DECONSTRUCTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS’ PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN LABELED WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

by

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B.A. (Honors), Boğaziçi University, 2003

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Early Childhood Education)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

August 2014

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Abstract
The research reported here is based upon a critical qualitative study with six Early Childhood Educators (ECE) who had the experience of providing care and education to young children labeled with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms. Three main research questions guided this study, including: What are the participants’ perspectives on inclusion? What factors are influential in their perspectives on inclusion? How do these perspectives on inclusion inform their practices? Six active interviews with the participants were conducted. Each interview was co-constructed by the research participant and the researcher through the interview dialogue as an interactional event. Theoretical thematic analysis, informed by Derridian deconstruction embedded in a social constructive epistemology, was employed to analyze the resulting interview transcripts. After each transcript had been analyzed, four meta-themes were identified across the transcripts to highlight the participants’ perspectives on inclusion: acceptance as advocacy, agency as conformity, othering as vulnerability, and knowledge as expertise. These meta-themes are mutually constitutive of what appears to be a highly constrained Discourse of inclusion. Implications for education, along with limitations of this study and ideas for future research, are addressed in the conclusion.
Preface

This research is an original and unpublished work by the author, Maryam Dalkilic. The Behavioural Research Ethics Board of British Columbia gave full board approval to this research in January 10, 2014 under the UBC BREB Certificate number H13-03226.
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Acknowledgement

This work owes itself to a number of supportive people, whose roles I must acknowledge. I would like to start by expressing my appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Jennifer Vadeboncoeur. I am indebted to Jennifer for her invaluable guidance in this research, for challenging me to be critical in my approaches, and for her patience with me. Jennifer, your warmth and kindness made me feel at ease, and your trust in me made me believe that my story was worth telling.

I am also thankful to my committee members, Dr. Steven Talmy and Dr. Linda Farr Darling. Steven, I am deeply grateful to you for the role you played in my development and research. Thank you for honoring and encouraging me to pursue this work. Linda, thank you for welcoming my ideas and offering support.

I would like to extend my thanks to my mentors at The Institute for Early Childhood Education and Research at the University of British Columbia—Dr. Marilyn Chapman, Dr. Ann Anderson, Dr. Iris Berger, Dr. Mari Pighini, and Dr. Jodi Streelasky—who made this exceptional experience with a cross-disciplinary program possible.

I wish to also thank my long time friend and colleague, Ana Vojnovic. The regular discussions between Ana and I have allowed me to engage with critical perspectives and expand my horizons. Ana, I am deeply grateful for your unique insights, for your unconditional presence when I needed you, and for your never-ending patience with me.

My special gratitude goes to my older daughter, Sara Suna Dalkilic, who walked with me in every step of this journey. Sara, I cannot put my appreciation for your contributions to this work in words. You have greatly supported me, whilst challenging me with your critical approach to reconsider my ways. You have been my critic, my second pair of eyes, and my motivation. It is an honor to be your mother.
I am thankful to my husband Dr. Turker Dalkilic and to my daughter Lara Nil Dalkilic, for supporting my hopes and desires.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the participation of the six Early Childhood Educators in this study, to whom I am indebted for their time. I greatly enjoyed interacting with and learning from each and every one of them.
Chapter One

Introduction

“To begin a story, someone in some way must break a particular silence”


I am still captivated by the reverberations of her voice: “When you register a child who screams all day, bangs his head on the floor, throws the chair from one end of the classroom to the other, and bites his own arm to the point that it bleeds, you can’t sit in your office and work on your computer. Come to my classroom and see how my days look like.”

It was more than a decade ago. I was the manager of a childcare program in Istanbul, Turkey. A young lady came to visit the childcare program. She was interested in registering her son who was almost three years old. I gave her a tour of the childcare center and we talked about the program. Although she said she would not have considered registering her child in a childcare as she was a homestay mom, her son had a limited vocabulary and her friends had suggested she should consider sending him to childcare so that he could socialize and expand his vocabulary.

Semant ran into the childcare on his first day of school. He was holding his mom’s hand, pulling her to the middle of the playroom where there was a rocking wooden horse. Seman climbed on the horse and started rocking back and forth. His mom exclaimed in a happy tone of voice, “He’s gonna love it here!” After that happy first day of jumping from one toy to the other and pulling his mom’s hand to accompany him, followed a second day of tears and screams as

1 All proper names are pseudonyms.

2 In accordance with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.).
his mom had to leave Seman for a couple hours for gradual entry. “That’s normal,” the educators would say to each other in a calm manner. “It is his very first day away from parents! Of course he will cry,” I found myself repeatedly reminding everyone—and mostly myself. Days passed by with Seman screaming. The rocking wooden horse was the only thing that calmed him down. He did not speak a word. He did not eat. He did not play with any other children.

“What’s wrong with this child? He is not normal,” I often heard educators say when they were talking among themselves. We were all curious as to what were the reasons behind Seman’s behaviours. At times our curiosity was combined with pity for Seman and at other times it was filled with anger toward him. Our childcare environment was dysfunctional due to some of Seman’s behaviours. As days passed, our situation with Seman became the main topic of conversations within the childcare program. There were competing and contradictory discussions regarding if and how we should continue providing care for Seman. There was only one thing we agreed upon: we needed an “expert”2 opinion on Seman’s behaviours. We needed a label to define Seman’s condition and to establish our situation. We needed to draw on the knowledge dictated by that label to decide as to how to care for Seman. I talked to the parents and asked them to seek professional help. Soon enough, Seman got a label. “Classic autism they said”; his mom’s voice broke and she burst into tears. There was a moment of silence on the phone. I did not know what to say. It felt like a never-ending stage of mourning. This was my first real life encounter with the label autism.

2 In accordance with the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.), quotation marks are used in the document when a word or phrase is used for the first time to introduce “an ironic comment,” “a slang,” or “an invented or coined expression” (APA, 2010, p. 91).
Sure enough, this label brought with it a particular regime of talking that represented the dominant conceptualization of classic autism at that time. This dominant Discourse, capitalized following Gee (2005), shaped our thoughts about how Seman as the “autistic child” performed. Foucault (1972) referred to Discourses as “practices that systematically form the object of which they speak” (p. 49). The reference for our discussions at the childcare centre was the Discourse of classic autism that formed Seman. “Autistic children don’t eat solid food. See, he keeps it in his mouth. Won’t chew it. You have to blend it. I am sure that’s what they do at home. Really, he needs one person dedicated to him. Sorry, I have 12 more to attend to,” said his teacher.

Our discussions not only shaped Seman, they also formed categories of educators in our childcare program. Some of the educators performed positive attitudes toward having Seman in the program, and some others performed negative attitudes. For example one day, as Seman was screaming and banging his head on the floor, the educator who was responsible for the five year olds’ class passed by him. “Poor little guy,” said the educator. “Poor little guy, or poor me? He screams the whole day. I have to deal with him all the time. You can have him if you want,” exclaimed Seman’s educator in a frustrated tone. “I have no problem having him in my classroom. It is just, he is three and my kids are five. They can’t be in the same group. I wouldn’t mind at all to have him in my group if his age matched,” said the five year olds’ class educator. Such discursive practices shaped our social and power relationships in the childcare program. A positive approach to having Seman in the program was privileged and educators were categorized as “pro-inclusion.” Our pro-inclusion discussions “othered,” and in a sense excluded and silenced, alternative discussions on having Seman in the childcare program. We normalized inclusion and privileged particular social practices that we discursively established as pro-inclusion at the expense of othering any alternatives.
The “politico-educational” system in Turkey back then was more than ever dictating that inclusion was a “must” and that children labeled with “Special Educational Needs (SEN) continue to be taught alongside their peers who do not have SEN in preschool, primary, and secondary schools” (Secer, 2010, p. 43). The Turkish Ministry of Education legally established the inclusive education movement through 573 Special Education Legislation (Milli Egitim Bakanligi, 1997). According to this legislation, “preschool education programs [must] cover both normal children and children who need special education,” and “preschool education is mandatory for children diagnosed with a need for special education” (Secer, 2010, p. 43).

The Turkish inclusive education movement recognized educators’ positive attitudes toward inclusion and their belief in inclusive education as “a key element in the successful implementation of the policy of inclusion” (Secer, 2010, p. 44). Turkish Special Education Legislation mandates that educators create an accepting and positive environment for children labeled with disabilities in regular schools (Milli Egitim Bakanligi, 2006). I considered myself an advocate for the rights of children labeled with disabilities to inclusion. The inclusive education movement was the dominant Discourse that shaped my thoughts on how to advocate for inclusion. Drawing on this Discourse, my task as an advocate for inclusion and my responsibility as the manager of the childcare program was to hire educators who were committed to inclusion. I assumed that the remedy for inclusion was having educators who expressed positive attitudes toward caring for children labeled with disabilities in regular classrooms.

For years, inclusion / exclusion existed as a binary in my world. I saw educators as either inclusive or exclusive, and fixed in their attitude toward inclusion. I struggled to see beyond this binary and see the possibility of having varying or even contradictory attitudes toward inclusion across different contexts. When the attitude toward inclusion was a fixed notion and just a matter
of being for or against, the answer seemed easy. However when I was no longer able to ignore the existence of educators who were fluid in their attitudes toward inclusion, the picture of “good” and ethical educator who is pro-inclusion versus “bad” educator who is anti-inclusion was not sufficient to explain this messy phenomenon anymore. This awareness provoked in me a sense of wonder. What if the notion of inclusion was not as commonsensical as I once believed? What if some of the educators, who reported that they supported the rights of children to inclusive education during their job interviews, had a different understanding of inclusion than I assumed they had? What if the meaning of inclusion was not singular and universal? I began to see the possibility of individual meanings for each educator regarding inclusion, as well as the idea that these personal meanings were shaped by a variety of factors such as the educators’ socio-cultural background and previous experiences, among others. Also, I questioned the possibility that the educator’s attitude toward inclusion could change in relation to different contexts, including their interactions with different children.

**Statement of the Problem**

Substantial research exists with a primary focus on “educators’ attitude toward inclusion.” Much of this is based on the assumption that “the successful implementation of any inclusive policy is largely dependent on educators being positive about it” (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002, p. 129). These studies have set to investigate the “various reasons for positive and negative teacher attitudes toward inclusion” (Olson, 2003, p. i). The rationale for the focus of these studies is that if the contributing factors to the formation of “negative attitudes toward inclusion” are found, addressed and improved, “schools can enhance inclusion experiences” (Olson, 2003, p. 2). For example, Center and Ward (1987) concluded that regular and resource teachers’ attitude toward including children labeled with disabilities was dependent on the level
of administrative support, teachers’ confidence in their own instructional skills, and to some extent on what the teachers perceived to be the nature of the child’s label. On the other hand, Norwich (1994) suggested that teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion were impacted by their socio-political views. This study reported that teachers with a “more right-wing outlook” had a more positive attitude toward inclusion (Norwich, 1994, p. 91). Norwich (1994) also suggested that teachers’ attitude toward inclusion could be affected by their previous contact and experience with children labeled with disabilities.

Some studies cited teaching experience as an influential factor in the formation of an attitude toward inclusion. These studies suggested that teachers with less experience expressed a more positive attitude toward inclusion (Center & Ward, 1987; Leyser, Kapperman, & Keller, 1994). In a study by Salvia and Munson (1986), the child’s age was reported to be important in the formation of teachers’ attitude toward inclusion. This study suggested that as the age of the child increased, teachers’ attitude toward their inclusion became less positive. Further, Olson (2003) stated that educators were most “favorable of inclusion” when they had a “support system in place” (p. 4). She concluded that for the educators to be positive toward inclusion “the whole school needs to be supportive of inclusion and its benefits, with support coming from all directions” (Olson, 2003, p. 4). The scholarly interest in the topic of teachers’ attitude toward inclusion (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002) has provided suggestions regarding the factors that have potential to impact educators’ attitude toward inclusion.

These studies and related research, however, have neglected to address a significant question: What are the participants’ perspectives on inclusion? An implicit assumption seems to exist in a universally held understanding of inclusion by practitioners—including pre-service/in-service educators, special educators, school administrators, school counselors, and school
psychologists—in the field of education. These studies have aimed at “measuring” the attitude of practitioners toward inclusion and inclusive education for children labeled with disabilities without considering the possibility that these individuals might have various understandings and/or perspectives of the notion of inclusion and, in addition, that notions of inclusion may be contingent on the context. Slee (2001) questioned professionals and researchers who engaged in conversations about the notion of “inclusion, irrespective of the fact that they may be talking across deep epistemological ravines” (p. 169). In this study, the taken-for-granted and normative assumption concerning the existence of a universal understanding of inclusion is problematized. Understandings and/or perspectives can differ for different individuals “who have various investments, or vested interest, in how [a notion] is constructed and interpreted” (Dunne, 2009, p. 43). In addition, each individual’s perspectives may differ in relation to different contexts.

Furthermore, there are few if any studies that have considered Early Childhood Educators’ (ECE) perspectives on inclusion. Studies on attitude toward inclusion have been conducted with educational professionals such as head teachers (Center, Ward, Parmenter, & Nash, 1985), regular teachers (Center & Ward, 1987), school psychologists (Center & Ward, 1989), preschool administrators (Bochner & Pieterse, 1989), principals and special education teachers (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999), and student teachers (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). Although ECEs are professionals who work on a daily basis with young children and their families, and invariably teach children with learning differences, their understanding of inclusion has yet to be the topic of research. Early Childhood Educators’ work has the potential of impacting children, their families, and consequently the larger society; however, only a few studies have considered inclusion on a preschool level (Lieber, Capell, Sandall, Wolfberg, Horn,
& Beckman, 1998). Young children and Early Childhood Educators constitute a substantial part of the education system and, hence, need to be represented in related scholarly work.

**Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to learn from the participants their perspectives on inclusion. This study did not attempt to establish a single truth of inclusion, or identify the “best inclusive practice” for young children labeled with ASD. Following Dunne (2008), studies that strive to find the “truth” on inclusion or “focus on practicalities and advocate for best practice…. reinforce a certain way of thinking…. and possibly confirm policymakers’ realities” (p. 9). This study was devised based on the recognition that different ECEs may have varied understandings of the notion of inclusion and that these may be contingent on multiple factors, including but not limited to their past experience, their socio-cultural background, and their context. Indeed, from experience it seems that the same educator may hold different perspectives on inclusion given different contexts.

To narrow the scope of the study, and to apply it to my professional background and personal passion, the focus of the study was limited to inclusion as it pertains to young children labeled with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). By focusing on young children labeled with ASD, room was left for the possibility that if the educators were asked about their understanding of inclusion concerning any other “disability,” they might have responded differently.

Three main research questions guided this study including:

1) What are the participants’ perspectives on inclusion?

2) What factors are influential in the participants’ perspectives on inclusion?

3) How do the participants’ perspectives on inclusion inform their practices?
Context of the Study

Early Childhood Care and Education Services (ECCES) of BC, Canada include regulated and unregulated group settings that provide care and education for young children from birth to age five (CCALA, 2004). The regulated ECCES are connected to the Ministry of Health, as opposed to elementary and secondary schools that are part of the formal school system and are regulated by Ministry of Education. Regulated ECCES are monitored by licensing officers from the Ministry of Health for their compliance with the Child Care Licensing Regulations (CCALA, 2004). These settings include preschools and daycare centres that provide care and education to young children year-round for five or more days a week. Preschool and daycare centres differ from each other mainly in terms of their hours of operation and the ratio of adult to child. Preschools are eligible to provide care to each child between two and a half to four hours per day, whereas daycare centres can provide care to each child up to 11 hours per day. The ratio of adult to child is one to 10 in preschool settings and one to eight in daycare centres.

Childcare staff in British Columbia is composed of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs), Early Childhood Educator Assistants (ECEA), and Responsible Adults (Doherty, Friendly, & Beach, 2003). ECEs require a minimum of one year post-secondary education in Early Childhood Education, which is provided by recognized colleges. Although there is no Canada-wide ECE curriculum, “typically, college ECE programs include course work on health and safety, early child development, education theory, programing strategies, and strategies for behaviour guidance, plus some supervised experience in a child care setting” (Doherty et al., 2003, p. 56). Early Childhood Educator Assistants (ECEA) are required to have successfully completed at least one main course of child development in early childhood education and work under supervision of a licensed ECE. In BC, for the ECEs to have an updated license to practice
they are obligated to attend 40 hours of professional development training within the duration of five years, while working actively with children for at least 500 hours during these five years (CCALA, 2004). Responsible Adults are not required to have any postsecondary education. These professionals are not eligible to work with young children without direct supervision of a licensed ECE. Early Childhood Educators are responsible to provide young children with a healthy and safe environment and opportunities for social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth.

The conditions in which ECEs work varies a great deal depending on the organization where they are employed. Some ECCE services are for profit while others are non-profit. Some ECCE services are unionized and others are not. This situation, along with many more aspects, including but not limited to educational requirements, rate of salary, roles and responsibilities, makes the work conditions and social reputation of the ECEs dramatically different from teachers in the formal school system.

**Theoretical Framework: A Critical Special Education Perspective**

This study drew on a critical special education perspective, in particular on the insights of Slee (2014) that viewed the dominant Discourse of inclusion “as a new form of marginalization of students through paradoxically named programs for inclusive education” (p. 7). Slee (2014) argued that current practices of inclusion are further representations of marginalization of students that are replacing “traditional discourses of special and regular education” (p. 7). The critical special education perspective that this study engaged with proposes to reconsider inclusion as an “aspiration for educational reform,” and a call for democracy. According to this perspective, inclusion should be a system that considers each individual in their own rights, recognizes individual competency, and values individual contributions (Slee, 2014).
Slee (2014) argued, “Schools were never intended for all comers”; rather, they have been places for exclusion of marginalized students (p. 7). Marginalizing students is a means for exclusion through “producing class inequalities” (p. 10). Marginalization can happen based on differentiations in skin colour, ethnicity, religion, and labels of special education needs among others. While traditionally marginalized students were placed in segregated schools, as a result of the international human rights movement “the once diverted and absent children now attend their local schools for substantially longer period of time” (p. 10). Yet, the notion of inclusion has not gone further than “normalizing discourses of individual defectiveness” (p.12). Dominant Discourses of special education are a manifestation of strives for normalization under the neo-liberal understanding of inclusive education (Slee, 2014). Neo-liberal education draws on labels to “sort out increasing numbers of children into residualised forms of schooling” (p. 13).

