A MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVE CASE STUDY OF A YOUNG ADULT WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES PARTICIPATING IN A UNIVERSITY CLASS

by

Jimmy Wintle

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Education
in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Master of Education
Queen’s University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
August, 2010

Copyright © Jimmy Wintle, 2010
ABSTRACT

In this qualitative study the experience of a young woman with an intellectual disability (ID) auditing a university course was explored from multiple perspectives. This young woman audited a curriculum course in a one-year, after-degree Teacher Education program at an Ontario university. The purpose of this study was to explore the meaning of this experience for the student, her classmates, and her curriculum course instructor. Data were collected at the University from observations of the curriculum course and from interviews with the participants. As well, observations were made at a community-based program that prepares adults with ID to take part in inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE) to provide a description of the preparation of these adults for university experiences. The focal participant attended this program for four months prior to auditing the University course.

Data from interviews with the classmates and the course instructor elicited both positive and negative responses concerning their experiences in the inclusive class. Positive responses include seeing inclusion in practice and coming to know the focal participant on a personal level. Negative responses concern whether or not a curriculum class was the right fit for the focal participant. Interview data from the focal participant show that she overwhelmingly enjoyed her experience auditing the Education course. She saw the interaction with same-age peers as a chance to socialize with these peers and as an opportunity to learn about being independent.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who contributed to this study and deserve my heartfelt thanks:

To Amrit, Kristian, Hugh, and my family, thank you for helping me maintain my sanity these last two years.

To my focal participant, Laura, thank you allowing me to be part of your university experience.

To the students and instructors at CALC Prep, thank you for welcoming me into your learning community. I will always cherish our lunchtime games of Uno.

To my participants at the University, thank you for sharing your time and insights into the IPSE experience.

To my committee member, Dr. Ruth Rees, and supervisor, Dr. Nancy Hutchinson, thank you for your mentorship, dedication, and attention to detail. I will always be grateful for the guidance and encouragement you have both given me.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT........................................................................................................................ ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................... iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS................................................................................................... iv
LIST OF TABLES .......................................................................................................... viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ....................................................................................... 1
  Situating the Researcher.......................................................................................... 1
  Statement of the Problem...................................................................................... 2
  Purpose and Research Questions ........................................................................... 3
  Rationale .................................................................................................................. 5
  Qualitative Research Approach ............................................................................ 6
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .......................................................................... 11
  Overview.................................................................................................................. 11
  Historical Views on ID .......................................................................................... 12
    Defining ID .......................................................................................................... 12
    Normalization and Social Role Valorization ..................................................... 14
    Inclusive Education as a Human Right .............................................................. 16
  Rationale for IPSE .................................................................................................. 19
  Teachers and Inclusion ......................................................................................... 19
  Rationale for Post-secondary Institutions ............................................................... 23
    Human Capital and Social Capital ................................................................. 25
  Trends and Previous Research on IPSE ................................................................. 27
    History of Inclusion at the Post-secondary Level ............................................... 28
    Modern Inclusive Post-secondary Education ..................................................... 30
  Previous Research .................................................................................................. 31
  Chapter Summary .................................................................................................. 47
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .................................................................................... 49
  Rationale for a Qualitative Case Study ................................................................. 49
  Research Settings and Setting Selection ............................................................... 50
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: Themes with Sub-themes...............................................................76
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the perceptions of one student with intellectual disabilities (ID), of her classmates without disabilities, and of her course instructor while she audited a course in a professional Teacher Education program. The inclusion of adults with ID in post-secondary courses is referred to as inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE). This chapter begins with a brief introduction of the researcher and his motivation for taking on this research. This is followed by a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. The rationale for the study is then presented. Next is a rationale for the research approach and a description of the methodological framework. A brief description of the remaining chapters within this thesis concludes this chapter.

Situating the Researcher

Prior to the final year of my undergraduate education, I would have viewed any first-person account of an academic study, let alone a positioning of the researcher vis-à-vis their research, to be somewhat arrogant. This was an ingrained belief that resulted from my previous three years as a science student. The impetus for change came in the second semester of my final year of undergraduate studies. Being free to pursue an elective credit, I decided to broaden my education by taking a seminar course in Women’s Studies. This was when I first realized that no researcher can completely separate himself from his research, and that it was in fact arrogant to believe it possible. Research does not occur in a vacuum; it is influenced by the researcher’s cultural, political, social, and ideological origins and views. I came to learn that acknowledging these was part of a reflexive practice, which I will expand upon in Chapter 3. In order for
you, the reader, to better understand who I am, and how that in turn influences my research, I thought it pertinent to include an explanation of why I undertook this research.

The idea of studying an inclusive education class came quite serendipitously; I learned of the effort to integrate students with intellectual disabilities at the University during a meeting I attended while an Education student there. What led me to want to pursue this as an area of study, however, had been with me since early in life. As a young child, I was diagnosed with a learning disorder. The “othering” effect of being labelled had a profound impact on me—and has directly influenced my worldview. The feeling of being treated differently for something I had no control over deeply upset me, but it also engendered a sense of social justice. This eventually led to a position at a summer day camp, where I worked for a number of years one-on-one with children with intellectual disabilities, helping to integrate them into the camp’s activities. When I learned of the effort to integrate students with ID into the Education program, I naturally wondered if this was something that the children I had worked with could one day benefit from. My mind was made up that inclusive post-secondary education was something that I wanted to investigate.

**Statement of the Problem**

In this thesis, an inclusive class is one where students with ID learn alongside their typically developing peers. Although several studies have described inclusive programs at post-secondary institutions across North America (see Frank & Uditsky, 1988; Neubert, Moon, Grigal, & Redd, 2001; Weinkauf, 2002), few have documented the perceptions of the participants with ID (see Casale-Giannola & Kamens, 2006; Hamill, 2003; Hughson, Moodie, and Uditsky, 2006; Mosoff, Greenholts, & Hurtado, 2009; and
Swift, 2001). Perhaps this is because, historically, children and adults with ID have been considered poor informants who have unreliable memories and are susceptible to suggestion (Cederborg & Lamb, 2008; Milne, 1999). As well, there appears to be no literature documenting IPSE in a one-year, professional program. Thus two purposes of this study include bringing to the fore the voice of an IPSE participant with ID, as well as exploring the impact of the experience of IPSE on teacher candidates’ (TCs) views on education and career preparation, especially in relation to inclusive education. I believe that studying students with ID in IPSE is an area worthy of study because of a general culture of low expectations that surrounds individuals with ID (Rapley, 2004). As schools are an important site of social conditioning for young people, it would stand to reason that schools could serve as grounds for a reconceptualization of what it means to be “disabled.” This would necessitate the same reconceptualization in teachers prior to entering the teaching profession since they exercise an important and powerful role in the classroom. As noted by Patton (2002), views of reality are socially constructed; those views “dominant at any time and place will serve the interests and perspectives of those who exercise the most power” (p. 100). By including adults with ID into a class of teacher candidates (TCs) in a Teacher Education program, I hope that TCs will gain a greater appreciation for the notion of classroom inclusion and the capabilities of those with ID.

Purpose and Research Questions

What I conducted is both a descriptive exploratory and descriptive explanatory study. IPSE will be examined in an exploratory capacity, with special emphasis on observing the social interactions between and among the participants. In an explanatory
capacity, the views of the participants will be collected, focusing on their feelings about IPSE. I hope that illuminating the challenges and benefits perceived by the participants will help improve the design of future IPSE programs, particularly at this institution, while also building a case for providing an increase in the number of opportunities TCs have to engage with learners with ID.

Thus there are two purposes of this study and one overarching purpose. The first purpose is to include the voice of an IPSE participant with ID. The second purpose is to explore the impact of the experience of IPSE on TCs’ views on education and career preparation, especially in relation to inclusive education. The overarching purpose is to provide information that will contribute to enhanced opportunities for IPSE for individuals with ID. Accordingly, this study seeks to provide a descriptive account of one IPSE program—both of the preparation of individuals with ID to attend university classes and of the participation of one individual with ID in a university course.

In order to accomplish this, the design of this study has been informed by the main research questions:

1. What steps does a local IPSE preparation program take in order to prepare its students for auditing inclusive post-secondary classes?

2. 
   a) How does the individual with ID (hereafter referred to as the focal participant) interact with the TCs and with the instructor?
   
   b) How do the TCs and instructor interact with the focal participant?

3. 
   a) What do the focal participant, the TCs, and the instructor perceive to be the challenges and benefits of this experience?
   
   b) How can the experience be improved from their different perspectives?
4. How does this experience affect the TCs’ visions of inclusive education?

Rationale

Education of students with ID was traditionally carried out in segregated classes that focused on “fixing” students, a concept rooted in a medical model of disability. Recently, though, ideas about what it means to be disabled have shifted based on a social model of disability, and schools in Canada have adopted more inclusive practices.

A culture of low expectations has created an environment where access to an Ontario post-secondary education for adults with ID is very difficult. In Ontario, students with ID must leave high school upon reaching the age of 21; this means that at least 1000 students with ID leave school each year (Ryan & Lysaght, 2007). Traditionally, attending post-secondary institutions after high school graduation has been impossible because of mandatory course pre-requisites and lack of appropriate supports. This is unfortunate because, given the slower cognitive development of individuals with ID, a stimulating environment is important during early adulthood. Employment options generally are limited to sheltered workshops or low-wage, menial jobs (Schmidt, 2005). Consequently, many individuals with ID become fast-food workers, janitors, or landscapers, what some in the field of community living refer to as “food, filth, or flowers” (Schmidt, p. 37).

Advocates claim this relegates individuals with ID to a life of poverty (Schmidt). A new approach to education for individuals with ID, called inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE), is seeking to reverse this trend by including adults with ID in the social, recreational, and academic fabric of post-secondary institutions (Weinkauf, 2002). Studies by Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006), Neubert and Moon (2006), and Zaffit, Hart, and Zimbrich (2004), have shown that students with ID who have attended
inclusive post-secondary classes have improved their academic, social, and vocational skills, and have attained higher rates of employment than students with ID who did not attend post-secondary classes. Disseminating how one community agency prepares its students with ID for university life, and how one of those students with ID interprets her experiences at university, as well as how her classmates without ID, and her class instructor view the challenges and benefits of such an experience will be an initial and important step in promoting meaningful educational opportunities for adults with ID.

Qualitative Research Approach

A qualitative design utilizing a multiple perspective case study was employed to describe both the steps that a local community organization takes to prepare students with ID to take inclusive university classes, as well as the experiences of the focal participant, and the views of her classmates (the TCs), and the class instructor about their experience in an inclusive post-secondary class. Observations allowed me to observe the interactions between the focal participant and the TCs and course instructor in a naturalistic setting, while interviews facilitated the data collection of participant meanings of how they experience IPSE. The advantage of a multiple perspective case study is the thick description this approach provides. I aimed to explain not only the observed behaviour of the participants, but the context of that behaviour as well, to render it meaningful to others (Geertz, 1973). I hoped that this study will add to the limited amount of literature presenting views of IPSE participants with ID, and initiate research presenting the views of TCs in an after-degree professional Teacher Education program on IPSE, something which so far is absent in literature on IPSE. By providing a record of the experiences of the multiple participants, as well as their own perspectives, this research may allow others
to compare, contrast, and develop meaning related to the subject and views presented (Stake, 1994).

The four main research questions are posed within an overarching interpretivist paradigm, using constructivist and phenomenological frameworks. Within research theory in social sciences, the two paradigms that predominant are the positivist and interpretive paradigms (Williamson, 2006). According to Williamson, the positivist paradigm holds that knowledge can only be based on what can be experienced and observed. This leads to a preoccupation with objectivity, measurement, and quantitative data. Contrasted to positivism is the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretive paradigm holds that the social world is constructed by people, who constantly interpret this world to give it meaning. It is these constructed meanings that interpretivists are concerned with (Williamson). Since, as noted, the notion of ID itself can be viewed as a social construct, it is fitting then to employ a theoretical paradigm that acknowledges that people construct reality.

Constructivism is one of several frameworks within the interpretive paradigm. This framework was used when interviewing the TCs and instructor of the inclusive class. “Constructivists study the multiple realities constructed by people and the implications of those constructions for their lives and interactions with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 96). That is to say, two TCs can experience the same IPSE class and take from it very different meanings. Individuals have different perceptions, all of which are experienced as real, and the constructivist strives to capture and honour each of these different perspectives about reality (Patton). A constructivist approach asks the questions: “How have the people in this setting constructed reality? What are their reported
perceptions, explanations, and beliefs? What are the consequences of their constructions for their behaviors and for those with whom they interact?” (p. 96), while “attending to the ways in which language as a social and cultural construction shapes, distorts, and structures understandings” (p. 102), in this case the language of disability.

I used a phenomenological framework when observing and interviewing the focal participant. As stated previously, little attention has been paid to the perceptions of participants with ID in IPSE programs (for examples, see Casale-Giannola & Kamens, 2006; Hamill, 2003; Hughson, et al., 2006; Mosoff, et al., 2009, and Swift, 2001). This is especially disconcerting given that such programs are intended to benefit them. In order for IPSE programs to become more readily available, a preponderance of evidence will have to be built that demonstrates participants with ID in these programs value and benefit from their experiences. A phenomenological framework is most appropriate given this goal. This framework focuses on searching for the underlying meaning of an individual’s experience with a particular phenomenon (Miller & Salkind, 2002), in this case, the focal participant’s experience in the inclusive education class. Central to phenomenology is the concept of “epoch,” which stipulates that researchers put aside their own understanding of the phenomenon to understand it from the perspective of the informant (Miller & Salkind). The data provided by the informant through interviews are then analyzed so that themes can emerge out of significant statements. How the environment in which the phenomenon was experienced—its context—is also analyzed. Together, these analyses are presented to give an idea of the “essence” of the phenomenon for the informants, so that others will better understand what it is like for the informant to experience the phenomenon (Miller & Salkind).
Essential to working with informants with ID is the notion of a presumption of credibility. This entails the conscious assumption that all perspectives on an issue or event are inherently valuable and useful (Ferguson, Ferguson, & Taylor, 1992). Swift (2001) found that informants with ID were able to provide rich data from which the essence of their experience in IPSE could be derived. Working with informants with impaired communication abilities, Swift found that data that might otherwise be overlooked needed to be given serious consideration. For instance, Moustakas (1994) recommends that researchers eliminate repetitive and vague statements to extract the stand-alone phrases—those that capture the real meaning of the phenomenon in question. When interviewing individuals with ID, Swift, however, did not treat repetitive and vague statements as unimportant, but rather as indicators of implicit expressions. Many of the participants in Swift’s research used repetitive and overlapping statements to emphasize important aspects of their experiences.

The use of people with ID as research informants capable of providing an “inside” perspective is corroborated by Taylor (1999) and Mactavish, Mahon, and Lutfiyya (2000). Taylor explored how attending college impacted the lives of young women transitioning from school to work. Among her informants was a young woman enrolled in an IPSE program in Alberta. This research participant was able to account for her own experience, as well as comment on its meaning for her. Mactavish et al. interviewed individuals with ID about their views on social integration. In addition to giving their views on social integration, the informants also identified four themes that contributed to their perceptions of belonging: school/work, structured recreation, friendship, and family. Mactavish et al. found that the informants were able to give meaningful and reliable
insights about social integration as a concept, and how it was enacted in their lives. Thus previous research suggests that a phenomenological approach is a valid approach to use with informants with ID. I hope that the qualitative research approach undertaken not only did justice to capturing the beliefs of the participants, interpreting the findings, and presenting the essence of the experience of IPSE, but also fulfilled the overarching purpose of advancing the availability of inclusive education to many more individuals with ID.

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. In the first chapter, I introduce the rationale for studying IPSE in a professional Teacher Education program, and provided the research questions that frame my study. In the following chapter, chapter two, I review the history of inclusive education, as well as the literature on IPSE. In the third chapter I give a detailed account of the methodology I employed in this multiple perspective case study. The fourth chapter presents the results of the data I collected. In the fifth chapter I discuss possible ways to improve the IPSE experience studied; as well, I connect the findings of this study to the literature. In this chapter I also discuss the limitations of this study, and offer suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This chapter reviews literature on the topic of inclusion for learners with ID. Historically, trends in inclusion have shifted with changing views on what it means to be intellectually disabled. Thus this chapter provides an overview of the changing definition of ID, as well as the changing nature of inclusion, and its rationale. As teachers are at the forefront of implementing school policies on inclusion, research connecting TCs, in-service teachers (teachers working in the field of education), and inclusion will also be presented. This literature review is documented below in the following sections: historical views on ID; rationale for inclusion; and trends and previous research on IPSE. This is followed by a brief chapter summary.

The first section, historical views on ID, reviews the concept of ID, giving the modern definition and tracing its history from the 18th century. Normalization and social role valorization—theories that inform many aspects of present-day inclusion—are then explored. This is followed by a review of some of the advances in human rights that have led to an increase in educational opportunities for persons with ID.

The second section is a review of some of the research that establishes a rationale for IPSE, such as increased human and social capital. This section also draws connections between both TCs and in-service teachers and inclusion. Research on these two groups includes findings that indicate that many TCs perceive disabilities as problems, and considers the importance of addressing this issue early in a teacher’s education.
The third section traces developments in IPSE from the 1980s to the present, and describes recent research on IPSE. In particular, research that examines the perspectives of participants with ID and participants without ID is presented. While there is a growing body of information on IPSE, there is no literature that makes sense of a case of a student with ID auditing a university course, which includes a description of the preparation to audit a university course. Although the literature available occasionally acknowledges difficulties in implementing IPSE programs, it is generally positive about the outcomes.

Historical Views on ID

Defining ID

Currently approximately 600 000 learners in Canada have exceptionalities (Hutchinson, 2007). These exceptionalities present many challenges to learning. Intellectual disabilities (ID) are a specific subset of exceptionalities originating before the age of 18 that result in significant limitations in intellectual functioning and conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). It is important to acknowledge that a growing body of literature recognizes ID as a “diagnostic and social category” (Rapley, 2004, p. 31), that is, that ID is a construct rather than an innate characteristic.

Lunsky, Garcin, Morin, Cobigo, and Bradley (2007) reported that ID affects 1 to 3% of the population. There are many causes of ID, including environmental and genetic factors. Indeed, geneticists have identified over 1 000 genetic disorders associated with ID (Hodapp & Dykens, 2007). People with ID often have delayed cognitive, social, and emotional skills. In addition, many disorders that cause ID are characterised by
“behavioural phenotypes”—differences in behavioural and developmental conditions compared to those without the disorder. Although specific phenotypes are consistently associated with specific syndromes, there is some within-syndrome variability as well (Hodapp & Dykens).

**History of Thinking on ID**

The convergence of medicine and statistics in Western culture has had a profound effect on the way society supports individual differences (Grenier, 2007). The view that nature has an accepted course of action, and that humans who do not conform to this path are “abnormal,” and their condition the result of a pathological state, took hold in the 19th century and gave rise to the medical model (Shogan, 1998). According to the medical model, people with disabilities need to be fixed, and thus are regarded as objects to be treated (Ash, Bellew, Davies, Newman, & Richardson, 1997). According to Ash et al., within this model, failure to change is conceptualized as the problem of the people who are disabled. Systems of classification are based on how much these individuals deviate from the norm, which ultimately determines the degree of disability (mild, moderate, or severe) (Ash et al.). The identities of persons with ID are constructed in medical discourse by using scales of cultural intelligence, measured by intelligence quotients (Shogan). Within these discourses, those with ID are seen as deficient, a trait that implicitly defines people with ID, and jeopardizes their potential for advancement in the educational system (Grenier; Shogan).

In contrast to the medical model, the social model holds that disability is a social construct; disability is in the eye of the beholder, not the body of the beholden (Andrews et al., 2000). Individuals with an impairment become disabled by social and cultural
norms which reflect a preoccupation with “normality” (Ash et al., 1997). Normality is a construct defined by the norms within a society (Rao, 2006). According to the social model disability is part of, not outside, the ordinary range of human diversity (Ash et al.). The social model holds that the segregated form of education promoted by the medical model is an exercise in power that essentially places students with ID in subordinate positions through the association of disability with disease (Grenier, 2007). IPSE can be seen as a movement away from the medical model, toward the social model of inclusion (Weinkauf, 2002). Whereas the approach of the medical model focuses on separate classes aimed at “fixing” students with ID, IPSE classes are inclusive and coherent with what students without ID experience (Weinkauf). Students with ID are not treated as objects—rather they are full social participants within the classroom.

Normalization and Social Role Valorization

For several decades normalization, and more recently social role valorization (SRV), has had an influence on policy development and practice involving those with ID (Yates, Dyson, & Davies, 2008). The concept of normalization developed in Scandinavia during the 1960s (see Nirje, 1969). It holds that people with ID should have access to patterns and conditions of everyday life which approximate the norms and patterns of mainstream society as close as possible (Nirje). According to Nirje, one of the early proponents of this principle, normalization should be applied to all individuals with ID, regardless of an individual’s extent of impairment.

Nirje (1969) also contends that normalization entails a normal routine of life. For most people, a typical day has them travel between various locations. Home, work, school, and leisure activities are often at different venues. Consequently, it is not
appropriate for a person with ID to receive an education, structured therapies, or recreation activities in the same building that also serves as home (Nirje). It is also inappropriate for an adult with ID to receive an education with children, as this creates an image of people with ID as being as dependent as children.

SRV has its roots in normalization (Yates et al., 2008). It was formulated by Wolfensberger as an evolution of normalization during the 1970s and 1980s, with the term SRV coined in 1983 (Wolfensberger, 1983). The basic premise of SRV is that people are more likely to experience social capital if they hold valued social roles than if they do not (Osburn, 1998). Wolfensberger holds that certain groups of people, especially people with ID, occupy devalued social roles. The contribution that people with ID have been deemed capable of making in the past is reflected in negative ways of thinking about them, and this informs the role expectations placed upon them. SRV seeks to change this by creating and supporting socially valued roles for people as a way of according dignity, respect, acceptance, a voice in the affairs of one’s community and society, opportunities for work and self-support, and a decent material standard of living (Osburn).

