apr 03)

Although Benjamin did not serve customers one on one at the counter he still had opportunities to interact with them. A lot of times, Benjamin would ask customers if he could remove dirty dishes for them, and he always apologized when he was in their way. On several occasions Benjamin’s acquaintances came to the restaurant and chatted with him.

“...Benjamin talked to a customer he knows. She told him she was on her way to school. Later he told me he helped the girl move few years ago...” (Observation-April 20)

The cross case analysis also shows several characteristics of workplace culture
that had an impact on social integration for the individuals with ID, including the length of the employment, type of employment (i.e. group vs. individual), work pace within the work setting, organizational philosophy to promote inclusion, interpersonal acceptance of workers with ID, and approaches to management. These elements will be examined in turn.

**Length of employment**

In the educational organization, the four participants with ID had been a part of the workforce for many years and they were employed full-time. Most people in the building were also long-time employees; as a result, the four participants with ID were well recognized. This longevity of presence in the workplace had contributed to the familiarity and comfort level between the employees with ID and their co-workers; as one co-worker expressed:

“... Well, I started work here in 1994 and I think that David was here – David and Jason, I think they were here... Gary came later... And I guess Albert, to my memory, those guys were always here. Except I remember Gary coming. I don’t know when they started... So I guess I always just think of them as being here as long as me. That’s interesting that they were.” (Interview-Co-worker 2-March 13)

It was obviously a different situation in the restaurant. Most employees met Benjamin when he resumed work in 2007. As every employee had a different work schedule and Benjamin only worked twelve hours a week there had been few
opportunities for close relationships with his co-workers. In conclusion, the length of the employment did not necessarily influence the interpersonal acceptance of the employees with ID in the workplace but rather had an impact on how close and deep a relationship was formed.

**Type of employment (group vs. individual employment)**

Another difference between the two worksites was that the four participants with ID in the educational organization worked as a group. They had a common work area and always had co-workers with ID around themselves. They supported each other and formed strong comradeship among themselves. On the other hand, Benjamin was the only employee with a disability in the franchise restaurant. He was very aware of his disabilities and did not think he had any real solid support or understanding from his co-workers.

**Work pace within the work setting**

In the restaurant, it was strictly about work. Employees were not allowed to go out for a short conversation. When the store was busy it was impossible for them to have any general conversation. Every employee had a different work schedule, and they seldom took a break at the same time, so there were few opportunities for them to
develop close relationships with each other. On the contrary, most employees in the educational organization had a lot of control over how they used their time. Hence, when the participants with ID passed by, other employees usually stopped to have non-work-related conversations with them; as a result, the four participants with ID and their co-employees were able to develop closer relationships with each other.

“...We have a lot of control over how we use our time. We have a lot of work to do. There’s too few people to do the work, but we can, we can control a lot of that, and I can spend time chatting when they come along and deliver the mail and I have a little conversation and gradually get to know Gary when he came... whereas in a restaurant, I don’t have that option to say I’m going to talk to this guy for ten minutes and get to know him and, you know, figure out what, how, the best way to have a conversation with him...”

(Interview-Co-worker 4-April 17)

Organizational philosophy to promote inclusion

The educational organization embraced a specific philosophy to promote social integration of employees with disabilities which can be summed up in the phrase “it is all about inclusion.” The educational organization was a school that prepared teacher candidates. Its atmosphere emphasized inclusion. It actively attempted to establish a good example in order to instruct teacher candidates in the importance of including people with disabilities in either classrooms or workplaces. Most employees acknowledged the effort the organization was making to create an inclusive environment for people with disabilities:

“I think it’s because we’re an equal opportunity place. Umm, and what better
place to integrate, umm, disadvantaged young adults? It’s in an education system because we, we know that children like this are in schools. And we’re all teachers and we learn to deal with that in school, that this should be a very welcoming, warm place... They’re not, you know, not ‘them and us’. We’re all whole group together that’s trying to get a job done in this building and we all play an important role... I think anybody in that situation coming in this building would be welcomed. It’s not just those four gentlemen. It’s anybody who has limited abilities would be accepted.” (Interview-Co-worker 1-March 27)

What did the organization do to create an inclusive environment for the employees with ID? Foremost, the organization treated the four employees with ID with respect. As mentioned previously, David, Jason and Gary had their own office and they each had their own desks. Moreover, the four employees with ID each had distinct job description so other employees knew what to expect from them, but at the same time, knew what not to ask from them:

“... I think it’s really good that everything is prepared and planned and organized to those guys so that they carry on with their routine and I think the rest of us should recognize that if we want to do something different in the routine or if we want them to do something different for us or something special, that we should really speak to the supervisor about that and not approach one of those guys. Because they are doing the work that they have been asked to do, and I think that’s one thing that everybody would recognize is that you don’t ask those guys to, you know, do something out of the ordinary for you that you might ask somebody to do on a one time occasion.” (Interview-Co-worker 2-March 13)

Other evidence of the organization treating the four participants with ID with consideration was that the participants with ID assumed important job duties and their job responsibilities were well-matched to their abilities and personalities. David, for instance, can read and write well so he took the responsibility of ordering office
supplies; Gary loved walking around in the building so he delivered mail and parcels;

Jason had asthma and cannot do much physical work, and as a result, he spent more time in the office receiving outgoing courier packages; and Albert, who was quieter and more shy but very physical, enjoyed working as a janitor:

“I think they all perform an important function within our building and that function, it’s a very necessary function... I think their skills are perfectly matched to the responsibilities...of their job... They have responsibilities. They have demonstrated that they can accept those responsibilities and that those responsibilities are important... I have seen cases in the past outside of this building where people with disabilities are given monotonous tasks—maybe sometimes when their ability was much higher than what those tasks involved. And that’s a case where maybe somebody in a position of authority didn’t, wasn’t willing to give those people the chance to demonstrate their capabilities to fulfill higher responsibilities. And, uh, where that’s the case, I think that’s a tragedy.” (Interview-Co-worker 5-March 20)

For Workplace 2, as previously mentioned, there was no written policy to include people with disabilities in the workplace. However, the company had created a work environment that cared about its employees and their contributions, and treated them with fairness and respect. The company also valued the differences of each employee. For instance, Benjamin’s job duties were modified according to his skills and preferences; besides, he received the same benefits as any other employee of equivalent title.

Interpersonal acceptance of workers with ID

This theme implies that people in the workplace show general interest in workers
with ID and are willing to participate in organization philosophy to promote their integration. In the educational organization, the employees often tried to help and support people who were disadvantaged; for instance, they collected money for people with Alzheimer’s disease at one point in the year. They were eager to develop close relationships with the four participants with ID and knew each participant with ID’s personality and interests well. The supervisor had all participants with ID assume important responsibilities that were well-suited to their skills and personalities.