Critical perspectives on special education view the traditional special education practices that draw on individualized curriculum for children with labels as forms of exclusion through neo-liberal inclusive education policies (Broderick, Mehta-Parekh, & Reid, 2005). Critical perspectives on special education call for a “new politics of identity” in which the “curriculum and pedagogies of schooling” are deputies of democracy (Slee, 2014, p. 13). Broderick et al. (2005) stated, “A comprehensive approach to teaching, enables the successful inclusion of all students” (p. 194). Instead of modifying the curriculum for children labeled with disabilities, Broderick et al. (2005) suggested planning responsive lessons that “differentiate instruction for all students” (p. 194). A responsive curriculum that permits attending to each child’s individual needs is suggested as a remedy for inclusion as opposed to specially designed curriculum for children labeled with disabilities (Broderick et al., 2005).

The critical special education perspective that this research drew on problematizes the
limited notion of inclusion and interrogates “the conjoined nature of inclusion/exclusion” (Graham & Slee, 2006, p. 7). This perspective invites us to look differently at the notion of inclusion. It challenges the normative assumptions on inclusion and proposes an engagement with inclusion as an object of the study. The critical special education perspective presented here aspires to redefine the question of inclusion from *what is inclusion* to *what are the ways that inclusion can exist* (Graham & Slee, 2006).

**Methodology**

A qualitative paradigm was used for this study with data collected using a semi-structured active interview protocol. Merriam (1998) defined interview as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that helps us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena” (p. 6) in which “the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection” (p. 7). In this study, data was collected through six semi-structured active interviews with the research participants. The active-interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Theoretical thematic analysis was employed to analyze the resulting interview transcripts. Braun and Clarke (2006) described thematic analysis as a “flexible” analytic method that “can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches” (p. 78). This particular feature of thematic analysis is referred to as “theoretical freedom,” meaning this methodology is not bound by any particular theoretical framework. However, it is essential that the theoretical and epistemological position of the analysis undertaken is made explicitly clear by the researchers (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The theoretical freedom characteristic of the thematic analysis enabled me to use this methodology within the identified critical special education framework of this research, informed by Derridian deconstruction, embedded in a social constructivist epistemology.
Summary and Structure of the Thesis

This introductory chapter framed the study. The chapter opened by providing an account of the story that inspired this research. Next, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the problems in the literature identified by the researcher were highlighted. Regarding the context of the study, a brief overview was provided on the Canadian Early Childhood Care and Education Services (ECCES) as it pertains to the province of British Columbia (BC). In this section the qualifications, role and responsibilities of the ECEs were outlined based on a report by Doherty et al. (2003). The chapter provided a critical special education perspective by Slee (2014) as the main theoretical framework of the research. Finally, theoretical thematic analysis was presented as the methodological framework of the research.

The second chapter presents a review of the literature on inclusion and the topics aligned with it, first from conventional special education perspectives and later followed by critical special education perspectives. The chapter discusses Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) environments in British Columbia and the concept of inclusion in such environments. Then it moves forward to discuss the British Columbia Kindergarten-12 legislation on inclusive education. The chapter offers a brief definition of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) from the medical model, followed by a discussion on the notion of disability from a critical perspective. The chapter ends with an elaboration on the concept “discourse/Discourse,” and the ideas associated with this concept.

The third chapter describes the methodology of the research organized in five sections. The chapter starts with identifying the researcher’s position in the first section. The second section provides information about the participants and the procedures for obtaining consent. In the third section, the chapter discusses the process of generating data and outlines in detail
“interview as a social practice” (Talmy, 2010) as the sole source of generating data. The fourth section describes the thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke’s (2006) definition. This section also describes the features of Derridian deconstruction that informed the analysis. Finally, the fifth section ends the chapter by providing information on the process of data collection in three phases: (1) introduction to the interview, (2) dialogue, and (3) closure.

The fourth chapter presents the data analysis process. The data analysis is divided into two parts: a brief description of the preliminary analysis required to construct the transcripts, followed by thematic analysis of the six interviews informed by deconstruction. The chapter ends with a discussion of four meta-themes that were identified across the data set.

The fifth chapter summarizes the thesis and notes educational implications. Also included is a discussion of the strengths and limitations of the study. The chapter identifies further research, and provides recommendations for researchers and practitioners.
Chapter Two

Literature Review

Discourse on inclusion has established itself as a significant subject in educational research (Slee, 2001). The matter of inclusion and topics aligned with it has received widespread scholarly interest from across conventional and critical special education perspectives. In particular, this attention has increased over the past few decades (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). The purpose of this chapter is to present a selective review of the existing literature on inclusion from both conventional and critical special education perspectives, and to elaborate on the concept of Discourse in the social sciences informed by existing literature on the subject matter.

The chapter is arranged into six main sections: conventional perspectives on inclusion, critical perspectives on inclusion, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) environments in British Columbia and the concept of inclusion, British Columbia Kindergarten-12 legislation on inclusive education, literature to situate autism spectrum disorders (ASD), and the concept of Discourse. The chapter starts by reviewing literature from internationally conducted studies on inclusion with a brief reference to the historical implications of international human rights movements on the notion of inclusion, then it moves forward to specify the status of children labeled with disabilities as defined by the legislative documents of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health in British Columbia. Further, the chapter provides a discussion on ASD from both the conventional medical perspective and from a critical perspective. The chapter ends by elaborating on the notion of Discourse, used in this study, by differentiating between its uses

3 In this paper, the term inclusion is mainly used to reference the inclusion of children labeled with disabilities in educational environments.
in linguistics and social sciences.

**Conventional Perspectives on Inclusion**

Traditional or conventional special education perspectives often use the terms inclusion and integration interchangeably, and with reference to the “Western movement of normalization” to define the concept (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002, p. 131). The *Normalization Movement* is interpreted in a variety of ways, some contradictory to each other; however, these interpretations share “an eager challenge to institutional segregation” (Culham & Nind, 2003, p. 67). The Normalization Movement was a dominant force in educational policy that led to the principle of integration. In principle, integration refers to placing children labeled with disabilities in the “least restrictive environment in the manner and to the extent that is appropriate to their particular needs” (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002, p. 131). The *Education for All Act* provided global momentum for international recognition of the principle of integration (Culham & Nind, 2003).

In March 1990, 155 countries and representatives of 160 governmental and non-governmental agencies accepted the notion of Education for All in a World Conference meeting held in Thailand that led to an “action plan to identify strategies for providing for all” (Sukbunpant, Arthur-Kelly, Dempsey, 2013, p. 1106). Following the Education for All Movement, the *Salamanca Statement* (UNESCO, 1994) at the 1994 World Conference on

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4 At the 1994 conference held in Salamanca Spain, which was sponsored by UNESCO, representatives of 92 countries proclaimed that every child has a fundamental right to education and has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs, which should be taken into account by child-centered education systems (Mitchell, 2010).
Special Needs Education reinforced the Education for All Movement by declaring the entitlement of all children to inclusive education as part of their Human Rights (The Rights of the Disabled Persons, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1975). The Salamanca Statement held regular schools responsible for providing education to all children irrespective of their diverse needs (Sukbunpant et al., 2013). The Salamanca Statement is arguably the most significant international document in the field of special education (Khan, 2011). In the Salamanca Statement, inclusive education is described as “a framework for action that would accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions” (Khan, 2011, p. 18). Years after the declaration of the Salamanca Statement, the UNESCO International Conference on Education was held in Geneva in 2008. At the UNESCO International Conference on Education, based on Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, participants announced that all individuals have the right to education and affirmed that inclusive quality education is essential in achieving social and economic development (Mitchell, 2010). The main promise of this conference was the “promotion of respect for diverse abilities and elimination of all forms of discrimination” (Khan, 2011, p. 19).

Throughout years there have been considerable international efforts to adhere to the Education for All Movement and to include the integration principle into national educational policies (Khan, 2011). However, policies and practices of integrative education have been divergent depending on many variables. Three main models of practice have been recognized based on the principles of integration: locational integration, social integration, and functional integration (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

**Locational integration.** Locational integration is defined as a practice that physically
places children labeled with disabilities/special needs within mainstream schools, and in the presence of peers (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002). In locational integration, children labeled with special needs attend the same classroom environment as peers, but do not follow the same curricula and routines. Some locational integration policies require children labeled with special needs to attend the school with a Special Educational Aid (SEA), and spend some portion of the day in the resource rooms where they are separated from peers in order to work on their individual curricula with their SEA. The main promise of the locational integration is physical placement of children labeled with disabilities in mainstream schools. Hence, in this system there is no emphasis on social or academic connection between children labeled with disabilities and peers (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

**Social integration.** This category is defined as “some degree of social but not educational interaction between children with special needs and their mainstream peers” (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002, p. 131). Social integration policies and practices do not require children labeled with special needs to follow the same curricula as peers. The main purpose for social integration is for children labeled with disabilities to socialize with peers while following their special curricula (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

**Functional integration.** The functional integration model permits for “some unspecified level of participation in common learning activities and experiences” (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002, p. 131). Functional integration policies and practices welcome children labeled with disabilities in regular classrooms and foster their interactions with peers in both social and academic matters, yet children labeled with special needs do not completely follow the same curricula as peers (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

All three models of integration are based on the idea that children labeled with
disabilities/special needs are integrated in the program to the extent that their ability level permits. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) criticized the principle of integration for providing various forms of integration models, instead of striving for inclusion by holding schools responsible for arranging their environments in ways that allowed any child regardless of their ability to participate. They argued that the Integration Movement is based on the principles of “assimilation,” rather than “accommodation” (p. 131). In a system based on assimilation, children have to adapt to an already established school environment. This principle is in accordance with the normalization movement. Dissatisfaction with the Principle of Integration led to the concept of “full inclusion” (Khan, 2011, p. 20). Avramidis and Norwich (2002) separate the notion of integration from full inclusion and provide a definition with an attempt to move away from the normalization movement. Based on this definition, full inclusion is “restructuring mainstream schooling that every school can accommodate every child irrespective of disability (accommodation rather than assimilation) and ensure that all learners belong to a community” (p. 131).

The shift in attempts to challenge institutional segregation from the idea of different models of integration to full inclusion helped to displace the burden of inclusion or fitting in the system from the children labeled with disabilities to the school systems and teachers who are viewed as the gateways to inclusion. The idea of full inclusion proposed that “successful implementation of any inclusive policy is largely dependent on educators being positive about it” (Avramidis & Norwitch, 2002, p. 129).
**Educators’ attitude toward inclusion.** Conventional perspectives on inclusion often argue that educators’\(^5\) positive or negative approach to the idea of inclusive education can have essential facilitating or hindering impacts on the process of inclusion (Park & Chitiyo, 2009). Avramidis et al. (2000) investigated 81 primary and secondary school teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion by the means of a survey study. The study was based on the rationale that “for inclusion… to be effective…teachers should be receptive to the principles of inclusion” (p. 192). As the result of this study, Avramidis et al. (2000) reported that educators’ experience in implementing inclusive programs and their professional development in inclusive education were the two essential agents in reinforcing a positive attitude toward inclusion. The authors acknowledged the limitation of using a quantitative methodology in their study and stated, “it is our strong belief that accurate judgment of teachers’ attitude to inclusion cannot be made solely by employing traditional quantitative methodology’’ (p. 195). Avramidis et al. (2000) reported that the participants were generally positive toward the concept of inclusion.

Cassady (2011) studied teachers’ attitude toward the inclusion of students with autism and Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD). The participants of this study were 25 educators who were given a survey regarding their willingness to include children labeled with ASD and EBD in their classrooms. Similar to Avramidis et al. (2000), Cassady (2011) argued that the essential factor in the success of including children labeled with disabilities in a regular classroom was dependent on the educators’ attitude toward inclusion. As the result of this study, Cassady (2011) reported that the type of label (i.e., ASD versus EBD) was an important feature in formation of educator’s attitude toward inclusion. Cassady’s study drew on a definition that

\(^{5}\) Throughout this paper the terms educator and teacher have been used interchangeably.
proposed inclusion to be a system that promoted the belonging of every individual. The study did not clarify if the research participants were aware of this proposed definition for inclusion and/or if they knew that their attitude toward inclusion was being measured with reference to this definition. In this study, Cassady critiqued previous research on educators’ attitude toward inclusion for having focused on educators’ approach to the overall idea of inclusion and suggested that it was important to investigate educators’ approach to inclusion with regards to the specific label of the child.

Horne and Timmons (2009) also investigated educators’ attitude toward inclusion while referring to inclusive education as “serving students with a full range of abilities and disabilities in the general education classroom with appropriate in-class support” (p. 273). Similar to Avramidis et al. (2000) and Cassady (2011), this study employed a survey as the main source of generating data. Different from the two previous studies, Horne and Timmons (2009) interviewed five of their 20 research participants after conducting the survey. The authors reported to have conducted the interviews to elaborate more on some of the survey questions. In the survey questions, the notion of inclusion is taken as an abstract concept. For example, the first survey item stated, “Inclusion is the best way to meet the needs of all students” (p. 277). The research participants were asked to state their level of agreement with the statements. There was no clarification as to if the concept of inclusion was defined or elaborated upon between the participants and the researchers.

Park and Chitiyo (2010) engaged with the topic of educators’ attitude toward inclusion of children labeled with ASD in general classrooms. Based on the rationale that different labels have varying impacts on the approach of the educators toward including children with that significant label in their classrooms, Park and Chitiyo (2010) used a survey to investigate 131
pre-service educators’ attitudes toward children labeled with autism. As a result of their study, the authors argued that an essential factor in the success of inclusion of children labeled with ASD is the educator’s positive attitude toward the label.

Studies conducted on inclusion from conventional perspectives mainly used surveys as the means of generating data with relatively large numbers of participants. In such studies, the notion of inclusion was assumed to be an abstract universalized concept that does not require clarification between the research participants and the researchers. These studies are dramatically different in terms of their epistemological and methodological perspectives from the studies conducted with a critical perspective on inclusion.

**Critical Perspectives on Inclusion**

Critical perspectives on inclusion are based on the social justice and equality movements and propose that inclusion is about the “protection of rights of citizenship for all” (Slee, 2001, p. 173). Critical perspectives shift from viewing inclusion with the lens of normalization to considering inclusion in relation to a democratic system that “values diversity and various forms of knowledge,” rather than striving for homogenous communities (p. 175). Accordingly, inclusion is viewed as the entitlement of all individuals, irrespective of their label, to their full human rights. This perspective acknowledges the potential in each person to contribute in his/her own ways. Inclusive education is an enactment of this philosophy in classrooms where each child is recognized as an active agent in building the educational community and valued for what he/she has to offer in co-constructing knowledge with peers and educators (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2012). This perspective moves away from the image of the child with label as a defective child who needs to be fixed to fit the school system, and further to an image of the child as competent and with a right to participate and contribute.
Critical perspectives on inclusion interrogate conventional perspectives on their “pathological gaze” that redeems the notion of inclusion merely to inclusive education for children labeled with disabilities (Slee, 2001, p. 171). Slee (2001) said, “Inclusion is an aspiration for a democratic education and, as such, the project of inclusion addresses the experiences of all students at school” (p. 168). This acknowledgement, in particular, is valuable as it problematizes the idea that suggests not being labeled with a disability automatically equates inclusion. Talking about the notion of inclusion only with reference to individuals labeled with disabilities denies the potential for experiencing exclusion or accounts of it in situations in which the individual is not labeled with a disability. The conventional disability based language of inclusive education can be highly troublesome, as it has the potential to be imperceptible of experiences that are regarded as accounts of inclusion by children irrespective of their label.

Critical perspectives on inclusion, similar to conventional perspectives, acknowledge the importance of international human rights movements, and in particular the Salamanca Statement, in advocating for the entitlement of children labeled with disabilities to education as a part of their human rights (Dunne, 2008; Slee, 2001). However, they problematize the ways in which international organizations, such as UNESCO, have engaged with the object of inclusion as a universalized and taken-for-granted concept. For example, Dunne (2008) argued that following the Education for All movement, and the Salamanca Statement’s reinforcement of this movement, the notion of inclusion came to be recognized as a universally defined concept and a normative assumption. Dunne argued for the importance of acknowledging the implications of the socio-cultural, contextual, and individual components in conceptualizations of the notion of inclusion. Agbenyega and Klibthong (2012) stated, “Any attempt at developing and
implementing inclusive early childhood education must consider and analyse contextual factors,” as inclusive practices are highly dependent on various contexts that frame the disposition of professionals toward it (p. 72). Graham and Slee (2006) criticized the generalized language of inclusion and argued that in order to engage with the question of inclusion and inclusive education, the ways in which these concepts are understood by different individuals needs to be examined. Otherwise, talking about inclusion irrespective of the individualized perspectives on this notion might mean engaging in conversations “across deep epistemological ravines” (Slee, 2001, p. 169). Slee (2001) suggested that to engage with the question of inclusion, one must inquire into what this notion means to different individuals and across different contexts.

This study engaged with the object of inclusion from a critical perspective: a critical position enables researchers and activists to transform inclusive education practices from the deficit model of conventional perspective that assimilates the child to the system, to the equity and social justice perspective with a focus on embracing diversity (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2012).

**Early Childhood Care and Education Environments in British Columbia and the Concept of Inclusion**

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) environments must be examined as one of the places in which educators enact inclusion. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) environments in British Columbia provide service to children from birth to age five, and before and afterschool care for children who attend elementary school including kindergarten (CCLR, 2007). In British Columbia, ECCEs are connected to the Ministry of Health and regulated by Child Care Licensing. According to Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR, 2007), ECCE environments that provide services to children from birth to age five are divided into four general
categories: Group Child Care for children under 36 months, Group Child Care for children 30 months to school age, Preschool for children 30 months to school age, and Multi-Age Child Care that provides services to children of various ages from birth to five. Although all ECCE services in British Columbia are regulated by CCLR, individual program operations may vary based on institutional policies. It is up to each institution to design their curriculum, as long as it provides a safe and healthy environment for the children and also promotes their social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth.