IPSE is one way that individuals with ID can assume socially valued roles. Osburn (1998) states that if the adult status of adults with ID is not emphasized, then the common negative stereotype that adults with ID are merely overgrown children will be perpetuated, along with the negative consequences that attend this stereotype. IPSE serves to reinforce the adult status of its participants through their involvement in the same activities and environments as their non-disabled peers (Weinkauf, 2002). Bowman and Weinkauf (2004) view post-secondary education as a means to enhance one’s
competencies and image, as well as a mechanism for achieving meaningful work, a place in one’s community, and continued growth, all of which are fundamental to SRV.

Just as the idea of intellectual disability has been contested (see Rapley, 2004), so too have the ideas of normalization and SRV (see Yates et al., 2008). Yates et al. contend that normalization and SRV fail to examine the problematic individual-society dualism and the “hidden but implied” notion of the individual with impairments existing prior to socialization (p. 248). According to Yates et al., while normalization and SRV emphasize the role of social forces in devaluing people, normalization and SRV still imply the concepts of disability and difference are biological in nature, rather than socially constructed.

*Inclusive Education as a Human Right*

The current status of inclusion in the Canadian context has been the result of decades of change in how society regards human rights. These changes have been marked by watershed moments, such as United Nations’ proclamations, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and other legislation, specifically provincial legislation governing education.

In 1975, the United Nations announced The Declaration of Rights of Disabled Persons, which emphasized the need “to develop their abilities in the most varied fields of activities and of promoting their integration as far as possible in normal life” (United Nations, 2004). Although it provides a reference point for the equal treatment of individuals with disabilities, the Declaration was not legally binding. The United Nations proclaimed 1981 the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP), with the theme of full participation and equality (United Nations, 2004). One outcome of the IYDP was the
formulation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the UN in 1982 (United Nations, no date). The UN describes the World Programme of Action (WPA) as a “global strategy to enhance disability prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities, which pertains to full participation of persons with disabilities in social life and national development.” The WPA also emphasises the need to approach disability from a human rights perspective (United Nations, no date).

In 2006, the United Nations adopted the legally binding Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. While the Convention does not create new rights, it does set out the legal obligations of states to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities (United Nations, no date). Canada formally ratified the Convention on March 11, 2010 (United Nations, 2010). Article 24 of the Convention outlines the obligations of signatories toward education for people with disabilities. Clause 1 states that “States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. . . . States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to . . . the full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth” (United Nations, no date). Clause 5 states:

States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, enacted in 1982, with equality provisions coming into force in 1985, was in turn influenced by UN proclamations, in
particular the IYDP (Hutchinson, 2007.). The Charter regulates the interactions of state (federal, provincial, and territorial governments) and individuals. The Charter has the power to render invalid or inoperative any laws that are inconsistent with its provisions. Section 15 of the Charter deals with Equality Rights, stating:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. (Department of Justice, 2010)

In the context of education in Ontario, the Education Act outlines the Ministry of Education’s responsibility for ensuring that all children with exceptionalities have appropriate special education programs and services without payment available to them within the publically funded primary and secondary school system (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2002). The definition of “exceptional” employed by the Act includes students with ID. While accommodation of students with disabilities at the primary and secondary level is subject to detailed legislative structures, this is not the case at the post-secondary level (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2002). In 1995, the Ontario Ministry of Education did, however, conduct a review of college programs for adults with ID. There was no agreement among the reviewers for a single province-wide model for providing college programs to adults with ID. Nevertheless, the report did emphasize that colleges must participate in meeting the educational needs of those with disabilities by being a part of a continuum in the provision of educational services to adults with ID (Mouritsen, 1995, as cited in the Roeher Institute, 1996).
Rationale for IPSE

This section reviews the rationale for IPSE. It is divided into three parts: one, teachers and inclusion; two, rationale for inclusion in post-secondary institutions; and three, human capital and social capital.

Teachers and Inclusion

As the previous section on human rights points out, inclusion is becoming increasingly preferred in elementary and secondary settings for students with ID rather than previous models of education based on segregation. This shift to progressively heterogeneous classrooms means that teachers are required to integrate students with various abilities into their classes. This underscores the unique potential of IPSE in a Teacher Education program—to expose TCs to learners with ID, a group that they may have previously had limited contact with but will likely be required to teach in their future classes as teachers.

Teachers are the prime implementers of policies on inclusion in education. It has long been accepted that teachers’ expectations can influence their students’ educational outcomes (Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskeley, 2003). Larrivee and Horne (1991) posited that student peer acceptance may be, in part, teacher-mediated as well. Thus successful inclusion not only depends on teachers having the knowledge, skills, and competency to implement such policies (Cardona, 2009), but also on teachers’ attitudes and beliefs, which can directly affect their behaviour with students (Fang, 1996; Stanovich & Jordan, 2004). According to Wyer and Albarracin (2005), beliefs are estimates of subjective probability which, in the case of propositions, are reflected in either: estimates of the
likelihood that a proposition is true, expressions of confidence or certainty that the proposition is valid, or agreement with the proposition. Attitudes, however, are responses to an object along a continuum of favourableness. Many of the factors that underlie belief formation and change could also govern attitude processes (Wyer & Albarracin, 2005).

Previous research on teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities has had conflicting findings. While some research has indicated that teachers have not been favourably disposed to the idea of increased inclusion of children with intellectual disabilities (e.g., Forlin, Douglas, & Hattie, 1996), other research has indicated otherwise (e.g., Ryan, 2009; Stanovich, 1999).

Ryan (2009) investigated the attitudes toward classroom inclusion of newly graduated TCs at an Ontario university. Survey data were collected from 141 participants enrolled in Special Education, Part One, following completion of the Bachelor of Education degree. Participants responded to questions using a five-point Likert scale. The majority of the participants (75%) somewhat agreed with the statement “I have received the training I need to successfully use teaching strategies and implement inclusion” (p. 182). Ryan interpreted this as meaning that participants believed they could use more training to feel more confident in the classroom. However, 92% of those surveyed also indicated that “all students will do well in the inclusive classroom” (p. 185, emphasis in the original), demonstrating a positive disposition toward inclusion. Yet nearly as many (94% of the participants sampled) noted their need for additional support, and mentioned obstacles to inclusion such as time, facilities, money, and personnel issues. Because the participants were enrolled in Special Education, Part One (i.e., a course devoted to teaching inclusive practices), the transferability of these results may be affected.
Stanovich (1999) conducted a series of three 90-minute focus group meetings with six in-service teachers, focusing on their beliefs about inclusion. Each of the participants worked at the same grade 7-8 school in Ontario. The school was in the process of transitioning from a predominantly segregated Special Education service delivery to an inclusion model. The participants included one Special Education resource teacher, one Special Education classroom teacher, and four general education classroom teachers. Stanovich found that the six teachers she interviewed held positive beliefs about the inclusive model of education. The participants described several benefits of this model, including the opportunity for students with disabilities to model appropriate kinds of social behaviour when they were taught alongside their general education peers. The participants also reported that students without disabilities underwent significant social growth, and demonstrated the development of respect for people who were different from them. As well, the participants felt that integration was responsible for motivating students with special needs to perform to a higher level in order to fit in better with their peers.

Ambivalent beliefs were found by Cardona (2009), who surveyed TCs’ beliefs on inclusion and perceived competence to teach in inclusive classrooms. For instance, she found that the 93% of TCs surveyed (n = 114) disagreed with the statement that “children with disabilities should be usually taught in a separate group from children without disabilities in classroom settings” (p. 37), while 78% agreed with the statement that “the needs of the majority of children with disabilities could be met in regular classrooms” (p. 37). However, her results also indicated that 40% of participants agreed with the statement “most pre-service teachers [TCs] who will teach in regular schools would
rather not teach children with disabilities” (p. 37). According to Cardona, the participants did not feel sufficiently competent in their own instructional skills with special educational needs, despite feeling sufficiently competent to teach students without disabilities. Cardona attributed these findings to TCs viewing disabilities as problems, and noted that participants appeared to be more comfortable with the traditional system of special education than with an inclusive model of education.

Forlin et al. (1996) found a marked decline in teachers’ willingness to integrate children with intellectual disabilities as the level of disability increased. Furthermore, Pearson (2005) observed that a majority of participants in a study of secondary TCs based their attitudes toward special educational needs on a conceptual framework rooted in the medical model. This is of particular concern; Jordan, Lindsay, and Stanovich (1997) documented that teachers with beliefs based on the medical model demonstrated less effective teaching practices compared to those teachers that attributed student problems to an interaction between student and environment. They noted that the latter group of teachers engaged in more academic interactions and persisted more in constructing student understanding when working with students with exceptionalities.

While many Teacher Education programs offer lectures and tutorials on the topic of “students with disabilities,” this may not be enough to alter TCs’ attitudes toward students with ID. Using the Interaction with Disabled Persons Scale, Tait and Purdie (2000) compared the attitudes of TCs at an Australian university at the beginning and end of a one-year after-degree teacher education program. Their conclusion was that the program was unsuccessful in inducing desirable attitude changes. Murphy (1996) contends that it is also difficult to induce positive attitude changes toward inclusion in
practicing teachers. Tait and Purdie suggest that negative attitudes acquired early in a teacher’s career may be difficult to change when subsequent experiences are filtered through a negative bias toward inclusion. Tait and Purdie further said that, because positive attitudes on the part of the teacher are needed to foster an environment conducive to students with disabilities succeeding in the “regular” classroom, Teacher Education should aim to enhance TCs’ attitudes to inclusion.

While some studies have shown that TCs and in-service teachers are positively disposed to inclusion, others have revealed ambivalent or even negative dispositions toward inclusion. This underscores the potential of IPSE, particularly in Teacher Education programs, as it can expose future teachers to learners with ID in an inclusive environment, and potentially promote more positive dispositions toward inclusion. Studies (Acton & Zarbatany, 1988; Donaldson, 1980; Eginbroad & Retish, 1988; Esposito & Peach, 1983) have demonstrated that it is possible to promote a shift to more positive attitudes toward people with ID. However, these studies imply that contact must be direct, structured, organized along a meaningful dimension, include equal status, and that the quality of the contact influences attitudes. Such contact between TCs and students with ID has been studied by Carroll, Petroff, and Blumberg (2009). They interviewed 12 TCs (mixed undergraduate and graduate level) participating in a non-credit bearing IPSE course. They found that most TCs finished the course with a stronger commitment to inclusive teaching practice.

Rationale for Post-secondary Institutions

Given that there are already a number of agencies offering normative experiences for adults with ID, it is reasonable to question why post-secondary institutions should be
counted among such agencies. Causton-Theoharis, Ashby, and DeClouette (2009) identified three specific benefits of inclusion in post-secondary institutions: one, benefits to students with disabilities; two, benefits to classmates; and three, benefits to faculty. Zafft, Hart, and Zimbrich (2004) and Rusch and Braddock (2004) identified economic benefits for students with ID who attend IPSE programs.

Causton-Theoharis et al. (2009) conducted in-depth interviews of eight stakeholders in two IPSE programs at an American university. Included in their interviews were one parent, five support staff, and two professors of students with ID; however, students with ID were not among their interviewees. The researchers used purposeful sampling to select “interviewees who represented the different groups involved...those that we deemed most able to speak to the complexities of each of the programs” (p. 92). The interviewed stakeholders perceived IPSE participants with ID to have matured. The stakeholders also said that some of the participants with ID began to identify themselves as learners for the first time. One stakeholder commented, “I see students really being much more proud, much more full... giving themselves another chance of a new definition and building on strengths rather than identifying by what they can’t do” (p. 97). These stakeholders also remarked on student pride, new hopes, and opportunities for friendship. The benefits to classmates were learning to include and engaging in natural interactions. According to the authors, stakeholders reported that classmates learned to include by sharing an academic space with members of a group that has traditionally not been part of the academic community, and gained an appreciation for the ability of these students with ID to learn. Natural interactions were the result of classmates spending time with students with ID during group activities, where learning
The benefits of IPSE to students with ID can be described as social capital, which refers to the ability to convert social relations into a form of capital which allows for the opening up of real and sustainable economic opportunities (McClenaghan, 2000). However, there is also a documented human capital benefit in IPSE. According to Farmakopoulou and Watson’s (2003) interpretation of human capital theory, the education system and patterns within it can best be understood as investments in increasing economic returns and in increasing the place of individuals in the competitive labour market. The history of human capital theory being applied to education goes back several decades, when economists began to view education as an important factor that explained historical economic growth and predicted future growth (Gerber, 2007).

Rusch and Braddock (2004) contend that persons with severe disabilities are just as likely to wind up in segregated employment as they are in integrated work, in spite of evidence that persons with severe disabilities can meet their goals of being competitively employed and earning wages that they can rely upon to meet their personal needs and wants. This is despite the fact that Rusch, Conley, and McCaughrin (1993), investigating
the benefits and costs of supported employment during a four-year period, found supported employment to be economically viable. In particular, they observed the benefit to society, as measured by the increase in earnings of supported employees over what they would have earned in an alternative program, and taking into account the costs incurred by supported employment programs and the costs that would have been incurred if placed in an alternative program. They found that society received a return of $1.09 for every $1.00 invested in supported employment by the fourth year of the four-year study period. Gross earnings for supported employees almost doubled compared to earnings received while enrolled in their previous placements (largely sheltered work and adult day care).

This evidence then suggests that there is a financial incentive to promote the transition of adults with ID from segregated work to supported work. Indeed, for adults with ID, IPSE can be seen as an investment with a high return. In a matched cohort study of 40 students, 20 who participated in an IPSE program and 20 who did not, Zafft et al. (2004) found that participation in IPSE correlated positively with competitive employment. In particular, all of the students from the IPSE program who were working were in competitive employment. In comparison, 57% of students without experience in post-secondary education who were working did so in a sheltered setting. Of the employed students with post-secondary education, 67% used no work-related supports, compared to 29% of students with no post-secondary educational experience (Zafft et al.). Thus the evidence suggests that IPSE can provide long-term benefits to society by increasing the number of adults with ID who are employed in supported or independent work rather than having them remain in sheltered work.
The social capital perspective emphasizes the importance of provisions designed not only to promote an individual’s employability, but also to enhance quality of life, social networking, and citizenship (Farmakopoulou & Watson, 2003). Weinkauf (2002) argues this orientation is grounded in the idea that students with ID in IPSE programs can assume socially-valued roles. Through their role as post-secondary students, along with their participation in out-of-class activities alongside peers without disabilities, they achieve status and legitimacy as members of the community (Weinkauf). Further, these advantages are believed to extend beyond scholastic peer groups to the wider community, a goal that would otherwise be far more difficult to achieve (Weinkauf).

The social capital perspective is predicated on the importance of an education not only designed to promote an individual’s employability, but also to enhance citizenship, social networking, and quality of life (Farmakopoulou & Watson, 2003). Although a system of education based on social capital can appear to be at odds with one based on human capital, it is important to point out that social and human capital are linked, and that an increase in one would logically lead to an increase in the other (Farmakopoulou & Watson). Within the social model is an emphasis on encouraging self-knowledge, self-awareness, and self-management skills (Weinkauf, 2002), all of which are key aspects within the workplace, and thus important to human capital as well.

Trends and Previous Research on IPSE

This section reviews the historical trends in IPSE and previous research on the subject. It is divided into three parts: one, history of inclusion at the post-secondary level; two, modern inclusive post-secondary education; and three, previous research on IPSE.
History of Inclusion at the Post-secondary Level

The history of IPSE as a topic of interest among educators and adult service providers extends over the last 30 years (Neubert et al., 2001). The predominant philosophy underlying inclusive practices has been to allow students with ID to continue their education in age-appropriate settings (Grigal, Dwyre, & Davis, 2006). However, the type of education and degree of integration with peers without ID have varied substantially over time (Neubert et al.). According to Neubert et al., throughout the early literature on IPSE, the focus seemed to be on training adults with ID in the area of daily activities of living: personal hygiene, money management, etc. Indeed, the literature from the 1970s showed little evidence of integrated opportunities, such as classes and social events for students with ID, apart from specialized programs where instruction was generally provided in a segregated setting.

The 1980s saw an increase in awareness of disability issues, particularly as a result of the United Nations proclaiming 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons (IYDP) (Hutchinson, 2007). According to Hutchinson, the IYDP had a direct impact on the inclusion of disability rights in Canada’s Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and inclusive education in Canada has been influenced by the Charter. Following its enactment in 1982, Canada became the first country to guarantee rights to people with disabilities in its constitution (Hutchinson). During this period, the focus was on transition planning for students with ID leaving high school and on integrated experiences with students without ID (Frank & Uditsky, 1988).

One integrated program, at the University of Alberta, offered a contrast to the programs at American post-secondary institutions in the 1970s. Born out of concern for
their children, a parent group in Edmonton united with allies from the university, the Alberta Association for Community Living, and the Gateway Association for Community Living to create what can be considered the first truly inclusive post-secondary program in North America (Weinkauf, 2002). Called On Campus, it started in 1987 with 11 students with ID. These students were given learning supports and modifications to learning materials (Weinkauf). The goal of this program was to promote friendships, enhance employability, and provide normative and enriching experiences through integrated classes (Frank & Uditsky, 1988). In contrast, surveys conducted at American post-secondary institutions during this period revealed they still provided only a few services to students with ID, and that administrators and staff were often not supportive of the idea of inclusion on campuses (Neubert et al., 2001).

The 1990s witnessed the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, and the IDEA Amendments of 1997 in the United States (Neubert et al., 2001). Neubert et al. claim these American acts functioned to centralize the topic of transition within the inclusive post-secondary education literature. In particular, the emphasis was to promote access to these programs while students with ID were in their final years of high school. One marked difference from previous decades was the mention of student identification cards being issued to students with ID enrolled in IPSE programs (Neubert et al.). Such cards provide access to the social and recreational activities at these institutions, such as sporting events, which hitherto would have been inaccessible for members of IPSE programs (Neubert et al.). Thus these cards provided students with ID another means of socializing with their peers without ID.
Modern Inclusive Post-secondary Education

Today IPSE programs, especially those based on the model developed at the University of Alberta, can be seen as a radical departure from past iterations. In its modern conception, IPSE encompasses a multitude of principles which differentiate it from segregated education programs for individuals with ID. Weinkauf (2002) compared three IPSE programs in the province of Alberta to formulate a number of guiding principles for IPSE, which generally relate to the delivery of these programs. Several of these principles are listed below (pp. 32–33):

- IPSE is available to any adult with an intellectual disability…There are no academic or physical criteria used to select students.
- IPSE is inclusive and is coherent with what other students experience: Students are included in the same academic, social and recreational experiences as others.
- IPSE programs provide individual student support(s): In consultation with the student, the people in the environment they wish to be involved in, family and any significant others, a plan centred on the intensity and type(s) of support is formulated and facilitated by program staff.
- IPSE programs provide supports to others as well: It is imperative that program staff provide support to the instructors, non-disabled students and others involved in an IPSE student’s program of study.
- IPSE programs encourage self-determination of students…Goals associated with involvement in academic, recreation and social experiences are directed by each student’s expectations for him or herself in these areas.
Hughson, Moodie, and Uditsky (2006) noted additional “commonly articulated” principles that have guided the “vision for inclusive post secondary education” (p. 96). Quoted here are several of those principles (pp. 96–97):

- need to challenge assumptions about the very nature of developmental disabilities;
- desire to test the perceived limits of inclusion (who can be successfully included and in what contexts);
- intention to advance inclusion and reduce marginalization;
- to facilitate inclusion where no history of special education practice or knowledge existed (at least outside of special education specialization in faculties of education);
- to innovate in a place where no human service infrastructure existed to provide therapeutic intervention; and
- to step outside existing policy frameworks regarding entitlement to advanced education.

As evidenced by these guiding principles, it is clear that the notion of inclusion has evolved over the course of the past 30 years, from completely segregated classes on post-secondary campuses, to the increasingly common practice of integrated post-secondary classes.

Previous Research

Although IPSE is a growing field, a search through the literature reveals that there is still no research reporting multiple perspectives that make sense of an IPSE experience.
in a Teacher Education program. However, for any inclusive program to be truly successful, consideration must be given to the participants, since ultimately any program is intended for the benefit of all involved.

While it is recognized that interviewing persons with ID presents unique challenges (Finlay & Lyons, 2001), these challenges must be met, and the perceptions of IPSE participants disseminated, in order to create a preponderance of evidence from which best practices for IPSE can emerge. Due to the paucity of literature chronicling the views of IPSE participants, some of the literature reviewed here offer views from programs involving children in inclusive education (e.g., Frederickson, Simmonds, Evans & Soulsby, 2007) and participants in segregated British college programs that would not meet the aforementioned criteria to be considered IPSE programs in Canada (Ash et al., 1997; Farmakopoulou & Watson, 2003). These studies are presented first, and followed by North American studies of IPSE.

Frederickson et al. (2007) systematically assessed the social and affective outcomes of inclusion in elementary schools in order to describe measures of peer group inclusion and feelings of belonging at school (Frederickson et al.). Although they did not interview the participants, they did survey students in an effort to gauge their perceptions. The scope of this study was quite large. It included a total of 397 children, aged eight to 11 years old, in 14 classes at 11 schools. Of these children, 294 were “typically developing,” while the remainder had some form of exceptionality (mostly ID). The children were assessed using the Belonging Scale, a scale used to report the extent to which a child feels a sense of belonging to their school, and the Social Inclusion Survey,
a socio-metric measure used to assess how willing children are to associate with classmates at school. Responses were used to generate a measure of social acceptance.