Some participants’ behaviours were not appropriate in the workplace but most employees were nevertheless very protective of them and were very considerate with the consequences of those behaviours. They had tried to prevent the behaviours and complaints from occurring. Several examples can illustrate this statement: first, Albert had diabetes and had no control of his cravings. People had found food missing in the fridge. Hence, employees always made sure that sugar and candies were not accessible to him:

“... we’re all very conscious of how to help make their time here work for them... I know in the summer when we’re here and there’s no classes going on and I’ll be working in the classroom, and Albert will come wandering through... And I think he’s just looking to see if there’s any place that’s got food or candy... with workshops going on and that kind of thing... He just can’t resist it! ... I know that when they keep their lunches in the fridge and stuff, there has been parts of lunches disappear and all kinds of things... I don’t want to get him in trouble if he likes his job and he does a really good job at his job... His responsibility is more like in terms of the caretaking staff... that kind of thing... It’s always a job that he can handle that’s not going to cause him stress. It’s just keeping him away from the sweet things and sugars and...
Gary had very close relationships with many teacher candidates. When he saw them in the classroom he walked in to chat with them without realizing that there was a class going on and he had work to do. One teacher candidate expressed his concern about this issue with the investigator:

“...Gary seems more... Well, we brought him in the loop and now he seems to be wandering into, uh, classrooms and having chats and we’re wondering whether, whether we’ve made a mistake and, uh, maybe he’s becoming too familiar. We’ll speak with the supervisor to help with that and we’ll head off any problems that may arise.” (Interview-a student-April 18)

The investigator also noticed two incidences where Albert and Gary had inappropriate work behaviours; one was Albert left work early without informing the supervisor and the other was Gary refused to do his work. The supervisor acknowledged those incidents and the way he dealt with these kinds of behaviours was to accept the behaviours, give the participants a choice and remind them their work was important to them:

“... well, sort of put it into perspective that the work they’re doing is important to them. It’s, I don’t want to say that they’re, that the work they do isn’t important, but in the grand scheme of things,.... If they leave early, it doesn’t matter.... I think the main reason that they’re here is to give them purpose in life and help them become, you know, members of society... Not everyone has a good day at work. I have bad days at work too. And if I don’t feel like working, you know... things of that nature..., again, you got to deal with each person individually, treat each case individually. Umm, it’s, in incidences like that, all I can speak to them is, you know, remind them why they’re here. Remind them what their job is. Basically, I’ve said to Albert and Gary, ‘If you don’t want to be here and do your job, then you don’t have to come to work.’ So I treat them with respect, but I give them a choice. And they normally say, ‘Well, oh yeah, you’re right... I should do my job.’ Umm, it takes a lot of
patience working with Gary, when he gets in situations like that where he tries to get out of work. That takes up about an hour of my day, trying to tell him why he should be here to do his job. And that’s, again, it’s a learning experience for him and me…, at times it’s tough, it’s frustrating… We usually settle the problem.” (Interview-the supervisor at the educational organization-March 08)

For Workplace 2, although there was no policy to include employees with disabilities, the director of HR had worked in partnership with several employment agencies in the region to include people with disabilities in its restaurant franchises. The director of HR and the employment agency also modified Benjamin’s job duties to accommodate his skills, needs and preferences. As Benjamin was very competent, the investigator did not hear any issues or complaints from his supervisors and co-workers. The investigator also noticed that all employees in the Workplace 2 respected Benjamin and were very friendly to him.

Approaches to supervision

Neither the supervisor in the educational organization nor the supervisor in the restaurant franchise had previous work experience with employees with ID. Nonetheless, they both facilitated the integration of the employees with ID in their workplaces. The approaches of supervision at both work sites will now be examined in turn.

The supervisor in the educational organization performed a role of natural
support, “a set of strategies that include the support of co-workers and supervisors in helping provide support and assistance that allow an individual with disabilities to secure and maintain a job” (Mank, Cioffi, & Yovanoff, 1997), to promote integration of the four participants with ID in the workplace. The supervisor in the educational organization was a mediator between the employees with ID and other employees in the building. If the participants with ID had any questions regarding their work they went to the supervisor and he made sure the work was done properly. If other employees had any concern about the four participants with IDs’ work they also contacted the supervisor.

In the educational organization, since the supervisor took over the position he had had all participants with ID assume more responsibilities and had given them a lot of independence and freedom in their work. He treated each participant with ID with great respect and guided them with patience. He viewed his work with the four participants with ID as a learning experience, as he expressed in the interview:

“... I didn't really know how I would cope with it. I just figured, you know, if I dealt with them just as, not look at them as people with special needs but just deal with them as, you know, I would deal with you. Umm, deal with a lot of patience and sense of humour..., the guys have a great sense of humour. They love to laugh and part of my job interview that I had was to meet these guys and to have brief conversations with them and, uh, I could tell that they enjoyed having fun. So I figured, you know, keep humour and fun in the job and we’d be able to cope. And it's a learning process for both of us—the them and me—when we first started out, how we would, how to deal with each other... Each of them, you have to deal with them differently..., each have different needs..., I try to give them as much independence and freedom as they can...
handle. I’ve found over the four years that their level of responsibility has increased and they are more independent than they were when they first started working here, simply by helping them, coaching them, guiding them, ... They’re making decisions now, sort of under my mentorship, that they would never have done previously. So I think that I’m helping them in a small way to become, you know, a more valuable employee... I’m a firm believer that you treat people fairly. You treat them with respect... I actually learned a lot about myself dealing with these folks. They help me just as much as I help them. And that’s really the way I look at it.” (Interview-the supervisor at the educational organization-March 08)

The supervisor’s office was not too far from the mail room. He came to the mail room several times a day to check if everything was going well with the participants with ID. He had a fun work relationship with the four participants with ID. They often joked around and laughed together. The followings are two examples showing the fun relationships between the supervisor and the four employees:

“The supervisor came in the office. Gary told him that he will go to Florida for a vacation. The supervisor said, ‘Yes, I know. Your dad told me that. I think it is one week after the curling which is Feb 16, right?’ Gary said, ‘Yes.’ The supervisor said, ‘Can I go with you? Please tell your dad.’ David jumped in, ‘I want to go too!’ The supervisor asked Gary, ‘Which one do you pick?’ Gary, ‘That’s great. You two can go with me.’ The supervisor, ‘OK, then Jason will stay here doing all the work at that time.’ Gary, ‘Then I pick David and you stay here with Jason...’” (Observation-January 30)

“...When Albert and the supervisor took off a huge plastic bag covering the file cabinet the supervisor said, ‘Do you need a bag to carry your lunch?’ Albert said, ‘Then it will be a big lunch!’” (Observation-February 06)

The supervisor received a lot of praise from the employees in the organization. They thought he was very good at guiding the four employees with ID and fostering
communication between the two groups (i.e. the four employees with ID vs. other employees). All the participants with ID enjoyed working with him. They thought the supervisor was more like a friend than a boss:

“... He has those guys trained really well so they know what they’re supposed to do and he takes care to support them and to provide, you know, information that they need. And if you’re not sure about something that somebody did... Gary didn’t bring the mail one day, say, you could just ask the supervisor and say, ‘You know what, we didn’t get the mail’ and he just fills in. But usually that would never happen because the supervisor would tell you beforehand that there was going to be something come up with the mail tomorrow that you wouldn’t get it until later in the day or something. So both the second supervisor and current supervisor have been fabulous support people and we just always know that if we have a question about something that the guys are doing, you could ask one of them.” (Interview-Co-worker 2-March 13)

Two participants with ID identified different managerial approaches exercised by each of the three supervisors over the last twenty years, and the impacts. They did not enjoy working with the first supervisor as he did not give them any independence in their work. They felt this did not recognize their capacities and thus made other people believe they cannot complete important responsibilities. The independence and increased responsibilities granted by the second, and the third, supervisor changed how the participants with ID perceived their jobs and themselves. They had all enjoyed the changes since the second supervisor. They gained a lot of self-confidence and pride through having responsibilities and independence to complete those duties. By receiving the staff award in 2002 they knew that people recognized and appreciated their work, and this reinforced their belief that they were
capable of doing a great job. The followings illustrate the participants with IDs’ passion for their work:

