

**WALKING THE TALK?
MODELS OF DISABILITY AND DISCOURSE IN EMPLOYMENT POLICY
FOR CANADIANS WITH DISABILITIES**

by

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ABSTRACT

The research undertaken in this thesis facilitated an examination of the dominant discourses contained in several disability policy documents, the ideological underpinnings driving the discourses and the influence of particular models of disability. This investigation demonstrated that there were in fact two dominant discourses common to all the policy texts, namely a discourse of Independence and a discourse of Employability. These evolved from a status of being overtly referenced within the policy texts to becoming an underlying “given” or “truth”. While the language of various models of disability were used in the texts, there is little evidence to suggest that any particular model had any singular influence. Rather, the use of the language of various models of disability appeared to be “tactical” in nature, and used simply to enhance the legitimacy of the particular discourses or arguments being presented. As the texts appeared to be grounded within a neoliberal policy orientation, the use of the language of the models, particularly the social model of disability, was of value in providing legitimacy to concepts that are in many ways antithetical to some of the core precepts of the models. Lastly, the analysis suggests that the actors with the greatest degree of power and influence during the drafting and implementation of the policy texts remained government officials, and the influence of people with disabilities or their advocates was at best subordinate, or in many cases nonexistent.

Through this type of research, policy researchers, advocates and impacted individuals with disabilities who endure the effects of policy, have powerful tools with which to expose these dominant discourses. Often these dominant discourses have evolved into unspoken and taken for granted "truths". Foregrounding such discourses can facilitate the development of counter discourses or strategies to negate or at least minimize the negative impacts that result from policy and program decisions grounded in these discourses. Such a capacity could go a long way in leveling the playing field, and at least to some degree equalize the power differential between government and "others" when presented with skillfully written and often dissembling policy texts.

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GLOSSARY

DRES Disability Related Employment Supports

EAPD Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities

MRSS Forum of Ministers Responsible for Social Services

VRDP Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons

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1: INTRODUCTION

This study examines the dominant discourses present in a national Canadian employment policy framework targeted at persons with disabilities, and the influence of particular models of disability. The author contends that through the identification of the discourses and the evaluation of the presence/absence/emphasis of language drawn from various models of disability, insights can be obtained into ideological “drivers” within the policy documents, and the relative power/dominance/subordination of key actors within the policy processes.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Stakeholders within the community of persons with disabilities in Canada have expressed increasing concern about the incongruity between what is said in national disability policy texts and how the policies are subsequently operationalized and implemented. In other words, the policies seem to say one thing but do another (Battle, Torjman, & Mendelson, 2003). Often the documents seem to imply policy directions that are not reflected in actual programs and services.

This study explores the actual dominant discourses present within a set of employment policy texts for Canadians with disabilities, and asks how they are used to promote particular policy and ideological agendas. There are three aspects to this problem. First, the study will explore what these discourses are, and the commonalities in the discourses among the policy texts.

The second aspect of this problem relates to how the language of disability is used within the discourses articulated in the texts. This is explored through an examination of the role and function of the language of various models of disability within the policy documents. In particular, the presence or absence within the texts of the language of specific models is examined, together with their role in legitimizing certain policy approaches.

The third aspect of this problem lies in identifying how the discourses empower/disempower various actors involved in the policy process and whether they promote or discourage specific ideological approaches to social policy. Differing audiences, actors and power differentials seem to be at play at different stages in the policy process, and certain ideological orientations also seem to present. How these interplay within, and are reflected by the dominant discourses forms an important element of the study.

This thesis intends to examine a set of four publicly accessible documents that depict the development and implementation of a primary framework for national Canadian employment policy for people with disabilities. The national policy framework being examined is the Multilateral Framework of the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities [EAPD] (Government of Canada, 1998a), developed in the late 1990's and early 2000's. I will examine four key public texts generated during the evolution and implementation of this multilateral policy framework. In so doing, I intend to determine what the dominant discourses are among these four documents, demonstrate and examine the presence (or absence) of the language of different models of disability.

This process provides insights into the degree of power exercised by various actors and the dominant ideological themes.

1.2 Research Questions

1. Are there common discourses in four public documents surrounding the development and implementation of the EAPD national disability employment policy framework?
2. Are there any models of disability reflected in these discourses?
3. Do these discourses and/or models suggest or support particular ideological orientations within the policy texts?
4. Do the discourses and models of disability interact to support or diminish the voices/power of the primary actors involved?

1.3 Rationale for the Study

Ball (1994) notes that policies “typically posit a restructuring, redistribution, and disruption of power relations, so that different people can and cannot do different things” (p. 20). Similarly, models of disability reflect predominate views of disability extant in society at large at particular points in time. Hubbard (2004) and Devlieger (2005) observed that contemporary societies are driven by these views when interacting with the population of persons with disabilities within their midst. In other words, if policies facilitate the determination of who can do what, then models of disability articulate how individuals with disabilities should be understood and considered in society. The

interaction of these two elements, within the context of the vital area of employment policy for Canadians with disabilities, is the foundation for this study.

1.3.1 Importance of Models of Disability

Dominant models have the implicit ability to shape the power relationships within the policy, yet the integration of elements of subordinate models (or at least the language used in them) can often ‘soften’ the evidence of this domination. Just as Canadian society’s view of disability and people with disabilities have changed over the last two centuries, these changes have been reflected by the dominance or subordination of various models of disability.

The dominance of earlier models of disability, such as the “Religious” model which attributed disability to divine punishment or demonic possession, and the “Charity” model wherein individuals and society had a moral obligation to assist the afflicted and disabled has been gradually superseded by other models. As the United Nations Expert Group on International Norms and Standards Relating to Disability (United Nations, 2003) has noted, “the move from the patronizing and paternalistic approach to persons with disabilities ... to viewing them as members of the community with equal rights has also been reflected in the evolution of international standards relating specifically to disability, as well as in moves to place the rights of persons with disabilities within the category of universal human rights” (para. 6).

In many cases the older and newer models of disability often contain deep philosophical differences that appear irreconcilable (O'Day, 1998, O'Day,1999). Policies grounded in these differing models can often take radically different approaches to

addressing the needs of persons with disabilities. However, when examining recent examples of Canadian disability policy documents it appears that elements of the documents often reflect the newer models, particularly in regard to the language used. Other elements of the policy reflect earlier models, despite their supposedly mutual irreconcilability. Devlieger (2005), in his discussion of models of disability within a global context observed that "...one should consider the existence of [such] modes of thought as sometimes juxtaposed, but more often intertwined. While one model may be dominant in one context, snippets of [other] models of thought intervene" (p. 6).

Prince (2004) has also observed this phenomenon in Canadian disability policy, noting that:

Legislative reviews and reforms have modernized the language as well as the law of concern to Canadians with disabilities. Such measures represent a reordering of the symbolic fabric of citizenship, measures disability groups regard as important gestures in expressing what kind of nation we wish to be. The older perspectives on disability persist, though, embedded in various policies and programs at both levels of government in Canada. (p. 463).

This phenomenon is not restricted to Canadian disability policies. Other researchers of disability policy have observed a similar phenomenon. For example, Humpage (2007) noted that within the Australian governments' proposed changes to the national Disability Support Pension (DSP) to promote the concepts of 'participation' and 'inclusion'. She observed that the language used in the new policy document: "...shares some overlap with that used by disability advocates to promote the "social model of disability", which focuses on the relationship between people with disabilities and their

social environments and locates the required interventions with the end of the realm of social policy and institutional practice” (p. 215). However, she also noted that:

The Australian government’s plans for welfare reform actually sit in tension with a social model of disability. This is because a central component of the reforms, mutual obligation, overlaps with and reinforces a ‘medical model of disability’, in that both locate the ‘problem’ in the individual and ignore the obligations of the state and society more generally. In addition, they both use medical professionals as ‘gatekeepers’ to resources and subject people with disabilities to systems of surveillance, compliance and coercion. (p. 216).

Thus the importance of the models of disability on government disability policy cannot be ignored. If, as Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry (1997) contend, “power and control are central in the policy process” (p. 27), then examination of the policy texts should provide an excellent means of exploring how the various models of disability are used in different ways at different stages in the policy development and implementation process. As was noted in a 1999 evaluation of existing federal policies and programs for people with disabilities:

The literature shows that there are various ways of defining and identifying disability. How it is done can result in differing characterizations of the disabled population and differing conceptions of disability. This in turn can have important implications for both policy and evaluation [as].... disability is often defined to be as inclusive as possible, such as in overarching legislation, while in other cases, definitions are used to control access and to ration services (Government of Canada, 1999a, para. 24).

1.3.2 Why Employment Policy for People with Disabilities?

The critical importance of employment to the personal, economic, and social well being of persons with disabilities is well documented. In a capitalistic society which values both health and physical/mental ‘normality’ as well as economic self-sufficiency, being unemployed carries a heavy social stigma yet is depressingly common among adults with disabilities (O’Day, 1998). Barnes (1999a) notes that the understanding of disability in our society is “inextricably linked to paid work [and] since at least the industrial revolution, to be defined as ‘disabled’ means to be either unemployed or underemployed” (p. 147). Yasuda, Wehman, Targett, Cifu & West (2002) observed that being employed has become synonymous in our society with financial security, self-esteem, independence, social relationships, self-worth, and personal identity. Robinson (2000) noted the “advantages of employment for disabled people in terms of the social psychological benefits of work in enhancing self-esteem and reducing social isolation” (p. 246). The *In Unison 2000* policy document (Government of Canada, 2000a) specifically states that “for many people with disabilities, paid or voluntary work - whether full- or part-time - is a key to independence and full participation in their communities” (p.31). Indeed, so important is the role of employment for people with disabilities that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities includes a specific Article (27) which references the needs and rights of persons with disabilities regarding employment (United Nations, 2006).

Despite this importance, the employment situation for persons with disabilities is worsening. Numerous studies (Government of Canada, 1996b; Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2003; Roeher Institute, 2001a; Schwochau &

Blanck, 2000; Vilsack & Pederson, 2000) confirm a distressingly high (and growing) discrepancy in employment rates between disabled and non-disabled Canadians. As the 2003 Statistics Canada document *Disability in Canada* (Government of Canada, 2003b) notes:

...during the working age years (15-64), persons with disabilities are almost twice as likely to experience low income as others (26.6% versus 13.9%). Employment is also a great challenge, with employment rates ranging from 45.7% for youth with disabilities to 51.2% among core-working ages, to 27.3% among older workers with disabilities. These rates are all substantially lower than those of persons without disabilities (pp. 2-3).

Even in Alberta, with its generally higher levels of employment overall, the aggregate labour participation rate for persons with disabilities in 2001 was 58.8% for men and 52.8% for women vs. 89.1% (males) and 77.8% (females) for their non-disabled counterparts (Government of Alberta, 2006). Fawcett (2000) observed that the poverty rate for women with disabilities who were employed full-time, full-year in Ontario was 8 per cent, but among women with disabilities in Ontario who were not employed at all, the poverty rate was 40 per cent – five times higher! Russell (2002) notes the continuing decline in the employment rates of persons with disabilities in the United States, even in periods of economic expansion and increasing employment levels within the population as a whole.

From an international perspective, the situation is equally serious. As was noted at the 2002 Inter-Regional Consultative Expert Meeting on Disability Sensitive Policy Design and Evaluation (WorldEnable, 2002) “worldwide, the socioeconomic dynamics of

disability have tended to be similar among countries for a long period of time. People often tend to lose some or all of their rights to social and economic inclusion as a result of incurring a disability, which typically results in some degree of social and economic isolation and marginalization” (para. 2). Barnes (1999a) citing an array of mainly disabled writers, goes so far as to claim that without a radical restructuring of social policy in general, and within employment policy the concept of work in particular, there is little cause for optimism that the employment or economic situation of persons with disabilities will change substantially in the future. Hoff, Holsapple, Kennedy and Moseley (2009) note that the current global economic crisis is accentuating an already difficult employment picture for persons with disabilities. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) reports that in 2009 the employment to population ratio (the proportion of the population that is employed) was 19.2% for persons with a disability, compared with 64.5% for individuals without a disability. The Bureau also reported that workers with a disability were more likely than those without to be employed on a part-time basis, and much more likely to be employed in service occupations than their nondisabled peers. Similarly, individuals with disabilities are far less likely to be employed in management, professional or similar occupations with greater remunerative possibilities.

The importance of employment lies not only in the ‘taken for granted’ status of employment as a key element in the determination of self-worth in our society, but also in the very real correlation between employment status and poverty. Persons with disabilities in Canada face levels of poverty almost twice that of persons without disabilities (Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres, 2004), and employment is seen as a primary means for addressing this disparity. Indeed, recent key

social policy initiatives at both the federal and provincial levels have emphasized the importance of employment for persons with disabilities as a means of reducing poverty, an unsuccessful policy direction which appears to be gaining strength under the current Conservative federal government (Council of Canadians with Disabilities, 2008). Policy initiatives in the last decade at the provincial level, such as the British Columbia's Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities (Government of British Columbia, 2003) and Manitoba Rewarding Work (Government of Manitoba, 2007) emphasize employment as a key mechanism for raising persons with disabilities out of poverty.

1.4 Relevance to Practice

Prince (2001) notes "the history of citizenship for Canadians with disabilities is in large part a history of public policies and intergovernmental relations" (p. 791). Despite the fact that federal/provincial/territorial policies and agreements have historically played a critical role in the provision of employment supports and services to people with disabilities in Canada, little attention has been given to examining the development or impact of policy initiatives such as EAPD Multilateral framework. This is in part due to employment policy for persons with disabilities in Canada being, until recently, a relatively isolated subset in the area of disability policy development. Unlike other areas, such as health or transportation, where policy initiatives are often rolled into broader social policy directions aimed at the general population, the Canadian experience in employment policy for persons with disabilities has, as a rule, been very narrowly interpreted. As a result, few have looked at these policy frameworks, let alone the models of disability underpinning them, even though they are one of the primary national social

policy mechanisms for addressing the employment needs of persons with disabilities in Canada.

My interest in this issue is, in part, a result of my current job responsibilities as the Director of the Intergovernmental Relations Branch – Strategic Corporate Services Division of Alberta Employment and Immigration. In this role, I oversee both policy analysis and strategic support to the Minister, Deputy Minister, and Assistant Deputy Ministers on key issues as they interact with their counterparts in the federal government and other provinces and territories. One of my areas of responsibility involves the negotiation, monitoring and evaluation of intergovernmental agreements impacting departmental programs and services for Albertans with disabilities. Although the policy initiatives reviewed in this study were developed prior to my assumption of this role, I have been privy to many of the discussions and decision-making processes underlying the development of similar provincial and national policy initiatives arising subsequent to the EAPD Multilateral framework. I also have extensive contact with stakeholders and advocates for persons with disabilities on both a regional and national level, many of whom are increasingly critical of the current approaches by government to the provision of employment supports for persons with disabilities.

Prior to my current role in Intergovernmental Relations, I had spent nearly 20 years in direct service provision with people with disabilities. In that time, working within government, non-profit, and workers' compensation systems, I have personally seen both the positive and negative impacts that can result as policy is interpreted and implemented. However, within my entire time in the public service or the vocational rehabilitation sector, I have rarely (if ever) encountered any challenges to the underlying

assumptions or models upon which the policies governing my practice and work environment were based. As someone whose professional training and professional practice has almost entirely been grounded in the medical and functional models of disability (to be discussed below), I was initially shocked and puzzled when adherents of other models of disability launched quite vociferous attacks on the principles underlying many of the major policy and program initiatives underlying my work. Over time, as I expanded my own knowledge base of other models and viewpoints of disability I began to question many of the assumptions and policies grounding my professional practice. It is this questioning, combined with the obvious failure of many of the current policies and practices intended to help persons with disabilities gain employment, which drives my interest in this area and centers my research for this dissertation.

2: POLICY CONTEXT

Goldberg (2005) states that the first step in the critical discourse analysis of policy requires limiting the policy field in order to focus the analysis. This involves "... situating the policy in its discursive context and delineating the boundaries of the investigation. Once delineated, key actors/stakeholders, their interests and power relationships can be identified" (p. 103). In this study, the policy field is limited to the area of Canadian employment policy for persons with disabilities, and further limited to a set of policy documents generated either in conjunction with or under the auspices of the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities (EAPD) policy initiative.

The EAPD initiative has been identified as one of the key elements in national disability employment policy (National Educational Association of Disabled Students, 1998; Prince, 2001), as well as one of the major policy outcomes arising from work undertaken in support of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Social Union Framework Agreement. This agreement, signed in 1999, commits federal, provincial, and territorial governments to work collaboratively to "strengthen Canada's social safety net, involve Canadians in the development of social programs and strengthen partnerships among governments" (Government of Canada, 2000, para. 1).

Loewenson (2003) notes that "policy development processes are neither linear, simple nor always coherent. They often involve the concerted action of multiple agencies with differing interests and are generally influenced by a wide range of factors, not all of which are within the public domain" (para. 9). The policy discourses examined in this

study were generated at a time when a number of differing (and often conflicting) social and political factors were making their influences felt on the development of disability policy both globally and within the Canadian context. While this complexity makes the identification of all factors influencing the development of the EAPD policy framework almost impossible, there are some key elements whose influence can be more easily isolated.

This chapter will examine a number of these environmental and contextual elements influencing the development of the policy texts. The chapter begins with a discussion of the concept of employability and the influence this concept has had on labour market policy, followed by an exploration of the history of disability employment policies in Canada. The latter discussion includes specific consideration of federal/provincial government disability policy as well as the perspectives of external stakeholders both within Canada and internationally. The next section in the chapter briefly summarizes the policy context behind the EAPD policy initiative, and the chapter concludes with a summary of the current policy environment and changes that have taken place since the initiation of the EAPD.

2.1 The Concept of Employability and People with Disabilities

One key element of employment policy for persons with disabilities at both the national and international level has been the application of the concept of ‘employability’. Leggatt-Cook (2007) notes that while the term “employability” has been discussed since the early 20th century, it is only in the last two decades that concept has been actively applied to labour market and employment policy. McQuaid & Lindsay (2005) observed that in recent decades the concept of employability has played a crucial

role in informing labour market policy worldwide, both in terms of local, regional and national policy in numerous countries. The concept has also been applied when describing the objectives of economic strategies promoted by important supranational institutions such as the OECD, ILO, United Nations, etc. Indeed, the ubiquity with which the concept is used has resulted in the term acquiring a variety of meanings and applications within a range of different policy contexts, and has become a “buzzword” often applied to labour market and employment policy (Hillage & Pollard, 1998; McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005).

2.1.1 History of the Concept

McQuaid & Lindsay (2005) trace the history of the concept of employability in terms of ‘waves’ of change in the meanings of the term. The first ‘wave’ comprised of a singular usage of the concept, defined as “dichotomic employability”, which essentially divided the population into two categories of people: the “employable” and the apparently “unemployable”. This conceptualization of employability was utilized from the early 1900’s until the late 1940’s with little attention paid to any nuances or differences influencing the dichotomy. ‘Employable’ simply referred to individuals considered to be ‘ready for work’, while ‘unemployable’ applied to those deemed ‘not ready for work’ and consequently in need of welfare or other social supports (Gazier, 2001).

The second wave of meanings was popular in the 1950’s to the 1960’s, and centered on the attributes of the individual within the labour market. In particular, two definitions were popular, the ‘socio-medical’ and ‘manpower policy’ variants (Gazier, 2001). The socio-medical definition of employability “sought to establish the work

requirements necessitated by employment, and examined the distance between [them and] the existing work capabilities of the physically and/or mentally disadvantaged” (Leggatt-Cook, 2007, p. 13). The manpower policy definition was primarily used in the United States during the activist era of the 60’s, and while retaining the focus on the individuals’ physical capabilities, also added a focus on the social and educational capabilities of the individual (e.g. - level of educational qualifications, type of work experience, criminal records, etc). To this mix, McQuaid & Lindsay (2005) added a third definitional category, namely the ‘flow employability’ definition. Emerging out of French sociological literature in the 1960’s, this approach to defining employability focused “on the demand side and the accessibility of employment within local and national economies” (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005). As such, it was less concerned with the individuals attributes than in the local, regional and national economic and labour market environments within which the individual operated.

The third ‘wave’ of understanding the term employability appeared in the 1980’s and 1990’s, with the abandonment of the preceding conceptualizations and the progressive adaptation of three successive understandings of the term. These changes to the meaning of the term were premised both on developments within the global economy and on the increasing impact of ideological considerations in the development of labour market policy. McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) describe the three different variants as (1) ‘outcome-based’, labour market performance centered employability; (2) ‘initiative employability’, with a focus on individual responsibility; and (3) ‘interactive employability’, which integrated a focus on individual adaptation to labour market realities with an acknowledgment that a number of social and structural factors also

influenced individual ability to access employment. Gazier (2001) and McQuaid & Lindsay (2005) argue that there has been a steady progression in the last 20 years in the usage of the three meanings listed above, and that, until recently, the interactive employability conceptualization has been dominant within labour market policy in advanced economies.

Leggatt-Cook (2007) however, caution that the ‘third wave’ formulations of employability may not fully capture the impact of increasing changes to the economic and political environments of advanced Western economies. They speculate that these formulations are perhaps minimizing the extent to which dislocations caused by rapid technological developments, the onset of widespread globalization, and the continuing impact of neo-liberal economic thought are having on governments worldwide, and how they in turn utilize the concept of employability within national labour market policy. Further, the recent and sudden onset of the current world-wide economic slowdown has resulted in a dramatic expansion of direct interventions by national governments in terms of economic stimulus, regulation of the banking system, and the application of labour market policy to enhance the employability of citizens impacted by the global recession.

2.1.2 Current Applications of Employability in Labour Market Policy

McQuaid & Lindsay (2005), citing Philpott (1998, 1999) suggest that radical changes in the world economy over the last three decades “inevitably leads to a two-part approach to employability policy—one focusing on activation and labour market attachment (or what Philpott calls 'access'), and the other focusing on 'up-skilling' the labour force through employability training and lifelong learning” (p. 203). The implication of this for labour market and employment policy, particularly for persons

with disabilities, is significant. Such an orientation can easily lead to a “kind of supply side fundamentalism” (Peck and Theodore, 2000, p. 729), which essentially attributes responsibility to the jobless individual for his/her situation and assumes that they simply lack the requisite skills, abilities or motivation to obtain and maintain employment. As will be discussed in detail in later chapters, certain models of disability place a primary emphasis on the individuals physical and employment related attributes as their primary focus. Such an application of the concept of employability in labour market policy would likely favour the influence of certain models over others during policy development.

Within a Canadian context, Butterwick and Benjamin (2006) note a policy shift in recent years away from finding and placing unemployed workers into jobs, and towards an orientation that sees the enhancement of the individual’s employability as the primary objective of labour market policy. This shift in orientation has had significant policy implications, particularly for populations facing substantial barriers in the competitive labour market. The onus of responsibility has shifted away from state’s role in ensuring the availability of jobs for individuals, and towards a reliance on the marketplace to create jobs as an outgrowth of economic activity, with a corresponding responsibility on the individual to ensure that they have the necessary skills and attributes needed to convince employers to hire them. McQuaid & Lindsay (2005) point out that this shift in orientation can evoke “a 'traditional' reactionary understanding of unemployment, which seeks to blame the jobless individual's predicament upon his or her inadequacies, rather than acknowledging a lack of opportunity within the labour market” (p. 204).

Leggatt-Cook (2007) argues that the Canadian policy discourse on employability is today increasingly centered on the need to forge closer ties among government,

business and education in order to ensure that Canada is competitive and successful in the global economy. As a result, government labour market policy approaches (strongly supported by the private sector) have increasingly retreated from the activist interventions in employment and unemployment often seen in Europe (e.g. statutory and regulatory restrictions on layoffs and firings, legislation promoting protection of workers' rights, etc.) and towards a focus on the personal development and training of workers.

Butterwick & Benjamin (2006) observed that "public policy now becomes focused on the domestic or private sphere, that is, the personal development and 'inner life' of individual workers" (p. 79).

In terms of national Canadian disability policy, a focus on the employability of the individual has been a central element of recent policy initiatives. For example, Prince (2001) observes that among the principles grounding the EAPD policy framework examined in this study is an emphasis on direct support of employability, as well as a focus on individual needs. In this regard, Canadian disability employment policy has followed international trends, with a marked refocusing on the 'upskilling' of the individual to meet the needs of the employers, rather than direct government intervention to create jobs or ameliorate the harsher aspects of the competitive labour market (Butterwick & Benjamin, 2006, Gazier, 2006, Leggatt-Cook, 2007, McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005).

2.2 History of Employment Policy for People with Disabilities in Canada

The need for some form of national policy response to the employment concerns of persons with disabilities has been recognized in Canada for over 50 years (Crichton &

Jongbloed, 1998). The first concerted efforts to address the employment concerns of persons with disabilities concentrated on injured workers, with the initiation of Workers' Compensation legislation in Quebec in 1909 and Ontario in 1914. Subsequent to the First World War, further efforts were undertaken through federal policies and benefits intended to reintegrate and employ disabled veterans. However, these efforts were targeted only to specific populations of disabled individuals, identified as "deserving" of government assistance. Most individuals with disabilities were totally reliant on either personal resources or charity in finding employment, a situation that continued in the years leading up to the Second World War (Crichton & Jongbloed, 1998).

The post-World War II influx of wounded and injured veterans combined with an increasing awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities led to federal initiatives to enhance the services and resources available. Neufeldt and Enns (2003) note that in the 1950's the initial impetus for a more coordinated, national approach to disability issues arose from the dissatisfaction experienced by returning injured veterans. They expressed concerns over the nature and approach to treatment and rehabilitation provided by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs. Veterans felt that the existing services, heavily influenced by physician-centric and institution-based models dating back to the post-World War I era, offered little scope for rehabilitation or facilitating their return to the community. Veteran's advocates joined with organizations representing other populations of persons with disabilities to push for more coordinated, responsive and national policy and programs.

Jongbloed (2006) notes that initiatives such as the federal *Blind Persons Act* of 1951 and the federal *Disabled Persons Act* of 1956 were among the first of the post-war

national legislative efforts intended to assist persons with disabilities. Related legislative developments in the creation of the Canadian welfare state also occurred in other areas that affect people with disabilities, such as income support (*Unemployment Insurance Act*), health care (*Hospital Insurance & Diagnostic Services Act*), and pensions (Canada/Quebec Pension Plan, Canada Assistance Plan). Jongbloed (2006) also notes that broad scale social and health initiatives of this type were common from the 1940's to the mid-1970's. She attributes to a greater degree of comfort by the burgeoning middle classes with substantive initiatives to redistribute the countries wealth more evenly.

However, none of the legislative and regulatory initiatives cited above specifically addressed employment. Employment concerns were first addressed from a national policy perspective with the passing of the *Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Act* (VRDP) in 1961 (Government of Canada, 1985). When tracing the development of this initiative, Neufeldt and Enns (1993), place its beginning with a national conference on the rehabilitation of the physically disabled in 1951. They cite this as the first effort to bring together academics, practitioners, disability advocacy representatives and representatives from both the federal and provincial governments. This outcome of this conference included calls for the federal government to become more heavily involved in rehabilitation. They also cite the event as a primary impetus for the creation of the VRDP legislation.

The *Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Act's* primary intent was to assist persons with disabilities lacking personal resources in accessing or maintaining themselves in the labour market (Crichton & Jongbloed, 1998). As noted earlier, the *Act* enabled provinces to recover 50% of their costs associated with educating or training

adults with disabilities. It was also a notable policy initiative in three aspects: (1) the broad scope and wide flexibility inherent within the policy (i.e. - there were no funding limits and a wide variety of services and programs were covered); (2) policy development activities were primarily driven by the federal government with input from provinces, and (3) there was active federal participation in program delivery as federal officials were involved in decision making at all levels including individual client services.

Neufeldt and Enns (2003) noted that the VRDP initiative was both revolutionary and evolutionary. It was revolutionary in that it was the “first mechanism for federal provincial cost sharing of training and technical support to bring disabled people back into the labour force” (p. 47). It was also evolutionary as its development and implementation reflected the gradual acceptance by provinces of federal involvement in areas of provincial jurisdiction. However, this acceptance of a federal role by provinces was not whole-hearted. As Neufeldt and Enns (2003) also observed, the VRDP program began with an Order in Council in 1952 with legislation only tabled in 1961, an elapsed time span of ten years. Neufeldt and Enns believe that this delay speaks to a possible reluctance on the part of some provinces to participate, with the resulting need for lengthy negotiations and consideration. Despite this, the VRDP Act (slightly updated in 1985) served as the primary national and provincial policy vehicle for disability employment activities until the mid-1990s.

While the VRDP Act served as a linchpin for disability employment policy through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, research and policy development efforts surrounding disability issues were not static during that time. Bickenbach (1993) notes that the cause of persons with disabilities was gaining increasing prominence both

nationally and internationally, particularly in the 1980's, with the United Nations declaration of 1981 as the Year of the Disabled Person. Changes were also taking place regarding the role of advocacy within the community of persons with disabilities. In the 1950's, 60's and 70's advocacy functions primarily rested within the ranks of national disability organizations such as Easter Seals, Canadian Paraplegic Association, and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. However, the 1980's marked the increasing empowerment of individuals with disabilities to advocate on their own behalf.

This period also saw an increasing assertiveness on the part of the community of persons with disabilities to attempt to influence government policy development. McColl and Boyce (2003) cite the period from 1981 to the present as one in which the concept of disability and what it meant to the individual to be 'disabled' underwent a substantial shift. Citing Driedger (1989), McColl and Boyce (2003) argue that the very concept of disability has shifted from being considered a misfortune to an injustice; and that the responsibility for disability issues has shifted from the individual to society. They further argue that this shift had dramatic effects on the approach taken by advocates within the community of persons with disabilities. They moved away from a strong identification on the disability itself and towards an emphasis on the cultural assumptions about disability, and how attitudinal and socio-economic factors have an impact on society's understanding of disability. Derksen, in a keynote address to the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (2004), summarized the growth of coherent lobbying to influence policy development by stakeholders within the community of persons with disabilities. He notes the development of national and provincial coalitions amongst organizations advocating for people with disabilities, where "strength in numbers derived

from the recognition that joining together in common bonds of understanding and experience, rather than remaining separated by differences” (para. 13).

A number of other public policy initiatives relating to the status of persons with disabilities in Canada also took place during this time period. A major review of disability policy by the House of Commons Special Committee on the Disabled and Handicapped took place in 1981. The report of this Committee, entitled *Obstacles: Report of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped* (Government of Canada, 1981) was intended to “identify the key obstacles faced by disabled persons in Canada, and to outline practical actions which will help to overcome these obstacles” (p. 3). The *Obstacles* document set forth a number of detailed recommendations on a number of issues, including education, skills training, and employment for people with disabilities. Bickenbach (1993) noted its importance in calling for a discrete branch of social policy activities relating to disability issues, and the transformation of those issues from an ill-defined collection of social problems to the object of detailed social policy analysis. Derksen (2004) describes the report as a major historical turning point in empowering the participation of the community of persons with disabilities in government policy development in Canada. Prince (2004a) observed that:

The 1981 *Obstacles Report* observed that most federal decisions were taken without regard to their impact upon the lives of children, youth and adults with disabilities. Accordingly, the Committee recommended that the federal government establish a review at the cabinet level similar to that for the Status of Women, which would ensure ongoing consideration of the concerns of people with disabilities, including children and their families. The government's response

at the time was one of general interest and an expressed intention to explore implementing the proposal (p. 68).

In 1985, legislation was tabled to address one of the major recommendations of the *Obstacles* report regarding the employment for persons with disabilities. This legislation, the *Employment Equity Act* (Government of Canada, 1985), provided for the establishment of employment equity programs in all corporations under federal jurisdiction, including crown corporations with 100 or more employees. In conjunction with the 1985 updating of the *Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons Act*, it was hoped that significant advancements could be made in the employment of persons with disabilities.

Unfortunately, the impact of the legislation, particularly the *Employment Equity Act*, was disappointing. In their review of the impact of the *Employment Equity Act*, Wallace and Currie (1996) noted that despite the laudable intentions of the *Act*, "... the measures appear to have had very little impact in terms of increasing the employment of persons with disabilities" (para., 6). They go on to identify several possible reasons for the relative ineffectiveness of the legislation, including a lack of effective monitoring mechanisms and a lack of effective sanctions for noncompliance. While amendments to the *Act* were undertaken in 1994 to address some of these concerns, the employment situation of persons with disabilities has not noticeably improved despite these legislative initiatives.

By the early 1990s it was becoming increasingly apparent that the employment status of persons with disabilities was not improving significantly under existing legislation and policy. A report commissioned by the federal government, entitled *A*

Consensus for Action: The Economic Integration of Disabled Persons (Government of Canada, 1990) referenced the significant gaps between expectations of persons with disabilities and actions being taken by governments, with particular reference to the lack of consistent and coordinated policy. Recognition of the failings of existing policy responses, combined with mounting concerns by disability advocates, changes in government fiscal and social policies, and increasing demands by provincial governments for greater autonomy were creating the impetus for a new approach. This radically changed national policy responses to disability employment issues in Canada.

The academic community has only lately begun to examine the issue of disability policy in Canada. Bickenbach (1993) undertook one of the first major examinations of disability policy in Canada, and in particular examined how different models of defining disability have had an impact on policies to enhance employability for people with disability. He was also one of the first to note and review the major policy implications inherent in the federal policy documents then being generated, such as the *Obstacles Report* (Government of Canada, 1981). Crichton & Jongbloed (1998) followed Bickenbach's groundbreaking analysis some years later, recognizing that developments in the mid-1990's had superseded some of Bickenbach's suppositions that the policies and their implications needed to be revisited. Their major review of disability and social policy in Canada provided insights into both the current state of policy development in the country as well as a historical context for the evolution of disability policy. Though they reviewed employment policy as merely one component of disability policy within the country, they did provide an overview of how disability employment policy had evolved in Canada to that point. McColl and Jongbloed (2006) have since produced an

updated overview of disability policy in Canada, though again with only limited reference to employment issues.

Puttee (2002) undertook an examination of disability policy in Canada from the perspective of intergovernmental relationships. He also undertook an analysis of recent developments in Canadian disability policy, particularly the evolution (and subsequent partial collapse) of the cooperative federalism approach initiated by the Chrétien government. Puttee also undertook an analysis of the concurrent impact of federal and provincial fiscal restraint measures on disability policy. Prince (2001, 2004a, 2004b, 2005) has examined Canadian disability policy from a number of perspectives including employment, and is one of the few who has directly discussed the development and implications of the EAPD policy initiative. Other studies have also looked at disability employment policy, but from more narrow perspectives. For example, Pedlar and Hutchinson (2000) explored the potentially far reaching consequences of the major restructuring of federal and provincial human services ministries and programs in the 1990's. Likewise, Campolieti and Lavis (2000) examined the public and private programs which constituted the "income safety net" for persons with disabilities from the 1970's to the mid-1990's, and the potential impact of changes undertaken in the name of fiscal sustainability, a major factor in the operationalization of EAPD.

2.3 Federal/Provincial/Territorial Government Approaches to Disability Policy

Federal, provincial, and territorial governments have generated large numbers of studies, policy reviews, evaluations, and other documents in the area of disability policy in general and disability employment policy in particular. The federal government in

particular has undertaken numerous studies and examinations that attempt to document the needs and issues of Canadians with disabilities. These efforts have generated a large number of policy recommendations, reports, issue papers, green papers, white papers, and other documents.

Examples of major policy documents from the 1980's and early 1990's include the previously cited 1981 *Obstacles Report* (Government of Canada, 1981) and the *Consensus for Action: The Economic Integration of Disabled Persons* report (Government of Canada, 1990) which highlighted the failings of existing policy responses. In 1996, the Federal Task Force on Disability Issues released a report entitled *Equal Citizenship for Canadians with Disabilities: The Will to Act* (Government of Canada, 1996a). This report explored many aspects of the concept of citizenship and equal rights for persons with disabilities, including the changing nature of federal-provincial dynamics and the importance of work and labour market integration for Canadians with disabilities. Also in 1996, a report commissioned by the federal government (Fawcett, 1996) entitled *Living with Disability in Canada: An Economic Portrait* examined both the rate and types of labour market participation by Canadians with disabilities.

Also cited earlier and examined in detail in this thesis is the national vision paper *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues* (Government of Canada, 1998c). This paper was drafted to be a focal point for Canadian social policy development addressing the economic and income support needs of persons with disabilities. This work was complemented by the *Future Directions to Address Disability Issues for the Government of Canada: Working Together for Full Citizenship* report (Government of

Canada, 1999b). The document focused on the need for inclusion of persons with disabilities into federal disability policy planning, while the *Lessons Learned from the Evaluation of Disability Policy and Programs* report (Government of Canada, 1999a) provided a review of evaluation information policies and programs from a variety of sources in Canada and several other countries. An update of the *In Unison* document, entitled *In Unison 2000* (Government of Canada, 2000a) addressed changes that had taken place in federal/provincial/territorial approaches to service delivery for persons with disabilities since the publication of the original vision paper. In 2001 the federal government sponsored the Caledon Institute to develop a *Proposal for a National Disability Supports Initiative* (Caledon Institute for Social Policy, 2001), which explored the possibility of a new and major initiative to develop a comprehensive support system for persons with disabilities. Also in 2001, the Government of Canada released the findings of the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). Entitled *Disability in Canada: A 2001 Profile* (Government of Canada, 2001), this survey gathered statistical information on children (aged 14 and under) and adults (aged 15 and over) in Canada who had a disability. The data in this report remains a critical source of demographic and economic (including employment) data on Canadians with disabilities for researchers and policy makers.

A series of reports entitled *Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities* (Government of Canada, 2002a) attempted to capture the current concerns of Canadians with disabilities, especially the impact of fiscal restraint measures. In 2003 the Government of Canada released a report entitled *Defining Disability: A Complex Issue* (Government of Canada, 2003c). This report illustrated and clarified the complex and

multi-dimensional nature of the concept of disability found in policy, programs and benefits in Canada, while also providing a review of and framework for understanding disability definitions in key Government of Canada initiatives. In 2004 the Government of Canada released a two-part study (statistical and qualitative) entitled *Canadian Attitudes Towards Disability Issues* (Government of Canada, 2004b). This study gauged the attitudes of Canadians towards persons with disabilities, their awareness of disability-related issues, and how these compare between individuals with and without disabilities. Also in 2004, the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services commissioned a “gap analysis” to gather information on whether persons with disabilities in Canada have adequate access to the supports and services needed for full inclusion (Government of Canada, 2004c). This report provided a basic profile of the requirements and unmet needs for disability supports. In 2004, the Government of Canada released the first of a series of annual reports entitled *Advancing the Inclusion of People with Disabilities* (Government of Canada, 2004d, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010), in which the federal government provides an overview of key initiatives undertaken by different federal departments and agencies (either individually or in collaboration) in the reported fiscal year. These reports include a reference to federal initiatives within the area of employment and skills training for persons with disabilities.

Similar types of documents have also been generated at the provincial level. For example, the *Alberta Disability Strategy* (Alberta Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, 2002) undertook a range of policy recommendations to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities. The document *Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Provincial Strategy on Disability* (Government of Manitoba, 2001) also

explored employment issues within the context of overall disability policy within the province, and the 2002 Government of British Columbia document *Employment Strategies for Persons with Disabilities* (Government of British Columbia, 2002) examined changes to provincial employment supports for persons with disabilities. Another example can be seen in the June 2006 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador guiding document for a new poverty reduction strategy. Entitled *Reducing Poverty: An Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2006), this policy strategy outlined a proposed set of approaches to prevent, reduce and alleviate poverty amongst a variety of populations in Newfoundland and Labrador, including individuals with disabilities. These documents, although generated in many cases by governments of different political persuasions (with perhaps the exception of the British Columbia strategy document) have tended to promote similar values and render similar policy recommendations as those generated by their federal counterparts.

2.3.1 Constitutional and Jurisdictional Authority

Disability policy in Canada is both shaped and influenced by the constitutional division of powers between the Government of Canada and the provinces and, to a lesser degree, the territories. Most national disability policy initiatives (particularly those related to disability employment policy) are shaped by this complex set of interactions.

Constitutionally, the authority and responsibility for the delivery of services to persons with disabilities is almost exclusively a provincial responsibility. However, through using its broader fiscal resources, the federal government has traditionally yielded considerable influence in shaping disability policy.

The governing of Canada is based upon a federal system of government, consisting of a national (federal) government and governments for each province and territory. Each body of government, federal, provincial and territorial, possesses certain powers and areas of jurisdiction. Along with jurisdictional responsibility, each level of government also has certain fiscal powers, most importantly in the area of taxation and revenue generation. Provinces have traditionally had jurisdiction over most areas considered within the realm of disability policy, such as health, education, employment, social services and income security for citizens with disabilities. Provinces (and more recently territories) have argued that the problem with this constitutional arrangement is that the provinces were allotted those areas that are the most costly to govern, while the federal government was given the highest level of fiscal powers. Hence, while the federal government has the most access to financial resources, the provinces have the most costly responsibilities (Disability and Information Technologies Research Alliance, 2006). This dynamic has been at play within F/P/T relations since the beginning of confederation, but gained greater prominence with the development of the post-World War II welfare state (Prince, 2008). As a result, the federal government has used its fiscal power to influence disability policy despite its limited jurisdictional authority.

2.3.2 Collaborative Federalism

Prince (2002a) identifies one key element within the web of relationships between the various orders of government to be of critical importance in the development of the EAPD framework. This element, collaborative federalism, is a major theme in many of the documents examined in this study. For example, within the *In Unison* vision paper, direct or implied references to collaborative federalism were repeatedly identified within

the first eight paragraphs of the preamble alone. Similar references to the concept are also present in both the Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements as well.

In his examination of Canadian federalism and disability policy, (Prince (2001) identifies the concept of collaborative federalism as one of the key elements impacting recent disability policy initiatives. Prince defines collaborative federalism (also referred to as co-operative, executive, or administrative federalism) as denoting "...mutual interdependence, joint problem solving among officials, and little or no hierarchy in working relations between the two orders of government in Canada" (p. 794). Cameron and Simeon (2002), in their review of Canadian F/P/T intergovernmental relations over the last 50 years, argue that collaborative federalism has been at the heart of intergovernmental relations between the federal government and provinces/territories and was a major factor in the creation of the Canadian welfare state. They also argue that Canadian intergovernmental relationships have been marked by a steady progression in the development of F/P/T mechanisms representative of the concept of collaborative federalism.

2.3.3 Evolution of Canadian Disability Employment Policy

In setting the federal/provincial intergovernmental context for the EAPD policy framework, the beginnings can be seen in the period running from the immediate post-war era to the mid-1960s, which was defined by an activist agenda on the part of the federal government (Jongbloed, 2003; Prince, 2001). The era was one in which provincial governments in large part tolerated this agenda, as much of the policy design work and funding came from Ottawa (Cameron & Simeon, 2002) and a number of major national disability policy initiatives were undertaken during this time. In his review of the

evolution of the VRDP and EAPD policy initiatives, Prince (2001, 2002a) states that the intergovernmental process began with the formation of a National Advisory Committee on the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in 1951. The process expanded in 1953 when Cabinet authorized the federal Minister of Labour to enter into agreements with the provinces for developing rehabilitation activities for disabled persons.

This intergovernmental process was ultimately codified in the *Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act* (Fawcett, 2000). As noted earlier, the *Act* enabled the provinces to recover 50% of vocational training costs related to individuals with disabilities. The other significant legislation arising from this and similar process was the *Canada Pension Plan Act* (Russell, 2002), which resulted from a federal–provincial agreement to provide a national system of social insurance, one element of which was a disability pension. Prince (2001) observed that a key selling point was Ottawa’s offer to provinces/territories of an open-ended financial offer, dependent only on how much provinces/territories wished to spend on these rehabilitation services. All the provinces entered into two or three-year renewable agreements with Ottawa, with the exception of the Government of Quebec, which eventually did elect to participate in VRDP in the late 1980s.

In the 1970’s, a change in orientation began to appear in the area of national disability policy. Jongbloed (2003) noted that in 1977, the federal government introduced the Federal–Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Established Programs Financing Regulations, intended to control costs brought about by open-ended, federal–provincial matching grants in programs such as VRDP. Guest (1980), as cited by Jongbloed (2003) observed that by the 1970’s there was increasing ambivalence about general income

support for those in need. There were numerous factors at play surrounding this ambivalence. Foremost, Jongbloed (2003) contends that Canada's welfare state has always been a middle class construction, arising out of the middle classes' acceptance of the importance of distributing the country's wealth more evenly. Hence, income support, training and health programs were not only intended to meet the needs of disadvantaged Canadians, but more importantly "...to ensure that all Canadians had access to education and healthcare services through redistribution of resources" (Jongbloed, 2003, p. 204). In this regard, the Canadian welfare state was less an altruistic construct and more a means by which the needs of the politically powerful middle class were addressed while, to a lesser degree, also addressing the needs of the disadvantaged populations within Canadian society. The difficulty was and is, of course, the vulnerability of policies and programs generated by the state should the social or political dynamic (i.e. – the needs and/or desires of the dominant political class) shift.

Prince (2002a) argues that various types of shifts took place in the 1990's. Friendly (2000) likewise states that the terrain of Canadian federalism, especially as far as federal/provincial understandings of the concept, shifted dramatically in the 1990's. Johns, O'Reilly and Inwood (2006) point out that this shift has resulted in a range of pressures being placed on intergovernmental processes. Prince (2001, 2002a) identifies two particular catalysts for these shifts. The first was a major restructuring to federal/provincial funding and cost sharing arrangements for disability program/services which took place in the early to mid-1990's. In the particular, this period saw the development and implementation (or imposition) of the Canadian Health and Social Transfer (CHST). The second is the development of the Canadian Social Union.

2.3.4 Federal – Provincial Relations

Prince (2002a) notes that “the disability policy field in Canada is a dense network of intergovernmental agreements” (p. 24). National disability employment policy in particular is shaped by a set of complex interactions between the provinces and the federal government. Constitutionally, the authority and responsibility for the delivery of services to persons with disabilities is almost exclusively a provincial responsibility. However, the federal government has served as a major source of funding and resources for these services.

The governing of Canada is based upon a federal system, consisting of a national (federal) government and governments for each province and territory. Each body of government, central, provincial and territorial are given certain powers and areas of jurisdiction. Along with jurisdictional responsibility, each level of government also has certain fiscal powers, most importantly in the area of taxation and revenue generation. Provinces have traditionally had jurisdiction over most areas considered within the realm of disability policy, such as health, education, employment, social services and income security. Provinces (and more recently territories) have argued that the problem with this constitutional arrangement is that the provinces were allotted those areas that are the most costly to govern, while the federal government was given the highest level of fiscal powers. Hence, while the federal government has the most access to financial resources, the provinces have the most costly responsibilities (Disability and Information Technologies Research Alliance, 2006). This dynamic has been at play within F/P/T relations out since the beginning of confederation, but gained greater prominence with the development of the post-World War II welfare state (M. Prince, 2008). As a result,

the federal government has used its fiscal power to influence disability policy despite its limited jurisdictional authority.

Prince (2002a), identifies one key element within the web of relationships between the various orders of government to be of critical importance in the development of the EAPD framework. This element, collaborative federalism, is a major theme in many of the documents examined in this study (e.g. - within the *In Unison* vision paper, direct or implied references to collaborative federalism were repeatedly identified within the first eight paragraphs of the Preamble alone). Similar (if not always as overt) references to the concept are also present in both the Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements as well.

In setting the federal/provincial intergovernmental context for the EAPD policy framework, the beginnings can be seen in the period running from the immediate post-World War II era to the mid-1960's, which was defined by an activist agenda on the part of the federal government (Jongbloed, 2003; Prince, 2001). The era was one in which provincial governments in large part tolerated this agenda, given that much of the policy design work and funding came from Ottawa (Cameron & Simeon, 2002). Also, a number of major national disability policy initiatives were undertaken during this time. Prince 's (2001, 2002a) review of the evolution of the VRDP and EAPD policy initiatives states that the process began with the formation of a National Advisory Committee on the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons in 1951. This policy process expanded in 1953 when Cabinet authorized the federal Minister of Labour to enter into agreements with the provinces for developing rehabilitation activities for disabled persons. This intergovernmental process was later codified in the *Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled*

Persons Act [VRDP] (1961). The VRDP Act enabled the provinces to recover 50% of vocational training costs related to individuals with disabilities. Prince (2001) observed that Ottawa essentially offered provinces and territories an open-ended financial arrangement, dependent only on how much they wished to spend. All the provinces entered into two or three-year renewable agreements with Ottawa, with the exception of the Government of Quebec. However, in the late 1980's Quebec did elect to participate.

In the 1970s, a change in orientation began to appear in the area of national disability policy. Jongbloed (2003) noted that in 1977 the federal government introduced the *Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Established Programs Financing Regulations*, which were intended to control costs brought about by open-ended, federal-provincial matching grants in programs such as VRDP. Guest (1980), as cited by Jongbloed (2003), also observed that by the 1970's there was increasing ambivalence within governments at both the federal and provincial levels about general income support for those in need. Jongbloed (2003) contends that Canada's welfare state was a middle class construction, arising from of the middle classes' acceptance of the importance of distributing the country's wealth more evenly. Hence, income support, training and health programs were not only intended to meet the needs of disadvantaged Canadians, but more importantly "...to ensure that all Canadians had access to education and healthcare services through redistribution of resources" (Jongbloed, 2003, p. 204). Hence, the Canadian welfare state was less an altruistic construct than a means by which the needs of the politically powerful middle class were addressed while, to a lesser degree, also addressing the needs of the disadvantaged populations within Canadian society. The difficulty was (and is) that policies and programs generated by the state

within such a context are vulnerable should the social or political dynamic (i.e. – the needs and/or desires of the dominant political class) shift.

Prince (2002a) argues that this very type of shift took place in the 1990's. Within both federal and provincial governments, regardless of political affiliation, a profound ideological change took place. This change moved away from a perspective supporting an activist social agenda by the state and overt federal involvement in social policy development. Instead, governments moved towards a perspective emphasizing individual responsibility and the constitutional pre-eminence of provincial governments in the area of social policy. Friendly (2000) likewise argues that the terrain of Canadian federalism, especially as pertaining to federal/provincial interactions, shifted dramatically in the 1990's. Johns, O'Reilly and Inwood (2006) point out that this shift resulted in a range of pressures being placed on intergovernmental processes.

2.3.5 Changes to Federal – Provincial Funding Arrangements

From the 1950's to the 1980's, a number of federal-provincial cost-sharing arrangements developed to ensure the equitable provision of social/health programs and services to citizens across Canada, including the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and the Canada Assistance Plan (CAP). From a disability policy perspective, the CAP was perhaps one of the most significant, being a multilateral intergovernmental agreement that consolidated a number of older welfare programs, which included several targeted towards Canadians with disabilities. In terms of employment policy for persons with disabilities, the primary vehicle was the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for Disabled Persons (VRDP) program. Key elements of this initiative were that federal funding provided to provinces was open-ended, and that the federal government would reimburse

provinces 50% of all expenditures covered under VRDP. Further, the scope of the initiative allowed for coverage of a wide range of programs services, including areas addressing physical rehabilitation and assistance to populations of persons with disabilities who were unlikely to achieve economic self-sufficiency or attachment to competitive employment (e.g. participants in sheltered workshops).

Prince (2002a) suggests that programs such the CAP and VRDP represent the “institutional infrastructure of collaborative federalism” (p. 36) and manifested themselves through consultation, negotiation and coordination, administrative bilateral agreements with provinces and cost-sharing agreements for programs and services. Such institutional arrangements were put at risk, however, by federal responses to budgetary pressures in the early and mid-1990s. Friendly (2000) notes that in 1994-95 the federal government responded to deteriorating revenue/debt ratios by implementing severe cutbacks in the federal public service, downloaded the costs of government programs to provinces via a massive slashing of transfer payments, and privatized many other services.

From an intergovernmental perspective, the federal approach was to move away from the consultative and collaborative model described above and towards a more unilateral approach, wherein the federal government unilaterally made changes or proposed amendments to existing federal funding transfer mechanisms. Friendly (2000) believes that the federal fiscal policies of the mid-1990s marked the beginning of the federal governments withdrawal from having a pronounced role in the shaping of national social policy through use of its spending power, and marked the end of a 30 year reign of federal activism in Canadian social policy.

The federal imposition in 1995 of unilateral fiscal policies also helped set the stage for the development of the EAPD Multilateral framework. The parameters and precedents established by the federal actions generated serious conflict between provinces/territories and the federal government, culminating in legal challenges going all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled in the federal governments favour. Such actions also integrated into the FPT policy process the strong influence of federal and provincial/territorial fiscal and budgetary concerns which, in turn, inserted an adversarial element into FPT discussions in areas such as disability policy, where it had previously been somewhat rare. Citing Bach & Rioux (1996), Prince (2002b) also contends that there was a subsequent de-emphasis in the role of the national government “in managing and encouraging a national discussion on comprehensive social policy in which public policy and welfare state provision would be critically examined from the perspective of universal human rights” (p. 50).