**Reference to inclusion in Child Care Licensing Regulation.** Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR) uses the phrase “child requiring extra support” to refer to “a child who, for physical, intellectual, emotional, communicative or behavioural reasons, requires support or services that are additional to, or distinct from, those provided to other children” (CCLR, 2007, section 1). In CCLR, there are three references to child requiring extra support. In Part 2 Division 2 of the CCLR under the title “Environment,” it is specified that if there is a child requiring extra support in the program, the care provider must ensure that the physical structure of the ECCE environment is modified to meet the needs of the child (Sec.13). Another reference to the child requiring extra support in CCLR is in Part 4 Division 2 under “Program of Activities.” Here, the CCLR mandates the programs that have children who require extra support to modify their program to address the needs of the child (Sec. 24). Finally, in Part 4 Division 4 under the title of “Care plans,” it specifies that for child requiring extra support the program must provide a Care Plan that shows the child’s “diagnosis,” “course of actions recommended by health care professionals,” and “the resources to be made available to the child” (Sec. 58). Section 13, 24, and 58 are the only legislative references available for inclusive education in early years (birth to age five) in British Columbia. Child Care Licensing Regulation (CCLR)
does not entail ECCE services to provide inclusive education to young children (birth to age five) who “require extra support.” Providing care to young children (birth to age five) who require extra support is dependent on the institutional policies based on their ability to provide services to these children.

**International references to inclusion at the early childhood level.** In 2009, the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education for Young Children (NAEYC) in their joint position statement proclaimed, “Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society” (DEC/NAEYC, 2009, p. 2). In their joint statement, the organizations identified “a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationship and friendship, and development and learning” as the defining features of inclusive education for young children (Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011, p. 345). The British Columbia Early Learning Framework (BC ELF, 2008) has adapted and incorporated these principles in its reference to key areas of learning for children from birth to age five. This document is available to ECEs online in the form of a Portable Document Format (PDF) for their reference. The BC ELF provides ECEs with practical implications of suggested theoretical concepts in development of their curricula. However, more research is required to investigate the usage of this resource among the ECEs and its implementations in practice (Langford, 2010).

**Practices of early childhood inclusive education.** In spite of the philosophies that universally define inclusion in early childhood, inclusion is uniquely defined “by the ways it is enacted by systems and individuals” (Odom et al., 2011, p. 345). For example in a study conducted by Odom et al. (1999) in 16 preschool programs, it was found that programs varied in
great deal on their delivery of inclusive services. Based on this finding, it was concluded that preschool inclusion could take many different forms. In a report published in 2000, Odom stated that a number of factors—such as attitude of the educators toward inclusion, characteristics of the child and educator, organization’s policies, and resources provided to educators—could impact the ways inclusion is implemented. The recognition that inclusive practices in preschool education can take multiple forms makes it impossible to provide a generalized picture of how an inclusive preschool classroom would look (Wolery & Hemmeter, 2011). For this reason it is recommended that researchers investigate early years inclusive practices through participatory methodologies, rather than relying on surveys, where they can be within the actual ECCE and experience the extent to which educators’ perspectives on inclusion influences their practice (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008).

**British Columbia Kindergarten-12 Legislation on Inclusive Education**

As opposed to CCLR that does not entail ECCE environments to provide inclusive care and education for children from birth to age five who require extra support, the Ministry of Education requires all schools from Kindergarten to grade 12 to provide equitable access to learning opportunities for all students, irrespective of their label. Special Education legislation mandates all school boards in British Columbia to “provide a student who has special needs with an educational program in a classroom where the student is integrated with other students who do not have special needs” (BC Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 2). The only exception to this position is “when the educational needs of the student with special needs or other students indicate that the educational needs of the student with special needs should be provided otherwise” (p. 2). The difference in approach to inclusion between the regulatory bodies that oversee ECCEs and the formal school system, in part, is due to the focus of the service these
organizations provide (CCLR Authority, personal communication, March 20, 2014). In the formal school system, the focus is on education, whereas the main focus of ECCEs is care. Providing adequate care to young children who require additional support might demand specific education on the part of the care provider. Placing children that require additional support in environments where staff members do not have the necessary education to provide this support is not considered to be in the best interest of the children. Due to this reason it is expected that ECCE services, using their best judgment, decide if they are equipped enough to provide care to children who require additional support.

**Autism Spectrum Disorders**

*Conventional perspectives.* The conventional definition of ASD provided in this section is mainly with reference to the *Standards and Guidelines for the Assessment and Diagnosis of Young Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in British Columbia* (Ministry of Health, 2003). Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is defined as an umbrella term that encompasses a range of what is labeled as developmental disorders including autistic disorder, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified (PDD-NOS) and Asperger’s Syndrome. Autism spectrum disorders is referred to as the most broadly researched child psychiatric disorder (Wolff, 2004). Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is characterized by: restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior; limited interests; impairments in reciprocal social interactions; and deficits in verbal and nonverbal communication skills (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Each individual labeled with ASD has unique characteristics that lead to demonstration of significantly different behaviors and skills (Haq & Le Couteur, 2004). For example, while some of these individuals are labeled with advanced cognitive capacity, others are labeled with profound disability in this domain (Heflin & Simpson, 1998). Likewise, some individuals labeled
with ASD develop verbal communication skills, while others may never have functional language. It is widely presumed that many individuals labeled with ASD show difficulties with making and maintaining reciprocal social relationships, play skills, task engagement, and exhibit repetitive and stereotypical behaviors that is accepted to interfere with learning new skills (Kishida & Kemp, 2009). For this reason, it is recommended that children labeled with ASD receive special education (Harrower & Dunlap, 2001; Katz & Mirenda, 2002; Kings & Edmunds, 2001).

The purpose of special education is explained by BC Ministry of Education as “to enable the equitable participation of students with special needs in the education system in British Columbia” (Special Education Policy Manual, 2013, p. 6). Students labeled with ASD are recognized by the Ministry of Education as students with special needs and are entitled to special education, according to the Kindergarten-12 special education legislation. As there is no special education legislation for ECCE, the status of young children (birth to age five) who are labeled with ASD with respect to their participation in ECCE services has remained unspecified. In other words, it is left to the individual ECCE facility to decide if they would be willing to accept a child with an ASD label in their program.

Critical perspectives. The critical perspective on disability shifts the location of disability from the individual to social construction, including social construction of the meaning of a perceived disability and social construction of the purported differences that surface in relation to a perceived disability. Following Broderick et al. (2005),

…disability results not from an individual’s bodily, sensory, or cognitive difference per se, but from social interpretations of that difference…. Disability is contextualized. It is not a universal fact or condition; it is enacted. As an enactment, its nature and meaning
shift through time. (p. 196)

Critical perspectives argue for “the socially constructed, culturally contingent, and contested nature” of disability labels such as autism (Lester, 2011, p. 5). These perspectives follow the idea that definitions of labels are rooted in their sociocultural context. This counters the conventional notion that disability is constructed in relation to a fixed and ever-present understanding of normalcy. Based on this acknowledgement, this thesis moves away from using the term diagnosis as such term implies and inherent capacity of disability, and instead uses the term label to highlight the alternative perspective: the socially constructed nature of disability.

**Discourse**

As this research relies on spoken language that is transcribed into text as data, it is important to discuss the concept of Discourse as it relates to this research. Although in the field of linguistics the term discourse is often used to refer to groups of utterances or conversations themselves only, the concept of Discourse has been understood in different ways across the spectrum of research in the social sciences (Dunne, 2008). Reviewing the literature surrounding this concept, it is clear that these varied understandings of discourse/Discourse share similarities and differences.

For example, Fairclough (1992) referred to Discourse as “a form of social practice, rather than a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables” (as cited in Macleod, 2002). Fairclough’s reference to social practice implies that for an activity to be considered as Discourse, it needs to be governed by long established social conventions as opposed to being instantaneous and removed from its context, as purely individual activities or reflexes of situational variables would be. Burman (1994) identified Discourse as “socially organized frameworks of meaning that define categories and specific domains of what can be said and
done” (as cited in Macleod, 2002). This identification further elaborates on the social aspect of Discourse and also takes into account its restrictive nature; by setting up what can be said and done, Discourse by default also sets up what can’t be said and done. According to Ramazanoglu (1993), Discourse is “historically variable ways of specifying knowledge and truth” (as cited in Macleod, 2002). Ramazanoglu draws on the role of the time period, a founding factor of social context, in shaping the discourse. In other words, the participants involved in the formation of a dominant Discourse—or specified knowledge or truth—are impacted by their social context, which has been influenced by what has happened prior to that moment, or the history. Finally, Davies and Harre (1990) established Discourse as “a multi-faceted public process through which meanings are progressively and dynamically achieved” (as cited in Macleod, 2002). The publicity of Discourses can be interpreted as both their nature as social events, where participants shape the Discourse, and the Discourse’s impact on its participants.

A prominent similarity between the understandings provided above is that they imply Discourse is more than purely the text, but instead is the application of the social factors onto the language in order to deliver the meaning of spoken (or written) words within a context. In order to differentiate the common use of discourse as language-in-use, and the notion of Discourse as social practice, Gee (2005) argued for distinguishing between discourse and Discourse, a practice that was followed from the beginning of this thesis. Using “discourse” and “Discourse” advances the notion that the word “discourse” itself can be associated with both of these meanings. Sometimes called little “d” discourse, according to Gee (2005), is “any instance of language-in-use” (p. 205). Big “d” Discourse is “a characteristic way of saying, doing, and being” (p. 30), and is dependent on involved identities and pre-existent philosophies, which make it political and coexistent with power structures. According to Gee’s (2005) conceptualization of these two
terms, the spoken or written language gains its meaning from its social context. In a sense, language derives its message in relation to who has said it, during what time, and for what purpose. Little “d” discourse stems out of and gains meaning through big “D” Discourse; in return, big “D” Discourse is created and represented using little “d” discourse. While little “d” discourse aligns with the linguistic approach to the term, big “D” Discourse aligns with the Foucauldian social sciences approach wherein Discourses are events or living entities as opposed to static utterances that have been stripped of their social aspects. Discourses, which act to naturalize and normalize certain ways of thinking, being, and valuing over others, are inherently political due to their existence through social relations and power structures.

Summary

This chapter presented literature on inclusion from conventional and critical perspectives. A brief overview on the historical implications of international human rights movements on the notion of inclusion was provided. The Education for All movement and the Salamanca Statement that are accepted as the basis for integration movement were highlighted. The chapter provided some information on ECCE services in British Columbia with reference to legislative documents. Then the legislative documents of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health in British Columbia were compared to in their reference to inclusive education. Finally, a brief definition on the label ASD from the medical perspective and an observation of the label from a critical perspective was provided. The chapter ended by expanding on the distinction between “discourse” and “Discourse” as seen in the use of the term in the fields of linguistics and social sciences.
Chapter Three

Methodology

This study was guided by three main research questions including: What are the participants’ perspectives on inclusion? What factors are influential in the participants’ perspectives on inclusion? How do these perspectives on inclusion inform the participants’ practices?

This chapter describes the methodology of the research organized in five sections. The first section identifies the researcher’s position. The second section provides information about the participants and the procedures for recruitment and obtaining consent. The third section describes the data source, active interviews, and the process of generating data. The fourth section describes the thematic analysis used for the analysis of interviews, based on Braun and Clarke’s (2006) definition. This section also discusses the approach to Discourse of this thesis. Further, there is a discussion provided on Derridian deconstruction that informed the analysis. Macleod’s (1999) three-step guideline for undertaking deconstruction is highlighted as the frame for deconstructing the participants’ perspectives on inclusion. Finally, the fifth section provides information on the process of data collection. The data collection section is divided into three phases: (1) introduction to the interview, (2) dialogue, and (3) closure.

Researcher’s Position

I began this research project inspired by my experiences with the complexities of the notion of inclusion that I had once taken-for-granted. The strong passion that inspired my activism for the rights of children labeled with disabilities to inclusion left in its place a deep disappointment once I realized that I could not intervene to make inclusion happen. I had once thought that I could make inclusion happen if I hired educators who expressed positive attitudes
about inclusive education for children labeled with disabilities. In my role as the childcare
manager, I put all my effort into choosing educators who said they believed in inclusive
education. While the educators I worked with seemingly shared my belief in inclusive education,
enacting this belief in practice looked very different than what I anticipated. The way I
anticipated inclusion to look in practice was based on my personal perspectives on the notion of
inclusion. I had experienced what Lieber et al. (1998) had argued: that “teachers define inclusion
differently and act differently based on their definition” (p. 88).

I had a utopian idea of inclusion. I viewed inclusion as a smooth transition of children
labeled with disabilities into mainstream schools. In my dream of inclusion, everyone—from the
educators to administrators and parents—had the same understanding of how inclusion should
look, and everyone agreed that this transition and placement would be the best for any child that
had been labeled with a disability. In this premature understanding of inclusion, the placement of
children with labels in regular programs, with the support from educators, was a guarantee for
inclusiveness. It never occurred to me to question the legitimacy of so called inclusive education
practices, where children labeled with disabilities are placed in regular programs while being
marginalized by the means of special curriculum, special educational aids, and most importantly
by their labels. Slee (2014) interrogated current Discourses of inclusion that marginalize children
through “special educational needs.” (p. 7) He argued that in the past, children with labels were
placed in segregated schools or segregated classroom within mainstream schools, whereas now
children with labels are marginalized by special educational aids and individualized curriculum
within the environment of the regular classrooms. Following Slee (2014), I came to problematize
what he identified as “new forms of segregation” and I started to think through the paradox of
exclusion through inclusion and various forms of marginalization (p. 7).
The complex nature of inclusion that I had once taken for granted made it hard for me to find an easy answer to the question of inclusion. I was living what Stiker (1999) defined as a dilemma: “The dilemma, exclude or include, hides a whole series of exclusions that are not all the same and of inclusion which are not all commensurate. We could just as well say that the dilemma is illusory” (p. 16). The dilemma seemed hopeless and disappointing. Ironically, this disappointment did not silence me; rather, it made me eager to talk about my experiences with inclusion, and to learn about the experiences of others. Throughout these conversations I, along with my colleagues and the other people with whom I conversed, created the possibility of troubling “inclusion” as a universal notion, and of opening to the possibility of multiple perspectives of inclusion. This new perspective challenged me to redefine my question of inclusion from “what is inclusion,” to “what are educators’ perspectives on inclusion?”

Although this perspective surfaces from several complementary critical theories, I find it most close to the ideas within what is labeled as post-structural theories. Sarup (1993) argued that post-structuralism is a “critique of the truth,” a challenge to commonsense knowledge and a way to disrupt easy assumptions (p. 2). According to Dunne (2008) post-structuralism enables one to destabilize what appears to be “natural, true, unquestionable, right, moral, or beyond approach” (p. 25). This perspective urged me to think with questions, to problematize taken-for-granted notions—like a universal definition of inclusion—and to be at ease with finding multiple, partial, and positional answers. I began to appreciate the idea of uncertainty and to value conditionality.

As my life journey with post-structuralism evolved, so did my thinking with the design of this research project. Although for years my interest was to learn about ECEs’ understandings of inclusion, certainly my way of investigating this interest shifted. This new perspective inspired me to look at inclusion not as the subject to my study but as an object, and think about the ways in which the object of inclusion was performed by the ECEs that participated in the study.

**Qualitative Research**

To recruit participants, I drew on elements of purposeful sampling and snowball-sampling methods. According to Merriam (1998), purposeful sampling strategy is used when the research purpose is to discover and gain insights. The sample, thus, should be ones that enrich the research. The participants for this research were chosen based on their interest and professional immersion in inclusion. Snowball sampling, also referred to as “chain-referral sampling,” proposes using initial research participants’ social/professional networks to access potential research participants from a specific population (Cohen & Arieli, 2011, p. 426). Following a snowball sampling method, the participants were asked to spread the word regarding this research to their professional ECE network. The ECEs that were interested in being part of the research were asked to contact the researcher.

Six ECEs were needed to participate in this study. The number of participants was decided based on the scope and limits of the research. The epistemology grounding this research opposes the idea of generalizing research results; hence, there was no concern with a potential criticism related to low sample size being an obstacle to generalizability. Similar to other qualitative studies that rely on active interviewing, six participants seemed to be a reasonable number. The procedure of recruitment started with the researcher approaching the ECEs in her professional network who were potential participants for this study. The ECEs were provided
with verbal information regarding the study, as well as with a sample of the research participant consent as a form of written information on the research (see Appendix A). The ECEs were invited to be a part of the research if they considered themselves as a suitable match with the recruitment criteria, and if they were interested. The ECEs were asked to extend the invitation to be a part of this study to their professional ECE network. As there were only six ECEs required, some ECEs that contacted the researcher after the six participants were identified were informed that the number of participants had been found.

The following section provides some information on the research participants and the recruitment criteria. For the purpose of maintaining confidentiality, the participants were given pseudonyms.

**Research participants.** The six participants in this study were ECEs who had experience working with at least one young child labeled with ASD in a regular preschool/daycare classroom. The research participants were recruited according to two main criteria:

- Holding a minimum of an Early Childhood Educator Certificate to Practice;
- Having experience working with at least one young child labeled with ASD in a preschool/daycare classroom.

The Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Certificate is a required certification for a person to be eligible as an ECE to provide care and education for young children in licensed preschools and daycare centers. The requirements to become a certified ECE include a minimum of one-year full-time college education, two field practica, and 500 hours of supervised practice. In the ECE field, ECE certification is referred to as a basic certificate. The basic certificate in ECE can be upgraded to a post basic certification of Infant/Toddler and/or Special Needs education (Early Childhood Education Registry). A post basic certification requires additional related college
education and field practica. The first recruitment criterion required the research participants to hold at least an ECE certificate. Having any additional education, such as holding a post-basic ECE certificate or having university degrees, was not a criterion for being part of the research.