“... I do want to say, though, the last ten years, I’ve worked with the current supervisor and the second supervisor..., have been a lot better for us than the first ten years with our first supervisor. Umm, what I feel is that he didn’t think we could do anything. And he led people to think that we couldn’t do anything. We never had a key to our office. We didn’t have a job description. We just did what he told us. But 1996, I think it was, when he left, the second supervisor came along and that all changed... she made sure that we got the respect that we deserve. And made a lot of changes and at the point when the current supervisor came in, he didn’t have to worry about anything... I wouldn’t want to work anywhere else. I mean, now, if you were to ask me that same question ten years ago, you might have gotten a different answer, okay? But now that the past ten years, I wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.”
(Interview-David-February 13)

“I think we each got our own responsibility which is so much better. And before, the second supervisor sort of helped it out in that department. She got this all ready and she got us our own job and got us our own keys. So I think when the current supervisor came along he was all set coz we all knew our own job, each one did and what our responsibilities were. That worked out really good... I think my confidence really increased a lot. Actually the last five years, it’s really given me a good self-confidence, feeling about myself. I feel really good about myself. I think of that before when I worked with the first supervisor you not only had your head down, you’re kind of, you were scared. He was not a nice man... He didn’t recognize our potential for doing things. And I think he sort of took all the credit for it which is sad.”
(Interview-Jason-February 27)

In the second site, both the manager in the original franchise and the manager in the second store were very pleasant and friendly. They both created a fun work environment. The manager in the original franchise respected Benjamin and had a good working relationship with him. According to Benjamin, they often joked with
each other:

“Benjamin told me he was supposed to shave this morning. When he came in today the manager joked with him about his beard but at the same time meant that he should shave.” (Observation-March 30)

The manager at the second store quite often stood behind the counter helping other employees and at the same time, talked to and joked with them. She also appeared to respect Benjamin. On the day Benjamin was transferred to this branch she told the investigator that he had his pattern of doing things so other people in the store would try not to interrupt his work. The following is an anecdote demonstrating the good working relationship this supervisor had with other employees:

“The manager helped a female employee serve customers. They played with each other for a while. The manager grabbed the employee’s ear.” (Observation-April 26)

“She doesn’t think she is above everyone else. She is here all the time helping out... There have been days she has been here till like ten or ten and nine, you know, doing all her extra work so she can help us during the day the stuff so. And she is good at everything. If you have questions she is not going to be hard on you or anything, you know. Yes, she is a great boss.” (Interview-a co-worker at the new franchise-April 26)

Table 4.1 summarized the comparisons between Workplace 1 and Workplace 2.
Table 4.1
Summary of comparisons between Workplace 1 and Workplace 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Workplace 1</th>
<th>Workplace 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of employment</strong></td>
<td>The majority of the participants with ID had worked in the workplace longer than 15 years; the worker with ID with the shortest job tenure had been employed 6 years.</td>
<td>The participant with ID had worked at the restaurant for three months.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job duties and social</strong></td>
<td>The four participants with IDs’ job duties provided them opportunities to interact with other people in the building.</td>
<td>The participant with ID’s job duties provided him opportunities to interact with other people (coworkers and customers).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interactions</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Group or individual</strong></td>
<td>Four participants with ID worked as a team. They were very close to each other and supported each other.</td>
<td>The participant with ID was the only individual with ID in the workplace. He did not feel he had support and understanding from his co-workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>employment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Work pace within the</strong></td>
<td>Most employees in the organization had a lot of control over how they used their time. Hence, when the participants with ID passed by they usually stopped to have short conversations with them.</td>
<td>The participation in non-work interactions was limited in the restaurant. Most of time, it was strictly work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>work setting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational</strong></td>
<td>-The organization’s atmosphere emphasized inclusion.</td>
<td>-The restaurant treated the participant with ID with respect:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>philosophy to promote</strong></td>
<td>-The organization treated the participants with ID with respect:</td>
<td>a. the job duty was modified to meet the participant’s need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>inclusion</strong></td>
<td>a. the participants with ID had their own office and lockers.</td>
<td>b. the participant earned competitive wage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. they each had distinct job description.</td>
<td>c. the participant received the same benefits as others.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c. they assumed important job duties in the building.</td>
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Table 4.1 (con’t)
Summary of comparisons between Workplace 1 and Workplace 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Workplace 1</th>
<th>Workplace 2</th>
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| Interpersonal acceptance of workers with ID | Accepting co-workers: a. people in the building were very friendly, caring and supportive.  
b. some participants with IDs’ inappropriate behaviours were tolerated. | Accepting co-workers: People in the restaurant were very friendly to the participant with ID. |
| Approaches to supervision       | Supportive managerial style:  
  -The supervisor performed a role of natural support.  
  -The supervisor had had all participants with ID assume more responsibilities and created a very fun work relationship with them. He treated each participant with ID with great respect and guided them with patience. | Supportive and friendly managerial style:  
  -The manager in the restaurant respected the participant with ID and had a good working relationship with him. They often joked with each other. |
| Participation in social events  | -Social events organized by the workplace included potluck luncheon, BBQ, and staff recognition breakfast.  
  -The four participants with ID were never left out of social events in the organization. | -There were not many social events going on at the restaurant.  
  -The participant with ID was invited to a co-worker’s wedding reception. |
| Participation in staff meetings | The four participants with ID were invited to the organization’s annual meeting, but only one of them attended. | -The restaurant held at least one staff meeting per quarter.  
  -The participant with ID had not attended any meeting. |
4.5 Summary of Results

A qualitative case study was conducted to explore the process of social integration of people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace. Sources of information included company documents, observations, and in-depth interviews that were conducted at two worksites: one an educational organization where four workers with ID were employed, the other a restaurant franchise where one worker with ID was employed.

In this chapter, the study results from two workplaces were presented. The participants with ID from both worksites stated that they felt included in their workplaces and expressed their belief that people with and without disabilities should work together. They believed persons with ID should not be labelled by their disabilities as they are very capable of fulfilling their job demands. At both workplaces, the employees with ID had task-related and non-task-related conversations with others during the workday. Except for the employee with ID from Workplace 2 who was invited to a co-worker’s wedding reception, the employees with ID from both workplaces did not usually participate in social activities with their co-workers without disabilities outside of work. Co-employees from both locations had positive opinions of the employees with ID. The employees with ID were viewed as workers who were always competent, courteous and
Two environments were compared and several characteristics of workplace culture that likely had an impact on social integration emerged, including a job structure that promoted social interactions, length of the employment, work pace within the work setting, type of employment (i.e., group or individual employment), organizational philosophy to promote social integration, interpersonal acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities, and approaches to supervision.
CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the process of social integration in the workplace for people with ID, and to provide exploratory data gathered from the review of the institutional and social environments of the workplaces studied that can inform the development of new strategies, or amend current strategies, to enhance social integration in the workplace for persons with ID. The results of this study have provided the following:

1. A description of perceptions and needs of social integration in the workplace these employees with ID held, as well as a description of their social relationships in their work settings.

2. A portrayal of co-workers’ perceptions of the employees with ID.

3. A range of workplace characteristics and workplace culture that may have facilitated social integration for the employees with ID.

These three main findings will be discussed as they relate to previous studies and relevant literature concerning vocational rehabilitation for people with ID. Review of existing literature shows that the current research contributes valuable information to the area of vocational rehabilitation for people with ID:

1. Discrete ideas shared or expressed by the people with ID, their
supervisors and co-workers.

2. Identification of attributes of an inclusive work environment for people with ID and their implications for supported employment policy development and practice.