2.3.6 The Social Union

While, as noted above, the imposition of the Canadian Health and Social Transfer (CHST) in the 1990’s by the federal government did add a strong element of conflict and animosity to FPT relations, not all elements of relations between provinces/territories remained rancorous. Efforts continued between the two levels of government to develop mechanisms for joint progress on social policy issues. These efforts started with the establishment of the provincial Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform and Renewal in 1995, whose report to the Premiers recommended that provinces and territories “create a national agenda for social policy reform and renewal, which is supported by all First Ministers” (Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform, 1995, p. 1). In 1996 the federal

Throne Speech built on recommendations from the Ministerial Council, suggesting that the federal government “might be willing to discuss how to improve Canada’s child support system as a joint initiative with the provinces” (Friendly, 2000, p. 23), an initiative that by 1998 had evolved into the National Child Benefit (NCB).

In the disability policy field, a similar process evolved, in this case with the EAPD Policy initiative. Work had been ongoing since the late 1980s on possible improvements to the VRDP program. While the capping of federal VRDP contributions in 1995 as part of federal cost reduction measures added an element of tension to the intergovernmental mix, in April, 1996 provincial and territorial ministers for social services invited their federal counterpart to participate as a full partner in jointly developing integrated programs for people with disabilities (Prince, 2002a). Employment was just one of the disability policy areas examined over the period of 1996-1999. The EAPD Multilateral framework was one of the few FPT policy initiatives to come to fruition through the process, one of the very few that overtly referenced the Social Union as a significant influence on the policy development process.

The "Social Union" initiative was intended as an umbrella mechanism under which FPT governments could concentrate their efforts to renew and modernize Canadian social policy. It focused on “... the pan-Canadian dimension of health and social policy systems, the linkages between the social and economic unions, and the recognition that reform is best achieved in partnership among provinces, territories and the Government of Canada” (Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council on Social Policy Renewal, 2009, para., 1). On February 4 1999, the federal government and nine provincial governments signed the *Framework to Improve the Social Union for*

Canadians (Government of Canada, 1999c). First Ministers had previously created the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Council on Social Policy Renewal in 1996, and upon the signing of the *Framework* directed it to guide the Social Union initiative. The role of the Council was to monitor work on overarching social policy issues and coordinate/support "sectoral" councils that examine broad reaching policy concerns issues such as social supports for children and persons with disabilities. At present, the Council is co-chaired by the Federal Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada and a rotating provincial/territorial minister responsible for social services.

The primary objective of the Social Union initiative was to reform and renew Canada's system of social services and the federal and provincial/territorial governments reached a broad consensus that the first priorities should be children in poverty and persons with disabilities. Both the NCB and EAPD were developed in large part in response to this consensus.

2.4 Community Stakeholders and Disability Employment Policy

An examination of the role of the community of persons with disabilities and their advocates in the development of EAPD Multilateral framework must consider both the historical context of their involvement and the direct role they have taken in the development of the documents. The former is important given the evolution of this role over the last 50 years. During the 1950s, external consultative efforts by governments on disability policy tended to be focused primarily on academics, professionals and others involved in the delivery of services to people with disabilities. As noted previously, the National Advisory Committee on the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons was formed in 1951. It was composed of 37 members representing the federal and provincial

governments, health and welfare voluntary agencies, the medical profession, employers, organized labour and universities. Interestingly however, representatives from disability groups themselves were not identified as warranting designated membership on the Committee (Prince, 2001, 2002a). Occasionally, specific populations of persons with disabilities and their advocacy organizations (e.g. – Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Canadian Paraplegic Association) were able to make their voices heard in the development of national legislation and policy, such as the *War Veteran's Allowance Act* of 1930 (Neary, 2009) or the *Blind Persons Rights Act* of 1952 (Government of Canada, 1952). Generally, however, the dominant discourses surrounding disability policy occurred without substantial participation by the community of people with disabilities.

This exclusionary approach began to change in the 1970s. Jongbloed (2003) cites the development of human rights organizations with strong interests in legal and policy issues (e.g. – the formation of ex-psychiatric patients rights groups in Vancouver) as the first steps of politicization within the various communities of Canadians with disabilities. This was followed by the development of cross-disability advocacy organizations with active political agendas, such as the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped, formed in 1977. Jongbloed (2003), citing Dreidger (1990) argues that these organizations changed the nature of interactions between governments and the Canadians with disabilities. The prominence given to the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981, and the introduction of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 resulted in increased responsiveness by governments, particularly at the federal level. Political activism by disability advocacy organizations in Canada continued throughout the 1980's. This can be seen most notably in their participation during the development of

the *Obstacles* (Government of Canada, 1981) report. With its emphasis on the three interlocking goals of people with disabilities: (1) to be treated with respect, (2) to have the right to control their fate, and (3) to have opportunities to participate in all aspects of Canadian society, the report reflects many of the issues and agendas emphasized by the communities and their advocates (Bickenbach, 1993; Jongbloed, 2003).

Other studies and papers examining specific aspects or issues in disability policy have been undertaken by independent research organizations, think tanks, and advocacy organizations, often at the behest of various levels of government. Many of these touch on issues relating to employment for persons with disabilities. The Roeher Institute (2001b) examined disability supports within the context of women's equality, the Caledon Institute (1997) examined the impact of income support systems in place for persons with disabilities and their impact on employment, and the Canadian Council on Social Development (2004) undertook an examination of workers with disabilities and their current status in the workplace. At a provincial level, the Ontario Income Security Advocacy Centre (Fraser, Wilkey & Frenschkowsky, 2003) completed a study of the Ontario Disability Support program. More recently, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives undertook a detailed study of welfare recipients in BC who are expected to work (Klien & Pulkingham, 2008). They concluded that current BC government welfare reforms were clearly unsuccessful. Indeed, as one senior official with a major disability advocacy organization pointed out in private discussions with the author in an off the record conversation, rarely has an issue been examined in such depth by so many different governments and organizations to such little effect.

2.5 International Perspectives on Disability Employment Policy

From an international perspective, there have been a limited number of studies examining the impact of disability employment policies and programs from a multi-national perspective. However, differences in governance, culture, and economic development between countries make such comparisons challenging. For example, the legislative and policy responses to disability employment issues in the United States and Canada differ radically. Canada has no equivalent to the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (Government of the United States, 1990), and the influence and control of state governments over disability policy is much less than their provincial counterparts in Canada (Gerber & Price, 2004). Even within other first world countries with advanced social-welfare systems, governance differences can be so substantial so as to challenge the validity of cross-national comparisons. For example, Tuominen and Laitinen-Kuikka (2003) identified three regime types within the European Union: liberal, conservative and social democratic, based on a clustering of countries along three dimensions of variability, state-market relations, stratification and social rights. They observed significant differences between countries, in particular the different philosophical and ideological approaches to disability employment policy, especially regarding the degree to which persons with disabilities should be able to make their living independent of pure market forces. These were found to vary greatly among European countries, emphasizing the difficulties in making trans-national comparisons and suggesting that caution should be undertaken in interpreting data based on such comparisons or drawing conclusions from it.

Corden and Thornton (2001) attempted to address this difficulty in their comprehensive review of international research on policies, programs, and interventions intended to assist persons with disabilities in accessing, sustaining, or maintaining employment. The principle aspects of the study centered on an examination of program evaluations of identified national policy initiatives in five countries, each selected on the basis of benefit structures seen as not dissimilar to that of the UK: (e.g. - USA, Canada, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand). Bruyere (1999) undertook a comparison of the employment policy provisions of major disability policy initiatives in the United States, Great Britain, and Northern Ireland through a major survey of employers within those jurisdictions. It is argued that the similarities in benefit structures and governance that made such comparisons useful.

Studies by quasi-governmental organizations or international NGO's on employment policy for persons with disabilities have also been undertaken. In 2003 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2003) released a major study examining employment policies for persons with disabilities in over 30 industrialized countries. The International Labour Organization (ILO), in collaboration with the Policy and Research Unit at the University of York, conducted a research project on job retention and return to work policies and practices for persons with disabilities in Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States (International Labour Organization, 1999). This study noted similarities and differences in national approaches to disability employment policy and the importance of cultural considerations in the examination of this area.

Thornton & Lunt (1998) identify a number of factors influencing disability policy

in the 1990s, including “education, health, housing, transport - as well as discussions around anti-discrimination and human rights legislation that embrace disability on a number of fronts” (p. 22). They also cite the increasing politicizing of disability issues across countries that has “highlighted notions of disadvantage and exclusion and has been contributory factor to the 'soup' of policy change” (p. 23). Interestingly, Thornton & Lunt (1998) identify the elevation of employment issues as a major development in global approaches to disability policy. They note that “national policy-makers are increasingly looking cross-nationally for ‘solutions’ to the ‘problems’ of employment of disabled people, and disabled people and their allies are drawing on experience elsewhere to promote, and sometimes achieve, radical change nationally” (p. 26).

McCabe (2007) likewise observes that while policy makers always operate from within their own political, social and cultural contexts, there is increasing evidence that they will look beyond these contexts for policy ideas, and that examples of international policy transfer and other related concepts are becoming more common in disability policy development. Price, Radio & Toga (1999) have identified several global trends which could have influenced Canadian disability policy in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s. Chief among these was an increasing recognition of disability policy issues within international bodies such as the United Nations, International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), along with the placement of disability issues on the United Nations social agenda. Price et al (1999) also argue that:

There has been a “major shift in the philosophical value system underpinning disability initiatives, from a viewpoint which locates disability within the individual and focuses on the need for amelioration or rehabilitation, to a human

rights framework which perceives individuals with disabilities as persons with rights and opportunities equal to those of non-disabled members of their communities. The onus is on society to accept diversity in its members, and to make the institutional changes necessary to achieve this outcome for disabled citizens (para. 2).

Another contributory influence from a global perspective could be the increasing acceptance among policy makers worldwide of neoliberal ideologies emphasizing the importance of maximizing the economic self-sufficiency of all individuals as a core element of social policy. Horton (2007) argues that one popular view of globalization stresses the role of policy choices associated with a broader program of neoliberal reforms, and that global social policy influences are marked by a general shift towards market-oriented neo-liberalism. In this context, disability policy, like other aspects of social policy, emphasizes "...a (new) orthodoxy of individual responsibility and the "emergency" safety net - thus replacing collective provision through a more residualist welfare state ... in which individuals are required to assume the status of being the subjects of their own lives – the entrepreneurial self" (p. 1). Larner (2000) notes that the pervasive adaptation and application of the concepts of neo-liberal ideology in social policy by governments of differing political stripes throughout the world speaks volumes as to the degree that the preference for market mechanisms as a means of ensuring social well-being is now imbedded in the policy making agenda of governments throughout the world. Larner (2000), citing Brodie (1996). goes on to note that despite questionable empirical claims and a lack of intellectual rigour for the neo-liberal policy agenda, the ideology has successfully changed "public expectations about citizenship entitlements,

the collective provision of social needs, and the efficacy of the welfare state” (p. 7). Citing Hall’s (1988) analysis of the Thatcher regime, Lerner (2000) identifies the effectiveness of neo-liberal ideology from a policy perspective as lying in “its ability to constitute subject positions from which its discourses about the world made sense to people in a range of different social positions” (p. 8), thus changing the currency of political thought and argument. In essence, neo-liberal concepts impose a new ideological hegemony on discourse regarding social policy.

2.6 Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Policy Framework

The EAPD policy initiative was officially intended to address shortcomings in the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP) program, then perceived as inadequate in meeting the goal of improving the labour market and economic participation of persons with disabilities (Government of Canada, 2002b). In 1997, the Government of Canada and Provincial/Territorial jurisdictions initiated a multilateral process to examine programming then in place to assist people with disabilities, particularly in terms of employment and integration in the labour market, and more specifically focused on programming then funded through VRDP. The intention was to “build on those program elements which have contributed most to labour market and economic participation” (Government of Canada, 1998d, para., 2).

As a result of this review, a shift in focus was recognized by both orders of government toward the funding of programs and services with a stronger employability focus. This shift was not without contention, as it involved the withdrawal of support to some existing programs and services, and the replacement of the VRDP program with a

new funding initiative under which the Government of Canada would share with the provinces and territories the costs of selected initiatives. It was also recognized that this reorientation could require a multi-year implementation period, determined through bilateral discussions and agreements between the federal government and provincial/territorial jurisdictions.

By early 1998, discussions between federal and provincial officials had advanced to the point that an agreement was reached between the federal government and the provinces and territories to replace the VRDP program with a new policy framework. This framework was to be entitled the *Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Multilateral Framework* and would be based on the principles then being finalized in the *In Unison* vision paper. EAPD was to be centered on a core multilateral policy framework to be signed by all federal and provincial governments. This would articulate a set of values and principles intended to underpin federal and provincial efforts at disability employment supports. The framework was also intended to serve as a ‘blueprint’ for the development of a series of five year bilateral agreements between the federal government and the ten provinces (territories were not included in the EAPD framework). Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services approved the EAPD Multilateral Framework in April, 1998 (Government of Canada, 1998a).

2.7 Current Situation

The EAPD initiative officially expired on March 31, 2003. Negotiations had been ongoing since early 2001 between the federal government and provincial and territorial jurisdictions regarding a successor agreement. Progress was slow, partly due to federal

fiscal restraint measures precluding any increase in funds to provinces, as well as federal demands for increased accountability and data collection by provinces and territories. For their part, provinces and territories had demands for increased flexibility, decreased accountability requirements, and a substantial increase in federal funds above that provided under EAPD. Stakeholder groups were equally vocal in their demands for a complete revisiting of employment supports for persons with disabilities, and the launching of a new, comprehensive disability supports program (Caledon Institute for Social Policy, 2001).

After extensive negotiations undertaken in 2001 and 2002 between federal and provincial/territorial officials, a document entitled *A Framework for a Comprehensive Labour Market Strategy for Persons with Disabilities* (Government of Canada, 2002d) was finalized and endorsed by FPT Ministers Responsible for Social Services in November, 2002. Officials were directed by Ministers to undertake specific negotiations on a new policy framework. Subsequently, a policy agreement to replace EAPD was negotiated, and a document entitled *Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD)* (Government of Canada, 2004a) was developed.

This new policy framework was intended to be somewhat broader in scope in terms of services funded than the EAPD agreement and gave provinces/territories more administrative flexibility on accountability and reporting criteria. F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Social Services met in Yellowknife on August 29, 2003 and reached agreement in principle on the new LMAPD (Government of Canada, 2004a) to succeed the EAPD agreement. This new agreement was formally endorsed by all jurisdictions

except Quebec. The new LMAPD was strikingly similar to the previous EAPD agreement, with changes primarily focusing on accountability mechanisms and reporting measures. At present, the LMAPD remains in force across Canada (save for Quebec and the Territories), has been extended beyond its March 2008 expiration date pending new FPT negotiations.

On February 6, 2006, a new Conservative minority government was sworn into office. There are only limited formal references by the Conservative Party of Canada to disability policy in their social policy pronouncements, and current references to disability policy as part of the *Policy Declaration* contained on the party website (Conservative Party of Canada, 2008) is restricted to brief references committing the party to the development of a national disability policy framework. At present the impact of this government's approach to national disability policy is still a work in progress. Since assuming power the Conservative government's approach to social policy in general and disability policy in particular is oriented to an even more decentralized approach, emphasizing provincial primacy in social matters.

On March 19, 2007, The Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance Canada, tabled the 2007 federal budget *Aspire to a Stronger, Safer, Better Canada* (Government of Canada, 2007). Within that document were elements that identified a radical departure in national disability employment policy. First, the government announced that beginning in fiscal year 2008/09, the federal government would introduce a new program to address gaps in labour market programming through the provision of \$500 million per year (over the course of a six-year term), to be delivered through bilateral agreements with the provinces and territories on an equal per capita basis. The key element of this

announcement was a formal recognition by the federal government that provinces and territorial governments were best placed to identify needs and deliver this training. Hence those levels of government would have primary responsibility for the design and delivery of programs. A second element within the budget built on this point, namely that additional federal labour market programs could also be transferred to provincial and territorial governments under these agreements. Particular reference was made to a number of current federal labour market programs targeted for under-represented groups such as youth, older workers and persons with disabilities.

Since this budget announcement the federal government has signed labour market agreements with all but one of the provincial jurisdictions (again territorial jurisdictions are not included due to their differing constitutional relationships with the federal government). In January 2009 additional funds were directed to provinces and territories via the Labour Market Agreements to address impacts of the worldwide economic slowdown. While no formal agreements have been made to transfer the funds currently being made available by the federal government under the LMAPD to the Labour Market Agreements, representatives of national disability advocacy organizations have informally expressed concerns that this is in fact the long-term intent. Disability advocates are concerned that the more liberal and activist approaches towards disability issues, which have driven federal disability policy in the past may now be de-emphasized or replaced with more traditional approaches should these transfers take place. Prince (2007) notes that disability advocacy organizations had frequently targeted the federal government in the past for national action on disability related supports, because of their greater receptivity and track record of leadership in national initiatives during the 1960's,

70's, and 80's. However, the current federal Conservative governments' declared intention to limit the use of federal spending power in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction makes such lobbying exercises much more problematic.

On January 27, 2009, the federal government released *Budget 2009: Canada's Economic Action Plan* (Government of Canada, 2009). It included a temporary increase in funding for training to be dispersed through provincial Labour Market Agreements. This included a commitment to provide provinces with an additional \$500 million nationally for a Strategic Training and Transition Fund (STTF), which was to be invested over two years to support the particular needs of individuals impacted by the burgeoning economic crisis. In addition, \$1 billion nationally was committed to top up the existing transfer funding of \$1.95 billion annually, in order to expand the availability of training delivered through the Employment Insurance programs by provinces and territories. Interestingly, none of this large commitment of additional funds was targeted towards persons with disabilities.

On March 19, 2010 the Government of Canada released *Budget 2010: Leading the Way on Jobs and Growth* (Government of Canada, 2010). This budget focussed primarily on initiatives to combat the persistent economic downturn, and the budget contained only minimal references to initiatives for persons with disabilities. Those initiatives announced in the budget focussed primarily on improving Registered Disability Savings Plans to allow more flexibility for contributions. Also announced was the continuation of funding for the Enabling Accessibility Fund, an initiative which provides funds to community-based projects that improve accessibility and remove

within communities. No new initiatives pertaining to employment for persons with disabilities were announced.

It is noteworthy that in an examination of the Conservative policy platform during the April, 2011 election, the only reference to Canadians with disabilities is within the context of the Canada Student Grants Program. Here students with permanent disabilities are lumped in with low-income, middle-income part-time students (Conservative Party of Canada, 2011). This tendency to reference services for people with disabilities within the context of generic services for all citizens is a common feature of neoliberal social policy approaches, and will be discussed in greater detail later in this thesis.

3: THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS

In this chapter, an examination will be undertaken of some of the key theoretical constructs underlying this research. The chapter will commence with a discussion of what models of disability are, followed by an exploration of the key models utilized in the study. Following this is a discussion on the various approaches to disability policy analysis and their relevance to the study. The chapter will then close with an examination of the concept of discourse, and a discussion on discourse theory and disability policy research.

3.1 Models of Disability

In their discussion of models of disability in rehabilitation, Brandt and Pope (1997) defined models of disability as conceptual models, which may assist individuals in thinking about components or behaviours in complex systems. Brandt & Pope (1997) go on to note that such models “must be constantly changed as new knowledge is gained, particularly if they are to adequately represent processes or systems that are in flux” (p. 63). The World Bank (2008) describes models of disability as mechanisms to “conceptualize and compare different ways of thinking and talking about disability, [and] certain analytical frameworks or mindsets” (para., 1). An often repeated descriptor within the literature is that models are used to “provide a framework for understanding the way in which people with impairments experience disability”(Open University, 2006). Rialland (2006) notes that models of disability:

“... are tools for defining impairment and, ultimately, for providing a basis upon which government and society can devise strategies for meeting the needs of disabled people. They are often treated with scepticism as it is thought they do not reflect a real world, are often incomplete and encourage narrow thinking, and seldom offer detailed guidance for action. However, they are a useful framework in which to gain an understanding of disability issues, and also of the perspective held by those creating and applying the models” (para., 1).

Bernell (2003) observed that the definition of what constitutes disability is very much grounded in the theoretical or conceptual framework in which it is based, and that the strengths and weaknesses of the particular framework or model has a significant impact on disability policy. Mitra (2006) observed that altering the theoretical definition or framework for the construct of disability can have far reaching social, economic, and political implications. She notes "... administrative programs and laws use definitions that define program eligibility and legislation coverage. Those definitions, which directly affect the lives of persons with disabilities, are typically based on theoretical models." (p. 236). If the models change, there can be significant influences upon the development and implementation of disability policy. As Townsend (1979), cited in Jongbloed (2003) notes "the way in which an issue is viewed contains an implicit prescription for policy" (p. 25).

In many cases, various disciplines or professions tend to subscribe to or be dominated by one or more models of disability (Hubbard, 2004). These models help define the role of the particular profession within the context of their involvement with disabled persons, but are in many cases highly instrumental in determining the status and

power of the profession and professional within society. Most of the models that have dominated government disability policy over the last century have been generated by the professional communities charged with providing services to persons with disabilities (Lutz & Bowers, 2003). Different professions have championed different models of disability at different points in time. Those professions who are influential within a government policy perspective (e.g. physicians) have primarily centered responsibility for the disability and any subsequent impacts squarely on the individual (Hubbard, 2004; Lutz & Bowers, 2003). Disability advocates have argued that these models have in turn been at the root of many policies seen by people within the disabled community as discriminatory, disempowering, and intent on maintaining the existing power structures of the professional communities (Barnes, 1991; Corker & Shakespeare, 2002; Shakespeare & Watson, 2002).

The late 20th century, however, saw the emergence of a new model of disability, one that has challenged those assumptions and had a profound impact on the way in which people with disabilities view themselves, how they interact with society, and how they view the various social mechanisms that exist to help them (Oliver, 1995, Barnes, 1999b). With the development of this new ‘social’ model and its rising popularity in certain quarters of both the professional disciplines and the community of persons with disabilities there also came challenges arising from conflicts with the vested interests and power held by adherents of the pre-existing models.

Kuhn (1996) states that gain for a new model is only achieved by “discarding some previously standard beliefs or procedures, and, simultaneously, by replacing those components of the previous model with others” (p. 66). He further noted, “the transfer of

allegiance from model to model is a conversion experience that cannot be forced” (p. 151). Thus the application of new models in policy often hinges on the various approaches of the professional disciplines traditionally involved (e.g. rehabilitation medicine, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, vocational rehabilitation counselling). In many cases, these various disciplines or professions tend to subscribe to or be dominated by one or more existing models of disability (Hubbard, 2004). This is important in that these models help define the role of the particular profession within the context of their involvement with disabled persons, and are highly influential in determining the status and power of the profession and professional within society (Jongbloed & Crichton, 1990). Daniels (1990) notes that often a model becomes so imbedded within a profession that for the practitioner the tenets of the model become “... unconscious or so taken for granted that its very existence is unquestioned” (p. 2).

The adaptation of a new model is not without risk for the professionals involved and may often entail resistance from entrenched and powerful elements within the profession(s) (Kuhn, 1996). Commenting on the disparity of power created within the various models of disability used in rehabilitation settings, Waddell (2002) observes that all “decision makers about disability (disabled individuals, health professionals, social security administrators, policy makers and politicians) need a better and more appropriate understanding [of] models of disability if society is to address current trends effectively and fairly” (p. 4). References to the impact of changing models on professional communities in the literature are not encouraging in this regard. Follette & Hout’s (1996) case study of the impact of changing models in psychology on the re-editing of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual suggest that rather than surrender the power implicit

within a particular model, professional communities will engage in battles of ferocious intensity to protect their perceived interests. In the case of models of disability, where entire professional communities (and industries) have been established in application of certain models, protection not only of power but also of livelihood has made the transitions between models particularly challenging (Bury, 1997).

3.2 Key Models

There is an extensive base of literature on what constitutes a model of disability, with numerous delineations of what the models are and their components and subcomponents (DePoy & Gilson, 2004; Gabels & Peters, 2004). Bickenbach & Chatterji (1999) observe that attempts to define and explain the concept of disablement have drawn from a number of sociological and social-psychological theoretical perspectives, including being "...explained in terms of deviance theories, labelling and functionalist theories, symbolic interactionism, somatopsychological and attitude theories, Marxist and other materialistic theories, and more recently feminist theories, postmodern interpretations and many others." (p. 1174). Pfieffer (2002) posited nine different models of disability, Hubbard (2004) identified four, Lutz and Bowers (2002) suggested two models, while Turnbull, Beegle, and Stowe (2001) and Waddell (2002) identified five separate models. Given the variety of theoretical perspectives at play in the definition and description of disability, it is difficult to identify let alone utilize all the models of disability presented in the literature.

However, in my review of the literature I have identified commonalities that suggest certain models can be considered as being the most used or dominant at different times within North America. It appears that no formal research or meta-analyses have

been done on the frequency of appearance of particular models within the literature. However, most major works reference the existence of some form of medically dominated model, a functional and economic model emphasizing the economic productivity of the individual and how this is impacted by the disability, and a social model of disability emphasizing the predominance of societal factors in determining who is considered disabled and what that means. Prince (2002b) used this differentiation in his discussion of the application of models of disability to Canadian disability policy. Hubbard (2004) also references this differentiation as a common means for delineating the various models.

On this basis, I have elected to draw on the terminology used by Smart and Smart (2006) in their review of the major models of disability. Smart and Smart aggregated models with strong similarities into broader clusters, and from these derived the three core models posited in their typology. This in turn has reduced a confusing array of models and classification systems to a manageable set of categories. Hence, the three core models that I will be referencing in this study are:

3.2.1 Medical Model

Also known as the biomedical model, the medical model has been the dominant model for disability policy and program development for most of the 20th century. Bickenbach (1993) traces its roots back to earlier Christian theologies that regarded many types of disability as arising as a result of some form of deviance or sinfulness. Waddell (2002) suggest that the evolution of the medical model regarding the disabled paralleled the development of the disease model in medicine, both occurring at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. Both have at their heart the location of disability or

disease within the individual (Beckett & Wrighton, 2000; DePoy & Gilson, 2004; Terzi, 2005). Hubbard (2004) notes that medical model “denotes a medical aetiology that stresses a causal relationship between the origins and outcomes of disability” (p. 184). She also notes that under this model a medical determination becomes a prerequisite for being considered disabled, and the individual is basically assigned the role of being ‘sick’.

Smart and Smart (2006) state that a major strength of this model lays in its explanatory power, and its use of the language of medicine “...lending scientific credibility to the idea that disabilities are wholly an individual experience” (p. 29). Lutz and Bowers (2003), building on Minaire’s (1992) concepts, note that the medical model is a linear process that begins with the aetiology of the ‘disease’, followed by its pathology and subsequent manifestation. Hence the model focuses on the ‘disease’ process itself, by finding a cure and returning the patient to a ‘normal’ or at least former level of functioning. Waddell (2002) posited that the primary processes at work within the medical model are: (1) recognizing patterns of symptoms and signs (history and examination), (2) inferring underlying injury (diagnosis), (3) applying physical therapy to the injury – treatment (and rehabilitation) and (4) expecting the patient to recover (or have residual disability).

While useful in research and diagnosis, Lutz and Bowers (2003) also note that the pure application of the traditional ‘medical model’ has limited applicability in many cases of disability, where a “cure” may not be possible and improvement of current levels of functioning difficult to achieve. Hubbard (2004) observed that the medical model, in its purest form, attempts to treat the body without regard for the individual inhabiting it.

However, Hubbard also notes that this is a form of reductionism that is, in fact, impossible when dealing with people who operate and interact in their environment, live within family and other social units, and function both economically and socially with a greater society and culture.

Despite these limitations, the medical model has dominated many aspects of policy and program development for persons with disabilities in Canada for much of the 20th century (Prince, 2004). The Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (VRDP) Act (Government of Canada, 1985) specifically stated that a disabled person was “ a person who because of a physical or mental impairment is incapable of pursuing regularly any substantially gainful occupation” (para. 4), and required medical (i.e. – physician) verification of the existence of a permanent disability. The influence of the medical model continues today, in that it is still difficult to find government programs or services that do not require some form of medical proof of disability (Government of Canada, 2006a). For example, eligibility for the Canada Pension Plan Disability Vocational Rehabilitation Program (Government of Canada, 2006b) hinges on the “physicians agree[ment] that they can cope with a work-related rehabilitation program” (para., 5). Likewise, all Workers’ Compensation systems in Canada rely heavily on medical opinion as a fundamental criterion for accessing the systems.

3.2.2 Functional/Environmental/Economic Model of Disability

Lutz and Bower (2003) observed that many disciplines (e.g. – Occupational Therapy) recognized quite early the limitations of a strict application of the medical model in dealing with clients with disabilities. Nagi (1965) expanded upon the concept of the medical model by looking at factors beyond the strict aetiology of the individuals

condition (e.g. - social factors, environmental considerations, etc.). Other models and classification systems followed, such as the Institute of Medicine model, the International Classification of Function model, the Economic model, the Disablement model (Verbrugge & Jette, 1994), and most recently, the International Classification of Disabilities, Impairments and Handicaps – II (World Health Organization, 2001). These systems were all attempts to move beyond the limitations of the medical model.

Smart and Smart (2006) collapsed this collection of models and classification systems into a functional/environmental model of disability. Their primary argument was that all the models and classification systems mentioned above were interactional in nature, since they consider the individual not only on the basis of his/her medical diagnosis but also how the person with a disability interacts with and functions within his/her environment. From this perspective:

... the definition of disability, the causal attribution, and the solution attribution are not found wholly within the individual (or his or her disability). Instead, adherents of these models of disability recognize the importance of biology but also posit that the environment can cause, contribute to, and exaggerate disability. Furthermore, these models do not view the “problem” of disability as located totally within the individual, suggesting that many of the difficulties of disability are also located outside the individual, specifically within the environment and its functional requirements. (Smart & Smart, 2006, p. 32).

To Smart and Smart’s definition I have added a third element, namely economic considerations. The focus on the functional requirements of the outside environment, particularly in regards to employment, has resulted in a strong focus on the economic

capability/contribution of the individual. This in turn has resulted in elements of this model having a major effect on disability employment policy (Hubbard, 2002). This model pushes the emphasis on the ability of the individual to function in some form of remunerative employment, and to achieve to the greatest degree possible the ability to be economically self-supporting. This in turn has evolved as a key element of most current vocational rehabilitation policies and programs (Bickenbach & Chatterji, 1999). In most cases, the medical and functional/environmental/economic models are often used co-jointly. The medical model offers a determination of whether an individual is indeed 'disabled', with the functional/environmental/economic model offering determinations of the 'degree of disablement' and the economic impact of the disability (Lutz & Bower, 2003).

The policy implications of the functional/ environmental/economic model and the aligned classification systems have been criticized on several different levels, not least in the way that disability and function are translated into economic and employment productivity frames of reference (Lunt & Thornton, 1993). In a functionalist model, persons with disabilities (PWD's) are 'obligated to become rehabilitated if possible' (Myers, 1965). One of the consequences of this model is that "as long as the person is not 'fully functional' ... he or she is expected to be dependent on others for care. Therefore, for PWD's who cannot regain full functioning, the assumption inherent in this perspective places the PWD in a chronic role of dependency." (Lutz & Bower, 2003, p. 74). Higgins (1992) noted that under the assumptions embedded in the functional/environmental/economic model of disability, societies (and their agents, i.e. – governments, charities, etc.) can cause disabilities, exaggerate disabilities, and even

“make disabilities”. Conversely, disabilities can also be discredited, minimized, and in some particularly horrific examples (e.g. – Nazi Germany) demonized. Bruzy (1997) argues that it is the misuse or abuse of the assumptions in this model, particularly when combined with the determinism inherent within the medical model, that have resulted in much misery for people with disabilities in the last 100 years.

3.2.3 Social Model of Disability

Shakespeare and Watson (2002) in their review of the history of the social model of disability, trace its roots back to the United Kingdom in the 1970's, when activists in the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) began to reject the assumptions inherent within the medical and functional/environmental models. British academics (Barnes, 1991; Finkelstein, 1980, 1981; Oliver, 1990, 1995) contributed heavily to the theoretical development of the model. Oliver (1996) described the core elements of the model:

in our view, it is society which disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society. To understand this it is necessary to grasp the distinction between the physical impairment and the social situation, called ‘disability’, of people with such impairment. Thus we define impairment as lacking all or part of a limb, or having a defective limb, organism or mechanism of the body and disability as the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organization which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them. (p. 22).

Smart and Smart (2006) note that inherent within the model is an assumption that disability is a social construct, and as such can be deconstructed or revised to address the blatant barriers and discrimination faced by persons with disabilities. From this perspective, they define the social model of disability in the following way:

...self-definition, self-determination, the elimination (or reduction) of the prejudice and discrimination (sometimes referred to as “handicapism”), rejection of medical diagnoses and categories, and the drive to achieve full equality and civil rights...[and that] ... (a) people with disabilities must define disability; (b) people with disabilities must refuse to allow “experts” or “professionals” to define the disability, determine the outcomes of their lives, or judge the quality of their lives; and (c) people with disabilities refuse the “disabled role” of deviance and pathology. (Smart & Smart, 2006, p. 34).

As noted earlier, since its formulation, the social model has become highly influential (Vickery, 2001). Inherent within the model is an assumption of political activism on the part of people with disabilities, particularly within Great Britain, where the model was strongly influenced by neo-Marxist academics and the concept of social oppression is strongly emphasized (Barnes, 1991, 1999b; Dewsbury, Clarke, Randall, Rouncefield, & Sommerville, 2004; Oliver, 1990; Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). In North America, where the model has evolved somewhat differently “...the North American approach has mainly developed the notion of people with disabilities as a minority group, within the tradition of US political thought” (Shakespeare & Watson, 2002, p. 4). Batavia and Schriener (2001) also discuss the North American approach to the

social model in terms of what they describe as the ‘disability-rights movement’, and refer to the model as the ‘civil rights’ or minority group model’.

Although enormously influential over the last decade, the social model is not without critics (Dewsbury, et al., 2004; Humphrey, 2000). Batavia and Schriener (2001) note that the model is less effective in providing policy guidance in cases where the employment or other issues faced by persons with disabilities are not the result of direct (or indirect) discrimination. Within the British school, criticisms have surfaced over the rigidity and dogmatism with which the model is applied to all aspects of disability issues. Crow (1992) notes the increasing reluctance by adherents of the model to even acknowledge the existence, let alone any possible influence of an individuals’ impairment in terms of how they interact with society, and posits that challenges are arising as adherents to the social model try to address issues or aspects of disability which are problematic under the model (Vickery, 2001). Hansen and Philo (2007) reflected on how the physicality of the individual’s disability and the nature of the impairment could impact on the disability geography in which the individual interacts and must navigate every day. From the perspective of this study, Hansen and Philo’s (2007) discussion of how the expectation that individuals with disabilities should strive to be as “normal” as their disability allows (normalcy being the standards and performance expected of their non-disabled peers) can influence areas such as work and employment are of particular interest.

Shakespeare and Watson (2001) argue that the model has become so dominant, particularly in Great Britain that “...the very success of the social model is now its main weakness. Because it is such a powerful tool, and because it was so central to the

disability movement, it became a sacred cow, an ideology which could not easily be challenged” (p. 5). However, others have argued that far from being dogmatic, the social model is merely evolving and much of the criticism is an artefact of the struggle for dominance between different ‘schools’ of thought within the model. Gabels and Peters (2004) for example, argue that much of the criticism is arising from neo-Marxist adherents of a class struggle interpretation of the model who had dominated both the initial development of the model in Great Britain and are now resisting it’s evolution into a broader “resistance” based model. New approaches or interpretations of the model arising from these are now putting at risk the dominant position of many of the ‘fathers’ of the social disability model whose writings in the 1960’s and 70’s gave rise to the disability movement. However, despite these limitations, the social model of disability continues to have a very strong influence on contemporary thought regarding disability and disability policy.

3.3 Disability Policy Analysis Approaches

While the relationship between public policy and issues that have an impact on persons with disabilities have been highlighted since the 19th century (O'Brien, 2001), examination of disability policy as a separate area of study is relatively recent. With the development of the socio-political model in the latter part of the 20th century, an increasing emphasis began to be given to the linkage between disability issues and public policy (Michael Oliver, 1995), and with it an increasing recognition of the importance of the effective application of policy analysis.

Various authors (Dejong, 1994; Fox, 1994; Oliver, 1995; Watson, 1993) began to identify a gap in the analysis of public social policy, namely the systematic examination

and research of public policy directed at persons with disabilities. Dejong (1994) observed that “disability policy has not been recognized as a generic policy area. We often speak of a health policy, a tax policy, a defence policy, an education policy, a foreign policy, a transportation policy, an energy policy, an environmental policy, or an income policy, but seldom do we speak of a disability policy” (p. 154). Watson (1993) noted that disability policy research was an emerging area in the field of policy research, with a particular impact upon public (i.e. – government) policy. Watson further noted the broad nature of the field, encompassing special education, civil rights statutes, accessible transportation, housing, and public facilities, publicly funded rehabilitation services, and benefit programs for people with disabilities (p. 720). Due in part to the wide scope of what can be included under the category of disability policy, there has been a relative dearth of research examining how the various theoretical constructs within the policy analysis field apply to this area. To address this, Scotch and Schriener (1997) argued that it is necessary to examine methodologies and processes from a range of social and economic policy realms.

My review of the literature, in particular the theoretical frameworks used in disability policy analysis, suggests that there are separate lines of inquiry or approaches to policy analysis which seem to have relevance to the issues examined in this thesis. Howlett and Ramesh (2003), citing Radin (2000), identified two ‘ideal’ approaches to policy analysis, the first of these being the ‘rational’ or ‘modern’ approach, which focuses on the quantification of economic costs and benefits. This approach was particularly popular in the 1960’s and 1970’s and still in use. The second, identified as

the ‘postmodern’ approach of the 1980’s and 1990s’, is concerned with the social construction of policy problems, policy discourses and the politics of policy processes.

The ‘rational’ approach is described by Everett (2003) as a prescriptive model, which is process oriented and is usually comprised of a number of logically ordered sequential steps which comprehensively canvasses, assesses and compares all options. According to Everett (2003), the ‘post-modernist’ approach examines policy as an inherently political process, and the outcome of a ‘play of power’ which proceeds from an interaction and series of negotiating steps between groups using a variety of resources and techniques in order to reach a solution. Pothier and Devlin (2006) expanded on the concept of ‘post-modern’ policy analysis approaches by applying their concept of critical disability theory. Drawing from a number of theorists, including feminist, communitarian, critical race theorists, and gay/lesbian/queer theorists (among others), they identify four central themes that underlie a critical examination of disability issues:

- (1) Language, definitions, and voice,
- (2) Contextual politics and the politics of responsibility and accountability,
- (3) Philosophical challenges; and (4) citizenship/dis-citizenship.

Similarly, Hiranandami (2005) articulated the importance of applying critical theory to disability, where a number of factors, including models of disability, must be applied to “question the monolithic views of disability as individual inadequacy” (para. 2).

There have been continuing debates in the literature (Bridgman & Davis, 2003; Everett, 2003; Howard, 2005; Smith & May, 1980; Sutton, 1990) regarding which

approaches are the most effective theoretical perspective for undertaking policy analysis. In reviewing the different approaches to policy, I quickly noted the overwhelming preference within much of the recent disability policy research for approaches grounded in critical theory and post-modern approaches. Applying Michel Foucault's and Norman Fairclough's concepts to policy analysis, extensive use has been made of the methodologies centering on discourse analysis in the review of public policy. Pothier and Devlin (2006) noted: "A primary concern of critical disability theory is an interrogation of the language used in the context of disability" (p. 3). Dudley-Marling, Stevens and Gurn (2007) likewise observed that critical policy analysis of government and educational policy should include consideration of the explicit and implicit meanings in professional language, definitions and terminology, and the historical and political contexts that help shape the policy environment. Goldberg (2005) identified a number of researchers who have utilized these approaches to policy analysis, including: Stephen Ball (1993), Trevor Gale (1999), Olssen, Codd and O'Neill (2004), James Scheurich (1997), and Sandra Taylor (1997).

To effectively address the complexities of the actual policy process, in particular the interplay of power and political influences, Everett (2003) recommends using approaches which acknowledge that policies and policy directions are a result of a struggle among stakeholders for resources and their application and distribution. In particular, Everett argues that there needs to be an acknowledgement that the results of such a struggle are unlikely to be based on a fair and objective analysis. Rather, "... policies and their resultant outcomes are more likely to be determined on the basis of political clout and expedients" (Everett, 2003, p.70). Below I briefly summarize my

decision to reject the traditional “rationalist” approaches to policy analysis often favoured in the past by governments. I also examine three approaches, which I believe demonstrate the effective application of critical policy analysis and discuss their applicability to my research.

3.3.1 Limitations of the Rationalist Approaches to Policy Analysis

Everett (2003) argues that the rationalist approaches to policy analysis exemplified by concepts such as the ‘policy cycle’ are inadequate in addressing the complexity inherent within all major policy development activities. Everett (2003) believes that these more traditional approaches to policy analysis often fail to “address[ing] effectively the complexity of decision-making and how particular issues emerge on the political agenda and the means of their ultimate solution” (p. 68). Everett argues that such approaches fail to address the key political elements that are in play in the development of policy, or are inadequate in resolving policy steeped in controversy. At best he believes that traditional approaches like the policy cycle may have some value if the policy issues are relatively straightforward, however he believes that it is “... unlikely, however, that the policy cycle can replace the political contest, or resolve issues which become contentious and are politicized” (p. 69).

3.3.2 Ball’s Critical Policy Sociology

Recognizing the limitations of more traditional policy analysis approaches, I have been drawn to Ball’s work on the nature of policy, particularly his emphasis on policy as both text and discourse and his acknowledgment of Foucault’s concepts of power and governmentality, as well as the role of power and politics within the policy process.

Cataldi (2004) references Ball's application of Foucault's discourse theory and methodology in policy analysis, and notes that Foucault's concepts can serve as a viable foundation for a policy analysis methodology. Cataldi (2004) goes on to identify a number of potential applications of Foucault's discourse theory to policy analysis, including:

1. Foucault's concept of discourse provides an expansive framework for describing the broad ideological and political influences impacting the early stages of policy.
2. Foucault's mode of discourse inquiry (his discourse principles transposed into a procedural method) provides a systematic analysis of the multiple, unparallel dimensions of political and policy processes.
3. Foucault's methodology lends itself to the construction of a practical procedural model to gather data on policy interactions within a changing policy environment.

Ball (1994) builds upon Foucault's concepts by identifying policy discourse as a process which "articulate[s] and constrain[s] the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment" (p. 23). Goldberg (2005), citing Ball (1994), states that "this definition conceives of discourse as particular ways of organizing meaning-making practices and ...acts like the "'rules of the game' by differentially empowering or disempowering the relevant social groups" (Offe, 1984 as cited in Ball, 1994, p.20). Ball (1994) also observes that discourse can have the effect of "redistributing the 'voice', so that ...only certain voices can be heard as meaningful and authoritative" (p. 24). In looking at the sequence of policy documents in this study, Ball's concept of dominant

voices is of particular interest. As Ball (1994) notes "...we do need to recognize and analyze the existence of 'dominant' discourses, regimes of truth, erudite knowledge – like neo-liberalism and management theory – within social policy" (p. 25).

Goldberg (2005), citing Gale (1999), states that "...according to Ball, discourse is separate from text as text refers to a particular concrete manifestation of practices organized within a particular discourse... as such, text can be analyzed to reveal the discourses operating" (p. 64). In this study, the intent is to identify through an analysis of the texts the discourse/policy relationship, as reflected by the use of the key models of disability. Paralleling a discourse analysis of the Government of British Columbia's Disability Designation Review by Prieur (2006), Ball's conceptualizations will inform an examination of how these differing discourses have positioned the key actors and models within the policy texts.

3.3.3 Taylor's Critical Policy Analysis

Taylor (1997) builds on many of Ball's conceptualizations, particularly his observation that "policy is discourse", to further explore the applicability of discourse theory to the area of policy research. She notes Maguire and Ball's (1994) observation that policy studies appear to be methodologically unsophisticated, with issues of language and meaning often being taken for granted. (p. 24). Taylor draws on Foucauldian theories of discourse and particularly the work of Norman Fairclough (1989, 1992, 1993). Seeking to "... explore policy-making processes within the broad discursive field within which policies are developed and implemented" (p. 25), Taylor (1997) argues that discourse theories can enhance the scope of critical policy analysis not only by focusing on policy documents as texts, but also by exploring the arena of policy making. Citing

Yeatman (1990) and Fulcher (1989), she references the “struggle between contenders of competing objectives within the policy, where language—or more specifically, discourse—is used tactically” (p. 26). In Taylor’s view, discourse analysis is a particularly useful tool for capturing how language in policy texts reflects the outcomes of political struggles over meaning. In so doing, the researcher can understand the competing discourses extant in the document, and the dominant ideologies reflected therein.

Taylor goes further in arguing the importance of moving beyond textual analysis when applying discourse theory to an appreciation of the context in which the policy process takes place and the policy texts are created. Citing McHoul (1984), Taylor (1997) argues that a discourse analysis of policy must move beyond a focus on the linguistic aspects of the policy statements to explore the networks of discourse that constitute a field of power and knowledge. Quoting Codd (1988), she argues that policy texts represent the outcome of political struggles over meaning, and that “language serves a political purpose, constructing particular meanings and signs that work to mask social conflict and foster commitment to the notion of universal public interest” (Codd, 1988), in Taylor, 1997, p. 27). Taylor gives particular emphasis to the historical, economic, social, political and cultural contexts that help determine how policy ‘problems’ are constructed and positioned on the policy and political agenda, and which in turn shape both the content and language of the policy texts. She notes that the terminology used in policy texts is often highly malleable, and often reflect particular historical and cultural contexts. Discourse analysis can facilitate an understanding of these contexts, and this in

turn can provide a more complete picture of how particular concepts are used and understood.

Taylor (1997) also identifies the strong linkages between elements of feminist and discourse theories, in particular how both theoretical perspectives see policy as a set of dynamic, historically located and complex processes rather than simply a set of institutions. Both perspectives also question the assumptions surrounding the validity of earlier policy analysis methodologies and challenge the conclusions drawn from those studies. Citing Eisenhart and Howe (1992) and Silverman (1993), Taylor also argues that both theoretical perspectives encourage a more critical awareness of methodological questions that had previously been taken for granted—particularly in relation to interpretation.

Taylor believes that the application of discourse theory will strengthen policy research and produce effective and critical analyses useful in the pursuit of social justice. She sees the value of this type of research not only for policy makers within government, but also for interested stakeholders who may be engaged in struggles with the state in various policy arenas.

3.3.4 Goldberg's Critical Policy Discourse Analysis (CPDA)

Michelle Goldberg (2005) builds on the concepts of applying discourse theory to policy analysis by developing a detailed methodological approach for the examination of policy using discourse analysis. Combining Foucault and Fairclough's theoretical approaches, Goldberg extends them with concepts drawn from a range of researchers within the critical, narrative, educational and policy perspectives, such as Ball (1993),

Gale (1999), Joshee & Johnson (2005), Ozga (2000) and Taylor (1997). Goldberg has developed a detailed methodology that “uncovers how discursive technologies operate through predominant discourses and their interactions with other multiple discourses in a tangling web to influence policy reality” (p. 99). Similar to Taylor’s Critical Discourse Analysis, Goldberg does not limit the analysis to simply the text. Rather, she attempts to go beyond the linguistic content of a text to include:

- 1) A historical contextualization (a history of systems of thought),
- 2) Focus on discourse-as-knowledge, discourse as a matter of the social, historical and political conditions under which statements come to count as true or false,
- 3) Reference the materiality of discourse, not only interpreting text, but recognizing discourse as an instrument and effect of power (p. 97).

Another key element to Goldberg’s CPDA is recognition of the multiple ways that discourse operates as power. Building on Foucault’s belief that power operates through a multiplicity of forces, agents and practices, Goldberg sees a web of multiple, diffuse and interactive ways that power operates. She uses these concepts to highlight a revised notion of intertextuality, which she defines as “relationships between discourses that assign meaning to other discourses across multiple domains to structure reality” (p. 98). Hence, by identifying the multiple co-existing discourses and analyzing their interactions, it is possible to reveal their influence on the policy process.

Yet another parameter considered within Goldberg’s (2005) methodology is the concept of predominant discourses. A predominant discourse is “the discourse that exists at the core or hub of the discursive interaction. It is the discourse that “legitimizes and

marginalizes (enables or constrains) all other discourses, and is also the medium through which all other discourses are interpreted” (p. 98). The predominant discourse thus plays a privileged role in the motivating and articulation of other discourses. Building upon Greenberg's (2000) conception of themes, Goldberg emphasizes that the predominant discourse is not necessarily just the most common discourse expressed, nor the one which is spoken most frequently by the greatest number of speakers, or centered on the point of origin of the discourse or the position of the speaker. Rather, it is based on all these factors and on how they interact and legitimize other discourses.

It is from this perspective of policy as a complex set of interactions between predominant and other discourse that led Goldberg (2005, 2006) to apply a web metaphor, wherein the predominant discourse can play the role of a hub through which any number of other discourses interact and possibly contest. This “discursive web” is described by Goldberg (2006) as “an ensemble of multiple discourses that interact in a complex web of relationships that enable or constrain social relations” (p. 82). Through the identification of the predominant and other discourses present within a policy text(s), it is possible to describe this discursive policy web and highlight the relationships between them in order to expose their influence on the policy reality.

The analytical process undertaken in Goldberg’s (2005) approach to CPDA can be summarized as involving three phases:

- 1) Phase I involves situating the policy being examined within its discursive context and basically delineating the boundaries of the research, something Goldberg calls “limiting the policy field”. Key actors/stakeholders are identified, as are their interests and power relationships. The objective of this phase is to “identify the

discourses circulating and describing their relationships in details” (p. 103).

Another key element to this phase is identifying the predominant discourse(s) and highlighting the ideologies behind them.

- 2) The second phase involves an examination of the policy texts, not only the sentences, paragraphs, phrases, etc., but also how they are structured and what is silenced or missing. As well, the analysis examines how the ideology operates through the discourse, and identifies “how the discursive web operates as a technology to structure power relations” (p. 110).
- 3) The final phase in the CPDA involves the proposing social change. Arguing that deconstruction and analysis are insufficient, Goldberg suggests that the researcher redesign the discourses to “produce more positive effects and imagine new possibilities” (p. 111). She also suggests that one possibility is to develop counter-discourses that can challenge the dominant discourses.

Citing Fairclough’s premise that structural or social changes can be made by shifts in discourse, Goldberg (2005) argues that CPDA can assist the process by highlighting the interconnectedness of discourses and that “advocates need to work on multiple discourses together to facilitate social change. However, change will not happen overnight through a revolution. Change involves an ongoing process where resistance means creating and adapting discourses within the web that then have influences on other discourses” (p. 111).

Goldberg (2005) describes CPDA as an effective methodology that combines Foucault and Fairclough's theoretical approaches with the work of other theorists from narrative, critical thinking and educational policy perspectives to make critical discourse

analyses more powerful and realistic within a policy context. It can be used to examine how power relations are legitimized and regulated through discourse. It can also help identify those multiple and complex assemblages of power which in turn creates 'truths' that determine action and regulate behaviour in policy (p. 99).

3.4 Definition of Discourse

Fairclough (1993) notes that "... discourse is a difficult concept, largely because there are so many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints" (p. 3). MacDonnell (1986) characterizes discourse theory as constructivist, rationalist, and heterogeneous in nature. McHoul and Grace (1993) define the term discourse' within two contexts, namely 'non-critical' and 'critical' approaches. The former as they see as being derided from linguistics, socio-linguistics and sociology (among other traditional disciplines). The latter they see as originating in the critical approaches developed by thinkers such as Foucault, who examined the discourse (or discourses) in terms of bodies of knowledge. Foucault's approach "... moves away from a focus on language (in the sense of a linguistic system or grammar) and towards a counter reading of historical and social conditions" (p. 27). Goldberg (2005) citing Foucault (1974), and Fairclough and Wodak (1997) ,examined discourse as a process of social construction. She cites Berger and Luckman (1967) in stating that "discourse is the foundation of the process of social construction upon which social reality depends" (p. 70). As such, discourses are the basis for uncovering how reality is discursively constructed. Weedon (1987) interpreted Foucault's definition of the concept of discourse as:

... ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations ...discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (p. 108).

Curran (2000) noted that not all discourses are equal. Some discourses are more influential, pervasive, and tend to structure or dominate related discourses. Curran (2000) discusses these “dominant” discourses in terms of being “the spoken, written, and behavioural expectations that we all share within a cultural grouping” (para. 4). As such, she sees dominant discourses as being “normative” in nature, and, based on our expectations as a social group. Curran also notes that by being normative, dominant discourses can often be seen as a collection of expectations that are taken for granted. They embody socialization by the dominant or decision-making groups, and gives the prevailing "accepted" rules of everyday living as practiced or desired by decision-makers. As such, dominant discourses rarely include the perspective of the “other”, which she describes as the non-power holding groups within society.

Hare-Mustin (1994), citing Bloom (1981), likewise observed that “not all circulating discourses are of equal importance; some have a privileged and dominant influence on language” (p.19). She further noted that “dominant discourses are so familiar, they are taken for granted and even recede from view. It is hard to question them. They are part of the identity of most members of any society, and they influence attitudes and behaviours” (p.20). Within a policy context, these dominant discourses can often serve to decontextualize and depoliticize significant policy changes, and move them from the realm of potentially contentious and politically challenging issues to that of being

‘common sense’ decisions based on ubiquitous and ‘goes without saying’ assumptions that are rarely challenged (Butterwick & Benjamin, 2000).