According to Frederickson et al. (2007), pupils with ID in mainstream schools attained poorer outcomes when compared with their mainstream peers. Results for the Social Inclusion Survey showed that students with exceptionalities were statistically more likely to be rejected as potential work partners and playmates when compared to the “typically developing” students. The results for the Belonging Scale showed that mainstream students with special educational needs scored lower than students without special needs; however, this difference was not statistically significant. This study suggests that from a young age “typically developing” students show a reluctance to associate with students with exceptionalities. While interesting, these data are hardly surprising given the ingrained nature of the medical model that teaches that persons with exceptionalities are not “normal.”

Concomitant with the experiences lived by the elementary students in the study by Frederickson et al. (2007), college students with various disabilities in a study by Farmakopoulou and Watson (2003) had little social interaction with their non-disabled peers as well. These students were enrolled in two further education colleges in the UK. The majority of provision for students with disabilities, in both colleges was segregated. The authors used interviews to explore the significance of the college experience in the lives of students with various disabilities; the authors found that participants were dissatisfied with their lack of options in courses they were allowed to take. One student who was enrolled in a segregated program commented:
I like everything at the course except the personal development, it is boring and annoying to have to talk about yourself all the time...[name of tutor] keep asking us what we did during the week, why, how and if we do not answer she starts shouting at us. I wish I could tell her to bugger off. (Farmakopoulou & Watson, p. 232)

Another student added “I am so fed up with these reading and writing...As you saw in the class, only two of us can read and write. So why are they bothering us with it all the time? I prefer to do computing” (p. 232).

Students in the segregated programs, however, did appreciate being treated as adults, an improvement over their treatment prior to entering college (Farmakopoulou & Watson, 2003). Many of the students remarked on the difference between their treatment in secondary school and college, with comments such as:

Here, we are treated as adults and this is great. We have more freedom, for example, we can go a little late at the class without getting a shout, we can spend more time in the things we like...and generally we are respected and treated nicely from most of the tutors. (p. 233)

Students also felt that attending college had increased their confidence and social skills, and increased their chances in the labour market.

In terms of their motivation for attending college, many of the students indicated that the attainment of new knowledge was an end in itself, as opposed to a means to an end (Farmakopoulou & Watson, 2003). Some students gave reasons directly related to social capital as their foremost incentive for pursuing an education at college. Such reasons included the desire for a break from daily routine, a wish to meet new people, and
to be part of a group. According to Farmakopoulou and Watson, these are clearly issues of social capital; however, the college structured their learning in a way that did not enhance the citizenship of these students. Instead, they were taught in segregated classes that continued to diminish their roles within the community (Farmakopoulou & Watson).

In a similar study to that of Farmakopoulou and Watson (2003), Ash et al. (1997) reported students’ attitudes towards students with disabilities in three British colleges. The study included students with both physical and intellectual disabilities. Students with ID were taught in segregated classes. The study was conducted in two parts. First, questionnaires were distributed to students that asked about friendships and contacts between disabled and non-disabled students, and invited respondents to give their views on various aspects of inclusion. Four-hundred thirty students completed the survey. The vast majority (96%) of these students reported not having an impairment. The second part of the study involved interviewing groups of students, including separate interviews with students with disabilities, to explore the distinct experiences of this group.

The authors found that 72% of questionnaire respondents considered anti-discrimination laws necessary to protect the rights of disabled persons. Yet upon interviewing a portion of those respondents, the data indicated that students without ID felt there should be separate schools for students with ID, because they required more attention from the teacher (Ash et al., 1997).

Ash et al. (1997) reported that most of the students interviewed had a conception of disability based on the medical model. These students focused on the perceived deficits of the individual and what remediation might be needed to offset their effects (Ash et al.). For example, on being asked what could be done to mitigate the effects of an
impairment, one student suggested, “Education, like at schools they have special teachers to help them” (p. 611). According to Ash et al., the results of their study revealed limited exposure both to students with disabilities and to issues about the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream college and social life. The authors also noted that non-disabled students’ overwhelming support for the principle of inclusion was tempered with qualification, especially around the inclusion of students with ID (Ash et al.).

Ash et al. (1997) reported that students with ID were educated in segregated classes and had little contact with students outside these classes. Despite this, these students were very positive about attending a mainstream college (Ash et al.). Some of the students with ID who were interviewed viewed inclusion as giving them the opportunity for a more academically challenging education, with comments such as “We didn’t learn much [in special school], we used to do little kiddies stuff. We didn’t do hard work but at college we do hard work and then we learn more” (Ash et al., p. 617). From the data collected in their interviews, the authors concluded that students with disabilities, more than non-disabled students, perceived themselves as “students first” (Ash et al.).

Unlike Farmakopoulou and Watson (2003) and Ash et al. (1997) who studied students’ perceptions at schools with segregated courses for students with ID, the following studies all examined perceptions of participants from inclusive courses.

Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006) report the impact that the experience of a truly inclusive post-secondary program can have on a student with ID, as well as on that student’s peers. They conducted a multiple perspective case study involving a young woman with Down syndrome participating in an inclusive course at an American
university. Multiple perspectives were presented so that readers could “compare, contrast, and develop meaning related to the subject and philosophies presented” (p. 345).

The focal participant, Jacqueline, was a 21 year-old woman with Down syndrome. The other members of the study included her 28 classmates, all freshmen and sophomores, enrolled in a Communications class at a private four-year university, as well as the professor. Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006) used a mixed-methods approach to collect data in this study. Qualitative data were collected through interviews with the focal participant, her classmates, and professor. Quantitative data were collected through the use of pre- and post-Likert surveys, which were distributed to the students in the class. The authors designed the surveys to solicit responses based on the students’ perspectives of having someone with ID in their class. Questions were centred on issues such as comfort levels, inclusion beliefs, and the effects of including someone with ID in the class. Although the perceptions of 28 students, along with the class professor and focal participant were collected, the scale of this study is relatively small, since all the opinions gathered were related to one instance of an inclusive post-secondary class, making it difficult to generalize the opinions expressed.

The results of the surveys indicated that the class underwent a significant change in attitude about the inclusion of someone with ID. For instance, more students disagreed with a Likert item that said, “The professor will have to give extra attention to a student with a cognitive disability which will take away time from other students in the class,” in the post-survey than the pre-survey (8.1% change, which was a significant difference). Before this experience, students surveyed believed that the inclusion of an individual with ID might negatively affect their learning experience in the course. At the end of the
course, students indicated that they did not perceive their learning experience to be negatively affected because of Jacqueline’s participation in their class. The results of the interviews also implied positive views toward the experience from the perspective of both Jacqueline and her classmates.

Moreover, Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006) found that Jacqueline enjoyed her experience. She described her classmates as friends, reported that she improved her public speaking abilities, and stated that “The class was just wonderful” (p. 347). The instructor reported that she “never had the sense that here is this kid that is taking up our time that we could be using for something else” (p. 348). Casale-Giannola and Kamens documented that Jacqueline’s classmates perceived her as just another student in their class. One student commented that “She’s pretty much the same as everyone else” (p.348). Her classmates said that Jacqueline’s presence gave the class a “deeper meaning,” and that it served as a reminder to not take going to college “for granted” (p.348).

Similar to Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006), Hamill (2003) documented the experiences of a young woman auditing two academic courses at an American university. This was accomplished through observations and interviews with various stakeholders. The focal participant was a 26 year old woman with Down syndrome named Megan. Hamill describes Megan as an outgoing person with excellent communication skills.

Megan audited two courses in the Communication Arts Department during consecutive fall semesters. The first course that she audited, Interpersonal Communication, focused on skills to develop and maintain effective interpersonal relationships. The second course, Presentational Speaking, focused on presentation skills.
Although Megan was not graded for her work, she did participate in tests and presentations.

The other participants included seven other students, and three members of the faculty/staff. Of the students, two were Megan’s study buddies—classmates who supported Megan by explaining assignments and academic concepts that Megan found difficult, sharing class notes, and encouraging Megan when she became overwhelmed or frustrated. The other student participants included three of Megan’s classmates and two acquaintances who knew Megan in campus settings outside of class. The faculty/staff participants were the professors from the two courses Megan was auditing, as well as the director of the Learning Assistance Office, who had organized Megan’s program and arranged for her to audit classes.

Hamill (2003) collected data through her observations of Megan, as well from field notes made by the study buddies, in addition to interviews of all the participants. From the data, Hamill derived four major themes: realizing the dream of going to college; having friends; negotiating the academic program; and everybody benefits.

The first theme focused on the importance of having a college experience to Megan and her family. Attending college was extremely important to Megan. On more than one occasion, she remarked, “I’m finally realizing my biggest dream...to go to college.” Megan also reported how proud she was to be in college and to be independent like her sisters.

The second theme, having friends, addressed the social aspect of Megan’s college experience. Megan developed friendships with some of her peers in her class; though she reported that students in her class did not always talk to her, particularly outside of class.
However, Megan did begin to interact with students outside of the classroom as her first semester progressed and enjoyed meeting new people in the cafeteria. She also participated in the school’s Natural Ties club, a student organization that brings peers with and without disabilities together to provide social connections.

The third theme, negotiating the academic program, concerned Megan’s interactions with the academic work. Although Megan desired to participate in the same way other students did, she occasionally had trouble comprehending specific concepts and instructional procedures in her courses. A particular challenge Megan encountered was managing the coursework. She acknowledged, “I don’t always ask the teachers. I get kinda shy. I don’t like doing it in front of everyone ‘cause they just look at me weird or funny even though I’m really good at it.” However, she did access help from her professors at other times, and worked diligently to improve her work. Hamill reported that Megan found her second course easier to manage than her first. One of Megan’s professors also reported that she struggled at times. The professor was challenged to explain written assignments to Megan, and both she and the other course professor expressed a wish for greater support from the Learning Assistance Office.

The fourth theme, everybody benefits, concerned the quality of the learning experience for all the participants. Megan said that she learned a great deal from the two courses that she took, while her classmates and professors indicated that they enjoyed the experience and found Megan inspiring. Hamill suggested that Megan’s experience in college had relevance beyond school, because she was able to take what she had learned in her Communications courses and apply it to her work as a speaker on behalf of the organization People First.
Megan wanted to do the same things she saw other people her age do, and that meant going to college. For Megan, the college experience was a symbol of her adulthood. While there were some issues with the academic component of the experience, these problems were largely allayed by the time she took her second course. This was in part due to the support she received from her study buddies and professors who, along with other students in classes, the cafeteria, and at club meetings, all contributed to Megan realizing her dream of being a college student.

Hughson et al. (2006) conducted a study of IPSE at three colleges and two universities in Alberta. They interviewed various stakeholders, including course instructors (13), students with and without ID (14 and 4, respectively), and alumni with ID (11) who had participated in IPSE programs. Data from these groups were collected by semi-structured interviews and by focus groups.

Four students without ID were interviewed. Three had been classmates of students with ID, while one had made connections with a student with ID while playing on a university sports team. These students reported a change in their perceptions about people with disabilities, and that they appreciated the friendships they made with students with ID. One of the students without ID remarked:

I have learned about pure enjoyment of life. He learns just like everybody else but he has got that positive aspect—everyone wants to be like that. Everyone strives for it and He is that guy. There has never been a negative comment about him. He is friends with everyone. (Hughson et al., 2006)

As well, 13 instructors were interviewed. The authors reported that several of the instructors commented on the positive impact on group dynamics that resulted when
students with ID were part of their classes. Instructors noted that social barriers among students dissolved more readily when a student with ID was part of a small group or classroom. Instructors also mentioned that getting to know students with diverse abilities had shifted their previously limited views about disability.

A total of 14 students with ID and 11 alumni with ID were interviewed. The benefits listed by both of these groups included meeting people and forming relationships, meaningful learning, new opportunities, personal growth, and paid employment. Both groups considered forming relationships and academic work to be the challenges of the IPSE experience. When describing the university experience, one alumnus said, “It’s a great opportunity to learn more and do something you will remember for the rest of your life” (Hughson et al., p. 36). When asked why going to university was important to her, she replied, “I learned. I’m mature. I worked hard. I had fun” (p. 36). One student said that “University made me who I am,” while another said that university “rescued me from high school” (p. 37). According to the authors, enthusiasm talking about and describing their post-secondary experiences was consistent through all interviews.

Carroll et al. (2009) studied the impact on TCs of an IPSE course that they participated in at the College of New Jersey. They interviewed 12 of the TCs who were part of the class. The class, called Great Conversations, was a non-credit course in which “typical college students,” including TCs, explored liberal arts and science topics alongside young adults with ID. The course also provided several of the participating TCs opportunities to teach individual classes. Great Conversations was part of a four-year liberal studies program, called Career and Community Studies (CCS), designed to
prepare 18 to 25 year old students with ID for adult life, including peer interaction, liberal learning, and career exploration and preparation. CCS was not originally intended to give TCs opportunities to interact with peers with ID or to develop their inclusive teaching skills. Early on, however, program planners realized the benefits in bringing these two groups together, recognizing the potential for TCs to develop dispositions and skills for teaching students with wide-ranging abilities.

Students with ID enrolled in Great Conversations included four men and two women, all with IQs of 70 or lower. TCs who participated were enrolled in both graduate and undergraduate programs. The course lasted one semester, and met for one hour and 20 minutes twice a week. The students without ID were not given instruction about disability as part of the course, or instruction on how to interact with the students with ID. They did take part in a half-hour session during which they were asked to participate in the course as learners and not to see themselves as teachers’ aides or assistants. Course instructors were given the task of teaching inclusively and making the full participation of all students in all activities a natural part of the course. The course was divided into seven 2-week modules, each of which dealt with a different academic content area, used teaching methods such as experiential learning, and small-group processing of concepts. Several of the TCs participating in the course helped develop and teach the course modules.

Typically, lessons were attended by 12 to 15 typical students alongside the six students from the CCS program. Each of the 12 TCs interviewed attended at least 10 class sessions. Carroll et al. (2009) found that every student enjoyed the experience, with most saying they loved it. One student commented that she could “actually work with
students who have a disability that I may encounter in a classroom” (p. 360). TCs who taught some of the classes saw the experience as an opportunity to apply teaching concepts they had learned.

According to the authors, each of the TCs interviewed agreed that students with ID deserved to be exposed to the liberal learning topics that were covered in the Great Conversations course, and often framed participation as a human rights issue. One TC noted that there were times when the students with ID did not understand the content that was presented, but she attributed this to the way the material was taught. While the TCs were unsure if the students with ID had mastered any material, they did feel these students would benefit from having increased general knowledge, better ability to present their own ideas, and greater skill in thinking critically about the world.

Carroll et al. (2009) found that TCs finished the course with the belief that students with ID can handle serious academic content, and indicated their own desire to teach challenging content to all their students in the future. They concluded that the TCs they interviewed expanded their sense of what can be imagined for students with significant disabilities because of their participation in the inclusive Great Conversations course.

Mosoff, Greenholtz, and Hurtado (2009) conducted a series of exploratory interviews in British Columbia with participants associated with IPSE initiatives at three post-secondary institutions. These interviews formed the first part of an ongoing three-part study being carried out to develop a comprehensive assessment protocol for IPSE. The goal of the first phase of their study was to identify themes that should be included in
an assessment. Interviews were held with 32 individuals from five groups: students with ID (8), faculty (7), inclusion staff (6), non-academic staff (3), and parents (8).

Participants with ID were auditing a variety of courses, including fine arts, psychology, political science, music, and film, among others. Throughout their study Mosoff et al. (2009) avoid the use of diagnostic labels or psychometric indices to describe participants with ID. They did this conscientiously as acknowledgement of the fact that “such categorizations have contributed to the stigmatization of people with developmental disabilities and are irrelevant to the outcomes sought by the students in this context” (p. 4). Rather, the authors use the term “developmental disability,” referring to a “wide range of labels, conditions, or diagnoses where a person has a mental impairment discerned early in life that affects cognitive functioning, generally” (p. 4).

Mosoff et al. (2009) identified five recurrent themes: confidence, student engagement, impact on the institution, individuality and choice, and authenticity, although the different groups placed differing amounts of emphasis on each of these themes. Additionally, the authors identified two overarching perspectives shared by all participant groups: one, the challenges or anxiety associated with inclusion; and two, the critical importance of appropriate support. Participants cited a need for support for the students with ID in terms of academics, social relationships, and job searching. Faculty members also said they wanted more support in the form of information, particularly information about what to expect. The most important benefit of IPSE for the students was an increase in self-esteem. Each student interviewed mentioned an increase in her or his confidence and a brighter outlook for the future. As well, students remarked on an increased confidence in the belief that they would find “good jobs” after completing their
IPSE programs. Students also commented that making friends with typical students enhanced their own social status. Some students became completely involved in their course work. Other students reported enthusiasm about their involvement in extracurricular activities. Extracurricular involvement allowed students to meet like-minded people and to engage in long-standing interests.

Swift (2001) conducted a phenomenological exploration of the university experiences of students enrolled in IPSE programs, focusing on the question: What is the student's perspective of his or her university experience while attending inclusive university classes? Nine individuals with ID, who were either current or former participants in IPSE programs in Alberta, were interviewed. Each participant was interviewed once, with interviews lasting between 45 minutes and 1.5 hours in length. Data were analyzed thematically and resulted in the identification of five emergent themes: fear and hanging on, “I can make friends, too,” the road to belonging, “I have choices,” and better hopes and dreams.

A main finding was that the informants with ID were able to give trustworthy accounts of their university experiences (Swift, 2001). Another major finding was that university appeared to serve as a transitioning environment for the informants by fostering learning, identity development, maturity, and preparing them for the adult world of work. One particular limitation noted by Swift was informants’ difficulty with memory and the concept of time. Swift recommends a series of interviews over time to resolve this problem since questions could be asked in the present tense. A second limitation was building rapport with informants, which Swift noted could also be improved by
conducting a series of interviews with informants, rather than only conducting one interview with each informant.

Chapter Summary

For students with intellectual disabilities, a post-secondary education can be a transformative experience. But this can only happen if barriers preventing access to higher education are removed. Many centres of higher learning are starting to embrace the notion of IPSE by promoting the inclusion of adults with ID in the academic, social, and recreational fabric of post-secondary institutions, as a means of meshing with Canada’s commitment to inclusion of people with ID (Ryan & Lysaght, 2007).

The review of the literature shows that individuals with ID can indeed participate in post-secondary classes and that there is a growing realization that education is a right of these individuals. The section on normalization and SRV detailed how IPSE can accord dignity to people with ID by supporting socially valued roles for people with ID.

The section on teachers and inclusion described how both TCs and in-service teachers have demonstrated a range of beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion. According to Jordan, Glenn, and McGhie-Richmond (2010), this should serve as no surprise. Teachers are expected to meet teaching quality objectives by raising class averages in student achievement, while simultaneously they are increasingly responsible for diversifying instruction to meet a range of learner needs (Jordan et al.).

The section on post-secondary institutions described benefits of IPSE to participants with and without ID. Students with ID included pride, new hopes, and opportunities for friendships. Students without ID benefited from learning to include and
engaging in natural interactions with people with ID. Faculty who participated in IPSE benefited from better planning for course instruction.

The review of the literature did not find evidence of IPSE in a one-year, after-degree Teacher Education program. Given the unique structure of the Teacher Education program and the potential benefit of exposing future teachers to learners with ID, it is clear that a multiple perspective case study of an adult with ID auditing a BEd course would add to the literature.

In the next chapter, I review the methods I employed to carry out this study.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the methodological approach used in this study. It is divided into six sections, describing the following topics: rationale for a qualitative, case study approach; research settings and setting selection; participant selection and description; data collection; data analysis; and trustworthiness, validity, and transferability of findings.

Rationale for a Qualitative Case Study

A qualitative design utilizing a multiple perspective case study was employed to describe and analyze participants’ actions, beliefs, thoughts, and perceptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). This was done in order to explore the phenomenon of interest in an in-depth manner. In particular, this method was used to describe the steps that a local community organization takes to prepare students with ID to audit inclusive university classes, as well as to describe the experiences of a student with ID, and the views of her classmates (the TCs), and the class instructor about their experience in an inclusive post-secondary class.

The strength of the case study method is its ability to examine a phenomenon in a real life context (Yin, 2006). The advantage of employing multiple perspectives within a case study is the thick description (Geertz, 1973) this approach provides. My intention was to explain not only the observed behaviour of the participants, but the context of that behaviour as well, to render it meaningful to others (Geertz). By recording the experiences of the multiple participants, as well as their perspectives, this case study research should help others to compare, contrast, and develop meaning related to the subject and views presented (Stake, 1994).
Research Settings and Setting Selection

Data were collected at two sites, the Community Adult Learning Centre (CALC) Prep (a pseudonym), and a nearby university. For purposes of anonymity, this university will only be referred to as the University. This study was conducted after receiving ethical clearance from the University’s General Research Ethics Board.

**CALC Prep**

The first half of the data collection occurred at a site named CALC Prep, a charitable, non-profit organization during the first (fall) semester. CALC Prep operates as a 10-month program for adults at least 21 years old with ID who are interested in experiencing post-secondary education. The program is housed in the lower level of a modern, multi-purpose building in the city’s downtown. This space is shared between CALC Prep and CALC Studio. CALC Studio is a year-round program that focuses more on life skills for adults with ID, using fine arts for inspiration and motivation. While both programs cater to adults with ID, CALC Prep primarily caters to those who would be considered “higher functioning.”

Each has a separate learning space, one set up as a classroom and occupied by CALC Prep, and one set up as an art studio and occupied by CALC Studio. These spaces are separated by a large sliding door. Observations were made in the CALC Prep classroom. The CALC Prep classroom has a number of rectangular tables set up for students to sit around. At the front of the room is a dry-erase board, one side wall contains the sliding door to the studio, as well as some storage shelves and cupboards. The opposite wall has several computers and chairs along it. All the computers have
internet access. Outside the two learning spaces is a hallway with hooks for students to hang up schoolbags. Opposite the learning spaces is an office space/staff room, as well as two private offices adjoining the staff room.