Following the discussion, the limitations of the current study will be outlined in order to provide appropriate interpretation and application of the research findings. This section will conclude with suggestions for avenues of future research.

5.1 Perceived Social Integration

The employees with ID in this study demonstrated insight and understanding of broad social workplace factors. Expressing their perceptions and needs in this environment, all participants with ID agreed it is important that people with and without disabilities work together. The participants with ID from both workplaces also felt they were included in their workplaces and were satisfied with the social environments of the workplace.

In the literature, social integration was defined more in terms of physical and interactive dimensions. For example, the Developmental Disabilities Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-527) in the U.S. defines “integration” as; “participation by persons with developmental disabilities in the same community activities in which
non-handicapped citizens participate, together with regular contact with non-handicapped citizens…” (p. 2664). Parent, Kregel, Wehman, & Metzler (1991) and Wehman (2003) used four tangible elements; company factors, worksite factors, workers factors, and benefit factors, to assess vocational integration for supported employees. Storey (1993) proposed four components that can be used to describe the social dimension of integration of people with disabilities in employment settings;

- “Physical proximity,” people with and without disabilities working in the same environment.
- “Social interaction” consisting of conversations and communications.
- “Relationship” which can range from being formal to informal.
- “Social network” which involves frequent contact with certain persons.

The current study demonstrated that social integration was perceived as a relatively subjective experience. It can be seen that the employees with IDs’ experiences and the environment had a great impact on how they perceived social integration. In Workplace 1, two employees with ID identified changes in how they perceived their jobs and themselves over the last twenty years. Because the first supervisor did not provide them with responsibilities and independence they felt that he did not recognize their developed job skills and thus discouraged other people from believing that they were capable of fulfilling job demands. They felt they were
further hindered by the social reaction to their disabilities. As the supervisor at the
time of this study had them assume many more responsibilities and independence at
work they felt they were well respected and being treated as equally to other persons.
Hence, these participants with ID perceived social integration in the workplace as “not
being labelled by their disabilities” and the employer plays an important role in
achieving social integration.

In Workplace 2, Benjamin believed people with and without disabilities should
work together in whichever way. He felt he was integrated in his work setting but at
the same time, he was very aware of his disability and believed that people did not
want to associate with him. It was hypothesized that the assumption he held might
come from some earlier negative experience he had. Also, he had only worked in that
worksite for a few months and thus he may still be building his comfort level with his
coworkers. On that account he perceived social integration in the workplace in a
more physical dimension by emphasizing “physical proximity” of people with ID in a
workplace.

If an employee with ID believes s/he is different from other people or s/he is
subject to labelling in a workplace, it is unlikely that further social interactions will
occur or that close relationships will form between the employee with ID and the
general work population. Li’s (2004) study showed that the quality of the employees
with IDs’ work lives was strongly associated with employers’ and co-workers’ attitudes towards them. In Fillary and Pernice’s (2006) study, participants also emphasized the importance of positive staff attitude and staff having an understanding of disability.

The participants with ID in the current study identified that labelling of people with disabilities can happen in many circumstances - in work environments and in their personal lives. They said that it is easier for people without disabilities to recognize them by their disabilities rather than acknowledge their capacity to fulfill the job’s demands and other advanced skills, such as participating in competitive sports. They expressed the wish that people without disabilities to understand them and to pay more attention to their talents.

The current study also presented an interesting idea about what work means to the employees with ID. The workers with ID at Workplace 1 all received disability benefits from the Ontario Disability Support Program. They were employed full-time and were paid only 1.10 dollar per hour. It was believed that the employer had tried to stay within the government guidelines for maximum payment in keeping with the wishes of the individuals with ID. However, their extra benefits did not compensate sufficiently to raise the salary to a level which was in keeping with what other workers of equal position might be paid. It was not clear whether the workers with ID were being fairly compensated for their work. For example, it was unknown
whether each position the workers with ID held was equal to a full-time unionized job.

However, putting equity issues aside, these four workers had been at the workplace for a long time and did not want to work anywhere else. They enjoyed their work and the people they worked with. It was evident that the important responsibilities assigned to them and the respect they received in their workplaces furnished them with enough source material to build a strong self-identity and strong self-confidence. The relationships they had at work brought them a satisfaction and sense of appreciation in their work life that financial compensation alone would not have fulfilled.

5.2 Co-workers’ Perceptions of Employees with ID

All co-workers interviewed had positive opinions of fellow employees with ID. The employees with ID were perceived as workers who were competent, reliable and willing to go the extra mile at work. The investigator observed numerous situations where the workers with ID demonstrated competence in their work, and that this element likely reinforced the relationship with their co-workers. In Workplace 1, however, there were some incidences where the employees with ID did make mistakes in their work. It was evident that there was acceptance for a limited amount of error. For most co-workers, the employees with ID also brought something special to their
workplace; they enlightened the workplace, inspired their co-workers and broke down the barriers between the mainstream populations and persons with disabilities.

Future policy will find it relevant to take into consideration that if more job placements are created to integrate people with ID into the workforce Canadian society will benefit from a better understanding of this under-represented segment of the Canadian population.

5.3 Employees with IDs’ Social Relationships in the Workplace

The social relationships a person has in his/her workplace is an important indicator of his/her quality of work life. There was evidence in the study findings of strong reciprocal relationships between the employees with ID and their co-workers without ID. In Workplace 1, the majority of employees knew the personal stories and interests of the employees with ID well. Many employees without ID also shared stories from their personal lives with the employees with ID. In Workplace 2, the worker with ID participated in joking and sharing his interests with co-workers and his co-workers did the same with him. In Hughes, Kim, and Hwang’s (1998) systematic review of twelve research articles, however, it was noticed that employees with ID engaged mostly in superficial interactions such as greetings or receiving instructions, but employees without disabilities participated frequently in teasing and
personal conversations. A possible reason for the discrepancy between the findings of the current study and of previous studies may be that the employees with ID in the current study were articulate, and their co-workers were enthusiastic about engaging them in general conversations.

The longevity of the employment may also play an important role in how deep a relationship can be developed in the work setting. In Workplace 1, the four employees with ID were employed full time and had worked at the same positions for many years. They were recognized and had established close relationship with many co-employees. On the other hand, the worker with ID in Workplace 2 was employed part-time and had only worked there for a few months. He had not yet developed close relationships with his co-workers. In Fillary and Pernice’s (2005, 2006) studies, it was also found that supported employees with ID who worked full-time were more integrated in the workplace compared with supported employees with ID who were employed part-time. In Ontario, once an employee with a disability receives disability benefits they can only have a certain amount of work income, otherwise their benefits are reduced. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to institute a policy to balance employees with IDs’ work income and their level of social integration in the workplace since integration appears to associate with the hours spent in the workplace (Pettinger, 2005).
In the current study, the participants with ID in Workplace 1 were best friends and participated in many social activities together after work. The worker with ID in Workplace 2 had many friends outside of work who also had disabilities. None of them regularly associated with other employees without ID outside of work. Only one exception was the worker with ID from Workplace 2 was invited to a co-worker’s wedding reception. This finding corresponded to the findings from other studies: one was Ohtake and Chadsey’s (1999) study, in which they surveyed the relationships 21 participants without disabilities had with their co-workers with ID and with other non-disabled co-workers. Nearly 73 percent of the participants had at least one social friend with whom they participated in social events after work but none of them viewed their co-workers with ID as social friends. Rusch, Wilson, Hughes, and Heal’s (1994) study also showed that non-disabled workers had more interactions outside of work with each other than with their co-workers with disabilities. In the current study, although the employees with ID did not associate with employees without ID outside of work, they still felt they were socially integrated in their workplaces. Participants with ID at both locations had friends outside of work with whom they enjoyed participating in social-recreational events. This was a factor that altered the meaning of the study results and can not be casually overlooked. Several authors (Chadsey & Beyer, 2001; Pettinger, 2005) indicated that not everyone who works will
develop close social relationships, in particular friendships, with their co-workers.