The concept of discourse used in this thesis is grounded in the work of post-structuralist scholars such as Foucault and Fairclough. As Cataldi (2004) observed, these conceptions of discourse “offered a new way of conceptualizing and evaluating historical traditions and institutional structures, political processes and their influence on policy and values, the formulation of individual and cultural identity and the artefacts and symbols that represent them” (p. 9). As Goldberg (2005), citing McHoul and Grace (1993) and Hook (2001) points out :

This understanding leads to a definition of discourse as a series of rules, which at a given period of time, and for a definite society, dictate the possibilities and limits of what it is possible to write, think or say, or what counts as truth. These rules are the basis of forming, refining, and constraining our thoughts and behaviours. Discourses have material effects as discourses and the assumptions carried with them circulating in society limit thoughts, behaviours and actions (albeit in an unconscious manner). Furthermore, viewing discourse as the series of rules that enable and constrain material relations of power, enables an analysis of how the rules have the tendency to privilege some people and disadvantage others (p. 69).

3.5 Discourse Theory and Disability Policy Research

Despite some concerns that discourse theory and the poststructuralist assumptions that underpin it would tend to favour certain types of disability models over others, I

believe that discourse theory offers the best theoretical and methodological construct available to examine the policy documents and research questions. In particular, it has a capability to focus on ideological issues that accommodate belief and value systems within differing models and the policy choices inherent within them. As Cataldi (2004) notes, “when consensus is not present or strong, then, discourse analysis allows a relativistic assessment of policy purpose and function; it accommodates and accounts for diverse value systems within the policy environment by using numerous lenses.” (p. 47).

3.5.1 Discourse and Power in Structuring Policy

Peters (2007) argues that every policy document deploys particular discourses as both tactic and theory in a web of power relations. Discourse theory thus enables an examination of policy within a broader framework of power, where specific values are viewed as instruments usually serving an established, powerful majority (Cataldi, 2004). As Nisbet (1999) observes “... their concern is not so much a matter of being “right” (for there are different “right” solutions, depending on one’s values), but rather of reconciling divergent views in a solution which is seen as “fair” by a maximum number of those affected by it. In this, the aims and values of those with access to power must carry greatest weight.” (p.71)

In policy environments such as those affecting national disability policy, the potential disparity in the power relationships between governments (usually the sole source of funding for major disability services initiatives) and representatives of advocacy organizations and the community of persons with disabilities is great. Reliance solely on one-dimensional, rational and linear approaches that see policy interactions as causal, defined and predictable may produce facts without insight. Cataldi (2004)

suggests that the research goals in discourse analysis should “aim to detect the play of different forces and mechanisms of political power” (p. 48). To this end, I draw on the work of Foucault (1974, 1980) who suggests that the study of power must be located in discursive activity, for “relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse” (Foucault, 1980, p. 93). As Goldberg (2005) observes, Foucault’s focus on the role of discourse in the operation of power examines the way discourses conceal particular interests by making them appear “normal”. Hence the discursive practices undertaken in policy development legitimize a “truth” which structures current power relations by “... formulating meanings and understandings which disciplines action and regulate behaviour”. (p. 71).

Chan (2005) notes that one of the strengths of Foucault’s conceptualization is that power is an endemic practice in everyday relations, and is active even when there is no consciousness of it. Quoting Foucault’s (1978) statement that “... power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere” (p. 94), she notes that as such, power relations are not unilateral or unidirectional but discursive. Chan (2005) cites Smith’s (1987) work on ‘relations of ruling’ as a framework, which develops a more complex theory of power relations that are embedded in everyday practices as well as language. She argues that these relations of ruling are useful in thinking about public policy as “... they explain how power becomes embedded in actions and documents, even when individuals have no consciousness of the power that these actions and documents convey” (p. 139). She notes that Smith (1987) considers the examination of policy texts as one means of capturing ruling relations and, in particular,

the researcher can identify the various voices within the discourse, especially those that may be silenced or are speaking out to challenge traditional norms.

3.5.2 Ideology and Policy

The issue of ideology poses a number of unique challenges within disability policy research. Questions arise as to what is meant by the term “ideology”, how ideologies are intertwined with particular models of disability, and how both ideology and power are expressed within the context of particular policy instruments. Merriam-Webster (2011) defines ideology as (1) visionary theorizing, (2) a systematic body of concepts especially about human life or culture (3) a manner or the content of thinking characteristic of an individual, group, or culture, or (4): the integrated assertions, theories and aims that constitute a socio-political program. Thompson (1984) identifies three key ways in which ideology operates:

1. An ideological process legitimates, it establishes the authority of particular individuals, classes or social categories and the authenticity of their collective view of the world,
2. Ideology offers a version of social reality which is in keeping with the interests of powerful individuals or groups,
3. It universalizes or naturalizes the arbitrary and contingent, dissolving the historical contingency of a particular formulation of social reality so that it appears as an inevitable and enduring aspect of human experience.

Abberley (1995) notes that there are wide disagreements amongst social theorists as to the usefulness and meaning of the concept of ideology. From the perspective of disability policy, he believes that the focus should be on “distinguishing between systems of symbols or beliefs which are politically neutral ... and those which embody and reproduce asymmetrical power relationships” (p. 222). Abberley (1995) goes on to observe that ideology provides a way of thinking about the body of events, pronouncements and practices through which policy can “serve to perpetuate the process of disablement of impaired people” (p. 222). This process is undertaken by:

1. Legitimizing the authority of particular individuals, classes or social categories and the authenticity of their collective view of the world,
2. Offering a version of social reality which is in keeping with the interests of powerful individuals or groups,
3. Universalizing or naturalizing the arbitrary and contingent, dissolving the historical contingency of a particular formulation of social reality so that it appears as an inevitable and enduring aspect of human experience.

In this thesis, the issue of ideology will be examined to establish the relationships between different ideological orientations and particular models of disability, and to determine their mutual impact on the policy texts. Particular attention will be paid to the influence of liberalist ideologies, most notably neoliberal and inclusive liberal approaches to social policy.

3.5.3 Neo-liberal Ideologies

Mahon (2000) summarizing the work of O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver (1999), distinguishes between three moments in the development of liberalism – classic, new or social liberalism, and neo-liberalism. Craig and Porter (2004) added a fourth, which they defined as inclusive liberalism. In the last 20 years, many social policy analyses have argued about the impact of neo-liberal ideological influences on the application of disability policy (McDowell, 2004, Wilton & Schuer, 2005). Citing the election of Ronald Regan in the United States and Margaret Thatcher in Great Britain as marketing the rise of the 'New Right' movement in the late 1970's, these analysts argue that neo-liberal administrations were characterized by a core set of beliefs influencing their approach to social policy. Kagan and Burton (2006), citing Jessop (2006) summarized these key elements of neo-liberal belief as including an emphasis on:

1. Legitimizing the authority of particular individuals, classes or social categories and the authenticity of their collective view of the world,
2. Economic liberalization promoting competition in the open marketplace,
3. A strong emphasis on deregulation, giving greater economic freedom from state control and legal restrictions,
4. Privatization where possible of the public sector involvement in the direct or indirect provision of goods and services,
5. The commoditization of the residual public sector to promote the role of market forces, either directly or through market proxies,

6. A focus on globalization and encouraging mobility of both capital and labour,
7. Reduced direct taxation to expand the scope for market activity

Kagan and Burton (2006) also note that an equally important aspect of neo-liberal thought on social policy has been an increasing emphasis on “radical individualism”, that is, an emphasis on individual responsibility and action and a belief that “ the wisdom of the market would allocate resources and ensure economic development that would trickle down to everyone else (p. 302). Fine and Barreras (2004), citing Bourdieu (1998), argue that this ideological orientation in social policy has become increasingly pervasive, and is increasingly being viewed in society as the commonly accepted and ‘self-evident’ perspective for addressing social concerns. Goldberg (2005), citing Erjavec (2001), observed that “... neo-liberalism has been uncritically adopted as inevitable. It promotes a view of the world that is certain and unquestionable, thus constructing a truth under which we are forced to operate” (p. 159).

Villas (1996) notes that emphasis on neoliberal policy approaches within governments world-wide reflects a shift in economic and social policy away from a Keynesian-Fordist model, where the state undertook an interventionist approach to regulate economic activity if need be, and intervene to address any acute inequities caused by the marketplace. Villas (1996) notes that in this model, social policy:

Reinforced the process of capital accumulation to the degree that it created externalities for private enterprises. For example, public investment in education, health care, worker training, and low-income housing represented a savings for the private sector, which would otherwise have had to invest in these areas.

Meanwhile, employment, wage and pricing policies improved the purchasing power of individual workers and the domestic market as a whole. Social policy was seen as an element of investment, not an expense [and] facilitated the incorporation of broad sectors of the poor, especially the urban poor, into the political and economic system (para. 6-7).

Villas (1996) argues that the neoliberal economic model that now predominates social policy throughout the Americas is predicated on a radically different set of assumptions, and views social policy as operating:

... like a charity, directing aid toward the extremely poor. Rather than improving the working and living conditions of low-income groups, social policy tries to assist the many victims of structural adjustment, and to prevent further deterioration in the living standards of the population already below the poverty line. Neoliberal social policy doesn't help these people get out of the hole of poverty; it simply tries to prevent them from sinking further into it (para. 6-7).

Reichwein (2002) argues that current neoliberal social policy approaches are modern incarnations of late 19th century British and North American ethos towards the poor, combined with a core belief in the ability of the competitive marketplace to eventually equalize economic and social inequities and eventually “lift all boats” in a tide of increasing prosperity. Reichwein (2002, p. 7) identifies core policy assumptions that permeate the neoliberal social policy approaches, including:

1. There are worthy versus unworthy (or deserving versus undeserving) citizens in society.

2. Administration of social benefits is to be carried out at as a local level as possible, and there are to be strict residence/eligibility requirements.
3. The principle of 'less eligibility' should apply, meaning that aid given to the poor (especially the unemployed employable citizens) is to be sufficiently minimal so as to make active labour market participation (regardless of wage) the preferable option.

However, others have argued that the classification of the above-described principles and social policy approaches as solely 'neoliberal' is too simplistic. It is rather a description of what is in fact an amalgamation of a number of different 'liberal' constructs, tempered by the realities of constructing and applying social policy to complex issues faced by societies in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Mahon (2008) citing O'Connor et. al., (1999) argues that many of the social policy approaches of the last twenty years, which have been labeled as neoliberal by many critics, are in fact an amalgamation of classic liberalism, neo-liberal and social liberal constructs. While retaining the neoliberal commitment to challenging the Keynesian welfare state and classical liberalism's celebration of market individualism and minimal government, Mahon (2008) claims that much of recent social policy in Canada also draws on social liberal principles in support of some types of social investment. This approach, which he labels as inclusive liberalism:

... draws on social liberalism to support its case for social investment. Inclusive liberalism shares neo-liberalism's commitment to non-inflationary growth and balanced budgets and is equally dedicated to the liberalization of the flow of goods and capital. Both stress the centrality of employment (supply-, not demand-side

measures) and labour market flexibility, accepting that this means greater inequality. To instill the work ethic, systems of income support need to be reconfigured to eliminate ‘welfare traps’. For inclusive liberals, however, activation includes training and other forms of assistance designed to develop individual capacities. Social policy is here understood as a social investment designed to ‘empower individuals to take their place in markets and civil society’ (Craig and Porter 2006: 91). As in the Keynesian era, then, the inclusive liberal state recognizes the existence of ‘the social’, but social policies to empower people to meet the challenges of economic globalization (Mahon, 2008, p. 344).

From Mahon’s (2008) perspective, the term neoliberal has been generalized to a point where it now is being applied to a range of different ‘liberal’ approaches, and caution should be used in the application of the term to social policy approaches. While the term “neoliberal” will be used in a broader context in this thesis, the caution is acknowledged and the question of how “neoliberal” are certain elements of the policy texts will be examined later in the document.

3.6 Discourse and Disability Policy: A personal narrative

In the Graduate Handbook published by the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia (University of British Columbia, 2009), the doctoral thesis within the Doctor of Education (EdD) program is described as “... a research project in which the student has intensively studied a problem or set of circumstances in his or her practice” (p. 7). The previous sections of this chapter have examined various approaches to policy analysis and in particular efficacy of critical discourse policy

analysis. It seems appropriate at this time to examine my professional interest in this area, and the study's particular relevance to my field of professional practice.

My interest in the role of discourse, language and disability policy arose in part from my experiences in the negotiation and writing of intergovernmental agreements between the Government of Alberta and the federal government. In the course of the negotiations involved in these agreements, I began to understand the importance of specific words and language, and also the very strong role that power and influence play in the negotiation process. I also gained insight into how the interpretation and understanding of various words, phrases and sections of documents could profoundly influence how policies are developed and implemented. By way of example, I was at one point engaged in a private discussion with a representative from a major national disability advocacy organization who expressed extreme frustration over the fact that major disability issues were the focus of continued federal/provincial/territorial discussions, but no action seemed to take place. In particular, this individual noted that after seemingly endless studies, research papers, vision papers, reports, analyses, etc. there was little, if anything, to show for the effort. This individual observed that despite public commitments by federal and provincial politicians and officials, there was little concrete action to follow-up on these commitments.

From my own involvement in the files, I understood that in many cases there were other concerns and agendas that could and did have an impact on the course of intergovernmental agreements. Issues such as provincial constitutional authority of provinces to administer their own programs for persons with disabilities, the possibility of setting precedents that could influence future negotiations in other files, the

availability of resources to implement policy recommendations, and a raft of other considerations could play a role in how such agreements are negotiated and implemented. Often negotiations undertaken in good conscience by all parties can be influenced, redirected or even shut down based on considerations or concerns only indirectly related to the policy issues under discussion. My experience within intergovernmental relations has provided me with ample evidence that policy development, particularly from an inter-jurisdictional perspective, is often fraught with an incredibly tangled web of issues, concerns and agendas that can complicate and indeed thwart the best of intentions on a range of social policy issues.

Another area of insight that I have gained from my years within the intergovernmental world is on the importance of language within any policy document. Yeatman (1990) noted that from a discourse theory perspective, policy making could be viewed as an arena of struggle over meaning, where language is used tactically. Differing uses of rhetoric, differing ideological perspectives, and differing roles and functions (and power) within the policy process can lead to misunderstandings or differing expectations. Certainly, in my involvement with the development of policy documents and intergovernmental agreements, an incredible amount of attention is paid to the use of language. Phrases and words are often parsed and subjected to extensive analysis and consideration before they are included in texts. I have seen documents written and rewritten with an almost obsessive attention, and I have seen major agreements fall apart over what appear on the surface as being minor differences in language. In this study, I hope to explore one aspect of this tangled web, and in so doing shed a bit of light on an

element of the policy world that often goes unnoticed, but can have profound impacts upon a particularly vulnerable group within Canadian society.

4: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter will outline the methods and approaches undertaken in this study, the strengths and limitations of the methodology, the rationale for the selection of this methodology, a discussion on data management and the instrumentation utilized, and the data analysis processes followed to address the research questions.

4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis: Background to the Methodology

Just as there is no one agreed upon definition of discourse (Prieur, 2006), the term discourse analysis is also an umbrella term that refers to a number of different approaches drawing on a diverse range of theoretical and methodological orientations (Horsfall & Cleary, 2000; Taylor, 2004). Kumar and Pallathucheril (2004) note that the term discourse analysis has “been used in a wide range of social science disciplines such as linguistics, cognitive psychology, and sociology to include analysis of a variety of elements related to communication, use of language, and social interaction” (p. 829). Smith (2007) identifies discourse analysis as a methodology referring to the analysis of texts, whether written or spoken, in order to interpret the way that language functions in a given context. Traynor (1996), as cited in Horsfall and Cleary (2000), suggests that discourse analysis provides a method “to explore the way in which language constructs a reality which can serve to support particular institutions or ideologies” (p. 292). Lupton (1992) considers discourse analysis to be concerned with a critical analysis of the use of language in the reproduction of dominant ideologies. Virtually all definitions focus on the

use of language, either written or spoken, in order to find meanings beyond simple words and phrases (Pattison, 2006).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a unique form of discourse analysis emerged as a approach in the 1970's, primarily growing out of the work of a group of linguists at the University of East Anglia in England, and was first recognized as a distinct methodology in the late 1980's (Smith, 2007). Primarily identified with the work of Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak and Teun van Dijk, the field of critical discourse analysis has grown rapidly in the latter decades of the 20th century. It is now regarded by many as a an established academic discipline in its own right, with the same rituals and institutional practices as all other academic disciplines (Billig & Schegloff, 1999, cited in Wodak, 2002).

Wodak (2002) states that the roots of CDA “can be traced back to classical rhetoric, text linguistics and sociolinguistics, as well as in applied linguistics and pragmatics, in that the notions of ideology, power, hierarchy and gender, along with other with sociological variables were all seen as relevant for an interpretation or explanation of text” (p. 6). Hart and Lukes (2007) likewise trace CDA back to the Aristotelian study of rhetoric, and then note the contributions of contemporary philosophers of the Marxist-influenced Critical Theory of the Frankfurt school. In particular, they note the influences of Adorno and Horkheimer, later followed by Habermas, and Foucault's poststructuralist discourse analysis. Luke (1997) states that CDA

... builds from three broad theoretical orientations. First, it draws from post structuralism the view that discourse operates laterally across local institutional sites, and that texts have a constructive function in forming up and shaping human

identities and actions. Second, it draws from Bourdieu's sociology the assumption that actual textual practices and interactions with texts become "embodied" forms of "cultural capital" with exchange value in particular social fields. Third, it draws from neomarxist cultural theory the assumption that these discourses are produced and used within political economies, and that they thus produce and articulate broader ideological interests, social formations and movements within those fields. (para. 24)

Threadgold (2003) acknowledges these roots, and further observes that current forms of Critical Discourse Analysis are almost all strongly influenced by critical theory, something that McGregor (2003) suggests results in CDA aiming "to help the analyst understand social problems that are mediated by mainstream ideology and power relationships [that are] perpetuated by the use of written texts in our daily and professional lives (para. 7).

Wodak (2002) differentiates CDA from other types of discourse analysis by emphasizing that "CDA has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or specific theory. Neither is one specific methodology characteristic of research in CDA [rather] studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds, oriented towards very different data and methodologies" (p. 7). Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is also differentiated by its focus on how discursive constructions support certain institutions, ideologies and power relations (Kahu & Morgan, 2007; Parker, 1992). In her review of the evolution of CDA, Goldberg (2005) argues that critical discourse "goes beyond other forms of discourse analysis and conversational analysis because it emphasizes that inequalities and injustices are enacted,

reproduced and legitimated by policy text in discourse” (p. 85). Fairclough (1993) differentiates CDA from other types of discourse analysis in that it:

Aims to systematically explore the often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such processes, events and texts arise out and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse in society is itself a factor in securing power and hegemony (p.135).

Rogers (2004), citing Fairclough and Wodak (1997), offers eight foundational principles that underlie critical discourse analysis. These are:

- CDA addresses social problems
- Power relations are discursive
- Discourse constitutes society and culture
- Discourse does ideological work
- Discourse is historical
- A sociocognitive approach is needed to understand how relations between texts and society are mediated
- Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory and uses a systematic methodology
- CDA is a socially committed scientific paradigm

4.2 Critical Discourse Analysis in Policy

The model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) used in this thesis is based on Fairclough's (1995) approach to examining texts. Fairclough (1992, 1995, 2003) argues that CDA offers an approach for examining a broad range of critical social and health issues. Drawing on Fairclough's conceptualizations, numerous authors have argued that CDA offers a particularly apt approach for the examination of social policy texts (Adie, 2008; Goldberg, 2005; Jacobs, 2004, 2006; Jacobs & Manzi, 1996; Liasidou, 2008; Smith, 2007; Taylor, 2004; Waller, 2006). The argument made is that CDA enables the examiner of the policy text to "reveal how language is deployed to legitimate action and structure the parameters of policy intervention" (Jacobs, 2006, p. 42).

Taylor (2004), citing Fairclough (2003), distinguishes between those approaches to discourse analysis in policy which pay close attention to the linguistic features of texts vs. those approaches (often influenced by Foucault) which focus more on the historical and social context of texts, and in fact usually give little close attention to the linguistic features of texts. Taylor (2004) also notes that the importance of language in social life has led to increasing use of various forms of discourse analysis, including Critical Discourse Analysis. Quoting Luke (2002), she argues that "in these new conditions—characterized by new textual formations, new configurations of discourse, and new forms of identity— CDA research is likely to require new, hybrid blends of analytic techniques and social theories" (p. 434). Jacobs (2006) observes that there has been a proliferation of arguments (both pro and con) regarding the efficacy of using critical discourse analysis as a tool within the field of policy analysis. He states that there are two compelling arguments in favour of using this methodology as a tool in the policy analyst's arsenal:

- 1) Traditional policy analysis approaches have been less than successful in providing an analysis of some of the power and ideological conflicts that influence the deliberation of policy,
- 2) Researchers are increasingly recognizing the important role of language in the policy arena.

Fairclough (2005), citing Chiapello and Fairclough (2002), notes that CDA offers many opportunities for cross-disciplinary use as a methodology. Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) observed that changes in the nature of government, politics and policy in the latter part of the 20th century and early 21st century makes the use of critical discourse analysis in the review of policy particularly apt. Smith (2007) has observed that CDA has been increasingly used within certain policy sectors, such as health, as a preferred method for examining and analyzing policy discourses.

Smith (2007) also notes the value of the CDA for policy analysis as it relates to methodology's ability to examine the way that language functions in order to shape the perceptions of particular issues and the policy debates that surround them. She particularly notes that CDA pays attention to both the micro and macro levels of discourse, and provides a mechanism for exploring the ideological underpinnings of particular policy discourses that have become so "naturalized over time that we begin to treat them as common, acceptable and natural features of the discourse" (p. 61). CDA also provides a means by which the role of power within the policy discourse can be examined. As Smith (2007), citing Fairclough (2001), states, CDA "... visualizes discourse as central to the functioning of power and social processes, and attempts to

examine the processes of power in how these processes use discourse in subtle yet controlling ways” (p. 62).

Goldberg (2005) expanded on the use of CDA in policy by developing a methodology she entitled “Critical Policy Discourse Analysis. This methodology: describes a way to examine how policy discourses from many sources work together to orchestrate a truth...it is based on the assumption that a new policy/discourse does not simply change power relations; it enters pre-established or pre-existing discourses that affect its impact. It also shows how certain discourses are limited or endorsed by other circulating discourses, which work together as a context to influence the policy process (p. 99).

Goldberg (2005) argued that while traditional critical discourse analysis techniques provide a strong theoretical foundation, they proved to be incomplete for the actual analysis of policy documents. In particular, she argued that while many of the traditional approaches to CDA do provide strong foundations for uncovering “the materiality of discourse in the social construction of policy reality” (p. 100), they failed to provide a concrete set of methodologies and they also fail to account for the way that multiple discourses interact in the policy development/implementation process.

4.3 Application of Critical Discourse Analysis to the Study

Smith (2007), citing Cheek (2004), observes that while there are many different approaches to applying discourse analysis in policy research, confusion remains as there is no single formula for how such discourse analyses should be carried out. In this study, I have elected to draw on Fairclough’s (1992, 1995) suggested approach to CDA that

takes into consideration three levels of analyzing the text in question. Unlike many other types of discourse analysis, Fairclough's approach provides a clear analytical structure of engaging in discourse analysis (Jacobs, 2006) and has very strong support within the policy analysis literature (Waller, 2006).

Fairclough perceives discursive practices as inseparable from the social practices within which they exist (Murray, 2002). His "three-dimensional conception of discourse" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 72), brings together three key elements, (1) a textual and conversational analysis, (2) a 'micro' level sociological perspective of the discourse process, and (3) a 'macro' level sociological analysis of the broad social practice. His approach to both CDA, and discourse generally, integrate "aspects of a Foucaultian view of discourse and a Bakhtinian emphasis on intertextuality. The former includes the vital emphasis upon the socially constructive properties of discourse, while the latter emphasizes the 'texture' of texts" (Murray, 2002, p. 18).

Waller (2006) elaborates on Fairclough's analytical structure, noting that Fairclough's original conceptualization was further refined with the publication of *Critical Discourse Analysis* (Fairclough, 1995), and subsequently made more robust in joint work with Lilie Chouliaraki (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). Subsequent work through over 20 publications has refined the analytical approach, particularly as it applies to government policy, politics and the media (Waller, 2006). Currently, CDA as considered by Fairclough tends to focus on structural relationships (opaque as well as transparent) regarding dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language (Weiss & Wodak, 2003).

In practical terms, Fairclough's (1992, 1995) approach to CDA involves an analysis at three separate levels, these being: (1) the level of Sociocultural Practice, that is, the context in which the text is produced, (2) the level of Discourse Practice, or the way the text is produced, distributed, and received, and (3) the level of Textual Analysis, that is, an analysis of the details of the text itself. Within each of the levels, different types of specific questions are asked, and analysis is undertaken based on the texts in question and type of research being undertaken. Waller (2006) describes this process as an examination of the synergy between the levels, a process of continual movement back between the various levels of analysis, descriptive, interpretive and explanatory.

In the case of this specific research study, the specific analytical approaches are also grounded in Smith's (2007) suggestions for the examination of health policy texts, but also informed by recent critical discourse analyses of other policy texts, such as: Adie (2008), Boag-Munroe (2004), Furtado (2005), Gibb (2008), Goldberg (2005), Kahu and Morgan (2007), Liasidou (2008), Prieur (2006) and Waller (2006). The levels of analysis in the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are described more fully below.

4.3.1 Socio-cultural Practices

Smith (2007) describes the level of sociocultural analysis as the examination of the social context in which the text under investigation is produced. In particular, the analysis at this level assesses the text within the environment in which it was created, and attempts to link the language used within the text to the particular operations of power and ideology taking place at the broader level. Citing Fairclough (1992), Smith (2007), notes that :

The context in which the discursive event is produced is comprised of a nexus of practices produced as a result of a particular historical, political, institutional, economic, and social environment ... the sociocultural level therefore has a strong bearing on how a text is created, how it is received and what it includes, and needs to be examined as an integral part of the overall analysis of the text. (Smith, 2007, p. 62).

In this study, the examination of the social, political, and cultural context (and particularly the changes taking place) is of critical importance. A number of complex social, political and cultural factors were at play during the development and implementation of the EAPD/LMAPD multilateral policy frameworks and the programs supported by them. Some of these factors are quite unique. For example, the multilateral frameworks are in fact one of two sets of policy artefacts arising from concept of “collaborative federalism” emphasized by the Liberal governments of the late 1990’s (Pedlar and Hutchinson, 2000). Similarly, the mid-late 1990’s reflected the decreasing federal clout in FPT social policy interactions driven in part by substantial federal reductions in social funding transfers (St-Hilaire, 2005), with the increasing aggressiveness of provincial and territorial jurisdictions for control of areas under their constitutional responsibility. The community of persons with disabilities in turn was demonstrating an increasing assertiveness in advocating for their inclusion of in all aspects of social and political life in Canada (Jongbloed and Crichton, 1990). These and numerous other factors provide a critical context that influences the actors in the development of the policy texts. Any analysis of these policy texts must include a serious examination of this context.

4.3.2 Discourse Practice

Smith (2007), citing Fairclough (1992), defines the discourse practice level in CDA as "... an analysis of the 'production, distribution and consumption of a text'" (p. 62). Discourse practice refers to how the policy documents are created, the rules which govern their use of language, the way that they are distributed, how they are read, and who reads them (Fairclough, 1992). The nature of the discourse practice relies on the unique nexus of sociocultural practices in which it is situated.

The discourse practice utilized in the production and distribution of the texts examined in this study is of particular importance, in part because they were all produced as part of very formalized, and in large part little known processes. For example, the *In Unison* vision paper, and the EAPD Multilateral Framework and Bilateral Agreements were all produced within the context of Federal Provincial Territorial Forum of Ministers Responsible for Social Services. This intergovernmental forum, and the protocols, and processes established by it, both drove and set the parameters for how these documents were prepared, the language utilized, the degree to which non-government actors were allowed to participate, etc. Further, the veil of both official and unofficial government confidentiality and freedom of information protocols renders much of the official documentation and unofficial opinions of key actors inaccessible. Failure to examine the key elements of the discourse practice under which the texts were prepared will prevent a thorough understanding of how the models of disability were applied within the context of the texts that were finally produced.

4.3.3 Text Analysis

The final level that Fairclough analyzes is the textual level, which is concerned how the text is formed and particular vocabulary and styles used in order to produce meaning. Smith (2007), citing Wodak (1996), and Fairclough (2003), notes that "... within a CDA approach to analysis text analysis represents the investigation of the language of a particular discursive event, but this language can only be understood in conjunction with an analysis of the sociocultural and discourse practice levels, which give meaning to the content of the text" (p. 63). Text analysis can either be highly detailed at the semantic level, or conducted at a more thematic level, depending on the aim of the research (Threadgold, in Kamler, 1997).

The analysis undertaken in this study is conducted at a thematic level. Similar to other critical discourse analyses of policy (Goldberg, 2005; Horsfall & Cleary, 2000; Pattison, 2006; Smith, 2007), the aim of the research is "not to focus on the minutiae of the language used, but to comment on the general themes raised in the text" (Smith, 2007, p. 63) as they relate to the presence of language associated with particular models of disability. As well, the analysis should help reveal expressions of power or domination by certain actors or players within the policy environments.

4.4 Selected Policy Texts

In this study, I have identified both the key national FPT policy texts, and to capture the bilateral aspect, I have selected as relevant policy texts from the bilateral agreements between the federal government and Alberta. Lastly, in order to capture an example of the actual operationalization of the policy framework, I have included an examination of the policy manual from a major Government of Alberta disability

employment program funded by the bilateral agreement. A brief summary of the processes surrounding the generation of each policy documents examined in this study is included below.

This study examines four specific texts, namely:

- *In Unison: A Canadian approach to disability issues*
- *Employment Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Multilateral Framework*
- *Canada-Alberta Agreement on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities*
- *Alberta Works Policy Manual – Disability Related Employment Supports*

Each of the texts selected for analysis has a direct and major relationship to the EAPD policy initiative, and were selected as they demonstrate key stages in the evolution of the policy initiative.

4.4.1 In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues

The combination of federal restraint measures and increasing provincial demands for autonomy in the early and mid-1990's generated an impetus for a new federal approach to the traditional division of jurisdictional responsibilities, which was coined 'collaborative or cooperative or participative federalism' (Puttee, 2002). This new approach emphasized coordinated strategies with provinces and territories for the delivery of services to Canadians. One of the few examples of national social policy that actually reflected this new approach occurred within the context of national employment policy for persons with disabilities.

In 1996, FPT First Ministers affirmed that disability policy was “a collective priority in the pursuit of social policy renewal” and governments were tasked to make a proposal for the integration of income support services (Government of Canada, 1996). In 1997 First Ministers directed the Ministers Responsible for Social Services to develop policies and programs to meet the changing needs of persons with disabilities. Acting on this direction, FPT Social Services Ministers tasked officials to develop a vision document to guide policy development.

In 1998, the national vision paper *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues* (Government of Canada, 1998c) was released (see Appendix A). The *In Unison* document was intended to be the focal point for Canadian social policy development addressing the economic and income support needs of persons with disabilities. Global in scope, and developed through extensive consultation with stakeholder organizations and persons with disabilities, the vision paper was supposed to address the full scope of policy issues impacting upon income for persons with disabilities.

The *In Unison* document was also intended to provide the conceptual framework for a revisiting of social policy on income supports for persons with disabilities at the both the federal and provincial/territorial levels. Interestingly, the first opportunity to apply the principles espoused by *In Unison* came with the development of the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Multilateral policy framework.

4.4.2 Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Multilateral Framework

The *Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Multilateral Framework* (Government of Canada, 1998a) was intended as a replacement for the VRDP program described earlier (see Appendix B). The EAPD policy framework essentially has two components, a national, multilateral federal/provincial/territorial process involving all federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) governments, and a bilateral federal-provincial process for each province (territories were handled differently).

The EAPD Multilateral framework was approved and endorsed by FPT Ministers Responsible for Social Services on September 23, 1997. The stated objective of the Multilateral framework was to "... guide and inform the negotiations of bilateral agreements between Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and provincial and territorial governments on the new initiative" (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 7). The document set out a series of objectives and principles, as well as a set of parameters for the subsequent bilateral agreements on things such as: the implementation period, programs and services covered, funding arrangements and accountability. Although not intended to specifically limit the bilateral agreements, the Multilateral Framework did provide a structure upon which to structure the negotiations.

4.4.3 Canada-Alberta Bilateral Agreement on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities

Subsequent to the signing of the Multilateral Framework agreement, each federal-provincial bilateral agreement was negotiated separately (except in Quebec, where a similar but separate agreement outside the Multilateral Framework was reached).

Essentially, each bilateral agreement ensured that a set amount of federal funds were

provided to the provincial governments for the provision of programs and services to assist adult persons with disabilities to prepare for, attain, and maintain employment (Government of Canada, 2002b). The bilateral agreements were intended to adhere to the objectives and principles of the Multilateral Framework, while providing each jurisdiction with the flexibility to develop and deliver services in a manner that is most appropriate to the needs and conditions of their individual labour markets. The bilateral agreements ran for five years, with an expiration date of March 1, 2003.

The *Canada-Alberta Agreement on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities* (Government of Canada, 1998b) was the specific bilateral agreement reached between the federal government and Alberta (see Appendix C). Flowing from the EAPD Multilateral Framework, the agreement was signed by the Alberta Minister of Family and Social Service on April 8, 1998 and by the federal Minister of Human Resources Development Canada on May 4, 1998. Grounded on the principles articulated in the Multilateral Framework, the Bilateral Agreement was intended to specify the federal contributions to Alberta to support “measures which will enhance the economic participation in the labour market of working age people with disabilities by helping them to prepare for, attain and retain employment” (p. 1). The agreement is based on 6 specific principles, namely:

1. Direct support of employability through programs, goods and services to prepare people for economic participation, gaining employment in the labour market and to assist them in retaining employment, including assistance through job crises,

2. A focus on individual needs and participation through a range of measures from pre-employment support to short term assistance, to employment supports directed to individuals' needs; recognizing individuals' knowledge of their own employability and labour market requirements; with provision for appeal mechanisms to ensure fair application of provincial legislation and policies,
3. Flexibility in the design and delivery of programs and services appropriate to requirements of participants, the views of stakeholders, and labour market circumstances in Alberta,
4. Operating within the context of an accountability framework;
5. Co-ordination of programs and services with a view to making the best use of existing resources and avoiding unnecessary overlap and duplication,
6. Recognition of the financial contributions of both parties under the initiative in all informational materials prepared for the public relating to the programs, goods or services funded through the initiative.

4.4.4 Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES)

While the above referenced policy initiatives established both the vision and the framework for national disability employment policy and federal/provincial relations on this policy area, it is important to note that the ultimate aim of the policy initiatives was to provide employment supports for people with disabilities across Canada. However, examination of the actual programs and services offered through the auspices of the

Multilateral Policy Framework poses challenges. Virtually all are offered at the provincial level and vary widely across Canada (Government of Canada, 2002b). To ensure that policies related to the actual programs or services supported by the Multilateral Framework were included in the study, a representative program familiar to the author was selected for examination.

One of the programs supported under the Canada-Alberta Bilateral EAPD Agreements is a program entitled *Disability Related Program Supports* (DRES). The history of the development of the DRES program has many parallels to the development of the national EAPD policy initiatives. In the mid-1990s changes in provincial government fiscal policy combined with an increasing recognition of the limitations of the VRDP program resulted in a revisiting of the mechanisms for employment supports for persons with disabilities in Alberta. In 1997, the VRDP Coordinating Committee (the joint federal/provincial management committee overseeing the VRDP service delivery in Alberta) along with a stakeholder advisory committee initiated a public consultation to possible future improvements to employment supports for people with disabilities in Alberta. As a result of this consultation process, a document entitled “*Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities in Alberta: Current services, issues and potential solutions*” was released (Government of Alberta, 1997). This document, plus the simultaneous development of the federal *In Unison* document influenced the subsequent development of a new provincial policy framework entitled *Investing in Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities (ESPD)* (Government of Alberta, 1998d). This policy framework was in turn integrated into the Alberta Government’s 1999-2002 Multiyear Plan, which outlined a series of planned departmental initiatives over a five-

year period. One of those initiatives was the development of a new mechanism for the provision of employment supports for persons with disabilities. This program, entitled the *Disability Related Employment Supports Program*, was announced as part of the 1999-2002 Multi-year Plan (Government of Alberta, 2005). The DRES program continues in existence to this day (See Appendix D).

The intent of the DRES program is to "... complement other programs available to help burdens by providing an individual with a disability the necessary support to prepare for, enter and maintain his or her work choices" (Government of Alberta, 2005). The stated intent of DRES is to provide support and services to individuals with disabilities to help them address barriers in obtaining an education, or in obtaining and maintaining employment. Service provision under DRES is to be undertaken through a multistep collaborative process between the client and a Government of Alberta (GOA) career and employment counsellor. This process can include assessment, the development of a client investment plan, referral to existing GOA programs and services, financial support to attend post-secondary institutions or accepted training programs, assistance in locating employment, provision of educational or employment supports, and appropriate follow-up upon completion of their involvement with DRES (Government of Alberta, 2005).

DRES was, and remains one of the primary mechanisms for the provision of education and employment supports for adults under the EAPD Multilateral Framework and its successor agreements in Alberta. While not the only program supported by federal EAPD dollars, it remains one that is most accessible to the general public, and not

directly tied to specific types of educational and training programs or specific populations of persons with disabilities.

4.4.5 Production/Distribution of the Documents

As was noted above, all the documents examined in this study were generated within their own unique policy development process within the federal and/or provincial government bureaucracies. However, the specific government and intergovernmental organizations and processes involved are complex, and little known to the public at large. These processes are often convoluted in nature, with different elements of the bureaucracies and stakeholders playing different but often-interconnected roles in the policy development process. The complexity of the interactions of these various actors is often difficult to comprehend for anyone who is not deeply involved in the process.

Prince (2004), citing the federal parliamentary reviews of disability policy development (House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, 2001), notes that they reported a “lack of departmental responsibilities, an absence of strong program structures, fragmented service development and inconsistent standards” (Prince, 2004, p. 76). Prince goes on to argue that the Canadian government structure at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels, with its departmentalized nature:

... has a number of dysfunctional consequences. Hierarchies separate policy development from program administration within departments, with the result that departmental managers are accountable for the vertical rather than the horizontal management of programs. The same is the case for planning documents and performance reporting systems. Cross-departmental coordination and

accountability are frustrated by the deep-seated reliance on individual departmental portfolios and ministerial responsibilities

A further complicating factor in any consideration of the production and distribution of the texts is that there are (with the possible exception of the DRES policy manual) usually multiple departmental bureaucracies involved with any intergovernmental process within any jurisdiction. Thus, a process to develop documents such as the *In Unison* vision paper or the EAPD agreements may involve dozens of actors, and that just within the government bureaucracies involved. Add the fact that very often the external stakeholders consulted may be representatives of large and complex bureaucracies in their own right and the possible range of actors and influences on the policy development process may be extremely large.

Rather than attempt the nigh impossible task of trying to capture the full range of this complexity, I will limit the focus of this study to a finite set of documents and actors. The study will attempt to describe the discourses and intergovernmental process at in the work development of the *In Unison*, EAPD Multilateral Framework and the Canada-Alberta EAPD Bilateral Agreement. This examination will further be restricted to that involving a single jurisdiction (Alberta). Please note that as all of the Government of Alberta (GOA) ministries involved in the negotiations/development of these texts have undergone at least two to three organizational restructurings since the documents were created, the author will use the current GOA and federal nomenclature and departmental structures to reflect the current reality of intergovernmental disability policy.

4.4.6 Text Availability

Early in the design process, a decision was made to use only publicly available texts relevant to the development and implementation of the EAPD Multilateral Policy Framework and its' successor agreement. This decision was undertaken for a number of reasons, including constraints placed on me by my current employment situation and the paucity of official documentation available (either public or restricted) at both the policy and program levels. However, the most important reason was the need to examine the public discourses within the documents and how paradigms of disability helped to shape it. As the nature of the policy development process within Canadian intergovernmental contexts greatly constrains the degree to which certain actors can participate or provide input, the public texts provide the primary means by which those actors' voices can be discerned within the discourses.

4.4.7 Text Relevance

As noted earlier, the public disability policy sector within Canada is awash with numerous studies, commissions, reports, analyses, etc. extending over decades. These texts are usually autonomous policy vehicles, generated within different departments or levels of governments, often with little reference to earlier studies or acknowledgment of the interconnectivity of their texts with other works. A relative exception to this is the EAPD Multilateral Framework. The EAPD Multilateral Framework document was produced simultaneously with the *In Unison* vision paper, and the development of each is referenced in the other, while the Canada-Alberta Bilateral EAPD Agreement arose as a direct result of Alberta's signing of the Multilateral Framework. The Alberta Works – Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) program is one of the major

employment supports initiatives launched by the Government of Alberta and has, since its inception, been funded in part by EAPD funds, something clearly acknowledged by the provincial government.

4.5 Critical Discourse Analysis

Al-Hejin (2007) has noted that Critical Discourse Analysis theories are sometimes difficult to operationalize. He notes, for example, that researchers using Fairclough's (1992) theoretical model, with its three dialectically related dimensions, often find it difficult to investigate how these three dimensions actually interact due to lack of access to both 'producers' and 'consumers' perspectives within discursive practices. Moreover, he concludes that due to its interdisciplinarity, CDA should be regarded more as an approach than a method. Al-Hejin suggests that ultimately, the choice of both theoretical framework and analytical methodology depends primarily on what the researcher is personally interested in and whether the chosen tools produce meaningful results. However, the lack of concrete methodologies for the application of CDA often leaves the researcher often results in a wide variety of approaches. As Poole (2007) observed:

There has been nothing uniform about the ways in which these explorations have been conducted. Although it can be said that most CDA scholars subscribe to at least some of the above tenets and most see the process of data collection and analysis as 'hermeneutic', CDA does not constitute a well-defined empirical method but rather a cluster of approaches" (Wodak and Meyer 2002: 23). Just as there "is no guiding theoretical viewpoint that is used consistently within CDA" (Wodak and Meyer 2002: 18); there is no typical CDA way of collecting data (p.54).

In the absence of any commonly agreed upon approaches to undertaking a critical discourse analysis, my methodology has been informed by the processes undertaken in similar research studies on public policy, with an emphasis on that undertaken from a Canadian perspective. A summary of relevant studies examined includes:

- Prieur's (2006) critical/feminist analysis of the discourses within BC's Disability Designation Review,
- Kolenick's (2006) investigation of environmental management discourses within the Saskatchewan Power Corporation,
- McKeen's (2005) discourse analysis of the mid-late 1990's discussions of the Canadian government's federal Standing Committee on Human Resources Development's Sub-committee on Children and Youth at Risk,
- Goldberg's (2005) use of critical policy discourse analysis in her examination of Ontario's Access to Professions and Trades (APT) policies,
- Tucker's (2005) use of CDA to review provincial literacy policy within Newfoundland and Labrador,
- Winton's (2007) exploration of character education policy within Ontario school boards,
- Poole's (2007) discussion of recovery discourses within public mental health systems in Ontario. All were reviewed to examine the particular approaches to critical discourse analysis used by the researchers.

Drawing from the above referenced studies and my own interpretation of the key elements needed for an effective critical discourse analysis of public policy texts, I have

centered the analytical process in this study within the context of the research questions described in Chapter 1. The analysis will attempt to address these questions through the process described below.

4.5.1 Contextual Analysis

Tucker (2005), citing Jager (2001), observes that “an analytic study has to be embedded in the context of the surrounding reality in order to create the background for interpretation” (p. 86). In Chapter 3 of this thesis, I identified some of the major social and political contexts that have influenced national disability policy. In the contextual analysis, the focus will shift towards specific social or political contexts that may have had a particular influence the discourses contained within the documents. Examples of elements at this level of the analysis include:

- How changes in Canadian society and the increased activism of Canadians with disabilities may have influenced the development and content of the texts.
- The impact of federal and provincial fiscal restraint initiatives on the development of the EAPD disability policy framework and program implementation.
- The possible influences of collaborative federalism and the Social Union on the development of the documents.

4.5.2 Discourse Practice

In this part of the analysis, an identification of the key actors and the discursive mechanisms through which the texts were developed is undertaken. While the documents

examined in this study are all publicly accessible, there was for each a unique set of circumstances impacting not only their construction, but also the strategies and approaches by which they were released to the public. Examples of the elements under consideration include:

- The key actors present during the development of the various documents.
- Their various roles and levels of power and influence.
- The unique policy processes and mechanisms used that facilitated the development of the texts.
- The distributive mechanism for the documents, and the role that selective access/distribution may have played in enhancing or decreasing the power of particular actors.

4.5.3 Text Analysis

The third element to the analysis, the examination of the documents proper, starts with an initial analysis of the texts including the overall layout, structure, etc. This is followed by an examination of the use of language and rhetoric within the documents. To undertake this, I adapted the approach taken by Poole (2007), who addressed the texts with a series of questions, which I modified somewhat, and which ask:

- What are the dominant discourses in each document?
- Are there common dominant discourses that are present in all the texts?
- Who are the key producers of this discursivity (Rabinow 1984)?

- How are these discourses operating/being taken up in the different texts?
Transformed? Resisted?
- What ideas, talk or words are allowed and denied?
- Who is able to speak and how?

4.6 Analytic Process

In order to facilitate the analysis of the texts proper, a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) package, Atlas TI v.5.0 assisted in the analysis of the data. The program provides tools that let the user locate, code, and annotate findings in primary data material, weigh and evaluate their importance, and to visualize complex relations between them.

Building on the analytic techniques undertaken by Winton (2007), I approached the data intending to identify the dominant discourses present in each text, themes and assumptions underlying them, and ideological orientations that each text advocates. Initially, I created codes within Atlas Ti that captured the principles, assumptions, and values associated with the three models of disability examined in this study. As I read through each document I coded phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that reflected these assumptions, principles, and values. I found that the number of codes increased through repeated readings of the documents, and I often restructured or added to the codes as I noted relationships and nuanced differences both within and between them. This process was challenging, as the wording was often ambiguous. This was particularly true of the *In Unison* document and the EAPD Multilateral Agreement, both which were drafted by intergovernmental process involving numerous actors and multiple drafts. In similar

circumstances, other researchers have examined “the context in which the sentence or paragraph was discussed” (Winton, 2007, p. 56) in order to infer its actual meaning and relationship to the broader discourse.

After repeated reviews and coding, I then began grouping the codes into categories based on commonalities among them. It was through this grouping that I began to infer what the dominant discourses were, as certain categories appeared to be present in all of the texts. A further examination of these categories and codes led to the identification of two dominant discourses. This analysis and its contribution to addressing the research questions are discussed at length in the next chapter.

4.7 Limitations of the Methodology

4.7.1 Role of the Inside Researcher

My current role as Director of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) for Alberta Employment & Immigration provides both advantages and challenges as researcher in this study. The advantages hinge on my own extensive involvement in the EAPD file. I was not involved in the original negotiations leading to the generation of the EAPD Multilateral Framework, nor was I involved in the subsequent negotiation of the Canada-Alberta EAPD Bilateral Agreement. However, I have had extensive involvement with the EAPD agreement (and its successor) since 2001. I am privy to an array of restricted documentation, correspondence, etc. in regards to these programs, as well as direct or indirect involvement in the discussions and conversation associated with the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the EAPD agreement. These, combined

with my extensive professional experience in disability policy, provide me with insights and access to information unavailable to most other individuals.

However, my role within the Alberta government also places significant restraints on my role as a researcher. I am by law and formal oath unable to publicly discuss or reference confidential government documentation (i.e. – documents not cleared for public release). Likewise, I am unable to reference discussions or other discourses that I have participated in within my role as Director of IGR, unless such discourses were made in a public context. In practical terms, this has restricted my examination of the EAPD Framework to the context of publicly accessible documentation. It has also restricted my ability to draw upon or reference other types of information available to me, all of which could be used to complement my analysis. The implications of this constraint for the research and for my voice within a critical discourse analysis will be discussed later in this thesis.

4.7.2 Reliance on Documents

Marston (2002) notes that one limitation with Critical Discourse Analysis lies in its privileging of the textual dimension of social practices. Poole (2007) argues that critical discourse analysis fails to adequately capture the vocal and non-vocal aspects of communication and cultural meaning such as bodily or facial expressions, the tonal qualities of voice, visual presentation and dress, etc. He claims that these are all factors of interpersonal communication that escape attention in a textually orientated discourse analysis (p. 89). While acknowledging the desirability of being able to interview the original actors involved in the development of the texts, the practical barriers of even locating these individuals after nearly thirteen years (in the case of the *In Unison* and

EAPD documents) combined with the legal and ethical restrictions many of those actors would face in discussing their activities (especially those employed within the public service) make reliance on document analysis essential.

5: DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

As noted in the previous chapter, Fairclough (1992) suggests that the first step in critical discourse analysis is to examine the context that gives rise to the text(s) and discourse(s) under analysis. Yates (2009), citing Grbich (2007), argues that this can be accomplished by revealing “the historical development of the discourse over time and identify the players and the social, economic and political climate which fostered its development” (p. 76). This is the task I have attempted in Chapters 2 and 3, describing the causes, development and progression of past and current employment policy towards Canadians with disabilities, as well as the development of current models of disability being utilized. Yates (2009), citing Woods (2006), calls this the “top down” approach, which first seeks to identify overall expectations and assumptions about and by those participating in the discourse before proceeding to analysis of the text or talk.

In this chapter, I undertake an analysis and discussion of the discursive content of the policy documents. First, I will identify and discuss the dominant discourses contained in the *In Unison* text, and a version of ‘truth’ that is presented to discipline action and behaviour. The contexts supporting these discourses, their thematic elements and their influence within the policy texts will be considered.

Secondly, I will explore how various models of disability are interwoven within the dominant discourses in what appears to be an incoherent manner, but which are in fact used as a tactic to form a political coherence privileging aspects of certain models of disability (e.g. - the individualist perspective of the medical and functional models). The

texts are examined to explore how they use rhetorical elements from all 3 models (medical, environment and social) to influence the readers' acceptance of specific policy directions.

Third, I will examine how the discourses and models of disability interact to support a neoliberal presentation of disability employment policy and the role of persons with disabilities within the labour market. Particular attention is paid to how the discourses support a particularly narrow perspective of what is meant by 'employability', and in so doing present a variant on the 19th century concept of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor.

The last section of the chapter will explore the role of the intended audience in the deployment of rhetoric within the various policy texts. Each of the documents was developed with a particular audience in mind. To effectively present the intended message to the targeted audience, rhetorical elements of different models were emphasized, de-emphasized, or dispensed with completely. This section will discuss who these various audiences are and how the documents were drafted to elicit the desired responses from the targeted readers.

5.1 A Discourse of Independence

In this part of Chapter 5, an examination is undertaken of the dominant discourse of 'independence' for Canadians with disabilities. Starting first with a brief discussion of the various definitions of the term 'independence', the analysis then explores how the *In Unison* vision paper begins by articulating a concept of independence that closely aligns with aspects of the social model of disability. The analysis goes on to examine how this interpretation of independence slowly transitions to a much more narrow interpretation

centered on a concept of independence being equated with economic self-sufficiency. The section concludes with a discussion of how this discourse of independence in turn facilitates the development and increasing dominance of a discourse of employability in the latter part of the document, and how this in turn sets the stage for the dominance of this discourse in the subsequent texts explored in the study.

5.1.1 *In Unison* - Part One – Independence as a Global and Social Construct

The dictionary provides a number of different definitions for the term ‘independence’. These include (1) “a state of being not dependent; complete exemption from control, or the power of others”, (2) “a state of mind in which a person acts without bias or influence from others; exemption from undue influence; self-direction”, and (3) “a state in which a person does not rely on others for subsistence; ability to support one's self” (Merriam-Webster’s, 2011, para. 1). All three of these definitions are present within the *In Unison* vision paper. However, as will be discussed below, a significant transition occurs over the course of the document in what is meant by the term “independence”. While the *In Unison* vision paper initially leans towards the social model’s orientation that disability and independence are social constructs and encompass a wide range of social and societal issues and barriers, later in the document this interpretation narrows towards the concept of independence being primarily economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. As will be seen below, this transition is abrupt and somewhat surprising.

The first reference to the concept of independence for people with disabilities appears in the second paragraph of the Preamble within the *In Unison* document:

In addressing the challenges for persons with disabilities, we recognized the evolving nature of Canadian society and within it the place of persons with disabilities. As the needs and attitudes of Canadians change, public policies and programs need to reflect these changes. Most persons with disabilities do not consider themselves permanently unemployable. They see themselves as independent individuals with the ability to control all facets of their lives. The attitudes of Canadians also are evolving to be more consistent with the views and realities of persons with disabilities. As a result, Canadians with disabilities are no longer viewed as 'exceptions' whose needs must be met through segregated programs (para. 3).