*Faculty of Education at the University*

The second part of data collection occurred at the Faculty of Education of a mid-sized university in Eastern Ontario. The University has two campuses: Main Campus, and West Campus. The Faculty of Education is located on West Campus. Few courses outside the Faculty of Education are offered on West Campus. The Teacher Education program at the University is an eight month, after-degree professional program (all TCs enrolled in the Education program have previously completed an undergraduate degree). The program is divided into on-campus periods and practice teaching, or practica, periods off-campus. Data collection at the Faculty of Education occurred during the winter semester. The TCs were present for the first 7 weeks of the winter semester, before leaving for a teaching practicum. However, due to schedule changes for the audited course, the focal participant was only able to attend classes during the first 6 weeks of the winter semester. Thus data collection occurred during this 6-week period.

Observations took place in the drama curriculum room and interviews were held in the graduate student conference room. The drama curriculum class is a large, carpeted black box studio. It contains a number of chairs, arranged in a circle along the walls. This allows for a large space in the centre of the room to be used for drama activities and group work. One wall has chalk boards where the course instructor, Kelly, wrote notes. During observations I sat in a corner, behind the circle of chairs, to be as unobtrusive as possible.
Interviews at the Faculty of Education took place in the graduate student conference room. The conference room is located in the graduate student lounge, in the lower level of the Education building. The lounge is accessed only by education graduate students, by way of a swipe card. The conference room is a private room with a large, oblong table and a number of chairs.

I selected the Faculty of Education as the site of this study because of a pre-existing arrangement between CALC Prep and the University. This arrangement allows students from the CALC Prep program to audit courses at the University. Students from CALC Prep are full participants in classes at the University socially, though not academically because they do not take courses for credit. The Faculty of Education, in particular, was selected due to the lack of previous research focusing on IPSE in professional, post-degree programs. As well, the nature of the Education program presents a unique opportunity. After graduating, most of the TCs go on to teach in classes that include many students with various exceptionalities.

Participants and Participant Selection

The participants in this study included students from CALC Prep, the focal participant, TCs, the instructors of the Prep program, and the instructor of the inclusive drama curriculum class. This section describes the CALC Prep students and TCs in general, and the method of selection, before describing the instructors, focal participant, and five TCs who participated in interviews.
CALC Prep Students

CALC Prep services a medium-sized city and the surrounding area. This city is the largest population centre in South East Ontario, a region where 1,982 individuals are identified as having ID (Ouellette-Kuntz, Burge, Minnes, & McDonald, 2004). All Prep participants are adults 21 years of age and older with ID who are interested in experiencing post-secondary education. According to the organization, in order to be eligible for CALC Prep, potential students were those who:

1. had the ability to function in the school setting without disruptive behaviours;
2. had medium needs;
3. had a circle of support, i.e. parents, caregivers, community;
4. were able to self-feed/toilet/medicate; and
5. had education and career aspirations.

Typically 13 students were present in the CALC Prep classes I attended, although the number of students varied between 11 and 19. Students ranged in both age and ability level. The youngest student was in his early twenties, the oldest was in her early sixties. While all students were able to communicate verbally, there was a large discrepancy in reading and writing abilities, as well as some difference in cognitive functioning.

According to information provided by CALC Prep, students had a range of diagnoses, including some with dual-diagnosis. Diagnoses included Down syndrome, Pervasive Developmental Disorder - Not Otherwise Specified, cerebral dysgenesis, obsessive compulsive disorder, and Bipolar disorder. Some students lived at home with their parent(s), while others lived in community living arrangements. Most students outwardly displayed a love of learning, and welcomed me into their community.
During two of my early visits to CALC, I was given the opportunity to speak to the class. I introduced myself and explained my study. I did this twice because a number of students were absent on my first day. I distributed letters of consent and letters of information to the students (Appendix A), and left a labelled file envelope near the front of the class. I told the students that, if they wanted to participate in my study, they could return the signed consent forms to myself, or place them in the envelope if I was not present. Since I was not present during every class, this option of returning forms to the envelope allowed students to return consent forms anonymously, so that the instructors would not know who had agreed to participate.

Teacher Candidates

The Teacher Education program attracts students from across Canada, and across different age brackets, although most students are in their early 20s. They come to the University with differing knowledge of, and experience working with, people with ID. During the winter semester, they attend several classes on different topics during two on-campus sessions, divided by an extended period of teaching practicum in schools off-campus.

The Teacher Education program has two different streams leading to qualifications to teach in Ontario, concurrent education and consecutive education. Concurrent education students take additional education courses and complete additional practica during their first four years of study, concurrently with courses toward their four-year honours undergraduate degree. In their fifth and final year, they complete their remaining Education requirements to obtain a Bachelor of Education degree. Students in the concurrent program complete a total of seven credits from the Faculty of Education,
two credits during in their first four years of study, and five credits in their fifth year. The consecutive education program is open to students who have already completed an undergraduate degree. Students in this stream earn five credits from the Faculty of Education during their one year in the Teacher Education program.

The inclusive class that I observed, drama curriculum, was a mandatory course for TCs earning qualification to teach intermediate/senior (grades 7 through 12) drama. There were 28 students enrolled in the class, 23 females and 5 males. The class met twice weekly, on Mondays in the morning and on Thursdays in the afternoon. At the beginning of the first class that I observed, I introduced myself and my study. I placed a number of letters of consent and letters of information on a table, along with an envelope for signed consent forms. Similar to the students at CALC—and for the same reason—the TCs had the option of giving consent forms either directly to me or placing them in the envelope, which remained in the class for 1 week.

CALC Instructors – Amanda and Michelle

Two instructors taught at CALC Prep, Amanda and Michelle (pseudonyms). Amanda had taught in the CALC Prep program for three years. She had completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts before completing a one-year Education program in the intermediate/senior stream in Ontario. In addition, she has completed Special Education, Part One, a 3-week course, as an additional qualification course.

This was Michelle’s first year teaching at CALC. Prior to joining the staff at CALC, Michelle had completed a Bachelor of Science and a two year Bachelor of Education in the primary/junior stream, both in British Columbia. Michelle reported having limited experience working with individuals with ID before working at CALC.
Drama Curriculum Instructor – Kelly

During the second semester, the drama curriculum class was taught by Kelly, a second year PhD candidate in Curriculum Studies. Kelly completed her undergraduate degree in drama and English in Ontario before pursuing an MA in theatre in Alberta. After working in theatre, she completed a one-year Teacher Education program in Ontario, qualifying her to teach at the secondary level. She has also completed Special Education, Part 1, as an additional qualification course. She has taught at the secondary level for five years.

Kelly’s prior experience with individuals with ID includes work in schools as a teacher and in her home, as her younger brother has an ID. Additionally, in her first year in the PhD program, Kelly was a teaching assistant for the drama curriculum course. That year the course was audited by another student with ID from CALC Prep. Kelly considered it an enriching experience for the TCs and cited it as one of the reasons, in addition to her other experiences, that made her open to the idea of teaching an inclusive drama curriculum course.

The Focal Participant – Laura

The focal participant, Laura, was a 26 year old student from CALC Prep. In addition to having an intellectual disability, Laura also has a seizure disorder. Since the age of 18, she has lived in a homeshare. She visits her mother, who lives in a different community, about once a month. Laura graduated from a special education secondary school program in 2004. She reported having difficulty finding employment since then. She is an outgoing person, with what can be described as a bubbly personality. This was
Laura’s second year at CALC Prep, and her second time auditing a course at the University. In the preceding year, she audited a music curriculum class in the Teacher Education program. I asked Laura to be my focal participant based on the rapport that we shared. She always seemed happy to see me and, when I approached her about being my focal participant, she was genuinely excited.

TC Interview Participants

I interviewed five TCs from the drama curriculum class: Candice, Norah, Beverly, Olivia, and Stephanie (all pseudonyms). Of these TCs, Candice, Beverly, and Stephanie were part of the same class work group as was Laura. As well, Stephanie was one of Laura’s two “buddies”—students who volunteered to help Laura with course work and note taking. I chose the TC interview participants by convenience sampling. While this type of sampling facilitated the research, I note that the findings from these interviews will not be generalizable beyond those TCs with similar characteristics. Therefore, I will describe the TCs to show the extent to which their characteristics reflect those of BEd students in general (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006)

Candice was in the final year of the concurrent education program. In each of her practica, she worked with students with exceptionalities. Also, as a swimming instructor, she had worked with children with exceptionalities. These experiences have included working with students and children with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), autism spectrum disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and giftedness, among others. At the time of my interviews with Candice, she was acting as a tutor for a university student with a processing disorder. As well, she had already had some experience with IPSE.
During her honours degree Candice was enrolled in an inclusive dramatic arts acting class that included other students from CALC.

Norah was enrolled in the consecutive program, and had completed her honours degree at a different university in Ontario. After completing her honour’s degree Norah taught English for a brief time in Korea before returning to Ontario for her Education degree. Norah had limited experience working with individuals with exceptionalities, although she noted that, when she was younger, she had a friend who had an ID.

Beverly completed her honours degree at the University, prior to entering the consecutive education program. She reported having little prior experience with individuals with ID, apart from some integration in high school physical education classes.

Olivia was in final year of the concurrent program. While completing her honours degree, Olivia spent two of her summer breaks working at a summer camp operated by a school board in the Toronto area. Her job entailed working specifically with children with exceptionalities, such as FASD and Down syndrome. As well, one of Olivia’s practica was in a Grade 9 classroom that used a locally developed curriculum with a focus on basic skills for reading and writing.

Stephanie was also in her final year of the concurrent education program. Stephanie had prior experience working with children with exceptionalities, first as a babysitter, and later as a camp counsellor. As a babysitter she worked for a family who had a child with Down syndrome. As a camp counsellor she worked for the city of Toronto integrating children with exceptionalities into camp activities by adapting activities to make them more accessible.
Data Collection

I collected data in the form of observations, which took place at both CALC and the University, and interviews, which were conducted at the University only. Each type of data collection is described below.

Observations at CALC

I observed the CALC Prep program at the CALC School during the fall term. Observations allowed me to answer the first research question: What steps does a local IPSE preparation program take in order to prepare its students for auditing inclusive post-secondary classes? Emphasis was placed on attending classes of CALC Prep that were useful in describing the unique features of this program as it prepared students with ID for post-secondary education (Stake, 1995). By observing these classes, I believe that I am better able to understand the complexities of the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2002). Repeated contacts with the participants of CALC Prep also allowed me to build rapport with potential focal participants. I describe below the time that I spent at CALC Prep observing and interviewing participants.

I conducted observations at times that were convenient to the CALC Prep instructors. My observations started on September 29th. I typically attended classes 3 days a week, 3 hours at a time: Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the morning, and Thursdays in the afternoon. However, once I felt my data were at saturation, I reduced the number of visits. In total, I spent approximately 80 hours at CALC during the fall term. Visits most often occurred during DEAR time (drop everything and read), novel study, dance, math, music, and lunch.
Initially my intention was to sit off to the side, observing and taking notes without interfering or becoming involved in the dynamics of the classroom. This soon proved to be impossible, and I quickly took on the role of a classroom volunteer. During class discussions, I would often sit off to the side; however, during work periods, I would circulate amongst the students, answering questions. This contact proved to be beneficial, because it allowed me to continue to build rapport with the students.

My role in the classroom did not prevent me from taking notes of my observations. Throughout my time at CALC, I recorded field notes containing descriptive notes of my observations. As well, clearly separated from the descriptive notes, I included reflective notes on my thoughts and impressions of what I was observing. These field notes form the written account of what I saw, heard, experienced, and thought in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Observations at the University

The second research question was: How does Laura interact with the TCs and Kelly, and how do the TCs and Kelly interact with Laura? I answered this question during the first 6 weeks of the winter term, while Laura was auditing the drama curriculum class. I observed one class a week, for a total of approximately 11 hours. In an effort to mitigate any Hawthorne effect (Miller & Salkind, 2002), I chose not to participate in classroom activities or interrupt the social interactions in the classes. I sat in a corner of the room, behind the circle of chairs, where I would have a clear view of Laura. From there, I made observations of Laura’s interactions with the TCs and with the class instructor. Observations allowed me to record behaviour in field notes as it occurred naturally in the classroom (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Continuous observation was
used to describe the behaviour of the focal participant, with the aim of developing a portrait of the interactions involving the focal participant. I focused on the nature of the interactions between Laura and her classmates and instructor, and on who initiated these interactions. I also paid attention to the quality of the interactions, and their evolution over the 6-week period, to see if there was a noticeable change.

*Interviews with Laura*

Laura was interviewed as a means of understanding IPSE from her perspective (Patton, 2002). I used open-ended questions to be better able to understand and capture her point of view without predetermining her responses through prior selection of questionnaire categories (Patton).

I interviewed Laura three times over the 6-week period she was present during the first on-campus session in the winter term: at the beginning, middle, and end. This allowed me to phrase most questions in the present tense, and mitigated some potential problems associated with memory. As well, multiple interviews allowed me to build rapport with Laura. Such rapport is purported to be one way of reducing recall error (Matthews & Saywitz, 1992) and anxiety levels (Beyer, 2008) to increase reliability. Each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes. I conducted interviews in the graduate student conference room described above. This location was selected for its privacy and lack of distractions.

Delayed cognitive, social, and emotional skills can present additional challenges when interviewing persons with ID that may not be faced when interviewing non-ID populations (Ballard & Austin, 1999). These challenges can include the participant’s ability to recall important information, as well as their anxiety level (Ballard & Austin).
Therefore, I paid particular attention to the nature of the intellectual disability in order to prepare the interview environment and questions, with emphasis on prefatory statements and probes to facilitate depth of response.

Moreover, I followed Finlay and Lyons’ (2001) specific suggestions in order to improve reliability when interviewing individuals with ID. Several of those suggestions that I used include:

1. using significant events as markers for time questions;
2. avoiding adding *no* and *not* to positive phrasings, instead using negative forms of words;
3. including *don’t know* response options; and
4. stressing that information will not be shared with caregivers.

Milne (1999) also offered suggestions that I followed to improve reliability when interviewing Laura, including:

1. slowing the pace of conversation;
2. offering regular breaks during the interview;
3. explicitly asking for full details;
4. removing distractions from the interview location; and
5. asking the interviewee to repeat in their own words what they are asked to ensure that they understand.

As well, Milne reports that general questions elicited better responses than either free recall or specific questions. The responses to general questions had the best blend of completeness and accuracy. Therefore, to increase reliability, I asked general questions when interviewing the focal participant. Questions that fit these criteria from Swift
(2001), Hamill (2003) and Mosoff et al. (2009) were used. Since Swift, Hamill, and
Mosoff et al. had already used these questions successfully, they can be considered to
have a measure of validity (because of the heterogeneity among people with ID, full
validity cannot be assumed before the interviews). Examples of questions from Swift that
I used include:

1. How does being a student here at the University make you feel?
2. Tell me about new people you have met since coming to the University.

In order to alleviate any anxiety, prior to each interview, I reminded Laura that
any question she did not want to answer she did not have to, and that her real name would
not be used, so no one would know what she had said.

*Interviews with the TCs and Kelly*

I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews to answer the third and fourth
research questions: What do Laura, the TCs, and Kelly perceive to be the challenges and
benefits of this experience, and how can the experience be improved from their different
perspectives? How does this experience affect the TCs’ visions of inclusive education? I
chose this approach because a semi-structured method would allow me the flexibility to
raise new questions in response to what an interviewee might say.

I conducted one-on-one in-depth interviews with the five TCs described above, as
was done by Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006), using an interview guide to ensure
that similar questions were used with each interviewee (Patton, 2002). Using a different
set of questions, I also interviewed the class instructor. Five TCs was thought to be a
satisfactory number given the time constraints of collecting data over 6 weeks of one
term. I conducted interviews with the TCs and instructor at two times over the course of
the first 6 weeks of the winter term, near the onset of the term, and at the end of the 6-week period. These particular times were chosen because they allowed me to record changes in the TCs’ beliefs as the term progressed. Each interview lasted approximately 15–20 minutes. Each interview was conducted in the graduate student conference room. The questions used were intended to answer the research questions. For example, Has this experience made you think differently about Special Education? The design of the questions was influenced by numerous sources, particularly Mosoff et al. (2009), and Hamill (2003). For a list of interview questions, see Appendix B. Just as I had done at CALC, prior to commencing each interview, I reminded the interviewee that anonymity would be protected, and that they could choose to not answer any question.

Data Analysis

This section details how the data from this study were analyzed. It is divided into three sections: one, reflexivity; two, analysis of observations and interviews; and three, trustworthiness, validity, and transferability.

Reflexivity

The intention of a reflexive stance is not only to enlighten the researcher’s audience as to the researcher’s own perspectives, but also to remind the researcher to be attentive to and conscious of the origins of one’s own perspective and voice (Patton, 2002). This results in the researcher acknowledging the role of place and biography within his work (MacBeth, 2001).

Patton (2002) identifies a number of questions that an inquirer will find useful when practicing reflexivity. Among those questions are: How do I perceive those being
inquired about? What shapes and has shaped their worldview? What shapes and has shaped my perspectives? Patton also includes a number of screens to keep in mind when practicing reflexivity, including culture, age, gender, class, and education. Furthermore, Patton recommends that, when practicing reflexivity in written work, the researcher employ an active voice to communicate her or his self-aware role in the inquiry.

Prior to analyzing data, it was important for me to identify any preconceived ideas or notions that I had about IPSE. This was paramount, since I desired to uncover the experience and meaning of this phenomenon from the perspectives of my participants. To this end, I engaged in a reflexive stance before, during, and after data collection as a means of acknowledging my personal biases in an effort to keep them separate from the data. For example, by acknowledging my personal experiences working with individuals with ID, I realized I expected to hear glowing reviews of IPSE from the TCs. By confronting this bias, I was able to separate it from my data. I believe that this facilitated a more critical examination of the data, allowing me to recognize some of the problems that arose in this instance of IPSE.

Analysis of Observations and Interviews

I analyzed data from both observations and interviews as a means of data reduction and sense-making (Patton, 2002). This was done to identify the core consistencies across the data (Patton). From the patterns that I found, themes emerged. An inductive, open coding, approach was used early in the analysis. Eventually data analysis became more deductive, as the data became saturated. However, I remained vigilant to possible anomalous behaviours (outliers) that did not fit with preliminary conclusions, rather than excluding them as aberrant (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002).
I carried out the analysis of my observation data using photocopies of the original field notes. This was done in order to maintain the integrity of the raw data. Analysis proceeded by my writing codes in ledgers. I then arranged the coded data visually to allow for comparisons and to answer the specific research questions.

I had digitally voice-recorded all interviews to ensure accurate, verbatim transcription and reporting of participants’ views. The interview transcripts were then coded using the qualitative research program ATLAS.ti. This allowed me to arrange the interview data by theme, in order to answer the specific research questions. I identified significant statements from each individual’s transcripts that captured the meaning of the phenomenon and the beliefs of that participant. I combined overlapping and redundant significant statements into a small number of themes that described the meaning of the experience for the individual (Miller & Salkind, 2002). As a form of member checking, I gave transcripts to interview participants for review and asked them to suggest any changes or clarifications of their statements. None of the participants asked that any changes be made.

**Trustworthiness, Validity, and Transferability**

In an effort to increase external validity of the results, I triangulated the data. Having data from my observations, as well as from multiple interview participants, ensured that multiple perspectives could be drawn from in order to answer the research questions. I sought regularities in the data by comparing the findings of the field observations and coded interviews. As well, as a means of enhancing the trustworthiness of the data, I asked faculty members with comprehensive experience studying inclusive settings to review the results of the data analyses. Furthermore, I aimed to establish
credibility by the constant practice of reflexivity, which included being transparent about my possible biases, to transcend subjectivity and thus gain accuracy in reporting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

By their very nature, case studies provide little population external validity. The findings gathered by the interviews and observations in this study came from one inclusive class, with only one focal participant. Added to this is the fact that ID is complex and varied. Indeed, two people with the same ID can be very different, and such differences can be even more pronounced between people with different ID. Therefore I strived to describe the context of this study in detail so that other researchers can compare the fittingness, or degree of similarity, between it and other cases of IPSE, to decide its relative transferability (Patton, 2002). It has been my aim to explain not only the observed behaviour of the participants, but the context of that behaviour as well, to render it meaningful to others, so that what is gained is a thick understanding (Geertz, 1973). Therefore I hope that any findings that emerge from this study can be used to make comparisons and contrasts with other IPSE case studies, and with knowledge and best practices produced by the preponderance of evidence found in these separate case studies.

Chapter Summary

I collected data at CALC Prep through observations. At the University, I collected data from observations and interviews. Interview participants included the focal participant, five TCs, and the drama curriculum instructor. Themes emerged from patterns in the data. I increased the validity of this study by the use of triangulation. I enhanced trustworthiness by having faculty members from the University review the
results of the data, and I described the participants and context of this study in detail so that other researchers can determine its relative transferability.

In the next chapter, I report the findings that this method of data collection and analysis produced.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents data collected from CALC Prep and the drama curriculum class in two sections. The first section focuses on answering the first research question on what a local IPSE preparation program does to prepare its students for inclusive post-secondary classes. This description of how CALC Prep prepares students for IPSE is based on an analysis of observations and CALC Prep documents. The second section focuses on the remaining research questions and is based on an analysis of observations and interview data. The second section describes Laura’s interactions with her classmates and course instructor, the participants’ perceptions of the challenges of the experience, Laura’s perceptions of the benefits of the experience, and the professional and personal benefits of the experience for the instructor and the TCs.