Friendships are often built on the quality of reciprocity, intimacy, support, and companionship and are based around similarity. Friends tend to be of similar age, gender, religion, class background and race - a phenomenon called homophily (McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001). In Butterworth, Hagner, Helm, and Whelley’s (2000) and Chadsey, Shelden, Horn De Bardeleben, and Cimera’s (1999) studies, opportunities for extended relationships outside of work was an indication of a high level of social inclusion. More studies need to be conducted to understand how employees with ID perceive this issue, and what their goals are in terms of their relationships in and out of their workplaces.

5.4 Characteristics of Workplace and Workplace Culture that Promote Social Integration

It was evident that there was a clear relationship between integration outcome and the culture of the workplace. The current study identified several workplace characteristics and workplace culture elements that were seen to contribute to or detract from social integration for people with ID:

1. A job structure that promotes social interactions. In the current study, the participants with IDs’ job tasks provided them opportunities to engage
in conversations with general populations (i.e., co-workers without ID, students, and customers), and the participants needed to communicate with others in order to complete their tasks. In this situation, the participants with ID were not only physically present in a workplace but also socially interacting with people without disabilities as part of the work role. Other studies (Butterworth, Hagner, Helm, & Whelley, 2000; Fillary & Pernice, 2006) also confirmed that this interdependent job design was strongly associated with a high level of inclusion.

2. **Work pace within the work setting.** Most staff members in Workplace 1 had a lot of control over how they used their time; hence, they had opportunities to have non-work-related conversations with the employees with ID, and were able to establish close relationships with them during work hours. On the other hand, participation in general conversations and humour was limited for employees in Workplace 2. The category of business plays an important role in this situation. In other studies (Butterworth, Hagner, Helm, & Whelley, 2000; Rusch, Wilson, Hughes, & Heal 1994; Fillary & Pernice, 2006), it was found that most supported employees with ID were employed in social services, personal services and the labour sector. In those businesses, there are fewer opportunities to
have general conversations during work hours. In work settings where meeting the requests of customers is the only priority, socializing and chatting is usually discouraged (Pettinger, 2005). In labour sector posts, the noise in the environment makes it very hard for employees to talk during the work. The opportunities for non-task-related interactions in those types of businesses rely heavily on break and lunch time. When everyone has a different break and lunch schedule, the participation in non-task-related conversations and the development of relationships are severely restricted.

3. *Group or individual employment.* There were four individuals with ID who worked in the educational organization and they shared an office. These four individuals had camaraderie among themselves. They assisted and supported each other at work and in their personal lives but at the same time they had opportunities to socialize with the general work population. On the other hand, as Benjamin was the only employee with a disability in the franchise restaurant and because he was very aware of his disability, he did not have any real solid support or understanding from his co-workers. In Chadsey, Shelden, Horn De Bardeleben, and Cimera’s (1999) study, they compared 10 pairs of supported employees
with ID who were identified by their support persons as either successfully or unsuccessfully integrated into the work settings. They investigated what variables of social integration could differentiate the two groups and found that successful cases worked in the settings that also employed other individuals with disabilities. On the other hand, half of the unsuccessful cases worked in the settings where there were fewer workers with disabilities (in 4 out of 10 unsuccessful cases, there was only one employee with a disability hired in the workplace). The authors emphasized that the number of other supported employees working in the same settings with the successful cases was generally less than 5. The findings of the current study and the previous study suggested an idea that group placement, combined with other social factors (i.e., opportunities for social interactions with general work population), would facilitate the quality of employees with IDs’ overall social experiences in a workplace.

4. **Culture of acceptance within the workplace.** Social acceptance can be described at two levels in the current study, one was the organizational level, and the other was the interpersonal level. At the organizational level the current study found that both workplaces were actively
integrating the employees with ID into their workplaces, and assigning
job duties according to their skills, needs and interests. The workers
with ID were also invited to social events and staff meetings organized by
the workplaces. In this situation, the employees with ID were respected
by both organizations. In Workplace 1, the organization also adopted a
specific philosophy to promote social integration of employees with
disabilities and each employee with ID had his own job description.
Beyond this philosophy, it is necessary that someone in the workplace
puts these ideals into actions. At the interpersonal level, the current
study found that the staff members in Workplace 1 showed interest in
people viewed as having disadvantages. Inappropriate behaviours by the
workers with ID were tolerated and managed. In both workplaces,
people respected and were friendly to the workers with ID. It was
evident that these two levels of acceptance had a positive effect on the
social integration of people with ID in the workplace. In Fillary and
Pernice’s (2006) study, they found that at most workplaces co-workers
without ID had a job description but very few employees with ID had one,
and this prevented employees with ID from integrating in their
workplaces. The two authors (2005) showed that by providing people
with disabilities an equal opportunity, having a personal understanding of
disability, and friendly staff members promoted social integration in the
workplace for this population.

5. **Supportive management approach.** The results of the current study
indicated that the role of natural support provided by the supervisor in
Workplace 1 helped the employees with ID integrate into the workplace.

Natural supports for employees with disabilities can be defined as a set of
strategies provided by co-workers, supervisors and other supports
typically available in the workplaces to assist job skill acquisition,
maintenance and integration (Storey, 2003). Several studies (Chadsey,
Linneman, Rusch, & Cimera, 1997; Fillary & Pernice, 2005) have
suggested that the presence of job coaches or supported employment
workers in the workplace had a negative impact on the social integration
of employees with ID. Natural support strategies provided by a
supervisor include such elements as job training, job modification,
ongoing assessment, and incentive provision (Rusch, Munch, & Hughes,
1989, cited in Test & Wood, 1996). In Workplace 1, the supervisor at
the time of this study took over the position after each employee with
ID’s job was established; however, he constantly evaluated the employees
with IDs’ job skills and had assigned them more responsibilities according to their skills and interests. The responsibilities he had given the employees with ID fostered their self-confidence and self-esteem and gave them a valued role in the organization. He also supported the employees with ID at work and took a personal interest in them. In addition, he acted as a mediator between employees with ID and other employees.

In the current study, the supervisors at both workplaces gave the employees with ID independence in terms of their work and also created a more relaxed work environment. They frequently had non-work-related conversations with the employees with ID. They joked with the participants and had a friendly relationship with them. The participants with ID enjoyed this kind of work relationship with their supervisors and felt that they were equal with and well-respected by other people. In Chadsey, Shelden, Horn De Bardeleben, and Cimera’s (1999) study, they noticed that successful cases of social integration were found in the settings where there were more opportunities for non-task-related conversations with the supervisors and where the atmosphere of the
workplace was more relaxed. Fillary and Pernice (2006) had a similar finding: several participants in their study claimed that a relaxed and supportive management style had helped the inclusion of both workers with and without ID. In Butterworth, Hagner, Helm, and Whelley’s (2000) study, they found employees with ID were better integrated in a workplace when the manager adopted a personal management style. The personal management style can be implemented in two ways; one the manager applied a strategy to build a sense of teamwork among employees and used a less formal managerial style; the other approach was when the manager took a personal interest in her/his employees.