The statement within the above paragraph, “They see themselves as independent individuals with the ability to control all facets of their lives” would, on the surface, appear to support the first of the definitions in the Merriam-Webster (2011) dictionary were it not for the preceding sentence, which clearly frames independence within the context of being employed. Further complicating this reference to independence for people with disabilities is that the beginning and end of the paragraph focus on the attitudes and opinions of the non-disabled Canadians, and how there have been changes over time which impact the degree of independence available to their disabled compatriots. This suggests that the influence of the broader society also has an impact on whether people with disabilities are ‘independent’. Further, the last sentence must be questioned in terms of the current socio-political environment. Are Canadians with disabilities no longer viewed as ‘exceptions’ due to the evolution of attitudes amongst their non-disabled peers, or is this just a subtle attempt to reinforce the neo-liberal

aversion towards dedicated programs for particular populations and a preference for generic service delivery?

This convoluted approach to presenting the concept of independence continues throughout the first part of the document. Initially the primary application of the concept is that of full participation by persons with disabilities in all aspects of society, and simultaneous access to necessary supports and elimination of cultural, societal and physical barriers. For example, this use of the term ‘independence’ occurs in the Executive Summary (where it appears as a bolded paragraph) and clearly places the concept of independence within the context of the social model by stating that:

Persons with disabilities [must] participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disabilities requires the commitment of all segments of society. The realization of the vision will allow persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 11).

This paragraph is repeated (again bolded) early in vision paper proper, and is followed by numerous references to independence for people with disabilities within the context of culture, social relationships and society as a whole. The overarching theme of this discourse, especially in the early parts of the vision paper, is that the individuals independence can only be achieved by addressing a complex array of social, political and policy barriers. This is most succinctly captured in the following statement composing the Values section of the vision paper, which essentially lists the core values that are supposed to ground the disability policy in Canada.

Equality is a right guaranteed to all Canadian citizens. The values inherent in the concept of equality include self-determination, autonomy, dignity, respect, integration, participation and independent living. These values are consistent with those that shape the social union (Appendix E): compassion, dignity, sharing, fairness, equity, equal opportunity and independence. (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 32).

What is noteworthy about this paragraph is that the core values articulated are certainly congruent with key elements of the social model. However, they also become increasingly at variance with the dominant discourses as they evolve over the course of the vision paper, and with the realities of policy, program development and resource allocation as outlined in the other documents examined in this study. Thus, it is seen that this holistic and socially oriented discourse of independence continues until the middle of the document, when the discourse shifts towards an economic focus on independence. This shift gains momentum in the subsequent texts. Ultimately, this focus becomes one of the dominant discourses in all the texts. This transition is discussed in greater detail in the next section.

5.1.2 *In Unison* – Part Two - Independence as Economic Self Sufficiency

The first inkling of a shift in the orientation of the ‘independence’ discourse becomes apparent in the middle sections of the *In Unison* document. Starting with the Full Citizenship section, a marked shift begins in the presentation and focus of the document. Moving away from the broader, often ‘motherhood’ statements of the preceding sections, Full Citizenship begins with a box graphic (heretofore unused) obviously intended to highlight and emphasize the core messages that the authors wish to

impart to the reader. The box contains two headers (Objectives and Policy Directions) followed by bullet points. There is only one point under Policy Directions, which calls for “Policies that promote access to generic programs and services for all Canadians, including persons with disabilities” (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 87). This relatively brief policy recommendation is elaborated upon in the subsequent paragraphs, which start with the following statement:

Citizenship refers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society. It is the overarching theme that shapes the vision and the building blocks. Full inclusion means that the needs of persons with disabilities are met through generic programs, while additional essential supports are provided to those individuals whose needs cannot be met through generic programs and services. Future reforms will need to ensure that the policies and programs in each building block are consistent with this concept (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 89).

This paragraph is interesting from several perspectives, not the least in that it marks the first time where core concepts inherent within the social model are “torqued” to provide a rationale for policy recommendations that are in opposition to the overall intent or belief structure of the model. In this case, a core element of the social model, namely the concept of inclusion is shifted from representing the removal of the social, political, cultural and other external barriers that prevent people with disabilities from full participation in society (Oliver, 1995). The new ‘take’ on inclusion is now one that presents it as the ‘mainstreaming’ of people with disabilities, where their needs are met

through generic programs. Essentially, inclusion is shifted away from the idea that social policy and programs/services should be adjusted to include the needs of people with disabilities, to one where people with disabilities should adjust to access the same generic services as everyone else.

The above quoted paragraph is also an example of the very skilful use of the language of the social model by the writers to pursue often-antithetical policy and program aims. It is at this point in the document the concept of independence likewise takes a subtle but noticeable narrowing. After the discussion of ‘full citizenship’ alluded to above, the document then immediately moves to identify three ‘building blocks’ which are identified as the primary policy fields that should be addressed. These are defined as follows:

1. Disability Supports: availability and accessibility of disability supports (e.g., technical aids and devices; special equipment; homemaker, attendant or interpreter services; life skills; physiotherapy and occupational therapy; respite care) that respond to individual needs. These goods, services and supports are essential for active participation at home, at school and in the community and are a key component of maximizing personal and economic independence.
2. Employment: people with disabilities require access to opportunities for education, training and employment that together comprise the basis for economic independence. The intent of *In Unison* is to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities, encourage (re)entry into the labour market and help promote more work and volunteer opportunities. Enhancing

employability means supporting access to education, providing supports and flexibility in training programs, making job accommodation available and offering job seekers and employers adequate information.

3. Income: some individuals with disabilities may not be able to support themselves sufficiently or at all. Governments recognize the need for an income safety net which rewards individual work efforts to the greatest extent possible — but which provides financial assistance if self-support is impossible or insufficient to meet basic needs (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 100-102)

These three definitions mark a turning point within the same policy document - where the language in the document slowly turns towards an emphasis on the economic spectrum of barriers having an impact on people with disabilities, and the need for economic self-sufficiency. While the first category, Disability Supports continues the focus on a broader range of social and physical supports for people with disabilities; the latter two definitions begin to focus more on the issue of economic self-sufficiency. For example, the second definition, Employment, commences with a sentence outlining the key elements leading to economic self-sufficiency, although this is qualified in the following sentences by recognition of the various types of both remunerative and non-remunerative types of employment possible for individuals with disabilities. Similarly, the next definition, Income, starts with an acknowledgment that some individuals with disabilities cannot support themselves, but the second sentence then qualifies this by emphasizing the need for an income support program “which rewards individual work efforts to the greatest extent possible” (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 101). These

three definitions seem to be a transition point within the vision paper, where the authors start to focus on economic and employment concerns, but also seem reluctant to entirely let go of the broader scope and emphasis in the earlier sections of the *In Unison* document.

Also interesting is the choice of these three policy groupings (Disability Supports, Employment and Income) from the array of other, equally important barriers and issues impacting the quality of life of people with disabilities (e.g. – housing, transportation, education, access to health services, discrimination, racism, etc.). Even recognizing the jurisdictional limitations set by the intergovernmental forum in which the document was initiated, the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Social Services (MRSS), there appears to be a sudden and deliberate narrowing of the focus to policy fields, one that commences without explanation. Certainly the creation of the document within the MRSS forum would not, in and of itself, prevent examination or policy recommendations on issues outside the immediate jurisdictional responsibility of the MRSS, as cross-forum policy initiatives are common. Rather, it appears that the authors deliberately elected to concentrate on a specific sub-set of three policy areas to the exclusion of others.

An equally interesting observation lies in the ordering of the “Building Blocks”. The first definition (Disability Supports) begins with a reference to the need of a wide range of disability supports. However, after generating this list, the definition makes a sudden delineation between ‘personal’ supports and ‘economic’ supports, in the statement “these goods, services and supports are essential for active participation at home, at school and in the community and are a key component of maximizing personal and economic independence” (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 100). This

delineation occurs abruptly and sets the stage for the focus of the remaining two building blocks (Employment and Income).

Similarly, the definition of the Employment block includes the statement “persons with disabilities require access to opportunities for education, training and employment which together comprise the basis for economic independence” (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 101). Likewise, the third definition, that of Income, reinforces the economic emphasis of independence by first acknowledging that not all individuals with disabilities are self-supporting, but then immediately qualifies that acknowledgement with the statement “governments recognize the need for an income safety net which rewards individual work efforts to the greatest extent possible — but which provides financial assistance if self-support is impossible or insufficient to meet basic needs” (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 102). Through these definitions, and their subsequent elaboration in the following sections, the reader is moved from a consideration of independence as a global concept encompassing many different social, political, personal and environmental factors, to an interpretation resting on the concept of individual economic self-sufficiency. How the independence discourse is refined, and serves as a foundation for the second dominant discourse, that of Employment, which dominates the other three documents is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

5.2 A Discourse of Employability

As noted in the previous section, the Building Blocks section of the *In Unison* document appears to mark a turning point where the language of the discourse changes from one of social inclusion to economic inclusion. While the concepts of economic self-sufficiency and employment were present in earlier sections, the focus was more social in

nature. Following the Building Blocks section, the discourse becomes more overtly economic in character, and begins to structure the course of the policy directions presented in the remainder of the document. As will be discussed below, the core elements of both discourses become even more influential in the remaining three documents examined in this study.

5.2.1 Independence and Employability

As discussed in the previous section, the middle sections of the *In Unison* text sees the discourse of Independence begin to promote the concept of economic self-sufficiency as a primary objective for disability policy. At the same time, as the text moves towards a more concrete examination of possible policy options, there also appears the first elements of specific approaches by which this policy objective will be obtained, namely through remunerative employment, within the competitive labour market. This discourse, which I have labelled the discourse of Employability, is clearly seen within the first section of the Employment building block of the vision paper. In this block, both the policy objectives and policy directions are again highlighted in bullet format and prominently placed within a centered box at the beginning of this section.

The first bullet seen by the reader is a policy objective "to reduce reliance on income support programs". The location and prominence given to this bullet sets the stage for a focus on competitive employment by emphasizing the importance of reducing the dependence of people with disabilities on government income support programs. The unspoken but certainly implied inference is also that reliance by people with disabilities on various types of government or public income support programs is somehow bad and undesirable, and as such needs to be minimized to the greatest degree possible.

The remaining bullets within the Objectives section of this summary box focus on how to achieve employment for people with disabilities, through such activities as promoting access to training programs, increasing the availability of work related supports, encouraging employers to make appropriate job/work place accommodations, and to promote work and volunteer opportunities for people with disabilities. It is interesting that despite the one reference to volunteer work activities, throughout the remaining bullets within this section, no references are made to approaches or policy options that do not involve participation within a the remunerative labour market. Other types of "work" which do not involve remuneration, such as sheltered workshops, unpaid community service activities, child rearing or homemaking activities warrant neither mention nor consideration within this section.

The sections of the Employment building block extend over two pages, and address a number of "barriers" which inhibit the ability of people with disabilities to access the competitive/remunerative labour market. Barriers to education or training, the need for accommodations at the workplace also warrant considerable attention. However, nowhere within this section is there any acknowledgement that remunerative employment is only one mechanism for participation by people with disabilities within the Canadian labour market. Indeed, the Employment section of the Building Blocks both begins the discourse of Employability and immediately narrows and defines it to one particular aspect of labour market participation. In so doing, the discourse is not only restricted, but also has more subtle implications, namely the limiting of the policy discussions to a particular subset of the population of Canadians with disabilities (those who are able to participate in competitive employment). This in turn implies that there are two separate

groups of people with disabilities, those with "desirable" characteristics that permit them to achieve economic self-sufficiency through competitive employment, and those with "undesirable" characteristics who remain reliant on public support. These implications will be discussed at greater length in later sections of this chapter.

One final consideration of the Employment section of the *In Unison* document is a reference to the limitations of and need to re-examine the Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled persons (VRDP) program. As was noted in previous chapters in this thesis, one of the perceived strengths of the VRDP program was the broad interpretation of the concept of vocational rehabilitation, combined with a willingness to consider a wide range of different types of supports for an equally broad range of disabilities, including applicants with severe intellectual and/or physical impairments. Within the employment building block, this flexibility is presented as a negative, with the statement "... governments recognize that fundamental changes were needed to develop a greater employability focus" (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 118).

The subsequent paragraph outlines key elements of the EAPD policy framework which were first alluded to within the *In Unison* text. While the opening sentence of this paragraph emphasizes support for a "broad range of programs and services", the remainder of the paragraph emphasizes "employability focused programs", and specific programs and services such as employment counselling, assessment, wage subsidies, assistive aids and places. The second last line within the paragraph notes a commitment by governments to a planning process ensuring "... a more coordinated approach to employment related issues for people with disabilities" (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 119). Clearly the message being transmitted by this description of the new

replacement for the VRDP program is that the future policy and program emphasis will be on attaining employment in the competitive labour market.

This emphasis on a particular interpretation of the concept of employability carries on through the remainder of the *In Unison* document. After a brief (one paragraph) section on the meaning accountability issues between the two levels of government, the document concludes with a Next Steps section which attempts to summarize the key points outlined in the vision paper. This section is interesting in that it attempts to illustrate by way of a chart of the "fundamental change that has been underway in terms of the approach adopted by governments to disability issues [and] ... serves to identify important trends that will continue to guide longer-term reform".

The concepts of employability and independence are both presented near the top of the chart and are subsequently emphasized through many of the subsequent points. Concepts presented under the category of "new" include such measures as promoting employment, identification of work skills, and incentives to seek employment and volunteer opportunities, [and] opportunities to develop skills and experience. The fact that the chart is the last item in the document proper also helps reinforce that the concepts of independence and employability are among the critical elements that should be retained by the reader upon completion of the document.

5.2.2 *Multilateral Framework on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) – Moving the Discourses From the Overt to the Implied*

As suggested in its name, the EAPD Multilateral Framework concerns itself solely with the provision of employment and labour market services for people with disabilities. It could also be argued it represents the embedding of the dominant

discourses of Independence and Employability as the key constructs falling out of the *In Unison* document. The EAPD Multilateral Policy Framework (and subsequent bilateral agreements) are the only policy initiatives specifically referenced within the vision paper. As such, it is interesting to note that of all the various issues and concerns identified within the vision paper as important to the well-being of people with disabilities, the sole policy area addressed was that of employment.

The Multilateral Framework very quickly shows the movement of the dominant discourses from the more overt references made within *In Unison* to a more implied or “assumed” status. The framework document commences with a Background section, which curiously makes no references whatsoever to *In Unison*, or to the broader scope of barriers and issues identified within the vision paper, such as housing, transportation, healthcare, etc. This is surprising given the emphasis early within the vision paper on the inter-related nature of these barriers, and that it was previous attempts by governments to segment and develop policy responses only to specific barriers that was at the root of much of the current dissatisfaction by people with disabilities to the governments’ efforts to date. It was noted in the vision paper, “We agree that there is much scope to improve the current patchwork of federal, provincial and territorial benefits and services. Work needs to be done at both levels of government to reduce the fragmentation of our supports and services” (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 4).

However, the initial paragraph of the Multilateral Framework does not follow this thread, but rather concentrates it’s focus solely on employment with the statement:

Over one million adults with disabilities in Canada are currently unemployed or remain out of the labour force. People with disabilities recognize the value of

being employed, but many face barriers that impede their participation in the labour market. Systemic barriers are often the major cause of unemployment among people with disabilities. They are looking to governments for assistance and support in breaking down these barriers to employment. (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 1)

This paragraph has two key points, (1) that systemic barriers are a critical consideration when examining the employment issues facing Canadians with disabilities, and (2) that the provision of government assistance/supports are believed by persons with disabilities to be necessary to overcome these barriers. It is interesting to note the authoritative tones with which the document purports to speak for Canadians with disabilities. The paragraph makes clear declarative statements as to what the desires of people with disabilities are (to be part of the labour market), what the key problems are (systemic barriers), and then identifies the solution is sought by people with disabilities (government assistance in breaking down these barriers). Aside from the single statistic offered in the first line, no proof nor citations are offered to support these statements, nor is evidence provided as to how the writers can claim to be speaking on behalf of all Canadians with disabilities. Rather, the document takes the tone at the very beginning that the statements are unalterable proofs, and that the authors, in this case government officials, have the full knowledge and authority to make these statements. The approach taken in this opening paragraph, where possibly contestable facts and assumptions are presented as 'givens', with no supporting evidence given or even cited, provides a first glimpse as to how the authors will use the dominant discourses to structure the policy document.

What happens within the remainder of the Background section of the document could be described in some ways as 'bait and switch'. The following three paragraphs are used as a way to legitimize the elimination of the VRDP program and the major refocusing of government programs in support of an economic self-sufficiency and employment focus. For example, the third paragraph states:

Governments recognize the valuable contribution VRDP has made to the lives of many people with disabilities since being operationalized in 1962 and wish to build on those program elements that have contributed most to labour market and economic participation. (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 3)

This paragraph is curious - on one hand it acknowledges the contribution that the broader VRDP program had in improving the lives of Canadians with disabilities, but on the other it undermines this acknowledgement in the second half of the statement by noting the need to focus only on those program elements leading to economic and labour market participation. The inference is, of course, that the earlier program was too broad, and should have been focused more strongly on promoting employment and economic self-sufficiency.

Subsequent paragraphs go on to reinforce the link within the Framework to the discourse of employability, by noting that EAPD will be "a new initiative under which the Government of Canada would share with the provinces and territories the cost of program initiatives, but only those with a focus on employment and labour market interventions for people with disabilities" (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 5).

Equally interesting is the second last paragraph in the Background section, which states that:

The new initiative will result in a shift in government of Canada support from some established programs and services to funding for programs and services which are consistent with an employability focus (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 5).

This apparently innocuous statement essentially presents the Employability discourse as the core driving force in policy and program development under EAPD. As noted earlier, the VRDP program had a high degree of flexibility in terms of both eligibility criteria and the wide range of supports it provided. The above statement implies that such a broad scope was a negative, and that an immediate and profound shift in the types of vocational programs and services supported by governments in Canada is needed.

In summary, the opening Background section of the EAPD Multilateral Framework is far from being an innocuous historical introduction to the document proper. Rather, it is a skilfully constructed effort to embed the dominant discourses of Independence and particularly Employability as the underlying discourses of the policy framework.

The next section of the document, entitled Purpose of Multilateral Framework, while quite brief (one short paragraph), manages to further narrow the scope and focus of the policy. In this section, the stated purpose of the Multilateral Framework is to:

... guide and inform the negotiations of bilateral agreements between Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and provincial and territorial governments on the new initiative (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 26).

This statement signifies that (1) the key actors in the policy framework are the federal and provincial/territorial governments. While the paragraph is constructed so that the statement does not necessarily exclude other stakeholders from the process, their omission does suggest that the policy framework is primarily intended to facilitate government-to-government negotiations. This skilfully written paragraph allows sufficient 'wiggle room' should external stakeholders complain, but also clearly sends the message that the EAPD Multilateral Framework will be a policy process dominated by, if not exclusive to, governments at both levels.

The following section, entitled Objective of Initiative, both reinforces this exclusivity amongst the policy actors while also reiterating the dominant discourses of Independence and Employability. The first sentence of the objective is noteworthy in that emphasizes key elements of the dominant discourses by (1) referencing the key objective of enhanced "economic participation of a working age adults with disabilities" in the (obviously competitive) labour market; and (2) through a focus on "helping them to prepare for, attain and retain employment". (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 31).

The second statement within the Objectives section elaborates on the discourse of Employability by attempting to summarize the "... full spectrum of needs related to economic participation, from a person taking the first steps to working, through two skills development, onto supporting a person at work and, finally, to ensuring that person is able to remain working" (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 31). This latter statement achieves not only the goal of centering the policy objectives within the dominant discourses, but also of more clearly communicating what the authors considered to be

viable programs and services worthy of support within the context of this policy framework.

The next section of the document, entitled Principles, differs substantially from the broader constructs included under the same title within the *In Unison* paper. These ‘principles’ are much more detailed and specific than the more general statements found within *In Unison*. For example, the first principle, direct support of employability, is immediately followed by five bullet points that outline in considerable detail what is considered to be an eligible ‘direct support’, and equally important, what is not. The latter observation is critical in that these "principles" do much to crystallize the previously referenced exclusion of significant elements of the population of people with disabilities from accessing programs and services under this policy initiative. For example, bullet point #3 states “programs and services which are oriented to medical treatment are not intended to be funded through the initiative although their importance is recognized” (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 41). Likewise, bullet point #5 states "services provided in a sheltered employment or work activity program which do not demonstrate preparation of people with disabilities for economic participation or entry into the labour market will not be supported under this initiative” (Government of Canada, 1998, para. 43). Thus the first cited bullet effectively excludes all those individuals with disabilities who require vocational rehabilitation services offered via the health care system, such as occupational therapy, physical therapy, ergonomic supports etc. The latter bullet effectively excludes any individual whose disability is such that they require sheltered or supported employment. In short, the ‘principle’ articulated is essentially that only certain types of people with disabilities are suitable for the new program. Though bullet #3 does

make rhetorically recognize the importance of vocational rehabilitation services offered through the medical system, bullet #5 is references exclusionary categories that limit services to those deemed unemployable in the competitive marketplace. In neither case is any rationale or justification offered for the exclusion of a vast numbers of individuals with disabilities who were previously eligible under the preceding VRDP initiative. Rather, those individuals who cannot meet the criteria associated with the dominant discourses of Independence and Employability are simply dismissed as irrelevant.

The remaining principles are likewise drafted in a prescriptive manner that is obviously intended to meet specific policy and ideological objectives. For example, the principles ‘focus on individual needs ‘and ‘participation’ has four bullets. These primarily appear to center the policy framework not only within the context of the dominant discourses of Independence and Employability, but also to emphasize the neoliberal ideological perspective of personal responsibility and self-reliance. The first bullet under this principle focuses on the specific types of interventions, programs and services that provinces/territories should provide under the EAPD initiative. Specifically, the bullet emphasizes that provinces and territories:

... will endeavour to provide a range of interventions from a menu of measures, from pre-employment support, to short-term assistance, to ongoing active employment supports, and make these available to people with disabilities according to their individual needs and employability requirements. (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 47).

This bullet is significant not only in its emphasis on those types of interventions that will lead to participation within the competitive labour market, but also for the last statement in the bullet, with its emphasis on "individual needs and employability requirements". This latter statement provides a natural segue to the following bullet which emphasizes that "services and interventions will respect the individual's knowledge of his/her own employability and labour market requirements and will allow individuals to represent their own interests" (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 48). As noted in Chapter 3, this latter bullet is closely congruent not only to a particular orientation of the concept of employability (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005), but also with the strong neoliberal belief that ultimate responsibility for the well-being of people with disabilities rests solely with the individual her or himself (Watson, 1993). The influence of this merging of neoliberal ideological perspectives with the dominant discourses of independence and employability will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

It is also at this point within the Framework document that the emphasis shifts away from the role/impact of the Framework re: individual's with disabilities and instead redirects the document's focus towards federal/provincial/territorial intergovernmental issues surrounding the transfer of substantive sums of money between large and complex bureaucracies. The remaining principles of 'flexibility', 'accountability' and 'coordination' all address systemic and coordinative issues between governments, most of which are unrelated to the employment needs of people with disabilities. For example, the Flexibility principle reiterates the need to address provincial/territorial concerns over their flexibility to develop programs and services as they see fit. Likewise, the 'accountability' principle emphasizes the importance of the concurrently developed

accountability framework for upcoming federal-provincial bilateral negotiations, while the Coordination principle emphasizes the importance of collaboration in program and service design.

Interestingly, no reference is made to the possible role of people with disabilities regarding these issues. The only exception occurs in the last sentence of the last principle (coordination), which states that "people with disabilities will be consulted on program design, implementation and evaluation" (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 52). The location and solitary nature of this reference suggests that its inclusion is in many ways an afterthought. It is as if the authors suddenly remembered the need to include consumer participation in the policy process, as emphasized in the *In Unison* paper, and thus sought to tag on a reference at the end of the last principle. This duality and the abruptness in which the focus transitions away from the individual with disabilities, is surprising and emphatic. It is as if the attention of the authors was suddenly taken away and redirected towards intergovernmental concerns.

The remaining sections of the Multilateral Framework primarily address administrative or legal issues inherent with intergovernmental agreements. These include a discussion of implementation periods for the agreement, excluded programs and services, funding arrangements, accountability and the structure of the impending bilateral agreements. Of these sections, only two appear of interest within the context of this thesis. The first, entitled Programs and Services, starts with the following paragraph:

Employment interventions funded through the new initiative will be on a continuum, and will recognize the unique labour market challenges faced by

people with disabilities. For this reason the distinct needs of each individual with a disability will be considered in determining this set of interventions required to support the person's preparation for and economic participation in the labour market. (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 64)

While on the surface this paragraph is very positive in supporting the need for a continuum of services, it again reinforces the key emphasis of the dominant discourses on economic participation (i.e. - paid employment) in the competitive labour market. This is evidenced in the subsequent paragraph where a list of 'examples' of possible interventions and services is provided, all of which center on the movement of individuals with disabilities into paid employment. Likewise, the last statement in this section "those specific programs and services eligible for funding will be reflected in bilateral agreements and it will focus on removal of barriers *and the economic integration of people with disabilities* [author's italics]" reiterates yet again the strength of the dominant discourses.

5.2.3 *Canada-Alberta Agreement on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities – Applying the Dominant Discourses in Policy*

The *Canada -- Alberta Agreement on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities* (Government of Canada, 1998b) document serves two purposes, acting as both a legal contract between the federal government and the Government of Alberta while also narrowing and focusing the nature of the programs and services that the federal government and Alberta will jointly fund. As such, the document itself is an interesting combination of legalese and very detailed points regarding both the implementation and administration of the agreement. Of greater interest to this study is

pre-eminence of the dominant discourse of Employability as the primary driving force of the policy text and how it moves the discourse more closely towards the precepts of particular models of disability.

The introductory section of the Bilateral Agreement is presented in the form of a legal preamble to a contract, outlining the date upon which the contract was signed (May 4 1998), a description of the parties (Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta), and the legislative authority of both the parties to sign the agreement. One interesting aspect of the preamble lies in the last two paragraphs, which state:

Whereas, in the context of the Multilateral Framework on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities, which has been used as a guide for this Agreement, Canada and the Province wish to support people with disabilities in their efforts to overcome barriers to employment;

Whereas, the goal of this Agreement is to provide contributions to the Province to support measures which will enhance the economic participation in the labour market of working age people with disabilities by helping them to prepare for, attain and retain employment (Government of Canada, 1998b, p. 1).

In the first paragraph, the EAPD Multilateral Framework is cited as a primary reference point for the drafting of the Bilateral Agreement. Equally important is the explicit notation that both governments "wish" to "support people with disabilities in their efforts to overcome barriers to employment". This wording is interesting in that the use of the word "wish" suggests that this is an optional choice of both levels of government, unlike the tenants of the social model of disability which argues that governments have an obligation to provide employment supports to people with disabilities. Rather, the

paragraph implies to the reader that both levels of government are in fact choosing to respond to requests by people with disabilities to access employment.

This, in and of itself, would seem to be a rather benign statement. It builds, however, on the implicit or ‘common sense’ assumption that people with disabilities, as a matter of course, will wish to engage in employment. The second paragraph not only reiterates the importance of economic participation by people with disabilities, but also further restricts the focus of the agreement to working age individuals who are training, seeking, or wish to maintain employment. These two relatively innocuous paragraphs both reinforce the dominance of the Employability discourse and effectively narrow the scope of the agreement to a very limited subset of the population of Albertans with disabilities.

The next section of the document outlines the Principles that underlie the agreement. The first principle is drawn directly from the Multilateral Framework, and explicitly states that the purpose of the Canada-Alberta Bilateral Agreement is to:

Direct support of employability through programs, goods and services to prepare people for economic participation, gaining employment in the labour market and to assist them in retaining employment, including assistance through job crises as described in Annex 1 (Government of Canada 1998b, para. 9).

This principle is explicit in its support of the Employability discourse. Of particular interest is the reference to the need to prepare individuals with disabilities for ‘economic participation’, which implicitly supports the discourse of independence, with its focus on economic self-sufficiency.

The section of this principle, which includes the proviso to allow “assistance through job crises” seems somewhat incongruous and appears to suggest that individuals with disabilities experience job crises on a regular basis, and therefore a special reference needs to be included. Also implicit is that individuals with disabilities will need special assistance to weather these crises. However, it is curious that an overt limitation is added to this by restricting the nature of the job ‘crises’ to which support will be given. This unusual clause may give evidence to possible conflicts within the group of federal and provincial officials authoring the document. It may also suggest that even though the discourse of Employability is accepted as the dominant discourse, conflicts still arise when attempting to explicate the discourse into specific principles and policies.

The second principle narrows the range of these supports and services to short-term assistance, employment supports directed to individual needs and labour market requirements. This principle, which focuses on:

... individual needs and participation through a range of measures from pre-employment support to short-term assistance; to employment supports directed individual’s needs; recognizing individual’s knowledge of their own employability and labour market requirements; with provision for appeal mechanisms to ensure fair application of provincial legislation and policies (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 10).

This principle again emphasizes the relatively narrow scope of possible programs, goods and services that the agreement is prepared to support. For example, support for community college or university level instruction, while not unheard of, is discouraged in favour of short term training programs leading to labour market attachment as quickly as

possible. This repeated emphasis suggests a strong desire on the part of the authors to clearly delineate the difference between this agreement and the preceding (and more inclusive) VRPD program. Another interesting aspect of this principle is the strong emphasis on the individual; both in terms of the individual's needs and the individual clients own knowledge of their employability. As will be discussed later in this chapter, this emphasis on individual needs and responsibilities will become an increasingly dominant aspect within the employability discourse.

Similar to the EAPD Multilateral Framework, the remaining four principles move away from a focus on the actual individual with disabilities, and instead focus on the broader intergovernmental agendas of the two parties. These include:

- Recognition of the provinces' desire for maximum flexibility in the provision of programs and services,
- The federal government's desire for a strong accountability framework,
- The need for close coordination to avoid duplication between federal and provincial programs and services,
- An assurance that both the federal and Alberta governments will be equally recognized in any public materials that are released in the provision of programs goods and services.

It might be argued that none of the above could be construed as 'principles' per se, but do provide both parties with the opportunity to articulate in very specific terms the intergovernmental elements of the agreement that they consider critical.

It is interesting to note that only two of the six principles in any way address the actual provision of goods and services to Albertans with disabilities. This demonstrates another aspect of the intergovernmental agreements, namely that both in the multilateral and bilateral intergovernmental agreements are only partially about people with disabilities. Both the federal and provincial governments came to the table with multiple agendas, and in the case of the Bilateral Agreement it is clear through the principles that there was considerable give-and-take as both sides attempted to use the Principles section to include points that they considered vital to their interests. For example, the assurance of public acknowledgement of federal contributions has been a long standing issue that continues to this day, with the recent public outcry over federal insistence that large signs acknowledging federal funding be posted outside of all projects supported by federal stimulus funds to combat the 2008-2010 recession. The degree to which these other agendas overshadowed or influenced the ultimate nature of the agreement can only be guessed at. However, it is important to note that many agendas shaped the public discourse presented in the documents regarding disability, and it is unclear how often the needs and concerns of people with disabilities were a secondary consideration.

The remaining sections of the Bilateral Framework clearly articulate some of the major policy objectives that were at play during the negotiations and subsequent drafting of the agreement. In the next section, Eligible Programs, Goods and Services, the first two clauses centre on the restricting the scope of what would be considered for funding under EAPD. Examples are provided, and a reference is made to a more comprehensive list in Annex 1. The remaining clause serves to explicitly exclude a number of programs, goods and services important to different populations of people with disabilities, with

particular reference to any services provided in sheltered workshops or sheltered work activity programs "which do not demonstrate preparation of people with disabilities for entry into the labour market" (Government of Canada, 1998, para. 16). Section 2.3 notes that:

No later than April 1, 2001, programs, goods and services which are not consistent with the principles set out in section 1, including, but not limited to, programs oriented to medical treatment, and services provided in sheltered employment or shelter work activity programs which do not demonstrate preparation of people with disabilities for entry into the labour market, will not be cost shared under this agreement (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 17).

This single clause has the effect of eliminating support to a number of previously funded rehabilitative services (i.e. - mental health services, addiction services, etc.), many of which are of critical importance in facilitating the employability of individuals with disabilities. It also has the implication of effectively excluding a wide range of individuals whose disabilities preclude participation within the competitive labour market, but who could nonetheless participate in work related activities within a sheltered or supportive work environment. This exclusion, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, could be argued to be the logical operational conclusion of both the independence and employability discourses. With their emphasis on economic self-sufficiency, individual responsibility, and participation within the general competitive workforce, individuals whose disabilities preclude this are simply excluded from consideration. However, rather than risk the negative consequences of explicitly

referencing this exclusion, the task is addressed indirectly by the elimination of support for the programs and services they require.

The remaining sections of the Bilateral Agreement tend to be very administrative in focus, including a detailed section on accountability criteria and evaluation responsibilities by both parties, a summary of the process for identifying eligible programs, services and other costs. This is followed by sections on coordinative efforts by both levels of government for planning and reporting, the implementation period (including a clause requiring a three-year transition plan during which the province will divest now ineligible programs and services from the EAPD roster), appeal mechanisms, a funding cap (i.e. - the specific amount of money that the federal government will contribute on EAPD). Lastly there are a number of legal clauses relating to payment arrangements, the duration of the agreement, termination clauses etc.

The common theme among all of the later sections of the agreement is the total lack of focus on individuals with disabilities. Consideration of the potential consumers who will be impacted by these clauses is notable by its absence. In this regard, it appears that the authors went out of their way to depersonalize the agreement, and make it less an agreement about the provision of programs and services for Albertans with disabilities and more a simple agreement to transfer funds from one level of government to another. There may be several reasons for this depersonalization in the language of the agreement. During the mid-to-late 1990's, the Alberta government was making concerted efforts to both consolidate the number and reduce expenditures in the social services sector, including services to people with disabilities. Adapting a more legalistic and depersonalized language in the agreement may have been one strategy to reduce

consumer interest in reading the document as well as masking the implicit (and substantial) reductions in vocational supports to many individuals and organizations. Another motivation may lie in the strong resistance by provinces to federal involvement in areas of provincial constitutional jurisdiction, particularly after federal cost reductions strategies, such as the capping of previously open-ended funding agreements (such as occurs in EAPD). Lastly, the author is aware of the desire within provincial intergovernmental circles to decouple federal-provincial cost-sharing and funding agreements from the day-to-day operational considerations of program and service delivery. The wording may well reflect a desire by the authors to move the issue of dollars away from the issue of service delivery.

The annexes to the Bilateral Agreement are also interesting, in that they provide vivid examples of the types of services and the populations of people with disabilities that had previously been supported under VRDP but were excluded under the new EAPD. These include mental health services, transitional vocational programs for intellectually challenged individuals, addiction programs offered by the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC), etc. Another interesting clause within the annexes (section 4.1) reveals that many of these restrictions may in fact be fallout from other policy strategies. For example, this section notes that through the Bilateral agreement, and:

In keeping with Alberta's policy framework, Investing in Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities in Alberta, the Province will fund an array of goods, services and programs, or provide funding to individuals to purchase goods, services and programs designed to reduce barriers to employment, and to enable

people with disabilities to prepare for, obtain or maintain competitive employment (Government of Canada, 1998b, para., 12).

This single paragraph effectively demonstrates that the discourses of Independence and Employability were not only the driving force for this intergovernmental agreement, but were also key elements in the broader disability policy arena in Alberta. As suggested in the above statement, the effect of these discourses on disability employment policy is to ensure that individuals with disabilities who are unable to fulfil the twin goals of economic self-sufficiency and participation in the competitive labour market are effectively disenfranchised from many of the programs and services. For the purposes of accessing vocational supports, the operationalization of these discourses effectively divides the population of Albertans with disabilities into two distinct groups, the "deserving" and "undeserving" disabled. This troubling concept will be discussed at length in a later section of this chapter.

5.2.4 *Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) Policy Manual*

The remaining document examined in this study, the DRES policy manual differs substantially in content, construction and presentation from the earlier texts. First, this document is much more recent, with the publication date of September, 2010. Second, the policy manual is presented solely as a web-based text, unlike the others which all started life as paper-based documents (though all were subsequently made available on the World Wide Web). Third, this document is the only text that is solely provincial in the origin and construction, being a product of the Department of Employment and Immigration (E&I), Government of Alberta. Lastly, the policy manual focuses on a specific program offered to Albertans with disabilities by E&I and funded by EAPD and

its successor agreements. Review of this text offers an opportunity to examine the progression of policy initiative and the dominant discourses to their ultimate development as a specific program.

Because the DRES policy manual is solely a web-enabled text, and relies extensively on web-enabled links to minimize the amount of text in the document proper, it has a substantially different style to that of the previous documents examined in this study. While other documents such as the EAPD Multilateral Framework are available from the Internet, they began life as paper texts and were subsequently modified for presentation on the web. The DRES policy manual, on the other hand, was designed from start to finish to be placed on the worldwide web. As such, it tries to take advantage of the technology to present a wider range of information than that contained in the preceding documents. The degree to which this supports or reinforces the message of the dominant discourses and furthers the division between the “deserving” vs. “undeserving disabled is examined in this section.

5.2.4.1 From Implicit to a ‘Given’: The Pervasiveness of the Discourse of Employability in DRES

As has been noted in earlier sections of this chapter, the dominant discourses of Employability and Independence have gradually moved from being overtly and explicitly stated to being implicit and ‘common sense’ assumptions. Within the DRES policy manual, the implicit status of the discourses is fully evident. The first text-based section (i.e. - not composed strictly of Web-enabled links), Overview, commences with the following paragraph:

Alberta Employment and Immigration (AE&I) is committed to increasing the capacity of Albertans to respond to the skills and abilities required by a changing economy and demand for an ever-increasing knowledge-based skilled workforce. The participation of persons with disabilities in the Alberta economy is essential in fulfilling this commitment (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 2).

This introductory paragraph is interesting in that the focus is strictly on the role of Alberta Employment & Immigration in meeting the needs of the Alberta economy for a skilled workforce. People with disabilities are mentioned only within the context of their role in meeting this primary concern (i.e. – being a pool of skilled labour available to the Alberta labour force). In this context, the discourse of Employability is simply presented as a given, as the focus is solely on the broader Alberta economy and, implicitly, the remunerative and competitive labour market.

There is a similar emphasis in the remaining paragraphs of this section and the next sections (Intent, Accountability Measures and Policy). The second paragraph of the overview section starts with the recognition that the "needs of persons with disabilities in the *workforce* [authors italics] are diverse" (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 2). The paragraph then goes on to explain that the DRES program funds "supports and/or services to assist Albertans with disabilities [to] make successful transitions from school to work, unemployment to employment and from one career path to another" (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 3). When moving to the next section (Intent), a similar pattern emerges. The second bullet within the Intent section likewise emphasizes the need to "level the playing field for persons with disabilities by providing individualized supports and/or services that address the barrier(s) to employment created

by their disability” (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 7). Nowhere in these or other sections is seen the need to directly reference the focus on placing individuals into competitive, remunerative employment. Rather, it is simply a given, and the focus is solely on how the DRES program is intended to help achieve this goal. The dominant discourse of Employability now pervades the document.

5.2.4.2 Web-enabled Presentation: Using Inclusive Technology to Exclude

As noted above, the DRES policy manual is designed to be accessible through the World Wide Web. The decision to use this technology enables the writers to present a broader range of information than is customarily the case within government policy documents, while at the same time ensuring that the manual itself is relatively succinct and a manageable size. Surprisingly however, the actual application of the technology is quite basic and simplistic. Rather than electing to use the wide range of capabilities inherent with the web, such as video or audio enhancements, or improved visuals, the documents simply include a number of Web-enabled links. These are presented in the form of highlighted words or phrases which when clicked on allow the user to be redirected to secondary web pages containing more exhaustive information on the subject in question. For example, the document begins with a table of contents consisting totally of web-enabled links. Clicking on a specific title takes the viewer directly to that section of the manual. The document also contains a large number of particular words or phrases at various points throughout the text that are highlighted as web-enabled, and by clicking on them the viewer is taken to other web pages containing much more detailed information than is available in the manual proper. Lastly, the document features an array of appendices that are likewise simply lists of links to separate web pages.

There are, of course, both advantages and disadvantages to presenting information solely through an Internet-based media. It is not the intention of this thesis to explore at the pros and cons of the World Wide Web as an effective medium for people with disabilities. However, from a government policy perspective, the issue has received considerable exploration and has been the subject of significant policy responses in Canada and elsewhere in the world. For example, Section 508 of the United States Rehabilitation Act was amended in 1998 to ensure that the electronic systems and information technology used by the U. S. federal government was accessible to federal employees and citizens with disabilities (Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, 2011). Research undertaken by the World Wide Web Consortium as part of its Web Accessibility Initiative identified significant legislative, regulatory or policy initiatives associated with accessibility of web-based information for people with disabilities, including information on government policies and programs, in over 19 developed or developing countries (World Wide Web Consortium, 2010, para. 3). A common feature of much of these legislative and regulatory responses has been an acknowledgement that as the provision of information via the Internet becomes more pervasive, conscious efforts must be undertaken to ensure that people with disabilities have access, and are not inadvertently or deliberately excluded. In the case of the DRES website, there is no specific reference to standards of accessibility re: content or interactivity. Rather, it appears that reliance is placed on the standard GOA disclaimer located in an Accessibility page linked to the Alberta Employment and Immigration home page. This statement, which is common to most GOA departmental web sites, reads as follows:

The Government of Alberta has made every effort to make this website accessible and easy to use for everyone, no matter which web browser you choose to use, and whether or not you have any disabilities.

This website was specifically designed to take into account visitors who are visually impaired or blind. It is fully compatible with popular screen reading software. Also, this website was designed for those who for a variety of reasons may not be able to use a mouse. This website can be navigated using the keyboard on your computer or using other assistive devices.

This website uses Skip to Navigation and Skip to Contact links on every page so that you can quickly move to important information if you are navigating by keyboard or assistive devices.

This website also conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines of the Worldwide Web Consortium (W3C). All pages on this website should comply with Priority AA checkpoints (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 2-5).

In the case of the DRES document, an argument can be made that the use of a Web-enabled document to present policy information can be seen as limiting accessibility to many individuals with disabilities, despite the evident care in its preparation. For example, locating the document within the Alberta Employment & Immigration website is difficult to find, and navigation within the website itself is challenging even for individual familiar with the intricacies of government website design. Likewise the search engine provided within the website is poorly designed and will often generate

numerous spurious or irrelevant responses. The degree to which this is a deliberate attempt to ‘bury’ the manual within the layers of a convoluted website, or is simply an outcome of poor web design is unclear, but the potential impact for the novice web user is obvious.

The first section of the DRES document, entitled Authorities, consists merely of a list of three links, referencing the specific legislative act and regulations empowering the DRES program. Clicking on the links in turn takes the viewer to a separate page detailing the specific legislative act or regulation. However, the journey is not yet over for the viewer, since these pages, in turn, consist simply of further lists of links taking the viewer to specific elements of the legislation or regulation. While this approach does allow the knowledgeable user to ‘drill down’ with some ease into the details of the authorities, it would likely present a significant challenge to many users.

Web-enabled links are used extensively throughout the DRES policy manual. Though this approach harnesses the abilities inherent within the World Wide Web to present a substantial amount of information, this presentation style also presumes the ability of interested readers to (a) have the necessary computer adaptations to access the Internet given their particular disability, and (b) have sufficient familiarity with and skills to utilize these types of web enabled document formats. Individuals with profound physical, sensory or intellectual difficulties are also the least likely to possess the necessary assistive technology devices to effectively access the various elements of the manual. Equally important, the complexity of the presentation style and content would present a formidable barrier to individuals who are unfamiliar with government documents. This is especially significant in the case of individuals who seek to challenge

decisions regarding eligibility or service delivery, and who are relying on the information contained in the policy manual to support their case.

The question arises therefore as to whether this presentation style is merely part of the trend away from paper-based documentation by government, or whether this in fact reflects an inherent (if subtle) bias towards individuals whose disabilities do not preclude easy use of the Internet, and therefore whose “employability” within the competitive labour market may be greater. The use of the World Wide Web as the primary access point for the DRES policy manual could be interpreted as being congruent with the intent of the Employability discourse, in that the technology favours its access by those individuals whose disabilities who are most likely to be able to access employment within the competitive labour market. As the policy manual itself emphatically focuses on competitive employment, this may be a case of where the media is in fact a significant part of the message.

5.2.4.3 Elaborating the Discourse of Employability

The remaining sections of the policy document both refine and elaborate on the construct of employability, as well as providing the specific regulatory, procedural and process information needed by applicants to, and recipients, of DRES supports. The next section is entitled Policy and summarizes the key eligibility criteria and the core assumptions underpinning them. As noted above, these policy statements make extensive use of enabled links through which the reader can obtain additional information on specific elements of the policy. For example, clicking on links is required to access information such as a detailed description of an Employability Assessment, what a "person with a disability" is, what is considered to be "employment", etc. In many cases

these policy statements serve to even further narrow the focus of the DRES program. The overall purpose of these policy statements appears to be to limit access to the program only to those individuals with disabilities who are most likely to function in full-time employment within the competitive labour market. The following statements, drawn from the Policy section of the DRES policy manual, provide clear examples of this narrowing of the scope of the DRES program (note: underlined sections within the quote denote web enabled links):

- The person with a disability must be employment destined.
- A person with a disability may not be eligible for DRES funding if their supports and/or services are covered by:
 - Workers Compensation Board (WCB)
 - Disability Insurance
 - Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D)
 - Insurance settlements
 - Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)
 - Other funders
- Be a person with a disability and have a barrier to education/training and/or employment that has been created by the disability.
- A person with a disability is not eligible for DRES funding if involved in volunteer, supported, or sheltered employment.

(Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 20-36)

Another means by which the policy section serves to narrow or constrain access by people with disabilities is through a detailed examination of what type of organizations are considered to be suitable employers and thus eligible for DRES supports. The section on employer eligibility commences with the statement that: "AE&I strives to develop strong partnerships and working collaboration with employers to hire and support employees with disabilities" (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 37). This is followed by two lengthy paragraphs outlining the concept of "duty to accommodate" provisions of the Alberta Human Rights legislation, and how the purpose of the DRES program is not to assume that role, but rather:

... to work in partnership with small to medium-sized employers (less than 500 employees) to determine the disability related needs of a potential or existing employee(s) and to negotiate with the employer the contribution of each party towards the cost of supporting an employee(s) with a disability (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 39).

This focus on employers within the small to midsize business range of the competitive labour market is supplemented in the next paragraph with a detailed outline of what other organizations may be considered for DRES supports, and (more importantly) which may not. These are outlined in the following quote:

- Private and/or not-for-profit organization or company with less than 500 employees.
- Self-employed persons with disabilities may be eligible for DRES. The supports and services that are funded must be directly linked to the disability.

- DRES is not generally available to federal employment equity employers. If an exceptional circumstance(s) arises, regions will review and consider the request.
- DRES is not available to the following employers - Civic, provincial, and federal government, hospitals, and schools which include K-12 and publicly funded postsecondary institutions.

(Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 41)

It is noteworthy that the above eligibility parameters explicitly exclude large elements of the population of individuals with disabilities, particularly those with multiple or severe/profound physical, intellectual or mental disabilities. Those individuals often find employment in supported or sheltered work settings. Of equal interest is the fact that by limiting accessibility to DRES by very large employers, the program may be discouraging participation by the very organizations who may have better infrastructure to support individuals with disabilities (i.e. –formal affirmative action programs or targeted hiring). Also of interest is the exclusion from DRES of governments, hospitals, school systems and postsecondary education institutions. These are often the major institutions with which individuals with disabilities have had contact throughout their lives, and are often a source of employment opportunities. The overall intent of the program seems clearly intended to support participation by a limited population of individuals with disabilities in competitive employment with small to medium-size businesses, or self-employment. The ideological considerations of these policy constraints will be discussed at length in a later section of this thesis.

The remaining sections of the DRES policy manual consist of three sections entitled: (1) DRES categories, (2) responsibilities and (3) review of decision. The first DRES Category is the most detailed, and covers over half of the length of the policy manual. It outlines the various types of supports offered, the nature and scope of the supports, funding maximums, limitations/exceptions to accessing differing types of supports, procedural directions for both staff and applicants, and various scenario's for the provision of certain types of supports (e.g. – vehicle modifications). The DRES Categories also effectively divide the types of support offered by DRES into three groupings:

- Job search supports
- Workplace supports
- Education supports

Similar to the *In Unison* vision paper, this section marks the point where the document moves from a broader scope to a very detailed explanation of the who, what and how of specific types of supports. All three of these groupings are structured in a similar manner, with a brief objective statement followed by a “policy” section setting out the detailed regulatory parameters for the supports in question. By far the most detailed and lengthy of these sections relates to workplace supports, but all three groupings commence with an introductory statement that emphasizes the linkages of the types of supports to the attainment of employment within the competitive labour market:

- Job Search Supports: The intent of Job Search Supports is to provide short-term supports and/or services to a person with a disability who is actively seeking employment (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 47).
- Workplace Supports: The intent of DRES Workplace Supports is to provide short-term supports and/or services to assist a person with a disability transition into the workplace, maintain employment, and enable their full participation in the workplace (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 51).
- Education Supports: The intent of DRES Education Supports is to assist an eligible student with a disability, who is employment destined, to participate in education or training (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 81).

(Note: underlined words are web-enabled links)

All three of the ‘intent’ statements quoted above make clear both the total employment focus of the supports being offered, and again reinforce the exclusionary nature of the program. Thus, only students who are “employment destined” can access educational supports, though the meaning of the term is not defined. Workplace supports are offered only for the short-term, implying that those individuals with disabilities requiring longer-term or indefinite supports are not welcome. Even assistance for job search supports is limited to short-term services and only for those “actively” seeking employment. The neo-liberal influences behind the language are also prominent, and will be discussed further in a later section of this chapter.

The remaining two sections of the policy manual are much briefer. The responsibilities section consists of a one-page summary of the expected responsibilities of

the various players in the DRES program, including: the person with disabilities, Alberta Employment and Immigration personnel, employers, and post-secondary institutions or training/service providers. The expectations are detailed, and in many cases elaborated through enabled links on certain key words or phrases, such as ‘employability assessment’, ‘service plan’, ‘employee with a disability’, etc. Likewise, the review of decision section outlines the three levels of the application review/appeal process, with the process and authority undertaken at each level. The document concludes with lists of web-enabled links to pdf’s of a number of government forms, as well as links to numerous appendices, including checklists for applicants, explanation of the types of various assessments available/required, taxation information, etc.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of all of these sections lies in both the centering of responsibility with the individual client, and the increasing deployment of the language of the medical and functional models in ways that promote competitive employment as the only worthy type of work. These issues are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

5.3 Models of Disability and the Dominant Discourses

When the dominant discourses are examined from the perspective of the models of disability, two major considerations emerge. The first consideration is that while examples of all three models can be found in each policy text, the functional model appears to be the predominant model of disability present within the documents. The second consideration is that, notwithstanding the predominance of the functional model, the language of all the various models, and in particular the social model, is often used to validate or legitimize particular aspects of the dominant discourses.

Examples of both these considerations appear quite early within the first text examined in the study, the *In Unison* vision paper. The first three paragraphs in the Introduction section state:

Disability touches everyone. In 1991, 4.2 million (16 percent) Canadians reported some level of disability. Aboriginal Canadians are particularly affected with over 30 percent of Aboriginal persons reporting a disability — almost double the national average. All Canadians have some experience with disability through their own experience, contact with relatives, colleagues or friends. Most individuals experience some form of functional incapacity or limitation as a normal part of aging.

Canadians with disabilities represent a diverse group which includes individuals with physical, sensory and mental disabilities. Disabilities vary in terms of severity, longevity, cause and consequences. Some disabilities remain static throughout a person's life while others may have periods of remission or regression.

A variety of definitions of "disability" exist, including the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (the ICIDH), developed by the World Health Organization. The ICIDH (see Appendix A) is internationally recognized and is becoming widely used around the world.

(Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 58-60).

What is interesting in all three paragraphs of this quotation is their focus on core elements common to the functional models, namely prevalence, nature, severity, longevity, impact, consequences, etc., though this is stated quite indirectly. Elements of the medical model can also be found, as noted in the reference to the ICIDH. This is not surprising, for as Smart and Smart (2006) note, the functional model evolved out of the medical model, and both models retain common elements. The paragraph following the above quotation elaborates on these points:

Despite their diverse profile, Canadians with disabilities share many common concerns. They face personal, social and economic disadvantages and barriers that prevent access to the same opportunities as other Canadians. Persons with disabilities are more likely, for example, to have lower education levels and to be socially isolated and discriminated against in the workplace. They often face economic hardship in their daily lives and many live below the poverty line. Women and Aboriginal persons with disabilities, in particular, experience greater disadvantages, reporting higher incidences of unemployment and poverty (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 61).

The above paragraph uses some of the language of the social model, with the reference to social and economic barriers and the issue of social isolation and discrimination. However, the primary emphasis in the paragraph is on economic self-sufficiency and unemployment, and provides the first inkling of the discourses that will dominate all the policy texts. This is an early example of how the authors draw from the language of all three models in order to set the stage for the dominant discourses.

This use of the language of social model to reinforce both the dominant discourses and support policy concepts/recommendations that are rooted in the functional or medical models continues throughout the remainder of the *In Unison* document, as well as in the subsequent policy texts. For example, the two paragraphs below show how the language of the social model interweaves with language supporting other policy considerations that are not at all congruent with the underlying tenets of the social model:

Persons with disabilities participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disability requires the commitment of all segments of society. The realization of the vision will allow persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation. [bolded in original text].