CALC Prep

This section gives a brief overview of CALC Prep. After having made my observations at both CALC Prep and in the drama curriculum class, I paid particular attention to describing the aspects of the CALC Prep experience that my analysis suggested most prepared its students to audit university courses. These include familiarizing students with the University, and self-awareness, self-expression, and literacy components of the curriculum.
Overview of CALC Prep

CALC Prep was established with the goal of helping adults with ID pursue meaningful opportunities, particularly IPSE. As space is limited by the number of teachers, prospective students must apply to the program. The application is used to learn about prospective students’ interests, desire to learn, and willingness to make a commitment to the program. Funding for CALC comes from a combination of public sector grants, the sale of artwork produced by the students, and tuition fees. The tuition fee for students is $45/day when they are in attendance. Some students are eligible to have this fee covered through government financial aid supports. This fee is waived for students who cannot afford to pay tuition.

According to school documents, by the end of the four month program, students will have focused on learning goals, personal interests, and effective adaptations and learning strategies. In many ways, CALC Prep is similar to any public school. Throughout my observations, there was a noticeable regularity and cyclical nature to the school week. Such predictability facilitated smooth transitions from one activity to the next.

The Prep program starts in September, and runs 3 days a week (Tuesday-Thursday) until winter break in December. In the year that I made my observations, classes started on September 8 and continued until December 17. After the winter break, students began auditing university courses. This aligned with the start of the University’s winter term. Prep classes continue to run throughout the winter term for students who do not audit courses at the University and to supplement what the students are doing at the University.
Prior to the winter term, prospective professors and instructors at the University are contacted to see if they would be interested in allowing a student from CALC Prep to audit their class. Effort is made to find CALC students a university class that aligns with their personal interests. Because of the pre-existing agreement between the University and CALC, students from the Prep program do not have to pay to audit these university courses.

While at CALC Prep, students had the opportunity to interact with members of the community, including members of the artistic community and University community. Members of the artistic community interacted with the students during dance and music. Most Wednesday mornings, the students walked to a nearby community centre for dance class. The class was taught by a dance instructor and two assistants. Dance allowed for naturalistic interactions between students and volunteers. Members of the University community included students on placement for their academic programs, as well as volunteers. Placements that I witnessed included students from physical and health education, nursing, and college child and youth worker and behavioural science worker programs. Additionally, occupational therapy, physical therapy, education, and business students have completed placements at CALC in the past.

Daily Structure

My observations at CALC Prep showed a typical day there would begin with students starting to arrive around 8:30 a.m. Class would begin at 9 a.m., with a short snack break at 10 a.m. and an hour-long lunch break starting at 11:30 a.m. Morning and afternoon activities would depend on the day of the week. For example, Wednesday mornings were most often filled with dance class, while Tuesday mornings often
involved communication skills, and Thursday mornings often directly related to the University, such as field trips to the University’s campuses.

Before lunch, students in CALC Prep and CALC Studio often combined for music. The classes would learn new songs, or sing old favourites. Some of the songs the students learned were performed at a public auction fundraiser. The auction was the fall marquee event for CALC. Performing can be seen as a form of advocacy as it shows the public the abilities of the students.

Lunch at CALC was an unstructured time that allowed students to interact with one another and organize their own activities. Due to its hour-long length, lunch time allowed for the most interaction. Often, the door was opened between the Prep and Studio rooms, and the students from the two would mingle. The unstructured nature allowed for naturalistic interactions. Many of the Prep students, after finishing their lunches, would play very lively games of Uno together. After participating in one of these games, I recorded in my field notes that the disabilities that students at Prep experienced did not extend into all areas of their lives. This was when the bonds of friendship between students were most apparent. Lunch was often followed by literacy activities. A description of these activities follows.

Curriculum at CALC Prep

The aspects of the curriculum that emerged from my analyses as most useful for students preparing to audit courses at the University were lessons that familiarized the students with the University and lessons that incorporated self-awareness, self-expression, and literacy. Thursday mornings were often devoted to familiarizing the Prep students with the University. This included lessons at Prep and field trips to the
University. For example, one lesson included finding specific buildings on a campus map. Students would then look up the service offered in that building, write a small report on it, and present it to the other students. Learning about where to find buildings on the two campuses from a map may not have been useful in itself; I do not think a map provides a realistic representation of the campuses. However, this lesson gave students an impression of the large number of buildings at the University, as well as the various services offered. This was augmented by guest speakers from services such as Career Services, who gave the students a more thorough description of the services offered at the University.

Students also had the opportunity to visit both campuses of the University on multiple occasions. This was perhaps the most useful way of familiarizing the students with the University. By visiting the campuses, the Prep students had the opportunity to experience first-hand the sights and sounds of the University, which cannot be replicated through maps or guest speakers. It allowed the students to understand the scope and pace of life on campus. For many of the students, who had never audited a course at the University, visiting the campuses was a new experience. The size and number of people would be daunting for most people unaccustomed to university life. Thus experiencing the campus in small doses, with one of the Prep instructors, Amanda or Michelle, to guide them, made these field trips purposeful, understandable, and enjoyable for the students. This would help alleviate anxiety for those who would be auditing courses for the first time. Some of the locations that the Prep students visited included the cafeteria, the Women’s Centre, and one of the libraries. Students also used public transit between CALC Prep and the campuses, which helped familiarize the students with the different
bus stops they would need to use when auditing courses. Importantly, students were also
given the opportunity to meet their university instructors prior to joining their university
class at the beginning of the winter term. This would not only help alleviate anxiety on
the part of the student, but also for the instructor. Such a meeting would help the
instructor to gauge the academic and communicative abilities of the Prep student joining
her class.

Self-awareness was directly incorporated into the curriculum. Lessons on self-
awareness involved class discussions, role playing, and worksheets. Topics covered
included role playing body language and making good first impressions, and discussions
on recognising emotions in others and feelings associated with being powerful or
powerless in social situations. These lessons gave the Prep students the opportunity to
recognize and practice the sort of social behaviour they would encounter, and be expected
to reciprocate at the University.

Self-expression was indirectly incorporated into the curriculum through dance and
music. Dance class often reinforced themes covered during self-awareness lessons, such
as proper posture. However, along with music, it also provided the students with a
creative outlet that allowed them to become comfortable being expressive in front of
others. Feeling comfortable expressing oneself is an important quality for university
students, especially in courses that promote student participation.

Literacy incorporated various skill building activities, such as novel study and
Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) time. During novel study, Michelle read aloud from
the story, *Number the Stars*, while the students silently read along in their copies of the
story to improve literacy skills. This novel was chosen for its mature theme, as well as
because it was written at a level accessible for most of the students. After each chapter, students would be given worksheets to complete. During DEAR time, students were given the freedom to read any print text they wanted. Among other things, students chose to read newspapers, novels, and children’s books. This activity also focused on improving literacy skills, while allowing students to exercise choice. DEAR time and novel study supported the development of students’ reading and writing skills, while the worksheets that the students completed helped build recall skills and summarizing skills. Much of the learning that occurs at university is through reading of texts, such as board notes, lecture notes, and textbooks, so these particular skills are valuable in promoting student success.

Interview and Observation Findings at the University

The second through fourth research questions were answered through an analysis of interview data and observations of the inclusive drama curriculum class. Interview data consisted of the focal participant, Laura; the five TCs, Candice, Norah, Beverly, Olivia, and Stephanie; and the course instructor, Kelly. The research questions were: (2), how does Laura interact with the TCs and Kelly, and how do the TCs and Kelly interact with Laura? (3), what do Laura, the TCs, and Kelly perceive to be the challenges and benefits of this experience, and how can the experience be improved from their different perspectives? and (4), how does this experience affect the TCs’ visions of inclusive education? Themes and sub-themes that developed from these data can be seen in Table 1.

Data concerning the second research question focused on the theme of interactions. Data concerning the third research question yielded two themes, the challenges and benefits for Laura. One theme focussed on the difficulties that the TCs
and Kelly experienced. The other theme examined the benefits for Laura from the interview data I collected from her. While there was some difference in the intensity of responses concerning the third research question, often due to the extent of the interviewees’ interactions with Laura, overall there was a great deal of agreement on the nature of the IPSE experience. The data relating to the fourth research question resulted in one theme, mutual benefits. This theme focused on the benefits the TCs and Kelly derived from the experience of having Laura included in their class.

**Table 1 Themes with sub-themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactions</td>
<td>• Changes in Laura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• From stranger to classmate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The challenges</td>
<td>• Lack of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is this the right fit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Additional challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits for Laura</td>
<td>• Learning about self and being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Having responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learning and experiencing new things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Being social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual benefits</td>
<td>• Professional benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Personal benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interactions

One of the main reasons behind IPSE is the opportunity for adults with ID to interact with their same-age peers in a meaningful way. Several of the interview questions were designed to solicit the perceptions of the participants on the nature of their interaction with Laura. As well, during my observations of the drama class, I paid particular attention to Laura’s interactions with others.

Changes in Laura. As the 6 weeks of the study period progressed, participants noticed changes in Laura. Among these changes was her increasing comfort level in the classroom. In the first round of interviews, Candice and Olivia reported that Laura seemed particularly comfortable working in small groups. However, they both mentioned that Laura was hesitant when in large groups. They each cited a different example of a time when Laura did not want to be part of large group activity, even when offered help.

In the second round of interviews, all five of the TCs, as well as Kelly, commented on positive changes in Laura that indicated she had become more comfortable in the drama curriculum class. This was something that I, too, had noticed. Beverly, for example, remarked that Laura had become “a lot more comfortable with other members of the class” (B., int. 2) (Interview data are cited: first initial of interviewee, followed by the interview number). She cited Laura sitting and working with more of her classmates than at the beginning of the semester. Stephanie said that there seemed to be more exchanges between Laura and the other TCs. Norah remarked that Laura had become more vocal in the class, and was more likely to ask questions. Candice reported that Laura seemed more comfortable going to class on her own, and that she seemed more comfortable in groups of different sizes. Candice said that Laura had
become more independent and outgoing, and that she “knows she’s meant to be here” (C., int. 2). However, Candice reported that Laura was still hesitant to participate when put on the spot. Olivia felt that Laura was still “a little shy,” but more outgoing and comfortable with the class (O., int. 2). Olivia indicated that, “day by day she’s progressing and she’s becoming more comfortable in the classroom” (O., int. 2). Kelly commented on Laura’s increasing confidence in the classroom and on the fact that she was talking to more people than at the beginning of the semester.

By the end of her fourth week in the drama curriculum class, I observed Laura having impromptu conversations with classmates and reported that she addressed classmates by name. I also noted how comfortable she seemed in the class. For instance, just before the start of one class, I observed “Laura sits with Stephanie, they talk. Candice joins the class and Laura starts talking to her. Beverly enters the class, Laura says, ‘Hi, Beverly.’ Beverly says, ‘Hi Laura.’” My interpretation of this was “Laura has learned names and seems comfortable in the class” (FN., 28/1/10) (Field notes are cited: FN for field notes, followed by the date of entry in the field notes). This increasing comfort with the class was mirrored in the TCs’ increasing comfort with Laura, which leads to the next theme.

*From stranger to classmate.* When Laura joined the drama curriculum class at the beginning of the winter semester, the class had already been in progress since September. This meant that Laura was a stranger joining a group of students who already knew each other. In order for Laura to have peer-based, meaningful interactions, she would have to transition from being a stranger to being a classmate. In my first interview with her, Beverly touched on this when she said:
One thing I found interesting in the first class was that all of us knew each other already except for Laura, so that was kind of strange having her come in for the second part of the class because there had already been sort of relationships established between the people in the class. (B., int. 1)

One of the objectives of my observations was to see if Laura could successfully transition from being a stranger in the classroom to being seen and treated as a classmate by her peers in the drama curriculum class. I did, in fact, observe this transition, which was corroborated by statements made by Kelly and each of the TCs in the second round of interviews. In one particular class, at the end of the fourth week of the semester, Laura was working in a small group. Some of the members of her group had to leave; eventually Laura was left to work with only one other person, who was not one of her buddies. This did not seem to disturb her, and she continued discussing things with her group mate. My interpretation of this event was that Laura “is interacting more with people who are not in her usual group. Her classmates seem very comfortable working with [her]. She is becoming a classmate” (FN., 28/1/10). Later during the same class, Laura began interacting with a group of female students, asking them questions and discussing a movie that was showing in theatres. I believe that this was another example of Laura’s transition to being a classmate because she was interacting, with other females in her age group, beyond the academic topic and beyond pleasantries; rather, she was engaged in a conversation typical for her age group, in which she was treated as an equal.

Kelly said that, as the TCs in the class came to know Laura better, they became more comfortable with her. This was reiterated by the TCs. Norah, for example, reported that “I find that people are just treating her as anybody else more so than maybe being
more of a helper to her” (N., int. 2). Candice stated that when Laura joined the class, the TCs were very conscious of her presence, but by the end of the first 6 weeks, people had stopped thinking about it. Olivia commented that the TCs and Laura had grown comfortable with each other and that “she’s become more a part of the class” (O., int. 2). Similarly, Beverly reported that in the beginning the TCs wanted to ensure that Laura was okay, but by the end of the 6-week period she was treated like anybody else in the class. Stephanie felt that Laura was no longer viewed as “the new girl,” and that she and the TCs were “becoming friends” (S., int 2). She went on to say that she thought that Laura had become a member of the class, and not just of the course.

Importantly, although Laura engaged in conversations typical of her age group and was increasingly seen as a peer within the drama curriculum class, the TCs still communicated with her in ways that enabled Laura to understand them. This was explicitly reported by Candice in her second interview, when she said that she still thought more, when Laura was present, about how to make sure that everyone “knew what was going on” (C., int 2). I believe that the TCs treating Laura as a peer but communicating in a manner that she would be able to understand is an example of effective inclusion.

The Challenges

Although the TCs and Kelly were genuinely open to the idea of an inclusive class, the experience was not without its challenges. Some of these challenges appeared before Laura joined the drama class and were present throughout the entire study period.

Lack of information. In the first set of interviews, three of the TCs communicated to me that they wished they had been given more information about Laura and about her
learning expectations in the drama curriculum class. In the first round of interviews, Candice, for instance, said that she wondered how the class was supposed to “tailor things to include” Laura, given that Laura “was not coming from the same background at all” as the TCs (C., int. 1). She also wanted to know what Laura’s expectations were in the drama curriculum class. Stephanie reported that the TCs were unsure of why Laura was in a curriculum class, saying, “We don’t know what her purpose is in the class; my understanding is that Laura thinks we’re in a drama class, not a drama curriculum class” (S., int. 1). Stephanie, speaking as Laura’s buddy, also felt that she didn’t know enough about Laura to be able to help her. She said that it was hard being Laura’s buddy when she did not know what Laura was supposed to take away from the experience. Norah stated that when she first learned a student with ID would be joining the class, she wanted to know what kind of ID the student had. Since different IDs have different behavioural phenotypes (Hodapp & Dykens, 2007), it is understandable that the TCs would want to know what ID their new classmate has, as this might help them to prepare proactively for an inclusive environment.

In the second round of interviews, Norah still reported that having more information on the nature of Laura’s ID would be helpful. As she put it:

I think having an understanding of what she’s capable of and the intellectual disability that she has, I think would be beneficial to students that are in a classroom with her so they can gauge what things they can and can’t do or what things they [can] expect of her. (N., int. 2)

However, Norah did note that Laura may have wanted “to be treated like everybody else,” and therefore may have wanted this information to be kept private (N., int. 2). In
the second round of interviews, Beverly also reported a lack of information. Similar to Candice, she mentioned that she was not sure what Laura’s expectations were and what Laura was supposed to be learning from being in the drama curriculum class.

*Is this the right fit?* In my first set of interviews, three of the TCs, as well as Kelly, made reference to the fact that, because Laura was not actually a Teacher Education student, she might have a difficult time connecting with the TCs and the curriculum. In my first interview with her, Kelly reported a concern that Laura might have a difficult time integrating socially with her classmates. She pointed out that the TCs had bonded since September and that it would be difficult for anyone to join a class after an entire semester had passed. She also noted that Laura would not be participating in any practicum, saying:

> I think the fact that she won’t be doing a teaching practicum might be a little bit of a barrier, too...in terms of bonding experiences....What happens out on practicum is huge in terms of the class’s shared identity or sense of purpose...and unfortunately, there’s no way to really replicate those experiences for her. (K., int. 1)

Beverly raised a similar point. She reported that Laura was not as socially integrated as she could be due to the TCs bonding over the previous semester, as well as the fact that the TCs spent the whole school week together, while Laura was only present for two classes each week. I also made a note on Laura’s social integration. Just before my third observation of the drama curriculum class, I encountered Laura outside the classroom. She informed me that she had missed the Monday class that week because it was cancelled due to a special presentation for all the TCs. My interpretation was that even
when the TCs are on campus, there are many interruptions that can result in fewer classes. I wondered whether the amount of time Laura would be spending with the TCs provided enough social interaction to be of benefit for her.

Beverly also commented on the disconnect Laura experienced with the curriculum. She reported that Laura refrained from participating in the academic class discussions. In Beverly’s opinion, participating in these discussions would be difficult regardless of whether one has ID or not, because participating in such discussions requires experience in teaching. Beverly also made reference to a particular group assignment on unit planning. She and Laura belonged to the same group, and she felt that Laura was not benefiting from this assignment since it was not relevant to a person without a practicum experience. As well, Beverly was concerned that Laura was encountering difficulty during group assignments because of the common vocabulary surrounding pedagogy that the TCs employed as a result of their common experiences in the Teacher Education program. She felt some of the language used was beyond Laura’s comprehension, which contributed to Laura’s difficulty participating in group assignments.

Candice reiterated Beverly’s concern about the academic work being so reliant on having experience in a teaching practicum. Candice also questioned whether Laura was engaged during discussions of practicum and curricula. Her feeling was that Laura was not engaged at these times. This was a concern that I reported during my observations of the class. During Laura’s first class, I recorded in my field notes, “Class discusses rubrics. Laura listens to the other students. Laura starts going through her things, taking things out of her bag” (FN., 7/1/10). This apparent loss of interest in the topic under
discussion led me to speculate that “Perhaps she is bored; the topic is not one that she would be familiar with since she has not been on practicum” (FN., 7/1/10). I made similar comments during subsequent classes. My observations tend to corroborate Candice’s suspicion that during times when discussions focussed on pedagogy, Laura was not engaged as the discussion was beyond her experiences.

Candice and Stephanie both raised the concern that they were in a drama curriculum class, not a drama class. Stephanie felt that Laura was not made aware of this distinction, while Candice reported:

> It’s not a drama class, it’s a curriculum class, and it’s not very practical and so much of what we’re talking about is based on our experiences as teacher candidates in practicum...it’s not like in an acting class, [where] so much of what you’re doing is physical or you’re working in groups and you’re being an audience member and you’re watching. (C., int. 1)

The TCs’ comments seemed to underscore a sentiment that perhaps the Teacher Education program would not provide Laura with the same opportunities to connect and participate as an undergraduate drama course would.

In the second round of interviews, Kelly and Beverly still alluded to not being sure if the drama curriculum class was the right fit for Laura. As well, in her second interview Olivia raised concerns about the compatibility of the Teacher Education program with the goal of providing Laura with an experience she would find meaningful. Kelly expressed a concern that she could not make the theory aspect of the course relevant to Laura because it pertained to teaching, and Laura was not going to go on a practicum or become a teacher. She felt that attempting to make the theory
comprehensible to Laura would require her to present concepts to the TCs in too basic a fashion, which would be inappropriate given that the TCs have already graduated with a bachelor’s degree. I think that Kelly’s feelings can best be summarized in her statement that “the reality of it is it is a BEd program, and they’re here for teaching, and not just drama” (K., int. 2).

This incongruence between the needs of the TCs and creating a curriculum that is accessible for Laura was also reported by Beverly, who said:

Last class we spent an hour discussing everyone’s practicum experience and [Laura] didn’t participate in that because she didn’t do a practicum, and it didn’t feel like she felt comfortable commenting on the discussion at all...I don’t think it was completely boring for her, but I don’t think it’s necessarily the most valuable use of her time. So, I don’t know, I think it’s hard for Kelly to balance that. (B., int. 2)

In addition to raising a concern with the academic fit, Beverly also made reference to the social fit in her second interview. She mentioned how, after returning from a practicum, TCs would ask each other about their teaching experiences. She pointed out that these conversations, typical among TCs, were not possible with Laura since she was not completing any practicum.

Olivia’s concern was about the disruption caused by the upcoming practicum. She reported that Laura was progressively participating more and more with each class, and she was afraid that such a long break away from the drama curriculum class might cause Laura to “crawl back into her shell” and not feel as comfortable with the TCs as she currently did (O., int. 2).
**Additional challenges.** My interviews with the TCs and Kelly also revealed that they encountered a number of additional, wide-ranging challenges that they did not foresee before Laura joined their class. During my first interviews with Stephanie and Candice, there was a clear sense of frustration with how the inclusion of Laura was progressing. Stephanie made her feelings clear to me when she said:

> I just do not think that it’s working in this classroom, and I think that it’s really unfortunate that it’s not working. I feel like Laura is not being treated like a person….I feel like she is the student in our class with an intellectual disability and she’s just supposed to sit there and look pretty and I’m very upset by it. (S., int. 1)

Stephanie went on to explain that she was experiencing some difficulty as Laura’s buddy because she was not given enough information about how to help Laura. Her feelings were also a result of the lack of opportunities Laura was given academically in the class. She felt that Laura, with her help and the help of the second buddy, could be given more responsibilities in group assignments. While Stephanie did say that she felt the idea of including Laura in the drama curriculum class was wonderful, the impression that I was left with was that she felt Laura’s presence in the class amounted to tokenism.

I detected a similar sense of frustration during my first interview with Candice. She remarked on how eager Laura was at the beginning of each class, but that as the class progressed, Laura seemed to become disconnected. Candice said that she felt the design of the course did not create an inclusive environment. At the time of the first interviews, Stephanie and Candice had spent the most amount of time interacting with Laura of any of the interviewees, and thus it is not surprising then that they were the first to report
additional challenges associated with this experience. However, by the second round of interviews Beverly, Norah, and Kelly had also reported challenges with the experience, in addition to Stephanie and Candice reporting further challenges.

