SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' TALK ABOUT MAINSTREAMING - A STUDY IN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The interview accounts of nine urban, regular school principals are examined to identify the different positions held by these principals on the issue of the mainstreaming or inclusion of students with disabilities and special needs in regular schools. Applying the methodology discourse analysis, the different positions are investigated, and their implications explored, in terms of the ways they are justified in the context of wider beliefs and conceptions about the nature of education and the nature of disability.

The literature review describes the development of special education in New Zealand, the growing practice of mainstreaming, and the significance of the emergence of the Regular Education Initiative to the mainstreaming debate. The conflict in the debate is seen to lie in the differing conceptions people hold about the nature of education and the nature of disability. These conceptions are fully explored and applied as discourses within the debate.

Discourse analysis as a methodology is described in detail and the results of the analysis are reported in reference to the seven main discourses identified. Four of the discourses - the pro status quo, the medical , the lay and the charity discourses - are described as divisive discourses in that they in effect deny the equal rights of students with special needs to attend regular schools. Two other discourses - the rights and the proactive discourses - are described as inclusive, in that they argue for the rights of students with disabilities or special needs to be included in their neighbourhood schools and classes. A seventh discourse, the critical discourse, can be employed as a divisive or as an inclusive discourse.

It is claimed that this study has increased the potential for critical analysis of the mainstreaming debate in two main ways: firstly, by applying Fulcher's four identified discourses of disability to accounts by school leaders in the New Zealand setting (Fulcher, 1989); and, secondly, by identifying from the literature and the data three further discourses and applying these to the debate.

These three discourses provide further tools that enable educators and others to critically analyze their positions in the debate. It is hoped that critical analysis of discourses will lead to the challenging of current segregating practices in the education of students with special needs, and to more support and acceptance of their inclusion in regular classes and schools.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

PART TWO: METHODOLOGY

PART THREE: RESULTS

PART FOUR: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Tables

Figures

Where a lot of people come from, where a lot of teachers come from, is that because [students with disabilities] are special or because they are *deemed* special, we have the notion that they have to be *treated* special and ... until we can get over that notion, we will continue to treat them as special and expect them to have the extra resources, to have the extra assistance because of their special nature. But... on the other hand, where they are *not* regarded as special, then perhaps it works better... - for the *student* anyway.

(School principal - research participant)

Introduction

> "Excluding anyone from the mainstream of life always strikes us as wrong - so much so that we feel we have to justify it whenever it happens" (Allan Tyne, Founder, Community and Mental Handicap Research Association (C.M.H.E.R.A.). In Jupp, K. (1992, p.ii).

In this study the researcher analyses a set of interview accounts of nine urban school principals concerning their views on the mainstreaming or inclusion of students with special needs or disabilities in regular schools. The researcher's goal was to investigate the different positions these principals held and to explore the implications of these positions and the ways they are justified in the context of wider beliefs and notions about the nature of education and the nature of disability in the mainstreaming debate.

The mainstreaming debate remains very controversial. It is often emotional, even irrational, and has divided friends, parents and colleagues. As a lecturer who trains teachers in special education, I have been directly involved in the issues. I have observed teachers on the training courses struggle with aspects of the debate, as I myself have struggled, trying to develop or reconcile their positions with the moral and educational issues involved. I wanted to provide some tools to help clarify the debate, to enable a more critical analysis of the issues.

Discourse analysis provided an excellent tool to dissect and interpret the debate. It is a methodological approach which investigates how people construct their arguments on a particular issue and then explores the consequences or implications of particular constructions. It reveals the differences between people's accounts and reveals what is achieved by these differences. It makes us more conscious of the premises of our arguments, and therefore makes us take more responsibility for those premises. It alerts us to the existence of ideologies - wider belief systems that people can unconciously adhere to which have the power to oppress disadvantaged groups in our society.

Limitations of the study

This study represents a beginning only. It was limited by the constraints of time a thesis imposes. The participants represented only one sector of those involved in the debate, though an important sector, and were selected from one city only. Their interviews lasted less than an hour each. While this still yielded a wealth of data, a study that looked even more intensively at a group's views, or that spread the sample wider to include other stake holders such as parents, teachers, special school principals or people with disabilities, would enrich the debate. Further in depth application of Skrtic's (1991a) notion of adhocracy to mainstreaming discourses would also be beneficial, as well as study specifically on the ideological nature of the debate.

It is intended that this study will serve to further alert and inform people of the existence of differing discourses in the mainstreaming debate in this country, and of the origins and consequences of these discourses. Some may read this study and recognise their own or another's argument and reflect upon the implications of holding a particular position. The generalizability or application of the conclusions drawn from the study rest, as in much qualitative research, in the reader's own interpretation of their relevance. The study serves more to illuminate and illustrate the patterns of discourse in the debate than to categorically prove their existence, or their essential ideological nature. It has explored and dissected the debate. It has not solved it.

A note on language

I have used the phrases 'students with special needs', 'students with disabilities' and 'atypical students' interchangeably in this study to refer to students who are generally classified as requiring special education intervention. To refer to students who are generally not classified as requiring special education intervention, I have used the terms 'typical', 'regular' or 'ablebodied'. The words 'mainstreaming', 'integration', and 'inclusion' have similarly been used interchangeably except where the differences in their use are being specifically discussed.

Structure of thesis

The study is divided into four main sections. Part One, the literature review, contains four chapters which summarise the literature in special education and mainstreaming and also explore recent discussion on the issues related to the dual education system and disability that have arisen from the mainstreaming debate. The concept of discourse, a central notion in this study, is introduced and explained. Part Two contains two chapters which describe and justify the methodology used for this research, discourse analysis. This section is particularly comprehensive to enable the reader to assess the validity of the researcher's approach and ultimate interpretations and conclusions. Part Three comprises four chapters describing the results of the research, and Part Four contains the final chapter discussing those results and drawing the study to its conclusion. A short final addendum carries some personal reflections on the study.

PART ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter One

Special Education and the Mainstreaming Debate in New Zealand

Introduction

In order to explore the implications of what educators are saying about the issue of mainstreaming or including students with special needs in regular classes, it is necessary to trace the way our education system has historically responded to the perceived needs of students with disabilities, and to explain how the debates on appropriate services have arisen and developed.

This chapter will describe the development of education services for students perceived as having special needs in New Zealand and overseas, the problems that arose, and the way educational philosophies changed and developed in response to these problems - in particular the philosophies of mainstreaming and the Regular Education Initiative.

The development of special education in New Zealand

Special education refers to the education of students with disabilities or special needs, and, as Chapman comments, the notion of special education has usually implied *separate* education (Chapman, 1988, p.125). Special education has been essentially about the development of separate schools, classes and institutions to meet the educational needs of children whose needs were seen as not being able to be met by the regular schools or systems.

Mitchell (1987) records that the first group of 'exceptional' children to receive special attention or resources in New Zealand were neglected and destitute children in 1858, when the Auckland Education Board granted two pounds per year to enable orphaned or destitute children to attend school. The first 'special school' in New Zealand was established for this group of children in 1863 in Auckland, and an Act passed in 1867 allowed the establishment of industrial schools for neglected children under 15 years to prepare them for "leading useful lives in the colony" (Mitchell, 1987, p.26). The next kind of special school to be established in New Zealand was the Sumner Institute for the Deaf and Dumb in 1880, followed by the Jubilee Institute of the Blind, in 1891. The first three decades of the twentieth century then saw the establishment of special classes and schools for 'backward' children, departments in Mental Hospitals for 'idiots' and 'imbeciles', Health camps for 'delicate' children, hospital classes, speech classes and clinics and schools for 'mentally deficient 'children, and children with behaviour problems and physical disabilities. The 1940s saw the beginning of specialist teacher and educational psychologist training courses (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1985). More and more specialist facilities and positions were established. Special education became professionalised.

Mainstreaming

Until the 1960s most people considered that the separate self-contained facilities that had been developed were the most effective way of meeting special educational needs. However, in the 1960s and 1970s studies began to reveal that education in separate classes and facilities did *not* neccessarily result in superior academic or social achievement (Dunn, 1968; Johnson, 1962; Kavale, 1979; MacMillan, 1977) and in fact some special education children were shown to make better social and emotional progress by attending regular classes (Kavale, 1979).

Concerns were also raised about the practice of categorising and labelling children. It began to be argued that children with disabilities have more in common with children without disabilities than they have differences, hence they should receive a similar education, not one based on a label which only referred to one aspect of their abilities. It was recognised that children are much more than their disability. To know that a child requires a wheelchair, after all, indicates nothing about her reading needs. Further, once children were labelled they were treated differently, expectations were lower, or negative, as Chapman comments,

> Grouping children on the basis of medically derived disability labels was seen as having no practical utility in an education system. Labels were believed to result in the ascription of

> stereotypical and frequently stigmatic characteristics to groups of individuals (Chapman, 1988, p.126).

Once labelled, children received a certain set of expectations from both their teachers and their peers, and further, once assigned to a separate system it was often very difficult for them then to be able to return to the 'mainstream'.

Over representation of minority group children

Not only were students stigmatised, and often victimised, as a result of being labelled and placed in a separate class or system, but concern was raised about the disproportionate numbers of minority group children, through misclassification and inappropriate categorisation, who were being placed in special education (Bray, 1987; Dunn, 1968; Glass, 1977; Mercer, 1973).

Wang, Reynolds and Walberg (1986, p.27) have pointed out that labelling or classification is often influenced by factors other than a student's disability or needs, including space and professional availability, alternative programmes and services, and national and local guidelines and pressures. Citing Reschley (in press) they point out that although the Public Law 94-142, known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, specified 11 different classifications of handicapping conditions, most diagnoses of students placed in special education programmes are based on social and psychological criteria. Such criteria, including measured intelligence, achievement, and social behaviour and adjustment, are much easier to apply liberally than physical or physiological measures. In fact, the authors point out, (citing Ysseldyke, in press), more than 80% of regular students could be classified as learning disabled by the definitions now in use (Wang, Reynolds and Walberg, 1986, p.27). This renders the learning disability label virtually meaningless. In the United States the situation led a national Academy of Sciences Panel (Heller et al, 1982), to investigate the disproportional representation of minority and male children in special education programmes.

Similar patterns of over-representation of minority group children have been in evidence in New Zealand. Bray in 1987 stated that, "Clearly, a variety of factors determine whether or not a child in New Zealand schools is officially labelled backward and placed in a special class - apart from the child's own characteristics and/or achievement at school" (p.255). She cited the New Zealand study by Wilton et al (1983) who found that for 70% of a group of referred children "factors *other than* the child's ability level or learning behavioural characteristics appeared to be the major determinants of the decisions reached". Most of these pupils were labelled as backward, and the study found also that less than 1% of these children were being returned to regular class placement. Bray further commented that a greater proportion of non-European children are labelled 'backward' (Bray, 1987). Glass (1977) similarly found that the incidence of Maori children in 48 special classes was four times as many as in the general population. Ten years later, the over representation of Maori children in special classes remains a concern (Wyley, 1987). Discussing reasons for this, Wyley suggests that teachers may be less comfortable or skilled in teaching children with different language, cultural and behavioural needs and more ready to classify them as unteachable in a regular classroom (p.124).

Human rights

Further ethical and philosophical concerns about segregated special education began to be raised, in particular, from the 1960s, segregated special education for students with disabilities began to be seen as a human rights issue. In addition to the Feminist concerns and concerns about differential treatment of racial minorities of the human rights movement, it was felt that adults with disabilities should be enabled to live in the community with everyone else, and that similarly, children with disabilities should be educated alongside their peers in regular schools. Bank-Nicholsen, a Dane, coined the term 'normalisation' for this concept in 1959 (Kugel & Wolfensberger, 1969). Nirje (1969) and Wolfensberger (1972) further developed this philosophy, which maintained that people with handicaps should have the opportunity to a life style which is "as close as possible to the regular circumstances and ways of life of their society" (Nirje, 1969, p.181). The term 'mainstreaming' was coined in America about the same time (Reynolds, 1962) - and the alternative term 'integration' in other countries - to describe the process of educating children in ordinary school settings where they could have maximum association with other children.

Some children were now moved from special schools to special units and classes in regular schools, and some, already enrolled in special classes, were placed in regular classes for all or part of the school day. In the United States, the changing beliefs about appropriate education for students with disabilities culminated in the 1975 Education For All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142). This required that all handicapped children between the age of three and seventeen be educated in what was described as "the least restricted environment", the regular school. Similar requirements were passed in the UK in 1978, outlined in the Warnock Report (Warnock, 1978, p.99). Even though New Zealand was very slow to legislate officially for mainstreaming (a law was not passed until 1989), it is generally felt that New Zealand has espoused the philosophies and practices recommended in PL 94-142 and the Warnock report (Mitchell, 1987, p.108). Legislation, however, has now finally been passed in New Zealand. The Education Act, 1989, commits the state to educate all children and gives every person the right to free enrolment and free education at any state school. The Minister of Education may at his or her discretion direct that a child must attend a particular school, including a Special School, however there are appeal procedures for parents to challenge these decisions. Similarly education and health authorities have been moving young people out of pschychopaedic hospitals into the community (Bray, MacArthur & Ballard, 1989).

The Regular Education Initiative (R.E.I.)

Concerns, however, about appropriate education for students with special needs did not stop after public recognition of the desirability of inclusion of students with disabilities in regular settings, and the ensuing legislation and implementation. In the United States, barely a year after the act had been signed, it was claimed that the emphasis and underlying concepts of mainstreaming philosophy needed to be changed (Reynolds, 1976 cited in Skrtic, 1991a, p.60). This was the beginning of a movement which was later to be termed the Regular Education Initiative and which today is also espoused by prominent New Zealand special educators (Ballard, 1989; O'Brien, 1992; and Ray Murray, Director of the School of Special Education, Auckland College of Education, personal communication, December, 1993).

It was felt by Regular Education Initiative proponents that 'mainstreaming' with its special withdrawal strategies and separate classes actually continued to isolate and stigmatise students with special needs. Rather than catering for children with special needs in a pull-out programme (albeit within the school), Reynolds (1976, in Skrtic, 1990) and later many others (Ballard, 1989; Lipsky & Gartner, 1989; O'Brien, 1992; Pugach & Lilly, 1984; Stainback & Stainback, 1984; Stainback, Stainback, Courtnage, & Jaben,1985; Stainback, Stainback & Forest, 1989; Wang, 1981; Wang, Reynolds & Walberg, 1986) argued that regular classes and schools *themselves* must become "more diverse educational environments", adaptable enough to include these students in their regular programme. Reynolds argued that this could be achieved through the "redistribution of resources and energies, through training, and, finally, through the redistribution of students" (Reynolds, 1976, in Skrtic, 1990, p.60).

The Regular Education Initiative, then, emphasised that *regular education* must change to become more inclusive of students with different or 'special' needs. This was in opposition to the mainstreaming philosophy which emphasised the development of strategies to help *students with special needs* 'fit in' with the *present* structures of regular schooling.

Inclusion

Along with the change in belief and perspective of the Regular Education Initiative came a change in language, and the word 'inclusion' began to replace the words 'mainstreaming' and 'integration'. 'Inclusion' implied that students with disabilities were to be seen as belonging to the school and regular classes along with every one else:

> Inclusion ... is a visible positive alternative [to mainstreaming] ... Inclusion means incorporating special

> education classrooms into neighbourhood schools instead of isolating them (and their occupants) in a separate facility where they are out of sight, out of mind and out of contact with the rest of the world (Healey, 1992 , p.15).

Forest, who has written extensively on the concept of inclusion expresses it this way,

> For too long, integration, or mainstreaming, has been thought to mean placement of a child with a handicap in a school or classroom. Integration truly has a much deeper meaning that's expressed in the terms 'inclusion' and 'belonging'. Unless this deep meaning is addressed, the movement to integrate children with disabilities will be a placement issue rather than a philosophical debate ... What we are really doing is asking a new set of questions: What kind of school communities do we want? Who do we want our children to grow up with? What values will we model for our children? What do we want the future to look like? I believe that if we truly understand the why of integration, the how will follow quite easily. If we really want someone to be part of our lives, we will do what it takes to welcome that person and accommodate his or her needs. (Forest, 1992, p.14).

Educators arguing for 'inclusion' rather than 'mainstreaming' were arguing for students with disabilities or special needs to be enrolled and welcomed into regular classes and schools in the same way as children without disabilities. Under 'mainstreaming', it was felt students with disabilities were being fitted into a separate infrastructure within the school which subtly and unsubtly isolated them from typical, ordinary everyday school experience and learning.

The mainstreaming debate

Mainstreaming issues have clearly remained controversial. A glance at titles of articles published over the last five years further emphasises this: *Special ed students kept in restrictive environments, disability groups say,* (1986); *Is integration really the least restrictive environment?* (Pennington Link, 1991); *Special* *education in the least restrictive environment: mainstreaming or maindumping?* (Chapman, 1988);*The regular education initiative- Can we proceed in an orderly and scientific manner?*(Maheady & Algozzine, 1991); *Should students with severe intellectual disabilities be based in regular or in special education classrooms in home schools* (Brown et al, 1989); *Is regular class placement really the issue? A response to Brown, Long, Udvari-Solner, Schwarz, van Deventer, Ahlgren, Johnson, Gruenwald & Jorgensen.*(Williams, W., Villa, R. Thousand, J. & Fox, W.L., 1989).

The debate, as Skrtic (1991a) has described, falls into two main camps. One group (supporting the Regular Education Initiative) is arguing that schools need to be adapted to cater for and include students with special needs. The other group (opposing the Regular Education Initiative) argues that education is better provided for all through separate systems of provision.

The proponents of the Regular Education Initiative present two main lines of argument, one against the current special education system, and one in favour of reform of the general education system (Scrtic, 1991a, p.61). Their concerns with special education lie with the labelling and categorisation process required by current mainstreaming approaches, and with the 'pull-out' instructional approach, which is seen by opponents of the Regular Education Initiative as the most effective way to have individual needs met. Regular Education Initiative supporters argue that these labelling and withdrawal practices are fundamentally flawed and that they work against true inclusion of students with disabilities. They propose that the dual education system, one for typical and one for atypical students, must be replaced through a fundamental restructuring of the special education and general education systems by one unified system, where all teachers recognise their responsibilities to teach those in their classes with special needs (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989). As already noted, similar arguments in support of the Regular Education Initiative are being proposed in New Zealand:

> If a school accepts segregated islands within its organisation, then it is really saying that its classrooms are not available for

> all children ... What is needed, therefore, is to accept that mainstreaming means *changing the mainstream.* This means that we must provide sufficient resources (especially extra mainstream teachers) so that all children are catered for among children of their own chronological age. In this way, each classroom is a reflection of an accepting and integrated society (Ballard, 1989, p.54).

Opponents of the Regular Education Initiative argue, on the other hand, that it is neither feasible nor desirable to change or unify the education system (Braaten, Kauffman, Braaten, Polsgrove, and Nelson, 1988; Hallahan, Kauffman, Lloyd, and McKinney, 1988; Schumaker & Deschler, 1988). They accuse Regular Education Initiative proponents of merely going along with conservative government initiatives to save money by spending less and less on separate education. Kauffman calls this the "trickle down theory of the hard to teach" (Kauffman, 1989, p.256). Rather than change or reform general education, these writers argue that the *interface* between special education and regular education should be improved by further developing instructional techniques, and increasing resources - "with each party maintaining a strong sense of individual identity, while creating an ideal interface between the two" (Lieberman, 1985, p.516). Some wish to improve schools *before* full scale mainstreaming is implemented as Mesinger (1985) states, voicing reluctance "to abandon special education as a system until I see evidence of a drastic improvement in regular educational teacher training and professional practice in the public schools" (p.152).

Lipsky and Gartner (1989) propose that the source of conflict in this debate is the differing conceptions and values held by the two main camps in two main areas: conceptions and values about the nature of education, and conceptions and values about the nature of disability.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the development of special education services and philosophies in New Zealand in relation to overseas developments - particularly the United States. Prevalent belief in segregated special education for students with special needs has generally shifted to a belief in the desirability of mainstreaming students with disabilities into regular schools. Many educators are now arguing, however, that mainstreaming does not go far enough. Regular Education Initiative proponents propose that current mainstreaming practices continue to isolate students with special needs and that regular schools themselves must change in order to be fully inclusive of students who are different. Opponents of the Regular Education Initiative argue that it is neither feasible nor desirable to change the regular education system, but that rather educators must improve the interface between regular and special education by further developing and refining mainstreaming strategies and techniques.

The source of conflict between the opponents and proponents of the Regular Education Initiative has been identified as lying in differing conceptions and values held by the two camps; firstly, the differing conceptions and values about the nature of education, and secondly, differing conceptions and values about the nature of disability. The next two chapters will explore these two areas.