The second recruitment criterion was for the research participants to have experience working at least with one young child labeled with ASD in a preschool/daycare classroom. The research participants were not required to be actively working with young children at the time of the interview. Having the experience of working with at least one child labeled with ASD throughout their career was sufficient for the applicant ECE to be a potential research participant. The research participants’ experiences with a young child labeled with ASD had to be in a group care setting (preschool/daycare) as opposed to a one-on-one care for the experience to be regarded as inclusion.

All of the six research participants identified themselves as female. Two of the six participants identified themselves as Caucasians who were born and raised in North America. Three of the six participants identified themselves as Africans, two of whom said that they were born and raised in North America. The sixth participant identified herself as European and expressed that she had immigrated to North America in her 20s. Among the six research participants, four noted that they had higher education degrees in addition to their ECE certificate. The research participants had between 3 to 9 years of experience with young children in preschool/daycare settings. Among the six participants, three were currently working directly with children, two were working with adults who were receiving an education to become an ECE, and one had left the field of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The table below is a summary of the backgrounds of the research participants.
Table 1: Demographics of the research participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Number of years working with children as an ECE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian (North American)</td>
<td>ECE certificate</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>ECE certificate+ post secondary education</td>
<td>4.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian (European)</td>
<td>ECE certificate+ post secondary education</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian (North American)</td>
<td>ECE certificate+ post secondary education</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erica</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African (North American)</td>
<td>ECE certificate+ post secondary education</td>
<td>5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiona</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>African (North American)</td>
<td>ECE certificate</td>
<td>9 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interview setting.** The settings for the interviews were mutually agreed to by the research participants and the researcher. The participants were provided with some suggestions of possible places where the interviews could be conducted. One of the proposals for the interview site was the research participants’ classroom or an available room within the preschool/daycare where they were employed. This proposal brought with it the question of obtaining informed consent from the organizations (see Appendix B). The informed consent from the preschool/daycare where the participants were employed needed to be obtained for two
main reasons: first, for their permission to use an available space within these organizations for the purpose of conducting the interview; second, for their consent in case the research participants, while answering the research interview questions, drew on their experience with some of the children and families who were at the time registered with those organizations. Some of the participants expressed that they were not comfortable with their employers to be contacted. In such cases, the participants were asked not to draw on any experiences related to their current workplace; as well, they were informed that their workplace was not to be used as the interview site.

Another proposal for the interview site was a coffee shop that would be convenient for the research participants in terms of their commutes. This option embedded different challenges. There were two main concerns with conducting the interviews in a coffee shop: one being maintaining confidentiality, the other being audibility of the recordings. For the purpose of maintaining confidentiality, seats that were away from the crowd were chosen in the coffee shops. To ensure the quality of the audio recordings, a pilot interview was conducted. The data from the pilot interview was not considered for the purpose of analysis.

Conducting the interviews in the research participants’ homes was proposed by three of the research participants and was welcomed by the researcher. In such cases, the researcher visited the participants in their house on a mutually agreed upon time. Among six research participants, one chose her work place as the interview site. As this research participant was not currently working with children and families, consent was obtained to use a space in the work place to conduct the interview.

**Obtaining consent.** Each research participant was provided with a written copy of the Early Childhood Educator Consent Form (see Appendix A). The participants were asked to read
the information before the interview and ask any questions or express possible concerns. After each participant’s informed consent was obtained as an introduction to the interview, they were given some information on the researcher’s background, reiteration of the purpose of the study, and a reminder of their rights as research participants, with an emphasis on their right to withdraw from the study at any point. In particular the research participants were asked to stop the interview at any point if they felt they were not comfortable with questions, the way the question was asked, or if they found any comments inappropriate. One of the research participants asked to see the research questions ahead of time. This request was welcomed and she was provided with a copy of the research questions prior to the interview. Each introduction of the interview ended by asking the research participants if they had any questions or concerns. After addressing any possible questions or concerns, the initial part of the interview was started by asking the interview questions (see Appendix C). Each interview session ended with obtaining a verbal consent from the research participants to be contacted for a potential follow-up interview. All of the research participants gave verbal consent for a follow-up interview.

Active Interviews

In this study, individual face-to-face interviews were employed as the sole means of generating data. The study relied on what Talmy (2010) described as “research interview as social practice” (p. 26). Talmy (2010) proposed a binary heuristic of the research interview to account for ideologies of the interview in the late-modern “interview society”; a “commonsensical” understanding of the interview as a research instrument versus what he offered to be research interview as social practice (p. 19). In Talmy’s (2011) terms, the former understanding considers the interview as a means of “investigating truths, facts, experience, beliefs, attitudes, and/or feelings of respondents” (p. 26). The research interview as a social
practice, on the other hand, is based on the idea that interviews are situated speech events in which data are co-constructed, as opposed to direct conduits into what the participants really think. The data generated from the research interview as a social practice is not an innocent representation of factual truth gathered from the responses of the research participants. Instead, it is knowledge that is co-produced through the process of the interaction of the parties involved in the interview.

Talmy (2010) highlighted the importance of considering power structures between the interviewee and the interviewer in determining the social relations in the process of interviewing that he regarded as a highly complex process. He did not attribute this power as one-dimensional and only from the interviewer to the interviewee, but rather as a multidimensional process. Talmy (2011) stated that depending on “who chooses what—and what not—to discuss, who asks what questions, when, and how, who is ratified to answer and who is not, [and] who determines when to terminate a line of questioning,” the power changes dimensions (p. 31). Following Talmy’s heuristic, in this research study the process of the research interview was regarded as a mediator of socially co-constructed knowledge and negotiated meaning making regarding the participants’ perspectives on inclusion. In other words, the participants and the researcher co-constructed the data during the process of research interview.

**Thematic Analysis Informed by Derridian Deconstruction**

This research employed thematic analysis as the method of analysis. Thematic analysis is regarded as an “accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data” that “can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 77-78). One significant feature of thematic analysis is its flexibility that is also referred to as “theoretical freedom” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). According to Braun and Clarke
(2006), the theoretical freedom of thematic analysis means that this mode of analysis is not bound by any particular theoretical framework. Due to theoretical freedom, thematic analysis “can be applied across a range of approaches, independent of theory and epistemology” (p. 78).

In thematic analysis, the data—in this study, interview data—is examined closely in order to find “constructs, themes, and patterns that can be used to describe and explain the phenomenon being studied” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003, p. 453). While celebrating the flexibility of thematic analysis in relation to how it is used, Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that it is essential to have a “vocabulary” as to how to undertake thematic analysis (p. 78). For this reason they provided a six-step guideline for researchers to draw on in performing thematic analysis.

The first step for conducting a thematic analysis is to become familiarized with the data. This step requires constant engagement with the data: transcribing the data (if needed), reading and rereading the transcriptions or notes. This initial first step is followed by a second step of coding the data. The researcher needs to be well familiarized with the data set in order to highlight “interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). Codes are referred to as “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data” that can be considered in relation to the phenomenon of interest (p. 88). In a thematic analysis, the codes are developed based on and in relation to the research questions.

The third step of the guideline to conduct a thematic analysis involves searching for themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) stated that a theme captures important points within the data “in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set” (p. 82). Identifying themes heavily relies on the researcher’s judgment. In thematic analysis, the themes are identified by the researcher following the research questions and based on the epistemological commitment of the study, rather than the number of times an
idea is presented within the data set. Braun and Clarke (2006) argued, “The keyness of a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures—but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research questions” (p. 82).

After identifying the themes, according to the fourth step of the guideline, the themes need to be reviewed for their compatibility with the essential codes. If the themes are well matched with the codes, and if there is enough meaningful data to support these themes, then it can be moved to the fifth step, which is to combine these themes to form “the overall story they tell about the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). The sixth and final step is relating the analysis to the literature and producing the “scholarly report of the analysis” (p. 87).

Following Braun and Clarke, in this study the data was coded and the themes were identified in their relations to the research questions and drawing on the epistemological commitment of the research. The themes identified in this study were not necessarily the most prevalent themes across the data set, but they captured important elements in relation to the research questions. In identifying the themes, this research went beyond the explicit and surface meaning of the data to a latent level of analysis where the data was examined and coded for the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations.

Although thematic analysis is a flexible mode of analysis and is not bound by a particular theory or epistemology, it is essential that the theoretical and epistemological position of the analysis undertaken is made explicitly clear by the researchers. Braun and Clarke (2006) argued, “Researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum” (p. 84). Thematic analysis is driven by the researcher’s theoretical interest. One specific characteristic of thematic analysis is that it does not
provide a rich description of the overall data, but rather a detailed description of some aspects of the data based on the theoretical commitment of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

**Discourse.** In my research, I made the distinction between discourse—“any instance of language in use” (Gee, 2005, p. 205)—and Discourse—“a characteristic way of saying, doing, and being” (Gee, 2005, p. 30). This distinction allowed me to look at the research participant’s discourse in relation to what could be taken to be a dominant Discourse on inclusion. The research kept in consideration that the discourse of the participants is in a symbiotic relationship with Discourses on inclusion. These discourses interact with the social factors around them, such as the social identity of the person they were created by and dominating philosophies of the time, to create Discourses; in return, discourses are shaped by and are representative of the Discourses of which they are a part. Through this consideration, the participant’s discourses were analyzed as potentially shaping and being shaped by certain Discourses on inclusion, as discussed in Chapter 4. Along with identifying the variability in participants’ perspectives on inclusion, I tentatively wondered to what extent a dominant Discourse might be identifiable within the participants’ discourses.

**Derridian deconstruction.** This research used the perspective from critical special education and post-structuralism as a framework, along with Derrida’s (1967) deconstruction, to inform the analysis of the data. The research drew on deconstruction within a social constructionist epistemology. Deconstruction is described as “an aggressive political mode of critical analysis” that is used to interrogate and to unsettle “conventional and assumed truths” (Danforth & William, 1997, p. 357). Macleod (2002) claimed that Derridian deconstruction “aims neither at destroying the text nor assessing it to its truth value”; rather, it “attempts to destabilize the discourse” (p. 23). In an attempt to interrogate and unsettle the hegemonic
discourse, Balkin (1996) cautioned not to necessarily oppose the present discourses but to strive for opening the possibility of alternative and otherwise existence. Deconstruction informed the analysis part of this research by highlighting the importance of oppositions or absence in analyzing discourse. By bringing the oppositions or absences to the picture, deconstruction disrupts the dominance of a Discourse (Macleod, 2002). Questioning the hegemony of a Discourse allows the possibility for the alternatives to appear.

The aspect of Derrida’s deconstruction that was most significant for this research is what he referred to as the notion of *undecidables*. Undecidables “slip across both sides of an opposition” yet do not completely fit either (Macleod, 1999, p. 18). Undecidables “undermine the very promise of the binarism” and by doing so unsettle the dominance that is powered by the hegemony of the binary (Macleod, 1999, p. 18). The complexities of the undecidables and their power to disrupt the untouchable hegemonic truth require one to look above and beyond the binary and dualism. Derrida’s deconstruction and his notion of undecidables inspired this research to examine the notions that do not completely fit into or align with either side of the binary, but have characteristics of both.

Macleod (2002) provided a three-step guideline in employing Derridian deconstruction for the purpose of analysis. The first step is to identify an opposition in discourse. Finding the opposition in discourse is particularly important as it highlights the unsaid and the silenced. The second step is to show how one of the terms in the dichotomy/binary is privileged and dominates over the other through the hegemony of the Discourse. The final step is to find *undecidables*, or terms that do not fit into the dichotomy. The aim in highlighting the undecidables is to problematize the binary-based language that limits one’s perspective by silencing the possibility of alternatives. This study followed Macleod’s three-step guideline in deconstructing educators’
perspectives on inclusion. The interviews with the participants were analyzed for binary-based perspectives on inclusion. After identifying these perspectives, the oppositions were highlighted. Then, the dominant perspective was unsettled by signifying the unspoken and silenced undecidables.

Data Collection

Data collection took place over a period of three weeks. There were two interviews scheduled per week. No two interviews were scheduled on the same day or on consecutive days. After each interview the audio recordings were reviewed a few times before the interview with the next research participant was conducted. It was anticipated that reviewing the audio recordings would provide some insights for the upcoming interviews. Each interview was scheduled for approximately an hour; however, the duration of the interviews varied from 29 to 106 minutes. There were a total of four hours and 30 minutes of audio recording. The process of transcribing and analyzing took place over a period of approximately four months. The following section presents the three phases of the interview: introduction to the interview, dialogue, and closure.

Phase 1: Introduction to the interview. Each interview session started with an introduction phase where the research participant was welcomed to the session and provided with some information on the researcher’s cultural and professional background. During this phase, the research participants were reassured that at any point they could stop the interview and ask for clarification if needed. Before moving on to the interview, I asked participants if they had any concerns or questions. The purpose for this introductory phase of the interview session was mainly to establish a secure atmosphere in which the participants would not feel as if they were being questioned, and instead viewed the interview session as a place of dialogue, sharing, and
co-constructing. Punch (2002) highlighted the essential role of gaining rapport with the research participants before going forward with gathering data. This introduction phase of the research interview served as a place to begin developing rapport, in particular, because the researcher shared her own experiences as an ECE with the participants.

**Phase 2: Dialogue.** This phase started with clarifying that the interview would be in a form of dialogue, rather than question and answer. The interview questions started with some demographic questions where the participants were asked to talk about their cultural, educational, and professional background (see Appendix C). The interview continued with some questions that were designed in particular to address the research questions. These questions were meant to be a general outline to guide the interview, rather than to restrict the researcher from going with the flow of the interview. Often during the interviews, some questions were found to be already addressed previously during the conversation; hence, there was no need for those questions to be repeated. In some cases a question seemed irrelevant to a particular participant’s experience. In such situations, that question was bypassed. On other occasions, the dialogue around one question seemed so fascinating and rich in content that further conversation was initiated beyond the initial question. Through the experience of these six interviews, it became evident that no two interview sessions were the same. Each interview session was a singular world of its own with its unique stories to be told.

**Phase 3: Closure.** Each interview session was closed by asking the research participants if there was anything else that they wanted to add. All six research participants seemed to agree that the discussions ended in a satisfactory level. Finally, in each closing the research participants were asked if they had any concerns or questions. One of the participants asked if the thesis was going to be published and if she could have a copy. It was explained that the University of
British Columbia publishes the thesis online once they are approved by Graduate Studies and that she would be provided with an electronic link to the online thesis. All participants agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview in case there was a need. The participants were reassured that they could contact the researcher at any time with possible questions or concerns.

Summary

This chapter started with an overview of the researcher’s position. Then followed a section that provided information about the participants and the procedures for recruitment and obtaining consent. The chapter continued with a third section that described the data source, active interviews, and the process of generating data. The fourth section elaborated on the thematic analysis used for the analysis of interviews, based on Braun and Clarke’s (2006) definition. This section also described the approach to discourse/Discourse that I identified with, and its relevance in this research. A discussion on the features of Derridian deconstruction that informed the analysis was provided. Macleod’s (1999) three-step guideline for undertaking deconstruction was provided as the frame that this research drew on in deconstructing the participants’ perspectives on inclusion. The chapter ended with a fifth section that described the process of data collection.
Chapter Four

Data Collection And Analysis

This chapter presents the data analysis. The data analysis is divided into two parts: a brief description of the preliminary analysis required to construct the transcripts, followed by thematic analysis of the six interviews informed by deconstruction. The chapter ends with a discussion of four meta-themes created by clustering themes across some, but not all, of the transcripts of interviews.

Data Analysis

The process of data collection and analysis were interwoven. The preliminary analysis started with the development of transcript conventions after the first interview was completed, while the thematic analysis took place after transcribing all the audio recordings from the interviews. The data analysis became more focused once all the data was collected.

Preliminary analysis. During data collection, notes were recorded on the process of data collection for each interview in a research journal directly following the interview session. These notes were mostly reflections on the process of each interview. For example, the journal entry after the first interview session suggested an uncertainty in asking the research participant to elaborate on some concepts. The dilemma mainly resulted from the fear of putting pressure on the participant. In particular, I was worried about being perceived as questioning the participant’s practice. As this interview was the first interaction between the research participant and I, the conversation felt as if it had been inhibited by unavoidable formality. Reflecting on this experience, I considered the possibility of taking chances in being persistent with seeking further elaboration while assessing the atmosphere. One strategy I used to assess the atmosphere was to cue into the participant’s facial expressions; keeping the participant’s expressions in mind also
helped lower the tension—the forced, formal, and formulaic nature of interviews—caused by interactions between new acquaintances.

Furthermore, the audio recording of each interview was repeatedly reviewed before the interview with the next participant. The recordings were transcribed and organized into folders in both electronic and hardcopy using Microsoft Word®. A set of transcription conventions (see Appendix D) was developed based on Schiffrin’s (1987) transcript conventions, cited in Schiffrin (1994), integrated with Cameron’s (2001) and Ochs’ (1979) insights. Two considerations were made in developing the conventions: their representation of the researcher’s assumptions, and their ease of accessibility.

The development of the transcript conventions followed Ochs’ (1979) proposal that the process of creating a set of transcript conventions shapes the data in ways that impose the theoretical assumptions of the researcher. In accordance with this, it was recognized that “transcription is a selective process reflecting theoretical goals” (Ochs, 1979, p. 44). Ochs (1979) highlighted that this selectiveness is not inherently something to be avoided, as “a more useful transcript is a more selective one” (p. 44). However, she advised that researchers be aware of how their assumptions are represented through what their transcript conventions cover in the data; this was the first consideration when creating this set of conventions. Therefore, the theoretical and epistemological assumptions of this research guided the development of transcript conventions.

One theoretical assumption was that the data gathered from these interviews were co-constructed by the researcher and the research participant, following the principle of research interview as social practice. Talmi (2010) suggested that interviews are contextual speech events in which data are co-constructed by the interviewee and the interviewer. This research has
identified with this philosophy and has acknowledged that the data is not a direct conduit into what the interviewee “really thinks,” but an account of the knowledge co-constructed by the researcher and the research participants through their interactions at a specific place and time. While developing the transcript conventions, one goal was to use symbols that would support this research in reflecting this acknowledgment in the transcripts. For example, symbols indicating interruption were added to indicate that the participant may have originally had a different train of thought up to the point before the addition of the researcher’s own words.