6. **Participating in social events and staff meetings.** Social events in a workplace offer opportunities for its employees to develop closer relationships with each other. In the current study, the participants with ID in Workplace 1 were never left out in any social events in the workplace. On the other hand, there were not many social events going on in Workplace 2. The relationships its employees had with each other were limited to the work context. In terms of participating in staff meetings, in Workplace 1, all employees with ID were invited to its annual meeting, but generally there was only one employee with ID who
attended. In Workplace 2, there was one staff meeting every 3 months and the employee with ID was always invited, however, he never attended. In Fillary and Pernice’s study (2006) of eight workplaces that hired people with ID, only two supported workers were included in regular staff meetings but all of their paired co-workers without ID participated in these meetings. Although many authors (Hagner, 2000; Parent, Kregel, Wehman, & Metzler, 1991; Wehman, 2003) suggested that participation of employees with ID in social events and staff meetings is an indication of high level of social integration and is an area that needs to be looked at when evaluating the integration outcomes, the current study was not able to draw conclusions on the impact of participating in social events and staff meetings on social integration. All the participants with ID in the current study were invited to the staff meetings in their workplaces but most of them chose not to attend, and yet they were still included and respected by their workplaces. More studies need to be conducted to explore the impact of participating in social events and staff meetings on employees with IDs’ level of social integration in the work settings as well as their perception of this issue.
5.5 Implications for Supported Employment Programs

The results of the current study suggest that institutional and social environments of a workplace have a great impact on social integration of employees with ID. The findings are able to provide implications for supported employment policy and practice.

First, in the current study, all participants with ID were viewed very positively at their respective workplaces. There are strong indicators that inclusion of employees with ID can change social and workplace attitudes towards and perceptions of this population segment. It can also have a positive impact on the social culture of the workplace. Future policy will find it relevant to take into consideration that if more job placements are created to include people with ID in the workforce, Canadian society will benefit from having a better understanding and acceptance of this under-represented population.

The study findings suggest the necessity of identifying potential inclusive environments for employees with ID. Supported employment workers can evaluate the level of social integration in a workplace by visiting the worksite and speaking to its manager, supervisor and employees. The observations and conversations should focus on staff interactions, the social opportunities for employees, social norms, the overall atmosphere of the workplace, the managerial approach, and the possibility of
accommodating job tasks for employees with ID. Once the workplace culture of a workplace is identified, the supported employment worker can match an employee with ID with a desired work environment.

The results of the study also provide implications for the facilitation of job support in the work setting. It is recommended that the placement of more than one individual with ID in a work setting be considered when possible so that workers can support each other and have better quality of work life. Also, it is suggested that support for an employee with ID in a workplace should be provided by co-workers, supervisors and other supports available in the workplace, as previous research suggests that the presence of job coaches and supported employment workers will hamper the social interactions between employees with ID and other employees (Storey, 2003). Instead of providing direct support to the employee with ID, the job coach or supported employment worker can give the manager and the supervisor suggestions about how to provide supports to the employee with ID, and gradually withdraw from the workplace. The job coach should encourage the manager or the supervisor to have the employee with ID assume job responsibilities that are well-suited with the individual’s skills and interests or to accommodate the tasks to match the individual’s abilities. The supported employment worker can also act as an advocate and educator to help create a work environment that emphasizes
acceptance and respect for employees with ID.

5.6 Limitations of the Current Study and Recommendations for Future Research

The results of the current study must be interpreted cautiously due to a number of study related limitations. One, all participants with ID in this study were skilled at their jobs. They were able to independently carry out their job tasks. Whether this was a result of skilled job matching or due to strong work skills and aptitudes, these workers with ID were very capable and successful in their work. Second, all participants with ID in this study were able to initiate task-related, and non-task-related, conversations with their co-workers. The participants with IDs’ capacity of managing their job and conversations with others might be a factor which was likely to create more positive attitudes among co-workers. Lastly, convenience sampling was used in case recruitment. From all the workplaces contacted, two agreed to participate in the study and both were very supportive towards their workers with and without ID. Also, there might be a self-selection bias in the current study: all the co-workers who were willing to be interviewed had very positive opinions of the participants with ID. There might be co-workers who did not have positive opinions of the participants with ID but were not identified. Future research should
include workplaces with a lower culture of acceptance factor within the workplace.

These two types of workplaces should be compared to detect and define the causes where organizational acceptance fails to take root, as well as re-examine aspects of successful integration. Future research should also include/examine workers with ID who require greater support in their jobs and/or who are less articulate. The goal will be to detect elements that hamper social integration of employees with ID.

5.7 Summary and Conclusions

This study has significantly added to our knowledge of social integration of people with intellectual disabilities in the workplace. Firstly, this study has identified the employees with IDs’ perspectives around the issue of social integration. Secondly, the study has described social relationships the employees with ID had in their workplaces. Thirdly, co-workers’ perceptions of the employees with ID have been found very positive, which encourages service providers to create more job opportunities for this population. Lastly, several characteristics of workplace culture that have facilitated social integration for people with ID have been identified, including a job structure that promotes interactions, work pace within the setting, culture of acceptance and supportive management style. The results have provided supported employment workers strategies to improve social integration for employees.
with ID. Further research is still needed to enhance our understanding of workplace culture and employees with IDs’ social relationships in the workplace. It is hoped that the findings of this and future studies will help individuals with IDs’ needs of social inclusion in a workplace to be met.
REFERENCES


Description of variables impacting successful and unsuccessful cases of social integration involving co-workers. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 12*, 103-111.