Chapter Two

Conceptions about the Nature of Education

Introduction

This chapter will describe how and why a separate special education system has been developed and maintained, and explores two common conceptions in relation to our dual system of special and regular education: firstly, the notion that a separate system is seen as necessary, and secondly, the notion that the main responsibility for students with special needs is seen as not lying with regular educators and schools. An alternative proposal for school organisation, a unitary system, is introduced.

The dual education system

Today, many people appear to perceive neighbourhood schools as being primarily there for the students who can succeed in them, to a greater or lesser degree. The students who cannot 'succeed' or 'fit in' are seen as best catered for by special education, as Gartner & Lipsky have commented, "Schools are used to dealing with students with special needs by either separating them from the others (placement in special units or schools) or by 'remediating' them" (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987, p.369). There has been considerable discussion in the literature on the dual system of education that has therefore evolved, one system addressing the needs of 'normal' or 'typical' students, the other system addressing 'atypical' students, defined as having special needs or a disability (for example, Lipsky & Gartner, 1989; Stainback, Stainback & Forest, 1989; Wang, Reynolds & Walberg, 1986). Stainback, Stainback and Bunch (1989), in their introduction to a chapter recommending a merger of special and regular education, describe this dual system and comment that it has come to be accepted without question by the majority of special and regular educators,

> Although special education is technically a subsystem of regular education, a dual system of education has, in effect, been operating, each with its own pupils, teachers, supervisory staff, and funding system. While there have been attempts in recent years to reduce the sharp dichotomy between special

> and regular education (eg. mainstreaming, integration), the dual system remains intact. There are still special and regular school personnel, students, and funding. Unfortunately, significant numbers of educators, conditioned by their training and experience, do not question the continuance of this dual system (p.150).

Walker (1987), in an assessment of Public Law 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act, echoes Lipsky and Gartner's contention at the end of the previous chapter that the maintenance of this dual system approach has its source in people's conceptions of both disability and education,

> The primary problem appears to lie in our assumptions about students and the consequences for the organisation of schools: that there are distinct groups of youngsters, disabled and non disabled and thus need for distinct sets of services, special and general, which requires divisions of funding, service delivery, and organisational patterns (cited in Lipsky & Gartner, 1987, p.71).

Skrtic (1991b) has described this dual system response to the education of students with special needs as a 'rational-technical approach' which tries to address problems in a "functionalist, bureaucratic way, dividing students into categories for differential treatment" (p.153). It may be convenient for educators to separate students in this way but Skrtic argues that a more flexible, adaptable (or adhocratic) organisational approach would recognise student difference more effectively than the current, inflexible, bureaucratic system.

The dual education system, then, rests in a belief that a highly specialised, separate system is necessary to deal effectively with learners with disabilities or special needs. This system largely works on a 'label and withdraw' basis, withdrawing students with special needs for separate instruction. An alternative system would be a unitary system which would be able to cater for all students in flexible, adaptable programmes.

Separate special education

The development of special education in New Zealand into a profession in the 1900s was described in Chapter One. Mitchell (1987, p.27) made the point that while this new assumption of responsibility by the state for neglected children back in 1858 represented a departure from the old view that their needs should be met by charity, the new philosophy was not pure and simply humanitiarian. It was also grounded in necessity. New Zealand society, unlike the old country, simply did not have enough rich people to make philanthropy very effective so the old charity model could not work. He points out that society's motivations to deal with these children may be best seen as a mix of humanitarianism and social control, "a blend of benevolent humanitarianism that arose from an endeavour to escape the poor law and work house ethos of the old country... and of the imposition of hegemony over those who had the potential to disrupt the prevailing social order" (p.27).

The various motivations behind the development of special education services is a pivotal aspect of this study. Analysis of New Zealand's provision for students with disabilities both today and in the past, needs to go beyond the face-value interpretation that society is simply attempting to meet special needs most effectively and humanely. Others have written how the history of special education services cannot be read simply as a history of growing enlightenment and humanitarianism (Oliver, 1991; Tomlinson, 1982). As Mitchell (1987) comments: "Provisions for exceptional children ... reflect as much society's perceptions of its own directions and values as its perceptions of deviance" (p. 31).

Not only did the creation of special education serve society in finding a separate place for 'misfits', and serve the main education system in providing an alternative system to place children they were failing to teach. It also suited special educators to develop their new field, creating broader career and professional opportunities:

> This rise of professionalism within the field of education cannot be seen as an unreservedly positive development. While it

> does help special educators to estabish their credibility within the larger clan of educators, it provides a way to monopolize knowledge about a field and control access to a population of students which assures a continuing market for the specialized professional service (Ferguson, 1989, p.50).

Clearly these views could make distressing reading for many special educators, who are committed to the students they work with and to their fields of expertise. Unquestionably, there are areas of specialised knowledge and skill necessary in order to educate many students with disabilities. However Regular Education Initiative proponents are arguing that these areas are not as large or as complicated, mystifying and special as the special education system has begun to make them appear. Many of the special techniques (such as behaviour management, social skill development, even orientation and mobility training) are in fact applicable to all children. Also, even when needs have been correctly identified as special, separate systems of provision are not necessarily the only - or best - way to meet them. As Ballard (1989) points out, our teachers must be prepared to be open to change and self critique: "Teachers and other educators care about the children they work with and argue for what they believe to be in the children's best interest. Nevertheless, for all of us, our ideas need re-evaluation from time to time" (p.56).

Ferguson (1989, p.25) stresses that the processes of professionalisation and specialisation in special education in the United States have powerfully reinforced the established separateness of special and regular education,

> From the beginning, special education responded to its charge to deal with regular education's rejected students by finding professional status in the stigma. Following the paths laid by other occupational groups seeking to transform work into profession, special educators developed a unique technical expertise, licensing procedures, professional organisations, and a separate lexicon with which to baffle consumers and nonspecial colleagues alike.

Citing Tomlinson, a British writer, Biklen also describes how "the rise of special education occurred simultaneously with the elaboration of professional psychological assessment, each survey of students leading to an expansion of special education ranks" (Biklen, 1989, p.7). Biklen argues that special classes can serve as a safety valve for schools' lack of success with certain students (Biklen, 1989, p4-6). In the United states, 42% of all Special Education students are labelled learning disabled. These children, he points out, could well be seen as the results of *school failure* to educate them, rather than seen as having a deficit in themselves. If the problem was viewed in the former way, it would be seen as the *responsibility of the schools* to educate them.

Students with special needs - whose responsibility?

The establishment of a special education system has helped to convince regular teachers that they do not have the special skills, knowledge, or expertise to teach students with disabilities or special needs. The existence of this highly specialised and mystifying field with its own vocabulary and roles, is in itself a justification for teachers to feel that they have no large role or responsibility in this area. Ferguson points out that with each new group of special students entering special education, educators have created new specialists with more specialised skills. The services have become more and more fragmented by designated professionals. This specialisation has profound effects for the students. Specialists spend isolated blocks of time delivering special technical services "that produce little coherence in a student's educational life" (Ferguson, 1989, p.50). It becomes very difficult and time consuming to communicate and coordinate activities within this structure.

Withdrawal approach

Wang, Reynolds and Walberg (1986) describe how the withdrawal instructional approach of special education in particular can work against students with special needs.

> The widely used 'pull out' approach - removing students with special learning needs from regular classes - has been the predominant strategy for structuring programs to improve the

> educational attainment of students with special learning needs. Although well intentioned, the pull out approach neglects the larger problem: regular classroom learning environments have failed to accomodate the educational needs of many students. The pull out approach is driven by the fallacy that poor school adjustment and performance are attributable solely to characteristics of the student rather than to the quality of the learning environment (p.26).

Wang et al (1989), reinforcing Ferguson, describe how this pull out approach leads to "discontinuity and interruption in instruction for teachers and students, loss of control by school district leadership over specialised programs, and the fostering of narrow categorical attitudes and instructional programming" (p.27).

Stainback, Stainback & Bunch (1989) argue that the maintenance of the separate special education system is inherently unequal and unjust, and creates difference between students, stating, "By assigning some students to 'special' education, we physically separate them from their peers" (p.15). Placing students with disabilities into regular classes, they argue, does not solve the essential dilemma that they are still perceived as belonging to a different system: "Others, although mainstreamed, carry with them the label 'special' and are separated psychologically both in their own minds and in the minds of their teachers from their 'regular' peers" (Stainback, Stainback & Bunch, p.15). These authors also specify ways they perceive the dual system to be inefficient. They argue that fragmentation has fostered competition and duplication rather than cooperation among professionals, citing Lortle (1978):

> The historical separation of special and regular educators has taken its toll in the relations between them; shared viewpoints and mutual understanding, it appears, are not the rule. Educators outside special education are often perceived as either indifferent to, or even prejudiced against, the needs of children considered handicapped. Special educators, on the other hand, sometimes project the attitudes of an embattled group with its "them versus us" mentality (p.19).

In other words, the dual system creates artificial barriers between educators and divides resources, staff and programmes. Further, it reduces the range of curricular options available to students. Stainback, Stainback & Bunch (1989) make the point that regular education students are not generally offered access to courses such as social interaction skill training, whereas often special education students miss typing or band practice. They recommend, "By consolidating all curricular offerings into one unified system, each student would have access to any of the classes, individualised tutoring, support personnel, and material adaptations now offered in special and regular education" (Stainback, Stainback & Bunch, 1989, p.21).

Academics are not the only people who perceive weaknesses in the dual education system. In the United States, Madelaine Will, the U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special education and Rehabitation Services (1984) has noted the evolution of general and special education into separate and compartmentalized service delivery systems, and voiced concern that confusion exists between them (cited in Greenburg, 1987, p.7). Will (1986) has since more directly claimed that the parallel systems are obstructive to accomplishing the goal of PL 94-142 and has called for collective contributions from both general and special education to meet student needs.

Towards a unitary system of mutual responsibility

Mann describes mainstreaming as "an evolutionary concept of mutual responsibility" (Mann, 1986, p.27).The Regular Education Initiative rests on the contention that regular schools, their principals and teachers are responsible for the education of all the children in their community not just for the 'typical' students who appear to fit the system. It has been argued that this has not been the case up to now. In fact, it is claimed that special educators and regular educators have complemented each others needs by shifting the responsibility for children with special needs to the special system:

> For the decades prior to the discussion of reintegration programs, special educators demonstrated a general

> willingness to assume total responsibility for the education of children identified as handicapped. At the same time, the general education community appeared willing to relinquish all educational responsibility for those youngsters. To a considerable extent, one posture complemented the other; and both historically contributed to the exclusion of handicapped students from general education programs (Greenburg, 1987, p.6).

Stainback, Stainback & Bunch (1989) agree, stating, "Regular education has a history of being reluctant to meet the needs of all students. That is the primary reason special education was developed in the first place" (p.25). Greenburg (1987) similarly stresses, "Mutual responsibility is critical to successful integration" going on to argue, "It becomes essential to review the responsibilities of both general and special education service providers with the aim of fostering mutual responsibility" (p.6). What is essential, he suggests, is "cooperative planning and the subsequent investment of ownership and interest in the handicapped student's success" (p.6).

REI proponents propose that a more effective and more fair way to manage special educational needs is to unify the system:

> Rather than continuing efforts to perfect a separate, segregated system, we must turn now to changing the mainstream and to making general education flexible, supple and responsive - educating the full range of students (Lipsky & Gartner, 1987, p.72).

Greenburg, however, among others (Liebermann, 1985; Messinger, 1985) has reservations about the feasibility of the concept of a unified system. He suggests that now might not be the time "for breaking down the remaining conceptual and programmatic barriers between general and special education" (p.5). He proposes an extensive review of the potential of teacher consultant and resource room models as effective interface between special and regular education professionals. Others, (Braaten et al, 1988; Kauffmann et al, 1988), similarly propose that educators refine and develop *current* educational practices to ensure mainstreaming is more effective. These writers are in effect arguing to keep the status quo, but to continue to develop, refine and adapt it so that our current system can more effectively include atypical students.

As Skrtic (1991a) points out, in a careful and detailed analysis of the REI debate, these suggestions and counterarguments of the REI debate actually become an "implicit debate over special education's ... grounding assumptions" (p.63). In fact, both sides of the debate are arguing against the same notion - the twentieth century concept of the traditional classroom. They are both acknowledging that the classroom is traditionally seen as being there to only accommodate 'regular' students, and that it is structured in such a bureaucratic way that it is not able to respond flexibly to different needs. By arguing that it is not possible to accommodate students with special needs in such regular classrooms, the Regular Education Initiative opponents are in fact criticising the effectiveness of our current education system as strongly as the Regular Education Initiative proponents. Skrtic maintains that until the education system makes a fundamental shift from being bureacratic to being adhocratic, (from being rigidly rule-driven to being more flexible and problem solving), effective education of *all* students will not be possible (Skrtic, 1991a, p.234).

Summary

This chapter described how the current conception of education appears to be that our neighbourhood schools are primarily there for the students who comfortably fit them. Special services and schools are there for those who do not. Both regular and special education collude in this conception because while it gives special education full reign to develop a professional field of expertise and career structure, it gives, at the same time, a safety valve to regular education. It lets them off the hook for any major responsibility for children who present a different challenge. Mainstreaming initiatives have not succeeded in the views of both REI proponents and REI opponents. REI opponents argue for more specialised and expert support to facilitate mainstreaming, while REI proponents argue that schools themselves must be more adaptable to including students with challenging needs. The REI opponents see the status quo as acceptable, and that it merely needs to be further improved, whereas proponents want a fundamental change in the system. The opponents conceptualise the schools' role as one of educating the students who are able to fit the system, while the proponents conceptualise the schools' role as one of educating all students in the neighbourhood. Skrtic (1991a) argues that schools, and therefore our conceptions of education, will need to change from bureaucratic models to adhocratic models, to models that are flexible and adaptable to the challenges that learners with special needs can present.

Beliefs about the nature and implications of disability itself also feed into the belief in the desirability of separate, special education. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

Conceptions about Disability

Introduction

Disability has been historically perceived and conceptualised in various ways. This chapter will describe three deficit approaches to disability - the medical view, the charity view and the lay view - in relation to mainstreaming. Then, a more recent and alternative fourth approach to conceptualising disability, the rights view, will be introduced and described.

Disability as deficit

Ballard has made the point that in New Zealand, as elsewhere, the standard conceptual perspective of disability is one that focuses on difference and deficit (Ballard, 1990). This has two central implications. Firstly, people with a disability tend to be defined in terms of their disability, for example, the blind woman, the man in the wheelchair. Secondly, any problem a person with a disability may have is seen as arising from the disability itself rather than as a result of an environment that does not support differences.

1. Defining a person by disability

Similar to sexist and racist beliefs about attributes of different genders and cultures, beliefs about disability invariably generalise beyond usefulness or accuracy and enter the realms of stereotype and prejudice. Meyer, Peck & Brown (1991, p.17) illustrate this point very clearly in the introductory section of their book, Critical Issues in the Lives of People with Disabilities, describing how disability can be used to define a person beyond their individuality:

> If you had a severe disability, the very first thing that others would most likely be told about you would be a summary of your 'deficits' ... There would be a file containing a lengthy decription of your intellectual shortcomings, your physical impairments and your behaviour problems.... Nowhere would someone learn that you had a lovely smile, a strong sense of identity, and a family that cared about you. Instead we might learn about your 'inappropriate affect', your non compliance ...

> Why? Because an assumption has been made that your *disability* tells us all we need to know about you.... Your personality, your identity, and your lifestyle have become minor and even hidden details in a clinical history that tells the world about your weaknesses, faults and deficits.

Stainback, Stainback & Bunch (1989) describe how this kind of categorisation works against useful, well rounded, educational planning:

> As soon as educators approach students as individuals and whole persons and get to know them personally, the category to which they belong becomes irrelevant for instructional purposes, since they learn about their interests, hearing and visual capabilities, learning rate, and other physical, psychological, and intellectual characteristics. As a consequence, educators can plan an educational program for the whole child and avoid the trap of focusing primarily on one or two dimensions of a person (p.19).

A student with a disability is a whole human being with many intellectual, psychological, and physical characteristics. An educational classification according to one or two physical characteristics is only minimally useful in planning a total education program and yet special education has premised its services on this kind of classification. Not only has this resulted in the establishment of a different system for students identified as disabled or as having special needs, Lipsky and Gartner (1987) argue that it is an inferior system. They argue that negative and exaggerated attitudes about the limitations of disability have not only encouraged the separation of learners with handicaps from the general system, they have also made special education 'second class' (Lipsky & Gartner, 1987, p.69). They claim explicitly that "the establishment of a separate system of education for the disabled is an outgrowth of attitudes towards disabled people" (Lipsky & Gartner, 1987, p72).

The 'People First' movement by adults with disabilities is based on similar concerns about the consequences of focusing on a disability before a person (People First of Washington). Teacher Education courses in the education of students with special needs are attempting to address concerns that teachers primarily see the disability first when teaching a child with a disability (Murray & Thorburn, 1992). Shifting that conception can be argued to be primary in developing an effective teacher to support all children including those with 'special needs'.

2. Defining disablity as the problem rather than the environment

The second central implication of a deficit perception of disability is that it views disability as not only defining a person but as residing within them. Therefore it is assumed that it is the *person* who needs to be treated or responded to. This conception neglects consideration of the effect of the environment in the creation of a disabling condition. Fine and Asch (1988) make this point clearer when they ask: "Just how disabling would deafness be if twentieth century urbanites ... all practiced sign language. How disabling would paraplegia be if all cities were barrier free?" (p.8). Referring to Hahn (1983) they argue, "the consequences of any impairment cannot be understood or appreciated without giving due weight to the environment - physical, structural, social, economic, psychological, and political - of the person with the disability" (p.7). As Bogdan puts it, "Be it mental retardation, cerebral palsy, deafness, blindness, emotional disturbance, or learning disability, disability is only in a particular and most narrow sense something that someone has. Disability is always interactional" (Bogdan, 1986, p.348). To put it simply, people with disabilities are often more oppressed by mainstream society's attitudes and consequent structures and systems, than by the disability itself. The problems of people with disabilities must be understood in this framework.

Fine and Asch (1988) identify five assumptions prevalent about people with disabilities which reinforce this point. Firstly, they stress, it is often assumed that disability is located solely in biology when actually it is *social context* that shapes the meaning of a disability in a person's life. Secondly, when a person with a disability faces problems, it is assumed the problems are caused by the impairment, rather than by the "human made barriers of architecture or discriminatory work practices" (p.9). Thirdly, they continue, it is assumed that the disabled person is a victim. A disability may not, in fact, be as disastrous as ablebodied onlookers project. People often do not perceive the social responses to disability or the environmental constraints as the victimizing experience. Rather they perceive the disability itself as the problem, and the way that our society has responded to disability as the right and proper way. The fourth assumption that Fine and Asch identify is the assumption that disability is central to a disabled person's self concept. Disability may in fact be more salient to the able bodied people studying it, than to the person with a disability. A person with a disability is as likely to compare him or herself with people of a similar occupation, ethnicity or age. In other words, unlike their ablebodied observers, they are more likely to see themselves as a person first. Lastly, Fine and Asch argue that it is often assumed that having a disability is synonomous with needing help or support.

> The handicapped role, like the 'sick' [medical model] role of which it is an extension, compels the occupant to suspend other activities until recovered, to concentrate on getting expert therapy, to follow instructions, to get well, and only then to resume normal life (Fine & Asch, 1988, p.12).

Normal life must be suspended in the way that able bodied people suspend their lives when they have the flu or a toothache. It is reasonable, point out Fine & Asch (1988, p.13), to suspend decision making and entrust oneself to helpers when a condition is temporary, but not when a person has a long term disability. Biklen (1989, p.8) makes a similar point when likening special education to a repair shop. He points out that, unlike items at a repair shop, the children stay there. By linking disability with illness, people with a disability are perceived as needing to be cared for, protected and nurtured. Also, because disability is a lifelong characteristic, as opposed to a temporary 'illness', society's response of protection and nurturing will be lifelong too.

The historical construction of disability

An understanding of how disability has been historically perceived - or 'constructed' - and responded to, helps throw light on why people who happen to have a disability have been perceived in this deficit way. Oliver (1990) argues that the conception of disability as deficit and as an individual tragic problem, has essentially been created by capitalism. Citing Burton (1983), he points out that capitalism has encouraged us to view people as a "commodity for sale in the labour market" (Oliver, 1990, p.44). There was a proliferation of institutions with the rise of capitalism which operated as mechanisms of social control of those who would not or could not conform. In feudal times disabled people lived in families and communities. Most disabled people continued to live in the family with the coming of capitalism, however what did change, partly as a result of the ideological climate created by institutions setting people apart from the rest of society, was that disability became "a thing of shame" (p.34). Both the family *and* the institution became places of segregation. Oliver points out that it is possible, also, that the decline in domestic production and cottage economy of the agricultural labourer made it more difficult for families, particularly women, to provide care for the aged and disabled.