Continuing on Talmy’s (2010) idea of research interview as social practice, another theoretical assumption was that the context of the interview session and the atmosphere in which the data was produced played a significant role in construction of the data. Based on this philosophy, the transcript conventions were developed to reflect the atmosphere of the interview session. For example, symbols that indicated someone laughing, chuckling, gasping, smacking their lips and clearing their throat were included in the transcript as these gestures were social indicators of the participants’ different moods and affected the atmosphere. The epistemological attitude of the research impacted the shape of the transcription convention in a way that represented my goals as a researcher and my assumptions that there was no solid “truth” to be found in the data.

The second consideration for the development of the transcript conventions was efficiency and ease of use. The aim was for the reader to be able to conveniently read the pieces of the transcripts cited in the thesis, while getting some feeling of the atmosphere that was created during the interviews through intonations and pauses, loud tones, repetitions and stuttering, and emphasis on words. Cameron (2001) suggested it is important not to make transcripts “unnecessarily difficult to read” by trying to remain “faithful to the original
conversation” (p. 33). She argued that the transcript would never be a “full and faithful” representation of the data; therefore it is essential to “keep expectations reasonable” (p. 39). Following Cameron, transcript conventions that would support this research in reflecting the purpose for which the data was collected were developed (see Appendix D).

**Thematic analysis.** Constant engagement with the data through repeatedly reading the transcriptions was an essential step in familiarization with the data. This step supported the thematic analysis of the data. Each transcript was examined closely and specifically for the ways in which the notion of inclusion was constructed. Themes in each transcript were identified following Braun and Clarke (2006), based on their ability to represent “some important information about the data and in relation to the research question,” and “some level of pattern or meaning within the data” (p. 82). In identifying the themes, the most important question to ask was if they addressed the overall research questions. Themes in each transcript were presented in the form of typologies and summarized at the end of the analysis of each transcript.

The table below presents an overview of the themes and subthemes that were identified in the data set. The table is divided into two columns; the first column lists items that were constructed from the participants’ discourse, and the second column lists their binary opposites that the researcher derived, following Derrida’s deconstruction. Items that were presented as elements that were directly involved in the creation of inclusion or non-inclusion were labeled as such, whereas items which were understood to be products of the creation of said inclusion or non-inclusion were labeled as “passive element.”
Table 2: Identified themes and subthemes across the data set

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Derived From Data</th>
<th>Constructed Binary Opposite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Educator</strong></td>
<td><strong>Educator</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Passionate (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Lazy (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expert (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Incompetent (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Vulnerable (non-inclusion)</td>
<td>- Resilient (inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Enforcer (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Impotent (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outside Professionals</strong></td>
<td><strong>Outside Professionals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mediator (non-inclusion)</td>
<td>- Enabler (inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expert-mediator (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Lack of the expert-mediator (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child</strong></td>
<td><strong>Child</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Agentic (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Passive (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Outsider (passive element)</td>
<td>- Insider (passive element)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unknown (non-inclusion)</td>
<td>- Familiar (inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Estranged (non-inclusion)</td>
<td>- Involved (inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dependent/autonomous (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Autonomous/dependent (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent</strong></td>
<td><strong>Parent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Advocate (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Critic (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recipient of support (passive element)</td>
<td>- Not a recipient of support (passive element)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal of inclusion</strong></td>
<td><strong>Goal of inclusion</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Support the parents (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Hinder the parents (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reinforce independent movement of the child (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Physical dependency of the child (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reinforce socially appropriate behavior (inclusion)</td>
<td>- Social rebellions (non-inclusion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make a difference/change in the</td>
<td>- Make no difference/change in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis of this research was at the latent level, meaning that the analysis went beyond the face value of the data—what the research participants articulated during the interviews—“to identify and examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations” that potentially shaped and informed the participants’ verbal expressions (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). Hence, this research does not provide a mere descriptive analysis—only describing what the research participants verbally expressed—but rather a theorized analysis in which “assumptions, structures and/or meanings are theorized as underpinning what is actually articulated” by the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 85). The analysis of each transcript provides examples of what the research participants verbally expressed along with the researcher’s assumptions and theories on these expressions. The following section presents the analysis of each transcript and the typologies that derive from the reading of the interview.

**Transcript # 1: Alice’s perspectives on inclusion**

Early into the interview, while talking about her background, Alice identified her “passion” as “[working] with children” (lns 43, 44). She specified that she had made the right choice of career as an ECE and was “really happy for it, really happy” (ln 46). Reflecting on her career before becoming an ECE, she stated that she worked with adults labeled with disabilities and that “it brought a lot of joy” to her (ln 37). Alice’s expressions of joy while working with
individuals labeled with disabilities were predominant in her discourse. These expressions were often connected to the concept of helping. For example, Alice talked about her childhood memories where she attended school with a number of students labeled with disabilities. She expressed: “I always worked with them. I don’t know why, but I was always the helper. And, it always made me happy to do” (Ins 214, 215).

MacLeod (1999) argued that Discourses are constructive as they produce the object about which they talk. Through her discourse, Alice discursively constructed an object, a type of educator that I have labeled the *passionate educator*. As discourses both stem from and create the Discourses they represent, the object of passionate educator can be considered a Discourse. Drawing upon Alice’s representations in her discourse, the passionate educator can be pictured as a person who: is enthusiastic about working with children, has made the right choice of career as an ECE, hence is happy with what she/he does, and enjoys helping children/individuals with labels.

Reflecting on her experiences Alice discursively established one particular aspect of the passionate educator as their urge to learn. The passionate educator knows that “moderate knowledge” on the label of the child would not be “quite good enough” so he/she would take some time to “build a relationship” with the child while “watching for different behaviours he would exhibit” (Ins 197, 202). The passionate educator would “take notes” on these behaviours, refer to “credible sources” to make meaning out of the behaviours and expand his/her knowledge on the label (Ins 193, 203). While doing so, the passionate educator would not hesitate to volunteer some of his/her own time and resources for the benefit of the child with label.

MacLeod’s (1999) interpretation of Derridian deconstruction (1976, 1978) inspired the analysis of this research to look for oppositions or absence in a Discourse. She noted that
“discourse excludes that which is simultaneously exterior and interior to in ‘A’ relies on ‘not-A’, ‘being’ on ‘non-being’, ‘presence’ on ‘absence’ for their meaning, while at the same time subordinate the second term” (p. 85). Following Derrida, the analysis presents the other pole of the dichotomy to the passionate educator. On the other side of the binary stands the picture of a person who: is not enthusiastic about working with children, has not made the right career choice, hence is not happy with what he/she does, does not enjoy helping children/individuals with labels, does not have an urge to learn, and does not volunteer his/her time and resources to relate to the child or expand their knowledge on the label. This yields a type of educator that I have labeled the lazy educator. While describing and constructing the object of passionate educator, Alice also produced the opposite, the lazy educator.

Macleod (1999) highlighted what she called the “dual character of discourse” as constructive and restrictive. Speaking of what Gee (2005) called, big D Discourse, she said, Discourses “simultaneously construct and restrict what can be known, said or experienced at any particular socio-historic moment” (p. 86). The dichotomy of the passionate versus lazy educator constructed two ways of existence while restricting many others. Reading these lines, one wonders about the possibility of an educator who enjoys working with children, yet is not particularly ambitious to help children/individuals with labels. The likelihood of an educator who is enthusiastic about working with children and highly enjoys helping children/individuals with labels, however does not volunteer his/her time or resources to the benefit of the child can not be ignored either. One can imagine many more possibilities of educators who have some aspects of both categories, yet do not completely fit into either. Once again, the binary-based language is insufficient in acknowledging and relating to the grey zone, or what Derrida called undecidables. Here it needs to be clarified that this research does not regard deconstruction as “textual
vandalism” or “an attempt to point out the weaknesses or stupidities of the author,” or in this case, speaker (Macleod, 1999, p. 106). Rather, this is an endeavor to highlight how one mode of being is discursively dominated over by its opposite mode and has left no room for the possibility of the modes that do not fit in either pole.

Macleod (1999) suggested highlighting what category of people would gain and what category of people would lose from a particular discursive formation. In this interview, Alice privileged the passionate educator, which she identified with, over its subordinate lazy educator through her discourse. The Discourse of passionate educator who facilitates the process of inclusion is prevalent in the literature on inclusion, located in socio-ethical discussions that focus on values (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Robert, 2000). For example, Kavale (2000) referred to one particular model of inclusion, “Regular Education Initiative” (Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987), that was developed based on the idea that “good teachers can teach all students” (p. 5). Kavale stated the qualities of a good teacher that facilitate inclusion as: caring for the child, accommodating the child’s needs, willingness to put extra time and effort, ability to communicate effectively, and willingness to collaborate. In the qualities of a passionate educator stated in Kavale’s article, social values such as teamwork and diligence—involved in willingness to spend extra time and effort, effective communication, and collaboration—and ethical concepts such as fairness—as all children deserve to be cared and accommodated for—are also present.

The qualities of a good educator, as listed by Kavale, are similar to those advocated by Alice in her construction of the passionate educator. Alice’s discourse was laden with similar social values; she spoke highly of the idea of a collaborative relationship between the educator and parent, showing her admiration for the value of teamwork. As well, her allusions to putting
in extra effort to find ways of accommodating for the child with a label are indicative of her
devotion to diligence and fairness.

The object of passionate educator is privileged and normalized as a moral being that is an
advocate for children labeled with disabilities. “Through normalization individuals are compared
and differentiated according to a desired norm” (Carabine, 2001, p. 278). The examples that were
given throughout the interview by Alice made it evident that the object of passionate educator
stood out as a normalized feature to Alice’s perspective on inclusion.

Another element to Alice’s perspective on inclusion was a type of child that I labeled as
the agentic child. The construction of the agentic child was mediated by responses that
emphasized the agency of the child labeled with autism in being included.

He’s has problems making friends, because he knows what he likes and, he’s not always
open to new opportunities…But he tries…And he verbally says I try! And it’s
like, I see and I know you try! I said you’ve always tried and that’s something with him
that…Was always kind of a shining star because you could see in him? That he wanted,
to do things. He wanted to try and participate in the circle. (Ins 147-152)

In this paragraph, the agentic child is constructed as the one who tries to fit in or be “just another
regular child” (In 313). In another occasion, Alice referred to the capacity of the agentic child in
regulating his emotions. Alice said, “He was generally smart enough, he would pick himself up,
and off to the corner he’d go, his k-he would grab his books he liked to look at, and he’d sit
down…” (Ins 81, 82). The effort to self-regulate is yet another attempt of the agentic child to fit
in the regular classroom.

The object of agentic child is privileged over the passive child who does not put any
effort to be a part of the regular classroom as a student. Existence of the agentic child depends on
the passive child and erasure of the undecidables. The discursive construction of the agentic child exhibited another dimension in Alice’s understanding of inclusion. Alice’s perspective on inclusion was a system that required a passionate educator and an agentic child.

The third element in Alice’s perspective on inclusion was a type of parent that was labeled as the *advocate parent*. One of the examples that Alice gave for parent advocacy was when the mother of the child labeled with autism in the “first interview…laid it [the challenges the child was facing that were regarded by the mother as signs of autism] all out onto the table,” (Ins 113-115). Alice noted that being provided with this information by the mother of the child was a “proactive” (In 115) attempt to support Alice as the educator that cared for her child. Alice expressed that she was “amazed” (In 115) by this parent advocacy and support. Emphasizing the importance of parent advocacy in inclusion, Alice stated, “I said a proactive parent like you is a blessing. To *any* care he goes into. Because most parents, for the first while I find, wanna do the denial” (Ins 115-116). One essential quality of the advocate parent was established as their acceptance—as opposed to denial—of the child’s label. The concept of advocate parent created *critic parent* as the one who does not support the passionate educator by accepting the label of the agentic child. Based on Alice’s discourse, if the parents are “do[ing] the denial [of the label]” (In 116) they fall into the category of critic parent. It can be argued that limiting the notion of parent advocacy in inclusion to their acceptance of their child’s given label disregards many other possibilities of parent advocacy.

In this interview, Alice formed a perspective on inclusion that trusted the child in deciding how much he/she would like to contribute. This specific perspective on inclusion did not act upon the child with label as it was built on the awareness that “you can’t force someone to do something that they don’t want to do,” as it wouldn’t be “right” (Ins 382-384). Rather, this
perspective constructed the child as a powerful protagonist who “sets the tone” for inclusion. In Alice’s perspective, the passionate educator was secondary to the agentic child in their contributions to build the inclusive environment. Alice identified the goal of inclusion as to “help” (ln 374) the advocate parent who is the catalyst or “the ones that hold the roof” (ln 461) in the inclusion process. Alice’s perspective on the goal of inclusion constructed a binary. The polar opposite to the goal of supporting the parent can be typed as *hindering the parent*. The notion of hindering the parent does not require an intention or effort by the educator; by the virtue of not actively supporting the parent, the educator hinders the parent.

During the interview Alice did not use the term inclusion; however, through the examples she provided from her previous practices Alice constructed an understanding of inclusion that was based on three main elements: the passionate educator, the agentic child, and the advocate parent. Alice discursively constructed inclusion as a system that was based on the “partnership” (ln 435) of these three elements.

**Transcript #2: Barbara’s perspective on inclusion**

The interview with Barbara was scheduled three days after the interview with Alice. Experience from the interview with Alice provided valuable insights into the interview with Barbara. Drawing on these insights, in the second interview my comments on the research participant’s responses were less redundant and I was more confident in seeking elaboration on the concepts. This shift in approach furthered our level of engagement and the depth of dialogue between us.

In her discourse, Barbara mainly drew on her experience working with a child labeled with autism that she identified as the most significant to her. She described this child as “different, in the sense of the way he interacted with [her] compared to all the other children”
Barbara specified, “and I think that’s what drew me to him”… “he was almost like, the odd one out?”… “But he was still special, you know?” (Ins 45-46). On multiple occasions Barbara referred to the way the child labeled with autism performed as “special,” “not being usual,” and “so different” (Ins 46, 60, 136). Barbara discursively constructed the image of the child labeled with autism as an *outsider*. This perspective, of the outsider, placed the child labeled with autism in the opposite position to the usual, typical, and “normally functioning” (In 264) child, or the *insider*.

The constructed dichotomy of outsider-insider reflects a projection of the normalized idea of typical development within the paradigm of the medical model of disability (Lester, 2011). Barbara stated that she completed her undergraduate studies in biology. She also specified that currently she worked in the paramedical field. Following Braun and Clarke (2006) in their definition of latent analysis, it is possible to theorize that the predominant discourse of normalcy in this interview may have been influenced by Barbara’s educational background and current profession. Differing from the human sciences, the standard of normalcy in the natural sciences tends to be based on the mean distribution of the population. The practice of taking a standard of normalcy as the objective results in the othering of those who do not fit within the normal distribution, or the outliers. Given this perspective, Barbara may have conceived the notions of “typically developing child,” as based on a normal distribution, and “atypically developing child,” to fit children who could not belong in the former category.

In Barbara’s perspective on inclusion, the educator had a particular task. The essential role of the educator in Barbara’s terms was to “fully care for the child” (In 277). To do this, the educator must strive “to get to know the child” and “to build a relationship with him” (Ins 46, 51). Caring fully for the child would not be possible without a “supportive environment” (In...
Barbara’s perspective of an environment that could support inclusion was constructed as the environment that “is equipped” with “people power” (lns 336, 337, 341). The equipped environment is the one that is empowered by educators who are “knowledgeable,” and have “experience” working with children labeled with autism (lns 372, 373). The expert educator is the one who “knows, or who can teach the other people” what to do with the child labeled with autism (ln 378).

Barbara’s discourse suggested a belief in an inherent difference in the nature of the child labeled with autism—or the outsider—that required a particular way of interaction. In Barbara’s perspective, the educator needs to be equipped with related knowledge on autism and its characteristics to be able to relate to the “so different” (ln 136) nature of the child. This particular knowledge or expertise is what separates an inclusion educator—or the expert educator—from a regular educator. In Barbara’s perspective, the expert educator is the one who by the means of his/her expertise is eligible to provide “the treatment” (ln 141) that the child labeled with autism requires.

The notion of the expert educator brings with it the incompetent educator who is inexperienced, does not have enough knowledge on the label autism and its characteristics, and does not know how to relate to a child labeled with autism. Drawing on this picture, it can be theorized that in Barbara’s perspective, the incompetent educator(s) would lead to an unequipped environment, hence hinder successful implementation of inclusion.

In Barbara’s terms, inclusion is when the expert educator makes special arrangements in the equipped environment to ensure that the child with label—or the outsider—“get[s] some sort of special attention…towards the way he learns, or the way he [is developing]” (ln 226). For Barbara, the expert educator “caters” the program to “the child’s particular needs” (lns 263, 264).
The examples Barbara provided for catering the program to the child seemed to draw upon a Discourse of normalization. For example Barbara said, “he was normally functioning in terms of, he could go to the toilet by himself, or he could eat on his own…but umm…uh, he needed, umm…he needed help when he was in the playground to play [properly]”…”[he needed help to] kind of pull him to the group activities”… (Ins 207, 264-266). Deepening the analysis to a latent level, and going beyond the surface meaning of Barbara’s explicit statements, one can argue that what Barbara referred to as catering the program to the child is more of adjusting the child to the ways of the program by subjecting him/her to expertise of the educator and the institutional structure of the early childhood context. Later in her discussion, Barbara expressed that an inclusive program is the one that “[strives] to make a difference in a child” (In 354).

Discourses of normalization and expressions of striving to make a change in the child in this interview suggest that Barbara drew a perspective on inclusion as a system in which the expert educator challenges the child with a label to change and assimilate to the equipped environment. Examination of the data from the interview with Barbara highlights the main element in construction of her perspective on inclusion: The expert educator who equips the environment. The expert educator is the main protagonist without whom the environment cannot be equipped. The child with label—or the outsider—is a passive character that is subjected to the requirement to conform imposed by the educator and the environment.