Appendix A - Interview Protocol for Employees with Intellectual Disabilities
1. Please tell me what you do at your job.
2. A. How long have you worked in this company?
   B. Are you working full-time or part-time?
   C. What is your shift or work hours?
3. Why are you coming to work?
4. Did you choose this place to work?
5. A. Do you like working in this company?
   B. What do you like about it?
   C. Are people nice to you in the workplace?
      i. Describe ways in which they are nice/ not nice?
6. How much are you paid per hour for your work?
7. Do you receive any benefit from the company, such as medical benefits and holiday benefits?
8. Does anyone help you at your job (with your duties) when you ask? Do they work for this company or for someone else?
9. A. Where do you sit/ work?
   B. Do you work with anyone else in the company? /
       / Do you share work duties with anyone?
       i. Whom do you work with?
       ii. Do you talk with them during the day/ work hours?
       iii. What do you talk about with them?
10. A. Do you take lunch and breaks with other people?
    B. Who talks with you during the lunch and break?
    C. What do you talk about with them?
11. A. Do you have friends in the company?
    i. Why do you call them a friend?
    B. Who are they?
    C. What do they talk about with you?
12. Who do you talk the most at work? How come you like talking to him/her?
13. Who do you talk the least at work? How come you don’t like talking to him/her?
14. Do you go out/ meet with anyone from work after work hours?
15. Are you invited out for dinner, movie and visiting by anyone in the workplace?
16. Do you participate in social activities, such as birthday celebrations, picnics, and holiday parties with people from work?
17. Do you participate in any group meetings in the workplace?
18. How do you feel when you are getting ready to come to work?
19. What do you find the most different about being at work and being at the home?
Appendix B - Interview Protocol for Co-workers
1. Please tell me what your job duties are.
2. A. How long have you worked in this company?
   B. Are you working full-time
      i. what are your hours?
         or part-time?
            i. What is your shift?
            ii. Does your shift change?
            iii. Often?
3. Do you work with (the person with intellectual or developmental disabilities)?
4. A. Do you talk to (the person with intellectual disabilities) during the work/ the day?
   B. What kinds of things do you talk about during work/ the day?
   C. Are these the same types of things you talk with other coworkers about during the work day? In what ways might the nature of the interaction be different? Could you explain the difference?
5. A. Do you have lunch and breaks with (the person with intellectual disabilities)?
   B. Do you talk to him/her during lunch and break times?
   C. What do you talk about with him/her during breaks?
   D. (if yes) Are these the same types of things you talk with other coworkers about? How does your conversation differ?
6. A. Do you associate with (the person with intellectual disabilities) after work/outside of work hours?
   B. What kinds of things would you do?
7. A. Are there any social activities organized by the company, such as birthday celebrations, picnics, and holiday parties?
   B. Do you participate in these activities?
   C. Does (the person with intellectual disabilities) participate in these activities?
8. How do you feel about (the person with intellectual disabilities) in terms of his/her job skills and social relationships in this workplace?
Appendix C - Interview Protocol for Managers or Supervisors
1. A. Give me the job duty details of (the person with intellectual disability)
B. Does he/she work together with coworkers to complete his/her job responsibilities?
2. Is (the person(s) with intellectual disability) paid by the company for the work he/she performs or the supported employment program?
3. Does (the person with intellectual disability) earn comparable wages to his/her coworkers in the same department/division? or in the same position, w/the same duties?
4. Is (the person with intellectual disability) considered for yearly raises or raises based on performance evaluations?
5. Does (the person with intellectual disability) participate in any group/team/employee meetings?
6. Does the company have previous experience managing and working with persons with intellectual disabilities? If yes, how extensive is that experience?
7. Does (the person with intellectual disability) interact with other employees throughout the workday?
8. Does (the person with intellectual disability) receive assistance from his/her co-workers with work or work-related matters?
9. Does the company sponsor social activities, such as birthday celebrations, picnics, and holiday parties? And does (the person with intellectual disability) participate in these activities?
10. Does the company provide any formal or informal support, such as employee assistance programs, incentive programs and transportation? Does (the person with intellectual disability) take advantage of these supports offered by your company as much as the mainstream employees do?
11. Does (the person with intellectual disability) take advantage of company benefits, such as medical benefits, employee of the month award, holiday benefits and sick leave benefits offered by your company as much as the mainstream employees do?
12. Does (the person with intellectual disability) have opportunities for promotion? If their work is exceptional how far could they rise?
13. How do you feel about (the person with intellectual disability) in terms of his/her job skills and social relationships in this workplace?
Appendix D - Invitation Letter
Date:

Name of the Company:
Address of the Company:

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a Master’s researcher in the School of Rehabilitation Therapy at Queen’s University. I am conducting a study on the social integration of employees with intellectual or developmental disabilities in the workplace. The study has been approved by the University’s research ethics board and is supported by the South Eastern Ontario Community-University Research Alliance in Intellectual Disabilities (see: www.seocura.org). Your company or organization was identified by one of the CURA partners as a workplace that has employed workers with intellectual disabilities. This letter is to invite your company to take part in the study.

This is an anonymous study with three parts: In Part 1, a review of the employee policies of the company to understand employee duties and benefits. In Part 2, I will observe the workplace to understand the social relationships between workers with intellectual or developmental disabilities and other people. The observation will take about four hours per week for one and a half months (5 to 7 weeks). In Part 3, I would like to ask you and your employees questions regarding the issue of social integration and relationships in the workplace. The questions I have for each person will take less than 30 minutes. The interviews will be audio taped if the individual agrees. Please be assured that I will make every effort to be unobtrusive, and to schedule interviews at times that will minimize disruption to work routines. My presence should have no effect on work productivity in your organization.

The information we gather is important to help service providers understand how social integration of workers with intellectual disabilities happens in the workplace. I will not be making recommendations to specific employers nor will the study disclose anything identifiable about the participants. I will keep all of the information anonymous. No one will see the name of the company, your employees’ names or the raw data collected except members of the research team at Queen’s University. The information will be stored in a locked file cabinet. When the study is finished I will be writing a report to present at seminars and conferences.
The names of participating agencies, companies, their employees and representatives will not be in the report.

Do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor if you have any questions about the study. I would be happy to share my findings with you after the study is completed.

Two copies of the consent form are included with this invitation letter. If you would like to be a part of this study please fill out one consent form and return it to the address listed below, or contact Ms. Lin @ 613-453-7811 and someone will pass by to pick up the completed form. The other is for your records.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cheng-Jung Lin
School of Rehabilitation Therapy
Louise D. Acton Building, George Street
Queen’s University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7L 3N6
613-453-7811

People you can contact for more information:
Cheng-Jung Lin, Student Investigator, (613) 453-7811
Dr. Rosemary Lysaght, School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Thesis Supervisor, (613) 533-2134
Dr. Elsie Culham, School of Rehabilitation Therapy Dept. Chair, (613) 533-6727
Dr. Albert F. Clark, Research Ethics Board Chair, (613) 533-2975 ext 32975
Hélène Ouellette-Kuntz, SEO CURA in ID Director, (613) 548-4417 ext 1198 or 1-866-656-4417
Exploration of Social Integration of People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace

Workplace Consent
The invitation letter has been provided and the study has been explained to me. My questions about this study have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that:

➢ This study involves document reviews, observations and interviews about integration and relationships of workers with intellectual disabilities in the workplace.
➢ Individuals do not have to answer all of the questions and they can withdraw from the study at any time.
➢ All of the information will remain anonymous and the final report will not include the name of the company or participants’ names.
➢ I will receive a copy of the consent form and the invitation letter for my information.

If I have any questions I can contact Cheng Jung Lin (Ms. Lin) at (613) 453-7811 at any time,

I understand that by signing this consent form I am agreeing on behalf of _________ (company) to participate in this study.

______________________________  ____________________
Signature of company official                  Date

______________________________
(Print name of company official)

Statement of Investigator
I have carefully explained to the subject the nature of the above research study. I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the subject understands clearly the nature of the study and the demands, benefits, and risks involved to participants in this study.

______________________________  ____________________
Signature of investigator                  Date

______________________________
(Print name of investigator)
Appendix E - Consent Form for Participants with ID
The following information is to help you decide whether you would like to participate in this study. You are free to decide not to be part of it or to stop the study at any time for any reason. Also, you do not have to answer a question if you do not want to. If you don’t answer some of the questions or withdraw from the study, there will be no effect on your job or any supports you receive.

The goal of this study is to learn how you fit in or do not fit in at the workplace. This study has three parts; first, I would like to review the formal papers of the company to understand its rules and benefits. Second, I will observe the workplace to understand the social relationships between workers. Third, I would like to ask you questions about the issue of social relationships in the workplace. You will be interviewed in a private room. The questions I have for you will take about 40 minutes to answer. If you agree, the interview will be audio taped.

The information we gather is important to help us understand how social integration of workers with intellectual disabilities happens in the workplace. I will keep all of the information confidential. No one will see the name of the company, your name and the answers you give except the research team at Queen’s University. The information you give me will not be shared with anyone at your work place (not with the employer, supervisor, co-workers) nor with any job coaches or counsellors. The information will be stored in a locked file cabinet. When the information is put in the computer there will be no names with it and all of the information will be password protected. When the study is done I will be writing a report for other people to see. The name of the company and your name will not be in the report and no one will know what your answers were.

A copy of the consent form is with this information sheet for you to keep. If you would like to be part of this study you will have to fill out the consent form.