> Thus, as a consequence of the increasing separation between work and home, the boundaries of family obligations towards disabled people were re-drawn; so the new asylums and work houses met a need among poor families struggling to cope (Oliver, 1990, p.41)

Oliver claims that economic development, the changing nature of ideas and the need to maintain order, have all influenced social responses to, and the experience of, disability: "The rise of the institution as a mechanism of both social provision and social control has played a key role in structuring both perceptions and experiences of disability, and facilitated the exclusion of disabled people from the mainstream of social life" (Oliver, 1990, p.42). He further points out that it is significant that disability is not conceived this way in all societies. For example, he cites Rubin et al's study of the Navaho Indians, who rejected all offers of modern medical treatment for the congenital hip disease prevalent in their people, because they did not believe the condition to be either stigmatising or disabling. In contrast, in developing western societies, it was convenient to separate people with disabilities, in the guise of caring for them, and thereby to keep these nonconformists apart, and therefore controlled (Oliver, 1990, p.133).

Fulcher (1989), among others (Abberley, 1992; Tomlinson, 1982), concurs with Oliver that disability is a category the capitalist state has developed and used to control people, "a political and social construct used to regulate" (Fulcher, 1989, p.21). This is revealed today in our community in the establishment of institutions which serve to exclude members of our society who have not conformed. It is shown in our schools through practices which "stigmatise, marginalise, create tentative and marginal lives for those deemed disabled and provide segregating 'solutions' to the problems these children are deemed to present to the educational apparatus" (Fulcher, 1989, p.38). Fulcher argues that disability is in fact a 'political construct' which has no necessary connection with impairment (Fulcher, 1989, p.49).

Three deficit conceptions of disability

Four current conceptions of disability have been identified in the literature: medical, lay, charity and rights (Ford, Mongon & Whelan, 1982; Fulcher, 1989; Gartner & Lipsky, 1987) (i). The first three, the medical, charity and lay views, are essentially based in a deficit perception of disability, and will be described in turn.

The medical view ('medical model')

The medical view applies medical concepts to disability. Disability is perceived within this model as similar to a sickness and thereby as requiring diagnosis, treatment and cure. As previously discussed this means that the role of the environment or social context in the creation of disability is de-emphasisied. Gartner and Lipsky (1987) explain,

> The medical model views disability as located within the individual, and, thus, primary emphasis is devoted to the etiology or causes or conditions and the placement of persons in separate diagnostic categories. From this perspective, efforts

> to improve the functional capabilities of individuals are regarded as the exclusive solution to disability (p.390).

The focus on the disability rather than its context means that educators and social service providers focus on causes, symptoms and treatment rather than on broader educational needs: "There is a presumption that there exists a particular problem (disease?), with associated signs and symptoms, of known cause, with a particular chance of recovery and therefore appropriate forms of treatment" (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987, p.390). As Ford, Mongon & Whelan put it, the medical model results in people focussing on the bearer of the illness and attempting to "alleviate the symptoms and remedy the disease" (Ford, Mongon & Whelan, 1982, p.35). Citing Hargreaves (1978), Ford et al argue that viewing disability in a medical way means that teachers and social workers adopt "the whole conceptual apparatus of symptom, syndrome, diagnosis, aetiology, pathology, therapy and cure" (Ford, Mongon & Whelan, 1982, p.35).

The medical view can be seen at the heart of the debate over the issue of mainstreaming students with severe disabilities when it is argued that these students would have their needs better met in special segregated settings where the necessary professional expertise can be provided (Miller, 1991; Spungin, 1982). If a child was alternatively being regarded in a more holistic way, as a child first rather than as a 'disabled child', more acknowledgement would be given of the importance of friendships and social interactions, and of the increased access to these in regular schools when making educational placement decisions. The medical model locks educators into perceiving and treating a child with such educational challenges as lying with the disability first.

In the nineteenth century the medical model of disability enabled health care workers to place mental health and disability in a framework they could understand: sickness and treatment. Ford, Mongon & Whelan (1982) point out that, while this ushered in a more humanitarian approach at the time, it has now outlived its original value (p.57). They make clear the specific problems arising from the medical model approach in special education - those of seeing a need for 'experts' and for 'focusing on the student'. They explain how a medical belief system gives the responsibility for a problem to 'experts'. The regular teacher is thus further and further removed from participation or responsibility for the student with special needs in their class. The use of specialist terms and technical approaches increasingly mystifies and confuses. Once a problem is defined as needing expert intervention, people feel that excluding the pupil 'with' the problem is justified. Further, looking to causes and solutions in the individual means that educators blame the victim rather than try to adapt the social and educational context: "We ignore the evidence... that deviance may be symptomatic of wider social issues, such as class, race, sex, and the organisation of the education service, and concentrate our resources on individual diagnosis and treatment" (p.58). The medical model also encourages people to look at problem behaviour as the activity of deviants, rather than examining the possibility that the behaviour may be a reasonable and understandable response to the stress of attempting to fit into an inflexible education system. In this way, the medical model has been criticised as disguising the political nature of disability. Oliver (1990, p.48) also stresses the medical nature of our wider society's response to disability,

> That disability has become medicalised, there can be no doubt. Doctors are centrally involved in the lives of disabled people from the determination of whether a foetus is handicapped or not through to the deaths of old people from a variety of disabling conditions.

Oliver points out that some medical interventions are of course entirely appropriate, such as the diagnosis of impairment, and the stabilisation of medical condition after trauma. However, he directs our attention to the fact that doctors are also involved in prescribing wheelchairs, approving driving licences, measuring work capabilities and potential, and selecting educational provision. Further, many professions including teaching, "either work in organisations hierarchically dominated by doctors or have their professional practice structured by a discourse based upon the medical model" (Oliver, 1990, p.48). While acknowledging the substantial gains made in medicine, such as increased survival rate and prolonged life expectancies, Oliver stresses that "the issue for the late twentieth century is *not one of life-expectancy but expectation of life* [author's emphasis], and it is here that the negative and partial view prompted by medicalisation is most open to criticism" (Oliver, 1990, p.48). Social and educational services need to consider support which enables improved quality of life, and this means enabling similar choices for people with disabilities to those of able bodied citizens.

Fulcher (1989) reinforces these views in her explanation of the medical view. She argues that the medical conception of disability is seen as linking impairment and disability. Through the notion that impairment means loss, Fulcher points out this view clearly has deficit connotations. She adds that through its scientific status (and therefore its assumed neutrality) the medical view depoliticises disability. It conceals the fact that society produces disability. The medical model also professionalises disability. The idea of medical expertise implies that problems need professional judgement (Fulcher, 1989, p.27). A medical view also encourages person blame because responsibility is assigned to the victim rather than to society. "It directs attention to changing an individual's actions, lifestyle or personality rather than, for instance, changing the social practices of production, or educational apparatuses" (p.28). In the mainstreaming debate, evidence of a medical conception of disability can be seen when teachers label and segregate a learner according to his or her disability or argues for expert intervention. The child with a special need is seen as deficit and a programme is developed to help remove her deficit, rather than the class environment being seen as deficit, challenged as exclusive, and worked upon to improve its accessibility.

The charity view

The second approach to disability that Fulcher identifies is the charity view. The charity view defines people with disabilities as in need of help, as objects of pity, as personally tragic or as dependant and eternal children. This conceptualisation emerged from the middle class philanthropy of the Victorian age where Victorian reformers believed they had a moral duty to help the poor and afflicted. This charity view is oppressive because it excludes consideration of the human rights of people with disabilities. It promotes professionalism, "the view that experts know best" and disregards attention to what the consumers believe they need (Fulcher, 1989, p.29). Tomlinson has also noted themes of benevolence and humanitarianism in special education (Tomlinson, 1982).

Fine & Asch (1988) ask why nondisabled people tend to view disabled people primarily as people who need help. They cite an interesting study by Katz (1981) who found that people gave less help to disabled people when they perceived them as competent. This was in contrast to the results of a study where people were found to give more help to competent people who were black and nondisabled. Katz concluded that nondisabled persons are on one level offended or uncomfortable when confronting a disabled person who is managing life competently as it throws their belief in the importance of their own health and capacities into question. He suggests, "attributing neediness and lack of control to people with disabilities permits those who are not disabled to view themselves as having more control and more strength in their lives than may be the case" (p.16).

The charity view of disability can be seen in the mainstreaming debate when schools urge students to focus on 'helping' and 'being kind' to the students with a disability. It is at the root of the argument that it is good to mainstream disabled students primarily because it benefits *regular* students - that they then have the opportunity to learn to be good, supportive citizens, or they can learn to appreciate their own good fortune, and be grateful they do not have such a disability. The charity view is also often at the root of requests for more teacher assistance, as in the cases when a child is seen as in need of considerable help before an assessment of real individual needs has actually been carried out.

The lay view

The third approach identified by Fulcher is the lay view which is the view of the average person on the street who may have an aversion to people with disabilities. It relates to the social practice of shunning and devaluing bodies which are not as easily controlled or which are less attractive aesthetically. This preoccupation with body image leads to the unthinking acceptance of physical disability as stereotype (Fulcher, 1989, p.29).

The lay view is in evidence in special education practices that separate students with disabilities and move them to a remote area of the school. It is also seen in schools where it is part of the culture to tease children who are different.

Disability as difference

The rights view

The rights view, the fourth approach to disability that Fulcher identifies, has emerged more recently and stresses equality, self reliance and independence for the consumer. It perceives and talks of discrimination, exclusion and oppression and is overtly political in contrast to professional discourse which professes to be apolitical. Biklen (1988) has emphasised the political and social context of disability, noting that people with disabilities are "institutionalised, segregated and undereducated, socially rejected, physically excluded from public places and unemployed". He argues that this is not a result of disability itself but is rather caused by "social ostracism, discrimination, and powerlessness" (p.128). He makes clear how people with disabilities can be validly perceived as a minority group,

> The conditions faced by people with disabilities are those that plague other minorities: social isolation, insufficient and unequal treatment, economic dependency, high unemployment, poor housing, and an unusually high rate of institutionalisation. It serves the interests of neither professionals nor their clients - indeed it perpetuates a myth - to ignore people's need for political and economic changes while offering them only clinical treatment ... Put another way, people with disabilities are more likely to achieve increased self determination, real choice, and power if they cease being defined as clients whose future rests in the hands of professionals, and are instead recognised as a minority group (p.137).

This notion of equality conflicts with the themes of dependence and help in the medical, charity and lay approaches to disability. In the mainstreaming debate, the proponents of the Regular Education Initiative arguing for 'inclusion' of students with special needs, are speaking from a rights perspective.

When people are speaking from a particular perspective, or drawing on particular conceptions they can be said to be employing a discourse. The concept of discourse is one utilised in particular by Fulcher (1989) and is a central concept for this study. The notion of discourse needs to be fully explained in relation to the mainstreaming debate. This will be done in the next chapter.

Summary

This chapter described how people with a disability or special need are viewed as being in need of highly specialised support because the disability is seen as the problem rather than society's inability to accommodate people who have different needs. In providing support, services providers have tended to therefore focus on the pathology of the disability itself and to attempt to remediate, in a medical style, either the disability itself or the handicap the disability is seen to cause. Because of this medical conceptual approach children and adults with disabilities are generally not seen as people first. In other words, their needs (and rights) to belong in the community along with everyone else and have similar experiences, responsibilities and opportunities for interaction and friendship are not viewed as primary in many professional needs' analyses. Dealing with the disability is seen as primary from a medical view of disability. The common 'charity' view of people with disabilities also involves a primary focus on the disability before the person, and results in responses involving paternalistic care and denial of individual rights. The 'lay' response of shunning people who are different further reinforces practices of segregation and isolation. An alternative conceptualisation, the 'rights' view, emphasises society as having the deficit, rather than the person with the disability, and thus views people with disabilities as a minority group, a group that has experienced discrimination, oppression and exclusion in a society that favours ablebodied people. This conceptualisation focuses on the environment and social context (our society and schools) as the oppressor, rather than the disability, and leads to an emphasis on adapting and improving a malfunctioning society rather than focusing on a perceived deficit in an individual.

When people draw on these conceptualisations they can be described as employing a particular 'discourse'. The next chapter will introduce and apply the concept of discourse to the discussion so far.

Footnote i. Fulcher also mentions a fifth emerging discourse, the 'corporate' approach. She describes 'managing disability' as one of its themes, and sees it in increasingly in evidence in Government welfare agencies and in private sector rehabilitation companies.

Chapter Four

The Concept of Discourse and its Application to the Mainstreaming Debate

Introduction

The four 'views' of disability outlined in the previous chapter - medical, charity, lay and rights - have been variously referred to, sometimes as 'approaches' to disability (Ford, Mongan & Whelan, 1982), or as 'differing conceptions' of disability (Lipsky & Gartner, 1989). The medical view is also sometimes referred to as a medical 'model' (Ford, Mongon & Whelan, 1982; Gartner & Lipsky, 1987). The author of this study has, in turn, used the words 'view', 'conception', 'perception', 'conceptualisation' and 'approach' interchangeably. These terms are all used in a similar way to refer to the way people perceive and conceptualize disability, education, and other ideas.

Fulcher (1989), however, mainly uses the term 'discourse' when describing the four alternative views of disability. The notion of 'discourse' has a wider meaning than the words used up to now, such as 'view' or 'conception', and has particular significance for this study which is aiming to apply the research methodology of discourse analyis to school principals' discourse on the mainstreaming issue. It is essential, then, to define and explain the concept of discourse, particularly in relation to the mainstreaming debate.

This chapter will introduce and define the concept of discourse. It will also describe the way Fulcher (1989) has applied the notion of discourse to the four main conceptions of disability in the mainstreaming debate outlined in Chapter Three. Further, the notion of ideology will be introduced in terms of its significance in the understanding and analysis of discourse on the mainstreaming issue.

The concept of discourse

Potter & Wetherell (1987, p.2), two key writers on discourse analysis, define 'discourse' within discourse analysis as being used in its most open sense, to cover all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, written and unwritten. They point out, however, that what is most significant in a definition of discourse for discourse analysis is that the focus is not just on the discourse itself, linguistically. Rather, the focus is from a social psychologist's view of wanting to gain a better understanding of social life and social interaction from studying 'social texts' or 'contexts'.

Discourse and context

The word 'context' is described in the Oxford Handy Dictionary as "what precedes or follows a word or passage and fixes its meaning" (p.174). To appreciate the significance of the context of any piece of discourse, it must be accepted that language actually has very little meaning on its own, outside of its context. MacDonell (1986) expresses this idea in this way:

> To consider the politics of meaning, we need to let go then, of the notion that words have a meaning of their own, one pinned down for everyone alike in the system of a language such as French or English ... Words change their meaning from one discourse to another, and conflicting discourses develop even where there is a supposedly common language (p.45).

Words and phrases mean different things in different circumstances, and when spoken by different people with differing intentions, or with differing conceptions of the meanings of the words spoken. Lee (1992) also describes the term 'discourses' as referring to the many different ways of speaking that are associated with "different social contexts" or "different speaking positions" (p.51).

Fulcher (1989) similarly understands discourse as being inextricably connected with its context in this way. She points out that people speak from a particular perspective in the mainstreaming debate, drawing on particular contexts (or conceptions of disability) to enable them to effectively achieve their objectives : "Discourses articulate the world in certain ways: they 'identify' 'problems', perspectives on those problems and thus 'solutions'" (Fulcher, 1989, p.8).

The constructive nature of discourse

In contrast to the traditional view of language, then, discourse analysis theory is claiming that language is *not* homogenous with predictable, consistent sets of meanings, a formal system independent of its users and its context of use. It is highly heterogeneous (Lee, 1992, p.185). Potter and Wetherell (1987) refer to this phenomenon of changing meanings in language as the 'constructive' nature of language. Speakers 'construct a version' in relation to a particular context (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.33). It is important to point out that speakers may not be *consciously* constructing a version, but that a construction nevertheless emerges as they try to make sense of a phenomenon or to engage in unselfconscious justifying or blaming. A researcher in discourse analysis, then, acknowledges that when people say something they usually have a purpose in saying it and that it is essential to place a phrase in this context when determining its meaning.

Discourse within mainstreaming

Describing discourse as "how issues are talked about" (Fulcher, 1989, p.4), Fulcher explains how language in the context of the mainstreaming or integration debate can be deployed as a tactic to persuade others to the speaker's view. A clear example of the use of discourse as an instrument of persuasion is where the notion that school populations are divided into two distinct groups, those with handicaps and those without, is employed in discourse (Fulcher, 1989, p.9). Here, the deficit perspective of disability "constructs the notion of 'normal' and 'abnormal', of belonging here [in a local school] or elsewhere [in a segregated school] ... It leads to the view that specialist teachers are necessary for some children" (p.9).

Fulcher points out that this deficit argument suggests a particular range of objectives for special education: such as identifying difference, separate career structures, a focus on disability and so on (Fulcher, 1989, p.9). The deficit discourse is theorizing the problems of disability and mainstreaming as belonging to the child and, therefore, theorizes the *solution* as needing extra resources to remediate the child's needs. An alternative discourse, on the other hand, such as a discourse based in the rights view of disability, would suggest that the children are firstly pupils of the school and, therefore, would propose solutions to do with teaching or pedagogic styles and approaches (Fulcher, 1989, p.9). The rights discourse, Fulcher argues, can be described as an inclusive discourse because it has an unconditional commitment to integration. This contrasts with the deficit medical, lay and charity discourses which she labels as 'divisive' discourses. The latter discourses emphasise disability, and are often qualified rather than unconditional in their support of mainstreaming. These discourses argue that mainstreaming should only go ahead under certain conditions. Inclusive discourses, on the other hand, are firmly based in the principle of equality and parity of treatment for all students in education (Fulcher, 1989, p.50).

In this way it can be seen that any discourse contains a social theory about how the world works or ought to work, and accordingly each discourse provides a solution (Fulcher, 1989, p.8). In other words, discourse analysis is based on the idea that people use language to construct versions of their world and that therefore, their accounts vary according to the function of their speech, or according to the purpose of their argument. This 'version of the world' can be described as the context of the discourse.

The ideological nature of discourse

It is important here to briefly discuss the concept of ideology in relation to the concept of discourse. Any study setting out to examine the context of people's discourse involves acknowledging that individuals are invariably part of a larger group, institution or societal structure which has power and privileges which that system is interested to protect. In this way, discourse can be said to be ideological.

Thompson (1984) has defined ideology as referring to "systems of belief or thought which maintain asymmetical power relations and inequalities between social groups" (Thompson, 1984, p.60). In other words, people immersed in an ideology generally hold views which justify some kind of inequity. What is significant about ideology, however, is that many people fail to recognise these inequities. People, when they speak and act, may be unwittingly drawing on a system's ideology which feels right and natural to them and may be supporting this structure against their own or others true interests. The very nature of power is persuasive and people adhering to a dominant view may not question it because it appears to be right and natural, and, as a dominant view, the only way to be. Fairclough (1985, p.152), therefore, has recommended that discourse analysis researchers pay attention to the *institutions* an ideology serves as well as a participants place in them. He points out that it is when discourse is unchallenged that the norms it represents will become most 'naturalized' and 'opaque' in this way (p.129). This phenomenon has also been referred to as the 'reification' of an ideology (Thompson, 1984, p.137).

Potter & Wetherell (1987, p.187) and others (Fairclough, 1985; Van Dijk, 1985; Thompson, 1984) identified discourse analysis as having an important future role in the study of ideology. Potter and Wetherell (1987) acknowledge, however, that this is an enormously complicated area of study. Nevertheless, they cite a number of studies which address questions of discourse with ideological import, such as racism, in this way, including Said (1978), Wetherell et al (1987), and Trew (1979) (in Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.187). A New Zealand study investigating the ideological nature of teachers' discourse on the schooling of Maori children is Simon's study, Ideology in the Schooling of Maori Children, (Simon 1986).

Van Dijk (1985, v.4, p.5) points out that discourse analysis can show the role discourse is playing in the ideological formation of ideas, their communicative reproduction and the institutional management and representation of them. Discourse analysis, he argues, is "the key that can disrupt, disclose and challenge the mechanisms involved" (p.7).

The wider context of discourse in the mainstreaming debate

Bogdan & Kugelmass (1984) explain the importance of setting the mainstream debate in the context of wider, and often ideological, systems of meanings when they state,

> Definitions, ways of thinking, do not get formed at random. They reflect the environment of which they are a part. They will reflect the values, the problems and the concerns of people who operate in these settings. They will also reflect economic conditions. Meaning does not occur in isolated bits. It is part of larger and more complex clusters. To isolate education and disability from the context of the systems of which they are a part is to distort, leaving significant aspects unexamined (Bogdan & Kugelmass, 1984, p.188).