**Transcript # 3: Caroline’s perspective on inclusion**

The process of interview with Caroline started similarly to the previous interviews. However, there were some significant qualities that separated Caroline from any other participant in this research. In addition to being an educator who worked with children labeled with autism, Caroline was a mother of a young child who is labeled with a developmental
disability. This quality situates Caroline in a dual position in relation to inclusion: being the educator who has attempted to provide inclusion and a parent who has been the recipient of an attempt to include.

Caroline’s particular and complex experience with inclusion added a unique perspective to this research. During the dialogue Caroline stated, “I don’t think there is an inclusive program” (ln 210). She reiterated on this idea expressing “I don’t know even how an inclusive setting would look like, actually, but what I have seen, I don’t consider inclusive settings (At All.)” (Ins 216-217). Based on Caroline’s statements, a different approach was taken in examining data from this interview. This particular data item was examined rather for Caroline’s perspective on non-inclusion.

Caroline presented her perspective on non-inclusion through drawing on her previous experiences as an educator. In Caroline’s non-inclusion, the child with label was discursively constructed and typed as the unknown. Talking about the unknown—or the child with label that Caroline worked with—she expressed, “I couldn’t figure him out” (ln 33). She continued, “there was umm, there was something odd, in the behaviour, in the way he sp-was speaking and, the way he was relating to others…” (Ins 33-35). In another occasion Caroline expressed that she felt “insecure” (ln 42) in her competencies to interact with the unknown, as she did not feel “prepared” (ln 108) for these interactions.

Examining Caroline’s expressions beyond their face value suggests a constructed notion of an inherent quality in the child labeled with autism that puts the educator in an insecure situation. The insecurity can lead to frustration and fear as the educator does not know “how to approach [him]” (ln 40). Caroline constructed the non-inclusion educator as the vulnerable educator who is subjected to the inherent “strange” (ln 33) capacities of the unknown. In other
words, the educator is vulnerable to the child’s unpredictability; to the educator, who has been taught one textbook example of a typical child, the child with a label defies the classic and singular understanding of how a child should behave, and sheds light on this singular and insufficient understanding of the range of child development that is taken for granted as the only example.

While drawing the picture of her perspective on non-inclusion, Caroline also opened the probability of imagining inclusion. Caroline’s non-inclusion was built on the notions of the unknown child and the vulnerable educator. The opposite to Caroline’s non-inclusion provides a picture based on two elements: a familiar child and a resilient educator. The resilient educator makes the possibility of the familiar child by “[relating] to the child as a child first” (ln 90), rather than seeing the child as a label. The resilient educator strives to “make a personal connection” (lns 149, 151) with the child and the child’s family. In inclusive settings, the resilient educator develops the program based on his/her knowledge of the familiar child. In inclusion, the curriculum is not guided by the normalizing practices based on the label of the child, but is “tailored” (ln 215) to the individual child.

Caroline’s perspective on non-inclusion suggests a different protagonist than her perspective on inclusion. In the case of non-inclusion, the main agent is the child who makes the educator vulnerable by the virtue of his/her particular way of existence. In inclusion, however, the educator makes it possible for the child to exist in a relatable way.

To conclude, Caroline constructed inclusion as a system that is possible with a resilient educator who tailors the program to the child based on his/her knowledge of this individual child. This perspective suggests what is referred to as individualized curriculum. Perhaps counter intuitively, Broderick et al. (2005) argued that individualized curriculum is one of “the many
ways of marginalization and exclusion in schools” (p. 195). Although the idea of individualized curriculum seems far more inclusive than placing children labeled with disabilities in segregated schools or classrooms, it is nonetheless segregational in effect. The practice of individualized curriculum allows physical proximity of the children with and without labels of disability, while separating them through curriculum. In Broderick et al.’s (2005) terms, “Inclusive education is fundamentally about all students,” hence the curriculum needs to be developed in a way that permits the possibility of participation of all students (p. 195). It is interesting to note how one’s perspective on inclusion can be regarded as other’s definition of marginalization and exclusion. What Caroline considered as one of the main necessities of inclusion—tailoring the curriculum according to the child’s individual needs—is argued by Broderick et al. (2005) to be one of the many ways of marginalization and segregation.

Transcript # 4: Danielle’s perspective on inclusion

Danielle is a postgraduate student with a critical approach to pedagogy. This perspective was explicit in Danielle’s discourse throughout the interview. Danielle’s discourse about inclusion was not restricted to inclusion with its specific focus on special education. Rather, she discursively performed a broader perspective on inclusion that regarded inclusion as participation of all the individuals within a certain community. For example, Danielle talked about one particular experience of hers in which, although being one of the educators in the childcare setting, she did not feel included in the program. Drawing on this experience Danielle specified, “He [the child labeled with autism] was in-included. I wasn’t,” and she continued, “…I wouldn’t call that an inclusive space” (ln 378).

Drawing on this experience, Danielle talked about how the child labeled with autism attended the program with his Special Educational Assistant (SEA). In this particular experience,
the child was marginalized by the virtue of having an SEA who was the main person who interacted with the child. In Danielle’s discourse, it was noticeable that she viewed the close connection between the SEA and the child as a barrier or restricting force to the child’s interaction with others.

Danielle’s discourse rejected the idea of necessity for a mediated participation in inclusion. The SEA, as the mediator, had the potential to direct and shape the relationships of the child, his/her peers, and the educators. This mediated participation isolated and distanced the child from the other members of his/her program. The estranged child is excluded from the program by what is paradoxically perceived as attempts to support him/her. In Danielle’s perspective on inclusion, the child labeled with disability does not need to be “privileged” by receiving a different “treatment” (ln 257), but rather needs to be respected, as do all the individuals attending the program. The notion of mediated participation constructed the concept of direct participation. In direct participation, the child with label is not estranged; rather, he/she is involved. The notion of direct participation does not necessarily reject the idea of having an SEA present, but views the SEA as an enabler, rather than a mediator. The enabler makes it possible for the child to interact with others in the program by not intervening in—or being in the way of—every interaction.

Danielle problematized the experience that she was subjected to in relation to inclusion and constructed an understanding of inclusion that interrogated the idea of marginalization of the child with label through having an SEA who acted as a mediator. In this perspective, inclusion was regarded as unmediated participation of all the individuals in the programs in which they were “respected” and “affirmed in who they are” (lns 417, 418). Danielle’s perspective on
inclusion did not highlight main protagonists; rather, every individual was regarded as similarly agentic.

The picture of the marginalized child and the mediated participation that was problematized by Danielle brings a deeper layer to the findings of this research. By opening this discussion, Danielle interrogated and disrupted the dominant practices of inclusion. Danielle’s perspective opens a space to engage with the uncomfortable question of inclusion. How can inclusion be justified with a marginalized child and mediated participation? Slee and Allen (2001) stated, “We are still citing inclusion as our goal; still waiting to include, yet speaking as if we are already inclusive” (p. 81). In Graham and Slee’s (2006) words, current practices of inclusion where the child is marginalized by the means of special curriculum and/or by working with an SEA, are “cosmetic adjustment to traditional schooling simply work to (re)secure an invisible centre from which constructions of Otherness and the designation of marginal positions become possible” (p. 3).

Transcript # 5: Erica’s perspective on inclusion

Erica is an early childhood educator who also worked as an SEA with a young child labeled with autism, as a one-on-one support, in a preschool program. Although having worked as one-on-one support staff, Erica explicitly opposed the idea of this practice, arguing “one-on-one work” (In 66) can have a disabling nature by making the child dependent on adults. Erica expressed that she viewed “dependency on adult” as “exclusion” (In 139). In Erica’s terms, the independence of the child was “the right concept” (In 147) of inclusion.

They would think the teacher would have to come and sit with him…So even-even the children, were not getting the right concept. He [the child labeled with autism] was not
Erica constructed the notion of the autonomous child as the one that is independent from the adults, yet is “set up [for success]” as “[he is] shown how to play… appropriately... just like the other children” (Ins 156, 158, 159). One can argue that Erica’s reference to autonomy is more of independence within a particular structure that is determined by the educator/adult and the society, or the other children. Although verbally a dichotomy of autonomous versus dependent was constructed, Erica discursively performed the dependent-autonomous child. The dependent-autonomous child is not always in physical proximity of the adult, and is autonomous in meeting his/her physical needs. For example, this child is able to use the bathroom independently, self-feed, self-dress, and join the group activities without an adult accompanying him/her. However, the dependent-autonomous child performs all these actions within the limits of socially acceptable norms and in that sense is dependent on the adult who is there to make sure the child performs appropriately.

The discursive construction of the dependent-autonomous child portrayed the goal in Erica’s perspective on inclusion. Drawing on Erica’s discourse, the goal of inclusion is to reinforce the independent movement of children and enhancing their understanding of socially acceptable behavior: “…if I can get him to walk across the room and leave me? And go do something? Without me? At the end of the day I’ve done. What I came to do” (Ins 53-55). In Erica’s perspective, the most essential element in reaching this goal was “his [the child label with autism] ability to…Adapt and learn skills within the environment” (Ins 333,334). Erica’s discourse performed a belief in the agency of the child as the main protagonist of inclusion. The child or the dependent-autonomous could make the program reach its goal of inclusion if he/she
could assimilate: “…the independence, the confidence…and [the child’s] skills inside that can be worked out and brought out, within the environment…[are the most essential requirements for inclusion]” (Ins 489-490).

In the polar opposite, stands the rebellious-dependent child. The rebellious-dependent does not demonstrate the “ability to…Adapt and learn skills within the environment” (Ins 333, 334), consequently he does not abide by the society’s rules and limitations and does not assimilate, hence exhibits rebellions. The rebellious-dependent child does not “[get] the right concept” (In 147) of inclusion; he/she is physically dependent on adults for certain or all movements. These characteristics of the rebellious-dependent child make him a potential obstacle for inclusion to reach its goal: the independent movement of the child within socially acceptable limits.

To summarize, in Erica’s perspective on inclusion, the main element in the success of inclusion is the dependent-autonomous child who, while maintaining his/her physical independence, affirms to socially acceptable norms. The child’s capacity to assimilate determined the success of the inclusion. In this perspective on inclusion the family performed a passive role: mainly a recipient of support as opposed to a provider of support. The educator’s role was mainly viewed as the one who ensured the child acted within the acceptable norms: an enforcer.

Transcript # 6: Fiona’s perspective on inclusion

Fiona is an early childhood educator who expressed that she worked in both inclusive and non-inclusive settings. Drawing on her background, she gave the example of the non-inclusive settings as the childcare programs that “asked the parents…to pull the child out. As soon as they noticed there was something wrong?” (In 40-42). Yet, the childcare programs that claimed to be
inclusive were also “disappointing” to Fiona, as the educators who worked in those programs “did not know enough? To help them [children labeled with autism]?” (Ins 84-85). Drawing on her experiences, Fiona expressed that although the programs she previously worked in claimed to be inclusive, she did not consider them as such because they did not “cater to, all the children?” (Ins 108-109).

Fiona portrayed an inclusive program as the one that “recognized” that “each child is different,” and was “tailored” according to the child (Ins 112-117). Elaborating on the concept of inclusion, Fiona argued that “professionals…who do more research in this [inclusion],” should be consulted “to see how [the program] could be catered [to the child]” (Ins 138-139). Through these expressions, Fiona constructed the necessity for an expert in inclusion.

Not only was Fiona’s perspective on inclusion not constructed around an image of the educator as an expert, her discourse situated the educator in a distant position from the notion of inclusion. According to Fiona, “[educators] lack experience [and] don’t know enough to cater to them [children labeled with autism]” (Ins 230, 232). Fiona’s perspective on inclusion was constructed around an expert-mediator who had the necessary knowledge to “balance it [the program] out” (In 234). A balanced program was constructed as the one that would not necessarily “revolve everything around this one child, [but would] help him [participate] in this environment” (Ins 151-153). Fiona regarded a balanced environment as an inclusive environment.

Drawing on Fiona’s perspective, it is implied that in the case of the lack of expert-mediator, the environment would not be balanced. An unbalanced environment that does not have an expert-mediator is unable to cater the program to the child with label. Hence, the unbalanced environment that lacks the expert-mediator is a non-inclusive environment.
Discussion: Meta-Themes

Four prominent meta-themes were created by clustering themes throughout the data, some of which were interwoven across the transcripts: acceptance as advocacy, conformity as agency, othering as vulnerability, and knowledge as expertise. These meta-themes were developed from the discourse of the participants. In constructing the meta-themes, the participants’ discourse was taken into account within the social context of early childhood special education; thus, meta-themes may be consistent with or contribute to Discourses on inclusion. These meta-themes are not mutually exclusive and are, instead, overlapping and mutually reinforcing. The overlap between these meta-themes occurs due to their common roots in the educator-child-parent triad that is central to inclusion; in other words, these four meta-themes stem out of the various aspects of interactions between the educator, child, and parents in the construction of inclusion. As these meta-themes are interconnected to each other through their origin, they are not hierarchized in an order of their importance in the larger frame of inclusion; therefore, the listing of these themes could have been in any order.

Acceptance as Advocacy. Drawing on the transcripts, advocacy presents itself as the entanglement of multiple roles. The educator and the parents both have a part in advocating for inclusion; these parts are interdependent. The educator, whose role is to recognize the child’s label and the difficulties associated with it, seeks the parent’s affirmation of their knowledge in relation to the child’s differences. The parent must also accept the educator’s understanding of their child in order to receive the services viewed as necessary in working with the challenges associated with the label. Mutual acceptance of the child’s label is the first step of establishing support. However, establishing support does not end at the acceptance of the child, but also continues on as providing the means to tend to the needs of the educator and the parent in the
context of caring for the child. Support that can be provided varies from the perceived necessary information that the educator uses to facilitate inclusion, to monetary funds for the parents and/or school for the continuity of care. Particularities of the certain roles established also stand out in the grand context of inclusion and are further elaborated.

One dimension of significance in establishing support is the type of parent, the advocate parent. The advocate parent was constructed as the one that supports the educator—and consequently the process of inclusion—by first acknowledging that there are challenges associated with the behaviours the child exhibits, and further by communicating this information to the educator who is supposed to care for his/her child. Identifying parental support to the educator and the process of inclusion through their acknowledgment—or lack of acknowledgement—of the challenges associated with the child’s behavior—or his/her label—is not a novel notion. Dettmer, Thurston, and Dyck (2005) cited “effective parent involvement” as an essential element in the success of inclusion (p. 40). For parents to be effectively involved, one of the main requirements is to provide educators with the information “about the nature of [their child’s] disability” (p. 41). Withholding this information is perceived as lack of support to the educator, and the school, on the parents’ part. While parents who acknowledge possible challenges associated with their child’s behavior or label—and communicate this information to their child’s educator—are established as supportive parents, the ones that deny it—or fail to communicate this information to the educator—are regarded as undermining.

Although there was no explicit type of educator in reference to the concept of acceptance as advocacy, the educator’s role becomes visible in relation to the parent. Within setting the ground for the support, the educator’s ability to provide his/her services in working with the child depends on the parent’s acknowledgement of a common institutional ground of
understanding. Therefore, the educator’s understanding is rendered purposeless without the parent’s acceptance. The advocacy that stems from the relationship between the educator and the parent is a necessary step in acquiring external support in the forms of official application of the label and the means of help that come attached to it.

The child, even though he/she is a key feature, does not have an active role in the formation of advocacy; he/she is on the receiving side of this set of social relations. In this sense, the child’s own acceptance of this advocacy and establishing support can be regarded as his/her conformity to the system. This idea is elaborated next.

**Conformity as Agency.** Both the social and physical aspects of an environment set limitations to which all children must submit. Internalizing the obligation of conformity to these restrictions is expected as a part of social development. Children who are viewed as learning how to exhibit the expected behaviours for early childhood environments at a significantly slower rate than their peers are marginalized by the means of labels. For example, one of the highlighted characteristics of the label autism is nonconformity to certain social restrictions and rules. This is referred to as behavioural challenges that educators attempt to change through behavioural modification techniques.

The child can actively work to conform to societal restrictions, as can be seen in the typology of the agentic child. The agentic child was constructed based on Alice’s references to two main characteristics of the child labeled with autism, whom she had previously worked with: his ability to self-regulate, and his efforts to be a part of the so-called typical population. The agency of the child was not demonstrated in relation to his own will; rather, the child showed agency in conforming to society’s will.
This construction of the agentic child is paradoxical in nature. The child’s agency is praised when his actions are oriented towards the goal of normalization. The self-contradiction underlying the concept of the agentic child is brought to light with the idea that: were his wish perceived as unacceptable in relation to standards imposed on him, the child would no longer be praised for demonstrating his agency in obtaining what he wanted. Although the child’s discomfort in performing the behaviours demanded of him and his disinclination to fit in with peers is not contemplated by the educators when his actions are still in line with the goals of normalization, the child’s volition becomes labeled as problematic when he follows his own intentions.

The agentic child’s quality of seeking to normalize was also touched upon across the data. Erica regarded one of the outcomes of successful inclusion as having the child with a label conform to his/her environment; the child exhibiting actions which can be accounted as signs of nonconformity would then be regarded as countering the aims of inclusion and be labeled as problematic. Once again, the child’s own will in conforming to social expectations was not considered. The erasure of the child’s will removes any possible motive of a child’s challenging or problematic behaviour, other than the goal of disregarding social convention for the sake of it. Therefore, in accordance with this frame of mind, an act that is not in line with the norm, regardless of the degree of involvement of the child’s will, cannot be considered as agency, but rather as social rebellion.

The child is not the only one who must conform to the society’s idealized view of “normal.” Both the educator and the parents also must learn to work using the definitions of normality. Each system has its dominant Discourses; these are the “type of [Discourses] which [are] accepted and [make] function as truth” (Foucault, 1980, p. 132). Being part of the system is
a matter of conformity to the dominant Discourses. In other words, parents and educators also conform to the society by accepting the truth suggested by the label. Although parents and educators are not the subjects of the label and its implications within the context of what is “normal,” they are bound to it regardless.