One particular issue that came up in the second round of interviews related to communicating with Laura. Candice, Stephanie, and Beverly each commented that they had been communicating with Laura outside of class through email or Facebook. They each reported having difficulty with this, since they did not always understand what Laura was trying to say. Candice, for instance, said, “Face-to-face, I totally know that she means...but when she’s writing to me, I have no idea sometimes, and that’s really hard, because I want to respond, except I have no idea what I’m responding to” (C., int. 2). For Kelly, the issue of communicating with Laura through email was one of professional boundaries. She said that Laura would send her personal emails, even after she spoke to Laura about boundary issues. Norah remarked on the occasional unease some of the TCs felt when communicating with Laura. She reported that many of the TCs were not sure how to approach her or how to talk to her at times. Norah reported:

I think, especially if [Laura’s] not sure what to do in a situation, then no one really knows what to say. Or if she makes a comment that someone might not agree with, maybe someone might be less inclined to challenge it. (N., int. 2)

Similar sentiments were expressed by Stephanie, who commented that during group work it was difficult to respond to Laura’s ideas when they were not relevant to the topic at hand.
Another challenge reported by Stephanie was specific to being Laura’s buddy. Stephanie commented that she enjoyed being Laura’s buddy, but at times was not sure how to proceed. She said:

I’m always scared of offending her, leading her too much by the hand and spoon-feeding her too much, but then there’s times when I am paying too much attention to that so I’ll leave her too far behind, and so it’s like there’s a very fine line between helping and then going over the line. (S., int. 2)

Stephanie went on to say that she was not sure how to properly ask Laura questions, such as whether or not she needed help. This challenge is not surprising, given that although Stephanie had prior experience working with individuals with ID, she did not have experience working with individuals with ID in an academic setting, particularly with individuals the same age as her. As well, she did not receive any specific training or instruction on how to be Laura’s buddy, nor was she given the opportunity to meet Laura prior to her inclusion in the drama curriculum class.

Benefits for Laura

In the section on changes in Laura, I reported on the changes that the TCs, Kelly, and I witnessed in Laura over the course of the observation period. Many of these changes can be regarded as benefits. Over the course of my interviews with Laura, she also identified ways in which she saw herself as benefiting from the IPSE experience. I will present those benefits in this section. From my interviews with Laura, four themes arose from the data: learning about self and being independent, having responsibilities, learning new things, and being social.
**Learning about self and being independent.** Laura saw the opportunity to go to university as an opportunity to learn about herself. When I asked her about a benefit of being in university, she replied, “By learning how [university] students do the same stuff that I can do. That I cannot do” (L., int. 1). When I asked her what things she learned at university that would be useful to her, she responded, “Probably learn more things like learning to manage things that I can do independently, working towards getting my own apartment, stuff like that” (L., int. 2). Laura saw her classmates in the drama curriculum class as independent adults, and she seemed to equate the responsibilities of being a university student with those of being an independent adult. When I asked her why she decided to take a university course, she responded, “Why do it? Well, because I wanted to be like, [at the University] and learn things like how students live independently” (L., int. 3). At another point in the same interview she mentioned learning to be more independent from her classmates, saying, “I can be more independent learning things from other students” (L., int. 3).

In my last interview with Laura, she seemed to have a growing confidence in her ability to be a “university student.” She reported being nervous when she took her first course at the University the previous year, but that she was less nervous at the time of the interview and looking forward to taking another university course in the next school year. When I asked Laura what she knew about herself that she didn’t know before, she replied that she had learned that she could “do things all on my own” (L., int. 3).

**Having responsibilities.** Having responsibilities was clearly important to Laura. On numerous occasions during interviews she mentioned the responsibilities of being a student. As mentioned in the previous subsection, Laura seemed to connect the
responsibilities of being a university student with being an adult. Laura took her student responsibilities to be on time and to be prepared for class seriously. In my first interview with Laura after she joined the drama curriculum class, she told me about what she was learning as a student:

Be on time for class. I know there was once I was a tad late for class. So I think Monday coming I have to get up pretty early. So I’d have to leave the house before 8:00 to catch my bus. (L., int. 1)

The concept of being focussed was recurrent in my interviews with Laura. She seemed to connect the ability to focus with being successful in tasks. When I asked her what she liked about the class, she mentioned focusing, “That Kelly can teach things in the class like telling us to get in our groups, telling us to do what we’re supposed to be focused on, and learning focusing” (L., int. 2). When I asked her for more details, she explained that focusing made the class easy.

Laura considered homework a part of the university experience. She took it seriously as well, stating that she needed to “get it done on time” (L., int. 2). When I interviewed Laura in the middle of the 6-week observation period, she made a comment about an instance when she was not given homework like the TCs, “I’ll be like ‘OK, focus on this.’ Do schoolwork, make it happen, which Kelly didn’t give me any homework to do. I got mad” (L., int. 2). Laura’s reaction to not being given homework suggests that she placed a high value on this aspect of the university experience and wanted to have an experience that more closely approximated her classmates. When Laura described an upcoming group assignment, she remarked that she was happy that she was given a chance to contribute.
Learning and experiencing new things. During my interviews with Laura, she expressed that she enjoyed opportunities to experience new things. For instance, Laura remarked that she wanted to have a student card so that she could visit the University gym. She said, “I’ve never been to the gym before. I really, really appreciate if I had a membership over at that [University] gym” (L., int. 3). In one interview, I asked her about that day’s class, which had been taught by a guest lecturer. For part of the class, he had the students work in groups on a playwriting activity. Laura told me, “The playwriting was kind of my favourite thing to do because I’ve never done it before” (L., int. 3). In my final interview with Laura, I asked her questions about what made her excited to go to university. She responded that she liked meeting nice teachers, getting to know students, and doing things she had not done in high school. I think one of the most poignant examples of Laura’s appreciation for experiencing new things came when I asked her why she wanted to be a university student. She said, “I finally figured I might as well take the class and not be stuck at home” (L., int. 3).

Being social. Having the opportunity to socialize and to be part of a group of peers was an important aspect of the university experience for Laura. In my first interview with Laura, after she joined the drama curriculum class, I asked her about what sort of things she was getting from the class. She answered that she was “getting to know the students in the class and figuring out what they like to do and what their favourite hobbies are” (L., int. 1). Laura described interacting with her peers on many different occasions, and always in a positive manner. She noted that she enjoyed talking with the TCs and learning their names. She particularly enjoyed the group work the class often did, as this provided more opportunities for students to converse. At one point, Laura
mentioned that not all of the students in the class say “Hi” to her in the halls when they pass by. While Laura said this worried her, she did not seem upset. Rather, she viewed this as an opportunity to meet new people, saying, “If they don’t say ‘Hi’ to me and they don’t know me, then I have to probably say ‘OK, my name is this’” (L., int. 2). When I asked her what it meant to her to be part of the University, her reply focused on getting to see the students. She also told me that the best part of being a student was “just being friends with students in class, with everybody” (L., int. 3). Laura seemed to derive a sense of belonging from being able to socialize with her peers, and this sense of belonging was fundamental to her experience in IPSE.

**Mutual Benefits**

The fourth research question centred on the theme of the mutually beneficial nature of the IPSE experience. Throughout my interviews with the TCs and Kelly, they all reported ways in which Laura benefited from the IPSE experience. They also reported ways in which they benefited. Mutual benefits of the IPSE experience for classmates and faculty were also found by Hamill (2003). Although the fourth research question was designed to explore how the IPSE experience influenced the TCs’ vision of inclusive education, the TCs occasionally gave responses that indicated that the benefits of the experience went beyond their future careers. Similarly to Hamill, I identified sub-themes of professional benefits and personal benefits.

**Professional benefits.** Each of the TCs identified ways in which the experience would help them as future educators. In the first round of interviews, all five of the TCs reported that as future educators, they will be teaching in classrooms that have students with different ability levels. Being a part of an inclusive classroom during their teacher
education would provide an opportunity to see inclusion in action. This point was highlighted by their instructor, Kelly, when she said:

I’m a big believer in experience rather than just being told this is how it is to work with someone with special needs…I have no doubt that whatever class they take here for Special Ed is probably wonderful, but I don’t think it can possibly replace first-hand experience. (K., int. 1)

Olivia and Norah each felt that the experience enhanced their learning because it reminded them to acknowledge different learning needs. Candice reported that all learners are different, so the more experience the TCs gain with learners with different needs, the better. Stephanie suggested that the experience went beyond the standard Teacher Education experience of preparing lessons to include hypothetical students with ID, because the presence of Laura gave the TCs exposure to something tangible, since a future student in their class could be like Laura. Stephanie and Norah both commented on the positive effect that the experience could have on creating acceptance and breaking down preconceived notions of students’ abilities.

Over the course of the observation period, the TCs accumulated more experiences interacting with Laura. During the second round of interviews, the TCs articulated benefits of this IPSE experience. Norah, for example, felt that drama was a good environment to integrate students with ID because there “is an opportunity for them to contribute just as much as anybody else to the dynamic of the classroom” (N., int. 2). Norah mentioned that as a teacher she would employ a similar buddy system to that used in the drama curriculum class, except she would want a new buddy each week. She felt that would provide more opportunities for positive interaction. Norah also said that
students with ID are often stereotyped as not being able to participate. She said that this experience had helped her to realize that individuals with ID are capable of participating to a great extent within the classroom, “if you take the time to listen to what they have to say” (N., int. 2). Norah went on to say that the IPSE experience had made her more conscious of the need to actively think about how to accommodate her students when she is a teacher. Norah concluded her interview by stating that her time in the inclusive class had been “a great experience,” and that more university courses, especially in faculties of Education, should be made inclusive (N., int. 2).

The four other TCs made remarks similar to those of Norah. Olivia, for instance, also commented on student ability levels, especially in drama classes, which are often hands-on, and provide frequent opportunities for group work. Noting that Laura was often less outgoing in large group activities, Olivia said that as a teacher she would place more emphasis on small group activities in her future classes as a way of promoting participation of students with ID. Olivia, Stephanie, Beverly, and Candice all stated that having someone with ID integrated in a Teacher Education class was beneficial because it allowed TCs to see inclusion in action. Stephanie also reported that the experience gave her a greater awareness of ID and broadened her perspectives. Beverly commented on wanting to become more familiar with her students’ needs, saying:

I think one thing, on my first couple practicums, I didn’t read my students’ IEPs, and I didn’t really know what they needed that much, and I was more figuring it out as I went, and I think incorporating that into my planning is important. (B., int. 2)
Beverly reported that this experience made her think more about what she will do as a teacher to make her lessons relevant for students with ID, and how she can promote participation by all her students. Candice commented that she feels more comfortable talking about students’ needs with them, rather than trying to figure them out on her own. She also reported being more confident teaching integrated classes, saying:

I know some schools are trying to have more integrated classes, and I think I’ll be really open to it, because I’ve had this experience...I think I’m interested in it in a way I wasn’t before, and I’m definitely more confident in it. (C., int. 2)

Kelly also identified ways in which the TCs would benefit, as well as identifying benefits to her own teaching. Kelly felt the experience would remind the TCs that not all students can construct meaning from abstract theories, and therefore this experience had been a good way for the TCs to become aware of the need to incorporate “a concrete, tangible part to things, instead of just keeping everything abstract” (K., int. 2). In terms of her own teaching, Kelly indicated that the experience had helped her to be more cognizant of differentiation. As well, she thought the experience made her more mindful of making sure that what she was teaching was comprehensible.

Throughout my observations of the class, I also noticed ways in which the TCs benefited professionally. Numerous times, individual TCs answered Laura’s questions, or explained material to her. For instance, in Laura’s first class, I observed one of the students explaining to Laura what curriculum documents are. Each time one of the TCs helped Laura to better understand the course material can be seen as practice for future times when the TCs have classes of their own. Undoubtedly they will have students with
ID in their classes, and the experience they have gained working with Laura will help them to create inclusive learning environments.

*Personal benefits.* In addition to the professional benefits that the TCs cited, a number also mentioned gaining personal benefits from the experience of having Laura included in their class. Four of the TCs commented on enjoying getting to know and spend time with Laura, and described Laura using language that suggested they considered her a peer in more than just an academic sense. For instance, Beverly said:

I guess it’s made me more positive about adults with intellectual disabilities, because I’ve worked with young people with intellectual disabilities and in high school known people and stuff, but I haven’t really made friends with any adults with intellectual disabilities before...I find it really easy to have a conversation with Laura, and I feel like her life is similar to my life, and we can be friends. (B., int. 2)

Olivia said that she thought of Laura as a peer and not as “an outsider who you’re helping because of the special need that she has” (O., int. 2). She went on to say that she really liked working with Laura and that the way that she treated Laura was the way that she would treat any of her peers in the drama curriculum class. Candice reported how much she enjoyed Laura’s presence in the class and that she often talked with Laura before class. Stephanie also commented that she enjoyed Laura’s presence and liked working with her. She said, “I just love her so much...she’s just a treat to be with and she’s just so much fun” (S., int. 2). As well, Stephanie appreciated how much Laura loved being a part of the drama curriculum class and her love of life in general, and described this love of life as though it was infectious.
Chapter Summary

The program at CALC Prep was designed to prepare students with ID to audit university courses. This is done through a combination of experiences familiarizing the students with the University, in particular field trips to the University, and a curriculum designed to increase self-awareness, self-expression, and literacy skills.

My interviews with the TCs and the drama curriculum instructor, Kelly, about their experiences in an inclusive drama curriculum class elicited both positive and negative responses. According to the TCs and Kelly, the positive aspects of the experiences included seeing inclusion in practice, and getting to know Laura on a personal level. Negative responses largely concerned whether or not a curriculum class was the right fit for Laura. As well, there was a feeling of not knowing how best to help Laura and not knowing what Laura’s expectations were. Laura overwhelmingly enjoyed her experience auditing the drama curriculum course. She saw interacting with same-age peers as an opportunity to learn about being independent and to socialize with these peers. She also enjoyed having responsibilities and learning and experiencing new things.

The TCs, Kelly, and I all witnessed a change in Laura over the first 6 weeks after she joined the drama curriculum course. She became more outgoing and comfortable with her peers. As well, the TCs viewed Laura not as a stranger auditing their course, but as a classmate.

In the next chapter, I discuss the results of this study and make some recommendations for improving the transition of CALC students to the University.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Despite a small but growing body of literature describing the perceptions of IPSE from the viewpoint of the participants, both with and without ID, there is still a lack of literature that describes the preparation of adults with ID to audit university courses. Furthermore, I have not been able to identify any literature describing IPSE in a one-year after-degree Teacher Education program.

Accordingly, the purpose for this study was to describe how one community agency prepares its students with ID for university life, and how one of those students with ID interprets her experiences at university, as well as how her classmates without ID, and her class instructor, view the challenges and benefits of such an experience. Data on how a community agency prepares its students with ID for university life were collected from observations at CALC Prep. Data on how a student with ID from CALC Prep interpreted her experience auditing a course in the Faculty of Education, as well as how TCs and the class instructor viewed the challenges and benefits of the IPSE experience were collected through interviews and observations of an inclusive drama curriculum class.

This chapter discusses the findings of the observations at CALC Prep and of the observations and interviews from the inclusive drama curriculum class in six sections. In the first section, I summarize the findings of this study. In the second section, I discuss the findings of the interviews and observations of the inclusive drama curriculum class in relation to the existing literature. In the third section, I discuss possible improvements to
better enable a smooth transition from CALC Prep to the University, and possible improvements to the implementation of IPSE at the University. In the fourth section, I discuss the suitability of a professional Teacher Education program for IPSE. In the fifth section, I discuss possible limitations of the research. The sixth section contains recommendations for further research on IPSE. A brief seventh section provides my concluding thoughts.

Summary of Findings

The first research question asked what steps a local IPSE preparation program takes to prepare its students for auditing inclusive post-secondary classes. Data from my observations at CALC Prep show that the preparation of Prep students to audit courses at the University is accomplished by a curriculum that emphasises self-awareness, self-expression, and literacy, as well as familiarizing the students with the University.

The second research question asked how the focal participant interacts with the TCs and course instructor, and how the TCs and instructor interact with the focal participant. Interview data and observations of the drama curriculum class revealed that the focal participant became more comfortable in the class as the semester progressed. As well, the TCs became more comfortable with the focal participant, eventually seeing her as a classmate.

The third research question asked what do the focal participant, the TCs, and the instructor perceive to be the challenges and benefits of this experience, and how can the experience be improved from their different perspectives. Interviews with the TCs and the instructor revealed that they felt challenged by a lack of information about the focal participant, and they questioned whether a curriculum class was the right fit for her.
Other challenges included understanding online communications from the focal participant, boundary issues with regards to online communications, and frustration that the focal participant was not given more academic responsibilities as a student. Four benefits for the focal participant were clear from my interviews of her: learning about self and being independent, having responsibilities, learning new things, and being social.

The fourth research question asked how this experience affects the TCs’ visions of inclusive education. Interview data from the TCs revealed that there was a mutually beneficial nature to the IPSE experience. Not only did the TCs believe that the focal participant benefited from the experience, but they also benefited by seeing inclusion in action. The TCs gave several examples of how the IPSE experience had made them think about ways to promote inclusion in their classes when they are teachers. The TCs also mentioned personal benefits, such as knowing the focal participant, which they gained from the experience of having the focal participant included in their class.

Reflections on the Literature

In this section, I revisit five topics reviewed in the literature in Chapter 2. The topics of normalization and SRV, teachers and inclusion, rationale for post-secondary institutions, modern inclusive education, and contributions to the literature are discussed in relation to the data gathered in this study.

Normalization and SRV

According to Nirje (1969), normalization implies a normal routine of life. For most people, home, work, and school are at different locations; this should be no different for individuals with ID. Thus according to the principle of normalization, it is not
appropriate for people with ID to receive an education or therapy, take part in recreation
activities, or work in the same place that serves as “home.” Nirje argues that programs for
young adults with ID should assist them to “become as competent and independent in
their personal daily routine as possible, and to develop social skills which will enable
them to take part in the regular community life as much as they can” (pp. 20-21).

The opportunity to audit an inclusive university course acted as a normalizing
force for the focal participant, by giving her some agency and control over her life. She
noted it would mean she was not “stuck at home” (L., int. 3). By giving her more to do
away from home, auditing a university course created a greater distinction between the
different aspects of the focal participant’s life. As part of the inclusive drama curriculum
class, she was accepted as a classmate by her same-age peers. Her interactions with these
peers helped her to develop social skills that she can apply in other areas of the “regular
community,” and can help increase her independence, which the focal participant noted
as a personal goal.

SRV is rooted in normalization (Yates et al., 2008), and holds that people are
more likely to experience social capital if they hold valued social roles than if they do not
(Osburn, 1998). The contribution that people with ID have been deemed capable of
making in the past is reflected in the negative ways of thinking about them, and this
informs the role expectations placed upon them (Osburn). Auditing the inclusive drama
course was a means for the focal participant to increase her social capital. This is most
evident when considering how the TCs described her, especially during the second round
of interviews. They described her as “part of the class,” and stated that classmates were
“treating her as anybody else” (N., int. 2). The TCs also noted that they enjoyed the focal
participant’s presence in the class, and that they liked working with her. These data suggest that the focal participant’s social capital increased when she was a student—a socially acceptable or valued role in our society.

*Teachers and Inclusion*

Teachers are the prime implementers of policies on inclusion in education. Previous research on teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities has produced positive (e.g., Stanovich, 1999), negative (e.g., Tait & Purdie, 2000), and ambivalent (e.g., Cardona, 2009) findings. Importantly, Ryan (2009) interpreted the findings of a survey of 141 TCs to mean that TCs believed they could use more training to feel confident in inclusive classrooms. As well, Stanovich and Jordan (2004) found that teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities in their classrooms can be affected by previous success or failure at including students with disabilities. Teachers who receive resources and supports for inclusion are more likely to experience success, raising their sense of efficacy about inclusion. As a result, these teachers are more willing to teach inclusive classes in the future. However, this cycle can also be negative—teachers who are expected to teach inclusively but who do not receive appropriate supports and resources may not experience success. This in turn can lead to a lower sense of efficacy, which causes these teachers to become more negative about inclusion.

While the inclusive drama curriculum class did not offer the TCs training on implementing inclusive practices, it did give them the opportunity to see inclusion in action and to learn about disabilities from interacting with the focal participant. Their remarks in the second set of interviews indicated that they appreciated the opportunity to
learn alongside someone with ID. They mentioned several concrete examples of how the experience will influence their future teaching. The examples the TCs cited indicate that they have engaged in thinking about putting theory into practice and suggests a sense of efficacy in their ability to do so.

Rationale for Post-secondary Institutions

Each of the three specific benefits of IPSE identified by Causton-Theoharis et al. (2009) was also identified in this study: (a) benefits to students with ID; (b) benefits to classmates; and (c) benefits to faculty.

Causton-Theoharis et al. (2009) found that students with ID benefited from IPSE in different ways, including new hopes, and opportunities for friendship. The focal participant benefited from her experience as part of the drama curriculum class. As identified by the TCs, she became more outgoing as the course progressed. The focal participant also identified ways in which she benefited from the experience, including learning about herself, being independent, having responsibilities, learning and experiencing new things, and being social. While these specific themes may be different than those found earlier, their substance is similar. The focal participant wanted to become more independent, and this experience gave her hope that she would come closer to achieving that goal. Additionally, she placed a great deal of emphasis on her social relationships with the TCs, which can be seen as opportunities for friendships.

Causton-Theoharis et al. (2009) reported that classmates without ID benefited by learning to include others and by engaging in natural interactions. This was the result of sharing an academic space with members of a group not traditionally part of the academic community, and of gaining an appreciation for the ability of students with ID to learn.
This was similar to the data that I collected. The TCs commented that they had learned about inclusion from the experience, and had thought of ways to incorporate that knowledge into their own teaching practice. As well, I observed the TCs engaging in natural interactions with the focal participant. These natural interactions gave the TCs the opportunity to learn about disabilities in a more tangible manner than simply reading about disabilities.