In the previous chapters it was described how people with disabilities can be seen as a minority group that has experienced discrimination, oppression and exclusion in our society (Fine & Asch, 1988; Fulcher, 1989; Oliver, 1990). There are belief systems about disability and about education, with accompanying institutional structures, which support practices that exclude students with disabilities or special needs from educational opportunities and settings that other children have (Ballard, 1993; Biklen, 1991; Lipsky & Gartner, 1989).

There are a number of writers who contend that the beliefs and values underlying special education practices which exclude students from regular education programmes need to be investigated, including Ballard (1990), Blatt (1987), Booth (1983), Codd (1987), Murray-Seegert (1992) and Shapiro (1980).

A prominent writer in the field of disability, Burton Blatt (1987), has pointed out that the field of (intellectual) disability is "inextricably bound to the values and beliefs of society as a whole". Blatt maintains it is necessary that educators “identify those beliefs through which we filter our facts” (p.7). Elsewhere he points out the essentially value-laden nature of the mainstreaming debate:

"The integration controversy is not one of those dilemmas that presents us with a problem to solve as much as it is one that presents us with an opportunity to expose our values (Blatt, 1987, p.168).

Ballard (1990), a New Zealand writer and academic, has recommended that special education professionals "evaluate current conceptual models and resultant practices in terms of the social and political contexts within which we think and operate (Ballard, 1990, p.11). Booth (1983), a British writer, explicitly claims that the existence of special schooling for students with special needs is ideological, stating, "The existence of special schooling can best be understood as dependent on the same selection philosophy or political ideology which underpinned the sorting of children by an 11+ examination into Grammar and secondary-modern schools" (Booth, 1983, p.260). Booth points out that this political ideology has two main strands, firstly that children "could and should be divided into homogenous groupings which require a uniform style of education", and secondly that "this education should take place in separate buildings" (p.260). He challenges these arguments as based on inequitable beliefs and concludes that "where integration does not happen it is because people with the power to make the changes do not want children with disabilities in ordinary schools". He goes on to contend, "the forces for segregation still predominate over the forces for integration. These forces are not based on medical or educational facts about children with disabilities. Instead they concern values of selection and achievement which lie at the heart of our social structure" (p.266).

Codd (1987), another New Zealand writer and academic, warns educators of the dangers of ideological and social control through schooling, reminding New Zealanders that, in spite of professed educational beliefs that education is there for the development of the individual, the ideological effects are that a segmented labour market and associated class divisions are reproduced (p.72). He points out that surprisingly little attention had been paid, up to the time of his writing, to the socially reproductive aspects of special education. Through assessment and exclusion, special education channels off a group of students to a 'special future' which invariably has restricted opportunities in employment, life opportunities and independence (p.72).

The ideological nature of special education
Clearly it could be argued that the ideology of special needs appears to provide a rationale and legitimation for the exclusion of students with disabilities and 'special needs' from the regular education system. Murray-Seegart (1992) claims she has exposed the legitimation or reification of the practice of separate special education by making revealing comparisons with other countries. Demonstrating how "educational practices interact with their socio cultural context", (p.1), she shows that cross cultural comparisons between countries can help make people see that other countries do things very differently from theirs. This can lead them to challenge assumptions that 'their' way is 'natural and right'. She describes how Italy integrates 90% of its students with special needs while Germany integrates only 10%, and asks, "how can we account for such variation when all are arguing that [they] are meeting the needs of children?" She answers that something else must be affecting placement decisions (p.10). This 'something else' is the value system people adhere to. Decisions to segregate students with special needs, she argues, are in fact based on cultural values, not objective, medical or psychological evidence for the superiority of separate settings. Therefore, the mainstreaming debate becomes one of moral argument, an issue of social justice and equity (p.23). Tomlinson and Barton have also written extensively on similar concerns (Barton & Tomlinson, 1981; Barton & Tomlinson, 1984; Tomlinson, 1985).

However, it is not the purpose of this study to prove that an ideology of special education exists, either empirically or philosophically - although the likelihood that much discourse within the debate appears to be ideological needs to be acknowledged. What is essential, and this is the immediate purpose of this study, is that current discourses within mainstreaming arguments in New Zealand are identified and critiqued so that these issues are not overlooked or disguised any longer by layers of unacknowledged meanings. To do this, intensive analysis of the discourse of a range of school principals will be undertaken. The details and justification of this research approach will be described in the next two chapters which concern the methodology of this piece of research.

Summary

Fulcher (1989) has illustrated how the four common views or conceptions of disability, described in the previous chapter, are employed in discourse to either support or oppose mainstreaming of students with special needs. Discourse must be understood and interpreted in terms of its context. The wider context of discourse is often ideological in that it refers to an institutionalised system of beliefs and practices that justify and maintain some kind of inequity. The beliefs which are drawn on are, therefore, invariably 'reified' in that the speakers accept the dominant beliefs as right and natural.

Within the mainstreaming debate, belief systems are used that justify practices which exclude students with disabilities from regular educational opportunities. It is important that these beliefs are identified and acknowledged when they are referred to in the mainstreaming debate. Discourse analysis, a research methodology that has the capability of identifying beliefs within such a debate, will be described and applied to this study in the next two chapters.

PART TWO

METHODOLOGY

Chapter Five

Discourse Analysis of School Principals' Talk about Mainstreaming: An Introduction to the Methodology

Introduction

The methodology of this study involves the analysis of a set of interview accounts collected from a group of school principals concerning their views on the mainstreaming of students with disabilities or special needs in regular schools. The intention was to analyse the different positions these principals held on mainstreaming in terms of the different beliefs and conceptions about education and disability expressed in their discourse and which have been described in the literature.

This chapter describes and justifies discourse analysis as an appropriate methodology for this research. The ten stages of discourse analysis recommended by Potter and Wetherell (1987) are outlined. The first three stages - the preparatory stages of the research, which include clarifying the research focus, selecting the sample, and the collection of data - are described fully in terms of their application in this study. The final seven stages, the research in action, will be described in the next chapter.

Discourse analysis

The research methodology that appeared most appropriate for this study was the relatively new and currently developing method of discourse analysis because it appeared to have the capability of identifying and exploring the different beliefs and values underlying the mainstreaming debate. Potter and Wetherell's substantial text has been used as a central source for the methodological aspect of this study as it contains thorough accounts of both the theory and the practical application of this approach (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The other main reference is Fulcher's account of the four main discourses of disability in relation to mainstreaming (Fulcher, 1989). Other authors drawn upon when discussing discourse analysis as a methodology include Fairclough (1985); Kress (1985); Lee (1992); MacDonell (1986); Parker (1992); Thompson (1984) and van Dijk (1985). These writers describe how discourse analysis enables the researcher to reveal patterns of meaning in the discourse of individuals and to relate these patterns to wider sets of beliefs in our society. As described in the previous chapter, these wider beliefs can be defined as ideological when they uphold social organisations or practices which systematically discriminate against groups within our society. However, it is important to repeat that the aim of this study was not to prove or disprove the existence of an ideology in the context of the mainstreaming debate, but to identify the discourses discussed in the literature where they occur in the talk of selected school principals, and to explore and discuss the implications of these.

The differences between discourse analysis and attitude surveys

It is important to explain why an attitude survey was not selected as the methodology for this research. This explanation also highlights significant features of discourse analysis as a research technique.

Potter & Wetherell (1987) have pointed out that the traditional social psychological approach to language treated discourse in a straight forward way as a "relatively unambiguous pathway to actions, beliefs or actual events" (p.34), or as something which merely reflects or mirrors objects and events. As discussed in Chapter Four, more recent approaches to language suggest that people's discourse must be examined in terms of the context in which it is spoken. This context usually consists of the speaker's values and conceptions in relation to the topic being discussed. Discourse analysis, then, as Potter and Wetherell stress, places emphasis on the fact that a person's description of something is very closely tied to their evaluation of it (Potter & Wetherell, 1987 p.6). There are no value-free statements.

A clear example of such a traditional approach is the attitude survey where what people claim they believe is reported as fact, rather than the very nature and justification of their claim examined. An attitude survey of school principal's views on mainstreaming would therefore only provide the reader with information about what these principals *claimed* was their 'attitude'. Using discourse analysis actually shifts the researcher's focus from searching for an underlying entity such as 'attitude', which has been seen as generating talk and behaviour, to a detailed examination of how evaluative expressions are produced in discourse, how people are justifying what they believe and what wider sets of meanings and values they are drawing on to defend their position.

> [Discourse analysis] takes discourse as a research topic in its own right rather than treating it as a transparent medium through which the 'real facts' of attitudes, events or behaviours can be recovered. Moreover, it takes a social perspective which focuses on the role of discourse in interaction and sense making rather than being concerned with, for example, abstract questions of semantics, text coherence or aesthetics (Potter & Wetherell, 1987 p.184).

The purpose of discourse analysis, then, is to reveal or make visible that ways of speaking are socially determined, and to make clear what social effects these ways of speaking may ultimately lead to. As Potter & Wetherell maintain, rather than trying to resolve variations found in discourse, discourse analysis instead tries to *reveal the differences* between accounts and what is achieved by them (p.65). Consequently the methodology leads to two central questions:

1. How is the particular language constructed?

and

2. What are the consequences or implications of different types of construction? (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 55).

These two questions can be applied effectively to the current debate on mainstreaming students with special needs. It will be illustrated in this study how the language, used to argue one way or the other within the debate, is constructed in a particular way, drawing on particular discourses representing wider sets of meanings, and how these discourses have particular consequences for the education of students with special needs.

The ten stages of discourse analysis

Potter & Wetherell (1987), whilst acknowledging that discourse analysis is an emerging research methodology that is developing and changing, recommend ten basic stages for the researcher to follow, with various considerations to be taken into account at each stage.

> It is important to re-emphasise that there is no *method* to discourse analysis in the way we traditionally think of an experimental method or content analysis method. What we have is a broad theoretical framework concerning the nature of discourse and its role in social life, along with a set of suggestions about how discourse can best be studied and how others can be convinced findings are genuine. The ten stages we have outlined are intended as a springboard rather than a template (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.175).

The stages outlined are:

1. Clarifying the research question focus in the light of the role of discourse analysis;
2. Selecting an appropriate sample;
3. Collection of data in the form of documents or transcribed interviews;
4. Carrying out the interviews;
5. Transcription of the interviews;
6. The coding of data;
7. The analysis;
8. The validation of the results;
9. Writing the report; and,
10. The application or use of the study.

The first three stages, which can be seen as the preliminary or preparatory stages of the research, will be described in this chapter. The last six stages, which embody the actual research in action, will be described in Chapter Six. Each stage will be described fully in terms of its specific application within this study.

Stage 1. Clarifying the research focus

As discussed, according to Potter & Wetherell (1987), and other researchers in discourse analysis (Mercer, 1991; Parker, 1992; & Van Dijk, 1985), the focus of research using this methodology must be broadly related to the construction and function of the discourse itself, and not to things 'beyond' such as attitudes. The functional effects of the discourse examined are largely hypothesised on *after* an intense focus on the detail of an exchange (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.158). As already stated, the decision was made to focus this study on the analysis of a set of accounts collected from a group of school principals concerning their views on the mainstreaming or inclusion of students with disabilities or special needs in regular schools.

Stage 2. Selection of the sample

Size of sample

Potter & Wetherell (1987) stress that a small sample is usually adequate for the discourse analysis approach because a large number of patterns are likely to emerge, and also because the researcher is primarily interested in the *use* of language rather than in the *people* generating the language. Consistency across many reports is not looked for so much as patterns within and between fewer accounts. Consequently, ten school principals were selected for this study.

Participants

School principals were selected as the participants for this study because of the significant impact leaders can have on their organisations, both on their beliefs, values and culture, and on their general effectiveness (Kilmann, 1984; Sergovianni and Starratt, 1983; Shoemaker and Fraser, 1981). Studies have shown that principals do make a difference in mainstreaming (Bogdan & Biklen, 1985; Davis, 1977; Gage, 1979; and Robson, 1981). An Auckland principal has emphasised that the role of the principal in mainstreaming is crucial when you consider his or her influence on school climate, staff training, programme responsibility and initial enrolment of students with disabilities (Thew, 1988). Hughes & Meyer, (1990) in another New Zealand publication, reinforce these views. As Bogdan & Biklen state, “Some programmes may succeed without the active support and involvement of building principals. But a programme cannot succeed where the principal is opposed, or negatively disposed, to mainstreaming" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1985, p.30).

Recent writing on transformational leadership takes the significance of the role of the principal further, stressing the significant influence of a principal's vision and reflective practice on a school (Beare, Caldwell & Millikan, 1989; Codd, 1989; Edwards, 1986; Sergiovanni, 1991; Servatius, Fellows & Kelly, 1992). Further, Gronn (1983) has illustrated how it is the *talk* of school principals that excercises considerable administrative control in a school. Selecting principals as the focus for a study on discourse in terms of its likely impact on mainstreaming practices seems particularly appropriate in this light.

School principals' views

A recent New Zealand study (Moltzen & Mitchell, 1992) has recorded principals as being essentially in favour of mainstreaming, as has a recent study of Australian school principals (Center et al, 1985). It is significant, however, that in both studies nearly all the principals' statements of support are qualified in terms of receiving resources. In Moltzen & Mitchell's study the principals were in favour of mainstreaming only as long as adequate resources were provided. As one primary school principal stated, "I am quite happy with the concept, as long as we are given the resources, both personnel and others, so that these kids fit into the school." A secondary school principal makes a similar qualification. "It is a good idea as long as the resources are there" (p.19).

Similarly, a closer qualitative analysis of the Australian survey of Queensland principals revealed that, despite their philosophical commitment to mainstreaming, principals made contingent upon their agreement to mainstreaming, adequate and appropriate support services. They also made mainstreaming contingent upon not just the needs of a disabled child but on the needs of their non-handicapped peers (Center et al, 1985). As many principals perceive that necessary resources are not going to be made available in the current economic climate, *actual* support for mainstreaming practice appears to be far less common than philosophical support for the concept. As an intermediate school principal in the New Zealand study stated, "I support mainstreaming provided the resources and support services are in place. At present it is a definite 'no'" (cited in Moltzen & Mitchell, 1992, p.19).

There is an essential contradiction in educators' arguments which on the one hand philosophically support mainstreaming as a concept, but on the other hand argue that they will not practice it until certain resources and conditions are available. Hughes and Meyer (1990) show the flaw in this common 'resource argument' against mainstreaming:

> [We make] ... a plea to educationalists to avoid unwittingly arguing that mainstreaming is 'bad policy' because there are insufficient resources. As explained earlier, the rightness of the policy in moral terms is surely the point of justification ... We note that schools do not cease to teach mathematics because they lack sufficient maths resources. Maths is too important (p.21).

The decision of these principals to mainstream or include students with disabilities, then, rests in values rather than availability of resources. As Hughes and Meyer (1990) point out, other educational practices are not ceased due to lack of sufficient resources. Similarly Maori children and other minority groups are not excluded by school policy on the grounds that there are insufficient resources to cater for them. Clearly students with disabilities are seen as an 'optional extra' by these principals, in a way that other groups of children are not.

It seemed important, therefore, to carry out a study to specifically examine the positions some school principals are taking on the mainstreaming issue and to explore the beliefs behind these positions. This is not for the purpose of blaming or accusing individual principals but rather to clarify the debate. It is essential educators realise the implications, both social and historical, of certain arguments and assumptions taken up in the mainstreaming debate, and also essential that everyone in the debate (including the researcher) has the opportunity to be exposed to other positions, and to the implications of the analyses of these positions.

Range within the sample

The essential variable to be investigated in this study was a *range of views* of school principals on mainstreaming. However, it was also important for the sample to include both men and woman, secondary and primary school principals and Maori and Pakeha principals. The purpose of this was to make the sample representative, but not in the traditional sense of 'representativeness'. It was intended the study be representative to the extent that someone reading the study would not be able to dismiss the result of the analysis outright simply because it, for example, had no secondary school principals, or only contained male principal views. The meaning of ‘representativeness’ is different here to its application in quantitative research, where the intention would be to generalise from the sample to all or most principals. It is not claimed that this sample has representativeness or generality in that way. The analysis only demonstrates the positions this particular sample of people had access to and what they were able to, or decided to, reproduce in an interview. The discourses of these principals have generality only, as Wetherell, Stiven & Potter (1987) put it, “to the extent that they are recognisable as having a much broader currency” (p.61). In other words the generality of the results of the analysis depends on the *reader* of the research assessing the importance and interest of the effect described and deciding whether it has wider application. This has also been described as 'exemplar generalization' (Sarantakos, 1993, p.27). Some statements made by these principals may be perceived by readers as easily recognisable arguments made in the mainstreaming debate. This will contribute to its perceived application and validity by readers.

Consequently I ensured that the sample included both men and women, and both primary and secondary school principals, and Maori and Pakeha principals. However, as the sample cannot be generalised at all in the quantitative/traditional way, for example, to ‘all’ women principals (occasional personal pronouns aside), speakers were not systematically identified as male, female, primary or secondary, Pakeha or Maori. Although I was aware that readers may have found this category identification interesting, to ensure confidentiality I finally decided not to employ it. It was particularly important in the case of the Maori principal that this person was not identified in terms of gender because Maori principals are relatively uncommon and would be easy to identify. It may well be an interesting future study to analyse mainstreaming discourses of people of differing gender and race for the purpose of investigating possible differences in views between men, women, Maori and Pakeha principals, but that was not the focus of this study. In fact, for this study, as previously explained, I deliberately selected primary and secondary principals who would represent both 'sides' of the debate, some principals whose discourse would fall more often in the 'pro status quo' or 'disability as pathology' discourses, and some principals whose discourse would fall more often into the 'disability rights' or 'proactive' discourses. The aim was to illustrate and explore a range of positions.

Sampling procedure

The non-random sampling procedure of purposive sampling appeared most appropriate for this study (Dixon, Bouma & Atkinson, 1987, p.139; Sarantakos, 1993, p.138). As previously outlined, statistical representativeness which would be obtained through wider representation and random sampling procedures, was not required. In qualitative research the reader draws on his or her own experience and the fullness of the writer's description and analysis to decide whether the research is valid or meaningful to them (Bogdan & Knopp Biklen, 1982, p.41).

As previously stated, what was important for this study was that a range of views were represented so that different accounts and positions could be explored, and, hopefully, applied to the discourses on mainstreaming found in the literature. I also reserved the possibility that I might identify other discourses as yet not clearly identified in the literature - which is in fact what occurred. So, as with much qualitative research, the study was to a significant degree open-ended, intending to *explore* rather than to *prove* a hypothesis.

To obtain the names of likely participants I asked various colleagues and parents of children with disabilities to suggest any principal they thought would be interesting to interview on this subject. I then asked them briefly where they felt this person's view would roughly be, on a pro-mainstreaming to anti-mainstreaming continuum. I was confident I would get adequate representation from principals described as 'having a lot of reservations' because I believed them to be relatively common. I knew of two primary school principals myself who took a very pro-inclusion stance, and by asking in my network found the names of two secondary principals who were felt to take a very positive view. I decided not to interview any principal believed to be extremely hostile to mainstreaming as I felt the study was sensitive enough as it was and I did not want to provoke any unpleasantness.

As it turned out, I began to suspect that many of the principals who declined to be interviewed tended to be more likely to be on the less positive side of the continuum. Although I certainly ended up with enough data to illustrate the main discourses in the literature across the full range of views, I did feel in some ways my sample was more representative of pro-mainstreaming people than of the principals more negatively disposed, because the people more positive about mainstreaming seemed to be more willing to be interviewed.

As I gained agreement from each principal to be interviewed, I organised them on a list according to their view (assumed), their gender, race and their school level ie. Primary or Secondary. After I had interviewed five principals, I re-examined my chart to ensure representation in those categories before selecting and telephoning others. This was because I knew an interview could be cancelled at the last minute, in which case I would want to ensure I retained the balance of my selection which aimed to interview five primary and five secondary principals. I felt to be (very roughly) consistent with current gender ratios of school principals it would be best to interview two female primary principals out of five and one female secondary principal out of five. I selected one Maori principal and, to represent the other school level, where there appeared to be no Maori principals, I ensured there was at least one (Pakeha) principal of a school with a predominantly Maori population. I also tried to ensure that both genders and school levels were represented at both 'sides' of the mainstreaming debate.

Quite late in the study, one of the principals had to be excluded owing to the poor quality of the recording of the interview. It was decided that the range of views was more than representative of all the positions I wished to explore, in fact the data were considerable, so a replacement was not found. As this was the first interview of the study, it proved to be very useful as a further pilot practice. It certainly contributed to improvement of the technical nature of my taping equipment.

Stage 3. Collection of data/interviews

Potter and Wetherell (1987) indicate that using interviews for data collection with discourse analysis has both problems and advantages. Problems include the practical difficulties of setting up taping equipment, and the ethical problems of ways to sensitively explore the issues, which with discourse analysis are likely to be connected with prejudicial belief systems, which are likely to be controversial.