Othering as Vulnerability. From the transcripts, the othering of a child with a label occurs frequently and comes in different forms. When looking at the dynamics of marginalization, the child—who is othered—is not the only one who is in a vulnerable position. The educator, through these othering acts, puts himself/herself in a position where he/she is vulnerable to the child as the unknown. One can examine the relationship between the performer and the object of marginalization through looking at the type of the vulnerable educator.

The vulnerable educator was defined as the educator who felt insecure in his/her interactions with the child with label. The educator’s vulnerability was subjected to the child with label, typed as unknown, whose behaviours and characteristics were viewed by the educator as unfamiliar. The unfamiliarity of the child was seen as the reason for the educator’s hesitance to interact with him/her. The educator’s perceptions of the child with label—as the unknown marginalized and othered child—thus, also places the child in a position of vulnerability.

In this typology, the educator’s vulnerability in creating non-inclusion is rooted in the child’s divergence from the norm. However, it can be equally argued that the child’s peculiarity to the educator stems from the dominant Discourse of normal. In other words, the child’s projection in the educator’s mind—or the educator’s perception of the child—as the unknown can be traced back to the overpowering narrative of the so-called typically developing child. The child’s defiance of the educator’s expectations, which have been formed based on the universalized notion of normal behaviour, displays the insufficiency of the singular,
conventional, and individual understanding of development as something a child does. The educator’s initial confusion potentially results in fear that leads to othering of the unknown.

While explicit identification of the child with a label as unknown is one manifestation of the educator’s fear, vulnerability of the educator in the face of the child with a label was also identified throughout the data in other forms of distinguishing the child from his peers. One method of distinguishing this was the educator’s apparent fascination with the child’s advanced abilities.

Elevating the child with a label above and beyond his or her peers, on the surface level, is simply an intense fascination on the part of the educator; on the other hand, the novelty of taking care of a child with label for the first time may seem daunting to an educator, who then may have dealt with his/her feelings through focusing on the positives of working with this particular and new child. Regardless of the reasoning behind it, the continual focus on the child’s uniqueness is an act of marginalization. Although it may initially seem benevolent on the part of the educator, emphasizing the otherness of the child with a label, no matter how favorable these othering qualities are, they act to alienate the child. The child is created as unknown and unknowable by the virtue of his/her alienation or difference from the educator. The educator, then, is vulnerable to the unpredictable qualities of the unknown and, in a related way, the child is vulnerable to the othering of the educator.

**Knowledge as Expertise.** The role of expertise in successful inclusion surfaced in multiple transcripts. According to these perspectives, an expert is a key agent in creating inclusion. The expert is characterized as possessing both theoretical and empirical knowledge: in this case, the expert must have both information on the label autism and experience working with children labeled with it.
Although both pieces of this construction are required to fit the definition of an expert, the question of the relative significance of each piece remains a question. One wonders to what extent a person who has received the sufficient education to care for a child labeled with autism, but does not have any experience doing so, would be considered an expert. In addition, the reverse: the level of expertise of a person who has had a great deal of experience working with children labeled with autism, but an educational background that does not meet the extensiveness of their level of experience can also be questioned.

This brings up the role of parents as experts. Although within the interviews some educators stated that they believed parents were a good source of information on their own children’s behavior, the parents were more often discursively constructed as passive recipients of the educator’s expertise. However, expertise is compromised of more than simply theoretical knowledge. The parent’s empirical—experience based—knowledge of his/her own child exceeds an educator’s empirical knowledge on the child, whether or not the educator has the theoretical knowledge of the child’s label or not. In this sense, although the parent may not know about their child’s label on a theoretical level, he/she could be regarded as an expert on their own child; by communicating the knowledge of their child to the educator, parents establish themselves as an expert in facilitating inclusion. For this sort of knowledge to be a resource, however, educators would need to recognize it as such.

There is a compelling argument that both elements of expertise—theoretical and empirical knowledge—would lessen the vulnerability of an educator to the child with label, and facilitate inclusion. In line with this argument, as the educator learns about the label and encounters children with the label more often, the child would be less of an unknown to the educator. An equally powerful argument suggests that, as the educator becomes more of an
expert in the matter, the child loses his/her identity to the dominance of the label. In other words, the educator views the child through the lenses of an expert filtered by the established knowledge of the label.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the data analysis process divided into three sections. The first section provided a brief description on the process of constructing the transcripts as the preliminary analysis. The second section presented the thematic analysis of the six interviews. Finally, the chapter provided a discussion of four meta-themes that I created based on themes across the transcripts: acceptance as advocacy, conformity as agency, othering as vulnerability, and knowledge as expertise.
Chapter Five

Conclusion

The purpose of the research was to learn from the participants their perspectives on inclusion. This study was based on the recognition that different Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) may have varied understandings of the notion of inclusion and that these various understandings may be contingent on multiple features, including but not limited to their past experiences, their socio-cultural background, and their context. The research questions that guided this study were:

1. What are the participants’ perspectives on inclusion?
2. What factors are influential in the participants’ perspectives on inclusion?
3. How do the participants’ perspectives on inclusion inform their practices?

As a result of the study, four prominent meta-themes surfaced in the participants’ perspectives on inclusion: acceptance as advocacy, conformity as agency, othering as vulnerability, and knowledge as expertise.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section presents a summary of the previous chapters. Second, I discuss the strengths and limitations of the research. Third, I suggest implications and recommendations for practice. Last, the fourth section describes potential future studies that build on this research.

Summary of the Study

Chapter one began by describing some of the experiences that inspired me to question my understanding of the concept of inclusion; I had previously assumed inclusion to be a singular and universal concept. Questioning the contextual relativity of perspectives on inclusion was the foundation to the problem that I examined in this thesis. Furthermore, I confronted the lack of
scholarly work that represented the perspectives of Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) in inclusion as a second problem with which to engage. In line with the philosophy that inclusion is not a singular and universal concept, and is instead contextually rooted, chapter one suggested the purpose of this study was to learn from the participants their perspectives on inclusion. This chapter presented the three research questions that were articulated in order to give shape to this investigation.

Further, chapter one included the context of the study and, therefore, a discussion of Early Childhood Care and Education Services (ECCES) in British Columbia was provided. This section elaborated on the different professionals involved in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), the legislation surrounding ECCES, and the variations of practices involved. Critical special education perspectives, in particular the work of Slee (2014), grounded the theoretical framework of the study. According to Slee (2014), the current practices of inclusion are yet additional forms of marginalization, through “paradoxically named programs for inclusive education” (p. 7). Critical special education perspectives call for curriculum and pedagogies of schooling that are deputies of democracy (Slee, 2014). These perspectives view inclusion as a system that recognizes individual competency, and values each individual’s contributions (Slee, 2014). Finally, chapter one briefly described an overview of the study: qualitative research with data collected using a semi-structured active interview protocol analyzed using thematic analysis informed by deconstruction. The chapter ended with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two began by examining the conventional perspectives on inclusion; these perspectives were defined as using “inclusion” and “integration” interchangeably, and in reference to the idea of normalization. This section reviewed the history of the Normalization Movement that contributed, in part, to a dominant Discourse on the integration of children in
general education. The significance of the Salamanca Statement (1994) within the global movement of integration was highlighted. As well, three models of integration were elaborated: locational integration, social integration, and functional integration. This chapter also discussed the trend of quantifying educator’s attitude towards inclusion in a significant portion of related scholarly work. Quantitative studies on a large sample size that used surveys as the primary means of gathering data, and their approaches to the notion of inclusion as a singular and universal understanding were included.

Chapter two moved on to review literature from critical perspectives on inclusion. Objections that these perspectives have toward the dominant Discourse on inclusion were highlighted. These objections of the dominant Discourse were the continual focus on normalization, the view of a child with label as someone to be fixed to fit the general classroom, and the erasure of the complexity of the notion of inclusion. The alternatives offered by critical perspectives on inclusion—such as acknowledging the value of each child’s difference, moving away from normalizing Discourses, allowing for each child to be able to contribute in his/her own way, and considering the contextual nature of inclusion—were also discussed. Within this chapter, the context of inclusion in ECCES was also reviewed in further detail. Legislation and practices around inclusion of children with labels in ECCE were examined. The chapter examined both BC-specific and international legislation and practices around inclusion within ECCE. This section also looked at the legislation and practices of inclusion at the grades K-12 level in BC.

Furthermore, chapter two reviewed literature on Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), both from conventional perspectives and critical perspectives. The section on conventional perspectives provided a medical definition of ASD. The section on critical perspectives of the
label ASD discussed disability labels in terms of social constructions based on the current prevailing Discourse of normalcy. This section argued that disabilities are not inherent capacities, but rather are socially constructed notions. Chapter two ended by examining the term “discourse” as it has been used in the fields of linguistics and social sciences, and by presenting the dichotomy of discourse/Discourse. The chapter discussed Gee’s (2005) distinction between the two understandings of this term—for the linguistic approach, “discourse” refers to utterances and language-in-use, and for the social sciences approach, “Discourse” refers to the ideologically infused interaction of language, meaning, and social context—through difference in capitalization.

Chapter three described the methodology of the research. The chapter began by explicating the position of the researcher as aligned with post-structuralist perspectives. Post-structuralist perspectives were defined as those that question the legitimacy of assumed absolute truths. This section explained how post-structural thinking affected the design of this research and was a contributing factor to my focus on ECEs’ understanding of inclusion. Chapter three continued by elaborating on the qualitative nature of this research, and outlining the process of preparation for data collection. Recruitment of participants through purposeful sampling and snowball sampling, the criteria for selecting research participants, deciding on interview settings, and obtaining consent from the research participants were discussed. Demographic backgrounds of the research participants were provided. This section noted that the rights of the research participants, such as the right to withdraw from the study at any point, were explained to the participant, both on the consent form and before the interviews began.

Furthermore, chapter three explained the active interview process as the sole means of generating data. Talmy’s (2010) principle of “research interview as social practice” was
presented as the philosophy that informed the data collection. According to this principle, the research interview is a “social action” where the data is co-constructed by the researcher and the research participants through their interactions within the context of the interview (Talmy, 2010, p. 129).

For the analysis of the data, a discussion on thematic analysis informed by Derridian deconstruction was provided. The steps to perform a thematic analysis on the data, based on Braun and Clarke (2006), was outlined. It was highlighted that thematic analysis was chosen due to its “theoretical freedom,” or the flexibility of thematic analysis in applying across different epistemologies (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 78). This section also outlined the steps of Derridian deconstruction, where the oppositions inherent to discourses were examined to consider notions that did not fit within assumed binaries. The section explained that thematic analysis informed by Derridian deconstruction was used to find prominent themes across the data set, and examine the binaries that these themes created. Finally, the chapter reviewed the process of data collection in three phases: introduction to the interview, dialogue, and closure.

Chapter four presented the data analysis process, divided into three sections: preliminary analysis, thematic analysis, and a discussion section on meta-themes generated. The preliminary analysis section presented the rationale for the construction of transcripts. In the thematic analysis section, the six transcripts were examined in detail. Finally, the discussion section provided four prominent meta-themes that were identified across the data set by clustering the themes: acceptance as advocacy, conformity as agency, othering as vulnerability, and knowledge as expertise. This section highlighted that these meta-themes were identified in relation to inclusion concerning the label of ASD and, thus, may not apply to other labels.
Within the meta-theme of advocacy as acceptance, the parent was seen as being responsible for accepting the label given to their child. The parent’s acceptance of their child’s label was presented as the first step to advocate for the proper treatment and inclusion of a child with label. Rejection that a parent may have against the labeling of their child was posed as problematic on the parent’s part. In this meta-theme, all other possible forms of parental advocacy were erased in favor of one: to accept their child’s label. The idea that the parent is responsible in accepting their child’s label in order to further inclusion is one that appears in the conventional Discourse on inclusion. It is the parent’s responsibility to accept that a child must receive a label before any official support can be delivered to assist with his/her inclusion. The label is seen as an essential force within the popular Discourse on inclusion, as it is necessary in getting official support to provide care for the child, unlike in critical approaches towards inclusion where the label is seen as a method of marginalization (Slee, 2014).

Conformity as agency was the idea that a child’s efforts in trying to blend in with his peers should be celebrated, and that these efforts aid the process of including him/her. The child’s agency here was defined as whether the child was using his/her willpower to fit into the standards of normalcy imposed on him/her by the societal conventions around him; whether or not he/she wanted to, or was comfortable with, fitting into these standards was not considered. This counters the connotation of agency where an individual does what he/she wants or desires. The notion that the child with label can become an active creator of his own inclusion amongst his peers does not seem to be consistent with the dominant Discourse of inclusion. The dominant Discourse on inclusion focuses highly on the positive outcomes of early intervention for children labeled with disabilities (Corsello, 2005; Rogers, 1996). According to this perspective, early intervention supports inclusion by intervening into the child’s way of being, and adjusting
him/her to fit in the school system through behavioural modification techniques (Corsello, 2005; Rogers, 1996). This Discourse views the child as a passive object who is modified or regulated, instead of an active subject who modifies or regulates himself. However, both the dominant Discourse on inclusion and the discourse of the research participants—wherein the child is an active agent in his/her own inclusion—disregard the child’s comfort level and volition. In both cases, the child who acts in ways that are not socially acceptable is seen as rebellious, and these behaviours are positioned as an obstacle to his/her inclusion.

Othering as vulnerability in the interviews was posed in the form of an educator who felt insecure in his/her practice due to the “otherness” of a child with label. This educator, by seeing the child with label as unfamiliar and “strange” in comparison to other children, excluded and marginalized the child. The educator’s acts of marginalization created non-inclusion by putting both himself/herself and the child in a position of vulnerability. The label of the child, which set him/her aside from his/her peers, was seen as a method of marginalization in the frame of “othering as vulnerability.” This understanding seems to misalign with the dominant Discourse on inclusion. Within the dominant Discourse, the construction of so-called typical development is a set of standards by which all children are measured. The labeling-with-disabilities of children who do not fit these standards is seen as an essential step in including these children, as an early diagnosis is seen as the gateway to early intervention and, thus, inclusion (Corsello, 2005; Rogers, 1996).

The last meta-theme, knowledge as expertise, was constructed based on the idea that both theoretical and empirical knowledge were necessary for the educator to be eligible to work in an inclusive setting. In the case of ASD, the construction of expertise required both theoretical knowledge on the label of ASD and experience working with children who had this label. A
possible argument that also connected with the notion of “otherness as vulnerability” was that a knowledgeable educator would be less “vulnerable” to the otherness of a child, due to familiarity with his/her label. However, this understanding of expertise seemed to misalign with the constructions of parents in the participants’ discourse; although the parent could be considered an expert on their own child in the sense that they have more experience taking care of their child than the educator does, the parent was viewed as a passive element in most research participants’ discursive construction of inclusion. This can be compared to the dominant Discourse on inclusion, wherein parents are passive recipients of support and expertise of professionals, such as the educator, Special Educational Assistant, and Applied Behavioural Analyst. This system is regarded as the net of expertise with the authority to decide what means should be used as part of the child’s behavioural modification, and to what construction of normalcy the child should strive to match.

**Strengths and Limitations**

The research reported here was based upon a critical qualitative study. The choice of qualitative study was a major strength in this research as it distinguished this study from research on this topic using quantitative methods, such as surveys, and enabled the participants’ perspectives on inclusion to become the object of the research. The methodological choice enriched the findings of the study by providing accounts of the participants’ perspectives on inclusion beyond the explicit and surface meaning of the data, further into the underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations.

Moreover, the epistemological stand of this research that drew on critical perspective of special education situated the present study amongst few that have challenged the status quo of inclusion as advocated by conventional perspectives. The conventional perspectives suggest a
singular, universal, and taken-for-granted perspective on inclusion among the practitioners. Following an epistemology that highly regards the acknowledgement of the implications of the socio-cultural, contextual, and individual components in perspectives on the notions, this study highlighted each participant’s unique perspective on the notion of inclusion.

Equally important, to the best of my knowledge, this research was one of the first that interviewed early childhood educators in their perspective on inclusion. Related research either investigated the early childhood educators’ attitudes toward inclusion by the means of surveys, or interviewed them on their perception of successful inclusion. This study seems to be the first to acknowledge the early childhood educators’ expertise in *telling their own stories* of inclusion by examining their perspectives of the notion of inclusion based on their practices of inclusion.

This study and its contributions to the topic of inclusion provide valuable insight into the future works of practitioners and researchers. However, this research is not without its limitations. The study utilized interview as the sole means of generating data. Using a single mode in gendering data is a limitation to this study as the results draw on a single source of data. As a consequence of this limitation, the third research question—How do the participants’ perspectives on inclusion inform their practices?—relied solely on the self-descriptions of participants during interviews. Including observational data to inquire into the practices of educators could have enabled triangulation and elaborated my response to this particular question, further enriching the results of the study.

Arguably, another limitation of this study could be regarded as the small sample size. Six early childhood educators were interviewed in this study. The findings of this study are specific to the participants and the findings do not suggest a general perspective on the notion of inclusion on the part of the early childhood educators.
Implications of the Study

The results of this study suggest that, rather than being a universal and agreed upon notion, inclusion is contextually contingent. It differs for educators across contexts and, potentially, differs when educators work with different children as well. The six educators interviewed for this study differed in many senses, such as their socio-cultural background, age, level of education, number of years of experience working with children, settings in which they worked, professionals with whom they interacted, and the children with whom they worked. While it is not clear to what extent the combination of these differences resulted in different perspectives on inclusion, what is clear is that no single or universal perspective on inclusion surfaced across the interviews. There was also a sense from these participants that, although educators may use the language of inclusion, inclusive environments may be too difficult to create.