Although the vision does not promote special treatment of persons with disabilities, it does recognize the need for specialized services for persons with disabilities within the generic framework for the delivery of services and supports. The intent is that persons with disabilities will have the same opportunities as other Canadians. The vision also reflects the changing attitudes of society. Most persons with disabilities no longer are seen or see themselves as dependent individuals with no ability to control their lives. They no longer are considered permanently unemployable or unable to contribute to society. Indeed, persons with disabilities contribute to Canadian society through art, culture, sports, political, voluntary and community activities, and other activities which are not

solely economic. These realities must be reflected in legislation, public policy and programs (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 66-67).

This quotation is interesting from several perspectives. The first paragraph, with its unique positioning (placed prominently and centered in the page) and bolding indicates the authors' intention to highlight the importance of the message being communicated. The language of the first paragraph itself is strongly indicative of the social model, with the emphasis on full participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society and the "commitment of all segments of society". Every indication is that the core message that the authors wish to communicate is reflective of core elements of the social model.

However, the subsequent paragraph presents a more complex picture. The language in the paragraph again seems to be that of the social model, but can also be interpreted in ways that are not necessarily congruent with core elements of that model. For example, the first sentence in the second paragraph could ostensibly be interpreted as being in support of a core principle of the social model, namely that the provision of services should not be constructed in such a way that individuals with disabilities are isolated or excluded from general society. However, the sentence could equally be interpreted as being supportive of a major neoliberal policy direction, namely that government services should be as minimal and generic as possible. Thus the first sentence in the paragraph "although the vision does not promote special treatment of persons with disabilities, it does recognize the need for specialized services for persons with disabilities within the generic framework for the delivery of services and supports" (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 67) successfully intertwines the two concepts Bill –

state the two concepts. It asserts a core element of the social model while simultaneously allowing the authors the ability to also claim that they are presenting a core neoliberal social policy principle. At the time this document was being prepared, several provincial jurisdictions (particularly Alberta and British Columbia) were in the process of eliminating services for dedicated populations and moving towards a ‘one size fits all’ approach to service delivery. This paragraph could be interpreted as an attempt to assuage the sensitivities of both liberal and conservative provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

Interestingly, the remainder of the second paragraph moves back to an emphasis on the major themes of the social model, such as measuring the contributions of individuals with disabilities from a broader perspective rather than simple economic independence. However, in the subsequent paragraphs and sections of the vision paper the key issue of cultural and societal emphasis is increasingly muted as the focus gradually turns towards a focus on the individual, and the provision of supports that can enhance their employability and economic independence. Thus comes the concept of the overarching theme of citizenship (defined as full economic participation and assumption by people with disabilities of the same responsibilities and expectations as their nondisabled peers) and the ‘building blocks’ of disability supports, employment and income. While these are sometimes couched within language reminiscent of the social model, they nonetheless retain the primary focus on the individual that is inherent within the medical and functional models of disability. For example:

The first step in this process is to change attitudes and to provide information as to how to make core programs and services more inclusive. For example, information on accommodation could be disseminated widely to schools, training

institute's employers in various programs. Accommodation does not need to be costly. Since accommodation encompasses more than modifications to physical infrastructure, procedural changes to accommodate persons with disabilities could also be undertaken at almost no cost. Accommodation planning at the design stages of any process is usually a much more cost-effective approach than retrofit or redesign. Information on accommodation complements potential measures discussed under the Employment building block. (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 93)

This paragraph is noteworthy in that it starts with a concept common to the social model, namely the need to modify societal attitudes towards people with disabilities. It also refers to possible populations within society that could benefit from such a correction (e.g. -- employers, training institutions, and program administrators). However, almost immediately within the paragraph, the focus switches back onto the individual. The emphasis is on how this information could be of use to the *individual* [authors italics], in this using case an example of the development of employment accommodations.

This emphasis on the individual becomes increasingly apparent once the document moves away from the broader concepts of principles and values, and moves into the specific building blocks that form the key element of the vision paper. It is at this point that the core precepts of the functional models begin to surface and it is also at this point where the dominant discourses of independence and employability likewise first begin to concretely manifest as well. Thus, under the building block of disability supports are declared the objectives of:

- Improving access to disability supports
- Enhancing the portability of these supports
- Offsetting the cost of disability supports

(Government of Canada, 1998c, para 104).

It is noteworthy that none of these objectives, or indeed the subsequent policy directions, attempts to address such points as societal responsibilities or obligations for the provision of supports, or at the cultural role and attitudinal barriers which have precluded the provision of such supports in the past. Rather, the policy recommendations developed within this building block are focused on the promotion of greater access by the individual, the separation of disability supports from eligibility provisions for income support, and most importantly "more consumer control, flexibility and responsiveness in the provision of disability supports" (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 104). This emphasis on the provision of specific accommodations and supports to address environmental barriers impacting the individual as opposed to societal barriers is a major hallmark of the functional model.

This tilt towards addressing the functional and environmental barriers that inhibit employment and economic independence becomes even more noticeable in the remaining two Building Blocks outlined in the vision paper, namely employment and income. Some of the objectives of the employment building block there are:

- To increase the availability of work related supports
- To encourage employers to make appropriate job/workplace accommodation

- To promote work and volunteer opportunities for persons with disabilities.

(Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 113).

The above fits nicely within the conceptual framework of the functional model of disability, as do the major policy recommendations emerging from the objectives, such as:

- Enhancing widespread understanding and application of the concept of accommodation
- Provision of measures that provide more assistance to offset work-related disability costs
- Provision of more assistance to offset work-related disability costs enhanced employability through better access to education, training and transition mechanisms

(Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 113).

Similarly, the objectives of the income building block are congruent with the overall focus of the functional model to maximize the capability of the individual to function within the workplace and society by:

- Encourage economic independence by removing barriers to working
- Improving access and reducing administrative duplication through greater coordination of income programs
- Ensuring the availability of income supports for periods during which individuals are not able to support themselves.

(Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 126).

All the above, as well as the elaboration on the policy recommendations which follow in the text, hinge on the key precept that the ‘problem’ of disability is primarily located within the individual, but also located within the environment that the individual operates in and its functional requirements (Smart & Smart, 2006). It is this focus on the individual and the environment in which he/she functions, rather than political, societal or cultural influences which appears to underlie the remainder of the *In Unison* document as well as the other policy texts examined in this study. The tendency to emphasize the functional model of disability gains momentum when the EAPD Multilateral Framework and Canada-Alberta Bilateral Agreement documents are examined. The rhetoric of the social model appears much less frequently and is replaced by a much more overt and straightforward focus on the functional and environmental supports the necessary to promote employment among people with disabilities. Thus we see in the initial sections of the EAPD Multilateral Framework that one of the major objectives of the policy framework is to facilitate new bilateral agreements that:

... provide support for programs/services across the full spectrum of needs related to economic participation, from a person taking the first steps to working, through two skills development, onto supporting a person at work and, finally, to ensuring a person is able to remain working (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 47).

This emphasis on the concrete functional and environmental supports needed by individuals with disabilities to access and maintain themselves in employment is continued throughout the documents. For example, when discussing the programs and services that will be supported under at the EAPD initiative, the descriptors include such

items as: “employment counselling and assessment, pre-employment training, skills development, postsecondary education support, school to work transitions, ongoing active employment support, assistive aids and devices, individualized funding, wage subsidies and earning supplements, supported employment, vocational crisis interventions and self-employment” (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 65). Only occasionally does the rhetoric of the social model become evident, and even then it is relatively muted. For example, the first paragraph within the Multilateral Framework effectively collapses and paraphrases the first three paragraphs of the *In Unison* Executive Summary, and includes the reference to “systemic barriers [that] often the major cause of unemployment among people with disabilities” (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 1). However, there is little elaboration on these ‘systemic’ barriers or how the policy framework is intended to address them.

A similar scenario takes place with the Canada-Alberta Bilateral Agreement. If anything, in the rhetoric suggesting elements of the social model is even more muted. As noted previously, the apparent determination within the text to minimize the focus on people with disabilities and emphasize, instead, the legalistic nature of the agreement as simply a funding transfer arrangement makes for sparse references to any model of disability. In those cases where references are actually made about services for people with disabilities being funded through the agreement, the functional model is the main model of disability reflected in the text. An example appears under the principles section of the document where there is reference to, and focus on, the specific functions needed by an individual with disabilities to access and maintain him/herself in employment. Thus Item 1.1 (b) states that the focus of the agreement is on:

Individual needs and participation through a range of measures from pre-employment support to short-term assistance, to employment supports directed to individual's needs, recognizing individuals knowledge of their own employability and labour market requirements (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 14).

A likely cause for this sudden decline in the use of the language of the social model is the radical shift in the intended audience for this document. The *In Unison* document had wide distribution, including a news release and efforts to engage the general public media. There was an expectation that the document would be read and closely reviewed not only by people with disabilities, their advocates and other critical stakeholders, but also potentially by national media outlets and the public at large. As has been noted in previous chapters, the social model of disability has gained widespread acceptance and usage within the populations of people with disabilities, their advocacy organizations and elements of the academic community (particularly within the Disability Studies field). The authors no doubt felt a need to utilize the rhetoric of the social model to enhance the legitimacy of the text with those audiences.

The EAPD Multilateral and Bilateral Agreements, on the other hand, were considered for all intents and purposes to be internal documents of use only to federal and provincial governments. Though both documents were signed by the ministers of impacted federal and provincial departments and were subsequently made available through the Internet for public access, both the signing and release of the documents were given minimal publicity or public exposure. Certainly in the case of the latter document, the Bilateral Agreement, the text was considered strictly a legal agreement between the two levels of government regarding a funding transfer, and there was little to no

expectation of the audience for the text extending beyond government officials. As a result, it is likely that the authors of either document felt little need to try use the language of the social model to enhance its perceived legitimacy.

A similar scenario unfolds with the DRES Policy Manual. However, with this text the dynamics impacting the use of language and rhetoric from any particular model of disability are somewhat more complex. The DRES manual is, in fact, intended as a public document, with the expectation that applicants to the program, their advocates or other stakeholders will reference it. However, as noted earlier this expectation has not necessarily resulted in an easy to read text, or one where a special effort was made to use the more inclusive or ‘politically correct’ language. Instead, the rhetoric used could best be described as a sort of “bureaucratise” combined with occasional elements of the functional model and a healthy dose of the medical model as well. For example, the DRES program groups ‘supports’ into three categories: job search supports, workplace supports, and education supports. Each of these supports is discussed in considerable detail, with emphasis on specific activities or functions which will be supported or enhanced, such as technical learning aids, other types of assistive technologies, worksite modifications, vehicle modifications, translator or signing services, etc. It appears that the intent is to provide very specific examples and provide as narrow a context as possible. The quotation below captures the gist of the rhetoric:

- DRES may provide funding to assist with the cost(s) of modifying a vehicle owned by a person with a disability or an employer.
- Vehicle modifications may be funded to a maximum AE&I contribution of \$35,000 per vehicle.

- DRES will only fund the vehicle modifications that are directly related to addressing the barrier(s) created by the person's disability
- In the case of the vehicle being owned by the person with a disability, initial and subsequent vehicle modifications require the owner to contribute to the cost of the modifications. DRES may contribute up to \$35,000 for the first vehicle modification, 50% of the \$35,000 for the second vehicle modification and 25% of the \$35,000 for the third modification (which is the last vehicle modification DRES will fund for the individual with a disability).
- The owner of the vehicle that is modified must purchase vehicle insurance that includes coverage of the modifications. Documentation must be provided that confirms this (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 205-211).

It should be noted that the above quotation represents only about one third of the actual bullet points assigned to the category of vehicle modifications, which extend for a further 1.5 pages in the text. This level of detail, combined a directive and regulatory tone, reflects not so much any particular model of disability as it does a bureaucratic mindset oriented towards compliance by recipient of DRES funds.

One surprising area where both the functional and medical models surface unexpectedly is not within the DRES Policy Manual proper, but rather in some of the enabled links within the text. Many of these links take the viewer to a "Glossary of Terms" webpage, where the definitions for many of the terms used as criteria in the policy manual are explained. Some terms are defined within a context mostly congruent with the medical model. Thus a "person with a disability" is defined as:

A person who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Director that the person has a diagnosed and documented chronic or permanent physiological or psychological impairment of functions that limits his or her ability to complete training, become employed or self-employed and/or maintain employment (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 176).

Likewise, “impairment” is defined as

Any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 112).

The use of these and other definitions of terms such as diagnosis, chronic, impairment, abnormality and physiological/anatomical structure are all drawn from the language of the medical model. Further, the manual specifically requires that eligible applicants must present medical proof that a disability exists.

Other definitions within the glossary of terms page focus reflect more closely the functional model, such as the definition of ‘essential skills’ which are defined as:

Enabling skills that help people perform the tasks required by their occupation and other activities of daily life. Essential skills include: reading text, document use, writing, numeracy, oral communication, computer skills and thinking skills (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 90).

Interestingly, the examination of this glossary provides no examples of where the language of the social model is used. Rather, it appears the intent of the glossary is to provide a list of decision making criteria and limits for service providers attempting to

undertake eligibility assessments, determining the types of supports which will be approved, or to provide justification for decisions rendered, in cases of appeal.

Any explanation for the paucity of social model rhetoric in the EAPD documents and DRES policy manual are speculative. However, the language of the social model, while popular with stakeholders and individuals with disabilities, also presents certain political and ideological challenges. These considerations are examined in more detail in the next section.

5.4 Neoliberal Ideological Underpinnings

As noted in Chapter Three, many authors argue that neo-liberal policy orientations became increasingly common within both provincial and federal governments over the course of the 1990's, a dominance that continues to this day (Brock & Banting, 2003, McKeen, 2005, McKeen & Porter, 2003, Villas, 2006). In this section, the analysis will commence with an examination of the major neoliberal policy concepts presented in the policy texts, and how they evolve over the course of the various documents. The examples cited are, of course by no means the only neoliberal policy concepts reflected in the policy texts. However, they do provide the most overt examples of how neoliberal ideology gradually gains ground as the dominant ideological orientation within the documents.

The second component of this section will examine some specific policy constructs that have been identified in the literature as core to neoliberal social policy approaches. Their presence within the documents and their influence will be considered.

The third section will address the development and impact of one particular neoliberal social policy construct, namely that of 'targeting'. The discussion will explore

the inevitable outcome of the application of this policy construct, namely the splitting of the populations of Canadians with disabilities into two categories, which can be described as the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ disabled. The former are those individuals who are capable of undertaking remunerative employment within the competitive labour market, the latter being those who cannot. I will examine how this concept evolves and is presented in the policy texts, how its true intent is masked through the skillful use of language derived from various models of disability, and how this policy orientation is an almost inevitable outcome of the integration of neoliberal social policy concepts into the area of employment policy for people with disabilities.

5.4.1 The Changing Policy Environment and the Inappropriateness of Previous Policy Responses

Curran (2000) observed that dominant discourses are, by their very nature, normative and can often be seen as a collection of expectations that are taken for granted. They embody socialization by the dominant or decision-making groups and provide ‘accepted’ rules of everyday living as practiced (or desired) by decision-makers. Further, they rarely include the perspective of the ‘other’, which Curran describes as the non-power holding groups within society. The documents examined in this study provide a very good example of how dominant discourses can develop and then transition into a state where they no longer have to be articulated within the texts, but rather simply form a ‘given’ status where they operate as fundamental ‘truths’. Equally interesting, however, is the ability of these new ‘truths’ to undermine or denigrate previously accepted policy approaches that have fallen out of favour. In other words, substitute new ‘truths’ for old ones.

Evidence of this emphasis on a new policy reality and the implicit message that earlier policy approaches are no longer appropriate are found throughout all the texts. For example, one of the first paragraphs within the *In Unison* vision paper emphasizes the new reality facing people with disabilities, noting:

While the current system of social policies and programs offers much to persons with disabilities, there is clearly a need for policies and programs to embody these evolving attitudes and meet the changing needs of persons with disabilities ...Accordingly, we need to renew our efforts to adapt our policies and programs to reflect the fact that persons with disabilities should be full participants in society (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 3).

Similarly, the subtle but nonetheless clear denigration of earlier policy initiatives such as the VRDP program are also found within the documents. For example within the *In Unison* vision paper is found the following statement:

Until recently, one of the principal means of addressing the employment needs of persons with disabilities had been the Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (VRDP) program which provided for federal-provincial-territorial cost sharing of rehabilitation programs delivered and administered by the provinces and territories. While the VRDP program has served Canadians with disabilities well, governments recognized that fundamental changes were needed to develop a greater employability focus (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 118).

Similar examples are found in the other texts as well. For example, the EAPD Multilateral Framework references the new policy reality and the weakness of previous policy responses in the first four paragraphs of the document:

In February 1997, the Government of Canada and the Governments of all Provinces and Territories, through the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Subgroup on Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP), embarked on a multilateral process to look at programming currently in place to assist people with disabilities integrate in the labour market and more specifically programming currently funded through the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act.

Governments recognize the valuable contribution VRDP has made to the lives of many people with disabilities since being operationalized in 1962 and wish to build on those program elements which have contributed most to labour market and economic participation.

As a result of the shift in focus, both orders of government support the replacement of the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP) program with a new initiative under which the Government of Canada would share with the provinces and territories costs of initiatives with a focus on employment and labour market interventions for people with disabilities (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 1-3).

Only the DRES policy manual fails to explicitly reference either the changing economic and policy environment or the weaknesses of previous policy approaches.

Instead, the documents center strictly on the case at hand, namely the policies, procedures and regulations required for the implementation of the program.

5.4.2 Neoliberal Ideological Orientations in the Policy Texts

As has been noted in previous sections of this chapter, the early sections of the *In Unison* vision paper had a strong emphasis on the impact of social and attitudinal barriers upon people with disabilities. As well, the early sections of the document focused on the broader concepts of full citizenship, values and principles. In articulating these concepts, the more activist language of the social model, with its emphasis on direct government intervention in the mobilization of social and bureaucratic systems is often used.

However, it was also noted that there is a marked shift in both focus and language midway through the vision paper. There is a transition point in the *In Unison* where the dominant discourses become much more evident. A similar transition takes place in terms of the ideological orientations in the text. Once again, the Building Blocks section of the vision paper is where this transition occurs, and neoliberal social policy approaches begin to overtly manifest themselves.

Acting in parallel to the presentation of the dominant discourses themselves, the increasing use of neoliberal terminology and concepts within the Building Blocks section occurs gradually. The first of the Building Blocks, focusing on disability supports, maintains the language of the social model, with a strong emphasis on societal and systemic support needed by people with disabilities. Indeed, some of the content of the section explicitly rejects elements of the market-based orientation that grounds much of neoliberal social policy. For example, the following quotation addresses the issue of

centering funding for disability supports with the individual, thus allowing him/her to make their own arrangements in the private marketplace:

But while individualized funding to help respond to many identify problems, it is not a panacea for resulting all problems related to disability supports. In some areas, services may not be available in the marketplace, thus limiting the effectiveness of individualize funding (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 111).

The above statement conflicts with some core elements of neoliberal ideology, first through its rejection of the concept of total individual responsibility. Secondly, there is a similar unwillingness to consider the private marketplace as the sole route for the provision of disability supports. However, a transition takes place towards a more supportive stance on neoliberal social policy in the next two Building Blocks, where the discussion narrows to focus on employment and income supports.

If the preceding building block was grounded in the social model's emphasis on social and systemic barriers (albeit with some neoliberal ideological concepts beginning to creep in), then the next building block, titled employment, marks a point where the focus begins to shift towards a much more emphatic emphasis on neoliberal concepts such as economic self-sufficiency, limited reliance on government, and the importance of participation in the competitive labour market. An example of this can be found in the objectives part of this building block, where the following objectives are listed (in order):

- To reduce reliance on income support programs
- To promote access to the training programs available to all Canadians
- To increase the availability of work-related supports
- To encourage employers to make appropriate jobs/workplace accommodation

- To promote work and volunteer opportunities for persons with disabilities (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 113).

It is interesting to observe that each of these objectives promotes a key element within neoliberal social policy approaches, such as reducing reliance on welfare, encouraging generic service delivery and an emphasis on government and private sector collaboration. Also noteworthy is the order in which these points are listed, where the bullets containing the objectives most closely aligned with neoliberal policy approaches are at the beginning of the list of bullets, and the 'softest' of objectives (promoting work and volunteer opportunities) is located at the end of the list.

This interlacing of the language of the social model, often combined with that of the functional model, is used throughout the remaining Building Blocks to support neoliberal constructs. Thus for example, the language of the social model is prominent in this paragraph addressing broader legislative and social factors such as "duty to accommodate" within Canadian jurisprudence and the impact of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*:

'Accommodation' refers to the range of modifications to a given job and/or workplace to promote the employment of persons with disabilities. It addresses the physical procedure role and attitudinal barriers that persons with disabilities often encounter which prevent them from finding and retaining employment.

Although the *Canadian Human Rights Act* does not include any express duty to accommodate, Canadian courts, including the Supreme Court, have recognized that this duty does exist in Canadian law and is therefore legally enforceable.

Human rights codes provide similar protection in jurisdictions throughout the

country. Yet there is a lack of information about the various dimensions of accommodation and relatively little assistance to help offset associated costs.

(Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 116).

However, this paragraph is immediately followed by another stating:

*In October 1997, the Government of Canada introduced an amendment to the Human Rights Act to include the duty to accommodate. This is consistent with recent Supreme Court decisions that there is an enforceable legal responsibility to accommodate. (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 117).

In the initial paragraph, the first section seems to imply that ‘accommodations’ are, in and of themselves, not necessarily a bad thing. However, the tone of the latter part of the paragraph and the subsequent paragraph, which discuss the concept of duty to accommodate and its relationship to the Canada Human Rights Act, is more in line with the neoliberal reluctance to enforce social policy objectives through legislative means. While not overtly hostile to the concept, the placement of the second paragraph, marked with an asterix, does implies that this is a late breaking development which will have the effect of forcing a duty to accommodate on employers.

Immediately after the above paragraph, the document completely switches tone. The discussion now switches to the need to replace the VRDP Program (whose deficiencies are never elaborated) with a new policy initiative more closely aligned to the key neoliberal concept of enhancing the employability in the competitive labor market of individuals who would otherwise require government support. This shift can be seen in the following statement:

The Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) initiative has a strong employability focus, as reflected in the new name, a results-based accountability and greater emphasis on public reporting. The initiative responds to the need for appropriate programs and services to help people with disabilities over, the barriers they face in the labor market. EAPD will support a broad range of programs and services, ranging from employment counseling and assessment to wage subsidies and assistive aids and devices (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 119–120).

The above paragraph emphasizes some of the key language common in neoliberal social policy, and though not clearly explained within the *In Unison* document, their presence in the Building Blocks section provides legitimacy for their operationalization in the subsequent policy texts. With the ability to review the subsequent policy texts and how they were operationalized in programs such as DRES, we are able to translate the meaning of some of these otherwise innocuous sounding phrases:

- “a strong employability focus” - which translates into an emphasis on placing individuals into competitive employment.
- “appropriate programs and services” - which involves the elimination of a wide range of programs and services previously funded under VRDP.
- “results-based accountability” - an emphasis on measurable outcomes such as the number of individuals placed in competitive employment, and deemphasizing the softer or less easily measurable supports such as addictions counseling, peer support networks, etc.

The last building block (income) likewise includes this amalgamation of language from both the social and functional models to support neoliberal concepts. An example can be seen in the paragraphs below:

In determining eligibility, most welfare systems classify persons with disabilities as long-term cases or as ‘ permanently unemployable’. But this classification ties many persons with disabilities to the welfare system because they typically receive higher benefits, have access to various disability supports and are not required to show continuing proof of job search. Similarly, the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) requires that a person be out of the labor market entirely and incapable of performing any work that would provide sufficient income for basic support.

These expectations regarding employability—or unemployability—are dated. Many persons with disabilities can work, especially if their needs are accommodated through technical aids or equipment, specialized training, modified job or adopted workplace. Indeed, some recent welfare and CPP initiatives actively support workforce participation (Government of Canada, 1998c, para., 129–130).

The first paragraph in the above quotation focuses on the social and systemic barriers that block access into the welfare system, in this case the conundrum of requiring people with disabilities to be labeled “unemployable”. This is congruent with elements of the social model, with its emphasis on systemic barriers within government systems. However, these combine with attitudes and beliefs structures around people with disabilities to pose almost insurmountable barriers. Interestingly, these are also congruent with neoliberal concepts asserting that current social and income support programs are

‘welfare traps’ imprisoning generations of recipients in forced dependency. The latter paragraph (while still alluding to social beliefs and expectations) moves closer to the functional model in terms of examining those specific interventions assisting the individual with disabilities in becoming employable. This combining of the language of both models is common.

The neoliberal emphasis on individual responsibility and self-reliance are presented early within the EAPD Multilateral Framework and Canada -- Alberta Bilateral Agreement documents, along with other elements of the neoliberal policy agenda, such as program efficiency, cost containment and accountability. Of particular note is the more direct language used in articulating these concepts. For example, the four principles in the Multilateral Framework all articulate strongly neoliberal policy concepts. Thus, the first Principle, Direct Support of Employability, commences with the elaboration that:

Programs and services must provide the skills, experience and related support necessary to prepare people with disabilities for economic participation and employment in the labor market or assist them in retaining employment (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 39).

It would be difficult to articulate more clearly the emphasis on employment and economic self-sufficiency as a primary policy goal. A center point of neoliberal social policy (participation in competitive, remunerative employment) can be seen in the first Principle identified, and then this is further emphasized in the first bullet that will be read in this section of the document. This emphasis serves to not only ground the remaining bullets within this particular principle, but also to sets the stage for the presentation of other neoliberal policy concepts within the remaining principles. Hence the second

principle, Focus on Individual Needs and Participation, emphasizes the neoliberal concept of individual responsibility for both their current situation and any efforts to ameliorate or improve their circumstances. This is reflected in the bullet point that states:

Services and interventions will respect the individual's knowledge of his/her own employability and labor market requirements and will allow individuals to represent their own interests (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 48).

The other principles reflected in the Multilateral Framework similarly adhere to key elements of neoliberal social policy thought. This includes an emphasis on centering responsibility for the delivery of programs and services at the level that can most clearly provide effective monitoring and accountability (in this case provinces/territories) through the principal 'flexibility'. A similar emphasis on detailed accountability for any funds expended is seen in the principle entitled 'Accountability'. Likewise, the last principle, 'Coordination', emphasizes the major neoliberal policy principle of expending minimal resources on government social policy endeavors while extracting maximal value from any funds that are spent. This can be seen in the first sentence of the elaboration for this principle, which states "programs/services for people with disabilities will be designed and implemented in a way that makes the best use of available resources to empower citizens with disabilities, and to avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication" (Government of Canada, 1998, para. 52).

The strong neoliberal focus continues in the remainder of the Multilateral Framework and continues on within the Bilateral Agreement. Thus in the next section of the Multilateral Framework, entitled 'Implementation', there is a sentence which emphasizes that "arrangements will be made for the orderly phasing out of Government

of Canada funding of programs/services which are inconsistent with the objectives of the new initiative" (Government of Canada, 1998, para. 59). As noted previously, this alludes to the elimination of programs and services of a more rehabilitative nature along with those being provided to individuals with disabilities who are not considered 'employable' within the competitive labor market. The aforementioned section on Accountability is extensive, running nearly three pages in length, and provides detailed elaboration on important program elements that:

... in keeping with the employability focus of the initiative and the needs of people with disabilities, results reporting will accommodate a quantitative and qualitative approach and focus on changes in the employment/employability status of program participants in the short, medium and long term (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 81).

The Bilateral Agreement mimics the key elements of the Multilateral Framework, including those with a strong neoliberal focus, and elaborates on some of them in considerable detail. Thus, the previously referenced emphasis on programs and services leading to remunerative employment within the competitive labor market becomes much more detailed in the second section of the document entitled 'Eligible programs, goods and services', where the second sub-point states that:

No later than April 1, 2001, programs, goods and services which are not consistent with the principles set out in section 1, including, but not limited to, programs oriented medical treatment, and services provided in sheltered employment or shelter work activity programs which do not demonstrate

preparation of people with disabilities for entry into the labor market, will not be shared under this Agreement (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 21). Similarly, other sections related to accountability, such as 'eligibility criteria', 'cost management' and 'coordinated planning and reporting' are highly detailed, with a clear emphasis on the key neoliberal concepts of cost containment, program efficiency and accountability. The first annex attached to the Bilateral Agreement provides even further information both on programs and services that were previously funded under the VRDP agreement, as well as the specific timelines for identification and elimination of these programs and services. Again, the justification is that they are deemed to be inadequate in terms of their employment focus. The second annex provides an extensive and detailed summary of accountability and evaluation criteria, again supporting the key element of neoliberal social policy thought, namely that any dollars expended on public programs must not only be minimal but be proven to be effective.

The last document examined in this study, the DRES Policy Manual, goes the furthest in integrating neoliberal social policy concepts into the text. As noted previously, the 'overview' section that commences the policy manual is explicit in its emphasis on the dominant discourses of employment and self-sufficiency. The manual emphasizes the accomplishment of this through the provision of supports for education/training, or by providing workplace and enhancements, or other forms of assistance for individuals who are currently employed. A similar emphasis on neoliberal concepts such as individual responsibility and creating a "level playing field for persons with disabilities" (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 6) are explicitly stated quite early in the text. For example, while the 'content' sections of the document emphasizes the creation of a level

playing field that equalizes the applicants chances to compete with his/her non-disabled peers, the section also states that the DRES program is "not to replace for overlap supports and/or services already in existence by another program, funding source, Government of Alberta Ministry or provided by an employer (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 7). This clause not only restricts a number of individuals with disabilities whose circumstances may compel in the involvement of other social or economic supports; it also reflects the neoliberal belief in (and abhorrence to) the idea that there are numerous duplications and overlaps in the provision of social services.

Other examples can similarly be found throughout the text. The 'individual eligibility section requires the applicant to be a "person with a disability" who meets the criteria set forth in the 'glossary of terms', with its emphasis on attestation by a physician or other professional, and its rejection of any applicants participating in volunteer, sheltered or supported employment. The neoliberal emphasis on the critical role to be played by the private sector is emphasized not only by a lengthy 'workplace supports' section (by far the longest and most comprehensive in the document) but also by a separate section on employer eligibility, headed by the following statement:

Employers are an essential piece of Alberta's commitment to increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in the work force. AE&I strives to develop strong partnerships and work in collaboration with employers to hire and support employees with disabilities (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 34).

What is interesting about the DRES Policy Manual is not only the frequent appearance of the expressions of neoliberal social policy concepts, but also the fact that they appear without any attempts to qualify, mask or otherwise soften the statements,

either through the use of the language of the social model or other ‘politically correct’ phraseology, such as was seen within the *In Unison* text. As noted previously, the DRES document could be seen to be the culmination of a progression in the articulation of neoliberal policy concepts. Within the *In Unison* document, neoliberal social policy concepts are present, but often masked or at least qualified with language drawn from the more socially acceptable (or at least palatable) social model of disability. The authors of the Multilateral Framework and Bilateral Agreement, on the other hand, appear to have been much less inclined to undertake this masking of neoliberal policy intentions through the use of ‘acceptable’ terminology.

Similarly, the drafters of the DRES policy manual appear to have been completely comfortable with a direct articulation of program requirements that are grounded in neoliberal social policy approaches. The drafters of the DRES document seem to have operated on the assumption that a neoliberal social policy agenda was an inherent part of the policy design, and the language used was based on that assumption. A key reason for this is likely the political and social policy environment within Alberta, combined with an assumption that the intended audience of the document would be familiar with the neoliberal tinge of current Alberta social policy. As a result, the purpose of the document is to clearly spell out the parameters and assumptions upon which decisions for funding and other supports will be made, with little concern for using language which does not fall within the context of a neoliberal paradigm.

5.4.3 Neoliberal Policy Constructs

Several authors (Villas, 1996, Jessop, 2006, Burton and Kagan, 2006, Reichwein, 2002) have identified core constructs that form the basis of neoliberal social policy

approaches. In the documents examined in this study, these constructs interact and meet to validate and provide legitimacy for the dominant discourses. These discourses, in turn, evolve into “common sense” assumptions or “truths” which have profoundly influenced the policies that affect Canadians with disabilities seeking some form of attachment with the labour force. These constructs are summarized below.

5.4.3.1 Preeminence of the Marketplace

Both dominant discourses are grounded in the construct that, ultimately, people with disabilities must be responsive to the demands of, and compete within the competitive labor market. The discourse of Independence hinges on the belief that individuals with disabilities should be expected to assume the same rights and responsibilities as their non-disabled peers, and thus are expected to function, compete and support themselves equally with them in a society founded on the open marketplace. The discourse of Employability operates on the expectation that individuals with disabilities can, with adequate supports, effectively compete with their nondisabled peers for sufficiently remunerative employment to support themselves within the competitive labor market. This construct is articulated quite early in all the policy documents. For example, the paragraph below, drawn from the Executive Summary of the *In Unison* document, reflects this concept:

Equal access to education, training and support programs will increase the potential for employment and a better economic future (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 16).

Further examples of this construct are found throughout the policy texts. The first paragraph within the EAPD Multilateral Framework states “people with disabilities

recognize the value of being employed”, while the second paragraph claims that EAPD was developed “to assist people with disabilities compete in the labor market” (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 1-2). Likewise, the fourth paragraph in the introductory section of EAPD Bilateral Agreement states that “whereas the goal of this Agreement is to provide contributions to the Province to support measures which will enhance the economic participation in the labor market of working age people with disabilities by helping them prepare for, obtain and retain employment” (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 4). Similarly, the DRES Policy Manual commences with the following paragraph:

Alberta Employment and Immigration (AE&I) is committed to increasing the capacity of Albertans to respond to the skills and abilities required by a changing economy and demand for an ever-increasing knowledge-based skilled workforce. The participation of persons with disabilities in the Alberta economy is essential for fulfilling this commitment (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 1).

The significance of these introductory statements lies in their establishment, right at the beginning of each text, of a neoliberal context that facilitates the presentation and evolution of the dominant discourses. Even in a document such as the *In Unison* text, which is by far the most ‘mainstream’ of the documents in terms of its use of the more socially acceptable language of the social model, the presentation of this construct at the very beginning of the text presents a neoliberal underlay which leaves no doubt as to the preeminence of the marketplace and private sector as one of the key elements of the policy text. As Alfred, Butterwick, Hansman and Sandlin (2007) note: “the ideology of

neoliberalism works as a form of powerful hegemony because it presents its market-based approach to social, political, and economic issues as the *only* approach” (p. 669).

5.4.3.2 Accountability

Ranson (2003) notes "the relations and discourses of accountability express not only the patterns of power and purpose in public services but reveal forms the governance of the public spirit itself" (p. 462). Ranson goes on to describe the key types of accountability emphasized within neoliberal governance systems as being:

- **Consumer Accountability:** focused on strengthening consumer responsiveness, degree of choice, availability of market competition, public access to accountability data, and control/power centered with the state or consumers.
- **Contract Accountability:** focused on strengthening service(s) efficiency, cost management/containment, competitive tendering or procurement, effective audit systems, and control/power centered with the state or contract provider.
- **Performative Accountability:** focused on strengthening product quality, emphasis on compliance with external guidelines/performance criteria, targeting and achieving a performance measures, power centered with the state or external performance auditors.
- **Corporate Accountability:** control of organizational culture/infrastructure, emphasis on monitoring fiscal expenditures and compliance with internal business plans, focus on public/private partnerships, power centered in the state or private sector.

There are examples of the above accountability systems within all the documents examined in the study. The importance placed on the concept is seen in the dedicated sessions specifically titled “Accountability” in all of the documents studied here. However, while this neoliberal construct was obviously a major point of concern for the authors of all the policy texts, the emphasis on these specific types of accountability varies between the different documents. Thus, within the *In Unison* vision paper the focus is on consumer accountability, with an emphasis on transparency, public participation and public reporting. This is readily evident in the following quotation:

Governments recognize the growing public demand for greater democratic engagement in the form of transparency and public participation - key dimensions of the Social Union. They consult consumers and disability stakeholders on an ongoing basis on a range of issues. Governments are moving away from an approach where they are accountable largely to each other to an approach in which they are more accountable to the public. The shift means the jurisdictions will measure outcomes that are important to the public (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 139).

The EAPD Multilateral Framework, on the other hand, focuses on performance accountability. While the accountability section of the *In Unison* document is composed of two paragraphs that of the Multilateral Framework runs to three pages of text. Detailed discussions are undertaken of accountability measures, results indicators, planning and information sharing procedures and evaluation criteria. A typical example of the level of detail can be seen in the following quotation discussing performance measures:

The Parties agree on the following criteria as the primary indicators for measuring the short and medium term results of the interventions under the initiative:

- Number of people employed, or sustained in employment in the case of vocational crises;
- Number of people actively participating in or successfully completing their program and the unsuccessful in their completion, why;
- Number of people not served on waiting lists or unable to access interventions;
- Savings to income support programs as a result of increased earnings through employment;
- Number of people who have received supports and have maintained employment or advanced in their jobs (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 93 - 98).

Similarly, the emphasis within the Canada - Alberta Bilateral Agreement's is also on Performance accountability. However, this document differs since the main body of the agreement, while echoing some of the points contained within the Multilateral Framework, defers much of the detail to Annex 2, entitled "Accountability Framework". The deferral of much of the detail to the Annex may be indicative of conflict or a power struggle between the federal and Alberta governments.

This possible contestation is suggested partly through the opening sentence in the Annex, which states "the EADP initiative will emphasize accountability to persons with disabilities and the general public, thereby enhancing and promoting program and cost

effectiveness, information sharing and the identification of best practices" (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 2). On first reading this would be suggestive of a consumer-based approach to accountability, however the remaining sections of the Annex outline very detailed performance and measurement criteria. It is more likely the case that while the Government of Alberta, itself possessing a very strong neoliberal ideological orientation, has no difficulty with the concept of detailed accountability and performance measures. It also possesses a very strong resistance to any form of reporting to the federal government. Perhaps unable to achieve consensus on many aspects of performance accountability and wishing to minimize public demonstrations of conflict, the parties agreed to a much shorter Accountability section within the agreement proper, and the deferral of many contentious points to the Annex. This is a rare example of conflict between jurisdictions in documents that were emphasizing consensus and collaboration.

The DRES Policy Manual also has a brief section on Accountability Measures, part of which emphasizes consumer accountability. Interestingly, it similarly defers detailed discussions of accountability to an entirely separate manual, the Alberta Works On-line Policy Manual" (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 17). An interesting aspect of this reference is that the accountability section is very brief and also quite vague, and details can only be accessed via a hyperlink to a completely different policy manual. As internal conflict is unlikely to be the cause of this deferral of detail, it is more likely an example of another cherished neoliberal social policy approach, namely the integration of policy approaches and the provision of generic services. Alberta Works is the global policy and program structure incorporating most income support services, and is grounded in a fundamental philosophy that emphasizes an early return to or placement in

employment. The only adults with disabilities whose income and disability supports are not accounted for under Alberta Works are those noted eligible for the Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) program. A key provision for eligibility for AISH is a permanent inability to work in remunerative employment. Thus the DRES program reinforces another aspect of neoliberal social policy, namely Individualism and Targeting, which are discussed in the next sections.

5.4.3.3 Individualism

Another core assumption or construct within neoliberal social policy is that the ultimate responsibility for the well-being of citizens within society rests with the individuals themselves. As Alfred et al. (2007), observed:

Central to the ideology of neoliberalism are the notions of *individual responsibility* and *self-reliance*. Neoliberal ideology promotes individual responsibility while it downplays structural issues and eschews governmental and corporate responsibility. Within neoliberalism, what used to be considered to be shared *social* issues are no longer open for discussion among the general public; social issues have, instead, become “utterly private miseries” (Giroux, 2004, p. 496). By stripping issues of anything resembling the political or social, individuals can no longer easily “translate private worries into public concerns and collective struggles” (p. 669).

Within the documents examined in this study, the construct of individualism forms a major element of both dominant discourses. There is evidence of this in the emphasis on input and participation by the individual with disabilities that permeates all the documents, along with an emphasis that the individual alone holds ultimate

responsibility for his/her successful integration into labour market. While the *In Unison* text does make reference to societal and cultural barriers, these are counterbalanced by statements such as the following, located under the heading pathway to integration:

Rights and responsibilities: Persons with disabilities have the same rights and the same responsibilities as a Canadians. They are entitled, as others are, to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law and require measures for achieving equality (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 83).

A similar emphasis is seen within the section addressing Citizenship issues, with the statement:

While governments in knowledge their role in providing leadership, the achievement of full citizenship requires more than the involvement of governments alone. Persons with disabilities should be able to make their own choices, take risks, and set their own goals and society should facilitate their participation and contribution (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 92).

As the dominant discourses progress and evolve in the different texts, this emphasis on individual responsibility becomes stronger. Within the Multilateral Framework and Bilateral Agreement, the focus is primarily on types of support provided and the allocation of, and accountability for, funding. There is no question that the ultimate role of government is seen to be that of supporting the *individual* to access and maintain themselves in employment. It is not seen as the responsibility of government to identify a training program, find the individual a job nor to maintain them in employment. Rather, governments support, or at best facilitate, such actions. This emphasis can be seen in statements such as:

Service and interventions will respect the individual's knowledge of his/her own employability and labour market requirements and will allow individuals to represent their own interests (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 48).

Similarly, the DRES Policy Manual is totally oriented towards the concept of individual responsibility. While individuals applying for DRES supports may be expected to work with other individuals or organizations such as career counsellors, educational institutions or employers, the ultimate responsibility for his/her success in training for employment rests solely with themselves. This is clearly spelled out in the Intent section of the policy manual:

- To level the playing field for persons with disabilities by providing individualized supports and/or services that address the barrier(s) to employment created by the disability.
- To assist persons with disabilities participate (sic) in education/training leading to employment, access employment opportunities and enables their full participation in the work force (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 8-9).

This emphasis is reinforced in the very next section of the manual, entitled Accountability Measures, in which the expected outcomes of the DRES program are described as:

- The individual with a disability has their barriers to employment addressed through the provision of supports and/or services, and/or
- The learner with a disability has participated in education/training, and/or

- The job seeker with a disability has access to employment opportunities, and/or
- The employee with a disability has been enabled to fully participate in the work force (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 13 - 16).

The neoliberal emphasis on individualism permeates all the documents. However, the impact of this emphasis extends far beyond the influences cited above. If the emphasis is to be on the individual, and scarce public resources are only to be allocated to ensure that the individual is successful in accessing and maintaining themselves in employment and thus achieve self-sufficiency, then the obvious implication is that the right individual must be selected. The policy reality of this implication is examined in the next section.

5.4.3.4 Targeting: The “Deserving” and “Undeserving” Disabled

A particularly interesting (and troubling) example of the influence of neo-liberal ideological construct within the dominant discourses, and the one that can be found within the all the texts, is the division of the population of individuals with disabilities into two distinct groups. This division is an extension the classic neoliberal divide between those ‘deserving’ of state resources and those who are ‘undeserving’. Giroux (2004) and Reichwein (2004) argue that this concept is simply a recent resurrection of the 19th century concepts of ‘worthy’ and unworthy’ poor. Lesa (2006) notes that the reconstitution of artefacts such as these from classic 19th century liberalism are used as part of an exclusionary process intended to maintain power and control by the dominant power brokers. This is achieved through a process of dividing potential competitors (i.e. people with disabilities and their stakeholders) into 2 groups: (1) the grateful ‘deserving’,

reliant on the power brokers for access to an increasingly limited pool of resources, and (2) the ‘undeserving’, disempowered, stigmatized and invalidated as meaningful participants in the discourse.

Though this somewhat harsh delineation is never explicitly stated within any of the policy texts per se, the effect of the distinction may be seen in all the policy documents examined in this study. It can be seen in the emphasis on the value of remunerative employment versus other forms of labour market involvement within the *In Unison* vision paper, along with the implied criticism of the much more inclusive VRDP program. It is rather bald-facedly implied in the restriction of EAPD supports solely to employment centered programs and services in both the Multilateral Framework and Bilateral Agreement, and the explicit exclusion of sheltered and supported employment programs. Lastly, the distinction is clear in the eligibility criteria for individuals applying for DRES supports, along with the nature and types of supports available.

Thus the presentation of this emphasis and preference for those individuals capable of attachment to the competitive labour market is quite common in all the policy texts, in some cases being quite overt regarding the distinction, while in other cases the message is inferred or implied. Examples of the former can be found quite easily in all the texts, where references to supports offered under the EAPD initiative explicitly focus on programs and services targeted to individuals who can access remunerative employment in the competitive labour market. Further, three of the four documents (i.e. Multilateral Framework, Bilateral Agreement, and DRES Policy Manual) explicitly exclude programs and services which enable individuals with more profound disabilities

to undertake some form of labour market attachment, such as in volunteer employment, sheltered workshops or supported employment.

More concerning in some ways is the implied message that values those individuals with disabilities who have the capability of ‘full participation’ in the competitive labour market. For example, the following quote articulates a ‘Canadian Approach’ to disability policy and appears quite early within the *In Unison* document:

In Unison is the vision made up of values, principles and building blocks that affirms the importance of ensuring full participation of persons with disabilities in society.

Persons with disabilities participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disabilities requires the commitment of all segments of society. The realization of the vision will allow persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation.

Although the vision does not promote special treatment of persons with disabilities, it does recognize the need for specialized services for persons with disabilities within the generic framework for the delivery of services and supports. The intent is that persons with disabilities will have the same opportunities as other Canadians (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 65-67).

While on the surface the above paragraphs appear as quite inclusive and supportive of the participation of Canadians with disabilities, a closer inspection suggests

some troubling distinctions. The emphasis on ‘full participation’ could be read as being exclusionary to the large numbers of people with disabilities who, due to choice, circumstance or severity of impairment, are unable to exercise substantial participation in aspects of society. More importantly, the emphasis in the last paragraph on not promoting ‘special treatment of persons with disabilities’ and the contention that any specialized services should be provided within the context of a ‘generic framework for the delivery of services and supports’ again subtly infers a negative connotation against the large populations of individuals with severe or profound disabilities who require dedicated and often specialized supports.

Even sections of text, which are ostensibly inclusive and supportive of all individuals with disabilities, may communicate subtle biases. An example can be seen in the following quotation:

Currently, persons with disabilities faced significant barriers to work because access to disability programs is tied rigidly to eligibility for specific programs such as income support, training and employment. Some income programs also adopt an ‘all or nothing’ approach to providing financial assistance. Individuals are classified as either incapable (eligible for income support) or fully capable (of working) and as such, income programs do not provide an incentive to work or volunteer (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 70).

While the above paragraph argues in support of a delinking of income supports with the concept of employability, the arguments are couched in a manner that still emphasizes or values the ability to work. Throughout the *In Unison* document, the overarching message contained within the dominant discourses is that individuals with

disabilities who are self-reliant and able to participate in the paid, competitive workforce are more highly valued. While allusions to other groups of individuals with disabilities who are not able to participate in remunerative employment are also present, the references are not frequent and that the overall focus of the text centers on individuals who are not severely or profoundly impaired. In other words, while the document makes a nod towards individuals with severe or profound disabilities, the primary focus from a policy perspective appears to be on those individuals with disabilities whose functionality lies closer to that of their non-disabled peers.

This distinction becomes increasingly pronounced within the three remaining documents examined in the study. Each document becomes progressively more explicit in terms of its use of exclusionary language and its emphasis on individuals with disabilities who are capable of employment within the competitive labour market. Thus we see in the Multilateral Framework the following statement:

As a result of the shift in focus, both orders of government support the replacement of the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disable Persons (VRDP) program with a new initiative under which the Government of Canada would share with the provinces and territories cost of initiatives with a focus on employment and labour market interventions for people with disabilities. The new initiative will result in a shift in Government of Canada support from some established programs and services to funding for programs and services which are consistent with an employability focus and could require a multiyear implementation (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 19-20).

Within this somewhat benign paragraph lie the seeds of the process by which individuals with disabilities will be divided into: (1) those who are capable of functioning within the competitive labour market, and are therefore considered ‘deserving’ of government largesse, and (2) those whose disabilities preclude functioning within the labour market, and are therefore determined to follow outside of the policy sphere. These concepts are elaborated upon, with delineations made of the types of individuals with disabilities who may be considered ‘undeserving’, later in the text. These delineations start within the Principles section of the document. Under the principle of direct support of employability there is found the following statement:

Services provided in a sheltered employment or work activity program which do not demonstrate preparation of people with disabilities for economic participation or entry into the labour market will not be supported under this initiative (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 45).

This paragraph has a number of interesting connotations. First, it reinforces the classic neoliberal perspective that citizens are first and foremost units of production and consumption, whose value is primarily determined by their ability to economically contribute or participate within the capitalist marketplace. Secondly, it suggests that the only labour market related activities that are of value are those that contribute to the competitive marketplace. Third, and most important, the paragraph effectively devalues those individuals whose disabilities preclude such involvement but who are nonetheless capable of some types work related activities. It is particularly interesting to note that the two sets of services that are specifically prescribed are also those whose clients overwhelmingly suffer from intellectual or cognitive impairments. The rationale for this

specific exclusion is never explained, but it does fit a classic pattern within vocational rehabilitation where individuals within those populations have traditionally been isolated within separate streams of programs and services.

The Bilateral Agreement copies this exclusion, and has an even greater emphasis on programs and services leading to competitive employment. Thus we see within Section 2.2 of Eligible Programs, Goods and Services an extensive list of specific programs goods and services which are considered appropriate, such as employment counselling and planning, employment preparation/training, employment assessment, job coaching, pre-employment training, job crisis interventions, adaptive technologies and assistive devices, and addictions/mental health programs and services which are employment focused. A common theme among this list is that they are all primarily oriented towards individuals with mild to moderate impairments. Individuals with severe or profound impairments, who may be capable of some form of labour market attachment but who would find it difficult to participate in full-time remunerative employment, are dealt with in the subsequent paragraph, section 2.3, which reads:

No later than April 1st, 2001, programs, goods and services which are not consistent with the principles set out in section 1, including but not limited to, programs oriented medical treatment, and services provided in sheltered employment or sheltered work activity programs which do not demonstrate preparation of people with disabilities for entry into the labour market, will not become shared under this Agreement (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 23).

This explicit exclusion continues within the DRES Policy Manual. Within the Overview section of the document, DRES is identified as the program that "may fund

supports and/or services to assist Albertans with disabilities make successful transitions from school to work, unemployment to employment and from one career path to another" (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 3). However, to ensure that the exclusionary nature of the program towards certain populations of people with disabilities is maintained, the Individual Eligibility section of the document specifically states that "a person with a disability is not eligible for DRES funding if involved in volunteer, supported, or sheltered employment (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 34).

In personal conversations resulting from my current role within the Alberta Government, I have had informal discussions with individuals involved either directly or indirectly in the development of some of the documents explored in this study. With regards to the issue of targeting funds, they have argued that the policy directions articulated in the texts, while exclusionary, were in no way intended to be discriminatory or to imply a devalued status for individuals with disabilities who were excluded from accessing programs and supports. They argue that then, as now, the earlier VRDP program was too broad in scope, and a restructuring was inevitable in resource constrained fiscal environments. Further, they argue that the exclusion of individuals who were unlikely to attain at least some level of financial independence through remunerative employment is a logical objective for employment-based programs. Excluded individuals were seen as being able to access the vocational supports they need through other systems, such as the education or social welfare systems. Lastly, arguments were made that disability employment policy is innately tied to political policy orientations, and as such it is inevitable that the adaptation of more conservative policy approaches by provincial and federal jurisdictions would be reflected in policy texts. This

is especially true in the case of employment policy, which resonates so closely with the major neoliberal policy constructs described above.

5.5 Power and the Dominant Discourses

In this section of the chapter attention will be paid to the relationship between the dominant discourses of Independence and Employability and the relative power expressed by the various actors in the policy texts. In exploring this relationship, the examination will first focus on who are the various audiences that the policy texts are directed towards, followed by a discussion on how the dominant discourses are presented to these various audiences. Of particular note will be an examination of how the use of the language of particular models of disability may allow audiences to misconstrue the actual power and influence they have over the policies and programs reflected in the documents.

This examination will be followed by a discussion on how power is expressed by the various actors within the policy text, and in particular how these expressions of power may reflect conflicts or assertions of dominance/control by certain actors. Lastly, an analysis will be undertaken of how the language of the various models of disability interplays with the dominant discourses to maintain or enhance the relative power of particular actors.

5.5.1 Who are the Audiences of the Policy Texts?

While each of the policy texts is written in such a way as to be accessible by a range of different readers, it is also clear from the style and language used in the texts that each document also has a perceived target audience or audiences towards which it is

primarily directed. The *In Unison* vision paper, for example, is clearly intended to be read by the widest possible audience, with particular attention paid to individuals with disabilities, their advocates and support organizations. This is apparent, in the wide use of the language of the social model within the texts, which finds widespread acceptance within the various communities of people with disabilities. Also, the structure of the vision paper, which includes a preamble purportedly drafted by Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services and an executive summary, allows for the easy encapsulation of key points by non-expert readers. In my experience, these are all hallmarks of federal documents intended for wide distribution. Lastly, the vision paper was formally announced by the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Social Services to the media with an accompanying press release on October 27, 1998 (Government of Canada, 1998c), which is not common among intergovernmental forums and indicative of an attempt to obtain wide media coverage and thus inform the general public of the new policy document.