Interviews have the advantage, however, Potter & Wetherell (1987) point out, of allowing the researcher active intervention. Similar questions can be asked of each participant, giving greater comparability and increased simplicity in the coding process (p.163). Further, *variations* in response can be drawn out and fully explored. Potter & Wetherell (1987) make clear that interviews are used differently in discourse analysis to how they are traditionally used. The traditional approach is to gain consistency in responses and use this as evidence of a corresponding set of actions or beliefs (p.164).

For discourse analysis consistency is important in a different way. The researcher is aiming "to identify regular patterns in language use" (p.164). The focus on how the discourse is constructed and what it achieves rather than whether it is an accurate description of the participant's internal state. Variation is in fact *more* useful than consistency in discourse analysis because it gives the researcher a full range of accounting resources that people use when constructing the meaning of their social world, and clearly reveals the function of these accounting practices. Consequently it was important that I generated, rather than restricted, the diversity of the participants' accounts in this study.

Potter & Wetherell (1987) recommend a number of ways to do this (p.164). The interviewer can tackle the issue more than once in the interview in the course of different topics. Another way is to adopt follow up questions to responses which pose alternative or problematic views. I included both of these strategies in my approach and these will be discussed below.

Developing the interview schedule

It is clear that the role of the interviewer in a discourse analysis study may often be more complex and challenging than in a traditional role where the interviewer does his or her best to remain neutral and to ask very consistent questions. It was important to plan the interview schedule and process very carefully.

The pilot interviews

I developed and trialed a pilot interview schedule for two main reasons. Firstly, I wanted to be sure that the questions developed were capable of drawing out the beliefs and views of the principals interviewed on mainstreaming. I planned to test the effectiveness of the schedule by matching the beliefs explicitly or implicitly expressed in the interviews with the ones listed in the literature as common in the mainstreaming debate. My second reason was to trial and practise my interviewing *approach.* I was intending to interview school principals on a sensitive and controversial topic, and wanted to be sure that I was approaching the study ethically in terms of being sensitive to the participants' views. At the same time I wanted to ensure that they were aware that this was a critical study and that my views did not necessarily concur with theirs.

The pilot schedule was developed from an initial survey of the literature. From this initial survey I drew from Regular Education Initiative proponents accounts of 'negative' beliefs about mainstreaming, some broad themes that were evident in the debate (see Table 1). These beliefs fell into one of two grounding assumptions, or discourses, about mainstreaming: The assumption that regular schools are primarily there to serve typical children (which I named the 'pro status quo' discourse); and the assumption that disability is a deficit within a child and thus children with a disability should have a qualitatively different education (which I named 'disability as pathology' discourse).

I then developed questions which had the facility to draw out these beliefs - as well as any others the principals may hold. While I had an idea of the direction in which I was going I also wanted to be open to unexpected data that may emerge from the research. For these reasons I decided on open ended questions, and also to feel free to deviate from the questions when it felt appropriate to further probe a point. I would ensure however that certain common questions were asked of every participant as this would help me make clearer comparisons of responses when undertaking the comparative stage of the analysis. The pilot interview schedule is reproduced in Figure 1.

Evaluation of the pilot interview schedule

Piloting the content

I interviewed two school principals using the pilot schedule and transcribed and analysed the interviews. I found that the schedule had succeeded in drawing out beliefs of the two principals, and that many of these beliefs matched the list of beliefs drawn from the literature.

Question one; "What are your views on students with disabilities or special needs attending regular schools?" and question two: "What, in your opinion, are the main barriers to mainstreaming students with special needs?" succeeded particularly well in drawing out beliefs.

Table 1. Beliefs about mainstreaming drawn from the literature

1. Regular schools are for typical children
The current dual system is best ie. general education for most children and special education for those who don't fit.

It takes too much time, resources etc, so therefore segregation is the best compromise.

Only specialist trained professionals can teach or participate with children with disabilities ie. experts are necessary, and, children with disabilities aren't like 'ordinary children' so a teacher's *general* training has little relevance.

Mainstreaming will interfere with the quality of education offered to non-handicapped students ie. the non handicapped children are our first priority.

Services should be offered on a continuum, and students can move on when they are ready.

2. Disability as a deficit
Disability is primarily a medical phenomenon ie. it does not need to be defined in terms of the handicaps our society and environment and attitudes impose ie. a deficit approach.

Students with disabilities prefer to be segregated - amongst their own kind.

Teachers need to know a student's specific disability before they can plan an appropriate programme ie. disability before person.

Children with disabilities are more different than alike children without disabilities.

The children with disabilities will be teased and ridiculed.

I decided to adapt question three because, while it drew interesting answers, it did not particularly invite the principals to express their beliefs. I decided to change the question - "How important in your view is the role of the principal in terms of mainstreaming students with special needs in a school?" to: "What role should the principal play in terms of mainstreaming students with special needs in a school?" This adapted question, I found, drew out replies which revealed how far the principal felt the responsibility for - and therefore ownership of - students with special needs lay with them and their school, and how far they felt the responsibility for these students lay in the special education services.

Question four was very successful in drawing out the views of the principals, possibly because, to many educators, the possibility of facing the challenge of mainstreaming a child with multiple, severe disabilities is the most fearful scenario. This question was an example of the strategy Potter & Wetherell recommended of deliberately asking a question that poses a problematic or even provocative issue to yield further data in discourse analysis (Potter & Wetherell,1987, p.164). I felt this question might prompt some principals beyond giving a merely philosophical and theoretical response to my interview and lead to a deeper, stronger response.

In the first pilot trial question four succeeded well in drawing out such views, but the participant made the important suggestion that I make the questionnaire available in advance so that the participants could give the questions some thought prior to the interview. When I implemented this suggestion in the second trial I found that having prior knowledge of that particular question appeared to develop a kind of defensiveness in the participant, and she applied her ideas and feelings about that question to all of the previous questions which I had not wished to be influenced in this way. Because prior knowledge of this question seemed to pre-empt spontaneous replies to question one, which was intended to be open ended and undirected, I decided not to include this question on the written list of sample questions which I subsequently made available to participants prior to their interviews.

1. What are your views on students with disabilities or special needs attending regular schools?

2. What, in your opinion, are the main barriers to mainstreaming students with special needs? How could they be overcome?

3. How important, in your view, is the role of the principal in terms of mainstreaming students with special needs in a school?

4. I would like to ask a hypothetical question. If a parent in your neighbourhood came to you wishing to enrol his or her child who had severe disabilities at your school, (the child used a wheelchair, had no spoken language and a degree of intellectual impairment), what would your response be? What would you do, and why?

Figure 1. The pilot interview schedule

Finally, in reviewing the pilot schedule, I decided to include one final 'summing up question' for the purpose of both concluding the interview and also to draw out a final summative view from the participant. This was partly because I had found that by the end of the interview the speakers were more lucid. They seemed to be clearer about their ideas due to the process of exploring their ideas through the interview and also had begun to develop a more relaxed relationship with me. I also felt these 'nutshells' or summaries might be a useful and interesting unit to compare across principals during the analysis.

Piloting the approach
The pilots were invaluable for practising my approach to the interviews. I was reminded of how important it was for me to be very clear with the participants that I was intending to look critically at discourse about mainstreaming with the aim of exploring the implications of different positions held on the issue. At the same time I was aware I could not discuss my methodology in too much detail as it might affect the way the participants decided to express their ideas. Potter & Wetherell (1987, p. 164) suggest that this is a common difficulty in discourse analysis research which attempts to examine the sensitive area of human prejudice. I discussed the problem with one of the principals in the trial after her interview and also discussed it at length with colleagues, friends and my supervisor.

I decided on a strategy that would largely avoid this issue of 'deception' and also which might at the same time not detract from, and even possibly enhance, the quality of the data collected. I decided that at some stage in every interview, after the first two non-directive questions had been answered, I would deliberately disclose my views on mainstreaming. I did this by either making a direct statement about myself "You see, I believe ...", or I would describe views of people I had studied - implying I had sympathy for these views. I felt a lot better about my relationship with the participants by doing this because I knew then they would be unlikely to feel 'betrayed' when reading my subsequent analysis of their views when the study was completed. Further, contributing my view of an alternative to the one they expressed, often helped to draw out further, more substantial responses from the participants, often in justification of their initial statements. This gave the added advantage of generating more data.

Another reason for the researcher expressing alternative views during an interview, is a notion coined and discussed by Lather (1986) which she calls catalytic validity. According to Lather's concept of catalytic validity (1986), it is important that participants are further empowered as a result of a research study to act or to develop their thinking. Sharing an alternative view has the capacity to increase critical thought on an issue, and this is one aspect of empowerment.

Finally, question five, asking for a 'nutshell' (see Figure 2, next chapter) proved to be an effective way of rounding off the interview and of encouraging the speaker to express his or her views succinctly, providing another valuable source of data.

Summary

Discourse analysis was selected as the methodology for this study because it has the capability of identifying and exploring underlying beliefs and values in the mainstreaming debate. School principals were decided upon for the sample because of the significant impact principals have as leaders on school mainstreaming practices. The ten participants included men and women, Maori and Pakeha, and were from both secondary and primary schools. The notion of representativeness and validity within a qualitative research was explained in regard to the selection, composition, and size of the sample.

The interview schedule was developed on the basis of a literature review, and was trialed on two school principals for both the questionnaire content and for the interview approach. The actual interview process and the stages of coding, analysis and writing up the study are described in the next chapter.

Chapter Six

The Methodology in Action

Introduction

The methodology of discourse analysis, and the three preliminary stages of this research - clarifying the research focus, selecting the sample, and collecting the data - were explained and described in the previous chapter. This chapter will describe and apply the final seven stages recommended by Potter and Wetherell (1987) for discourse analysis. These are: carrying out the interviews; transcribing the interviews; coding the data; analysis of the data; validation of the results; writing the report, and, finally, considering the application of the study and related ethical issues.

Carrying out the research

Stage 4. The interviews

After I had refined the interview schedule and approach (see Figure 2 for the adapted interview schedule), I began setting up the interviews for the study. I contacted each participant initially by telephone asking either them individually or, if they weren't available, their school secretary, if they would be willing to be interviewed on their views on mainstreaming for between 30 minutes and an hour, as part of my Masters thesis study. If they agreed, I followed the call up with a letter explaining again the reasons for the study, indicating that the interview would be taped and transcribed, as well as assuring them they would not be identified. In this letter I also made clear that the study's purpose was to explore the different positions people hold on the mainstreaming issue (see Appendix). I enclosed the first three questions of the interview schedule as examples of the kinds of questions I would be asking, and confirmed the time and date of interview.

At the beginning of each interview I reviewed the purpose of the study, and thanked the participant for their time and involvement. I carried a spare copy of the sample questions for them to refer to in case they had misplaced the one I had posted. Every principal

1. What are your views on students with disabilities attending regular schools?
2. What in your opinion are the main barriers in mainstreaming students with disabilities or special needs? How could they be overcome?
3. What role should the principal play, in your view, in mainstreaming?
4. My views are/Some argue that ...
5. I would also like to ask a hypothetical question. If a parent in your neighbourhood came to you wishing to enrol their child who had severe disabilities at your school (the child used a wheelchair, had no spoken language and a degree of visual impairment), what would your response be? What would you do and why?
6. What, then, in a nutshell, is your view on mainstreaming?

Figure 2. The adapted interview schedule

without exception was very welcoming and supportive of me, assisting me in the complications of finding a power point for the tape recorder and being very gracious about the fact that I was taking their time at a period in schools where principals appear to be exceptionally busy. In fact I enjoyed the interviews very much and this surprised me as I had been apprehensive about addressing such a controversial topic. It was primarily the professional approach of these principals that made the process so comfortable.

The questions developed in the pilot interviews proved to draw out a rich range of data. The process, as previously discussed, was semi-structured. The main questions were all asked, and usually in the same order. At the same time I felt free to probe, contribute an idea or offer encouragement (to the participant to continue speaking) when it appeared desirable.

I found that with question four in particular it was not usually possible to just pose the question in a usual place, given the flexibility of the discussion in the interview format. Sometimes I could ask the question or make my 'alternative' statement, albeit in a fairly rambling and hesitant way, and the participant would immediately respond, as with this example:

> (Interviewer) *It's interesting - from all - from most of the people I've talked to, the students with disabilities are seen as that - kind of that last straw that breaks the camel's back - but there sort of seems to be an attitude that the other kids - all the other kids - their rights should be met first and we'll close the door on the students with the disabilities. Do you think that that's right - there's a sort of an attitude - they don't quite have as much right as the other kids, and that teachers will be stretched to cover the needs of these kids, but the kids with the disabilities are the last straw, and it's almost as though we're doing them a favour or they don't have a right to be there ...*
>
> (Participant) Well, there may be some who see them as add-ons, you know, another different sort of group that's coming in the classroom, again - but I think if you said, 'All right. We will take something away from you. We will give you time to prepare - you know - let's take a class - we'll just give you another x number of non-teaching periods

> during the week - let's lighten your existing load - not add to the damned thing because they already have to cope with so many different sorts of students'. And you might say, well - here's another student with equal rights ... But they still see that the disabled youngsters are - they have in their minds that they do need special assistance.

At other times I had to persist in making my point in order to draw a response to the point I was making, as with this example where I intervened four times:

> *(Interviewer) Yeah - and we keep them out unless we can cater for them? That's the bit that worries me - um - that the schools aren't catering for these various groups. They say, "We'll keep you out until we do."*
>
> (Participant) The schools - the schools don't keep them out . It's the Ministry that keeps them out ...
>
> *In a sense, but it is still schools that say, "No, I won't let you in unless you've got the resources" - but you'd never say that to the child with English as a second language, usually, [You would never say] "We're going to keep you out unless we've got the resources", but we're saying it to kids with disabilities.*
>
> Well, we're providing the resources - well, we contest for the resources - for students with English as a second language, there is a resource provided - though it's inadequate...
>
> *Yeah ... Yeah ...*
>
> ... and how we get those resources provided - we ask nothing less.
>
> *Right ... but some sort of resource comes with students with disability too . That's what I'm going to look at - I'm going to look at the idea that most schools seem to think that we have a right to keep them out, because they don't come with resources, whereas why don't they have a right to come along to their local schools, just like anyone else?*
>
> That's right ...

> *I'm just interested in your - view - what you think of that ...*
>
> Well, we say by all means come - Look, the argument is not with the pupil - No, it's not *with the pupil*, but unfortunately they're the meat in the sandwich between where the school stands and where the Ministry stands.
>
> *Right ...*
>
> And it goes back to the whole question of funding.

Here is another example of the use of this strategy to draw out a response to the rights issues of mainstreaming:

> *(Interviewer) Right - how far though, do you think that it's actually the right of those students to attend the school, just as much as it's the right of a child from a broken home ...*
>
> (Participant) It's their absolute right and if they presented themselves at the front office - and - and enrolled, we would enrol them. This would then become the Ministry's problem because they would have to see that we were resourced. I mean there have been times when the Ministry has said to me "Well, could be that we just encourage the parents to enrol these students at your school."
>
> *Well ...*
>
> We could cope with that ...
>
> *... what I'm interested in is the perception that we've got the right to exclude kids with severe disabilities but we wouldn't dream of excluding a Maori child because we don't have enough resources here - yet they wouldn't admit it, but - so I'm just - I'm interested in that ...*
>
> We also have here, currently, fifty students enrolled right through the school who have been thrown out of other schools.
>
> *Yes - that's very much happening now - yes*

That's part of our mentality here, that we actually do have a genuinely open enrolment policy ...

But, there is generally a perception that - like - you're kind of doing other people of the Ministry a favour if you accept students with severe disabilities, but it's not really the role of the school?

Well, I think - I think - I mean I'm not only talking generally, I'm talking about that provision of that additional unit which is part of the business of vacating the premises in the Training Hospital - and using up a pool of money

Yeah ...

... a pool of psychopaedic money - floating around the system that we have $100,000 of it - sitting in our Bank account - in case this unit ever gets built.

Right.

No. it's just - I mean, I think I'm raising proper questions, you know, I probably didn't mean it to sound - I know we have a genuinely open enrolment policy that - you know - you do get a wee bit - you do get a wee bit tired when you're fighting on every front simply to try to do your best for the kids in school, nothing advantaged godammit, you know. We're not talking about a flash school that's after even better and better - I'm talking about really *basic* stuff for kids who cannot afford it - you know - for kids with tons of potential and, you know, when it is absolutely outrageous that we have 580 something kids who this year are categorised on the Ministry's ESL categories - I mean they meet those criteria, and our total allocation is slightly less than x teaching half-days. Now there's no equality in that. In a sense the Special Education students are much better provided for - even though I don't think it's enough - than our - than our general students. I mean a school like this where you have enormous guidance needs is - just untold guidance needs, you know, we have one guidance counsellor position -

Yes ... Yes...

> Just how do you manage? You manage by heaping more and more and more on the shoulders of the children's teachers, and then you ask them to review the curriculum, new qualifications frameworks. They say growing carnations looks an attractive alternative. Those pressures are there.

On one occasion a principal challenged me on my technique, recognising that contrary to usual interviewing procedures I was inserting my own views into the discussion:

> *(Interviewer) I think so. I'm so glad you said that because ...*
>
> (Participant) Have you set yourself a premise to argue along?
>
> *Yes. Probably what you've just said then would be my premise or my hypothesis if you like. I mean in some ways I have to go into this [the research] open minded but everyone's got their own values and I'm not going to pretend I haven't.*
>
> Yes
>
> *And what you've just said then is what I'm starting to think - that because we've made it so special ...*
>
> People think ...
>
> *Yes, people, teachers think .. they get given a child who has a disability and they suddenly forget that it's a child and they've been taught to teach children ...*
>
> But it's human nature though isn't it, where people are special we give them special treatment - like young kids, like my wife and I. We've just got to the grandparenting stage and the grandchild is *extra* special, alright, because she is extra special we do all these things which are extra special for her that we never did for our own children - human nature.
>
> *Yes. I suppose it depends on how you see what special is.*

Yes.

At this point, I decided to expand on my beliefs to this principal, by telling a story which I felt illustrated my views. I did this mainly because this principal appeared particularly open to hearing the alternative views I was presenting in this interview:

(Interviewer) I think that when some people see someone with a disability they feel sorry for them - and that's why they give to them - and at other times they might just think "Oh well, it's Jim" and notice the wheelchair later. I remember my cousin who is a teacher was telling me this lovely story about her son raving on about his little friend Caroline, who was really good at playing 'tiggy'. And he always came home and said "my best friend Caroline, she's really good at tiggy", and about three weeks later my cousin went to the school and she saw Caroline was in a wheelchair!

Oh right.

And her son had never mentioned that Caroline was in a wheelchair, but just how good she was at tiggy. She had an electric wheelchair.

But that's kids though, eh? They don't see the differences.

Right, so is it human nature or is it ...?

They see the differences but they accept them - for what they are.

So I think is it human nature that we have this attitude, or, if kids are like that, is it ...?

Is it adults?

In the traditional approach to interviewing for gathering research data this kind of intervention would be perceived as inappropriate (Miller, 1990, p.234) because I am clearly emphasising my views to the participant, almost to the point of being persuasive. However, with discourse analysis this is not a concern because the intention of the study is not to prove or disprove whether a speaker has a particular 'attitude'. The notion of holding a consistent attitude anyway has been challenged by the literature, as previously discussed (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 34). The discourse *itself* is both the data and the source of validation. Validation is found by searching for contradictions and verifications within the speaker's own discourse. It would be equally invalid to assume that a person's view will not essentially change during or after an interview of this kind particularly when, as it appeared in this situation, the principal had not been previously exposed to an alternative view of disability or 'special' needs.

Stage 5. Transcription of interviews

Potter & Wetherell (1987) recommend that the entire interview be transcribed including the interviewer's questions, because, as illustrated in the previous section, these questions set some of the functional context for the discourse. They are "active and constructive, not passive and neutral" (p.165). Interviewers are more than just 'speaking' questionnaires, they are active participants. However Potter & Wetherell acknowledge that for many sorts of research questions transcribing the fine details of intonation and timing is not crucial (p.166). Before returning copies of the transcripts to the participants for their verification of the content I edited out many of the 'ums' and 'ahhs' and repetitions of words as they were not necessary for the analysis in this study and made the speaker's discourse appear unnecessarily clumsy. Even though the transcripts had been substantially edited in this way several participants requested me to edit them further when they checked and returned them, saying they felt embarrassed to see how unstructured their spoken discourse appeared in transcription.