A primary educational implication is, therefore, that it is important to open up a space to consider the complexities of defining and performing inclusion with and between educators. This is especially significant because ECEs do not, at present, have access to educational opportunities and professional development that engages them in discussions around inclusion. In BC, there is no legislation in early childhood level on inclusive education. The lack of relevant legislation inhibits discussions relevant to inclusion. Legislation relevant to inclusion in early childhood education, similar to legislation related to inclusion in the K-12 level, may open up a space for ECEs to be able to discuss inclusion. Opening the possibility of dialogue that may surface multiple perspectives on the concept of inclusion permits the likelihood, as well, of different practices of inclusion to be discussed.

A second implication, for researchers more specifically, is that the field of ECE, despite being overlooked in research relating to special education, is a field of valuable knowledge.
Although inclusion is a widely researched area and a significant number of studies have been conducted on the attitudes of other professionals such as head teachers (Center, Ward, Parmenter, & Nash, 1985), regular teachers (Center & Ward, 1987), school psychologists (Center & Ward, 1989), preschool administrators (Bochner & Pieterse, 1989), principals and special education teachers (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999), and student teachers (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000), there are few studies on inclusion as it relates to ECCE. It is my hope that this study will raise awareness within the ECE community and beyond of the voices of individuals with a variety of different experiences that relate to inclusion, yet whose voices are often ignored in both research and legislation that follows the dominant Discourse on inclusion. By addressing a gap in the literature and following a post-structural qualitative approach that foregrounds the significance of the participants’ unique recounting of experiences, the experiences of these ECEs were repositioned as an important source of knowledge and expertise.

As a third implication, I return with my own voice as an ECE who learned a great deal from the participants in this study, both about their perspectives on inclusion and my own. I ask the question, What if we approach inclusion as if it is a form of relational practice? As an alternative to the dominant Discourse, this concept of relational inclusion could be defined this way: as a practice of inclusion that foregrounds the relation between child, family, and educator within a particular social and cultural environment. Each role—child, family, educator—adds to the complexity of the system, as does the environment, constituted given physical space and resources, for example. This, therefore, requires a method of defining the concept differently, as through relation and through practice. As a consequence, inclusion may be performed differently from the perspective of each one of these roles, their relation to each other, and based on their position within a particular environment.
The concept of relational inclusion that I propose as an alternative stems from the experience of conducting this study; an experience that I regard as transformative in relation to my philosophical outlook. Although the term transformative sometimes implies moving from one position to another position, in this case I feel that my perspective on inclusion is in a state of constant change; ever more tentative, conditional, partial, and positional. The process of designing research and conducting the interviews with the research participants was significant in this transformation; my perspectives on inclusion drastically changed when I created the research questions and by the time I had conducted the last interview, and with each interview, my perspective shifted a little more. While conducting these interviews, I found that my views on inclusion responded to each participant’s stories, ideas, and discussions of the various interactions between the roles that contributed to inclusion, such as the educator, parents, child, and the environment. When analyzing each of these interviews, and looking at notes in my research journal that coincided with each interview, I realized that my perspectives on inclusion shifted closer to the participants’ perspectives as each of them discussed the context that formed their views.

As my perspectives on inclusion changed in accordance with the context presented, my sense of the central role of relationship in enabling participants to articulate what was recognizable to them as inclusion and non-inclusion was, in part, what lead to the idea of relational inclusion: inclusion must have a relational quality to it that links both roles and contexts to a certain perspective on what is possible for children who are perceived to be different.

**Ideas for Future Research**

This research utilized active interview as the means of generating data. The interviews
were audio-recorded and the findings of the study were mainly drawn on the verbal aspects of the conversations between the research participants and the researcher. The method of data gathering in this study did not permit for the consideration of the non-verbal behaviors of the participants. It is suggested that researchers should broaden their focus from “talk-in-interaction to talk-and-other modes of communication-in-interaction” (Lester, 2011, p. 305). Attending to the non-verbal aspects of communication is particularly important in active interviews, where the researcher openly acknowledges that the data is produced through the interaction between the research participant(s) and the researcher. A possible future study would be to shift from merely focusing on talk to focus on verbal and non-verbal modes of communication by using video recording as the method of gathering data. Furthermore, examining the practices of the research participants beyond what was said in interviews through observations in early childhood education centres would allow me to attend to the educators’ actions and discourses related to inclusion in the classroom.

In addition, this research can be furthered by designing a study that focuses on the notion of relational inclusion. The notion of relational inclusion that I proposed earlier in this chapter suggests that the relations between the roles of the child, parent, and educator within a particular context are central in shaping their perspectives on inclusion. In particular, I am interested in examining the perspectives of each of these protagonists of inclusion—child, parent, and educator—based on their relations with one another and within their particular context. Multisited ethnography would allow me to observe a child in his or her home setting and then follow the child to an early childhood education centre, therefore, enabling me to learn from both families and professionals about the way inclusion is negotiated for and with that particular child.
As noted throughout this research, few research studies have included the voice of early childhood educators as the research participants in topics around inclusion. This is the case even though early childhood education environments are often the first out of home care for young children labeled with disabilities and early childhood educators are among the first to provide for their care and education beyond their home environment. Examining early childhood educators’ perspectives on and experiences with inclusion is essential, and is sorely missing in the related literature. My future research will continue to honor the experiences of early childhood educators with inclusion and I will work to include their professional insights in the literature.
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Appendix A

Consent Form for Early Childhood Educators

I. Who is conducting the study?

Principal Investigator:
Steven Talmy, Ph.D.
Department of Language & Literacy Education
University of British Columbia

Co-Investigator:
Maryam Dalkilic
Early Childhood Education
Centre for Cross-Faculty Inquiry in Education
University of British Columbia

This research is being conducted as part of a Master’s thesis: a public document used to satisfy the requirements of the degree in progress.
II. Invitation and Study Purpose

Why should you take part in this study?
You are invited to participate in this research study because you are an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) who has had experience working with young children labeled with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in a preschool/daycare classroom.

Why are we doing this study?
Through this research, we want to learn more about how ECEs understand inclusion, when it comes to including young children labeled with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms. We believe that the best way to learn about ECEs’ understanding of including young children labeled with ASD is to talk with them about their related past experiences.
The study will examine:
1) The ECEs understanding of including young children with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms.
2) The factors that build ECEs current understanding of including young children with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms.
3) The way ECEs understanding of including young children with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms affects their practices.

III. What will you do in this study?

If you say “Yes”, here is how we will do the study:
• The co-investigator (Maryam Dalkilic) will contact you to arrange a time and place to interview you for approximately an hour. The co-investigator will ask you when and where you would like to be interviewed.
• There will be one interview session, and one follow-up interview session in which transcripts from the first interview will be checked and preliminary findings will be shared. You have the right to deny the follow-up interview session.
• The co-investigator and you will meet at the place and time you both agreed upon.
• The co-investigator will introduce herself, give some information about her background in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), answer any
questions related to the study/interview/confidentiality you might have, and ask you if you are ready to answer the research questions.

- The co-investigator will audio-record the interview so that she does not have to take notes. We believe that the co-investigator can engage better in the interview process when she is not distracted by taking notes during the interview.
- As the focus of this study is to learn about each individual ECE’s understanding of including young children labeled with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms, there are no right or wrong answers. Each answer you give is only the representation of what you think. Your knowledge or your understanding of inclusion or including young children labeled with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms will not be judged based on your answers to the research questions.

If you say “No”, we will ensure the following:

- You will not be contacted for the interview, meaning you will not be part of this research study.

IV. Study results?

The data from this study will be used for data analysis for the purpose of answering the study’s research questions. The results of this study will be reported in a Master’s thesis and may be published in journal articles and books.

V. Is there any way being in this study could be bad for you?

You may feel uncomfortable your voice being recorded during the interview. You might feel your ideas and practice might be judged or evaluated. To avoid this, the co-investigator will let you know that during the interview at any point you have the right to withdraw from the research. Meaning, if you feel uncomfortable for any reason you can tell the co-investigator that you do not want to be part of this research anymore and that you would like the audio records of your voice to be deleted right there. You do not need to give any reasons as why you do not want to continue with the interview. Furthermore, the principal investigator of this research, Dr. Steven Talmy, may be contacted if you do not feel comfortable talking to the co-investigator about wanting to withdraw from the study. Judging and evaluating your ideas or your practice is not the purpose of this research, and so the co-investigator’s notes and
final documents (research thesis, and any articles or books that might be published) will not reflect this perspective.

VI. What are the benefits for your participation in this study?

Direct benefits:
You might find benefits sharing your ideas and understandings with a colleague who has had some similar experience in the field. The co-investigator has worked in the field of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for over a decade and has some experiences in including young children labeled with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in preschool/daycare settings. While the primary focus of this study is for the co-investigator to learn about your understanding of including young children labeled with ASD in preschool/daycare settings, she will be talking about her related experiences as well.

Indirect benefits:
Your participation in this study may help the field of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) understand how different Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) can have different understanding of including young children labeled with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in preschool/daycare classrooms. We hope that adding this perspective to the conversation will impact some of the assumptions held about all the ECEs having similar understanding of including young children labeled with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms. By challenging these assumptions, this research may affect how some ECEs are judged based on their approach to including young children labeled with ASD into preschool/daycare classrooms.

VII. Measures to maintain confidentiality

Data collected from the interview will not be attached to your name. In the transcripts of the audio records you will be referred to as Educator # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 (as there will be 6 educators participating in this study). Identifying factors will also be changed in order to lessen the possibility of recognition even within the field of ECCE. Additionally, audio records will be deleted from the co-investigator's personal computer as soon as they are transcribed. The transcriptions will be
stored in a password-protected file on the co-investigator’s personal computer. These transcriptions will be deleted from the co-investigator’s computer after five years from the interview.

VIII. Who can you contact if you have any questions about the study?

If you have any questions or seek further information about this study, please contact Steven Talmy at [redacted] or Maryam Dalkilic at [redacted].

IX. Who can you contact if you have complains or concerns about the study?

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or email RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

X. Participant consent and signature

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative impact on you.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Participant Signature

Date

Printed name of the Participant signing above.
Appendix B

Consent Form for Daycare/Preschool

Consent Form

Deconstructing Early Childhood Educators’ Conceptualizations of Inclusion: Representations of Caring for Young Children Labeled with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Preschool/Daycare Settings

Consent Form for Daycare/Preschool

I. Who is conducting the study?

Principal Investigator:
Steven Talmy, Ph.D.
Department of Language & Literacy Education
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University of British Columbia
II. Invitation and Study Purpose

Why are we doing this study?
Through this research, we want to learn more about how ECEs understand inclusion when it comes to including young children labeled with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms. We believe that the best way to learn about ECEs’ understanding of including young children labeled with ASD is to talk with them about their related past experiences.

The study will examine:

1) The ECEs understanding of including young children with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms.
2) The factors that build ECEs current understanding of including young children with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms.
3) The way ECEs understanding of including young children with ASD in preschool/daycare classrooms affects their practices.

III. What will you do in this study?

We are asking for your consent as one or more of the Early Childhood Educators (ECEs) currently working in your daycare/preschool have agreed to take part in this study. We are asking your organization to take part in this study in following ways:

1) To use an available space (classroom, library, etc.) in your daycare/preschool to conduct the interview with the ECEs who work in your organization, either after work hours or during work hours in an empty space. For the purpose of maintaining confidentiality we prefer to conduct the interviews without the presence of a third party.
2) The ECEs will be asked to talk about their previous/current experiences regarding including young children labeled with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in preschool/daycare classrooms. While some of these experiences might be related to their works in other places than your organization, the ECEs might be giving some examples related to their current work with the children and parents in your organization. The ECEs will be reminded of confidentiality and that they are not to use any names of the children or their parents while talking about their experiences. The name of your organization will not be mentioned in the report of the study or any publications related to the study. Any identifying features related to your organization will be changed to minimize the possibility of your organization being recognized.

If you say “Yes”, here is how we will do the study:

• The co-investigator (Maryam Dalkilic) will contact you to ask for an available space at your convenience for the interview with the ECEs who work in your center.

• There will be one interview session per ECE, unless the co-investigator and the ECE agree upon a follow up session. In that case the co-investigator will contact you for the possibility of using your space for one additional interview session.

• On the day of the interview, the co-investigator will meet the ECE at your organization. The co-investigator will introduce herself to the contact person in your organization and will ask for the space that you have agreed to provide to the co-investigator and the ECE for the purpose of the interview.

• The co-investigator will audio-record the interview so that she does not have to take notes. We believe that the co-investigator can engage better in the interview process if she is not distracted by taking notes during the interview.

• The interview will last for approximately an hour.

If you say “No”, we will ensure the following:

• The interview will not be taking place in your organization and the ECEs will be asked not to give any examples related to their current work.

IV. Study results?
The data from this study will be used for data analysis for the purpose of answering the study's research questions. The results of this study will be reported in a Master's thesis and may be published in journal articles and books.

V. Is there any way being in this study could be bad for you?

You may feel uncomfortable with your employee discussing their experiences in your organization with the co-investigator. You might feel your organizations approach to inclusion or your managerial policies might be judged or evaluated. Judging and evaluating your organization’s approach to inclusion or your organization’s managerial policies is not the purpose of this research, and so the co-investigator’s notes and final documents (research thesis, and any articles or books that might be published) will not reflect this perspective. Please be advised that you do have the right to withdraw from this research at any point you feel uncomfortable without having to present any reasons for your withdrawal. Furthermore, the principal investigator of this research, Dr. Steven Talmy, may be contacted if you do not feel comfortable talking to the co-investigator about wanting to withdraw from the study.

VI. What are the benefits for your participation in this study?

Direct benefits:
You might find professional satisfaction in having been a part of a research study, having been a support to a graduate student and/or having been a support to a colleague (the co-investigator is an ECE) in furthering her academic/professional competencies.

VII. Measures to maintain confidentiality

Data collected from the interview will not be attached the name of your organization. Any
Identifying factors will also be changed in order to lessen the possibility of recognition of your organization even within the field of Early Childhood Care and Education.

VIII. Who can you contact if you have any questions about the study?

If you have any questions or seek further information about this study, please contact Steven Talmy or Maryam Dalkilic.

IX. Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Services or email if long distance.

X. Daycare/preschool consent and signature

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative impact on you.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.

Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Participant Signature                                                                                 Date

Printed name of the Participant signing above
Appendix C

Research Interview Questions

Consent Form

Deconstructing Early Childhood Educators' Conceptualizations of Inclusion:
Representations of Caring for Young Children Labeled with Autism Spectrum
Disorders in Preschool/Daycare Settings

Consent Form for Daycare/Preschool

1. Who is conducting the study?

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3b. How did he/she participate in the childcare program?
   - How many days per week? (Prompt)
   - Did he/she have a special aid presented in the program? (Probe)
   - Were parents accompanying him/her?
   - How often did he/she participate in peer group activities (like circle time, story time, group games) (Probe)

3c. What was the purpose/goal of having him/her in the program?
   - Was the goal mainly for him to socialize or to get ready for kindergarten? (Prompt if necessary)

4. Imagine a mother who has a child labeled with autism is visiting your program to see if your program would be suitable for her child or not. How would she know your program is an inclusive program?
   - For example I had a child labeled with autism in my program who was also labeled as "non-verbal". I had taken some courses related to alternative communication and knew that communicating with pictures could be an option in this situation. I designed ‘flash cards’ with pictures on them. These flash cards were available to him, to the teachers, and to all the other children to communicate with each other. (Prompt if necessary)
   - Another example I can provide is related to another child labeled with autism in my program who was very sensitive to fluorescent light. I covered the light by hanging a white sheet on the ceiling. (Prompt if necessary)
5. Now I’d like you to think of an experience that you thought was the most successful in terms of including a child labeled with autism in your program? What elements contributed to this success?
   - My most successful experience was when I had the mother of the child attending the program every day with her son. She was like a teacher in my program. She would attend to all the children as much as she could, and she was there to help us with her son when he needed extra support most.

6a. Once I had a three year old boy in my program who got a label of autism shortly after attending my program. It was extremely challenging for some of the teachers in the program (including myself) to deal with some of the behaviors he exhibited. There was a point that we thought we had no choice but to ask the parents to remove the child from the program. I personally had huge issues with that. On one hand I felt professionally incompetent because of not being able to meet the needs of that child; on the other hand I could see that the program was dysfunctional with having a child who constantly screamed and banged his head on the floor or threw chairs and toys. I just felt paralyzed by not knowing what to do when he attended the program, and I felt uncomfortable having to ask him leave the program as I believed in his right to attend a childcare program alongside his peers. I questioned my practice, as I believed in having an inclusive program, yet I was asking a child to leave the program.
   Can you think of any experiences that you were in an uneasy situation with having a child labeled with autism in your program? How can you describe this experience in relation to your understanding of inclusion?

6b. What could have made this experience different?
   - In the case of my example, the situation would have been different if we had a fulltime one-on-one support. We had support for 6 hours per week, but we had the child in the program for around 20 hours per week. (Prompt)
7. What is the most essential requirement for success in including a child labeled with autism in a regular childcare program?
   - I would consider parental support as the most essential requirement
     (Prompt if necessary)

Final question:
8. Is there anything that you would like to talk about that we didn’t cover in the interview? Do you have any questions for me? Do you have any concerns?

Citations Bibliography
## Appendix D

### Set of Transcription Conventions

| . | falling intonation and noticeable pause |
| , | continuing intonation and slight pause |
| ! | animated or loud tone |
| ? | rising intonation and noticeable pause |
| ... | elongated pause |
| a-a | repetition, as in the case of stuttering and correcting false starts of phrases |
| | e.g. A: I-I-I was-I was tired. |
| _ | immediate following of one person after the other without overlapping |
| | e.g. A: I was very hurt and so_ |
| B: _Did you deal with it? |
| [a] | overlapping as when both speakers speak at the same time |
| | e.g. A: I was [shocked.] |
| B: [Wow.] |
| a | emphasis on word |
| | e.g. A: I was so happy. |
| (a) | quieter phrases such as in whispering |
| | e.g. A: I was all done… (So done.) |
| {S} | lip smacking |
| {L} | laughing |
| {C} | chuckling |
| {G} | gasping, deep breath |
| {T} | clearing throat |
| {N} | inaudible word or phrase |