The very term "vision paper" along with the title *In Unison* provides an indication of the intended audience. The dictionary defines the term "vision" as "the manner in which one sees or conceives of something, the formation of a mental image of something that is not perceived as real or a vivid mental image produced by the imagination" (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2000, para. 1-6). In this case, the vision is described as:

Persons with disabilities participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disabilities requires the commitment of all segments of society. The relaxation of the vision will allow

persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 66).

The initial sections of the vision paper emphasize a collaborative process that is not restricted to government programs and services, but did emphasize the full commitment/involvement of all aspects of society. Hence, this emphasis on the full commitment/involvement of all aspects of society is reflected in the title "*In Unison*". However, an examination of the text also reveals other motivations behind this emphasis on the public at large as the primary audience for the document. Political considerations in which both First Ministers as well as Ministers Responsible for Social Services are evident in the following quotations:

At the First Ministers Meeting in June 1996, the Prime Minister and Premiers' agreed that improving the current system of benefits and services supporting persons with disabilities was a collective priority. At their recent meeting in December 1997, First Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to persons with disabilities, and agreed to a vision and framework to guide future collaborative work in this area needed to be included (Government of Canada, 1998, para. 63).

The following document entitled *In Unison: a Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, sets out a blueprint for promoting the integration of persons with disabilities in Canada. As Ministers of Social Services, we have developed this document together in response to the request by First Ministers in June 1996, and reaffirmed in December 1997, to make disability issues a collective priority in the pursuit of social policy renewal (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 1).

The desire by senior elements of both the federal and provincial political systems to show that they are responsive to the needs of Canadians with disabilities to the broadest possible audience is evidenced by the prominent location of the above quotes within the Executive Summary and Introduction sections of the document. Though other agendas subsequently appear over the course of the document, including jurisdictional conflicts between the federal and provincial governments, as well as neoliberal ideological concerns over cost containment and program generalization, the tone of the document remains focused primarily on the Canadian public as a whole, and to a lesser degree the population of Canadians with disabilities.

In contrast, the audiences for the Multilateral Framework and the Bilateral Agreement are substantially different than those of the vision paper upon which they are purportedly based. The audience for the Multilateral Framework can basically be inferred from the Purpose section of the document, which states:

This framework will guide and inform the negotiations of bilateral agreements between Human Resources Development Calendar (HRDC) and provincial and territorial governments on the new initiative (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 26).

As the above quote implies, the target audience for the Multilateral Framework is clearly government officials at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels. The document's intent is to provide sufficient policy parameters that have been agreed to in advance by all jurisdictions. This in turn provides sufficient structure and direction to government officials that they will subsequently be able to negotiate specific bilateral agreements. Both general and specific policy parameters are provided, with the language

being unambiguous in cases where there was cross-jurisdictional agreement on key policy elements, such as the intent to change the focus away from the broader range of supports provided by the VRDP program language to a narrower focus on supports for employment in the competitive labour market:

... both orders of government support the replacement of the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP) program with a new initiative under which the Government of Canada would share with the provinces and territories costs of initiatives with a focus on employment and labour market interventions for people with disabilities (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 19).

In other cases, where there are areas of possible conflict between federal and provincial/territorial jurisdictions or where maximum flexibility is desired, the language is much more ambiguous in nature, as seen in the following example:

In keeping with the desire of the Parties to respond to the needs of people with disabilities to overcome barriers to employment, the goal of the new initiative is to provide funding to provinces and territories for a range of measures which they will provide to enhance the economic participation of working age adults with disabilities and the labour market by helping them to prepare for, attain and retain employment (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 31).

However, the overall focus is to provide sufficient information and guidance to government officials to enable the successful negotiation of the bilateral agreements. While the Multilateral Framework was ultimately made available to the public, the press release regarding the document was substantially different from that of the *In Unison* vision paper. First, the announcement of the EAPD Multilateral Framework was not done

as an independent news release, but was simply one part of a general press release associated with an annual meeting of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services (Government of Canada, 1998d). Secondly, the announcement of the Multilateral Framework was a small part of the press release, which was dominated by information on another federal/provincial/territorial policy initiative, namely the National Child Benefit. Lastly, the announcement of the Multilateral Framework was referenced simply as an adjunct to the impending completion of negotiations of the bilateral agreements, rather than a major policy accomplishment in its own right. All the above reinforce the inference that the audience for the Multilateral Framework was intended to be governments and government officials.

The intended audience for the bilateral agreement is quite easy to deduce simply from the structure of the document. Written in the form of a legal contract, the audience for the bilateral agreement is clearly intended to be the respective Ministers and government officials within Human Resources Development Canada and Alberta Family and Social Services. This is confirmed in the opening paragraphs of the document, which commence with a statement that clearly identifies the parties to the agreement and their respective legislative authorities to enter into the agreement, followed by an explanation of the relationship of the bilateral agreement to the Multilateral Framework. Aside from a more general Principles section that draws heavily from the Multilateral Framework, the document is a very detailed summary of the expectations, responsibilities and obligations of the federal and provincial governments.

Those familiar with particular points of contention or conflict between the federal and provincial government, such as in the areas of evaluation and provincial

accountability to the federal government can find numerous areas where compromises were made or where areas of conflict for deferred for later consideration. For example, while point 3.2 of the Accountability and Evaluation section is a very specific in identifying a set of short and medium term evaluation indicators, the more contentious issue of accountability by the provincial governments to the federal funding authorities is defused by emphasizing "accountability to people served and the general public" (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 112). This quotation, combined with others such as "recognize the need for flexibility in response to varying individual's needs and provincial circumstances for administrative efficiencies and for realizing the value of stakeholder input and participation" (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 116) allows both sides sufficient 'wiggle room' to enable face-saving and the avoidance of having to take stands on issues that both parties know are not resolvable. Their presence however, and the fact that such nuances would only be significant to individuals with extensive knowledge of Canadian intergovernmental issues, indicates the fact that the intended audience for this document was limited to the parties involved in the contractual agreement.

In the last document examined in this study, the DRES Policy Manual, the intended audience of the text shifts back towards the public realm, but within a very narrow context. Unlike the Multilateral Framework and Bilateral Agreement documents, the DRES Policy Manual is intended to be a public access document and was written with the specific intention of being used as a reference point by applicants to the program, appellants of decisions made by DRES officials, and interested stakeholders. As such, the tone and language of the policy manual is much more specific and directive

than that contained in the other documents. Thus for example, the Intent section of the manual very specifically outlines that the objectives of the DRES program are to:

- Level the playing field for persons with disabilities by providing individualized supports and/or services that address the barrier(s) to employment created by their disability
- Assist persons with disabilities participate (sic) in education/training leading to employment, access employment opportunities, and enable their full participation in the work force.

(Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 5-6).

The most interesting aspect of the policy manual is that the language and tone give the impression that every effort has been made to limit ambiguity and to provide sufficient detail so that both applicants (or appellants in the case of rejection) and decision-makers are provided with clear parameters as to exactly what will and what will not be funded. Hence the audience of the documents are clearly those ‘who need to know’. This of course leads to further questions given the relative inaccessibility of the document (as described earlier in this chapter), the most important one being, of course, why make a document that is so vital also so difficult to find?

5.5.2 Presentation of the Dominant Discourses to the Audiences: Who has the Power and How is it Reflected in the Dominant Discourses?

While the primary audience changes for each of the policy documents examined in this study, the dominant discourses remain relatively stable throughout the various texts. The format, style and language utilized may shift according to what is seen as necessary to communicate effectively with the targeted audience, but the underlying

message contained in the dominant discourses remains constant. This raises the question of which group of actors within the development of the texts had the power to ensure this consistency within the various policy texts, and what are the implications of this expression for the intended audiences?

It was observed earlier in this chapter that the dominant discourses of Independence and Employability appeared about midway through the *In Unison* vision paper, having been preceded by several sections espousing the language and some of the policy ideals of the social model. At roughly the same time the focus in the vision paper began to shift from a broader perspective of issues such as a 'vision of full citizenship', 'Canadian approaches', 'values' and 'principles', towards a more detailed focus on specific policy responses. As the emphasis shifted towards the dominant discourses the use of the language of the social model diminished somewhat, while the more directive and authoritative language of the medical and functional models began to surface. Subsequent documents became even narrower in their focus, with even less use of the language of the social model. Consideration of who the primary actors were in the drafting of each document, along with the targeted audiences for each text, may provide insight into why these shifts took place and who was exercising power when the documents were drafted.

In the case of the *In Unison* document, the development process included public consultations with people with disabilities and their advocates, along with participation by key national advocacy and stakeholder organizations. However, ultimate responsibility and control of the drafting process appeared to rest with the consultant writing the document and the federal and provincial/territorial officials associated with

the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Forum of Ministers Responsible for Social Services. These officials, and the intergovernmental mechanisms established to facilitate work within the forum, provided the personnel and support needed to oversee this complicated process. Herein lies the challenge in teasing out whether the dominant discourses presented are the product of a truly collaborative process, or were in fact generated to meet the agendas of the actors with the most power and control over the writing process (i.e. - federal and provincial/territorial governments and their officials).

It is asserted quite early in the *In Unison* text that of all the issues and barriers confronting Canadians with disabilities, the focus in the document on the three primary areas of disability supports, employment and income was a result of feedback received from Canadians with disabilities and advocacy organizations during the consultation process. The document purports to speak for Canadians with disabilities in the following statements:

Despite their diverse profile, Canadians with disabilities share many common concerns. They face personal, social and economic disadvantages and barriers that prevent access to the same opportunities as other Canadians. Persons with disabilities are more likely, for example, to have lower education levels and to be socially isolated and discriminated against in the workplace. They often face economic hardship in their daily lives and many live below the poverty line.

Women and Aboriginal persons with disabilities, in particular, experience greater disadvantages, reporting higher incidences of unemployment and poverty.

Over the years, persons with disabilities have articulated their vision in an effort to have their concerns addressed. Recently, they told the Federal Task Force on

Disability Issues that they want a nation which demonstrates leadership with respect to disability concerns. Persons with disabilities desire a country which takes a holistic approach to disability issues that is sensitive to individual needs and ensures that Canadians with disabilities have input into the policies and programs in decisions that affect them. They seek a country which makes it possible to achieve a decent standard of living and supports an approach to disability issues that is common to all jurisdictions but sensitive to regional differences and needs. Persons with disabilities want a nation that uses legal and other measures to promote social and economic equity and equality of outcomes (Government of Canada, 1998c, para. 61 - 62).

While on the surface, the above paragraphs provide support for the dominant discourses, a closer examination draws into question whether in fact the priority areas examined in the document are those of Canadians with disabilities per se, or those of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial governments and their officials. For example, the leading paragraph cites the findings of the *Final Report of the Federal Task Force on Disability Issues*, also known as the Scott Report (Government of Canada, 1996) in support of the assertions and claims made in the text. It is notable that other policy and research texts from the same time period, such as the *Obstacles Report* (Government of Canada, 1981), the *Consensus for Action: The Economic Integration of Disabled Persons* (Government of Canada, 1990) or numerous studies and reports from academic and non-profit sector sources were not cited, save for a brief reference in Appendix D.

A possible explanation for the emphasis on the Scott Report may well lie in the fact that the report, though informative, was primarily focused on a few key issues, such

as national civil infrastructure/ citizenship, legislative review, labour market integration, income support and the tax system (Government of Canada, 1996). Most of the other reports and studies cited above took a far broader examination of the issues and barriers impacting individuals with disabilities, such as healthcare, housing, transportation, etc. Without access to the details of the discussions among individuals who drafted the document, it is impossible to determine whether the focus on the findings of the Scott Report was due to it being the most recent document available, or whether its findings most closely align with areas that governments had deemed as most important (or at least addressable). However, the fact that the areas identified for policy action within the *In Unison* text also aligned with neoliberal social policy orientations then being seen in both federal and some provincial administrations (e.g. – Alberta, British Columbia) suggests that the presentation and subsequent evolution of the dominant discourses within both the *In Unison* and other policy texts may well have been a preordained outcome determined by the primary power holders, i.e. – government officials.

The remaining policy texts examined in this study present far fewer challenges in determining who are the primary power holders, as their presence is explicitly identified as well as their expressions (and contestations) of that power. The EAPD Multilateral Framework explicitly states under the section entitled Purpose of Multilateral Framework that:

This framework will guide and inform the negotiations of bilateral agreements between Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) and provincial and territorial governments on the new initiative (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 26).

The document purports to present a set of consensually agreed upon policy parameters that will guide both the federal and provincial/territorial negotiators on the upcoming bilateral agreements. Areas of conflict and contestations of power can be identified within the text. However, as noted earlier these are for the most part masked and would only be recognizable to individuals knowledgeable about federal/provincial/territorial friction points and the language of Canadian intergovernmental agreements. For example, the following quotation outlines a common area of federal/provincial dispute, as well as demonstrates how language may be adapted to enable face-saving by both sides:

Employment interventions funded through the new initiative will be on a continuum, and will recognize the unique labour market challenges faced by people with disabilities. For this reason the distinct needs of each individual with a disability will be considered in determining the sets of interventions required to support the person's preparation for economic participation in the labour market. Examples of interventions which provinces and territories may consider in deciding on the mix of programs and services to be offered may include but are not limited to: employment counselling and assessment, pre-employment training, skills development, postsecondary education support, school to work transitions, ongoing employment support, assistive aids and devices, individualized funding, wage subsidies and earnings supplements, supported employment, vocational crisis interventions and self-employment (Government of Canada, 1998a, para. 64 - 65).

On the surface the above quotation is simply a policy statement followed by an elaboration with examples. However, it may also demonstrate a contestation between a federal government which was hitherto accustomed to direct participation in and determination of programs and services under the old VRDP agreement, and provincial/territories determined to assert their authority as the primary determinants of what services would be provided within their jurisdiction. Hence the first paragraph asserts the need for flexibility and recognition of the unique labour markets that are found across Canada, while the next enables the federal government to outline in a non-directive manner the types of programs and services they are prepared to fund. Examples of this type of contestation are found frequently in both the Multilateral Framework and Bilateral Agreement, and often reflect issues and conflicts that are only marginally related to the provision of services for people with disabilities.

Similarly, the Accountability section of the Multilateral Framework contains three pages of discussion on measures, results indicators, information sharing processes etc. Most of these are presented in the form of points preceded by a qualifying statement usually containing words such as 'could'. The length of the section and vagueness of much of the language reflects a little-known but quite vociferous conflict between federal and provincial/territorial governments over the issue of accountability for federal funds expended. Provinces/territories have traditionally held the view that they are responsible for programs and services in economic and social policy areas, and that existing provincial accountability and evaluation mechanisms should be sufficient. The federal government contrarily desires a high level of accountability on the results of federal funds expended, and (though this has diminished somewhat with the onset of the Harper

administration) and assumptions that provinces and territories will provide direct reports to the Federal Government. The emphasis on accountability in all the documents examined in this study is in part a reflection of this ongoing conflict, and involves a mutual sending of messages by federal and provincial officials, messages that are only discernable to highly knowledgeable individuals. Thus, the intended audience for this text is rather exclusive.

The Bilateral Agreement is similarly a demonstration of federal and provincial negotiation and contestation, with similar friction points surrounding such issues as accountability and reporting. What is perhaps more significant within the Bilateral Agreement is the lack of even token reference to the influence of people with disabilities or their representatives on the agreement proper. Whereas the Multilateral Framework includes the following statement within the Principles section of the document "people with disabilities will be consulted on program design, implementation and a valuation" (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 52), one has to search the annexes to the Bilateral Agreement to find a similar quotation. In this case it is located within Annex 2, the Accountability Framework, where a single line within Section 1.1 states "mechanisms for assessing and evaluating the anticipated and actual results of this initiative would involve persons with disabilities, using either formal structures or advisory groups" (Government of Canada, 1998b, para. 2). It is notable that not only is any reference to participation or input by people with disabilities absent from the main body of the text, but also that the above quotation is essentially buried in an annex which addresses only reporting and evaluation.

This absence of any significant reference to a role for people with disabilities or their advocates in any aspect of the Multilateral Framework or the Bilateral Agreement demonstrates clearly that whatever power was held by these groups was either absent or disregarded in the drafting of these two documents. As these two documents are direct linear descendants of the *In Unison* vision paper, it is notable that the first direct, concrete policy initiatives to come out of the vision paper totally ignored a key principle espoused within the vision paper, namely the critical importance of input into and participation by people with disabilities in the policy process that had major impacts on their lives. This may also suggest that the actual power and influence that people with disabilities and advocacy organizations reflected in the vision paper may have been much more ephemeral than previously assumed.

The DRES Policy Manual provides a different perspective again on the presentation of power within the texts. In the case of this document, there is no question as to where the power is centered and who yields it. The language of the document is directive and regulatory in tone, outlining specifically what the power brokers (i.e. – DRES administrators) are willing to consider and what they are not. Occasionally this directive tone is softened by the inclusion of statements such as the following:

Employers are an essential piece of Alberta's commitment to increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in the workforce. AE&I strives to develop strong partnerships and work in collaboration with employers to hire and support employees with disabilities (Government of Alberta, 2010, para. 64).

Even in these cases the tone and focus leaves no doubt as to who is in the driver's seat. As a regulatory manual, the DRES document assumes a directive role, with the

underlying assumption of compliance by applicants, program participants and employers. There is never any question as to where the power lies, and that it is solely with the Government of Alberta and the administrators of the DRES program.

5.5.3 Role of the Models of Disability in Affirming, Maintaining or Providing the Illusion of Power

As has been noted earlier in this chapter, the language of all three models of disability can be found within the policy texts. However, it has also been observed that the language of the social model is most commonly found within the early sections of the *In Unison* vision paper. Similarly, the language of the functional model appears quite frequently within the DRES policy manual. These two documents appear to bookend a progression where the use of the language of the social model initiates and provides legitimacy to a policy process that ends with a very pointed and directive use of the functional model language to ensure compliance with program and procedural requirements.

This use of the language of the different models of disability within the policy texts gives rise to an interesting question. Does the use of the more inclusive and empowering language of the social model in the *In Unison* vision paper in fact reflect real power and influence by people with disabilities and the advocacy organizations, or does it merely reflect an attempt to placate an otherwise vociferous and politically influential population? Equally important is whether the absence of this language in the subsequent documents (all of which are the direct policy or program outcomes of the vision paper) suggests a lack of strong (or possibly any) commitment to the concepts espoused in the social model by the government and their officials, those who yield the real power?

With no documentary evidence of any discussions during the drafting of the policy documents, it is difficult to ascribe with any certainty the relative roles or power of the various actors within the policy texts. However, the analyses undertaken in previous sections of the chapters do allow for certain inferences to be made. First, it can be noted that the language of the social model in any of the documents seems to appear primarily in those sections describing very broad concepts such as values, principles, etc. When any of the documents move towards more specific aspects of policy or program development or implementation, the language appears to move rapidly towards either a more legalistic or more directive style, with elements of the functional or medical models present. In other words, while the drafters of the documents appear comfortable with using the language of the Social Model in sections of the document dealing with general or ‘motherhood’ types of statements, this seeming acceptance of the activist and inclusive tone of the social model diminishes rapidly when the subject turns to specific policy or program applications. At this point, when the ‘rubber starts to hit the road’, the language reverts back to that of the more traditional medical and functional models, which have grounded most government disability policy in the past.

If the above is true, then the relative power of the actors in the policy texts becomes clear. It can be argued that the ultimate arbiters of the content (and by inference the real holders of power) during the drafting of the *In Unison* vision paper and the EAPD Multilateral Framework were the federal and provincial/territorial governments and the officials who represented these jurisdictions. Similarly the Canada - Alberta Bilateral Agreement and the DRES Policy Manual make no pretence towards involvement by any actors other than government officials, and as such contain virtually

none of the language on the social model. Power in the case of the former document is expressed through a delineation of responsibilities between federal and Alberta officials, and in the DRES manual by very directive and regulatory language which simply centers and asserts all power and authority to the provincial officials administering the DRES program.

6: DISCUSSION

In this chapter I will discuss some additional considerations arising from my research, including how the language of commonly accepted models of disability (and in particular the social model) can be used tactically to provide credibility and build support for dominant discourses which, at their heart, are grounded in neoliberal ideological principles. Also I examine how this usage facilitated a fundamental shift in disability policy that in reality was far removed from the tenets of the social model. This includes the undermining or discounting of earlier policy approaches that are now deemed inadequate to address the new ‘reality’. Lastly, I will examine how both the environment and the application of neoliberal social policy approaches may have combined to effectively limit or eliminate resistance by impacted populations.

6.1 Whatever Works: The Tactical Use of Language to Further Neoliberal Policy Agendas

As was noted in Chapter 5, one insight arising from the analysis is the limited degree to which various models of disability appear to influence the actual policies contained in the documents. While the language of the various models, and in particular the social model is used to provide legitimacy, few of these policies seem to actually reflect the core tenets of any particular model of disability. Rather, the texts appear to ‘cherry-pick’ those aspects of particular models of disability in order to enhance the credibility of the underlying discourses with the intended audience. In this sense, I describe the use of the language of particular models as ‘tactical’ in nature.

In cases where the intended audience was seen to be the public at large, or at the least substantial portions of the population of Canadians with disabilities, the language used tended to be that of the social model, with its emphasis on inclusion, empowerment and social justice. This is most evident in the *In Unison* vision paper, especially in the initial sections of the document where the language of the social model is especially evident. However, as was noted in the previous chapter, the use of this language begins (subtly) to shift when the document moves away from a discussion of the more general concepts such as principles and values, and towards the more applied focus on possible policy options and recommendations.

Similarly, the audience for the two EAPD policy documents was primarily seen to be government officials and their political masters. As such, the documents were written in language similar to that of a legal contract between the two orders of government, with an emphasis on the mechanics of the funding transfers, evaluation, accountability etc. In these cases, there is a dearth of significant reference to people with disabilities in any context, let alone an emphasis on the language of any particular model of disability. While the documents were ultimately made public (albeit in a very indirect and low-key manner), at the time of their drafting there was no ‘tactical’ need for the inclusion of any language of disability given the intended audience.

In the case of the DRES policy manual, while the document is intended to be publicly available, the intended audience was such that the approach to the language used differs significantly from the previous texts. Unlike the *In Unison* vision paper, which was an intergovernmental agreement and was publicly released with much fanfare and media attention, this document is regulatory in tone and targeted strictly at current

participants within the program or potential applicants. Here the more prescriptive and directive language of the medical and functional models is dominant. Again, it appears that the language of disability used hinges on the audience and intent of the document, rather than on any organizational or institutional commitment to any particular model of disability.

There are implications for this very pragmatic and utilitarian (if not cynical) approach to the co-opting of the language from models of disability. This lack of commitment or adherence to any particular construct of disability, combined with a ‘grab bag’ approach to drawing whatever approaches and constructs appeared to be the most appropriate regardless of the theoretical underpinnings of their use, leaves all the policy documents open to the fundamental question of ‘why’. Why did the *In Unison* document emphasize employment and income supports? Why did the EAPD policy texts deliberately exclude supported and sheltered employment programs from the list of eligible services? Why does the DRES program require medical proof of disability? By choosing to draw what appears to be haphazardly from differing models of disability, the policy documents forfeit any claim to a theoretical centerpoint which could be used to provide an internal logic and underlying rationale for the policy decisions reached. This has the potential to place the policy maker in a challenging position should he or she be called upon to justify the policy or the decisions made under it.

Policymakers do not want to be targeted for misunderstanding and misrepresentation of models by people with disabilities, health care professionals and others. Likewise they do not want to be criticized for a policy that pleases no one. This is particularly true in a highly complex policy arena such as disability employment policy,

which features interaction between a number of professional disciplines, governments and an array of individual and institutional stakeholders. Many of these actors approach policy issues from relatively firm perspectives centered within specific models of disability. For example, physicians are most certainly centered within the medical model, while occupational therapists would approach disability policy from a functional/environmental perspective and social workers would in most cases prefer the social model. The ad hoc use of language and constructs from various models of disability offers ample opportunity for confusion, misinterpretation or open conflict over policies lacking a firm and justifiable theoretical base. I note in particular that the social model of disability arose from the ranks of disability activists in both the academy and the broader community. As a result, the social model has gained widespread support by Canadians with disabilities and their advocates, and the core tenets of the model are widely understood and supported. Contradictions between policy intent and the language used are thus open to early detection and negative response.

6.2 Out with the Old: The Denigration of Prior Policy Approaches and the Extolling of a New Policy Reality

As was noted in Chapter 5, the documents examined in this study set the stage for, initiated the development of and saw the evolution of the dominant discourses of independence and employability. This was done by redefining of the policy environment, in part through a very skilful narrowing of the policy issues that were considered in the documents, and also through a quite explicit dismissal of the efficacy of the preceding policy approaches (e.g. - the VRDP program). Regardless of the fact that the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Social Services has a mandate which extends over a range of

social policy arenas, the document, starting with the vision paper, quickly narrowed their focus to a selection of policy issues which comfortably falls within a neoliberal social policy perspective. As the dominant discourses gradually shifted from those explicitly discussed to those implied as ‘truths’, the contents of the documents ever more readily reflected a neoliberal perspective on both the policy environment and appropriate policy responses. Previous policy and programmatic initiatives that were grounded in different sociopolitical perspectives are denigrated, and policy issues that fit less comfortably within a neoliberal perspective (e.g. - systemic discrimination, affirmative action, sheltered or supported employment, etc.) ignored or discounted. Most importantly, the overall rightness of policy and programmatic responses emphasizing the critical importance of economic self-sufficiency, the overwhelming role to be played by the private sector, and the focus on the role of the individual with disabilities as a productive worker within competitive marketplace became the new norms.

Fairclough (2003) notes that any discourse must be considered within the social and political context in which it arises. During the late 1990s, the Canadian economy was in the process of recovering from the sharp recession of the early to mid part of the decade, and both federal and provincial governments were recovering from the draconian fiscal restraint exercises. Also during this time period, several provincial jurisdictions, most notably Alberta, experimented with a range of neoliberal social policy initiatives intended to reduce expenditures by focussing on less costly programs targeting people with disabilities deemed as requiring minimal supports leading to finding and maintaining employment. Further, the late 1990s was a period where the concept of

collaborative federalism combined with the increasing assertiveness by provinces for autonomous control of programs within their constitutional areas of responsibility.

How these social and political contextual elements combined to produce a policy framework grounded in neoliberal social policy approaches yet endorsed by a federal/provincial governments of the right, center and left lies outside the scope of this thesis. However, in such an environment, it is likely unsurprising that both political direction and government bureaucracy would focus on a policy area which was of known concern by people with disabilities, was also a known policy issue that had been addressed at the federal/provincial level in the past, and thus would generate a reasonable amount of comfort amongst all actors, regardless of ideological orientation. However, the issue of employment and economic supports for Canadians with disabilities has been rapidly subsumed by the broader discourses on economic self-sufficiency and participation in the competitive labour market that are core elements of neoliberal social policy approaches to any disadvantaged population.

The neoliberal emphasis on economic independence and competitive employment has gained broader acceptance within many Western political and economic systems. When combined with the concomitant demonization of the concept of reliance on government provided income or other types of social supports, the dominant discourses presented within the documents as common sense ‘truths’ appear more understandable. As well, this gradual subsuming of key neoliberal values and principles into Western societies has enabled many resulting policy approaches to generate much less resistance than might be expected. Roulstone (2002) noted that in the UK governments of both the center-right and center-left have adapted a political and economic credo that equates

strategically reduced social intervention with a more flexible, economically efficient and ultimately more equitable society. This credo is predicated on a strong faith in the ability of an enabled marketplace and re-incentivized, flexible workers to diminish the need for substantial government supports for the disadvantaged. McQuaid and Lindsay (2005) similarly note that in accompaniment with this emphasis on the ability of the marketplace to address the inequities in modern societies, there has been an equal emphasis on the concept of employability that has gained a remarkable hold on social and labour market policies across the developed world. Lockhart (2004) observed that in Canada, vocational rehabilitation has historically always been a major point of emphasis within national disability policy. Within the social and political contexts of the last three decades, economic independence and employability are of course listed as important not just to government but also many advocacy organizations and disability activists. However, equally important to these stakeholders are commensurate supports within non-economic spheres of life and inclusionary policies that facilitate the participation of all people with disabilities regardless of whether paid employment or economic self-sufficiency is possible or not.

6.3 The Voice of People with Disabilities: Missing in Action or Effectively Silenced?

The policies presented within the documents examined in this study are suggestive of far more complex relationships of power and expressions of resistance than can be easily inferred from a surface reading of the texts themselves. As was noted in Chapter 5, there is scant evidence of contestation amongst the actors or resistance to the dominant discourses. When contestation does appear, most notably in sections of the

texts addressing evaluation and accountability, it appears to be most notably within the context of jurisdictional jousting between the federal and provincial governments for predominance in reporting relationships. Certainly on the surface, there appears to be little evidence of active resistance by Canadians with disabilities (or their advocacy organizations), even to policies that on the surface would be an anathema to individuals or groups supporting the social model of disability, such as the overt favoring within policy of certain populations of Canadians with disabilities (in this case those capable of competitive employment) over others.

However, a more nuanced look at both the documents and the policy environment the late 1990's suggests a more complex picture, one that both inhibits coordinated resistance to neoliberal social policy approaches and simultaneously promotes contestation and division amongst those actors who may suffer the most negative impact of the policies' implementation. As noted in previous chapters, many of the core tenets underpinning Canadian disability policy were developed and implemented during the 1960s to the early 1980s. These tenets were effectively discredited, if not demonized through the introduction and gradual assimilation of neoliberal ideological constructs within the Canadian political landscape over the last two decades of the 20th century.

Simultaneously with this development, the ability to of populations adversely affected by the implementation of neoliberal social or human service policies to resist was significantly impaired, often by the very nature of the policies themselves and the discourse surrounding their implementation. Horton (2007), in a presentation on health care policy, observed that a key method for undermining potential resistance to neoliberal policy constructs was to seize control of potential discourses surrounding the policy.

Since “discourses shape and constrained what is salable and doable, as well as what is thinkable, the limits of the expressible and the permissible” (Horton, 2007, p. 6). By defining the discourses around such constructs as quality versus equality, availability versus accessibility, costs versus taxes, etc., neoliberal policymakers effectively set the parameters around which any challenge or contestation can take place. Further, Horton (2007) notes that policymakers can, through the insertion of neoliberal values into the discourse, effectively limit the space available for contestation by promoting the policy as the defender of excellence and high standards. As such, the discourses strengthen the existing hierarchies while disguising the use of power and domination to discount or negate resistance.

From the perspective of the policy documents examined in this study, an argument could be made that a similar dynamic exists. Starting with the *In Unison* vision paper, the correctness and infallibility of the two dominant discourses of independence and employability is emphasized. The presentation of supporting discourses around such concepts as accountability, efficiency, cost effectiveness, and restricted resources combine with the dominant discourses to present an aura of ‘rightfulness’ and ‘truthfulness’ that makes effective contestation or resistance difficult. By effectively defining the environment around which any discussion of the policies can take place, counter arguments on such grounds as fairness, accessibility, or the diversity of people with disabilities are undermined as they are not supported by ever present neoliberal values which (implicitly or explicitly) underpin the policy documents.

Another key factor in limiting resistance to neoliberal approaches to disability policy arises from the very nature of the policies themselves. As public resources are

shrunk or withdrawn from a range of social supports, programs and services, there is increased competition and contestation amongst the populations requiring such resources for what remains. Newell (1996) claims that this has had the effect of encouraging contestation among different elements of the population of people with disabilities as they struggle amongst themselves for the diminishing pool of public resources made available under neoliberal social policy. Similarly, Soldatic and Chapman (2010) have noted an increasing tendency within Western disability rights movements for the natural divisions that often exist in such a broad-based population to widen and become segmented into what they describe as biosocial movements. These movements mark a return to the earlier emphasis seen in the 1950's on issues associated with the concerns of a particular impairment type (e.g. - autism, intellectual disability, etc.).

The argument could certainly be made that the application of neoliberal social policy principles on Canadian disability policy at both the national and provincial levels has resulted in a similar widening of the divisions within the population of individuals with disabilities. Malhotra (2005) observed that similar to the experience of other social movement such the feminism and gay rights, the disability rights movement was and is composed of a myriad of different perspectives and elements of the population. A resulting tendency has been to see the movement split over time into a number of different "camps" with often vastly different agendas and objectives. Far too often, governments can utilize policy to further these divisions for their own ends.

That the policy texts examined in this study were deliberately designed to enhance division or discord amongst people with disabilities is unlikely. But as Soldatic and Chapman (2010) point out, policies grounded in neoliberal constructs often have the

effect of “actively dividing and disorganizing collective strategies or actions common to the broader disability identity” (p. 140). In particular they note a disturbing tendency of governments to co-opt many disability advocacy organizations’ ability to organize collective actions. As governments are often the primary source of funds for disability advocacy organizations (particularly in Canada), the risk of withdrawal or restrictions on funding or government contracting of services (usually through the neoliberal emphasis on fiscal restraint or efficiency) can serve as inhibitors to either singular or collective resistance to government policy initiatives.

Whether these particular factors were at play during the development of the documents examined in this study is unclear. However, such a possibility does make clear the range of external factors, often not directly related to the preparation of the policy texts, that may nonetheless have substantial impact on the degree to which resistance or contestation to neoliberal policy approaches will occur. This might provide an explanation for the lack of strong resistance to elements of the policy texts that, at least on the surface, would be expected to generate strong contestation from elements within the population of Canadians with disabilities. For example, the deliberate exclusion in both the EAPD and DRES policy texts of individuals participating in shelter or supported employment programs provides one such example. On the surface, this exclusion would appear to be a somewhat disconcerting example of the application of the neoliberal principle of the deserving and undeserving poor. However, as Soldatic and Chapman (2010) observed, this issue was exploited by neoliberal governments in Australia to create a major and divisive struggle between differing groups within the Australian disability rights movement. In this case, governments enlisted the support of

activists within the disability rights and labour movement to support the removal of sheltered and supported employment programs from the Australian equivalent of the EAPD and DRES programs. Governments were able to align their desire to separate nonproductive populations from employment support programs with concerns by disability activists that supported in children and employment programs were exploitative, isolating and intended to provide a cheap pool of underpaid labor for private industry.

This surprising position, and its unusual alignment with the clearly harsh and exclusionary neoliberal policies of the Australian government of the day placed disability activists in direct conflict with parents and advocates for the developmentally and intellectually delayed. The resulting conflict was extremely bitter and divisive, and resulted in the curious case of disability activists publicly supporting a clearly neoliberal policy regime in both the media and resulting court actions. Ultimately, the Australian federal government obtained legal endorsement for a policy position similar to that articulated in the documents reviewed in this study, and sheltered and supported employment were removed from the list of eligible programs and services. The complexity of the issue and the perceived broader implications for issues such as the right to minimum wage, discrimination and parental rights eventually brought in a range of other interested parties such as organized labour, human rights organizations, etc. on both sides. Indeed, some of these external stakeholders even reversed sides over the course of the dispute (Soldatic and Chapman, 2010). However, a key consideration is that skillfully drafted and applied policies can have the effect of splintering opposition and effectively neutralizing contestation and resistance, and can even have the effect of causing

acrimony and even outright conflict amongst those who would, under normal circumstances, be allied together in resistance to neoliberal policy approaches.

Whether knowledge of these events, or similar dissensions within the Canadian disability rights movement facilitated the inclusion of similar policies within the EAPD and DRES documents is unclear, as no rationale is ever provided for such exclusionary provisions. However, the inclusion of these and other neoliberal constructs either subtly (in the case of the *In Unison* vision paper) or overtly (as within the EAPD and DRES documents) offers an unsettling introduction to the implications of applying neoliberal social policy approaches to the disability policy arena. For Canadians with disabilities, most of whom face numerous challenges or barriers to accessing needed training and employment supports, such policies can paradoxically insert new ones. Individuals who would previously been able to access supports or services under VRDP could now be deemed ineligible if unable to participate in competitive employment. The scope of the supports offered could potentially be reduced, so that an individual with a career goal requiring considerable post-secondary education may be denied or redirected towards training that would lead more quickly to employment. The range of supports and services could now face reduction if deemed non-essential to the goal of accessing or maintaining remunerative employment. Overall, the new policy framework could have the effect of reducing the choices or options available to Canadians with disabilities when compared to its predecessor.

7: INSIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

In undertaking this research, I have gained a number of insights into both the value of critical discourse analysis as a tool for effective policy analysis, and the challenges and benefits of the role of practitioner/scholar/researcher while employed within the public service. In this chapter, I will explore the implications of some of these insights, as well as providing a concluding statement on my journey while undertaking this research.

7.1 Value of the Methodology

This thesis used critical discourse analysis to identify and deconstruct the dominant discourses underlying a series of national and regional disability employment policy texts. As Goldberg (2005) observed, critical discourse analysis provides the policy professional with a methodology that can "problematize what presents itself as given, taken for granted and obvious conceptions of the world and expose how this 'truth' was constructed through discourse and ideology" (p. 190). In my review of the disability policy literature, it is apparent that this methodology is used infrequently, despite its general acceptance in other areas of policy studies. This is surprising given its ability to move beyond surface interpretations of policy texts and expose underlying discourses and messages which are often masked by skilful writing and the tactical use of language.

This thesis also demonstrates that critical discourse analysis can be used to examine the relative power and influence (or lack thereof) of various actors within the

policy process. This is of particular importance within the disability policy field, where consultation with and/or participation by representatives of people with disabilities is considered a 'de rigueur' part of the policy development process. The participation of people with disabilities is often used to legitimize the subsequent policy products. A methodology that can explore the underlying discourses that frame policy, and through it evaluate the influence of the various actors can be useful in determining who holds real power during the policy development process.

Third, this thesis demonstrates yet again how policies are not conceived in isolation, but rather are the outcome of a complex intertwining of historical, social and political contexts. Taylor (1997), citing Evans, Davies & Penny (1994), noted that criticisms have been made of the use of discourse theory in policy analysis for underplaying how these different types of factors can constraint policy making. However, I believe that the ability to review series of related policy texts written over time can capture nuances and changes to the sociopolitical environment that an analysis of a single document is incapable of identifying. This is particularly important in situations where there appears to be a significant change or shift from previous policy approaches.

Lastly this methodology can provide the policy professional with the ability to tease out the singular voices of particular actors (or identify their absence) in collaboratively written policy texts which purportedly represent a consensus by all actors. All documents examined in this study were drafted in such a context. Critical discourse analysis offers the ability to tease out the voices of the various actors, and infer the areas where there is actual consensus, where there are conflicts which remain unresolved, and where one or more actors have predominated.

7.2 Insights for Practitioner-Scholars Within the Public Service

The Canadian public service offers a unique environment in which to attempt to undertake research, particularly a qualitative study using critical analytical techniques. In my opinion, it is untrue that the public service is an unwelcoming environment in which to undertake qualitative research. As was noted in Chapter 2, a significant portion of the research undertaken in Canada on disability issues and policy has been undertaken or financed by both federal and/or provincial governments. However, the vast majority of this research has been undertaken within the context of official government policy development exercises, with all aspects of the research under the careful monitoring and/or control of the government bureaucracies involved.

Public servants attempting to undertake independent critical research within their own field of professional practice, particularly when it relates to their own employment functions, can face several impediments. These can include restrictions placed by their conditions of employment, the expectation that public servants are nonpartisan, confidentiality considerations and the often conservative and risk-averse culture within many government bureaucracies.

There are, of course, steps that can be taken to address many of these challenges. In this thesis I ensured that those Government of Alberta senior and executive managers within my reporting chain were informed of the nature of the research that I would be undertaking. As the area of intergovernmental agreements on disability employment policy was within my area of responsibility, I ensured that any documents selected for examination in my study were fully and publicly available. Further, I ensured that all sources of information were fully referenced, and in the case of personal conversations,

these were appropriately acknowledged and referenced as such. Most importantly, at no point did I access or utilize, in any manner, information or other Government of Alberta documents or resources that were not fully and completely available to the public at large.

I believe that it was this openness regarding the scope and nature of my research, combined with a constant awareness and scrupulous observance of the conditions of my employment and the parameters of the oath of confidentiality I took upon entering the public service that enabled me to avoid any conflicts of interest or difficulties. In retrospect, I can state that I received nothing but full support and encouragement from all levels within my department. I believe that with adequate advance preparation, complete openness and the willingness to work within the constraints posed by conditions of employment in the public service, it is indeed possible to undertake effective and independent critical research.

7.3 Insights for Canadians with Disabilities and Their Advocates

At its heart, this thesis is my attempt to answer the question that has been raised so many times by people with disabilities and their advocates, namely why disability policy so rarely seems to ‘walk the talk’. The answer, I believe, is that there is so much more to the ‘talk’ than can be inferred from a simple surface reading of a policy text. Further, much of the ‘talk’ contained in policy documents such as those examined in this study is in fact directed at other audiences. Very often the ‘walk’ is in fact congruent with the ‘talk’, it’s just that many readers are unable to discern all the messages contained in the policy text. Through the tactical use of language and skilful writing, these alternative discourses may not be detectable or easily understood.

This research is important in its ability to inform and empower people with disabilities and their advocates, enabling them to respond to ideologically based policy. As Goldberg (2005) observed, this objective also follows from Yeatman's (1990) politics of discourse and his striving for critical literacy in policy. She claims that to discursively contest policies as texts one "must come to understand how discursive practices operate, how they distribute power and constitute power, and how discursive interventions are possible" (p. 197).

This thesis offers activists and advocates for people with disabilities both methodologies and insights useful in deconstructing policy texts. It demonstrates how to use them in developing strategies to resist harmful discourses and policies, and how to create alternative discourses that can address the inequalities that are often inherent with the application of neoliberal social policy approaches. Goldberg (2005), citing Henry & Tator (2000), and Janks (1993), observed that the results of critical discourse policy analysis should encourage a heightened sense of critical consciousness and critical language awareness, which are essential components in the development of such strategies. I personally believe that by gaining a better appreciation of the discourses and messages which really underlie government policy statements or documents, activists and advocates will be better equipped to contest the pervasive neoliberal influences on policies and programs which impact the lives of Canadians with disabilities.

7.4 Conclusion

This thesis examined four documents associated with the development or implementation of a national disability employment policy framework. I undertook this analysis to investigate if there were major or dominant discourses common to all the

texts, and if so, to then explore how these dominant discourses developed and evolved over the course of the policy process. I then examined the texts for evidence of the influence of certain models of disability, and discussed how those texts in turn used language drawn from different models of disability to build legitimacy for the dominant discourses. Following this, I explored whether these discourses were used to introduce and implement neoliberal social policy approaches into Canadian disability employment policy. Lastly, I considered the degree to which the dominant discourses and the language of certain models of disability reflected the relative power of different actors within the policy development/implementation process.

In summary, this investigation demonstrated that there were in fact two dominant discourses common to all the policy texts, namely a discourse of Independence and a discourse of Employability. Both of these discourses were initially presented in the *In Unison* vision paper, and then continued as the dominant discourses throughout the remainder the policy documents. As is typical with dominant discourses, these evolved from a status of being overtly referenced in the policy text to becoming an underlying 'given' or 'truth' within the texts. Interestingly, while the language of various models disability, particularly the social model, was used in the texts there is little evidence to suggest that any particular model of disability has singular influence. Rather, the use of the language of various models of disability appeared to be tactical in nature, and used simply to enhance the legitimacy of the particular discourses or arguments being presented. This was of substantial value given that most of the policies articulated within the texts appeared to be grounded within a neoliberal policy orientation, and the use of the language of the social model in particular was of value in providing legitimacy to

concepts that are in many ways antithetical to some of the core precepts of particular models. Lastly, the analysis suggests that the actors with the greatest degree of power and influence during the drafting and implementation of the policy texts remain centered with government officials, and the influence of people with disabilities or their advocates was at best subordinate, or in many cases nonexistent.

Upon reflection, my journey through the course of this investigation has enabled me to gain greater insights into the degree to which neoliberal ideological orientations and social policy approaches have embedded themselves within the Canadian disability policy environment at both the provincial and national levels. The discourses of Independence and Employability continue to dominate the disability employment policy environment in Canada. The successor policy texts to the *In Unison* vision paper, such as the *In Unison 2000* policy document and the successor intergovernmental agreements that followed the EAPD Multilateral Framework all continue to center themselves within an ideological orientation emphasizing economic self-sufficiency and participation within the competitive labor market. This orientation is characterized by unquestioned faith in the efficacy of participation in the competitive marketplace as the most effective means for addressing the serious economic and social barriers facing Canadians with disabilities.

Equally interesting is the revelation of how many elements of the language of the social model of disability can effectively be torqued or altered to enable their use within a neoliberal policy framework. Thus, for example, the constructs of equality and inclusion, elements basic to the social model ideals of societies recognition of the inherent dignity of the individual, have been altered. While the terms remain the same, the underlying concepts of acceptance and willingness to accommodate the uniqueness and differences

of individuals with disabilities have been changed. In their place, equality has been equated with the inclusion of people with disabilities within a generic human services framework where everyone accesses the same services regardless of specific needs or differences. Inclusion now means the expectation that individuals with disabilities must compete within the same economic and employment environment as their non-disabled peers, with only minimal supports offered on an as needed basis. The notion of equality has been altered to meaning that everyone is treated the same. In so doing, another key element of the social model, equity, is therefore sacrificed. This torqueing of elements of the social model has permitted the use of its' language to be applied to policy approaches that, from most perspectives, would be considered antithetical to its original constructs. Regardless of whether such usage is deliberate or inadvertent, the impacts on people with disabilities can be profound.

Another consideration arising from this investigation has been the critical importance of moving beyond the surface interpretation of the content of disability policy texts, and the need to undertake a more in-depth and critical consideration of the contents of these documents. Even as a policy professional functioning in senior levels within the intergovernmental realm, and one with years of experience working within a very conservative political environment, it was eye-opening for me to realize the degree to which the skillful use of language can enable the imbedding of neoliberal social policy constructs into policy texts. While it is perhaps not fair to expect all readers to possess such knowledge, enhancing the ability of certain stakeholders such as activists or advocates to broaden their contextual awareness and worldview around policy development would no doubt be of value when attempting to interpret government policy

texts.

The research undertaken in this thesis has facilitated an examination of the dominant discourses contained in several government disability policy documents, and the neoliberal ideological underpinnings driving the discourses and the resulting policy actions. Through this type of research, policy researchers, advocates and individuals with disabilities are provided with powerful tools to expose these dominant discourses, which have often evolved into unspoken and taken for granted 'truths'. This can facilitate the development of counter discourses or strategies to negate or at least minimize the potential negative impacts resulting from policy and program decisions grounded on these discourses. It is my hope that by exposing the neoliberal social policy constructs in disability policy Canadians with disabilities will be armed with a powerful tool for developing effective resistance strategies.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues

In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues

Preamble

The following document entitled *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, sets out a blueprint for promoting the integration of persons with disabilities in Canada. As Ministers of Social Services, we have developed this document together in response to the request by First Ministers in June 1996, and reaffirmed in December 1997, to make disability issues a collective priority in the pursuit of social policy renewal (see Appendix F). The Quebec government has not participated in this initiative.*

In addressing the challenges for persons with disabilities, we recognized the evolving nature of Canadian society and within it the place of persons with disabilities. As the needs and attitudes of Canadians change, public policies and programs need to reflect these changes. Most persons with disabilities do not consider themselves permanently unemployable. They see themselves as independent individuals with the ability to control all facets of their lives. The attitudes of Canadians also are evolving to be more consistent with the views and realities of persons with disabilities. As a result, Canadians with disabilities are no longer viewed as 'exceptions' whose needs must be met through segregated programs.

While the current system of social policies and programs offers much to persons with disabilities, there is clearly a need for policies and programs to embody these evolving attitudes and meet the changing needs of persons with disabilities. The reality today is that persons with disabilities still face barriers and discrimination which prevent them from participating or contributing as equal partners in society. Accordingly, we need to renew our efforts to adapt our policies and programs to reflect the fact that persons with disabilities should be full participants in society. We need to continue our work to remove barriers and systemic discrimination.

We agree that there is much scope to improve the current patchwork of federal, provincial and territorial benefits and services. Work needs to be done at both levels of government to reduce the fragmentation of our supports and services. More effective and coordinated programs would better serve Canadians with disabilities and the country as a whole.

These changing attitudes and realities led the Prime Minister and Premiers at the June 1996 First Ministers' Meeting to identify persons with disabilities as a collective priority and to task governments to "make a proposal for the integration of income support." In examining the options that were developed for our consideration, we concluded that focussing on income support alone would result in missed opportunities to address the various and diverse needs of Canadians with disabilities. Other related issues, including

citizenship, disability supports and employment had to be considered in concert with the issue of income support.

In reaching this conclusion, our work built on the legacy of studies over the past decade that explored the system of disability supports and services. Many laws, policies and programs represent an important inheritance and should comprise the cornerstones for future work. Nonetheless, some laws, policies and programs can be modified to better reflect changing needs. It is especially important to remove the barriers and disincentives that prevent persons with disabilities from fully participating in society.

From this perspective, we agreed that a long-term vision should be developed to address these areas and their interrelationships. Taking action in any one area affects the others, and accordingly, a coordinated approach is required to ensure effective policies and programs for Canadians with disabilities. A coordinated approach requires Ministers of Social Services to involve other Ministers such as those responsible for the issues of health, labour, employment, education, training, learning, finance, aboriginal affairs, women, justice, housing, transportation, Workers' Compensation, and citizenship. Together, we will work to set new disability priorities and explore potential actions, in particular joint federal/provincial/territorial actions, consistent with the document.

In moving from vision to action, the starting point for governments is to recognize that much can be done to improve the existing system and the interaction of its various components. While much of this new disability agenda can be achieved through improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of programs and the coordination between programs, jurisdictions recognize that new investments may be required. New opportunities for investment or reinvestment would be explored as fiscal resources permit.

Moving from vision to action will require the engagement of the disability community and the support of all Canadians. This agenda also will include the development of accountability frameworks that will permit Canadians to assess the effectiveness of disability policies and programs. It is essential that governments and Canadians work in partnership in order to achieve the vision of full participation of persons with disabilities as we move into the 21st century.

* Quebec shares the concerns raised in the *In Union* report. However, the Government of Quebec did not take part in the development of this document because it wishes to assume control over programs for persons with disabilities for Quebec. Consequently, any references in this document to joint federal/provincial/territorial positions do not include Quebec.

Executive Summary

- In 1991, 4.2 million (16 percent) Canadians reported some level of disability.*
Aboriginal Canadians are particularly affected with over 30 percent reporting a

disability. Many of these individuals face significant barriers that prevent them from participating fully in the life of our country.

- Some persons with disabilities face economic hardship in their daily lives. Many live below the poverty line and are unable to participate as full citizens. Equal access to education, training and support programs will increase their potential for employment and a better economic future.
- Federal, provincial and territorial governments, First Nations, community groups and the private sector deliver the current system of benefits and services supporting Canadians with disabilities. Although it is a complex system, it is not working effectively for many individuals.
- The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms offers protection against discrimination based on physical and mental disability. Through the Charter and Human Rights legislation, the federal, provincial and territorial governments are working to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and to support their participation in all aspects of Canadian life.
- Over the years, Canadians with disabilities have shared their common concerns and have articulated their vision. In June 1996, disability issues were identified as a collective priority by the Prime Minister and Premiers. At their December 1997 meeting, First Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to disability issues and agreed that a vision and framework to guide future collaborative work in this area needed to be concluded.
- During the past year, jurisdictions have been working together to better address the needs of persons with disabilities. The product of their collaborative work is *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*, which is to guide future reform.
- The document articulates a vision that seeks to ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society. It recognizes that the achievement of the vision is a responsibility shared by all Canadians:

Persons with disabilities participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disabilities requires the commitment of all segments of society. The realization of the vision will allow persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation.

- The vision is based on the values of equality, inclusion and independence.
- *In Unison* translates this vision of full citizenship into objectives and policy directions within three interrelated building blocks: disability supports, employment and income.
- The document recognizes the need for governments to focus their initial efforts on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and the coordination between programs. At the same time, *In Unison* recognizes that new investments may be required to achieve this new disability agenda. New opportunities for investment or reinvestment would be explored as fiscal resources permit. Finally, the document recognizes the important role that all parties play in those situations where the occurrence or severity of a disability can be prevented or minimized.

The Vision of Full Citizenship

- Citizenship refers to the full inclusion of persons with disabilities. The intent of *In Unison* is to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the systems and programs open to other Canadians.
- This objective will be met by focussing on policies that promote access to generic programs and services for all Canadians, including persons with disabilities.

Disability Supports

- *In Unison* recognizes the need to move beyond actions focussed primarily on income support. It includes measures that address the costs related to disability and the need to change workplaces and communities to accommodate persons with disabilities.
- Flexible and responsive delivery of disability supports is explored to allow for more independent lifestyles. The objectives are to:
 - o improve access to disability supports;
 - o enhance the portability of these supports;
 - o help offset the cost of disability supports.