Stage 6. Coding

Potter & Wetherell (1987) point out that coding is not analysis. It is a process of sorting the data into manageable pieces (p.167). However they acknowledge that the process of identifying categories may well shift the researcher into aspects of analysis, so the process might be cyclical, moving between coding and analysis. Other qualitative researchers have made this point about the shifting process in qualitative study. O'Connor & Elkins (1991, p.9) cite Miles & Huberman (1984) stating "data collection and data analysis are mutually interactive processes, each informing the others direction." The steps followed are illustrated in Figure 3.

I began the coding process by reading carefully through each transcript and highlighting any phrase which appeared to represent one of the discourses described in the literature review. These were the education discourse, 'pro status quo', and four of the disability discourses which Fulcher (1989) has identified - the medical, charity, lay and rights discourses. I also highlighted any other feature or pattern that emerged. These included statements which illustrated a particular discursive strategy such as qualifying statements about mainstreaming, for example:

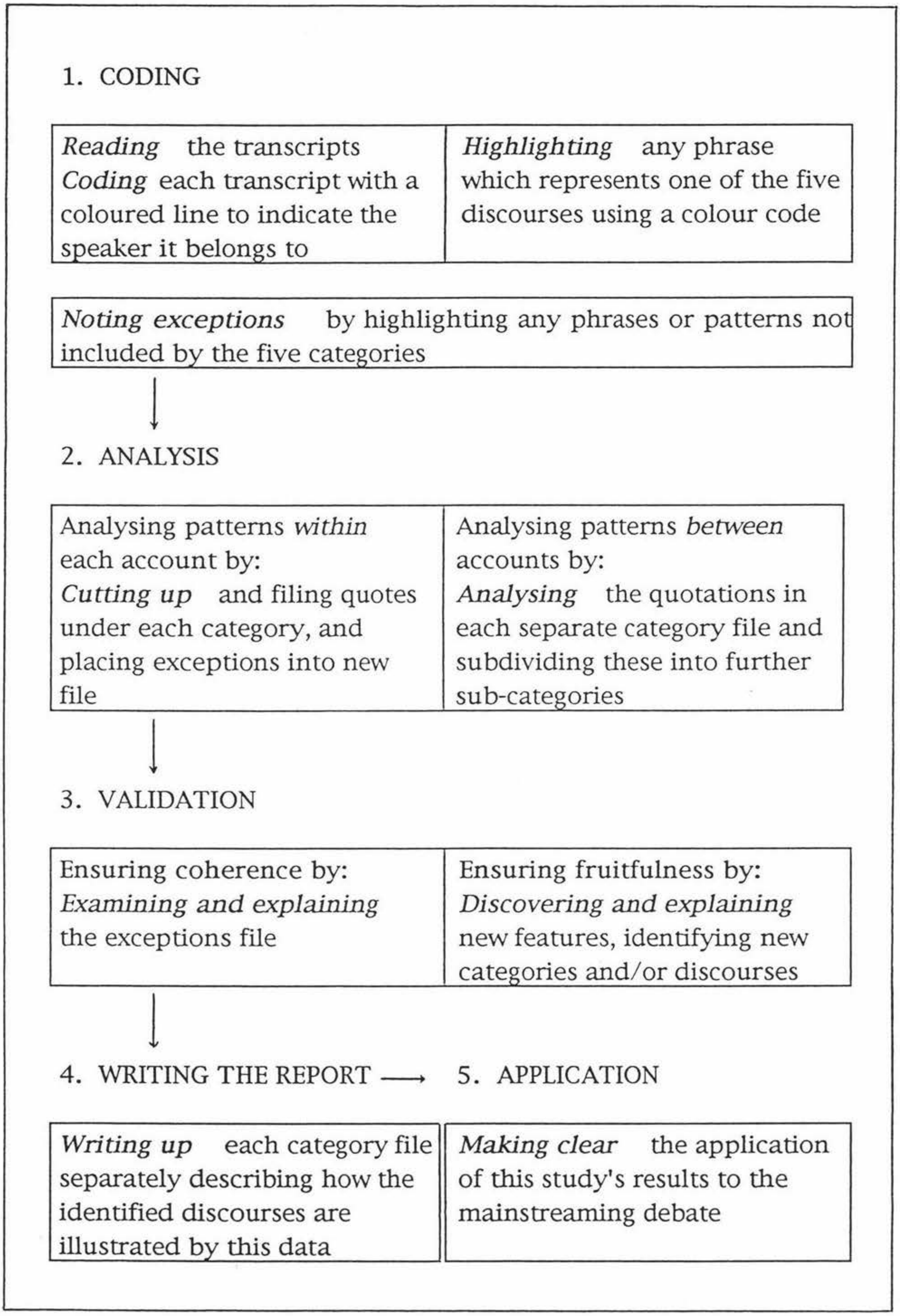
> Yes, [to mainstreaming] with the resources.

I also highlighted statements by principals which showed they were aware of, and actively critiquing aspects of, the pathological discourse on disability. An example of this from the transcripts would be:

> [Teachers] feel that if the child comes with cerebral palsy or a syndrome, or Down's, that they've got to in some way cure it, instead of ... getting on with enjoying the child in the classroom.

This speaker does not use the word 'discourse', however it is clear from his statement that he is challenging a widely held medical notion of disability; that disability is primarily a deficit within an individual, that needs to be 'cured'.

Each transcript was coded with a different coloured line to identify who the speaker was for later comparative analysis, and then the transcripts were cut up and placed into separate category folders. Next, each folder was closely studied again and its contents subdivided into further categories. For example, in the 'pro status quo' folder the following initial categories were formed: Regular schools are primarily for regular, not atypical students; What about the regular kids' needs?; What about the teachers' needs? Those



1. CODING

Reading the transcripts
Coding each transcript with a coloured line to indicate the speaker it belongs to

Highlighting any phrase which represents one of the five discourses using a colour code

Noting exceptions by highlighting any phrases or patterns not included by the five categories

2. ANALYSIS

Analysing patterns *within* each account by:
Cutting up and filing quotes under each category, and placing exceptions into new file

Analysing patterns *between* accounts by:
Analysing the quotations in each separate category file and subdividing these into further sub-categories

3. VALIDATION

Ensuring coherence by:
Examining and explaining the exceptions file

Ensuring fruitfulness by:
Discovering and explaining new features, identifying new categories and/or discourses

4. WRITING THE REPORT ⟶ 5. APPLICATION

Writing up each category file separately describing how the identified discourses are illustrated by this data

Making clear the application of this study's results to the mainstreaming debate

Figure 3. The stages of analysis

categories generally became the substance of the subheadings when I wrote up the results.

Difficulties of coding

It was sometimes difficult to categorise statements because they could fall into several categories at once. For example, the following excerpt illustrates both the pro status quo discourse and the medical discourse of disability:

> Well, [regular teachers] don't see themselves qualified to take them [students with special needs] ... it's not been in their background or experience.

The previous speaker is identifying students with special needs as requiring specialised intervention (medical discourse) and is also arguing (implicitly) that regular teachers are not seen as able to teach atypical children (pro status quo discourse). This discourse could also be labelled as a critical discourse, (a discourse which I identified later in the process), because it could be essentially critiquing the system for either not training teachers to deal with diversity or for maintaining a belief that they cannot.

Potter & Wetherell (1987, p.137) make the point that categories are "building blocks of our many versions of the social world; however once we look closely at the blocks, we see that they themselves are not solid and defined, but have to be moulded in discourse for use in different accounts." Others, (including Lather, 1991 and Jones, 1991), particularly in relation to post-structuralist theory, have described how discourses can overlap and even contradict each other in this way. Categorised discourses can have as many inconsistencies as consistencies. People will construct and use a particular category, such as a medical definition of disability, when it will fit a particular argument to achieve a certain outcome. Categories are not fixed, they are a device, "deliberate constructions fitted for many tasks" (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.128).

This is one of the reasons I decided not to identify the pattern of individual speakers. My purpose in this study is to highlight things that are being said, and ways they can be interpreted. It is not to specifically point a finger and label certain individuals as identifying essentially with the ideology of a particular discourse. As previously emphasisied, in discourse analysis, the focus is the *discourse*, not the people. This aspect will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, under the heading- *Attributions of quotes to individual speakers.*

There is another problem with identifying individual speakers as belonging in a particular discourse category, and this is the problematic notion of attitudes as "enduring entities which generate equivalent responses from occasion to occasion" (Potter & Wetherell 1987, p.53). People's behaviour, attitudes and stated beliefs are not static, but variable and often contradictory.

The emergence of 'new' categories

When it came to writing up the results and putting all of these ideas into a cohesive pattern I found that some categories of statements did not fit well under the discourse category I had initially thought they would. The best example of this are the statements critiquing the status quo which I initially thought would come under the 'rights' discourse. However, I realised that many of these critical statements, while indicating an awareness of the shortcomings of the status quo, did not nevertheless at the same time support a rights view of students with disabilities. These critical statements appeared to form an important category in their own right because their common feature was that they were not identifying students as deficit. They were identifying the *system* as deficit. As Fulcher (1989) has pointed out, challenging pedagogical issues rather than problems within students as the source of the problem results in an inclusive rather than a divisive discourse. This goes at least some way towards empowering students with disabilities, even though it does not necessarily go so far as to unconditionally support their rights.

The other major category that emerged, and which I initially filed with the rights discourse, and later with the critical discourse, was one I decided to separate further and name the 'proactive' discourse. Once again, this discourse appeared to be a very important category in its own right because it went beyond criticising the system and actively tried to create alternatives. This is the adhocracy which Skrtic (1991a) recommends is vital for education, and which must replace the 'bureaucratic rationality' of our system. The proactive discourse illustrates the creativity of many educators today who are endeavouring to find ways of effectively and meaningfully including students with special needs in regular schools.

Stage 7. The analysis of the transcripts

The basic theoretical thrust of discourse analysis is the argument that peoples' talk fulfils many functions and has varying effects (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.168). Potter & Wetherell point out two main aspects of the analysis phase of discourse analysis. As well as looking for patterns of variability and consistency, the researcher must form an hypothesis about the possible functions and effects of aspects of the discourse and search for linguistic evidence of these. Discourse analysis moves away then from the grounded theory approach of constant comparison (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) as an analysis technique. With discourse analysis, rather than beginning by making comparisons *between* accounts, each interview is separately and comprehensively analysed to find patterns of meaning, contradictions and inconsistencies in explanations or justifications *within* each account. The analysis has to attend to both the language detail *and* to the wider social context of the discourse, or the larger (often ideological) system which the speaker is representing. Later, similarities and differences *between* accounts are identified and described. However, this is done mainly to increase the explanatory power of the findings by demonstrating similar or different accounts, not for reasons of validity as with the grounded theory approach of constant comparison.

Patterns within each account

As previously described, each transcript was read carefully several times and significant pieces of discourse were highlighted, coded, and cut out and placed in different files. The process of making categories and subcategories forms part of the early analysis phase.

Attributions of quotes to individual speakers

I made a decision early in the analysis not to identify each quote with a particular principal when writing up this study. This was a difficult decision because I was aware that this information would enable the reader to see patterns of consistency and inconsistency within each speaker's account, and to build up a picture of each individual as primarily speaking, or not speaking, from a particular discourse. (I developed another method of achieving this - an overview chart - which will be explained shortly). I decided not to attribute quotes and utterances to particular speakers mainly to help protect the confidentiality of the principals, who are likely to be recognised if all of their statements are identified. I also made this decision because I wanted to avoid the possibility of offending the participants. Identifying each utterance could lead to the labelling of these principals in a negative way, even if their identities remain unknown to readers; I felt that the participants themselves might feel unfairly targetted. As Potter & Wetherell (1987) remind us, discourse analysis is more about *talk* than about the *individuals* speaking (p.2). It could be argued to be largely irrelevant and certainly unfair to be seen to be labelling individual principals as a 'medical' view person or as a 'rights' view person. My intention was not to finger point individuals in this way but to highlight the use of language itself within the debate.

The point to be made is that the *kinds of statements* identified, even in isolation, can indicate likely evidence of a particular ideological discourse. My aim was to alert readers to the kinds of statements being made in the mainstreaming debate and the possible implications of these in the light of prevalent beliefs and practices in our schools and society. The identification of these discourses in this way is intended to encourage further critical thought about the issues underlying mainstreaming and thus clarify and inform the debate. It was of major ethical concern to me that the principals, who willingly gave time to participate in this study, were not (even anonymously) labelled in a definitive, negative way.

Solving the context issue

Nevertheless, it has been explained how essential it is that any explanation of discourse remains linked to its context. It was important that the reader have some idea of the patterns of discourse within the separate accounts so that he or she could see how consistently each principal referred to one discourse and how often a principal drew on more than one discourse. I decided to convey this information in an alternative way by counting up the number of references by each principal to a particular discourse that I had found and quoted, and displaying these in a chart (see Figure 3). This avoided the problem of identifying particular statements with a particular principal and the consequent labelling of individuals, but still gave necessary information about the 'spread' and distribution of the discourses. The significance of the patterns found in the variable use of the discourses between accounts is discussed in the discussion section of this study.

Out of similar ethical and sensitivity concerns I also decided not to carry out the intense analysis of contradictions and discursive strategies of justification within separate accounts which is sometimes applied in discourse analysis. It was sufficient for the aim of my study to simply identify separate statements which could be seen to represent particular discourses. My intention was more to *illustrate how* these discourses were revealed within current accounts by school principals than to attempt to 'prove' that a certain principal was entrenched within a discourse.

Patterns between accounts

Once each account had been analysed for its own patterns, and identified statements had been colour coded and filed, I was able to begin to compare across different accounts. As previously mentioned, the function of this comparison strategy in discourse analysis is not to provide validity but more to increase the explanatory power of the results by presenting similar and different accounts. When citing utterances from speakers to exemplify a particular discourse I was careful to make clear when they were from different speakers and when they were from the same speaker, so that the reader knew when they were observing similar and different patterns between speakers. It was useful, for example, to demonstrate the different ways separate principals expressed the deficit assumptions underlying a medical discourse. This meant readers were able to see several different examples and were consequently more likely to understand and apply the concepts described to their own experiences of the mainstreaming debate - and perhaps to their own discourse.

Contrasting, as well as similar, accounts are useful in discourse analysis in that they can highlight different ways of speaking about an issue. The implications of these different discourses can then be discussed. An example would be the contrasting ways people spoke about the need for resources for mainstreaming depending on whether their arguments related to a rights discourse of disability or a deficit discourse of disability.

Stage 8. Validation

Potter & Wetherell (1987) point out that the validation of discourse analysis methodology lies within the data itself, within the inherent contradictions and statements that analysis reveals in the discourse. They argue against triangulation of many different sources as a validity measure for discourse analysis as this "compounds rather than reduces the variability between participants' claims and descriptions" (p.64). It often leads to a honing *out* rather than a honing in, or to the proliferation of more and more inconsistent versions. Discourse analysis does not try to resolve variations between different accounts but rather makes that variation an entry into analysis by examining how the accounts are constructed and what each different account or version achieves for each speaker. For example, the argument that mainstreaming can only go ahead when there are 'enough' resources will achieve a different result to the different argument that every child has a right to enrol at a school regardless of any other criteria. The former speaker has succeeded in excluding children with disabilities and uses resources as a justification. The latter has succeeded in including children with disabilities.

Validation within discourse analysis involves ensuring coherence, ensuring that there are no loose ends or exceptions which remain unexplained in terms of the analysis. It also involves assessing 'fruitfulness' or "the scope of an analytic scheme to make sense of new kinds of discourse and to generate novel explanations" (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.171). The analytic scheme applied to the 'exceptions' found in the discourse of this study resulted in the identification of two further discourses which have useful implications for the debate about, as well as for the implementation of, mainstreaming - the critical discourse and the proactive discourse.

It is these factors of coherence and fruitfulness which are essential in assessing validity within discourse analysis, rather than, as previously discussed, the traditional notion of proving generalizability. As with much qualitative research, the *reader* of the study assesses the importance and validity of the results by the way they are presented, and their perceived applicability to a wider group.

Stage 9. Writing the report

A report on discourse analysis is more than a presentation of findings. As Potter & Wetherell (1987) point out, the report constitutes part of the confirmation and validation of the procedures itself: "The goal is to present analysis and conclusions in such a way that the reader is able to assess the researcher's interpretations" (p.173). An effective report, therefore, requires a representative set of examples and detailed interpretation which links the claims of the analysis with the extracts. Consequently, this study has been described in careful detail. The results were reported with appropriate examples and interpretive discussion. As explained earlier, decisions about identifying utterances with particular speakers were carefully made, and it was also made clear in the presentaion of the material when quotes were from the same or from several different principals. Further, the methodology and process followed has been very fully described and explained to enable the reader to assess the validity of the study.

Stage 10. The application

The application stage of discourse analysis should make clear the usefulness of the study (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p.174). A central use of discourse analysis is to promote an informed critical attitude to discourse material of this kind. It is also to promote an awareness of the constructive nature of discourse and the close connection between the way textual versions of the world are put together and specific policies and evaluations are pushed (p.174).

A study may also be useful in that it makes the public more educated about the workings of these arguments so they are able to respond in a more critical manner or it may open up a dialogue with the people who have been researched, which may lead to further exploration and clarification of issues (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.175). It will be argued that this study has both these applications.

Ethical aspects of discourse analysis

Ethically it is extremely important that participants in a research study are informed of the aims and results of the project. Their full permission must be obtained and complete confidentiality assured, along with the protection of their identity. These factors are particularly important when the study is examining areas of a sensitive nature, such as the mainstreaming debate. Potter and Wetherell (1987, p.162) point out that discourse analysis methodology often poses a serious ethical problem in that the researcher has to decide whether he or she will be surreptitious about the fact that the aim is to explore the degree to which the participants hold prejudicial beliefs. This is a highly sensitive area and was discussed fully with the supervisor at several points within the study. I decided to honestly inform the participants that this was to be a study which aimed to analyse school principals' different positions on mainstreaming. I felt this was necessary from an ethical point of view. However, the fact that the participants were aware I may be looking critically at their views does not in fact necessarily skew data to be used for discourse analysis. Discourse analysis, which looks particularly closely at patterns of justification can find this, on the contrary, to be a rich source of data.

Nevertheless the nature of the topic of this study as well as the nature of the discourse analysis approach made it very important that participants freely and knowingly gave their permission to participate. For this reason, when making initial contact with participants by phone and inviting them to participate, I made it relatively easy for them to decline involvement. If there seemed a slight hesitation I assured them it was fine to refuse as I accepted how busy they were. When one principal left a message to postpone the appointment made, and indicated a preference not to be taped, I decided to ring and check if this participant wished to change his or her mind about involvement and withdraw from the study. The participant appeared to agree with some relief referring to the extremely busy year. I tried to make it easy in this way for participants to decline involvement in this study, which could be controversial and stressful, regardless of their reasons. I also returned all transcripts to the principals for their verification.

A further ethical concern was the issue of attributing statements to individual speakers. My attempt to deal with this issue ethically has been discussed in detail.

However, in spite of these ethical precautions and carefully thought through procedures, it is not possible to control all the bi-products of a study which deals with people's positions and values. This *is* a critical study, and even when using information approved by the participants, people may react negatively to analysis if they perceive they are being criticised. My intent, as previously discussed, is not to criticise school principals, for whom I have a great regard, particularly in these times of great educational change. My intent was to explore a complex, subjective field on a very controversial topic.

Summary

A range of school principals were invited to participate in this research. They were made aware from the beginning that the intent was to explore a range of positions on the mainstreaming issue. The interview questions developed for the schedule were consistantly asked, and flexibility was used with further prompts to probe issues that came up. Aspects of the transcribing and coding of the data have been described. It was found that the coding process revealed new categories previously not identified in the literature. To ensure the discourse was considered in the light of its context, the analysis of the data involved exploring the patterns both within individual's accounts as well as between different speakers' accounts. Validity within qualitative research and discourse analysis was explained as well as aspects of writing up the report and its wider application. Ethical concerns related to this study were raised and addressed.

The next four chapters will describe the results of the research.

PART THREE

RESULTS

Introduction to Part Three: Results

The next four chapters describe the results of this study. Each chapter focuses on particular discourses that were revealed through the analysis of the data.

The first chapter in this section, Chapter Seven, describes the ways that participants in this study referred to the 'pro status quo' discourse in their interviews. Chapter Eight, in turn, describes the ways a deficit discourse of disability was employed by participants, including the 'medical' discourse, the 'charity' discourse and the 'lay' discourse. The use of the 'rights' discourse of disability by study participants is reported in Chapter Nine.

The fourth and final chapter of the results section, Chapter Ten, describes two further discourses which emerged from the analysis of the data in this study: the 'critical' discourse, and the 'proactive' discourse. The application of these two newly identified discourses to the mainstreaming debate is explained.