People you can contact for more information:
Cheng-Jung Lin, Student Investigator, (613) 453-7811
Dr. Rosemary Lysaght, School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Thesis Supervisor, (613) 533-2134
Dr. Elsie Culham, School of Rehabilitation Therapy Dept. Chair, (613) 533-6727
Dr. Albert F. Clark, Research Ethics Board Chair, (613) 533-2975 ext 32975
Hélène Ouellette-Kuntz, SEO CURA in ID Director, (613) 548-4417 ext 1198 or 1-866-656-4417
Participant Consent
The information sheet has been read and explained to me. My questions about this study have been answered.

I understand that:
- I will be asked to answer questions about the relationships I have with other people in the workplace.
- I do not have to answer all of the questions and that I can withdraw from the study at any time.
- If I do not answer some of the questions or withdraw from the study nothing will change.
- Being in this study will not affect my job or any future jobs.
- All of the information will be kept confidential and the final report will not include my name.
- I will receive a copy of the consent form and information sheet for my information.

If I have any questions I can contact Cheng Jung Lin (Ms. Lin) at (613) 453-7811 at any time,

I understand that by signing this consent form I am agreeing to participate in this study.

_________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature of participant                          Date

____________________________________________
(Print name of participant)

Statement of Investigator
I have carefully explained to the subject the nature of the above research study. I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the subject understands clearly the nature of the study and the demands, benefits, and risks involved to participants in this study.

_________________________________________  ______________________________
Signature of investigator                          Date

____________________________________________(Print name of investigator)
Appendix F - Consent Form for Co-workers
The following information is to help you decide whether you would like to participate in this study. You are free to decide not to be part of it or to stop the study at any time for any reason. Also, you do not have to answer a question if you do not want to. If you don't answer some of the questions or withdraw from the study, there will be no effect on your job.

The goal of this study is to learn how employees with intellectual disabilities fit in or do not fit in at the workplace. This study has three parts; first, I would like to review the formal papers of the company to understand its rules and benefits. Second, I will observe the workplace to understand the social relationships between workers. Third, I would like to ask you questions about the issue of social relationships in the workplace. You will be interviewed in a private room. The questions I have for you will take about 40 minutes to answer. If you agree, the interview will be audio taped.

The information we gather is important to help us understand how social integration of workers with intellectual disabilities happens in the workplace. I will keep all of the information confidential. No one will see the name of the company, your name and the answers you give except the research team at Queen’s University. The information you give me will not be shared with anyone at your work place (not with the employer, supervisor, co-workers). The information will be stored in a locked file cabinet. When the information is put in the computer there will be no names with it and all of the information will be password protected. When the study is done I will be writing a report for other people to see. The name of the company and your name will not be in the report and no one will know what your answers were.

A copy of the consent form is with this information sheet for you to keep. If you would like to be part of this study you will have to fill out the consent form.

**People you can contact for more information:**
Cheng-Jung Lin, Student Investigator, (613) 453-7811
Dr. Rosemary Lysaght, School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Thesis Supervisor, (613) 533-2134
Dr. Elsie Culham, School of Rehabilitation Therapy Dept. Chair, (613) 533-6727
Dr. Albert F. Clark, Research Ethics Board Chair, (613) 533-2975 ext 32975
Hélène Ouellette-Kuntz, SEO CURA in ID Director, (613) 548-4417 ext 1198 or 1-866-656-4417
Exploration of Social Integration of People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace

Participant Consent
The information sheet has been read and explained to me. My questions about this study have been answered.

I understand that:
- I will be asked to answer questions about the social relationships between workers in the workplace.
- I do not have to answer all of the questions and that I can withdraw from the study at any time.
- If I do not answer some of the questions or withdraw from the study nothing will change.
- Being in this study will not affect my job or any future jobs.
- All of the information will be kept confidential and the final report will not include my name.
- I will receive a copy of the consent form and information sheet for my information.

If I have any questions I can contact Cheng-Jung Lin (Ms. Lin) at (613) 453-7811 at any time,

I understand that by signing this consent form I am agreeing to participate in this study.

_________________________________________   ____________________________
Signature of participant                          Date

______________________________________________
(Print name of participant)

Statement of Investigator
I have carefully explained to the subject the nature of the above research study. I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the subject understands clearly the nature of the study and the demands, benefits, and risks involved to participants in this study.

_________________________________________   ____________________________
Signature of investigator                          Date

______________________________________________ (Print name of investigator)
Appendix G - Observation Consent Form
You are being invited to participate in a research study conducted by Cheng Jung Lin (Ms. Lin) to learn how you fit in at the workplace. This study is being carried out as part of the investigator’s research at Queen’s University. Approval to conduct this study has been granted by the Research Ethics Board at Queen’s University.

You are being invited to participate by allowing observation of your daily work activities and social relationships with other workers. Observations will be conducted during the course of your usual work day. These observations will be recorded and put into private field notes for later analysis and study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not consent to being observed, the investigator will not engage in observational research in your work area. Choosing to not participate will not affect your job in any way.

The investigator will keep all of the information gathered confidential. No one will see the name of the company, your name or anything you do or say - except the research team at Queen’s University. The information you give the investigator will not be shared with anyone at your work place (not with employer, supervisor, co-workers) nor with any job coaches or counsellors. The information will be stored in a locked file cabinet at Queen’s University. When the information is put in the computer there will be no names with it and all of the information will be password protected. When the study is done the investigator will be writing a report for other people to see. The name of the company and your name will not be in the report and no one will know what your answers were.

The information we gather is important to help service providers understand how social integration of workers with intellectual disabilities happens in the workplace.

People you can contact for more information:
Cheng Jung Lin, Principle Investigator, (613) 453-7811
Dr. Rosemary Lysaght, School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Thesis Supervisor, (613) 533-2134
Dr. Elsie Culham, School of Rehabilitation Therapy Dept. Chair, (613) 533-6727
Dr. Albert F. Clark, Research Ethics Board Chair, (613) 533-2975 ext 32975
Hélène Ouellette-Kuntz, SEO CURA in ID Director, (613) 548-4417 ext 1198 or 1-866-656-4417
If I have any questions I can contact Cheng Jung Lin at (613) 453-7811 any time ask for clarification.

The information sheet has been read and explained to me. My questions about this study have been answered. I am voluntarily signing this form. I understand that by signing this consent form I am agreeing to participate in the study.

Signatures of participants… Date
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________
____________________________________

Statement of Investigator
I have carefully explained to the subject the nature of the above research study. I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the subject understands clearly the nature of the study and the demands, benefits, and risks involved to participants in this study.

______________________________ __________________________
Signature of investigator Date

________________________________________ (Print name of investigator)
Appendix H – Ethics Approval Letter
Appendix I – Qualitative Research Verification Procedures
Eight verification procedures to enhance the quality of qualitative research were presented by Creswell and Miller (1997) cited in Creswell (1998). These eight procedures are:

1. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field;
2. Triangulation, which makes use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators and theories to verify study findings;
3. Peer review or debriefing, in which a peer asks the investigator hard questions about methods and interpretations to enhance the credibility;
4. Negative case analysis, in which the researcher refines working hypothesis as the inquiry advances in light of disconfirming evidence;
5. Clarifying researcher bias, in which the researcher clarify past experiences and biases so that readers understand the researcher’s position and any assumptions;
6. Member checks, in which the researcher has participants to verify findings and interpretations;
7. Rich, thick description, which allows readers to determine whether the finding can be transferred to other settings;
8. External audits which allow an external consultant to examine the process and findings of the study.