Employment

- *In Unison* seeks to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities, encourage (re)entry into the labour market and help promote work and volunteer opportunities. The objectives are to:
 - o reduce reliance on income support programs;
 - o promote access to the training programs available to all Canadians;
 - o increase the availability of work-related supports;
 - o encourage employers to make appropriate job/workplace accommodation;
 - o promote work and volunteer opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Income

- *In Unison* recognizes the need for an income safety net that rewards individual work efforts to the greatest extent possible — but which provides financial assistance if self-support is impossible or insufficient to meet basic needs. The objectives are to:
 - o encourage economic independence by removing disincentives to work;
 - o detach eligibility for disability supports from income programs;
 - o improve access and reduce administrative duplication through greater co-ordination of income programs;
 - o ensure availability of income support for periods during which individuals are not able to support themselves.

Next Steps

- Ministers of Social Services are taking steps in the areas within their mandates. The Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (VRDP) program has been redesigned into a more employment-focussed initiative called the *Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities* (EAPD) program. Most of the new federal-provincial/territorial agreements have been negotiated and implementation is underway. The commitment on a strategy to harmonize income support is another important step toward improving the current system.
- The needs of persons with disabilities and the proposed policy directions are complex and multifaceted and transcend the borders of any single government, department or agency. An integrated and client-centered approach is required to meet these needs.
- As noted by First Ministers at their December 1997 meeting, intersectoral support is necessary to achieve the vision and policy objectives in practical terms for all Canadians. That process will allow jurisdictions to identify priorities and explore where potential actions, in particular joint federal/ provincial/territorial actions, can be undertaken over the next number of years.
- To complement the ongoing intersectoral discussions, the disability community will be engaged in this agenda.
- The agenda also will require the development of accountability frameworks to permit all Canadians to assess the effectiveness of disability-related policies and programs.
- The collective and individual efforts of governments have contributed towards real progress in advancing a new approach to disability issues. The chart below serves as an illustration of important trends and evolving perspectives and approaches to disability issues that will continue to guide future reform.

Introduction

Disability touches everyone. In 1991, 4.2 million (16 percent) Canadians reported some level of disability.* Aboriginal Canadians are particularly affected with over 30 percent of Aboriginal persons reporting a disability — almost double the national average**. All Canadians have some experience with disability through their own experience, contact with relatives, colleagues or friends. Most individuals experience some form of functional incapacity or limitation as a normal part of aging.

Canadians with disabilities represent a diverse group which includes individuals with physical, sensory and mental disabilities. Disabilities vary in terms of severity, longevity, cause and consequences. Some disabilities remain static throughout a person's life while others may have periods of remission or regression.

A variety of definitions of "disability" exist, including the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (the ICIDH), developed by the World Health Organization. The ICIDH (see Appendix A) is internationally recognized and is becoming widely used around the world.

Despite their diverse profile, Canadians with disabilities share many common concerns. They face personal, social and economic disadvantages and barriers that prevent access to the same opportunities as other Canadians. Persons with disabilities are more likely, for example, to have lower education levels and to be socially isolated and discriminated against in the workplace. They often face economic hardship in their daily lives and many live below the poverty line. Women and Aboriginal persons with disabilities, in particular, experience greater disadvantages, reporting higher incidences of unemployment and poverty (see Appendices B and C for detailed profiles).

Over the years, persons with disabilities have articulated their vision in an effort to have their concerns addressed. Recently, they told the Federal Task Force on Disability Issues that they want a nation which demonstrates leadership with respect to disability concerns. Persons with disabilities desire a country which takes an holistic approach to disability issues that is sensitive to individual needs and ensures that Canadians with disabilities have input into the policies, programs and decisions that affect them. They seek a country which makes it possible to achieve a decent standard of living and support an approach to disability issues that is common to all jurisdictions but sensitive to regional differences and needs. Persons with disabilities want a nation that uses legal and other measures to promote social and economic equity and equality of outcomes.

In recognition of this vision, federal, provincial and territorial governments have come together to better address the concerns of persons with disabilities. At the First Ministers' Meeting in June 1996, the Prime Minister and Premiers agreed that improving the current system of benefits and services supporting persons with disabilities was a collective priority. At their recent meeting in December 1997, First Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to persons with disabilities, and agreed that a vision and framework to guide future collaborative work in this area needed to be concluded. Governments from across Canada, with the exception of Quebec, have developed *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues* that sets out a vision and long-term policy directions which promote greater equality for and inclusion of persons with disabilities. POD's same

A Canadian Approach

In Unison is a vision made up of values, principles and building blocks that affirms the importance of ensuring the full participation of persons with disabilities in society.

Persons with disabilities participate as full citizens in all aspects of Canadian society. The full participation of persons with disabilities requires the commitment of all segments of society. The realization of the vision will allow persons with disabilities to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being through access to required supports and the elimination of barriers that prevent their full participation.

Although the vision does not promote special treatment of persons with disabilities, it does recognize the need for specialized services for persons with disabilities within the generic framework for the delivery of services and supports. The intent is that persons with disabilities will have the same opportunities as other Canadians. The vision also reflects the changing attitudes of society. Most persons with disabilities no longer are seen or see themselves as dependent individuals with no ability to control their lives. They no longer are considered permanently unemployable or unable to contribute to society. Indeed, persons with disabilities contribute to Canadian society through art, culture, sports, political, voluntary and community activities, and other activities which are not solely economic. These realities must be reflected in legislation, public policy and programs.

To realize the vision, governments have identified an overarching theme of citizenship and three key building blocks of disability supports, employment and income. These building blocks are guided by a set of values and principles.

In meeting the needs of persons with disabilities, governments recognize above all that an integrated approach is required. An integrated approach will help ensure that actions taken in one building block are consistent and complementary with actions taken in another building block. If actions are uncoordinated, they can offset or reduce the effectiveness of actions taken in another area.

Governments can facilitate, for example, the transition to work for persons with disabilities by adopting complementary income and employment strategies. Currently, persons with disabilities face significant barriers to work because access to disability supports is tied rigidly to eligibility for specific programs such as income support, training and employment. Some income programs also adopt an 'all or nothing' approach to providing financial assistance. Individuals are classified as either incapable (eligible for income support) or fully capable (of working) and as such, income programs do not provide an incentive to work or volunteer. Individuals who find work not only lose their income support but also may lose their disability supports. Many individuals are unable to make the transition to work unless they can purchase disability supports with their employment income. The rigid link between income programs and disability supports as well as the lack of adequate incentives in many income programs to pursue work or volunteer opportunities counteract employment strategies targeted for persons with disabilities.

From this perspective, *In Unison* promotes a common approach by governments to persons with disabilities. The objective is to ensure a seamless and coordinated system of benefits and services for Canadians with disabilities. At the same time, governments

recognize that each jurisdiction requires a degree of flexibility to address the specific circumstances and priorities of its citizens. Moreover, *In Unison* recognizes the need for governments to focus their initial efforts on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and the coordination between programs. At the same time, the document recognizes that this new disability agenda may require new investment or reinvestment as fiscal resources permit.

In Unison builds on years of consultation and government study. The building blocks — disability supports, employment and income — evolved from the many initiatives undertaken by governments over the years to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. The building blocks have been guided and shaped by this extensive body of work, summarized in [Appendix D](#). *In Unison* is also consistent with recent reform initiatives by the Government of Canada and provincial/territorial governments to harmonize income support programs and to develop and implement the *Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities* initiative (successor to the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons program).

Values

In developing this document, jurisdictions focussed on the set of values rooted in the notions of equality, the social union and federalism.



Equality is a right guaranteed to all Canadian citizens. The values inherent in the concept of equality include self-determination, autonomy, dignity, respect, integration, participation and independent living. These values are consistent with those that shape the social union ([Appendix E](#)): compassion, dignity, sharing, fairness, equity, equal opportunity and independence. The values that underlie Canadian federalism provide for mutual respect among jurisdictions and an acceptance of diversity; flexibility to respond to local priorities and circumstances; and citizen engagement and public accountability.

Principles

In Unison also is guided by three sets of principles which relate to the substance and process of reform. The substance of the proposed changes is informed by the principle of inclusion which seeks to enhance the full participation of persons with disabilities in all domains of Canadian society. The process of reform is shaped by the work of the social union and the principles inherent in the concept of flexible and efficient federalism. Finally, both the substance and process are framed by a set of principles that guide social policy reform.

Inclusion

The full inclusion of persons with disabilities is a central theme in previous reports and initiatives of both governments and nongovernmental organizations. The Federal Task Force on Disability Issues was the most recent major initiative that employed this theme as a key organizing concept.

Participation and inclusion also are embodied in the following principles set out more recently by Federal/Provincial/ Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services. These principles were derived from the federal/provincial/territorial review, *Mainstream 1992 — Pathway to Integration*.

- **Rights and responsibilities:** Persons with disabilities have the same rights and the same responsibilities as other Canadians. They are entitled, as others are, to the equal protection and the equal benefit of the law and require measures for achieving equality.
- **Empowerment:** Persons with disabilities require the means to maximize their independence and enhance their well-being.

Participation: Persons with disabilities require full access to the social, economic and physical infrastructure which supports our society so that they can participate fully and equally in their communities.

Full Citizenship

Objectives:

- To make as inclusive as possible all domains of Canadian society.
- To mobilize all sectors to enhance the full and equal partnership of persons with disabilities.

Policy Direction

- Policies that promote access to generic programs and services for all Canadians,

including persons with disabilities.

Citizenship refers to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of Canadian society. It is the overarching theme that shapes the vision and the building blocks. Full inclusion means that the needs of persons with disabilities are met through generic programs, while additional essential supports are provided to those individuals whose needs cannot be met through generic programs and services. Future reforms will need to ensure that the policies and programs in each building block are consistent with this concept.

The achievement of full citizenship is not limited to any one building block. The needs of persons with disabilities are complex and multifaceted, and transcend all three areas. As a result, measures to reduce barriers and to ensure access to programs and services enjoyed by other Canadians need to be adopted in each of the building blocks. At the same time, measures need to be viewed from gender and Aboriginal perspectives in recognition that women and Aboriginal persons with disabilities face greater barriers to full participation.

Citizenship also refers to rights and responsibilities. It implies participation in and contribution to the systems and the 'core' services in which all Canadians can participate and to which most Canadians have access. These include schools, training programs, postsecondary education institutes, health care, workplaces, recreation facilities, cultural programs, transportation, parks and other forms of public space. *In Unison* seeks to expand the boundaries of the core services to make them as inclusive as possible. The needs of persons with disabilities would be incorporated in the initial design of all programs and activities in every domain of society. For example, student loan programs would acknowledge that some students may require more time to complete their curriculum. Training programs would be open to all potential participants. Employers would accommodate jobs and workplaces to ensure the inclusion of employees with disabilities. Workplaces, recreation centres, and libraries would make provision for participation by all citizens. Within this context, the needs of women and Aboriginal persons with disabilities would require particular attention as they must overcome greater barriers and disadvantages. Persons with disabilities will achieve full citizenship as systemic discrimination and barriers are eliminated. Federal, provincial and territorial governments are determined to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities and to support their participation in all aspects of Canadian life.

While governments acknowledge their role in providing leadership, the achievement of full citizenship requires more than the involvement of governments alone. Persons with disabilities should be able to make their own choices, take risks, and set their own goals and society should facilitate their participation and contribution. Efforts from all sectors of society are required to contribute to the overall goal of full citizenship. Government departments and agencies, private enterprises and voluntary organizations can all take steps to make various forms of accommodation within their respective spheres of activity. Community development, including all sectors, must take place to provide

opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate fully in Canadian society. A healthy infrastructure of disability organizations also can help to interpret and implement the concept of full inclusion.

The first step in this process is to change attitudes and to provide information as to how to make core programs and services more inclusive. For example, information on accommodation could be disseminated widely to schools, training institutes, employers and various programs. Accommodation does not need to be costly. Since accommodation encompasses more than modifications to physical infrastructure, procedural changes to accommodate persons with disabilities could also be undertaken at almost no cost. Accommodation plans incorporated at the design stages of any process is usually a much more cost effective approach than retrofit or redesign. Information on accommodation complements potential measures discussed under the Employment building block.

Voluntary action to ensure inclusion would help breathe life into the protections afforded by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Human Rights legislation.

Section 15(1) of the Charter states

15(1) 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, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability. The intent is to reduce the need to invoke the Charter as an instrument of litigation. Ideally, it should be seen more as a beacon whose spirit guides all government actions. Jurisdictions also might contemplate a legislative review to support efforts to encourage action and the commitment to inclusion.

Building Blocks

The building blocks are defined as follows:

1. **Disability Supports**: These refer to a range of goods, services and supports tailored to the individual requirements for daily living. It will always be necessary to provide for the availability and accessibility of disability supports (e.g., technical aids and devices; special equipment; homemaker, attendant or interpreter services; life skills; physiotherapy and occupational therapy; respite care) which respond to individual needs. These goods, services and supports are essential for active participation at home, at school and in the community and are a key component of maximizing personal and economic independence.
2. **Employment**: Persons with disabilities require access to opportunities for education, training and employment which together comprise the basis for economic independence. The intent of *In Unison* is to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities, encourage (re)entry into the labour market and help promote more work and volunteer opportunities. Enhancing employability means supporting access to education, providing supports and flexibility in training programs, making job

accommodation available and offering job seekers and employers adequate information.

3. Income: Some individuals with disabilities may not be able to support themselves sufficiently or at all. Governments recognize the need for an income safety net which rewards individual work efforts to the greatest extent possible — but which provides financial assistance if self-support is impossible or insufficient to meet basic needs.

Disability Supports

Objectives

- To improve access to disability supports.
- To enhance the portability of these supports.
- To help offset the cost of disability supports.

Policy Directions

- Policies and programs that promote greater access to supports.
- Policies that separate access to supports from eligibility for income and other programs.
 - More consumer control, flexibility and responsiveness in the provision of disability supports.
 - Measures that provide greater assistance for disability costs.

A key issue for persons with disabilities is that access to disability supports is often tied to the eligibility for income support and other programs. Also, in most cases, supports are not portable across sectors. The supports provided at home can not be used in schools or in the workplace. Inversely, the accommodation provided at school or work cannot be brought home.

At the same time, disability supports often are attached to residential care such as group homes, nursing homes or institutions. Because the funds go to the residences, the services are not portable — creating problems for residents who wish to seek independent living arrangements. The provision of disability supports through welfare also makes it difficult to move off the program.

In Unison proposes a commitment to the principle of portability so that persons with disabilities are not locked into certain living arrangements or income programs in order to retain access to certain disability supports. 'Portability' in this context means that disability supports are attached to the individual; they go with that person regardless of the region or setting in which they are required. A commitment to portability would require each jurisdiction to develop an approach for ensuring access to disability supports. It could include a set of actions that articulates how disability supports might be detached from income and other programs, and 'assigned' instead to the individual. Disability supports should be portable across any and all sectors — at home, school, work and community.

One way to help implement a commitment to portability is through a form of financing known as individualized funding. Individualized funding helps offset the direct and additional costs of disability and allows services to be tailored to individual needs — the amount of payment is different for every person and is determined on an individualized basis depending on specific needs. This form of financing also has the potential to improve the responsiveness and flexibility of disability supports. Several jurisdictions already employ this form of funding, both experimentally and systemically, to meet disability needs. But while individualized funding can help respond to many identified problems, it is not a panacea for resolving all problems related to disability supports. In some areas, services may not be available in the marketplace, thus limiting the effectiveness of individualized funding.

Finally, governments recognize that affordability creates significant problems of access. The cost of disability supports can be prohibitive. Relatively limited assistance is available to help offset these costs. Statistics Canada's Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) estimates that some 33 percent of adults face costs related to their disability that are not reimbursed by any public or private plan.

Currently, there is a wide and complex range of measures in place to help offset disability costs to individuals, including tax measures; specific provisions in programs such as social assistance, Workers' Compensation, provincial health and social services; and private initiatives. Various options for providing additional assistance to offset disability costs, including tax-related measures, could be developed for further consideration. In many cases, however, problems of access arise from an inadequate supply of certain disability supports, such as homemaker services. Jurisdictions could decide that additional investments in selected disability supports are required to expand the available supply.

Employment

Objectives

- To reduce reliance on income support programs.
- To promote access to the training programs available to all Canadians.
- To increase the availability of work-related supports.
- To encourage employers to make appropriate job/workplace accommodation.
- To promote work and volunteer opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Policy Directions

- Widespread understanding and application of the concept of accommodation.
- Measures that provide more assistance to offset work-related disability costs.
- Greater support for community economic development and self-employment for persons with disabilities.
- Enhanced employability through better access to education, training and

transition mechanisms.

At all educational levels, students with disabilities often report that they find themselves at a disadvantage. Many have difficulty gaining access to the supports they require to enter or remain at school. There are also concerns with current training. Persons with disabilities typically are relegated to separate programs rather than integrated within existing training initiatives. Even within specialized programs, there are problems of accessibility — often interpreted narrowly to address only physical access.

Barriers to education and training translate into employment problems later in life. Persons with disabilities have lower than average workforce participation — partly because of lower than average educational attainment and lack of disability supports. More than one million adults with disabilities are unemployed or outside the labour force. Women and Aboriginal persons with disabilities generally face more barriers to employment, and as a result, are more likely to be unemployed. While most persons with disabilities would like to work, they face a range of barriers in acquiring the skills and experience which would help them prepare for jobs (see Appendices B and C for further details). Education, training and transition programs need to become more flexible and accessible. This is key to ensuring better educational attainment for persons with disabilities and securing a better economic future through employment.

'Accommodation' refers to the range of modifications to a given job and/or workplace to promote the employment of persons with disabilities. It addresses the physical, procedural and attitudinal barriers that persons with disabilities often encounter which prevent them from finding and retaining employment. Although the *Canadian Human Rights Act* does not include an express duty to accommodate,* Canadian courts, including the Supreme Court, have recognized that this duty does exist in Canadian law and is therefore legally enforceable. Human rights codes provide similar protection in jurisdictions throughout the country. Yet there is a lack of information about the various dimensions of accommodation and relatively little assistance to help offset associated costs.

*In October 1997, the Government of Canada introduced an amendment to the *Human Rights Act* to include the duty to accommodate. This is consistent with recent Supreme Court decisions that there is an enforceable legal responsibility to accommodate

Until recently, one of the principal means of addressing the employment needs of persons with disabilities had been the Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons (VRDP) program which provided for federal-provincial-territorial cost sharing of rehabilitation programs delivered and administered by the provinces and territories. While the VRDP program has served Canadians with disabilities well, governments recognized that fundamental changes were needed to develop a greater employability focus.

In early 1997, the federal and provincial/territorial governments began working together to explore ways to improve the VRDP program. The Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) initiative has a strong employability focus, as reflected in the new name, a results-based accountability and greater emphasis on public reporting. The initiative responds to the need for appropriate programs and services to help people with disabilities overcome the barriers they face in the labour force.

EAPD will support a broad range of programs and services, ranging from employment counselling and assessment to wage subsidies and assistive aids and devices. Provinces have the flexibility to tailor programs to reflect local priorities and circumstances. A periodic review of the employability-focused programs funded under EAPD agreements will help ensure that the programs are effective. Under EAPD, the federal and provincial governments have also committed to a planning process, which will ensure a more coordinated approach to employment-related issues for people with disabilities. The views of stakeholders will be considered in the planning process.

Greater awareness of accommodation could be raised through national roundtables that would explore the various dimensions of job/workplace accommodation in order to promote the hiring of persons with disabilities and help injured workers remain at work. These roundtables could include representatives from business, labour, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and current training programs. This information would be widely disseminated, as discussed in the section on Full Citizenship.

At the same time, strategies directed towards employers could be undertaken. For example, additional support could be provided to employers in order to encourage workplace accommodation. Currently, Workers' Compensation, certain training programs and the tax system provide some assistance. These measures could be expanded to help employers hire and retain persons with disabilities. A subsidy in respect of the salary paid to employees with disabilities also could be considered. Income benefits for persons with disabilities who return to work could continue to be paid for a limited period as an employment subsidy.

Another important issue is the transition from school to work. Programs which assist and support individuals as they move from educational settings to employment could be explored. Transition programs would ensure that individuals have an opportunity to utilize their training and maximize their potential. Without these programs, the resources that have been committed to education and training may be underutilized.

Opportunities for enhancing the integration and employment of persons with disabilities also could be explored through support for community economic development (CED) and self-employment. CED is an approach to local economic development that combines economic and social goals. It seeks to create employment opportunities through the development of locally-run and controlled businesses while at the same time responding to the social needs of individuals involved in CED efforts

(e.g., ensuring access and various forms of job/workplace accommodation). Currently, there is a wide range of CED initiatives under way throughout the country.

Income

Objectives

- To encourage economic independence by removing barriers to working.
- To detach eligibility for disability supports from income programs.
- To improve access and reduce administrative duplication through greater coordination of income programs.
- To ensure the availability of income support for periods during which individuals are not able to support themselves.

Policy Directions

- Income programs that reduce financial disincentives to work.
- Income programs that separate access to disability supports from eligibility for financial assistance.
- Improved coordination of assessment procedures and rehabilitation between income programs.
- Income programs that continue to ensure financial assistance when labour market participation is interrupted or not possible.

Canadians whose work is interrupted temporarily or permanently as a result of disability or who have no workforce attachment must rely on various income programs. Multiple assessment and administrative procedures create frustrations and high costs.

Eligibility generally is determined by where and how claimants became disabled or by the nature or severity of their disability. For many Aboriginal Canadians, eligibility to disability supports can depend on residency or status. Those who do not qualify under existing criteria often rely on welfare for financial support.

In determining eligibility, most welfare systems classify persons with disabilities as long-term cases or as 'permanently unemployable.' But this classification ties many persons with disabilities to the welfare system because they typically receive higher benefits, have access to various disability supports and are not required to show continuing proof of job search. Similarly, the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) requires that a person be out of the labour market entirely and incapable of performing any work that would provide sufficient income for basic support.

These expectations regarding employability — or unemployability — are dated. Many persons with disabilities can work, especially if their needs are accommodated through technical aids or equipment, specialized training, modified job or adapted workplace. Indeed, some recent welfare and CPP initiatives actively support workforce participation.

In order to improve service, reduce unnecessary duplication and remove financial disincentives to work, the federal and provincial/territorial governments already have agreed to a strategy for harmonization actions for income support, composed of three key goals to guide future initiatives: removing disincentives to work, rehabilitation and labour market (re)entry measures that encourage independence and social integration, and streamlined assessment and reassessment processes. Jurisdictions also have made a commitment to examine their respective income programs (e.g., CPP and social assistance/Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) and will select the areas around which they plan to work, both individually and together. A progress report of harmonization initiatives will be produced.

These harmonization activities, many of which are already under way, will help pave the way towards long-term reform. Streamlining multiple assessments and vocational supports, for example, moves well along the path to a more integrated system of income security, a key dimension of comprehensive reform. Streamlined assessment and reassessment can be made possible through the sharing of information. Such sharing potentially could lead to an application process which employs common assessment criteria for determining eligibility. Privacy protocols would have to be developed, however, to protect personal and confidential information.

Moreover, several measures could help remove disincentives to work. Many governments have already implemented some of the following measures. Entitlement to disability supports (e.g., medications) could be retained after entry or return to the labour market. Cut-off levels for qualifying and for maximum benefits could take into account the cost of disability. Rapid reinstatement could be introduced if work efforts do not succeed. Earnings exemption rules within welfare could be revised to encourage workforce participation. Program criteria which automatically disentitle individuals to benefits, such as volunteering or taking credit courses, could be removed. Most recently, jurisdictions agreed to introduce rapid reinstatement of income support for persons with disabilities should employment efforts fail. Jurisdictions also agreed to explore taking the health costs into account when determining cut-off points for income assistance. These efforts reflect the broad recognition of the need to support persons with disabilities in the labour force as well as the need to provide adequate supports for the costs of disability.

The consolidation of income support/ replacement involves many complex issues that require further study. The broader range of potential strategies under consideration, while not precluding work on the integration of income support, provides the opportunity to make more immediate progress on a number of important fronts, including the need to offset disability-related costs.

One possible direction for major reform could be to review the role of disability insurance. Reform could involve, for example, the consolidation of government-mandated programs that require employer contributions and protect employee income in the event of temporary or permanent work interruptions as a result of disability. Welfare would continue to provide last-resort assistance. There are

potential advantages to such an approach — e.g., removing the need to establish cause of disability in order to qualify and reducing 'offloading' between programs. Among the disadvantages of such a scheme are the exclusion of persons with little or no attachment to the labour market and the difficulty of determining an appropriate earnings replacement level.

* In October 1997, the Government of Canada introduced an amendment to the *Human Rights Act* to include the duty to accommodate. This is consistent with recent Supreme Court decisions that there is an enforceable legal responsibility to accommodate.

Accountability Framework

Governments recognize the growing public demand for greater democratic engagement in the form of transparency and public participation — key dimensions of the social union. They consult with consumers and disability stakeholders on an ongoing basis on a range of issues. Governments are moving away from an approach where they are accountable largely to each other to an approach in which they are more accountable to the public. This shift means that jurisdictions will need to measure outcomes that are important to the public. In adopting this approach, it will be equally important for jurisdictions to focus on the processes of developing an accountability framework.

As the agenda for action evolves, governments are committed to evolving the approach to accountability. Some specific accountability actions are already in place; the EAPD agreements have a built-in accountability framework. In focusing on *In Unison*, the federal and provincial/ territorial governments could, for example, produce an annual report on the status of persons with disabilities which documents key performance measures and progress around efforts to remove barriers and promote inclusion. Jurisdictions could explore using this annual report as a basis for engaging the public at the local level on the progress of the disability agenda.

Next Steps

In Unison advances a new approach to disability issues which reconfigures programs and services to reflect the changing needs of persons with disabilities and new societal attitudes. This evolution of societal views and approaches in the disability area are already setting directions for future reform. The chart on the next page serves as an illustration of the fundamental change that has been under way in terms of the approach adopted by governments to disability issues. It serves to identify important trends that will continue to guide longer-term reform. These evolving perspectives and approaches to disability issues will allow governments to achieve the vision of full participation of persons with disabilities.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments already have taken significant first steps in advancing this new approach. The replacement program for VRDP and the collective commitment to a strategy on the harmonization of income programs go a long way toward promoting the employment of persons with disabilities and ensuring that disability benefits and services are better integrated and client-centered.

To ensure a holistic and multisectoral approach to reform, Social Services Ministers are currently involving and will need to continue to involve other Ministers such as those responsible for the issues of health, labour, employment, education, training, learning, finance, aboriginal affairs, women, justice, housing, transportation, Workers' Compensation, and citizenship. Broad government support is integral for the achievement of the vision and policy objectives. As part of the intersectoral process, jurisdictions will identify new disability priorities and explore where potential actions, in particular joint federal/ provincial/territorial actions, can be undertaken over the next number of years. Support at the multisectoral level provides a unique opportunity to further a collective disability agenda that addresses the needs of Canadians with disabilities. In setting out this new disability agenda, governments agree that their initial efforts should focus on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of programs and the coordination between programs. At the same time, jurisdictions also recognize that this new disability agenda may require new investments. Governments agree that opportunities for new investment or reinvestment would be explored as fiscal resources permit.

In addition, jurisdictions agree that it is important to continue the dialogue with the disability community. To complement the ongoing intersectoral discussions, governments will engage the disability community in this agenda. Each jurisdiction already has its own processes for information sharing and dialogue; however, a collective approach is required in which federal, provincial and territorial governments work together to engage Canadians and in which all sectors work in partnership to achieve a common approach to reform.

By building on years of consultation and government study, *In Unison* offers a viable approach to reform. It provides a significant opportunity for governments to advance collectively a new approach to disability issues with all segments of society.



Appendix A

International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps*: World Health Organization

In 1980, the World Health Organization issued the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities, and Handicaps (ICIDH) in accordance with Resolution (WHA29.35) of the World Health Assembly. This has appeared in 15 languages and further versions are in preparation. ICIDH terminology refers to three concepts: impairments, disabilities, and handicaps defined as follows:

Impairment: "any loss or abnormality of a psychological, or anatomical structure or function". Impairments are disturbances at the level of the organ.

Disability: "any restriction or inability (resulting from an impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being". This describes a functional limitation or activity restriction caused by an impairment. Disabilities are descriptions of disturbances in function at the level of the person.

Handicap: "any disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal for that individual". The classification of handicap is a classification of circumstances that place individuals "at a disadvantage relative to their peers when viewed from the norms of society". The classification of handicap deals with the relationship that evolves between society, culture and people who have impairments or disabilities, as reflected in people's life roles

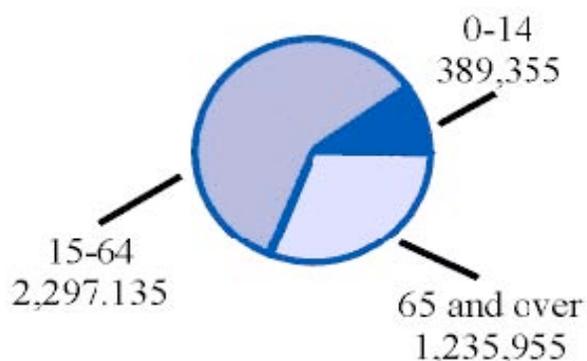
*The ICIDH is currently under review. Many countries, including Canada and the United States, are contributing to the development of the second official version of the ICIDH

Profile of Canadians with Disabilities*

Demographics

- In 1991, 4.2 million Canadians, 16% of the population, reported some level of disability. Of the 4.2 million Canadians with disabilities, 3.9 million live in households and 300,000 live in institutions.

**DISTRIBUTION OF ALL PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES RESIDING IN HOUSEHOLDS
BY AGE GROUPS**

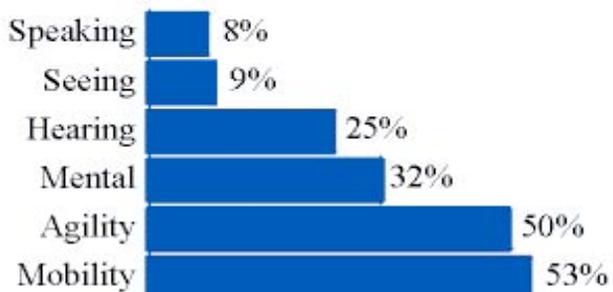


- Disability rates increase regularly with age, from 7% of children under the age of 14, to 50% of those over age 65. As the Canadian population ages, the prevalence of disabilities among the population rise.

Employment

- Persons with disabilities have a lower rate of employment as well as a lower participation rate in the labour force than those without disabilities. Limited employment opportunities for persons with disabilities may discourage many from actively searching for work.

DISTRIBUTION OF ALL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES BY DISABILITY TYPE



- The majority of persons with disabilities have mild disabilities. This group has a very high participation rate in the labour force. Persons with severe disabilities are least likely to be in the labour force. Yet, despite severe disabilities, 26 percent of this group do participate.

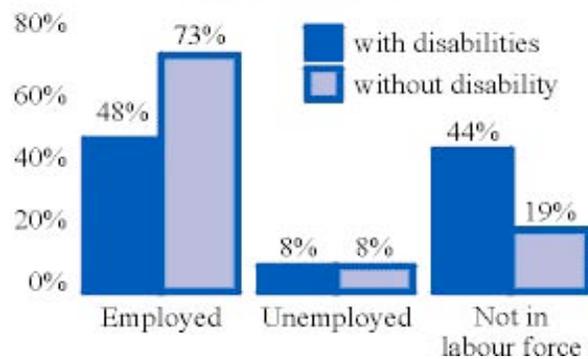
- The participation rate of men and women with disabilities differs considerably. Women with disabilities are less likely to be employed than men with disabilities. The disproportionate share of domestic responsibilities assumed by women with disabilities has presented significant barriers to their labour force participation and has contributed to increased poverty for many of these women.

- A number of factors discourage persons with disabilities from seeking work. The reasons for not joining the labour force most often cited by persons with disabilities are: losing their current income (21%); problems with training (16%); no jobs available (15%); fear they would lose additional supports (13%); family responsibilities (10%); discrimination (7%); and lack of accessible transportation (7%).

- The accessibility of the workplace largely determines whether or not people

with disabilities can work. The three accommodations most often identified by people with disabilities not in the labour force as required for them to work are: modified/reduced hours (33%); job redesign (27%); and accessible transportation (14%).

**LABOUR FORCE STATUS OF ADULTS
WITH DISABILITIES (15-64)
COMPARED TO ADULTS WITHOUT
DISABILITY**



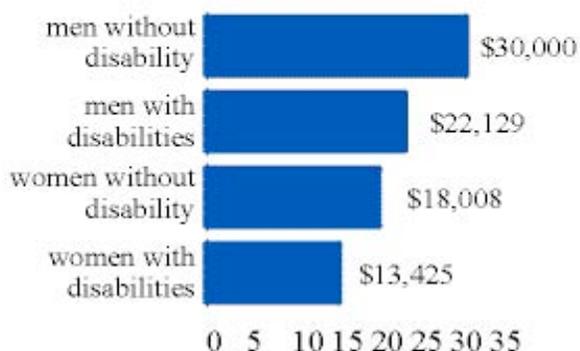
Income

- Persons with disabilities are more likely than others to have low employment income, particularly women with disabilities, who are concentrated at the bottom end of the scale.

PARTICIPATION RATE OF ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE LABOUR FORCE BY SEVERITY OF DISABILITY



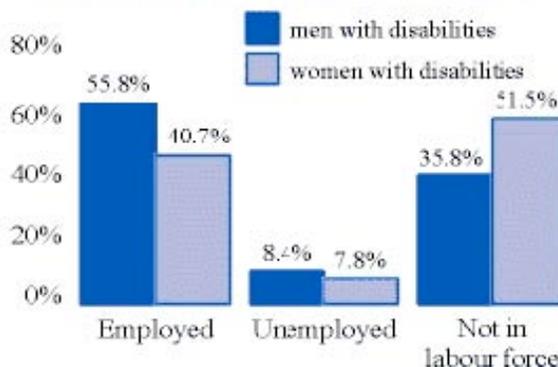
AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT INCOME OF MEN AND WOMEN, WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES



Other Social Indicators

- The majority (94%) of persons with disabilities reside in households, not institutions.
- 91% of children with disabilities attend school; 62% attend regular classes.
- Education level of adults with disabilities (15-64) compared to adults without disability:

LABOUR FORCE STATUS OF MEN AND WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES



with disabilities without disability

high school 65% 50% or less

university 6% 14% degree

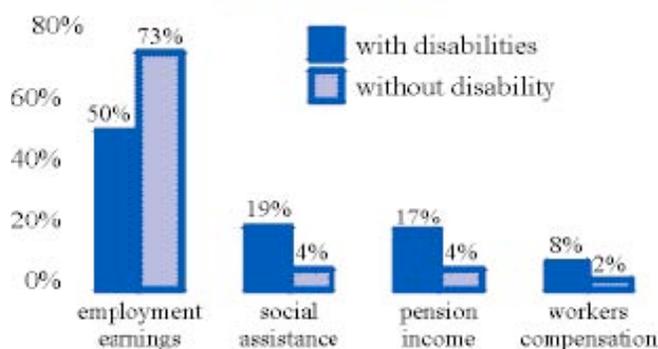
- Persons with disabilities who have participated in work-related training, by labour force status:

employed 54% unemployed 43% not in labour force 26%

- About one third of persons with disabilities aged 15 to 64 receive disability-related income. Half of them have employment earnings.

*Source: Health and Activity Limitations Survey (HALS), Statistics Canada, 1991.

SELECTED INCOME SOURCES OF PERSONS OF WORKING AGE (15-64), WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES



Appendix C

Profile of Aboriginal Canadians with Disabilities

Facts

- 30 percent of Aboriginal adults report a disability – almost twice the national rate.
- Among Aboriginal

people, the 15-34 age group has a disability rate three times the national average.

Problems

- As the Federal Task Force on Disability Issues highlighted, Aboriginal persons with disabilities share the same problems as other Canadians with disabilities, but these are worsened by jurisdictional issues:
 - the lack of disability-related services available on-reserve often forces Aboriginal people to abandon their communities in search of these supports;
 - however, once off-reserve, Aboriginal persons with disabilities face jurisdictional barriers in accessing these supports and services.

Actions Taken

- Federal/Provincial/Territorial Council on Social Policy Renewal:
 - created federal Aboriginal Technical Committee on Social Policy;
 - this Committee set its own priorities
 - children, persons with disabilities and the establishment of objectives and principles for the Social Union from an Aboriginal perspective.
- In a follow-up to Minister Pettigrew's commitment to the Council, the Aboriginal Round Table on Disability Issues was held 9-10 April 1997 which led to 15 recommendations including the creation of an on-going federal Aboriginal Reference Group on Disability Issues.

The federal Aboriginal Reference Group on Disabilities Issues:

- selected a site for a National Clearing House on Aboriginal Disability Issues;
- decided to commission a paper to complement *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*

Appendix D

Previous Initiatives

A number of studies have been conducted in Canada on disability issues. Some highlights of the major federal/ provincial/territorial studies are presented below. Provinces and territories also have undertaken major studies and initiatives over the last 20 years which have made a positive and valuable contribution to our understanding of disability-related issues and to the implementation of disability programs.

Obstacles Report

The International Year of Disabled Persons – 1981 – is often cited as the landmark date for tracing the history of disability studies in Canada. In respect of the International Year, the Government of Canada appointed an all-party Special Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped to undertake a comprehensive review of federal legislation pertaining to persons with disabilities.

The Committee produced the *Obstacles Report* which put forward 130 recommendations on all aspects of public policy including human rights, income security, assistive devices, transportation and communications. The major accomplishment of the Committee was to ensure the inclusion of persons with physical and mental disabilities in the equality rights section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The work of the Committee also sparked attitudinal change which set a new climate and framework for ensuring that persons with disabilities are treated as full citizens rather than passive recipients of services.

International Decade of Disabled Persons

Canada continued its work in this area in respect of the United Nations Declaration of the International Decade of Disabled Persons (1982-1993). In 1982, a major federal-provincial effort was initiated to propose options for disability income reform. In response to recommendations in the *Obstacles Report*, Social Services Ministers established a Federal-Provincial Working Group. It conducted an exhaustive study which developed several costed options for the reform of current earnings replacement and income support programs. These proposals were published in a Joint Federal-Provincial Study issued in 1985.

Another major initiative was the appointment of a Royal Commission on Equality in Employment. The 1984 *Report of the Royal Commission on Equality in Employment* explored the duty to accommodate persons with disabilities and the elimination of overt and systemic barriers to equality. The report pointed out that equality does not mean treating everyone the same way. In fact, in order to achieve equality, it actually may be necessary to treat people quite differently. In 1985, the Parliamentary Committee on Equality Rights issued *Equality for All*, which established an equality framework for meeting the needs of persons with disabilities. That same year saw the establishment of the Status of Disabled Persons Secretariat whose mandate was to raise awareness and support the full participation of persons with disabilities.

Mainstream Review

In 1992, the Conference of Federal/ Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Social Services announced a Mainstream Review to develop a collective strategic framework for the full integration of Canadians with disabilities. Ministers also directed that the Review explore whether governments and individuals with disabilities could agree upon a vision and statement of principles. The report of the Mainstream Review proposed a conceptual framework to support the shift from segregation to mainstreaming, or from 'warehouse' to 'open house'.

The open house concept emphasized the importance of persons with disabilities enjoying the same rights and benefits as other Canadians and participating fully in all aspects of life including school, work and recreation. This participation is made possible by the removal of social, economic and physical barriers and the provision of supports which accommodate and respect differences. The report also explored the need to make generic programs, such as child care, training and education, more open and inclusive.

Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons

WAREHOUSE	GREENHOUSE	OPEN HOUSE
Caring for	Enabling	Accommodating
Protection	Support	Autonomy/Empowerment
Labelled Permanently Incapacitated	Adaptation of Individual	Adaptation of Social and Physical Environment
Deemed Incompetent	Recognition of Capacity	Rights/Responsibilities

Over the past two decades, the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons has actively promoted the equality rights of persons with disabilities. In its 1990 report, *A Consensus for Action: The Economic Integration of Disabled Persons*, the Committee recommended that all federal departments, Crown corporations and agencies be required to review and reform legislation and regulations in order to promote the integration of persons with disabilities. The report called for an effective mechanism to ensure ongoing and consistent monitoring of all policy, legislation and regulations pertaining to persons with disabilities. In its 1992 report, *Paying Too Dearly*, the Committee highlighted the costs of the continued marginalization of persons with disabilities.

In the following year, the Committee produced *As True As Taxes: Disability and the Income Tax System*. The report explored various improvements to the tax system. That same year, the Committee produced the report *Completing the Circle*, which highlighted the needs of Aboriginal Canadians with disabilities. In 1995, *The Grand Design: Achieving the Open House Vision* further developed the open house vision put forward in the Mainstream Review.

Task Force on Disability Issues

The most recent national initiative, the Federal Task Force on Disability Issues (also known as 'the Scott Task Force') was established in June 1996 by the Ministers of Human Resources Development, Finance, Revenue and Justice. Its mandate was to define and make recommendations on the role of the Government of Canada as it relates to persons with disabilities. The Task Force organized public consultations throughout the country and commissioned research papers focussed upon five key issues: national civil infrastructure/ citizenship, legislative review, labour market integration, income support and the tax system. In October 1996, the Task Force issued its report entitled *Equal Citizenship for Canadians with Disabilities: The Will to Act*.

Appendix E

The Social Union

In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues is one example of the work of the social union, which is based on a commitment by jurisdictions to cooperative policy-making in the social policy area and which builds on the principles inherent in the concept of flexible and efficient federalism.

In Unison is consistent with the partnership approach advanced by the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Council on Social Policy Renewal (Council) whose ground rules include: cooperation, transparency, partnership, discretion and a 'whole of government' perspective. In their February 17, 1997 letter to First Ministers, the federal and provincial co-chairs of the Council, Pierre Pettigrew and Stockwell Day (Alberta),

emphasized that goodwill, trust and mutual respect should guide governments' search for better collaboration in the design and delivery of social programs. The Council also has made a commitment to focus on Canadians' needs in developing policies, directions and programs that respond to these needs.

The key ingredients of this new approach include: having an agreed and well-articulated set of principles and objectives; identifying a common agenda in recognition of roles and responsibilities and the need to manage interdependence; being willing to conduct business in a cooperative and open manner; and recognizing the need for public accountability. Accordingly, this document sets out an approach for how governments could cast such a new relationship in the area of persons with disabilities.

In Unison responds specifically to the Council's agreement to pursue a seamless and coordinated system of benefits and services for persons with disabilities. *In Unison* seeks to develop a more coherent and integrated approach by taking into consideration current roles and responsibilities and by identifying priority areas for governments to work together for the benefit of Canadians with disabilities.

Appendix F

Social Policy Renewal

In 1996, the provinces and territories put forward a number of principles in the *Report to Premiers* by the Provincial/Territorial Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform and Renewal (see below).

Discussions are continuing among federal and provincial/territorial governments on a mutually agreed set of principles in the context of the broader negotiation on a social union framework agreement initiated at the request of First Ministers in December 1997.

First Ministers also agreed that these negotiations would include collaborative approaches to the use of the federal spending power, appropriate dispute settlement mechanisms, clarifying ground rules for intergovernmental cooperation and identifying processes for clarifying roles and responsibilities within social policy sectors.

Principles put forward in the 1996 *Report to Premiers* by the Provincial/Territorial Ministerial Council on Social Policy Reform and Renewal:

Social Programs Must Be Accessible and Serve the Basic Needs of All Canadians

- 1 Social policy must assure reasonable access to health, education and training, income support and social services that meet Canadians' basic needs.
- 2 Social policy must support and protect Canadians most in need.
- 3 Social policy must promote social and economic conditions which enhance self-sufficiency and well-being, to assist all Canadians to actively participate in economic

and social life.

4 Social policy must promote active development of individuals' skills and capabilities as the foundation for social and economic development.

5 Social policy must promote the well-being of children and families, as children are our future. It must ensure the protection and development of children and youth in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment.

Social Programs Must Reflect Our Individual and Collective Responsibility

- 1 Social policy must reflect our individual and collective responsibility for health, education and social security, and reinforce the commitment of Canadians to the dignity and independence of the individual.
- 2 Partnerships among governments, communities, social organizations, business, labour, families and individuals are essential to the continued strength of our social system.
- 3 There is a continuing and important role, to be defined, for both orders of government in the establishment, maintenance and interpretation of national principles for social programs.

Social Programs Must be Affordable, Effective and Accountable

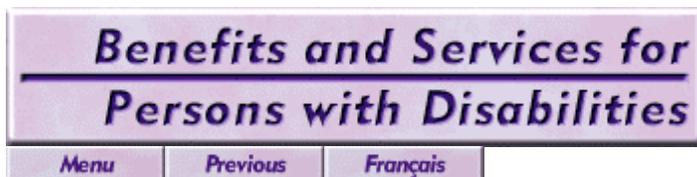
- 1 The ability to fund social programs must be protected. Social programs must be affordable, sustainable, and designed to achieve intended and measurable results.
- 2 The long-term benefits of prevention and early intervention must be reflected in the design of social programs.
- 3 Federal constitutional, fiduciary, treaty and other historic responsibilities for assurance of Aboriginal health, income support, social services, housing, training and educational opportunities must be fulfilled. The federal government must recognize its financial responsibilities for Aboriginal Canadians, both on and off reserve.
- 4 Governments must coordinate and integrate social programming and funding in order to ensure efficient and effective program delivery, and to reduce waste and duplication.
- 5 Social policy must be flexible and responsive to changing social and economic conditions, regional/local priorities and individual circumstances.
- 6 Governments must ensure that all Canadians have access to reasonably comparable basic social programming throughout Canada, and ensure that Canadians are treated with fairness and equity.

Social Programs Must be Flexible, Responsive and Reasonably Comparable Across Canada Social policy must recognize and take into account the differential impact social programming can have on men and women.

Acknowledgement

The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services would like to thank Sherri Torjman, Vice-President of the Caledon Institute for Social Policy, for her contribution in developing *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues*. Her professionalism and expert advice were greatly valued. It was a pleasure and a privilege to work with her.

**Appendix B: Multilateral Framework on Employability Assistance for
People with Disabilities (EAPD)**



Ministers Responsible for Social Services

Multilateral Framework on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities

September 23, 1997

- **Background Information**
- Background
- Purpose of Multilateral Framework
- Objective of Initiative
- Principles
- Implementation Period
- Programs and Services
- Funding Arrangements
- Accountability
- Bilateral Agreements
- Further Information

Background

Over one million adults with disabilities in Canada are currently unemployed or remain out of the labour force. People with disabilities recognize the value of being employed, but many face barriers that impede their participation in the labour market. Systemic barriers are often the major cause of unemployment among people with disabilities. They are looking to governments for assistance and support in breaking down these barriers to employment.

In February 1997, the Government of Canada and the Governments of all Provinces and Territories, through the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Subgroup on Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP), embarked on a multilateral process to look at programming currently in place to assist people with disabilities integrate in the labour market and more specifically programming currently funded through the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act.

Governments recognize the valuable contribution VRDP has made to the lives of many people with disabilities since being operationalized in 1962 and wish to build on those program elements which have contributed most to labour market and economic participation.

As a result of the shift in focus, both orders of government support the replacement of the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP) program with a new initiative under which the Government of Canada would share with the provinces and territories costs of initiatives with a focus on employment and labour market interventions for people with disabilities.

The new initiative will result in a shift in Government of Canada support from some established programs and services to funding for programs and services which are consistent with an employability focus and could require a multi year implementation period determined through

bilateral discussions and agreements.

The new initiative will be called the Canada-Provincial/Territorial Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities Initiative. 

Purpose of Multilateral Framework

This framework will guide and inform the negotiations of bilateral agreements between Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and provincial and territorial governments on the new initiative. 

Objective of Initiative

In keeping with the desire of the Parties to respond to the needs of people with disabilities to overcome barriers to employment, the goal of the new initiative is to provide funding to provinces and territories for a range of measures which they will provide to enhance the economic participation of working age adults with disabilities in the labour market by helping them to prepare for, attain and retain employment.

New bilateral agreements should provide support for programs/services across the full spectrum of needs related to economic participation, from a person taking the first steps to working, through to skills development, on to supporting a person at work and, finally, to ensuring a person is able to remain working. 

Principles

The Parties agree that the following principles will guide the bilateral agreements on the new initiative:

Direct support of employability

- Programs and services must provide the skills, experience and related supports necessary to prepare people with disabilities for economic participation and employment in the labour market or assist them in retaining employment.
- Under this initiative, funding will also be provided for programs/services for individuals who have a history of employment and are experiencing vocational crisis.
- Programs and services which are oriented to medical treatment are not intended to be funded through the initiative although their importance is recognized.
- In order to maximize the use of available financial resources for the benefit of people with disabilities, costs to be shared under this initiative are those directly linked to meeting their employability needs. No more than 15 per cent of the funding provided under bilateral agreements will support administrative costs.

Provincial/territorial capital expenses are not eligible costs under this initiative.

- Services provided in a sheltered employment or work activity program which do not demonstrate preparation of people with disabilities for economic participation or entry into the labour market will not be supported under this initiative.

Focus on Individual Needs and Participation

- Provinces/territories will endeavour to provide a range of interventions from a menu of measures, from pre-employment support, to short-term assistance, to ongoing active employment supports, and make these available to people with disabilities according to their individual needs and employability requirements.
- Services and interventions will respect the individual's knowledge of his/her own employability and labour market requirements and will allow individuals to represent their own interests.
- Provinces/territories will implement appeal mechanisms to ensure the fair application of provincial/territorial legislation and policies regarding programs/services funded under bilateral agreements.

Flexibility: Within the broad objectives of the initiative, each province and territory will have the flexibility to develop programs/services and deliver them in a manner which best responds to the requirements of people with disabilities and labour market circumstances.

Accountability: The bilateral agreements will be implemented in the context of the accountability framework.

Coordination: Programs/services for people with disabilities will be designed and implemented in a way to make the best use of available resources to empower citizens with disabilities, and to avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication. Parties to this new initiative, through the planning process, will work cooperatively to ensure the maximum coordination of programs/services related to people with disabilities. People with disabilities will be consulted on program design, implementation and evaluation. ▲

Implementation Period

Each province/territory will develop a one to three year implementation plan which will provide stability in programming for people with disabilities while ensuring an orderly introduction of eligible programs and services and an accountability framework.

The Parties may extend the implementation period by mutual agreement for a maximum of two years.

Through the bilateral negotiations, arrangements will be made for the orderly phasing out of Government of Canada funding of programs/services which are inconsistent with the objectives of the new initiative. The intention of these arrangements and the implementation plan is to ensure the new initiative is fully operational by fiscal year 2001-2002. ▲

Programs and Services

Employment interventions funded through the new initiative will be on a continuum, and will recognize the unique labour market challenges faced by people with disabilities. For this reason the distinct needs of each individual with a disability will be considered in determining the set of interventions required to support the person's preparation for and economic participation in the labour market.

Examples of interventions which provinces and territories may consider in deciding on the mix of programs and services to be offered may include but are not limited to: employment counselling and assessment, pre-employment training, skills development, post secondary education

support, school to work transitions, on going active employment support, assistive aids and devices, individualized funding, wage subsidies and earnings supplements, supported employment, vocational crisis interventions and self-employment.

The specific programs and services eligible for funding will be reflected in bilateral agreements and will focus on removal of barriers and the economic integration of people with disabilities. ▲

Funding Arrangements

Funding will be based on equal contributions from the province/territory and the Government of Canada. In each year of the agreements, the Government of Canada will contribute 50% of the eligible costs incurred by provinces/territories for programs/services funded under this initiative up to the amount of the Government of Canada allocation identified in the bilateral agreement.

- Funding from the Government of Canada will be \$168 million annually for the duration of bilateral agreements.
- Increases in funding may be made in current or subsequent agreements at the discretion of governments.
- Funding is subject to the annual appropriation of funds.
- Government of Canada funds which are unexpended at the end of a fiscal year will not be carried over to subsequent years. ▲

Accountability

The initiative will emphasize annual accountability to consumers and the general public, thereby enhancing and promoting program effectiveness, information-sharing and the identification of best practices. Mechanisms for assessing and evaluating the anticipated and actual results of this initiative would involve persons with disabilities, using either formal structures or advisory groups. This will ensure funds are effectively allocated to best achieve the goals of the initiative.

The Parties agree that, in keeping with the employability focus of the initiative and the needs of people with disabilities, results reporting will accommodate a quantitative and qualitative approach and focus on changes in the employment/employability status of program participants in the short, medium and long term. The qualitative approach could focus on:

- consumer satisfaction,
- reduction of individual and systemic barriers and how to achieve a more inclusive labour market,
- demonstration or pilot projects testing new approaches,
- best practices, and
- other appropriate qualitative measures.

The accountability measures take into account:

- the fact that people with disabilities require varying lengths and types of interventions to assist in their economic participation in the labour market,
- the new flexibilities provided to provinces and territories in this initiative,
- the desire of governments to achieve administrative efficiencies, and
- the value of stakeholder participation and the need to provide results to Canadians so they can assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the initiative.

Results Indicators:

The Parties agree on the following criteria as the primary indicators for measuring the short and medium term results of interventions under the initiative:

- number of people employed, or sustained in employment in the case of vocational crises;
- number of people actively participating in or successfully completing their program and if unsuccessful in their completion, why;
- number of people not served, on waiting lists or unable to access interventions;
- savings to income support programs as a result of increased earnings through employment;
- number of people who have received supports and have maintained employment or advanced in their jobs.