Chapter Seven

Discourse about Education: Pro Status Quo

Introduction

A close examination of many statements about mainstreaming reveals a prevalent belief that our regular schools are primarily there to cater for students in the community who fit the norm - for students who do not have disabilities or special needs and who thus can easily fit the status quo. While all principals in this study stated agreement with the philosophy of mainstreaming, many also made statements which revealed a belief that it is nevertheless appropriate and justified to exclude children with special needs from regular classes and schools. Reference to this set of beliefs is described in this study as the pro status quo discourse. This chapter will describe how this discourse was drawn on by participants in this research.

The pro status quo discourse:
The regular school for regular students

> I believe that there will always be some students, just as there are some regular students for whom the local school or the traditional school set-up, is not - does not meet their needs. So we'll never be able to accommodate in my view - everybody, you know, every need of every student (Research participant).

This quotation refers to a belief that the regular education system is not able to meet the needs of some students. What is significant in a pro status quo discourse is the *acceptance* of this notion. This is the way things are and the way they always appear to have been. The status quo appears to be the right way, the best way, possibly the only way, to do things. This belief that local schools are primarily there for the typical student is reflected by discourse which uses words such as 'standard core programme', 'traditional', 'normal' or 'uniform', as the following statements from three of the research participants show,

> We cater for a *homogenous* group, so to speak, eh?

> You know, their remedial needs are such that they don't fit into the *standard core* programme.

> Well, there's no way in which some of the kids she's got could be fulltime in a *normal* classroom. I mean - it would just be total chaos. I would think.

These statements reveal a perception that people with disabilities just are not the local school or local community's responsibility. The following statement similarly refers to the moving of people with intellectual disabilities from psychopaedic hospitals into the community. The principal is comparing this to mainstreaming students, saying it is a responsibility that people do not perceive as theirs:

> But to just thrust people out even just into community houses and expect the neighbours in the street to take the responsibility for them. I don't think that's good. It's once again giving other people responsibility that perhaps is not something they've asked for.

The status quo as 'common sense'

Speakers sometimes refer to 'common sense' or 'being realistic' when referring to the status quo, implying that how things are now is the standard of, or type of, programme it is right for schools to be offering.

> I would talk with the parent and ask what they wanted for the child, what they felt the child's needs were, and then I would tell them [parents of a child with severe disabilities] *realistically* and show them *realistically,* what we have to offer.

Statements such as this implicitly argue that it is unrealistic for a regular school to accommodate a student with very severe disabilities.

The word 'common sense' is used in a similar way by another speaker:

> And that's where there's to be *common sense* about it - I think schools - in schools we have mainly general practitioner teachers...

Significantly, this principal has used the phrase 'general practitioner teachers'. Regular teachers are seen as general practitioners who are not able to 'specialise'. Teaching children who have disabilities or special needs is not seen as part of their job. The use of the GP medical metaphor will be discussed in more detail later when describing the medical discourse.

Another principal similarly refers to the perceived impossibility or extreme difficulty of the standard traditional regular classroom realistically responding creatively and flexibly to students with severe disabilities:

> but - no - to occupy a space for the entire time, [a child with severe disabilities to be included in the classroom fulltime] I don't - that's detrimental to the whole concept I believe. They've got to be able to, you know, they've got to be able to participate in some way, and we can do that in small bits, but not for the entire day - that's *unrealistic* .

The following principal speaks of encouraging parents to choose schools for their disabled child which have special facilities as a more 'realistic' choice:

> We - in some areas - deliberately try to steer parents away, elsewhere, I mean, it's their right I know all that stuff, to go where they like, so we show them what we've got and how we tend to look after their child as best we can, but alongside that we will say, well, we think that, say, the Special Unit at x High School is better, or y High School, or whatever. So that they have got a reasonably *realistic* choice.

A third principal refers here to the 'common sense limits' of regular programmes:

> We would certainly cater within I think good *common sense* limits, for these kids. Now in my experience, what's worked best here is for there to be a flexible programme within the school. And so if there's a base

> for them almost like a semi-homeroom type base - I mean there are things that they need - their special - special education requirements.

'Common sense' and 'realism' in these statements refer to a belief that the general education system is really intended for typical children, and that children with obviously different needs should be catered for by a separate system. A dual system exists, and it is seen as the right way and the realistic way to cater for these children (Kunc, 1987).

Justifications for maintaining the status quo

A number of rationales are used to justify the exclusion of students with special needs from mainstream education programmes. These include:

1. A belief that the needs of typical students will be adversely affected by the inclusion of atypical students.

2. A belief that atypical students belong in the alternative education strand (special education).

3. A belief that regular teachers are too challenged in their roles to cater effectively for atypical children, and,

4. A view that more resources are necessary before mainstreaming can be effectively carried out.

Each of these beliefs are linked to a grounding assumption that children with special needs are 'best' educated by a parallel but separate education system. Statements that appeared to be grounded in these beliefs were found in the discourse of some of the participants in this study.

1. The needs of typical students

Because the schools are seen to be there primarily for typical or regular students, an argument against mainstreaming often used is that it can work against typical student's interests, as these five different speakers reveal:

> One has to be very careful when we introduce a child into the environment that we're not going to overload the teaching *to the detriment* of the learning programme of the kids in the school.

> In any case, in a classroom like that, you're *depriving quality time from other children* if you've got to give half the time to that child who needs all the attention ... I argue [question] that it does *really* do a lot for the other children, [mainstreaming a child with a very severe mental and physical disabilities] because they're deprived of a lot of quality time, too, and they deserve it, especially if the noise is such, as I have seen, it's distracting to other children's learning. I really argue whether that's really achieving a lot.

> Then the regular kids *can only take so much,* too, of a variety of other things.

> In external exam classes, quite rightly, parents would be saying, Well, most of the teacher's attention is focussed on this child and those children, *and not getting on with the syllabus with my child.*

> A criteria for accepting a child with a disability can be that *they don't disrupt the usual programme.* They're a conditional acceptance. We looked at the kids and said Yes. They're - they're not going to be overly disruptive in a classroom programme - all right - they have potential that can be explored. We are able to give them an opportunity ... to the extent whereby, mainstreaming within that framework does not disrupt the classroom programme to the detriment of the other children's learning. So I believe that there has to be a - relatively specific screening process that - defines a level of ability to cope within the mainstream situation.

It is sometimes felt that it is the community's expectation also that schools will cater firstly for students without disability:

> So at the end of the day, you've got to be very careful that you don't damage the good community relationship that you have with respect to parents saying, "Hey look. I know that a good percentage of the day is spent on x in the classroom. Now why isn't - my kid's falling back in reading ..." They [the Board of Trustees] understand that it takes a good

> percentage of teacher time to implement these things. They say, "Well, hang on a moment, what percentage is going to them and *what percentage is going to the normal ...* come on." So we are very accountable as a school too, to the future, and it's those expectations that are justifiably applied that - it's pretty difficult to sidestep - we wouldn't want to, anyway, I suppose.

The next statements by two different principals demonstrate how it can be argued that students with 'other' needs should be included before students with disabilities:

> What we haven't done, and what I don't agree with, is putting everybody into a regular mainstream class, because what's happening in schools now, is that we have such a wide range of children in every class, both Kiwi kids- we have quite a number of new immigrant Asians with language problems - we've got about 200 in the school here and *if we put - those with disabilities in, too, the teachers wouldn't last.*

> And it would just be irresponsible *to keep adding special education students* into that context because they wouldn't be getting the attention.

There is an assumption in these last two statements that it is okay to exclude children with disabilities from regular classes. In this case, this is felt to be particularly acceptable because both these principals' schools have a special unit for students with disabilities. Here it can be seen how, *because a separate system exists,* schools can feel justified in excluding atypical students from regular classes. Further, and perhaps more importantly, because the dual system has been operating these two principals actually have a disproportionately large number of atypical students in their schools. The city's children tend to be sent to schools such as theirs that have special units rather than to their neighbourhood school. Principals in this position are faced with the bureaucratic problem of applying an inclusion philosophy to an inherited, historically divided school system as this statement by one of the principals illustrates:

> [If the students in the special unit were mainstreamed into regular classes] ... we would need almost about ten or fifteen teacher-aides, or volunteer assistants, so I think from a practical and commonsense sense we would, you know, we don't - we don't do that. *Maybe if we had a more uniform school population and fewer disabled youngsters, then maybe we could look at it.* Now if I had five disabled youngsters in the school, for example, then we might be able to do something like that.

Regular students with different special needs

Concerns are also expressed about teachers having to meet the special needs of typical children not normally defined as special or as having a 'disability':

> Well, there are self-concept problems too - we actually have a programme [for this] in action. There was something written in the latest journal for gifted children, and we do it here, so we've got those ones, as well as the ones at the other end of the scale, as well as the language ones, as well as the genuinely disabled kids - what I'm putting to you is that there's a lot - that teachers have to deal with.

Resourcing is seen as already inadequate for the typical or non-disabled children in some schools, particularly those drawing on communities in lower socio-economic areas, as two other principals comment on here:

> We struggle to get the extra resources to meet *those* students' needs. We have something like four students above the 50th percentile - on the PAT Tests - and we scream for the resources and the resources that we get to address those needs are very minimal. So you can therefore understand and appreciate our concern that we had about students with *extra* special needs coming in - and that there may not be resources.

> You've got to also remember the context of what's called the mainstream in the school. The mainstream in this school is not the New Zealand mainstream of education. 60% of the students have profound English Second Language needs. Right? 65% of the parents come from benefit dependent homes, so your mainstream here is a very difficult educational context. The teachers to which you are adding [special

> education students] and you really have teachers working - competent experienced teachers - working to their limits, just because of the *normal* demands of the programme of a class.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education is seen here as not providing adequate support for many educational needs in the school, including those of both regular and atypical students. The previous principal continues:

> We've been taking a hammering - I've been here - this is my third year, right, and I was appointed three years ago last weekend, 3rd anniversary. In those three years we have been absolutely hammered in every respect. We have been stripped of our ESL resources to give them to the rich Asian school. We've had our guidance capacity reduced to a third of what it was. We've had a - continual battles to maintain our Special Education resources. For over a year we had to fight to even - to even - see that those units would continue to exist. It looked for a good part of last year as if they would go down the gurgler. Our community education programme is constantly under attack even though we have 6000 members of the community enrolled in it currently.

The same principal also talks of the added difficulties families with students with disabilities have when they also belong to a socially disadvantaged group in terms of race or class:

> The support for families is quite a barrier [to mainstreaming] in a district like this so that - like you would expect among our special education students there's the same range of barriers to learning and success that the rest of our students face so there are homes suffering great disadvantage. There are homes suffering - the kind of fractured social conditions that typify many of the homes in an area like this. There are homes enough of our students in that area the same as in our whole school come from - homes that don't know how to cope with the kind of barriers that Government departments put up. I mean I described our students in our community the other day at a meeting as 'the moved and shaken'. Now they're not the movers and the shakers - they are moved and shaken by others - you know. Those are barriers really ... I think probably the parents of students with disabilities in

> this area aren't as aggressive about their rights as the parents of students with disabilities in more middle class areas. That's partly not knowing what those rights are, but also having the language skills and confidence to grapple with bloody rude civil servants most of the time, you know - frankly. I mean the treatment of some of our people in the face of what are meant to be helping agencies is pretty bizarre.

Regular students with problems not officially defined as 'disability' or 'special needs', are seen as having priority of access to regular schools, partly because "special needs' students are seen as the responsibility of the special education strand.

2. The needs of atypical students

Often, arguments against including a student with disabilities in a school reflect a view that children with disabilities are better placed in the special education system, either at a special school or at a school with a special unit attached. Three principals demonstrate this:

> Ok, if somebody's going to enrol here, say, a blind [child], we haven't had somebody blind, I would expect, then, to go out and just look to see what else is available and whether we could really provide for that person here.

> I'll let him [student with severe disabilities] come in. But in terms of what we believe the student, the child needs, we haven't got the resources to specifically meet his needs. And we refer them to other schools in the area that have a special needs unit.

> Well, I am quite happy about them *attending* regular schools- I think the problem is, perhaps, that schools are not equipped. I think we're perhaps looking at something being *thrust* upon the schools and us expected to make quality time given to those students without any thought as to the physical environment, perhaps, and also the resources.

The last speaker perceives that students with special needs are "thrust upon schools", implying that they are not the expected responsibility of local schools. If neighbourhood children with disabilities were expected to attend their local school like any other child in the district, this perception would not exist.

The 'special education strand within the school

In a pro status quo discourse, even when a child with a disability is accepted into a local school, withdrawal options for 'special' education are seen as necessary to meet those needs that the regular class programmes are seen as unable to cater for. Examples of this discourse from three principals follow :

> We're fortunate here, because the one to one tuition is handled by the teacher in the Resource Centre, so the kids are well catered for. But you take that away and the kids are just going to be on the proverbial dirt pile. They just have to be because the teachers can't - they just can't run an individual programme when you have 33, 34, 35 others to contend with.

> So mainstreaming is - means they have a Home Room and they interact for the most of the day with those kids - but they also have support within that environment but they can also be withdrawn for specialist help in certain areas.

> I see the ideal in an attached unit like we've got - a resource unit, where the children are coming across, and being integrated into the normal classrooms. They might be quite capable in Maths for instance, so okay, say they are working in a J2 class for Maths, because of the social level.

The next excerpt also reveals an assumption that students with disabilities are better placed in a school which has a special unit:

> Well, we would say what we could provide for that child, as I have indicated, we would perhaps say, you would be better off elsewhere [in a school with a special attached unit]. But if the parent insisted they wanted their child to come here, well, we would probably, somewhat reluctantly, enrol them for a short term trial, which we would then do -

> with ongoing assessment and final assessment with the parent, and see how it went.

The 'pull out' model is justified in the next three excerpts by three speakers who use words such as a creating a good 'balance', a 'compromise', or a 'happy medium',

> Then I would suggest a partial integration - I mean there's no point if you want a child to come here to mix socially, there are certain areas of the day when the socialisation is at its peak and at its best. There's no point in a child who has severe difficulties sitting in a wheelchair in a classroom for the entire day, unless something productive emanates as a consequence of that child occupying a space in the classroom. So there would be a *compromise* with respect to bringing the child in for a period of time at the various intervals to allow the children to mix - to have a close association with the child and for the child to have some spin-off.

> Well, I think they [students at a special school with some integration into neighbouring school] have a *happy medium,* in a way she had a happy medium, because there was the integration of the special school- you see they were next to another school.

> ...that *balance* of who you're serving, and not serving any one group disproportionately.

A person who was not perceiving mainstreaming from a pro status quo perspective might perceive that it is actually *regular* students who are being served disproportionately by regular schools as atypical children are often excluded. A balance, also, may be perceived as irrelevant if the result is that a child is labelled and treated as different at school.

3. The needs of regular teachers

Another common reservation people in a pro status quo discourse express about mainstreaming is the view that teachers already have enough on their plate. Children with disabilities in the class are seen as the last straw.

> I mean the amount of pressure, I mean like what it takes out of [teachers], you know, is quite considerable and they'll have about another 150 kids in the week anyway - and the marking and the preparation and everybody expects them to do this that and the other at school. What you're doing is just adding another straw - And we have to be - we have to really be careful about that - now, with our teachers - because they will do fewer things at other parts.

Two other principals illustrate this discourse here:

> Teachers are also, as you well know, the general mood is one of being a bit under siege, anyway. Some of that's right and some of that's wrong, but that's the feeling.

> They see themselves being put in a situation where they know that they are going to have to do so much more to be able to cope effectively with the child and indeed there are teachers here on our staff who are very capable, but, hey, they see it as being the straw that breaks the camel's back.

Teachers are told that they do not have to include students with special needs in their classes, as these next two speakers demonstrate:

> We've made the path a little smoother in the sense that I have promised them that we will not put a child into your classroom for any extended period of time where the child is not coping.

> We will offer, from time to time, you know - opportunities [to mainstream a child into their class] but I haven't got into the 'this is compulsory' ... 'everybody must do this' type of thing ... because we haven't got the resources for them.

Once again, this kind of argument reveals a belief that children with special needs are an optional extra, an 'add on'. There is an implicit assumption in the next statement cited that there is good reason to exclude a group of children if the teachers are already too busy:

> I would not expect a secondary teacher to - where we have individual education programmes, plan them, consult the parents, all that paraphernalia ... They wouldn't do it . And I would openly oppose it - I'd publicly oppose it especially under their current teaching conditions, *with their thirty kids in class* - I mean, it's probably stupid to think of 5th Form, third year Science classes - thirty kids in that class - a whole range of abilities, whether there be disabled, or language problems, or whatever - thirty kids in a Science lab is ridiculous.

It is significant to note that this argument would probably be used with extreme caution, if at all, with any other designated group of students (such as Maori students) and yet schools feel justified in excluding children with disabilities on these grounds. This is because it is widely perceived that children with disabilities *should* be in the *special* strand of education. From this pro status quo point of view schools are perceived as being generous or charitable or humanitarian by including children with disabilities:

> But you know the acceptance of children with special needs is one of reluctance and staff here are very tolerant. But they do take a deep breath when another one arrives and say "Here we go *again*. What part am I expected to play in this round?" So - and it's really pressures - pressures of programming, pressures of numbers that don't add up.

It is often argued that teachers' concerns lie in the fact they will not be able to do a good job with the child, as in the following statement,

> They know that they're not going to be able to give that child the time that they would like to be able to ...

Nevertheless, the pro status quo discourse is still recommending the exclusion of this child. When schools can justify excluding any child they have failed to teach, we need to acknowledge that we have actually developed an unjust, elitist system. As the literature has borne out (Bray, 1987; Wilton et al., 1983), more and more children are now being designated as special education candidates and they are consequently shunted off to a parallel system which has lower status and often inferior learning and social outcomes. Broad definitions of categories, such as learning disabled, mean that virtually any child that a school system has difficulty teaching or accommodating can be classified and dealt with in this way.

It is essential to acknowledge, especially in the current employment climate, that teachers *are* busy and do have considerable pressures. The significant point, however, is whether schools believe they are right to exclude children on these grounds, and if they do, whether, morally, they are justified in doing so.

4. The need for extra resources

All of the principals interviewed expressed, at some stage, a need for more resources in order to mainstream effectively. Examples from four different speakers are:

> The biggest concern is the resourcing. And that the needs of the student are met by the teachers. The teachers here, felt that they would be put at a disadvantage if they weren't resourced to meet the needs of these - of these youngsters, who have, you know, special needs in the school.
>
> No, as far as the help is concerned financially for resources, no, we don't get enough, and I think it will lessen.
>
> You cannot expect mainstreaming to be successful without the resources to support it and some of those resources happen to be relatively expensive.
>
> If mainstreaming is a - is *desirable* and it is agreed that that child should be mainstreamed - and I think that you have to look at the individual - then significant funding has to be made available to meet the child's needs.

It will be seen in Chapter Nine, which illustrates the use of the rights discourse, that the issue of resources is dealt with differently depending on the view taken by the speaker. In a pro- status quo discourse, however, lack of resources are seen as the main barrier to mainstreaming, as these four speakers demonstrate:

> Well, I think that [it] is the resources, really [the main barrier to mainstreaming] - and that's both financial, I suppose, first of all. It underpins everything else, obviously, so I've mentioned the physical resources within the classrooms and buildings and out on the grounds, and so on. The sort of - school social climate - and I guess also, the training level of the teachers.

> They need more support than we are able to give them. They need more one-to-one instruction than we have support for, and so it's just that old niggly thing - that's the main barrier.

> I suppose one of the chief barriers is staff acceptance - it's the lack of funding to support the programmes. In our particular instance it's a lack of space. So it's the provision of resources - it's the provision of adequate staffing, and the special facilities that go hand in hand.

> Well, I say the main barriers I see are financial, because it is the provision of all the resources. It is the provision of the physical - it is the provision of the personnel and it's the provision of the right sorts of educational resources, as well.

Also, within this discourse, the amount of resources can be stated as extremely high:

> Right, the first thing I'd need is about *$20 000 of government assistance,* because we would have to change and re-landscape the school. And change the buildings to accommodate ...

The process of acquiring resources can be expressed in strong language, which these two speakers employ:

> So that would be a *nightmare.*

> The difficulty of dealing with ... a *multitude* of bureaucracy to get the hours [of assistance], to substantiate the hours, is another difficulty. In fact the whole syndrome of mainstreaming *makes my back tingle* - in the sense that every time I think about it, I assess the number of hours it has taken me to get where we're at, and the *battling* continues on a

> term by term, yearly basis to get what we consider to be the logical rights of those kids.

Many principals referred to the frustration of acquiring resources. It does appear to be a common reality. What is significant for the purposes of this study, however, is how the argument is being used. Is it being used to request better access to resources so that mainstreaming can be carried out, or to justify a refusal to mainstream a student? The last two speakers spoke predominantly from the latter, pro status quo perspective throughout their interview, which contrasted with the rights or the proactive discourses which will be described in the next chapters.