The third benefit that Cauton-Theoharis et al. (2009) identified was a benefit to faculty. In their study, one professor said that teaching in an inclusive class made her more transparent about student expectations. Similarly, the drama curriculum instructor noted that having the focal participant in her class caused her to think about differentiation in her instruction and about ensuring that her lessons were comprehensible.

*Modern Inclusive Post-secondary Education*

The IPSE that I observed in the drama curriculum class had several similarities with the principles of IPSE described by Weinkauf (2002) and Hughson et al. (2006), and listed earlier. For example, according to Weinkauf, IPSE provides individual supports for students with ID. This is true in the case of the focal participant, who received academic support from her buddies. According to Hughson et al., IPSE is intended to advance inclusion and reduce marginalization, as well as to step outside existing policy frameworks regarding entitlement to advanced education. This is also true in the instance of IPSE that I observed. The focal participant’s participation in the drama curriculum class not only serves to advance inclusion of adults with ID, but the positive experience gained by the TCs may also lead to more inclusive classes at the secondary level. IPSE is
still a very new phenomenon at the University where the focal participant audited the drama curriculum course, and can be seen as a challenge to the status quo regarding entitlement to advanced education.

While similarities do exist between the principles of IPSE listed by Weinkauf (2002) and Hughson et al. (2006), there also exist noteworthy differences. One particular difference that I observed was that the focal participant’s experience was not always coherent with what other students experienced. For instance, on one occasion, the drama curriculum class was cancelled (along with any other Teacher Education classes running at the same time) so that the TCs could attend a series of workshops. The focal participant was not included in the workshops. Although the focal participant was not a TC, she may have appreciated the opportunity to learn more about the teaching profession, which may have helped her in the drama curriculum class. Another principle of IPSE, according to Weinkauf, is that IPSE programs provide supports to others, including instructors and classmates without disabilities. From my interviews with the course instructor and the TCs, it is clear that both groups could have used more support, especially more information about the focal participant, such as her goals and abilities.

Apart from the specific case of IPSE in this study, IPSE at the University in general has another noteworthy difference. IPSE at the University was not open to “any adult with an intellectual disability” (Weinkauf, 2002, p 32). Students with ID who audit courses at the University first attend CALC Prep. These students must possess certain characteristics in order to enter the Prep program and then to move on to the University. They must want to learn, be committed to completing the program, and be able to participate in the class (share opinions, work with others, etc.). Moreover, a student from
CALC Prep will not be given a course to audit at the University if the Prep instructors consider that student to exhibit disruptive behaviours. Instead, they will continue to work with that student at CALC, perhaps over multiple years, to improve his behaviours.

Although Weinkauf’s argument that a guiding principle of IPSE is that it is available to any adult with an intellectual disability, in my opinion, this is not feasible. I agree with Weinkauf that academic and physical abilities should not be criteria for participation in IPSE. Post-secondary institutions are designed and often retrofitted to be physically accessible, so physical ability should not be used as a criterion for participation in IPSE. Likewise, the use of tutors, or class buddies as in this specific case of IPSE, should eliminate the need for an academic criterion for IPSE. However, Weinkauf’s claim that IPSE should be available to any adult does not address issues of disruptive behaviour, for example aggression or perseveration. It is unreasonable to expect a course instructor or students in a post-secondary course to be exposed to potentially unsafe situations or situations that impinge their ability to teach and learn. Although it is unfortunate that not everyone can be successfully included in post-secondary education, I think it is justifiable to restrict access to IPSE in some circumstances. One benefit of the CALC Prep program is that it helps promote appropriate behaviours so that students may one day be able to audit a course at the University, even if not in their first year of the Prep program.

**Contributions to the Literature**

This study contributes to the literature by adding to the preponderance of data on IPSE. While this study is similar to previous studies on IPSE that described inclusive classes and interviewed stakeholders, this study goes beyond past studies by describing
the steps taken to prepare students with ID to audit university courses. This study also
adds to the literature by examining an instance of an inclusive course that is part of a one-
year, after-degree Teacher Education program, which has not been studied before. The
results of this study found consistencies with several previous studies, including reasons
for adults with ID wanting to take part in post-secondary education, increasing
confidence in IPSE participants with ID, and the fact that adults with ID can be
successfully integrated into post-secondary classes. This study also adds to the literature
by detailing the concerns of participants without ID, which suggest that not all post-
secondary courses are as amenable to IPSE as others.

Findings from this study echoed findings from Farmakopoulou and Watson
(2003). Although they studied instances of segregated post-secondary education for
adults with ID, their data did reveal similarities with the data I collected. For instance,
Farmakopoulou and Watson described students with ID as wanting to attend college for
reasons of social capital. This included a break from daily routine and meeting new
people. This is similar to data from the focal participant, who indicated that she did not
want to be “stuck at home,” and that she enjoyed the opportunity to meet new people and
be social (L., int. 3). Farmakopoulou and Watson also found that students with ID
attending courses at a college appreciated being treated as adults. Likewise, the focal
participant appreciated having adult responsibilities. As well, they found that students
with ID felt that attending college increased their confidence and social skills. Similarly,
interview data from the TCs indicated that the focal participant became more confident in
the drama curriculum class. However, this study goes beyond Farmakopoulou and
Watson by including observation data. These data also showed the focal participant’s
increasing confidence in the class, as she began engaging in natural interactions with her peers as the course progressed.

Unlike Farmakopoulou and Watson (2003), who studied segregated post-secondary education, this study investigated an instance of inclusive post-secondary education. Thus it was more similar to studies by Casale-Giannola and Kamens (2006), Hamill (2003), Hughson et al. (2006), Carroll et al. (2009), Mosoff et al. (2009), and Swift (2001) in terms of the experiences shared by participants with ID and their classmates. Findings from these previous studies were replicated in this study. For example, findings from previous studies revealed the central importance of meeting new people and being social for students with ID (Hamill; Hughson et al.; Mosoff et al.; Swift); likewise, interview data from the focal participant indicated the importance she placed on being social with the TCs. Previous studies showed that students with ID can be effectively integrated with their classmates (Casale-Giannola & Kamens; Hamill); in this study the TCs reported that the focal participant transitioned from being a stranger to being a classmate. Finally, previous studies showed that classmates and faculty also benefit from IPSE (Carroll et al.; Hamill; Hughson et al.); this study showed that the drama curriculum instructor benefited from thinking more about her own instruction, and the TCs benefited from seeing inclusion in action, and thinking about how to make their future classrooms inclusive.

In addition to these similarities, there was also an important difference between previous studies on IPSE and this study. This difference centres on the theme of is this the right fit? Study participants in previous studies raised few concerns about the concept of integrating adults with ID into post-secondary courses. For instance, previous research
shows course instructors who participated in IPSE to have been pleased with their
decision to make their class inclusive. For example, one of the Communications
instructors from the study by Hamill (2003) reported, “If asked again I would participate.
It has certainly been wonderful and pleasant” (p. 350). Another instructor of an inclusive
Bachelor of Arts class from the study by Mosoff et al. (2009) noted:

If you want an experience that enriches the classroom, then do it. Really. If you’re
concerned about intrusiveness…no, doesn’t happen. If you’re concerned that
these students or the others will flunk, nope, doesn’t happen. If you want to see
the light in someone’s eyes who’s actually learning and experiencing and
engaging with the materials, then I’d say it’s something you should do. (p. 31)

This stands in contrast to comments made by the drama curriculum instructor. One of the
distinctions between her experience and the experiences of the two instructors above was
the program of instruction. In my second interview with the drama curriculum instructor,
she repeatedly mentioned how she felt the Teacher Education program was not the best
option for IPSE. At one point she said:

I’m not sure in some ways that BEd classes are the ideal settings for this
program….in some ways I don’t think you can get around the fact that there
are huge parts that are not going to be relevant because these students aren’t
doing practicums, so they can’t relate to that, and they don’t have the background
in the pedagogy, so again, it’s really difficult to make some parts relevant. (K., int
2)

These concerns were also raised by the TCs. In the previous research, classmates without
ID spoke positively about IPSE. While the TCs were positive about their experience with
the focal participant, they did raise concerns that the Teacher Education program was not the right fit for IPSE. This raises the potential that not all post-secondary courses are amenable to IPSE. This comes at a critical juncture, as IPSE is gaining recognition and expanding. For instance, the University has recently entered into an agreement with CALC to accept up to 50 students with ID each year. The finding that there are implications for the feasibility of IPSE in certain post-secondary courses, particularly in professional programs, where course content may be mandated and courses may be interrupted by field experiences, such as practica is new to the literature. These concerns, as they relate to professional Teacher Education programs, are revisited later in this chapter.

Reflections for Improvements

Possible Improvements at CALC Prep

As previously mentioned, CALC Prep employed a number of strategies to prepare its students for university life. These included familiarizing students with the University and promoting student self-awareness, self-expression, and literacy skills. Although these are important strategies, more could have been done to ensure that transition from CALC Prep to the University was as smooth as possible for the Prep students.

Even though Prep students had visited campus, they had not witnessed academic activities at the University. The size, seating arrangements, and general decorum of a university class, especially a lecture-based class, would be a foreign experience for any Prep student who had never audited such a course before. If students had had the opportunity to sit in on a university class prior to auditing a course, this would have
prepared students for the dramatic difference between classes at CALC Prep and at the University. Logistically, however, this may not be a possibility, as it would require a class with enough free seats, and an instructor open to the idea of having a large number of guests observing her or his class. A more feasible option may be to show videos of university classes to the Prep students. This could be followed by a class discussion about the ways in which university classes are different from Prep classes. Just as students role-played making good first impressions, students could have role played asking instructors or classmates questions, or volunteering answers. This could be carried out in conjunction with teaching students proper university class etiquette. For instance, at one point during a drama curriculum class, the focal participant’s cell phone sounded, indicating she had received a text message, at which point she proceeded to text a reply. This is inappropriate behaviour in a university class. CALC can address issues such as use of cell phones, music players, etc., prior to students auditing courses.

Personalized tours of the campus would also have helped students adjust to campus. The focal participant, for instance, emphasized the need to be on time for class. Giving students tours of campus starting from the appropriate bus stop and ending with a tour of the academic building their class would be located in would be useful. Such a tour could show Prep students the fastest route to their classroom and the location of bathrooms nearest their classroom. It could also include finding the food outlet on campus nearest to their classroom. Furthermore, these tours could include meeting the students in the class to be audited, before the winter semester begins. This, however, might only be feasible in year-long classes with small class sizes. Although many university classes do not fit this description, all curriculum classes in the Faculty of
Education, such as the course audited by the focal participant, do fit this description. This might have been particularly appreciated by the focal participant, since one of her motivations for auditing a course was to meet new people. The CALC instructors alone may not have had the time or knowledge of campus to conduct such tours, but University student volunteers would have been able to do so. Student volunteers leading individualized tours would also have provided the Prep students with a significant opportunity for naturalistic interaction with a university student prior to commencing auditing their course. In the focal participant’s case, such a tour could have been given by her buddies, giving them the opportunity to meet her, build rapport, and get a sense of her abilities.

Another possible improvement that CALC Prep could make would involve contextualizing the curriculum to make it more relevant to university life. For example, lessons on money (adding and subtracting different denominations) could be given in a situational context that students might encounter on campus, such as making purchases from the cafeteria or from a vending machine. Another possible opportunity to contextualize lessons at CALC Prep could take place once matches had been made between Prep students and university instructors open to teaching inclusive courses. Each Prep student could be given a literacy assignment that involves researching and writing about a topic related to what the student will learn about at the University. This may provide the student with some background information on the topic, such as new vocabulary that they might encounter in their university class. Background knowledge, even if limited, could make the transition from CALC Prep to the University easier. In the focal participant’s case, TCs reported that the focal participant believed she was auditing
a drama course, instead of a drama curriculum course. Such a context-specific lesson would have impressed upon the focal participant the difference between the two.

One of the challenges cited by the TCs was a lack of information. For example, three of the TCs reported that they wanted more information about the focal participant, including her purpose for auditing the course, what her learning expectations were, and how to “tailor things to include” the focal participant. This was understandable considering that the TCs were future educators. Indeed, one TC summed up this sentiment in her first interview when she said,

I think we just need to know more information. As educators we all know what we need to do to include someone, so I just think if we have all of the background information, then we can just make it the best possible experience for her. (S., int. 1)

Like any educator, the TCs wanted to be able to promote student success. This, however, was difficult without knowing the focal participant’s unique attributes. CALC could have addressed this by having one of the CALC instructors visit the drama curriculum class in advance of the focal participant auditing the course. If the instructor visited the class without the focal participant, the TCs would likely have felt more comfortable asking questions about her ability level. This would also be a suitable time to explain to the TCs that the idea behind IPSE is not just academic learning, but also social learning through interacting with same-age peers. This may have encouraged more of the TCs to interact with the focal participant, and might have alleviated some of the concern about the focal participant benefiting from being in a curriculum class.
Finally, CALC could also improve communication with course instructors at the University. Although CALC tries to match Prep students with courses that the student will enjoy and benefit from, it is the University course instructor who develops the course syllabus. Thus instructors should be given more information on the individual Prep student, including her interests and past experiences, to determine if the course they teach is a good fit for the Prep student. This can help ensure a fulfilling experience for the Prep student. Additionally, an instructor may be more inclined to allow a Prep student to audit her course if she is made aware of relevant experiences which the Prep student has in that field. For an example, many Prep students have drama and music performance experience from taking part in their fall public auction fundraiser. Being given this knowledge may encourage drama and music instructors to open their classes to Prep students.

Possible Improvements at the University

Improvements to the IPSE experience that can be made at the University can be divided into those that can be made by the course instructor and those which would require participation of the University administration. One particular improvement that the University instructor could have made would have been to increase the amount of responsibility given to the focal participant. The focal participant clearly appreciated having responsibilities and expressed dissatisfaction when she was not given homework. One of the focal participant’s buddies also felt that the drama curriculum instructor could have given the focal participant a greater role to play in group assignments. This could have enhanced the focal participant’s sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy. Productive work habits formed by having more school work to complete could also
transfer into other areas of the focal participant’s life, promoting her independence, which was a goal that was important to the focal participant.

At the administrative level, three improvements could greatly benefit IPSE at the University. First, students with ID auditing courses should be issued student identification cards. Second, the Faculty of Education could implement a course similar to the Great Conversations course in Carroll et al. (2009). Third, CALC Prep students would benefit from a dedicated space for the Prep program on the University’s campus.

Student identification cards are required at the University to access the gym, attend varsity games free of charge, and borrow books from the libraries. They can also be “loaded” with money to use at campus eateries (analogous to a store gift card). The Education Library at the University did allow Prep students to borrow books; however, this is only one of six libraries at the University, covers only one specific subject, and is located on the West Campus. The opportunity to borrow books from any of the University’s libraries would make the IPSE experience for students with ID more like that of their classmates without ID. In particular, the focal participant expressed an interest in having access to the gym. Access to the gym and varsity sporting events would also make the experience of students with ID more in line with their peers without ID. This would also provide students with ID with the opportunity to build greater social capital as they would have more opportunity to meet peers with similar interests in natural settings. Moreover, a student identification card could instil a sense of belonging and pride in students with ID auditing courses.

Carroll et al. (2009) studied the impact on TCs of an IPSE course that they participated in called Great Conversations. This was a non-credit course in which “typical
college students,” including TCs, explored liberal arts and science topics alongside young adults with ID. The course also provided several of the participating TCs opportunities to teach individual classes. The Faculty of Education at the University could offer something similar as an alternative practicum experience for TCs. Although this study showed that the TCs benefitted from their experience in an inclusive class, a course like Great Conversations would give them the opportunity to practice teaching lessons to peers with and without ID—an opportunity that did not exist for TCs in the drama curriculum course. This may lead to increased self-efficacy among the TCs with regards to inclusion.

Such a course would be an example of reverse inclusion. Reverse inclusion occurs when a group of learners who are typically developing is added to a specialized program for learners with disabilities (Rafferty & Griffin, 2005). This could increase the confidence of the students with ID since they would be learning alongside others like themselves in addition to TCs. Furthermore, it could provide more opportunities for the students with ID to participate in the class, because it would be designed specifically with their needs in mind.

Finding a space for the Prep program on the University’s campus is perhaps logistically the most difficult improvement to make, but could be the most beneficial for three reasons. First, being social was an important motivation for the focal participant to pursue IPSE. Offering CALC Prep on the University’s campus could provide more opportunities for being social, through spontaneous, natural interactions with peers without ID.
Second, my data suggest that one of the most useful topics in the curriculum at CALC Prep was familiarizing the Prep students with the University. Offering the Prep program at the University might ease the transition from the Prep program to university courses by giving Prep students even more exposure to the people and places of the University. This could increase the Prep students’ confidence navigating the University and university life in general. Moreover, this could provide an opportunity for authentic learning. Educators of learners with disabilities are increasingly focusing on the teaching of functional skills, rather than focusing on isolated impairments (van der Putten, Reynders, Vlaskamp, & Nakken, 2004). The University could provide an authentic setting for CALC Prep students to learn and practice social and life skills through “learning by doing.”

Third, it would increase the visibility of the Prep program within the University community. This could lead to students without ID being more aware of the goals of the Prep program, which would be beneficial should they find themselves in a class being audited by a student with ID. An increase in visibility could also lead to a greater number of professors and course instructors being familiar with the Prep program, and volunteering to teach inclusive classes. This would increase the range of options for students with ID, as well as create more spaces for students with ID to audit courses. Additionally, increasing the exposure of University students, staff, and faculty to Prep students on campus would normalize their presence at the University. Eventually this could lead to Prep students being treated similarly to “typical” students on campus, thus increasing the likelihood of interactions involving Prep students being natural.
Reflections on IPSE in a Teacher Education Program

Data from my interviews of the TCs and the drama curriculum instructor, as well as from my observations of the drama curriculum class, raised the concern that a professional program such as the Teacher Education program may not be the right fit for IPSE. The structure of a professional program—that it must cover specific material in a specific length of time in order to remain accredited—creates a unique set of challenges for IPSE that warrant inspection. While the previous sections considered general improvements that could be made to benefit IPSE at the University in general, this section examines IPSE specifically in the context of a Teacher Education program.

The data that I collected underscored the sentiment that perhaps the Teacher Education program would not provide the focal participant with the same opportunities to connect and participate as an undergraduate drama course would. For instance, in my first set of interviews, three of the TCs, as well as the drama curriculum instructor, made reference to the fact that, because the focal participant was not a Teacher Education student, she might have a difficult time connecting with the TCs and with the curriculum. While connecting with TCs may be difficult for a student who is not in the Teacher Education program, a student with ID who had a segregated high school experience would likely encounter an initial difficulty connecting with university classmates, regardless of the university course being audited. The benefit of auditing a curriculum course in a Teacher Education program is the small class size and the participatory, collaborative nature of the course. As well, students in a professional, after-degree Teacher Education program are expected to demonstrate the maturity required in the
teaching profession. This is a direct benefit to the student auditing the course, as it promotes maturity through modelling by same-age peers.

A concern expressed by the drama curriculum course instructor was that she could not make the theory aspect of the course relevant to the focal participant because it pertained to teaching, and the focal participant was not going to go on a practicum, or become a teacher. The drama curriculum instructor said that attempting to do so would require her to present concepts to the TCs in too basic a fashion, which would be inappropriate given that the TCs have already graduated with a bachelor’s degree. Again, regardless of the university course being audited, this will present a concern. Theoretical-based learning is a hallmark of university education; even at the undergraduate level an instructor may have difficulty presenting some theories at a level that can be understood by a student with ID, while still being appropriate for the rest of the class. In the case of IPSE in a Teacher Education program, learning theories of pedagogy should not be considered the primary motive for a student with ID auditing a curriculum course. Data from previous studies, as well as this study, indicate that being social with same-age peers is of central importance to IPSE participants with ID. Learning new things is also important; however, these “new things” do not have to be theoretical. The focal participant, for instance, reported that her favourite thing from the drama curriculum class was learning about play writing.

A TC and I both raised the concern of disruptions in the Teacher Education program. Each semester is disrupted by practica that see the TCs leave for blocks of practice teaching. The TC reported that the focal participant progressively participated more and more each class, and that she was afraid that such a long break away from the
drama curriculum class might cause the focal participant to “crawl back into her shell” and not feel as comfortable with the TCs when they returned from practicum (O., int. 2). I noted that there are many disruptions even when the TCs are not on practicum, such as assemblies, that result in fewer classes. I questioned if the amount of time the focal participant would be spending with the TCs would allow for enough social interaction to benefit her. This is a concern that cannot be easily ameliorated within the Teacher Education program. If, however, students with ID auditing courses in the Teacher Education program were to simultaneously audit a second course from another faculty, regressing from a lack of interaction with peers would not be an issue.

Despite the misgivings raised in the data, I believe that—with improvements—IPSE can be successfully implemented in a Teacher Education program. When evaluating whether or not a Teacher Education program is an appropriate venue for IPSE, one cannot disregard the mutual nature of its benefits. As future educators, TCs want to promote student success, making Teacher Education programs ideal for the inclusion of adults with ID. However, the benefits of IPSE also extend to the TCs, who profit from seeing theory put into practice, learning about disabilities, and seeing that people with ID are capable of learning. The growing trend toward integration of students with ID in Canadian schools means that these TCs will likely be expected to teach students with ID when they become teachers. Their experiences in IPSE will serve to help them fashion their own truly inclusive classrooms.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by five factors: first, the heterogeneity of ID; second, the fact that the focal participant had already audited a university course the previous year; third,
the lack of male TC participants; fourth, the fact that the drama curriculum instructor was a graduate student; and fifth, the fact that this study involved only one focal participant and one inclusive class.