Planning and Information-sharing:

A coordinated planning process between the Parties will be established which takes into consideration the views of individuals with disabilities, service providers and other stakeholders. The planning process will allow both Parties to table their plans for mutual review to ensure a coordinated approach to labour market issues for people with disabilities and will be the basis for annual reviews.

- Each province and territory will prepare a multi-year program and expenditure plan for review with HRDC, and an annual report on results achieved. The annual report will be the basis for making any required adjustments to the multi-year plan and will be made public.
- The report could contain information on such elements as:
 - types of programs and services;
 - numbers of participants served and outcomes (planned and actual);
 - expenditures by programs and services (planned and actual).
- HRDC and each province and territory will exchange information for planning purposes to ensure a coordinated approach to labour market issues for people with disabilities.

Evaluation

- The Parties will undertake ongoing evaluation activities because of the importance of measuring the long term and qualitative impacts of programs and services which will not be captured by the quantitative approach taken in results reporting, and, in order to develop a better understanding of best practices, in program design and delivery. Qualitative measurements are critical to ensuring that people with multiple or more severe disabilities are served.
- Evaluation of the new initiative will allow each province/territory to tailor activities to meet its specific needs.
- In each case, the Parties agree to share and make public their evaluation findings.
- A federal/provincial/territorial multilateral planning process will be used to track evaluations and to share information on specific evaluations to be undertaken or completed by a particular jurisdiction. Individuals with disabilities, service providers and other stakeholders will be consulted in conjunction with this planning and evaluation process.

Incremental costs to the provinces/territories associated with fulfilling the accountability requirements under this new initiative will be eligible for funding subject to certain limitations. ▲

Bilateral Agreements

This multilateral framework is intended to provide the foundation for bilateral agreements which will be effective April 1, 1998 and operate for a period of five years until March 31, 2003. Once endorsed by Ministers, this framework will be used to guide negotiations between the Government of Canada and the Governments of each of the Provinces and Territories.

Bilateral Agreements will be in the form of administrative agreements. Governments could continue to reflect the applicability of these arrangements through their incorporation in any new legislation pertaining to disability issues.

The Parties agree to a multilateral review of the agreements, including the sharing of bilateral evaluation findings, after the first three fiscal years to determine if mutually desirable results are being achieved and if adjustments are required. This review will include qualitative and quantitative analysis. ▲

For further information or for additional copies of this document please contact the following:

<p>Newfoundland and Labrador Division of Employment and Career Services Department of Human Resources and Employment Government of Newfoundland and Labrador P.O. Box 8700 St. John's, Newfoundland A1B 4J6 Telephone: (709) 729-3118</p>	<p>Quebec Intergovernmental Relations and Aboriginal Relations Division Department of Health and Social Services Government of Quebec 1005 Sainte-Foy Road Quebec (Quebec) G1S 4N4 Telephone: (418) 643-8580 Facsimile: (418) 643-3177 Internet: http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca</p> <p><small>*The Government of Quebec has not endorsed this Multilateral Framework.</small></p>
<p>Nova Scotia Employment Support Services Department of Community Services Government of Nova Scotia P.O. Box 696 Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T7 Telephone: (902) 424-4329</p>	<p>Saskatchewan Intergovernmental Relations Department of Social Services Government of Saskatchewan 12th floor, 1920 Broad Street Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V6 Telephone: (306) 787-3619 Internet: http://www.gov.sk.ca/govt/socserv</p>
<p>New Brunswick Policy and Planning Department of Family and Community Services Government of New Brunswick P.O. Box 6000 Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 5H1 Telephone: (506) 453-2460 Internet: http://www.gnb.ca/FCS-SFC/index-e.htm</p>	<p>Alberta Intergovernmental Relations Branch Department of Human Resources and Employment Government of Alberta 11th floor, 10030-107th Street 7th Street Plaza Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3E4 Telephone: (780) 422-6772 Facsimile: (780) 422-0274 Internet: http://www.gov.ab.ca</p>

<p>Prince Edward Island Child, Family and Community Services Division Department of Health and Social Services Government of Prince Edward Island P.O. Box 2000 16 Garfield Street Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island C1A 7N8 Telephone: (902) 368-6530 Facsimile: (902) 368-6136 Internet: http://www.gov.pe.ca/hss</p>	<p>British Columbia Corporate Services Division Ministry of Social Development and Economic Security Government of British Columbia P.O. Box 9934, Station Provincial Government 614 Humboldt Street Victoria, British Columbia V8W 9R2 Telephone: (250) 356-7047 Facsimile: (250) 356-1400 Internet: http://www.gov.bc.ca</p>
<p>Ontario Ontario Disability Support Program Branch Ministry of Community and Social Services Government of Ontario 80 Grosvenor Street, 3rd Floor, Room 386 Toronto, Ontario M7A 1E9 Telephone: (416) 326-1880 Facsimile: (416) 326-1735 TTY: (416) 326-1667 Internet: http://www.gov.on.ca/CSS</p>	<p>Manitoba Community Living Division Department of Family Services and Housing Government of Manitoba Room 119, 114 Garry Street Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 4V4 Telephone: (204) 945-4974</p>

**Appendix C: Canada-Alberta Agreement on Employability Assistance
for People with Disabilities**

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA (hereinafter referred to as "Canada") as represented herein by the Minister of Human Resources Development (hereinafter called the "Federal Minister") AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA (hereinafter called "the Province") as represented by the Minister of Family and Social Services AND both hereinafter referred to as "THE PARTIES"

Whereas the *Department of Human Resources Development Act* authorizes the Minister, for facilitating the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of any program or policy within the powers, duties and functions of the Minister, to enter into agreements with provinces:

Whereas Alberta's Minister of Family and Social Services is authorized to enter into this Agreement on behalf of Alberta under subsection 10 of the *Government Organization-Act* of Alberta;

Whereas, in the context of the Multilateral Framework on Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities, which has been used as a guide for this Agreement, Canada and the Province wish to support people with disabilities in their efforts to overcome barriers to employment;

Whereas the goal of this Agreement is to provide contributions to the Province to support measures which will enhance the economic participation in the labour market of working age people with disabilities by helping them to prepare for, attain and retain employment;

Whereas the Government of Canada means Her Majesty the Queen in right of Canada;

Whereas the Government of Alberta means Her Majesty the Queen in right of Alberta.

NOW THEREFORE, it is agreed by and between the Parties hereto as follows:

1.0 PRINCIPLES:

1.1 The implementation of this Agreement will be guided by the following principles:

- (a) direct support of employability through programs, goods and services to prepare people for economic participation, gaining employment in the labour market and to assist them in retaining employment, including assistance through job crises as described in Annex 1;
- (b) focus on individual needs and participation through a range of measures

from pre-employment support to short term assistance, to employment supports directed to individuals' needs; recognizing individuals' knowledge of their own employability and labour market requirements; with provision for appeal mechanisms to ensure fair application of provincial legislation and policies;

- (c) flexibility in the Province's design and delivery of programs and services appropriate to requirements of participants, the views of stakeholders, and labour market circumstances in Alberta
- (d) operation within an accountability framework, which is further detailed in section 3 and in Annex 2;
- (e) co-ordination of programs and services with a view to making the best use of existing resources and to avoiding unnecessary overlap and duplication; and
- (f) recognition of the financial contributions of both Parties under this initiative in all informational materials prepared for the public that relate to the programs, goods or services funded through this initiative.

2.0 ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS, GOODS AND SERVICES :

- 2.1 Eligible programs and services will be consistent with the principles set out in section 1.
- 2.2 The programs, goods and services eligible for cost sharing are identified in the Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan in Annex 1. These relate to programs, goods and services that help individuals prepare for, attain, and maintain employment. They can include but are not limited to the following: employment consultation and planning; employment preparation and training employment counselling and assessment; job coaching; pre-employment training; job crises interventions; technical advice; adaptive technologies; assistive devices; and addictions and mental health programs and services which are employment focused.
- 2.3 No later than April 1st, 2001, programs, goods and services which are not consistent with the principles set out in section 1, including, but not limited to, programs oriented to medical treatment, and services provided in sheltered employment or sheltered work activity programs which do not demonstrate preparation of people with disabilities for entry into the labour market, will not be cost-shared under this Agreement.

3.0 ACCOUNTABILITY AND EVALUATION:

- 3.1 The Parties will implement a results-based framework for accountability to

people with disabilities and the general public in order to enhance and promote program effectiveness, information sharing and the identification of best practices. This framework is outlined in Annex 2.

- 3.2 The Parties agree on the following as the primary indicators to measure the short and medium-term results of interventions cost-shared under this Agreement:
- (a) the number of people actively participating in programs, or receiving goods and services;
 - (b) the number of people successfully completing programs ;
 - (c) the number of people employed or self-employed after accessing programs and services;
 - (d) the number of people sustained in employment in the case of job crises;
 - (e) savings to income support programs resulting from increased earnings through employment, subject to 'the feasibility of collecting and sharing the data, and establishing the systems linkages required; and,
 - (f) the number of people on wait lists, subject to the feasibility of collecting the data .
- 3.3 The Parties will develop and agree upon definitions for these indicators, and agree on methodologies for their calculation.
- 3.4 As the Province implements the programs and services set out in the Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan in Annex 1 to this Agreement, the collection of information and the setting of targets will be based on the following:
- (a) the expenditure plan for 1998-99 as outlined in Annex 1 will have the same costs and programs as previous years. In the last quarter of 1998-99 the Province will table a Multi-Year Program and Expenditure Plan for subsequent years;
 - (b) during the year 1999-00, the Province will collect baseline data, that will include the primary indicators as outlined in section 3.2; and
 - (c) this baseline data will assist in the setting of targets for the primary indicators in the year 2000-01.
- 3.5 In the context of the Accountability Framework in Annex 2, the Parties agree to emphasize accountability to people served and the general

public. Beginning in fiscal year 1999-00 the Parties will:

- (a) incorporate a qualitative and quantitative approach in results reporting;
- (b) recognize the need for flexibility in response to varying individuals' needs and provincial circumstances, for administrative efficiencies and for realizing the value of stakeholder input or participation;
- (c) reflect the results of the accountability measures in the annual reports identified in section 5; and,
- (d) undertake ongoing evaluation activities which will be shared and made public as outlined in Annex 2.

4.0 ELIGIBLE COSTS:

- 4.1 The costs incurred by the Province to which Canada will contribute, pursuant to sections 8 and 9 of this Agreement, are costs of services and supports which are consistent with the Multi-Year Program and Expenditure Plan detailed in Annex 1, but do not include any costs incurred in the provision of services in respect of a disability which is the result of an injury for which benefits are the responsibility of third parties such as Insurance Companies or Workers' Compensation Boards.
- 4.2 No federal contribution under this Agreement shall be made in respect to any costs of the Province that Canada has shared or is required to share in respect to that fiscal year in any manner with Alberta pursuant to any Act of Parliament or under any other agreement or pursuant to any other federal program. (In this Agreement "Fiscal year" means the period commencing on April 1 of any calendar year and terminating on March 31 of the immediately following calendar year.) The Parties recognize and agree that the programs and services identified in section 2.1 of Annex 1 are cost-shared under existing VRDP arrangements at the time of the signing of this Agreement, and that VRDP cost-shared programs and services were not included in the calculation of the Canada Health and Social Transfer (CHST) levels to Alberta.
- 4.3 Provincial capital expenses are not eligible for cost-sharing under this Agreement.
- 4.4 Administrative Costs
 - (a) In accordance with paragraph 1.1(a), commencing in fiscal year 1999-00, Canada's contribution for administrative costs incurred for the programs and services covered by this Agreement will constitute no more than 15

- per cent of the total annual federal contribution to the Province;
- (b) Paragraph (a) applies equally to programs and services delivered by the Province or by third party agencies. The 15 per cent limitation applies to the entire amount of the federal contribution under this Agreement and not to individual projects or components;
 - (c) The Parties agree to consider cost-sharing major reviews and evaluations outside the 15 per cent limit on administrative costs, based on the Agreement; and,
 - (d) A description of the categories of costs which are subject to the 15 per cent limitation on administrative costs is attached in Annex 1. Staff salary and benefits costs directly related to program delivery are not considered to be administrative costs; they will not be included in the calculation of administrative costs referred to in paragraph
- 4.5 Canada will cost-share only salary costs incurred for services provided in the year for which the claim is being made. Where as a result of a collective agreement, retroactive salary costs are payable by the Province in the year for which the claim is being made, such retroactive costs may not be claimed.

5.0 CO-ORDINATED PLANNING AND REPORTING:

- 5.1 (a) The Parties agree to a co-ordinated planning process which requires both parties to table their annual plans and results for mutual review to ensure a co-ordinated approach to labour market issues for people with disabilities;
- (b) The Parties will exchange information on an ongoing basis for planning purposes to ensure a co-ordinated approach to labour market issues for people with disabilities;
- (c) For the purpose of this Agreement, the Province will:
 - 1) table an annual update of the Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan in Annex 1 before the end of each fiscal year and;
 - 2) prepare an Annual Report which includes the results achieved relative to the Multi-Year Program and Expenditure Plan

The content of these reports and a timetable for their preparation will be the subject of discussions between the Parties prior to the end of the fiscal year; and,

- (d) Commencing in 2000-01, the Parties will jointly review results achieved annually, and determine if changes to either the annual plans or the Multi-

year Program and Expenditure Plan are necessary.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD:

6.1 The Province will develop a three-year transition plan, which will provide stability in programming for people with disabilities while ensuring an orderly introduction of eligible programs and services, which are specified in Annex 1, and an accountability framework, which is specified in Annex 2.

6.2 The intention of these arrangements and the transition plan is to ensure that the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities initiative is fully operational by fiscal year 2001-02.

6.3 The Parties may extend the implementation period by mutual agreement for a maximum of two years, that is, to the end of fiscal year 2002-03.

6.4 (a) In fiscal year 1998-99 the Parties will determine which programs and services currently cost-shared under the Canada-Alberta VRDP Agreement are not in keeping with the principles in section 1 of this Agreement;

(b) The Province will set in place a transition process in the Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan that demonstrates a decrease in expenditures for ineligible programs beginning in 1999-00, with full wind-out of non-sharable costs by the end of 2000-01; and,

(c) Programs, goods and services which are not consistent with the principles set out in section 1 of this Agreement will not be cost-shared under this Agreement beginning in fiscal year 2001-02.

7.0 ACCESS TO APPEAL:

7.1 In respect of the principles identified in section 1, the Province undertakes to ensure that people with disabilities, or people authorized to act on their behalf, have recourse to an independent dispute resolution procedure for appeals with respect to employability assistance, and they may request a review of decisions related to eligibility, suspension or cancellation of employability programs, goods and services.

7.2 The Province will provide for a reasonable method by which this dispute resolution process will be brought to the attention of individuals seeking employability programs, goods and services.

7.3 The Province is entitled to determine priorities for programs, goods and

services in accordance with available resources.

8.0 FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS:

- 8.1 Subject to implementation of the Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan detailed in Annex 1, and the other provisions of this Agreement, the maximum federal contribution to the Province for each of the fiscal years 1998-99 to 2002-03 will be \$ 22.343 million annually.
- 8.2 Federal contributions for each year of the Agreement are subject to an annual appropriation by the Parliament of Canada for this purpose.
- 8.3 Subject to the limitations set out in this Agreement, Canada will contribute 50 per cent of the eligible costs incurred by the Province for the programs, goods and services under this Agreement, up to the amount set out in section 8.1.

9.0 PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS:

- 9.1 Subject to section 2 of the Agreement, Canada agrees to provide monthly advances on account of the maximum federal contribution to the Province for each year of the Agreement, based on financial projections agreed upon by the Parties in the context of the Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan specified in Annex 1.
- 9.2 The Province agrees to update the financial projections pursuant to section 9.1 on July 15, October 15, December 15, and February 15 during each year of the Agreement, in a manner and form acceptable to the Parties.
- 9.3 The financial projections provided pursuant to section 9.2 will reflect current expenditure patterns for eligible costs and Provincial programs and services to which Canada will contribute under this Agreement, within the maximum annual federal contribution set out in section 8.
- 9.4 Adjustments to the amount of monthly advances by Canada, within the maximum annual federal contribution, may be made in consultation with the Province, on the basis of the financial projections referred to in section 9.2.
- 9.5 No later than 365 calendar days after the end of each of the fiscal years included under this Agreement, the Province will provide, in a manner and form satisfactory to Canada, an annual statement of provincial eligible expenditures for programs and services provided by the Province under this Agreement. This statement shall include the federal and provincial

contributions for those expenditures, and shall be certified by the Provincial Auditor or a designated auditor acceptable to the Parties.

- 9.6 Any unutilized funds in a given fiscal year will lapse.
- 9.7 The final settlement process will involve a federal review of the Province's certified expenditure statements to ensure compliance with federal requirements, and will be concluded within three months of the receipt of the certified statement.
- 9.8 Where it is determined as a result of a federal review under section 9.7 and the audit referenced in section 9.5 that an overpayment has been made to the Province, that overpayment will be a debt due to Canada and will be recovered from advances not yet paid to the Province for any remaining years under this Agreement, or in such other manner as Canada may determine after consulting with the Province.

10.0 LIABILITY OF CANADA:

- 10.1 Whenever any question arises as to the liability of Canada to contribute to any expenditure certified by the Province as having been incurred pursuant to the terms of this Agreement the decision of the Federal Minister in respect thereto, after adequate discussions with the Province, shall be final and conclusive.

11.0 AMENDMENTS TO THIS AGREEMENT:

- 11.1 This Agreement may be amended or extended at any time by mutual consent of the Parties. To be valid, any amendment shall be in writing and signed, in the case of Canada by the Minister of Human Resources Development, and in the case of the Province by the Minister of Family and Social Services, or the federal or provincial Ministers responsible for any successor departments. An amendment to Annex 1 or Annex 2 may be made by designated representatives of each party.

12.0 TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT:

- 12.1 Either of the Parties may terminate this Agreement at any time by giving the other party twelve months' notice in writing of its intention to terminate.
- 12.2 In the event of a notice of termination being given under section 12.1, the Parties agree to work together to minimize the adverse effects on services to eligible people.

13.0 DURATION OF THE AGREEMENT:

13.1 This Agreement will be effective for a five fiscal year period from April 1, 1998 to March 31, 2003, subject to a multilateral review of arrangements under this Agreement in fiscal year 2001-02. The purpose of this review is to share bilateral evaluation findings to determine if mutually desirable results are being achieved and if adjustments to the Agreement are required.

14.0 GENERAL:

14.1 The selection of individuals for provincial employability programs and services cost-shared under this initiative shall be in a manner consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

14.2 No Member of Parliament or the Legislative Assembly of the Province shall be admitted to any share or part of any contract, agreement, or commission made pursuant to this Agreement, or to any benefit arising therefrom. This document and the attached Annexes 1 and 2 constitute the entire Agreement.

15.0 EQUALITY OF TREATMENT:

15.1 If a province or territory other than Alberta negotiates an Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities Agreement with Canada, and Alberta determines that an applicable provision of that Agreement is more favourable to that province or territory than what was negotiated with Alberta under the Multilateral Framework, Canada agrees, if requested to do so by Alberta, to amend this Agreement in order to afford similar treatment to Alberta.

ANNEX 1
MULTI-YEAR PROGRAM AND EXPENDITURE PLAN

1.0 **PLANNING PROCESS**

Prior to the end of the fourth quarter of the 1998-99 fiscal year, the Province will complete a Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan and present and explain it to HRDC. The Plan will include program descriptions and projected expenditures for the remaining years of this Agreement, to be revised and adjusted annually.

2.0 **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE COST-SHARED UNDER EAPD (1998-99)**

2.1. The programs, goods and services noted below are currently cost-shared under existing Canada-Alberta Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons program (VRDP) arrangements.

2.2. Programs, goods and services that are currently cost-shared under VRDP will continue to be eligible for cost-sharing in 1998-99 under EAPD.

3.0 **PHASE OUT OF INELIGIBLE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

3.1. Programs, goods and services which are determined not to be consistent with sections 1 and 2 of this Agreement will not be cost-shared under this Agreement beginning in fiscal year 2001-02 (for example, programs oriented toward medical treatment to improve/stabilize an individual).

3.2. In 1998-99, the Parties will determine which expenditures are not in keeping with sections 1 and 2 of this Agreement, and the Province will set in place a phase out transition process in the Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan.

3.3. The phase out transition component of the Plan will demonstrate a decrease in claims for cost-sharing programs beginning in 1999-00, with full wind-out of cost-sharing by the end of 2000-01.

4.0 ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS. GOODS AND SERVICES TO BE COST-SHARED UNDER EAPD INITIATIVE

4.1. In keeping with Alberta's policy framework, Investing in Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities in Alberta, the Province will fund an array of goods, services and programs, or provide funding to individuals to purchase goods, services and programs designed to reduce barriers to employment, and to enable people with disabilities to prepare for, obtain or maintain competitive employment.

4.2. For the purposes of cost-sharing under this Agreement, and in keeping with sections 2, 3, 4 and 8, the following goods, services and programs are eligible:

- a) Employment consultation and development of a vocational plan;
- b) Assessment of an individual's disability and its implications for learning and work;
- c) Employment or self-employment preparation and training initiatives (e.g., upgrading, vocational and skills training, including at the post-secondary level, entrepreneurial training, work experience, etc.) and associated learner funding arrangements;
- d) Assistance with obtaining employment (e.g., job search; job placement);
- e) Assistance with maintaining work and interventions during job crises (e.g., job coaching; workplace mediation, addictions programs excluding detoxification programs);
- f) Employment focused substance addictions programs that are part of a client's employment action plan;
- g) Employment related mental health interventions that are intended to help people prepare for, obtain and maintain work;

- h) Assistive technology and assistive services (e.g., technical aids; restorative goods and services; interpreter, reader, note taker and other assistive services);
- i) Transportation required in order to participate in training and employment; initial tools, equipment and worksite modification necessary for training and employment; and,
- j) Other goods, services and employment focused programs that are consistent with the spirit and intent of this Agreement, as agreed to by the Parties.

5.0 ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

- 5.1 The costs to be set out in the Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan will include the associated administrative costs. The administrative costs are subject to the provisions of section 4 of the Agreement such that commencing in 1999-00, Canada's contribution for administrative costs incurred for the programs, goods and services covered by this Agreement, will constitute no more than 15 per cent of the total annual federal contribution to the Province.
- 5.2 Canada will share eligible costs with the Province associated with fulfilling the accountability and evaluation requirements under the Agreement. Other than costs associated with demonstration or pilot projects noted in section 4 of Annex 2, these costs will be subject to the limitations on administrative costs contained in sections 2 and 4 of this Agreement.
- 5.3 The Parties will consider cost-sharing major reviews and evaluations outside the 15 per cent limit on administrative costs.
- 5.4 The Province will include the actual costs of the following goods and services in its calculation of administrative costs to which the Government of Canada will contribute under this Agreement. Administrative costs include program administration and coordination, financial administration, human resource administration, information systems development and administration, general office administration, staff training and development, travel costs for non-delivery reasons, research and evaluation (subject to section 5.3 above), publicity, liability insurance costs for participants, and policy and program development. The Parties agree to develop a practical and valid methodology to determine the administrative costs of third parties.

ANNEX 2 ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

1.0 GENERAL

The EAPD initiative will emphasize accountability to persons with disabilities and the general public, thereby enhancing and promoting program and cost effectiveness, information sharing and the identification of best practices. Mechanisms for assessing and evaluating the anticipated and actual results of this initiative would involve persons with disabilities, using either formal structures or advisory groups. This will ensure that funds are effectively allocated to best achieve the goals of the initiative.

2.0 PRINCIPLES

2.1 In keeping with sections 3 and 5 of the Agreement, accountability under EAPD will:

- (a) provide an opportunity to demonstrate whether governments are meeting the program objective of enhancing the economic participation of working age persons with disabilities in the labour market;
- (b) provide a mechanism to report to Albertans and to share the information nationally;
- (c) provide a learning opportunity to understand what works and what does not work;
- (d) be a dynamic process that will continue to evolve over time;
- (e) recognize the uniqueness of individual needs, community and economic realities, and differences in program mixes; and,
- (f) comprise joint federal/provincial/territorial planning, results reporting and evaluation.

3.0 PLANNING AND INFORMATION SHARING

3.1 The Parties will table their Annual Plans including a Provincial Multi-year Program and Expenditure Plan. These plans will identify the types of programs and services, objectives, reporting on agreed to results (planned and actual), and expenditures by programs and services (planned and actual). This co-ordinated approach to the planning process will ideally ensure a discussion between the Parties that will serve to identify gaps in

programs and services.

- (a) This review of the annual plans including the Multi-Year Program and Expenditure Plan will allow both Parties to reflect back on the previous year's accomplishments, and adjust planning accordingly for the next year. Alberta will carry out this process with the HRDC regional office.
- (b) Planning will take into consideration the views of people with disabilities, service providers and other stakeholders.

4.0 RESULTS MEASURES

4.1 The following primary indicators will be used to measure the short and medium-term " results of interventions under this initiative:

- a) The number of people actively participating in programs and services;
- b) The number of people successfully completing programs;
- c) The number of people employed or self-employed after accessing programs and services;
- d) The number of people sustained in employment in the case of job crises;
- e) Savings to income support programs resulting from increased earnings through employment, subject to the feasibility of collecting and sharing the data, and establishing the systems linkages required; and,
- f) The number of people on wait lists, subject to feasibility of collecting the data.

4.2 For the purpose of this Agreement, employment is defined as competitive employment, supported employment or self-employment that generate earnings.

4.3 As per section 3.4 of the Agreement, the Province will prepare annual reports on results achieved under this Agreement. The format of these reports will be the subject of discussion between the Parties prior to the end of the first year of this Agreement.

4.4 Results under this initiative will become available beginning in 2000-01 and will be made public.

5.0 EVALUATION

- 5.1 The parties recognize the importance of developing a broad knowledge base in order to identify best practices in program design and delivery. A Federal/Provincial/Territorial Evaluation Advisory Committee will undertake a multilateral planning process to oversee the design of a flexible "generic" evaluation framework. The Parties agree that medium and long-term impacts of programs and services can best be captured by using both quantitative and qualitative evaluation approaches.
- 5.2 In recognition of this, the Parties agree to develop a joint evaluation plan on employment initiatives for persons with disabilities.
- 5.3 This plan will recognize evaluations that are developed by either Party or jointly developed.
- 5.4 The types of evaluation activities could include: establishment of the core, common evaluation goals and objectives including the key issues and questions to be addressed in the evaluations; support and co-ordination for the evaluation process; facilitation of ongoing communication and information exchange among provision of technical expertise in the design and conduct of evaluations; and implementation of methods to ensure consistency in data collection and dissemination of results to all jurisdictions demonstration or pilot projects for the purpose of testing new approaches in keeping with the objectives of this Agreement, qualitative and quantitative measurements related to consumer satisfaction
- 5.5 A federal-provincial/territorial multilateral planning process will be used to track evaluations and to share information on specific evaluation to be undertaken or completed by a particular jurisdiction. Individuals with disabilities, service providers and other stakeholders will be consulted in conjunction with this planning and evaluation process.

**Appendix D: Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) Policy
Manual**

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AUTHORITY

[Income and Employment Supports Act](#)

[Income Supports, Health and Training Benefits Regulation Part 2](#)

[Employment and Training Benefits for Persons with Disabilities Regulation](#)

OVERVIEW

Alberta Employment and Immigration (AE&I) is committed to increasing the capacity of Albertans to respond to the skills and abilities required by a changing economy and demand for an ever-increasing knowledge-based skilled workforce. The participation of persons with disabilities in the Alberta economy is essential in fulfilling this commitment.

The needs of persons with disabilities in the workforce are diverse. To address these needs AE&I provides Disability Related Employment Supports (DRES) which may fund supports and/or services to assist Albertans with disabilities make successful transitions from school to work, unemployment to employment and from one career path to another.

AE&I strives to develop strong partnerships and work in collaboration with the person with the disability, the employer, the institution or training provider, and the other parties involved to determine the disability related supports and/or services needed by the [person with a disability](#).

DRES is a support element in AE&I programs and services. DRES may also provide supports and/or services in education/training, job search and the workplace if the eligibility criteria for all parties are met.

INTENT

The intent of DRES is:

- To level the playing field for persons with disabilities by providing individualized supports and/or services that address the barrier(s) to employment created by their disability.
- To assist persons with disabilities participate in education/training leading to employment, access employment opportunities, and enable their full participation in the workforce.
- Not to replace or overlap supports and/or services already in existence by another program, funding source, Government of Alberta Ministry or provided by an employer.

ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

The expected outcomes of DRES are:

- The [individual with a disability](#) has their barriers to employment addressed through the provision of supports and/or services, and/or
- The [learner with a disability](#) has participated in education/training, and/or
- The [job seeker with a disability](#) has accessed employment opportunities, and/or
- The [employee with a disability](#) has been enabled to fully participate in the workforce.

[Accountability – Performance Measures](#) are outlined in the Alberta Works On-line Policy Manual

POLICY

- DRES eligibility is determined through an [Employability Assessment](#) and the development of a [Service Plan](#).
- The [person with a disability](#) must be [employment](#) destined.
- There must be a direct relationship between the documented disability, the barrier created by the disability, and the support and/or service being requested.
- Appropriate supports and/or services needed to address the person's barrier must be a collaborative decision involving the person with the disability, AE&I and the training provider or employer and, in some situations, the specialist.
- Authority to approve DRES funding for supports and/or services, within the policy maximums is the responsibility of AE&I.
- DRES funding approval must be granted prior to the purchase and/or provision of disability related supports and/or services.

- If the [person with a disability](#) is eligible to receive the same or similar disability related supports and/or services from another program or funding source, they must access them prior to applying for DRES. Examples could include WCB and Insurance settlements.
- AE&I is responsible for verifying that the DRES recipient received the supports and/or services for which AE&I has issued payment(s).
- AE&I is responsible for [Service Management](#) of the DRES intervention. This ensures that as the individual moves towards their employment goal any changes in their situation can be identified and addressed.
- Mobius entry must be completed.

Individual Eligibility

In order to access DRES funding, the person with the disability must provide [substantiation](#) and meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Be a [person with a disability](#) and have a barrier to education/training and/or employment that has been created by their disability and
- Be a resident of Alberta or an [Albertan working temporarily outside of the Province](#) or an Albertan attending an out-of-province educational institution and
- Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or refugee under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and be legally entitled to work and/or train in Canada.
- A [person with a disability](#) is not eligible for DRES funding if involved in [volunteer](#), [supported](#), or [sheltered employment](#).
- A [person with a disability](#) may not be eligible for DRES funding if their supports and/or services are covered by:
 - Worker's Compensation Board (WCB)
 - Disability Insurance
 - Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D)
 - Insurance settlements
 - Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL)
 - Other funders

Employer Eligibility

Employers are an essential piece of Alberta's commitment to increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in the workforce. AE&I strives to develop strong partnerships and work in collaboration with employers to hire and support employees with disabilities.

Under [Alberta Human Rights](#) legislation, an employer has a **Duty to Accommodate** employees with disabilities. This includes incurring costs associated with accommodations. AE&I acknowledges that many employers already support the hiring of persons with disabilities. These employers through their individual contributions recognize the importance and value of a diversified workforce.

DRES's role is not to assume the employer's Duty to Accommodate. The intent of DRES is to work in partnership with small to medium sized employers (less than 500 employees) to determine the disability related needs of a potential or existing employee(s) and to negotiate with the employer the contribution of each party towards the cost of supporting an employee(s) with a disability.

An employer must meet the following criteria to be eligible and provide [substantiation](#) upon request:

- Private and/or not-for-profit organization or company with less than 500 employees.
- Self-employed persons with disabilities may be eligible for DRES. The supports and services that are funded must be directly linked to the disability.

- DRES is not generally available to [federal employment equity employers](#). If an **exceptional** circumstance(s) arises, Regions will review and consider the request.
- DRES is not available to the following employers - civic, provincial, and federal government, hospitals, and schools which include K – 12 and publically funded post-secondary institutions.

DRES Categories

DRES is grouped into three categories according to the nature of the Service Plan item that the [person with a disability](#) is engaged in at the time he or she accesses the supports and/or services.

1. **Job Search Supports**
2. **Workplace Supports**
3. **Education Supports**

1. **JOB SEARCH SUPPORTS**

The intent of Job Search Supports is to provide [short-term supports and/or services](#) to a [person with a disability](#) who is actively seeking employment.

Policy

- Job search supports may be funded to a maximum AE&I contribution of \$5,000/[person with a disability](#) per Service Plan where the person is actively seeking employment and working in partnership with AE&I. In **exceptional** circumstances this maximum can be exceeded with Regional Director's Approval.
- Job Search Supports may be available to [individuals with disabilities](#) who are 16 years of age or older.
- Includes supports and/or services that are required over and above [mainstream services](#).
- If the [person with a disability](#) is eligible to receive the same or similar disability related supports and/or services from another program or source, these must be accessed before DRES is provided. For example; if the person with the disability is attending a non-AE&I funded program or service which provides job search assistance, he or she must approach this provider first to fund the disability related supports and/or services needed.
- A [Service Plan](#) must be developed indicating that the [person with a disability](#) is [employment](#) destined, outlining the supports and/or services needed by the [person with a disability](#) to conduct an active job search, the period of time that DRES job search supports will be provided, and the DRES cost.
- AE&I is responsible to verify that the DRES recipient received the supports and/or services for which AE&I has issued payment(s).
- Mobius entry must be completed.

Refer to the [Eligible and Ineligible Assistive Services and Assistive Technology List](#).

2. **WORKPLACE SUPPORTS (WPS)**

The intent of DRES Workplace Supports is to provide initial [short-term supports and/or services](#) to assist a [person with a disability](#) transition into the workplace, maintain employment, and enable their full participation in the workplace.

Workplace Supports is provided through four areas; A) On the Job Supports; B) Worksite Modifications; C) Vehicle Modifications; and D) Assistive Technology.

Policy

- Workplace Supports are employee specific and are provided as supports and/or services to the [person with a disability](#) to address the employment related barrier created by the disability.
- Workplace Supports may be available to [individuals with disabilities](#) who are 16 years of age or older.
- AE&I will work in partnership with the [employee with a disability](#) and the employer to determine what disability related supports and/or services are needed to address the barrier(s).
- Maximum funding expenditures have been determined for each of the four areas listed below. In **exceptional** circumstances these maximums can be exceeded with Regional Director's Approval excluding Worksite Modifications and Vehicle Modifications made on an employer owned vehicle.
- [Employees with disabilities](#) can access workplace supports in each of the four areas while employed by the same employer.
- Eligible employers must provide the basic equipment and technology required by all employees for the job. DRES may assist in providing the [employee with a disability](#) the supports and/or services needed to address the barrier(s) created by the disability. (e.g. all employees require a computer to perform work duties but an [employee with a disability](#) may need disability related software to do the job. The employer is responsible to provide the computer and DRES may assist with the cost of the disability related software.)
- Employers who are requesting worksite modifications and employer owned vehicle modifications must contribute the regulated amount for the cost of the accommodations for the employee(s) with a disability. Refer to 2B and 2C below for more details.
- DRES will not cover business expenses such as start-up, operating, capital or renovation costs
- A [Service Plan](#) must be developed outlining the supports and/or services needed by the [employee with a disability](#), the period of time that DRES workplace supports will be provided, the employer's contribution, and the DRES cost.
- AE&I is responsible to verify that the DRES recipient received the supports and/or services for which AE&I has issued payment(s).
- Mobius entry must be completed.

2A. On-the-Job Supports

The intent of on-the-job supports is to provide initial [short-term supports and/or services](#) to assist an [employee with a disability](#) transition into a new workplace, and/or maintain employment and/or enable their full participation in the workplace.

Policy

- On-the-job supports may be funded to a maximum AE&I contribution of \$35,000/[employee with a disability](#) while employed with the same employer.
- Cost-sharing is expected between AE&I and the employer.
- DRES does not fund ongoing supports and/or services. DRES provides initial supports and/or services and gradually lessen its involvement as the employee with the disability becomes more competent in performing their job duties and builds their independence and employment capacity and/or the employer assumes the cost of accommodations. Exceptional circumstances may be considered if there is a change in the person's disability or job duties which require additional DRES supports and/or services.

On-the-job supports may include funding supports/services to an [employee with a disability](#) who is taking short-term training that is directly connected to performing their current job duties. This does not include education leading to certification offered by a post-secondary institution as that would then fall within DRES Education Supports.

Refer to the [Eligible and Ineligible Assistive Services and Assistive Technology List](#).

2B. Worksite Modifications

The intent of worksite modifications is to physically modify a specific worksite to enable an [employee with a disability](#) to have access to their place of employment and/or to perform their work as any other employee.

Policy

- Worksite modifications are 50% cost-shared with the employer to a maximum AE&I contribution of \$10,000/[employee with a disability](#) and up to \$40,000/worksite that employs 4 for more persons with disabilities.
- In the situation where a [person with a disability](#) changes employers, worksite modifications may be considered with the new employer.
- Worksite modifications can be made to privately owned or operated buildings, but not to publicly owned or operated or publicly subsidized buildings.

Refer to the Structural Alterations List within the [Eligible and Ineligible Assistive Services and Assistive Technology List](#).

2C. Vehicle Modifications

The intent of vehicle modifications is to assist a [person with a disability](#) to modify their vehicle which enables them to get to and from their place of employment, when public transportation is not available, and/or when the vehicle is necessary to perform their work duties. Vehicle modifications can be done on the eligible employer's vehicle if the [employee with a disability](#) is required to operate the vehicle to perform their work duties.

Policy

- DRES may provide funding to assist with the cost(s) of modifying a vehicle owned by a [person with a disability](#) or an employer.
- Vehicle modifications may be funded to a maximum AE&I contribution of \$35,000 per vehicle.
- DRES will only fund the vehicle modifications that are directly related to addressing the barrier(s) created by the person's disability
- In the case of the vehicle being owned by the [person with a disability](#), initial and subsequent vehicle modifications require the owner to contribute to the cost of the modifications. DRES may contribute up to \$35,000 for the first vehicle modification, 50% of the \$35,000 for the second vehicle modification and 25% of the \$35,000 for the third modification (which is the last vehicle modification DRES will fund for the [individual with a disability](#)).
- DRES will not modify another vehicle within five years of the last AE&I funded vehicle modification, unless the need is verified and recommended through an assessment by a [recognized specialist](#).
- In the case of the vehicle being owned by the employer, the vehicle modifications are 50% cost-shared with the employer to a maximum AE&I contribution of \$35,000/employee while employed with the same employer. Subsequent vehicle modifications for the same [employee with a disability](#) are the responsibility of the employer.
- If the [person with a disability](#) is the operator of the vehicle, a vehicle modification assessment must be completed by a [recognized specialist](#). On subsequent vehicle modifications an assessment is only required if there is a significant change in the person's with a disability functional ability.

- If the [person with the disability](#) is the operator of the vehicle they must hold a valid Alberta Driver's License stating the appropriate condition codes.
- If the [person with a disability](#) is the passenger in the vehicle being modified, then a vehicle modification assessment is not required as the vendor can make the recommendations. In this situation, the only vehicle modifications that DRES will support are those done to accommodate the passenger with the disability.
- Vehicle modifications must be completed by an Alberta vendor. If the [person with a disability](#) plans to have the vehicle modification completed outside of Alberta or is purchasing a vehicle that has been modified outside of Alberta, proof must be provided that an Alberta vendor will maintain and repair it after the modifications have been completed.
- A minimum of two quotes are required from certified Alberta vendors who perform vehicle modifications.
- DRES does not cover the cost of driver training or driver training specific to the modification(s) made to a vehicle, licensing, and insurance coverage.
- DRES does not provide funding to purchase a vehicle and/or cover the costs of repairs, warranties or operating expenses of the vehicle that was modified or the vehicle modifications.
- The owner of the vehicle that is modified must purchase vehicle insurance that includes coverage of the modifications. Documentation must be provided that confirms this.
- All vehicle modifications funded by DRES must have prior authorization from AE&I.

Vehicle Modification Options:

Option #1 – Employee's with a disability vehicle is being modified to get to and from work:

- The responsibility and cost of getting to and from the workplace lies with the employee. In exceptional circumstance a vehicle modification may be required for a [person with a disability](#) when public transportation is not available.
- Use of public transportation or other means must be deemed not available prior to modifying a vehicle. A statement of circumstance(s) from the [employee with a disability](#) is required.
- Confirmation of employment, location of worksite, and hours of work must be provided by the employee's employer.
- The employee with the disability must be the registered owner/co-owner of the vehicle being modified and provide documentation verifying ownership and insurance coverage. The vehicle cannot be under lease.
- The vehicle modification policy above regarding the owner of the vehicle's initial and subsequent contributions to the cost of vehicle modifications must be discussed between the [employee with a disability](#) and AE&I.
- In this situation where the employer does not own the vehicle, the employer's eligibility is not a factor.

Option #2 – Employee with a disability's vehicle is needed as a job requirement:

- Confirmation of employment, location of worksite, hours of work, job duties, and vehicle requirement must be provided by the employer.
- The person with the disability must be the registered owner/co-owner of the vehicle being modified and provide documentation verifying ownership and insurance coverage. The vehicle cannot be under lease.
- The vehicle modification policy above regarding the owner of the vehicle's initial and subsequent contributions to the cost of vehicle modifications must be discussed between the [employee with a disability](#) and AE&I.
- In this situation where the employer does not own the vehicle, the employer's eligibility is not a factor.

Option #3 – Eligible employer owned vehicle that the [employee with a disability](#) operates as a job requirement:

- Confirmation of employment, location of worksite, hours of work, job duties, and the requirement of the [person with a disability](#) to operate the employer owned vehicle must be provided by the employer.
- The employer or company must be the registered owner of the vehicle being modified and provide documentation verifying ownership. The vehicle cannot be under lease.
- The vehicle modification policy above regarding the owner of the vehicle's contribution to the cost of vehicle modifications must be discussed between the employer and AE&I.

2D. Assistive Technology

The intent of Assistive Technology is to provide employees with disabilities specialized disability related technology which will enable them to perform their duties as any other employee in the workplace.

Policy

- Assistive technology may be funded to a maximum AE&I contribution of \$35,000/[employee with a disability](#) while employed by the same employer.
- Funding of the disability related assistive technology, installation, set-up, training, upgrades and maintenance may be shared between the employer and AE&I. The employer and AE&I will negotiate cost-sharing. DRES's intent is to provide support for the initial disability related assistive technology and connected services needed by the employee with a disability and the employer's responsibility will be the ongoing costs such as upgrades and maintenance of that assistive technology.
- The assistive technology funded by DRES is provided to assist the [employee with a disability](#) and considered to be employee specific. If the employee leaves the job, the assistive technology belongs to the employee and will leave with the employee to another job. If the employer has cost-shared the purchase of the assistive technology, ownership will be discussed at the time of purchase and agreed upon between all parties. This agreement will be put in writing.

Refer to the [Eligible and Ineligible Assistive Services and Assistive Technology List](#).

3. EDUCATION SUPPORTS

The intent of DRES Education Supports is to assist an eligible [learner with a disability](#), who is [employment](#) destined, to participate in education and training.

Post-secondary institutions and training providers are essential in building a knowledge-based skilled workforce in Alberta.

Under [Alberta Human Rights](#) legislation, post-secondary institutions have a **Duty to Accommodate** learners with disabilities. This includes incurring costs associated with accommodations.

DRES's role is not to assume the post-secondary institution's Duty to Accommodate. The intent of DRES is to work in partnership with the post-secondary institutions and training providers to determine the disability related needs of the learner and to negotiate with them the contribution of each party towards the cost of supporting a learner(s) with a disability.

Policy

- Education supports are funded to a maximum AE&I contribution of \$75,000/[academic year](#) for a [learner with a disability](#) participating in an [approved training program](#) or in training approved by AE&I staff as per their Service Plan. In **exceptional** circumstances this maximum can be exceeded with Regional Director's Approval.
- DRES will not fund education supports for learners with disabilities served under the [Alberta School Act](#).
- DRES supports learners with disabilities who are attending [full-time training](#).
- DRES supports learners with disabilities who are funded by the AE&I Skills Investment Bursary for [part-time training](#).
- A [learner with a disability](#) must apply for a Canada Student Loan and the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities if their program of study is designated for loan funding. Alberta Works learners and apprentices are exempt.
- If the [learner with a disability](#) is eligible to receive the same or similar disability related support and/or services from another program or funding source, they must access them prior to applying for DRES.
- A learner, who continues to meet the DRES eligibility criteria and demonstrates [acceptable progress](#) towards his or her Service Plan, may continue to receive DRES to the end of their Service Plan, providing that the need for the supports and/or services continues to be demonstrated and the supports and/or services are still DRES eligible.
- The assistive technology funded by DRES is provided as a support to the learner and is considered to be learner specific. The assistive technology belongs to the learner.
- DRES may fund the assistive technology and cover the cost of the installation, set-up, and training. The learner is responsible for upgrades, insurance, maintenance, and repair costs.
- DRES will fund the [actual costs of the eligible supports and/or services](#) that have been provided and approved by AE&I.
- A [learner with a disability](#) who has reached the maximum life-time loan funding from Alberta Advanced Education and Technology may be eligible to receive DRES for education and living costs up to a maximum of two semesters. DRES will only provide this funding during the last two semesters of the learner's program of study. In these cases, the DRES funding for education and living costs will be in the amount that would have been available to the learner through Canada Students Loans, had he or she still been eligible to receive it. Education (tuition and books) and living costs are taxable and a T4A will be issued to the learner at the end of the tax year.
- A [Service Plan](#) must be developed outlining the supports and/or services needed by the [learner with a disability](#), the period of time that DRES education supports will be provided, the post-secondary institution's and/or training provider's contribution, and the DRES cost.
- AE&I staff is responsible to verify that the DRES recipient received the supports and/or services for which AE&I has issued payment(s).
- Mobius entry must be completed.

Refer to the [Eligible and Ineligible Assistive Services and Assistive Technology List](#).

Additional situations

Alberta Learners with Disabilities attending Out of Province Post-secondary Institutions

- Prior to applying for DRES it is the responsibility of the Alberta learner to contact the out of province post-secondary institution that they plan to attend to determine if their disability related supports and/or services can be provided and what funding is available. If funding is not available or is not sufficient to cover the costs of necessary supports and/or services, the learner can apply for DRES.

Out of Province Learners with Disabilities

- Learners coming into Alberta to attend post-secondary institutions must explore disability related supports and/or services funding resources in their home province prior to applying for DRES.

Learners with Disabilities attending Specialized Post-secondary Institutions

- Specialized post-secondary institutions offer programs specifically for persons with disabilities. The cost of supports and services to address the disability are included in the tuition, books and mandatory fees. As an example; Gallaudet University in Washington, USA is a post-secondary institution that provides education to deaf learners in an American Sign Language (ASL) environment. The intent of DRES in these situations is to assist the learner by providing funding to offset the higher cost of tuition, books and mandatory fees charged by the specialized post-secondary institution. DRES will provide the difference in the cost of tuition, books and mandatory fees between the specialized post-secondary institution and a similar program at a post-secondary institution in Alberta. This calculated amount will be considered as a resource for AET Learner Assistance purposes.
- Regional DRES Coordinators/Specialists must be consulted regarding the calculation procedure. AE&I staff will work in collaboration with staff from AET's Learner Assistance Unit to determine the amount of DRES funding the [learner with a disability](#) will receive.
- DRES funding for education costs (tuition, books and mandatory fees) are taxable and a T4A will be issued to the learner at the end of the tax year. Regional DRES Coordinators/Specialists must be consulted regarding the [Taxable Benefits Payment Process](#).

RESPONSIBILITIES

Person with a disability will:

- Provide requested documentation to substantiate DRES eligibility
- Notify the AE&I staff of any changes in their situation that may affect DRES eligibility. This could include health, job search, education, or employment changes.
- Report any issues or concerns in regards to their supports and/or services to AE&I, the employer, service provider or training provider
- Use the funded supports and/or services
- Ensure assistive technology is maintained and insured
- Be responsible for performance and attendance at work
- Be responsible for acceptable progress and attendance while participating in education and/or training

AE&I will:

- Conduct an [Employability Assessment](#)
- Determine the person's eligibility for DRES by collecting, copying and documenting information
- Develop a [Service Plan](#)
- Provide [Service Management](#) for DRES
- Compile a DRES file using the DRES Checklist of Information as a guide
- Establish a process in each Region to verify that a [person with a disability](#) received the DRES supports and/or services that AE&I funded
- Enter all information on MOBIUS as per the Mobius Input Sheet and [Mobius Guide](#).

Employer will:

- Adhere to their **Duty to Accommodate** persons with disabilities which is outlined in the [Alberta Human Rights](#) legislation
- Seek out cost/time effective means for providing supports and/or services
- Develop, provide and implement the list of approved supports and/or services
- Ensure the supports and/or services are meeting the needs of the [employee with a disability](#)
- Establish a time frame in which supports and services will be provided
- Provide AE&I with requested information and documentation to substantiate an [employee with a disability](#)'s eligibility and/or verification of supports and/or service rendered.

Post-secondary Institution/Service Provider/Training Provider will:

- Adhere to their **Duty to Accommodate** learners with disabilities which is outlined in the [Alberta Human Rights](#) legislation
- Seek out cost/time effective means for providing supports and/or services
- Develop, provide and implement the list of approved supports and/or services
- Ensure the supports and/or services are meeting the needs of the [learner with a disability](#)
- Establish a time frame in which supports and services will be provided
- Provide AE&I with requested information and documentation to substantiate a [learner with a disability](#)'s eligibility and/or verification of supports and/or service rendered.

REVIEW of DECISION

Individuals requesting a review of a decision to deny DRES supports and/or services or to exceed maximum funding amounts must follow the DRES Review process.

DRES Review Process

Reviews are conducted in a timely manner with full representation of the information.

The DRES Review process has up to 3 components depending on the situation:

- a. Administrative Review
- b. Regional Director's Approval
- c. DRES Review Committee

- a. Administrative Review

The initial DRES decision is made by an AE&I Authorized Official. If the request for DRES is denied, a letter must be sent to the individual advising them of the decision, their right to an Administrative Review, the review process, and the time limit to request a review.

- Individuals asking for a review of the initial decision must submit a written request for an Administrative Review to the Supervisor of the AE&I Authorized Official within 30 calendar days from the date the individual is informed of the decision.
- This level of the review is done by the Supervisor (or designate) of the AE&I Authorized Official who made the initial decision to deny DRES.
- The individual must be notified in writing of the results of the Administrative Review.

- If the Supervisor upholds the initial decision, the individual must be informed in writing of the decision, the next review level; the DRES Review Committee, the time limit to request the review, and provided with the form 'Request for Review of Benefits under Disability Related Employment Supports' (EMP 3630).

b. Regional Director's Approval

Regional Director's Approvals are used when an eligible individual's request for DRES is to exceed the maximum funding amount that is outlined in the policy.

- If the request is denied by the Regional Director, the individual must be notified in writing of the decision, the next review level; the DRES Review Committee, the time limit to request the review, and provided with the form 'Request for Review of Benefits under Disability Related Employment Supports' (EMP 3630).

c. DRES Review Committee

A request to review the Administrative Review or the Regional Director's Approval decision may be made to the Disability Related Employment Supports Review Committee (DRESRC) within 30 calendar days from the date the individual is informed of the decision to deny supports and/or services or exceed the maximum funding amount.

The purpose of DRESRC is to provide an arms length decision review to ensure decisions are fair and equitable and are within parameters established by legislation, regulations, policy and agreements.

If new or additional information that has not been previously considered is provided to the DRESRC, the DRES Review will not proceed until the AE&I Authorized Official who made the initial decision has considered it. The DRESRC Secretary will forward the new or additional information to the AE&I Authorized Official for their consideration and decision.

The individual will be notified that their 'Request for Review of Benefits under Disability Related Employment Supports' has been received and the date on which it will be reviewed by the DRESRC.

There is no requirement for the individual to attend the DRES Review but if they wish to attend, they may. If they plan to have another individual(s) in attendance with them at the review, they must advise the DRESRC. If the individual decides to send someone to represent them at the review, written consent must be provided to the DRESRC. No funds are issued to individuals for travel expenses related to the DRES Review.

The decision made by the DRESRC will be provided to the individual in writing.

Decisions of the DRESRC are final.

Committee members are government employees appointed by the Minister of AE&I.

DRESRC Members are:

- Alberta Employment and Immigration, Workforce Supports Division, Director, Employment and Training Services Branch (or designate).
- Alberta Seniors and Community Supports, Income Support for Persons with Disabilities Division, Director, Disability Planning and Support (or designate).
- Alberta Advanced Education, Learner Assistance, Director, Learner Funding (or designate).

- Alberta Employment and Immigration, Employment and Training Services Branch, Career Services Unit will serve as Secretary to the DRESRC.

FORMS

- [Consent for the disclosure of Personal Information](#) (EMP 3997)
- [Education or Training Supports Application](#) (EMP 3628)
- [Employment Supports Application](#) (EMP 3629)
- [Request for Review of Benefits under Disability Related Employment Supports](#) (EMP 3630)

APPENDICES

- Appendix #1 – [DRES Checklist of Information Required](#)
- Appendix #2 – [Mobius Input](#)
- Appendix #3 – [Types of Specialized Assessments](#)
- Appendix #4 – [Eligible and Ineligible Assistive Services and Assistive Technology List](#)
- Appendix #5 – [Taxable Information](#)
- Appendix #6 – [Taxable Benefits Payment Process](#)
- Appendix #7 – [DRES Codes](#)