The first limiting factor is unavoidable because ID is complex and varied. Two people with the same ID can be very different, and such differences can be even more pronounced between people with different ID. The second limiting factor, that the focal participant had already audited a university course, could have affected the results of this study. The focal participant’s previous experience at the University may have made the transition from CALC to the University less stressful than if this been her first experience auditing a course at the University. This could have influenced her interactions with others, and thus is a possible limitation to the transferability of the results.

The third limiting factor resulted from the fact that none of the five male TCs in the drama curriculum class of 28 TCs volunteered to take part in interviews. The fact that each of the TC participants in my study was female limits the transferability because many TCs, especially in the intermediate/senior divisions in the Teacher Education program, are male. Thus the sample of TCs that informed my data was not representative of all TCs. The fourth limiting factor was the fact that the drama curriculum course was taught by a graduate student who had never taught the course before this study. This limits transferability because many of the courses are taught by senior faculty who have many years of experience teaching Teacher Education courses. This limiting factor could not have been avoided without finding a different focal participant, because the drama curriculum course was the only course Laura was auditing at the time of the study. The fifth limiting factor of this study was partially due to the small scope of IPSE in the
Teacher Education program at the University, and partially due to the capacity of one researcher working alone. Thus transferability is limited because it is unclear if the findings are attributable to the unique characteristics of the participants rather than the characteristics they share with the greater population.

Recommendations for Further Research

I make eight recommendations for further research. Five recommendations address the limitations of this study and three recommendations address some findings of this study.

Addressing the Limitations

The limitations of this study may be addressed through the following five recommendations for further research: (1) Given the heterogeneity of ID, further research should strive to carefully describe participants with ID so that readers can determine the degree of similarity between this study and other cases of IPSE, to decide its relative transferability (Patton, 2002). (2) Further research should study IPSE with first time participants with ID, and continue to study their experience as they progress into further years of inclusive education, to see if a difference is evident in the experience for students with ID as they progress from one year to the next. (3) Further research should strive to have both male and female TC participants to ensure that the views of a more representative sample of TCs are captured. (4) Further research should study IPSE in courses taught by instructors more representative of university faculty in terms of experience instructing courses being studied. (5) Further researchers may want to work
collaboratively in order to study multiple instances of IPSE within the same after-degree Teacher Education programs.

Addressing the Findings

Based on the findings of this study, I make two recommendations for further research, plus a third recommendation based on the literature.

First, the findings showed that the experience of IPSE led to the TCs thinking about inclusion in their future classes. Further research should examine the long term benefits of IPSE for TCs. For instance, do in-service teachers who experienced IPSE as TCs report higher levels of self-efficacy with regards to inclusion than in-service teachers who did not experience IPSE as TCs?

Second, the findings showed that the participants without ID had misgivings about IPSE in a Teacher Education program. This study should be replicated, but with the previously mentioned improvements in place—particularly those concerning giving the participants more information about the student with ID and the goals of IPSE—to see if participants still report issues with the fit of IPSE in a Teacher Education program.

Third, I did not look at the participants’ conceptions of ID. But given the literature on the subject, a stronger case for IPSE might be made by interviewing TCs in inclusive Teacher Education courses at the beginning and end of their courses to see if their conceptions of disability and inclusion change. To see if changes in the conception of disability are related to experience in inclusive classes or to the common experiences of the Teacher Education program, TCs who are not enrolled in any inclusive courses should also be interviewed. This would allow comparisons to be made with TCs who are enrolled in inclusive courses.
Concluding Thoughts

The potential for IPSE in a Teacher Education program, I believe, is profound, with potential for both participants with ID and TCs to benefit. It is my hope that this research will contribute to increasing the number of opportunities for individuals with ID at post-secondary institutions, and that other researchers will continue to explore the possibilities of adults with and without ID learning alongside one another.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: LETTERS OF CONSENT AND LETTERS OF INFORMATION

Letter of Consent for the Students at CALC Prep

Researcher: Jimmy Wintle, Faculty of Education at Queen’s University
Project Title: *A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class.*

**Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return it to the envelope at the front of the classroom. Keep the second copy for yourself.**

I have read a copy of the letter of information about this project and all my questions have been answered. I am aware that Jimmy wants to find out what it is like for students from CALC Prep to get ready to go Queen's University.

I understand that this means that I have agreed to let Jimmy observe me once a week for 8 weeks during classes at CALC Prep. Each observation will last about 1 hour, for a total of 8 hours.

I understand that Jimmy will ask me questions during break times in class. I know that my talks with Jimmy will be voice recorded.

I know that nothing bad will happen to me if I talk to Jimmy. I also know that nothing bad will happen to me if I do not want to answer some questions.

I know that I can say no to being a part of this project at any time if I change my mind and nothing bad will happen to me.

I know that Jimmy will not let anyone know that I talked to him. He may write about what I tell him, but no one will know it was me who said it. I know that my answers might be published in academic journals and presented in conferences, but no one will know it was me who said it.

I know that if I want, Jimmy will go over what he writes with me, so that I can make sure he got my answers right.

I know that Jimmy will keep my answers in a safe place, locked-up. I understand that if I ask, Jimmy will give me a description of the results of the project after its completion.

I am aware that if I have any questions about this project, I can contact Jimmy Wintle at Queen’s University, Faculty of Education at (613) 533-3025 or by email at 3jjw@queensu.ca, or Dr. Nancy Hutchinson at 613-533-3025. For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study I can contact the Chair of the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, 613-533-6081, email: chair.greb@queensu.ca
I have read and understand this consent form and I agree to participate in this project.

Participant (Please Print): ________________________________
Signature: ______________________
Date: __________________________

Guardian (Please Print): ____________________________________
Signature: ___________________________
Date: _______________________________

Letter of Information for the Students at CALC Prep

Letter of Information

Researcher: Jimmy Wintle, Faculty of Education at Queen’s University
Project Title: A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class.

My name is Jimmy Wintle. I am a student at Queen's University. I would like to invite you to be part of a research project. It is about what students from CALC Prep do to get ready for taking classes at Queen's. Let me tell you about the project so you can decide if you want to be part of it.

I want to know what sort of things students do at CALC Prep. What are the classes at CALC Prep like? What are you taught there? What sort of activities do you do there? I want to find out by observing some of your classes, and asking you some questions for a few minutes during class breaks. I will come to CALC Prep about 1 time every week for 8 weeks. Each time I will be there for about 1 hour. I will be observing for a total of about 8 hours.

Each time I go to CALC Prep I will ask your permission first if I can observe you in your class. You can say no, and nothing bad will happen to you.

If I ask you a question you do not like, you do not have to answer it. You can also tell me if you do not want to talk to me anymore, or you can tell the director of CALC. Nothing bad will happen to you if you talk to me. It is important that you know that you can say "no" to being a part of this project and nothing bad will happen.

If you say "yes" to being a part of this project, your answers will help people understand what it is like for students from CALC Prep to get ready to go to Queen's. I would like to voice record what you say, so I do not miss anything. Only people who help me with my project will hear the tape. I will be the only person who will know who is on the tape.
After I write down everything that is on the tape, I will erase it. Your name and where you live will not be in any of the things I write. I will keep the answers you give and the form you sign in a locked file for 2 years and then I will destroy them. If you want, we can go over what I write to make sure I got your answers right. Your answers might be published in academic journals and presented in conferences, but no one will know it was you who said it.

If you want to find out more about this project, you can call me at 613-533-3025, or you can call my supervisor. She is Dr. Nancy Hutchinson, and her phone number is also 613-533-3025. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this project you can also contact the Education Research ethics Board at ereb@queensu.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson at 613-533-6081 (chair.greb@queensu.ca).

If you want to be part of this project, write your name and the date on the consent forms and put a copy in the envelope at the front of the classroom. If you have a guardian, please have your guardian sign the consent forms, too.

Letter of Consent for the Instructors of CALC Prep

Consent Form

Researcher: Jimmy Wintle, Faculty of Education at Queen’s University
Project Title: A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class.

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return it to the envelope at the front of the classroom. Keep the second copy for yourself.

I have read and retained a copy of the letter of information concerning A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class and all my questions have been sufficiently answered. I am aware that the purpose of this study is to describe what it is like for students from CALC Prep to get ready to go Queen's University.

I understand that this means that I have agreed to let Jimmy observe CALC Prep classes once a week for 8 weeks. Each observation will last about 1 hour, for a total of eight hours.

I understand that Jimmy will ask me questions during break times in class. I know that my talks with Jimmy will be voice recorded.

I have been notified that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point during the study and I may request the removal of all or part of my data without any consequences to myself. I have also been told the steps that will be taken to protect confidentiality to the extent possible of all information. This includes use of a
pseudonym on all documentation, reviewing the information with you and keeping the
data in a secure location.

I understand that, upon request, I may have a full description of the results of the study
after its completion.

I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of the study.

I am aware that if I have any questions about this project, I can contact Jimmy Wintle at
Queen’s University, Faculty of Education at (613) 533-3025 or by email at
3jjw@queensu.ca, or Dr. Nancy Hutchinson at 613-533-3025. For questions, concerns or
complaints about the research ethics of this study I can contact the Chair of the Queen’s
University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, 613-533-6081, email:
chair.greb@queensu.ca

I have read and understand this consent form and I agree to participate in this
study.

Name (Please Print): ___________________________________________  Please initial here if you
agree to interviews being recorded.

Signature: ___________________________________________
Date: ___________________________________________

Letter of Information for the Instructors of CALC Prep

Letter of Information

Researcher: Jimmy Wintle, Faculty of Education at Queen’s University
Project Title: A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual
Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class.

My name is Jimmy Wintle. I am a student at Queen's University. I would like to invite
you to be part of a research project. It is about what students from CALC Prep do to get
ready for taking classes at Queen's. Let me tell you about the project so you can decide if
you want to be part of it.

I want to know what sort of things students do at CALC Prep. What are the classes at
CALC Prep like? What are you taught there? What sort of activities do you do there? I
want to find out by observing some CALC Prep classes, and asking you some questions
for a few minutes during class breaks. I will come to CALC Prep about one hour each
week, for 8 weeks. I will be observing for a total of about 8 hours. I will only go to
CALC Prep at times that are convenient to you. There will be no deception of any kind
throughout the interview or study and there are no known risks to participants.
You are not obliged to answer any objectionable or discomforting question. You have the right to withdraw, at any time, from participating in the interviews without any reason for cause and without any academic penalty or cost. To withdraw please contact either me or my supervisor. If you choose to withdraw, you may request the removal of all or part of your interview data.

Each informal interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. These recordings and transcripts will be used confidentially; that is, they will not be used in any way that may identify you as an individual. In order to protect your confidentiality to the extent possible, a pseudonym will be used in place of your real name. This pseudonym will be used in transcriptions of your interviews and in any written use of the interview material. Data from these interviews will be seen by my supervisor and myself, and will be stored in a secure location. You may review interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. Data may be published in academic journals and presented in conferences.

If you agree to this, please sign the consent form and return it to the envelope at the front of the classroom. I will contact you in the near future to make arrangements for a convenient time to observe classes at CALC Prep.

If you want to find out more about this project, you can call me at 613-533-3025, or you can call my supervisor. She is Dr. Nancy Hutchinson, and her phone number is 613-533-3025. If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this project you can also contact the Education Research ethics Board at ereb@queensuc.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson at 613-533-6081 (chair.greb@queensu.ca).

If you want to be part of this project, write your name and the date on the other pages and put a copy in the envelope at the front of the classroom.

Letter of Consent for the Teacher Candidates

Researcher: Jimmy Wintle, Faculty of Education at Queen’s University
Project Title: A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class.

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to the class professor. Retain the second copy for your records.

I have read and retained a copy of the letter of information concerning A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class and all my questions have been sufficiently answered. I am aware that the purpose of this study is to describe Teacher Candidates’ perceptions of the challenges and benefits of their experience in a class inclusive to a student with
intellectual disabilities, as well as a description of how this experience affects Teacher Candidates’ visions of their classrooms when they are teachers, in regards to inclusive education. I am aware that my involvement would consist of participating in 7 classroom observations. I am aware that each observation will last about 1 hour, for a total of 7 hours. I am aware that I may be asked questions during these observations. Participating also involves 2 interviews over the course of the first seven weeks of this semester. I am aware that each interview will last approximately 40-60 minutes, for a total of 80-120 minutes. I have been informed that all interviews will be digitally recorded.

I have been notified that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point during the study and I may request the removal of all or part of my data without any consequences to myself. I have also been told the steps that will be taken to protect confidentiality to the extent possible of all information. This includes use of a pseudonym on all documentation, reviewing the information with you and keeping the data in a secure location.

I understand that, upon request, I may have a full description of the results of the study after its completion.

I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of the study.

I am aware that if I have any questions about this project, I can contact Jimmy Wintle at Queen’s University, Faculty of Education at 613-533-3025 or by email at 3jjw@queensu.ca, or Dr. Nancy Hutchinson at 613-533-3025. For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study I can contact the Chair of the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, 613-533-6081, email: chair.greb@queensu.ca

I have read and understand this consent form and I agree to participate in this study.

Name (Please Print): ________________________________ Please initial here if you agree to interviews being recorded.
Signature: ______________
Date: ________________ Email address: ___________________

I decline to participate in this study (please check box) ☐
Please fold this form and return it to the collection envelope.

Letter of Information for the Teacher Candidates

Researcher: Jimmy Wintle, Faculty of Education at Queen’s University
Dear Participant,

As part of my master’s thesis at Queen’s University, I am conducting a study of the views of up to 4 students involved in an Inclusive Post-secondary Education (IPSE) class in the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University. The study will provide a description of Teacher Candidates’ perceptions of the challenges and benefits of their experience in a class inclusive to a student with intellectual disabilities, as well as a description of how this experience affects the Teacher Candidates’ vision of their classrooms when they are teachers, in regards to inclusive education.

The study will consist of approximately 7 classroom observations, lasting about one hour each, for a total of 7 hours. During these observations I will ask you questions during class breaks and record your answers. I would also like to invite you to participate in a series of 2 interviews about your experiences in this inclusive class. An average interview may take 40-60 minutes, for a total of 80-120 minutes. You can choose an interview location that is convenient for you. There will be no deception of any kind throughout the interview or study and there are no known risks to participants.

Each interview will be digitally recorded and transcribed. These recordings and transcripts will be used confidentially; that is, they will not be used in any way that may identify you as an individual. In order to protect your confidentiality to the extent possible, a pseudonym will be used in place of your real name. This pseudonym will be used in transcriptions of your interviews and in any written use of the interview material. Data from these interviews will be seen by my supervisor and myself, and will be stored in a secure location. You may review interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. Data may be published in academic journals and presented in conferences.

You are not obliged to answer any objectionable or discomforting question. You have the right to withdraw, at any time, from participating in the interviews without any reason for cause and without any academic penalty or cost. If you choose to withdraw, you may request the removal of all or part of your interview data. To withdraw please contact me or my supervisor at the number below.

If you agree to this, please sign the consent form. If you choose to decline, please mark that you are declining to participate on the consent form, no further information will need to be filled out. Please fold your consent form and return it to the collection envelope in the classroom. If you decide to participate, I will contact you in the near future to make arrangements for a time and location that is convenient to you for the purpose of interviewing.

For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Education Research ethics Board at ereb@queensu.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson at 613-533-6081 (chair.greb@queensu.ca).

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Nancy Hutchinson, at:
Letter of Consent for the Drama Curriculum Instructor

Researcher: Jimmy Wintle, Faculty of Education at Queen’s University
Project Title: *A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class.*

Please sign one copy of this Consent Form and return to the Graduate Studies Office (room A106). Retain the second copy for your records.

I have read and retained a copy of the letter of information concerning *A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class* and all my questions have been sufficiently answered. I am aware that the purpose of this study is to describe the participants’ perceptions of the challenges and benefits of their experience in a class inclusive to a student with intellectual disabilities, as well as a description of how this experience affects Teacher Candidates’ visions of their classrooms when they are teachers, in regards to inclusive education. I am aware that my involvement would consist of participating in 7 classroom observations. I am aware that each observation will last about 1 hour, for a total of 7 hours. I am aware that I may be asked questions during these observations. Participating also involves 2 interviews over the course of the first seven weeks of this semester. I am aware that each interview will last approximately 40-60 minutes, for a total of 80-120 minutes. I have been informed that all interviews will be digitally recorded.

I have been notified that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any point during the study and I may request the removal of all or part of my data without any consequences to myself. I have also been told the steps that will be taken to protect confidentiality to the extent possible of all information. This includes use of a pseudonym on all documentation, reviewing the information with you and keeping the data in a secure location.

I understand that, upon request, I may have a full description of the results of the study after its completion.

I understand that the researcher intends to publish the findings of the study.
I am aware that if I have any questions about this project, I can contact Jimmy Wintle at Queen’s University, Faculty of Education at (613) 533-3025 or by email at 3jjw@queensu.ca, or Dr. Nancy Hutchinson at 613-533-3025. For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study I can contact the Chair of the Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson, 613-533-6081, email: chair.greb@queensu.ca

I have read and understand this consent form and I agree to participate in this study.

Name (Please Print): ______________________________

Please initial here if you agree to interviews being recorded.

Signature: ______________________________

Date: __________________________ Email address: ______________________

Letter of Information for the Drama Curriculum Instructor

Researcher: Jimmy Wintle, Faculty of Education at Queen’s University
Project Title: A Multiple-perspective Case Study of a Young Adult with Intellectual Disabilities Participating in a Post-secondary Class.

Dear Participant,

As part of my master’s thesis at Queen’s University, I am conducting a study of the views of up to 4 students involved in an Inclusive Post-secondary Education (IPSE) class in the Faculty of Education at Queen’s University. The study will provide a description of participants’ perceptions of the challenges and benefits of their experience in a class inclusive to a student with intellectual disabilities, as well as a description of how this experience affects Teacher Candidates’ vision of their classrooms when they are teachers, in regards to inclusive education.

The study will consist of approximately 7 classroom observations, lasting about one hour each, for a total of 7 hours. These observations will take place during classes that are convenient to you. During these observations I will ask you questions during class breaks. I would like to invite you to participate in a series of 2 interviews about your experiences teaching this inclusive class. An average interview may take 40-60 minutes, for a total of 80-120 minutes. You can choose an interview location that is convenient for you. There will be no deception of any kind throughout the interview or study and there are no known risks to participants.

Each interview will by digitally recorded and transcribed. These recordings and transcripts will be used confidentially; that is, they will not be used in any way that may
identify you as an individual. In order to protect your confidentiality to the extent possible, a pseudonym will be used in place of your real name. This pseudonym will be used in transcriptions of your interviews and in any written use of the interview material. Data from these interviews will be seen by my supervisor and myself, and will be stored in a secure location. You may review interview transcripts to ensure accuracy. Data may be published in academic journals and presented in conferences.

You are not obliged to answer any objectionable or discomforting question. You have the right to withdraw, at any time, from participating in the interviews without any reason for cause and without any academic penalty or cost. If you choose to withdraw, you may request the removal of all or part of your interview data.

If you agree to this, please sign the consent form and return it to the Graduate Studies Office (room A106). I will contact you in the near future to make arrangements for a time and location that is convenient to you for the purpose of interviewing.

For questions, concerns or complaints about the research ethics of this study, contact the Education Reseach ethics Board at ereb@queensu.ca or the chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson at 613-533-6081 (chair.greb@queensu.ca).

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Nancy Hutchinson, at:

Jimmy Wintle  
M.Ed Candidate  
Faculty of Education  
Queen's University  
E-mail: 3jjw@queensu.ca  
Telephone : 613-533-3025

Dr. Nancy Hutchinson  
Professor  
Faculty of Education  
Queen's University  
E-mail: hutchinn@queensu.ca  
Telephone: 613-533-3025  
Fax: 613-533-6584
APPENDIX B: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Sample Questions for the Focal Participant

1. If you met somebody new, and they wanted to know a bit about you, what would you tell them?
2. What new things have you learned at the University?
3. What can you tell me about your teacher?
4. What can you tell me about your classmates?
5. What things helped you in class? Did your buddies help you?
6. What other things did you do at university besides go to class?
7. What does being a university student mean to you?
8. Has being a university student made a difference in your life outside of school?
9. When you finished high school, what sorts of things did you think you would like to do next?
10. Tell me about new people you’ve met since coming to the University.
11. How did you feel when you first heard that you could go to the University?

Sample Interview Questions for the TCs

1. What did you observe about Laura’s learning?
2. What did you notice about the way she participated in class?
3. What lessons/activities seem most effective with her?
4. What lessons/activities have you found less effective?
5. Describe your personal interactions with Laura.
6. What has this experience taught you about teaching?

7. What have you learned that you will be able to use in your own classroom?

8. How has this experience affected your thinking about your future career?

9. In what ways, if any, has this experience affected your attitudes about intellectual disabilities? Inclusion?

10. What, if any have been the benefits that you’ve gained from this experience?

11. What, if any have been the challenges of the experience?

12. Do you think this experience has taken anything away from the class?

13. Do you think it’s added to the class? And if so, in what ways?

Sample Interview Questions for the Course Instructor

1. Describe for me any changes in the way the BEd students interact with Laura.

2. Tell me about Laura’s participation in your class.

3. What stands out for you about the participation of Laura with either the course work or with the class?

4. Have you noticed any changes in the way Laura conducts herself in class?

5. In what ways do you think the dynamics of the classroom have changed?

6. Has the way you teach the class changed?

7. What did you feel the other students took away from the experience of having one of their peers in the class have an intellectual disability?

8. What have been the challenges, if any, in this experience?

9. How have you worked through difficulties?

10. What were your major concerns when you were asked if a student with an intellectual disability could audit your class?
11. How did you feel your teaching would be affected?

12. What advice would you give to a professor who is contemplating teaching an inclusive post-secondary class?

13. Now that you have had a student with an intellectual disability in your class how have your impressions about inclusive post-secondary education changed?