A further significant feature of a pro status quo discourse on mainstreaming is that it is referred to as *conditional* upon resources being provided, as these four speakers illustrate:

> Oh I think the philosophy behind it is really good as long as the school can provide the necessary resources and back-up environment for students. So the philosophy, I'm 100% with. For obvious reasons. *But there are those ifs and buts attached on the other side of it.* I say that, because we're really one of the schools, in some ways where *there are some ifs and buts - depending on the disability.*
>
> So it's really then, making sure that you've got the resources in place for the kids. *I don't believe one should take any person, unless you are aware of what the resources are, and whether you're going to be able to have the resources to provide.* Mainstreaming, yes, *with* the financial resources.
>
> So I've got no difficulty with mainstreaming at all - *other than what the Ministry sees - in terms of resourcing.*
>
> So that's my concept of mainstreaming *with a conditional rider -* that for it to reach a proportion of what we're - what I'm talking about, there has to be some degree of regulation with respect to what the school can offer a child, what strengths the school has to offer the child.

Insufficient resourcing is viewed as quite legitimate grounds for excluding a student with special needs from a school, in the same way as teacher stress or workload, and the needs of regular children were used. This is because our dual education system provides a special strand for children who do not fit the regular mainstream system. It is seen as a natural expectation to exclude them. It is the status quo and therefore appears to be the right and proper way for things to be that students whom the schools fail to cater for effectively must be catered for elsewhere.

Summary

This chapter drew on a wide range of examples from the discourse of the principals participating in this study to illustrate the main aspects of the pro status quo discourse. Statements reflected a belief that our regular schools are primarily there for regular, not different, students, and this is often perceived as simply 'common sense', or 'realistic'. The four main justifications for the status quo included: a belief in the primacy of typical students needs within the regular schools; a belief that students with special needs belong in the special education strand; a belief that regular teachers are too busy to be expected to cater for atypical children; and finally, a belief that more resources are necessary before mainstreaming can occur.

The next chapter illustrates the three deficit discourses of disability, medical, lay and charity, found in the interview data of some of the participants in this study.

Chapter Eight

Discourse about disability: Disability as Deficit

Introduction

This chapter will illustrate discourse of participants in this study which reflects a pathological or deficit view of disability. This includes the medical discourse, the charity discourse and the lay discourse.

1. The medical discourse of disability

Disability as illness

As outlined in the literature review of this study, disability has historically been perceived as an illness or aberration. This is a deficit view of disability because it locates the source of the problem in the nature of the disability itself, rather than acknowledging that in an enabling environment many disabilities no longer pose a problem. When people speak from this view of disability, they tend to wish to label or define the student in terms of their disabling condition. The following excerpt from the interview with a study participant illustrates this:

> Yes, but what *sort* of disabilities are we talking about?
>
> *(Interviewer) Well, yeah - I'm talking generally, just sort of as a general - your general philosophy on it say, on mainstreaming or on including students with disabilities ...*
>
> Well, maybe I'll tell you what we've got - like it depends what you mean - by disability - that definition ...

When students are defined in terms of their disability in this way, rather than being seen as students or whole people first with broader more typical needs, the result is that professionals consequently regard them as requiring highly specialised and expert intervention. The next four principals' statements demonstrate this:

> I [recommended to a parent enrolling a student with special needs] x and y - *the schools that had the special unit* where they had the ability to mainstream the child.
>
> I mean, kids who are very severely intellectually handicapped, well, I *do think they need those special units* like a and b have got.
>
> But I get back to for some students, we won't be able to accommodate them at all. *We simply haven't got the physical resources or the skills* or the financial resources.
>
> You have to have *an ongoing liaison with a professional group,* i.e the psychologists and unless that aspect - of education particularly in this area here - is improved numerically in respect to the number existing in that department, you've got yourself a problem because who do the teachers turn to for advice.

Another of the participants, who was also a parent of a child with special needs, shared this view that there is a need for specialisation,

> And I just see specialised skills in special schools. I've got a daughter [with special needs] myself, and I'm just pleased that she went through the Special School system and that she wasn't in the normal school system...
>
> *(Interviewer) Why is that?*
>
> I think perhaps the teachers she had, and because she was able to work at her own level, and she didn't have the so called normal pressure that I've seen other children have in the classroom. To put her into a classroom with 30 other children, she couldn't get *quality time* and you're kidding yourself if you think she can.

There is a perceived need for 'experts' in a medical discourse:

> There will be some students I think who will never be able to attend a regular school and I guess *that's for the experts to decide* the cut off point.

Special schools and special classes are justified by the following two principals on the grounds that students with disabilities require more time, more teacher attention:

> [In special schools] they are *being resourced in a better ratio* . You have got a lower ratio - teacher to the child and perhaps teacher aide, and elsewhere, and there are a lot of other social skills that those ones need, that perhaps the other children get naturally. You've got to *give that extra time* to develop some of those social skills.
>
> Obviously *they need a lot of time* - you know, in a special unit and then out [in] the mainstream, in some classes and some activities.

When disability is the primary focus, as in a medical discourse, mainstream teachers are seen as requiring considerable extended training in order to cater for atypical children in their classes, as this principal expresses:

> They [regular secondary teachers] need a year out - I think they need a year out - because there's a variety of disabilities that they have to cope with. It takes a while for them to adjust - just to the presence of the youngsters in class. And dealing with the reactions of other children - for example - learning about what programmes are appropriate. You know, the individual nature of things - there's all that type of thing. There is the work preparation, understanding the psychology of it all - with our disabled youngsters - so - and to spend a bit of time, you know - almost on section - in another place for a while with a skilled teacher in that area. You know, to learn things. I really think it takes quite a bit of time, because you never know what is round the corner tomorrow - what other sorts of youngsters will be in here.

Students with disabilities are perceived as very different. When the following principal refers to the apprehensiveness of teachers, it is clear the teachers described are immersed in a medical view of disability - these students are not being seen as 'students first':

> They were just apprehensive ... because in their experience, they had - they didn't have the day-to-day contact. You know, what do these kids

> do? What are they like? and how do they act? How do you treat them? How do you approach them?

The medical discourse is particularly well illustrated in the following statement where the speaker compares the regular teacher to a general practitioner doctor:

> What we have to deal with now is such - such a wide range of different learners - that you know, how far can the general practitioner teacher - how much can the GP teacher cater for before you have to go to the specialist? And what goes through college, graduates from college are the GP teachers, mostly General Practitioner teachers - whereas every school has to have its specialists.

This comparison with the medical system also draws on status quo discourse beliefs about the regular education system described in the previous chapter: regular schools and teachers are seen to be there primarily to cater for regular students. The following comment by another principal is an example of this:

> *(Interviewer) So what would you say to people who say the main barrier is attitude - that schools and teachers don't feel that those children [with special needs] are really their responsibility?*
>
> I think there is an element of that. Because people are annoyed with the powers that be, that again they are getting things dumped on them that were being treated by - anyway, they weren't - but by an army of specialists out there looking after various areas, and they're suddenly saying, "Look, here's something *else* for you to do."

As this principal points out, students with special needs are seen by many as having their needs rightly meet by the special education system. Regular education consequently perceives the reintroduction of students with special needs into their neighbourhood schools as a liberty, an extra, an add on, 'something *else* for you to do'.

Deficit view of atypical students

The medical view of disability leads students with special needs to be perceived in a deficit way. Children who do not succeed in regular programmes are perceived as not 'coping'. In this way the student and/or his or her disability is in effect blamed for not succeeding, rather than the school being blamed for not succeeding in responding effectively to the students disability. The following two excerpts from the same speaker illustrate this,

> There has to be a criteria of entry into schools - so we have to define disability. And perhaps a simplistic definition is *whether the child is able to cope* adequately in the general classroom situation.

> It's done in consultation with the teacher and the teacher of the unit as to what areas of the curriculum the child will best survive in. And generally it's safe to say they would come in the first - in the morning to call the roll, they're part of the classroom, and - they - and those sorts of things that go on the social yet formal disciplinary process of the day. And then they come back for Maths *if they're coping* - for maths in a particular level that the teacher is taking.

In this way the medical view of the student reinforces the 'validity' of the dual system. It becomes a vicious cycle. A student who fails in the regular system is defined as being in the 'special needs' category because they failed, or because they were expected to fail and were excluded before even being given an opportunity.

The deficit perception of students with very severe disabilities can be taken so far as to perceive some students as being unable to respond at all in a way that is seen as meaningful within the usual parameters of the goals of regular education. Including students with severe disabilities in regular programmes is seen by many as inappropriate because it is felt nothing can be gained from it educationally. The next three principals' statements imply this.

> I don't see it being in the best interests of the child with the special learning disability to be put in to a situation where *nothing really is going to be gained from it educationally.*

> But the reality for me, is that I would say 'no', unless I honestly believed that the child would benefit. So I still believe that for some children, mainstreaming is not appropriate. I have to say that for most children with physical disabilities, the circumstances would have to be quite extreme, before I would say 'no', but if the children had intellectual disabilities - I would say that the circumstances would - *I'd have to really believe that those children would benefit from mainstreaming before I would say 'yes'* and that is where my attitude on mainstreaming becomes a little hard-nosed. And I start saying, "Why are we doing this"? You know, who's getting the benefit from this? It's - we're just - this is pie in the sky stuff. This kid is not benefitting.
>
> I think that schools are capable of responding to any student that's *capable of responding to the school.*

The last speaker enlarges on the former statement, implying that students with severe disabilities are unteachable, require constant care, and are unable to respond in a meaningful way to the school:

> At the end of the day I think where you get to profound or severe disability that probably requires some kind of specialist help - there are probably some limits there. And we're going through an interesting discussion at the moment with the Ministry that wants us to take on another unit in the school and a number of issues. Really life might be too short to start on them all, but one of the issues is "Should the students that they want to put into that unit be in the school when I can't be assured there is the potential for gain for the students? Because they want us now to take a unit with six profoundly disabled psychopaedic persons - they are even pretty vague about the age - and these are people who would remain in the unit all day, would have constant care and I'm saying, "Well, why locate them in a school if there can be no programme hours"? One could say you're in a school and it's different, whereas originally two years ago we started talking about this additional unit from older IH disabled students similar to the ones we have but older, who could take part in school activities and could be part of the school community - so I mean - I think there is an issue involved in all of that - why a school? This is a school - this isn't a hospital.

When this principal says "This is a school. This isn't a hospital", a historical assumption of the medical view is being expressed. People with profound disabilities, until very recently, were perceived as ill and as belonging in a hospital. This is because they were defined primarily in terms of their disability/pathology and their primary life-long need was seen as care. If a person hasn't been defined as profoundly disabled then his or her primary life long need is more likely to be defined as something like 'fulfillment' or to 'develop to his or her potential'.

There are studies, from both overseas and New Zealand, which show that students with severe and multiple disabilities can and do respond when included in a regular class (Anderson & Goetz, 1983; Bowden & Thorburn, 1993, Halvorsen & Sailor, 1990; Jackson & Dever, 1990; Lipsky & Gartner, 1987). However, prevalent beliefs about the aim or purpose of our regular education system contain assumptions about the kinds of responses regular educators *expect* from students. Our system is primarily there so that children learn to read books, write essays, and learn facts. As another principal describes:

> The fact is, that we have at the end of each year, schools disgorging pupils, a percentage of whom are failing to get employment. We have tertiary institutions that are providing academic qualifications for children - for young people - and at the end of it they are not able to get a job. Now my parents are looking at this syndrome and saying, "Hey, we've got to make sure that the education in your school fits the children well for whatever that may be - be the future for them. So the pressures are applied to the school to ensure that - that the children excel and do well.
>
> *(Interviewer) And you think that mainstreaming can sometimes work against that ?*
>
> Absolutely - absolutely - it hasn't been an easy concept to a) introduce, and b) maintain.

As this speaker acknowledges, mainstreaming can work against the role of the education system which is arguably there to prepare *typical* children for *employment.* It appears it is not there to provide broader educational opportuniites for *all* children in the neighbourhood regardless of their differences.

Deficit view of parents of atypical children

People identifying with the medical view of a student with disability can perceive parents who wish to reject that discourse and define their child as a child first, as in a state of denial. Two principals illustrated this:

> The thing was, *they weren't really wanting to accept that their child was impaired* - all right? When we asked for records and so forth - I said I'm not too sure whether our particular system would benefit your child.
>
> You see, we kid ourselves when we think that we're so-called normalising [children with disabilities] - and I think a lot of it is ego. It's ego-building on perhaps - on parents behalf, because *they don't always accept - that they've got a child who is different* and I've seen this with a lot of break-ups of marriages in my involvement in IHC where perhaps one partner hasn't accepted the fact that they've reproduced something that isn't quite normal - and so therefore they want to be sure that they can see that child in the mainstream, and be accepted as the normal. I mean, we've still got to recognise that the individual is an individual with very special needs and we have to look at what is quality for them.

Here a deficit is being applied to the parent. They are seen as unable to accept their child is different. It will later be shown how, in an alternative discourse such as the critical or rights discourses, this deficit could be alternatively applied to the school system, a system which labels children as different and consequently concludes it is not able to cater for them.

The pay off of the medical discourse

The literature review discussed how professionals may have an investment in perceiving students with disabilities as requiring special segregated facilities (Biklen, 1989; Tomlinson, 1982). Although people speaking from within a medical discourse may not consciously or directly argue this, the medical view does provide a rationale for mainstream educators to exclude students with challenging behaviour from the regular day to day life of the classroom. Professionals in the special education system may also have an investment in this rationale as it justifies the development, continuation and expansion of a special education system, a career structure (Ferguson, 1989). One principal referred to this in the interviews:

> It's a growing area in school. I mean I think if somebody wants to make a new career for themselves - having expertise, retraining and expertise in special needs education.

2. The lay discourse of disability

Disability as aversive

The lay discourse of disability, according to Fulcher (1989), depicts a strong aversion to people with disabilities, and a preoccupation with shunning or devaluing a different bodily appearance. The two following principals are referring to the existence in society of a lay discourse (though they are not speaking from that point of view) when they say:

> The neat thing about children in this school is that - the total acceptance now. There's none of this, you know, the mother in the supermarket and the kids pointing at wheelchairs and things like this, and they sort of hushed them - That sort of "Let's put it under the carpet" attitude. I think education for both children and teachers in terms of attitudes. Attitudes is probably the most difficult one because you are dealing with the human - humans really - and with all the fragility of human beings - and you know - prejudices. And there are things they have grown up with. I mean, it's not that long ago that people with mental illness were locked up behind bars and things. I don't think we've come that far.

> I think there's been a big learning curve that teachers have gone through just having the kids [with disabilities] around. You know, at one stage they were locked up and away, weren't they?

There was very little indication of the actual use of a lay discourse by any of the principals in this sample. The only (possible) indication found was where one principal referred to the support person or teacher aide working with a special needs student as a 'minder'. The Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990) presents one definition of 'minder' as a 'bodyguard, especially a person employed to protect a criminal'. In this way the use of the word 'minder' could indicate a lay view of disability, because it implies the student needs protection from him or herself or that classmates may be in danger from them. The use of the word 'minder' may also represent a charity view, which is the next discourse to be described, with connotations of taking care of someone in a paternalistic or over protective manner.

3. The charity discourse of disability

Disability as requiring help and protection

The charity view of disability is revealed in discourse which refers to students with special needs or disabilities as primarily being in need of help, support, sympathy and/or pity. An example from a participant in this study is:

> But they *need* people there *helping them all the time* .

The prevalence of arguments for more resources and more support referred to previously, reflect this charity view to an extent. It can also be recognised in statements referring to the need to *care* for students with a disability, such as this one:

> (Interviewer) What about [mainstreaming] students with intellectual disability?
>
> That one, I think, really depends on the teacher resources we've got available to *care for* those kids.

The charity discourse can also be seen in statements that refer to the need to protect students with disabilities from other children,

> [The] environment has to be set up, too, because we all know children can be wonderful individuals, but collectively they can be *monsters*.

or to keep children with disabilities very safe,

> If they're in workshops they need people there *caring for them,* making sure what they're doing is *safe* ...

The next two speakers make statements which show how students with disabilities may be referred to in a charity discourse as being in a nest or their own 'little' room, which has implications of vulnerability, of being very young or eternal children:

> We are able to give them an opportunity to be taught in a one to one situation where we have a *home nest* and they venture out of the nest when they have capabilities in certain curriculum areas for instruction within the mainstream.

> They also then have the security of their *own little environment* as well.

Isolated examples such as these probably do not mean that the speaker is necessarily immersed in a charity view. However, consistant references of this kind to a helping image may mean that.

Justifications for a charity discourse

The atypical students' best interest

Statements that claim that separate special education is in a student's best interests may stem ultimately from a charity view of disability as these three speakers demonstrate:

> Seek what is available for that person and then you've got to look at the resources and whether you can provide for that child to the best - *for the child's interests.*

> But I also know perils when you mainstream people who simply ... it's not in their *best interests* to mainstream.

> Overall I would say, "Yeah they ought to be in the school but it's got to be a decision that's *based on what's good for the student.*

Though often reflecting genuine caring and compassion on the part of the speakers, these kind of statements can have the effect of denying the rights of students with disabilities to attend local schools like anyone else on the street, as they, paternalistically, claim it is in the child's interest to receive a separate, specialised education.

As discussed previously, in fact, separate education is also in many *professionals'* best interests. This fact is disguised (whether it be consciously or unconsciously) by discourse that concentrates on *students'* best interests. Further, there are other arguments and discourses (i.e. the rights discourse and the REI initiative) that alternatively argue that children's best interests lie in attending their local school.

The 'best interests' argument within a charity discourse can also be used to justify a lot of special education intervention. One principal describes the decision to move a child back to an (age inappropriate) junior class this way:

> He just was not surviving or coping even with the social situation in the normal peer situation - so with consultation with the mother at her request and suggestion we put him back with the Juniors - and of course he's small in stature, so he's - he's no problem, as such.
>
> *(Interviewer) Does he miss his friends that he made in the other class - or -*
>
> Well, he - no. He didn't really - he was getting to the stage where he wasn't making any friends, you know. He was just an isolate, and they were - *we act in what we think and believe is in the best interest.* In fact taking that pressure off him now - I've just recently read a review and evaluation from the teacher, that he's now recommenced home reading. So there's something that's twinged inside of him that means that the decisions made have been recognised by him as being beneficial.

This student is seen to be happier and achieving more effectively as a result of this shift, and many educationalists and parents would agree the reasoning therefore for shifting him was sound. However, what is significant here is that this charity rationale has overridden any rationale that it is the right of a student to be part of his or her age appropriate, local classroom.

The regular students' best interests

The next two speakers demonstrate how a justification for mainstreaming students with special needs is that it provides opportunities for regular children to develop social skills and compassion:

> It's *good training for those who are not disadvantaged* as long as you naturally take care ... and give them the opportunity to let the human side come out ... and that in itself is an education too.

> It's also *good for the mainstream kids* to learn to care and have sympathy and recognition of the differences of others.

Arguments in *favour* of mainstreaming that argue that a central reason for mainstreaming is that it is beneficial for regular students similarly stem from a charity view of disability. The last speaker continues, providing an example of this:

> *(Interviewer) You said you agreed with the [mainstreaming] philosophy, 'for all the obvious reasons' . Do you mind saying briefly what those reasons are.*

Well, I think *for the socialisation of differently-able children.* That's - for all those reasons. Highly desirable for them to be in the mainstream...

This kind of reasoning places the rights of these students to attend their local school as secondary to the consideration of whether the school is seen as catering for them. To argue to include students on these grounds means we can also *exclude* them on these grounds. It can be argued that mainstreaming is undesirable because it is not 'beneficial' to the student, as the previous speaker in fact immediately goes on to do:

> Highly desirable for them to be in the mainstream. At least for *some* of the time. Not necessarily for all of the time.

As soon as regular students' learning is seen to be negatively affected, many schools perceive they have a right to exclude children with special needs. Similarly, the argument that it is in a students best interests that they attend a regular class can be used against mainstreaming if it is argued that it is not in their best interests, as this principal points out:

> I mean, they're people. They deserve a good go. But then again that can also be used counterwise as an argument, like, are they going to get a good go here? Or are they going to get a better go at x special unit? And so on.

A charity view of parents

A charity view is sometimes revealed in statements about parents:

> I really do feel strongly for the parents of these kids. You know, we haven't had very many, but the ones I've had, you know, they're going through hell, sometimes. Your heart really goes out to them and you want to help them.

Compassion, empathy and support are desirable qualities as long as they are not then used to support an argument that actions are therefore being taken in parents best interests, which the previous speaker goes on to do:

> Some of these parents, with kids who are in this category, are pretty desperate people and I understand that, you know, and it's our job as a Government agency as well as our heart desire, I suppose to help them, as best we can. *But sometimes that help is re-directing them.*

Re-directing parents to seek what is perceived by *professionals* as a more appropriate educational placement for their child, is seen here to be in the parents' best interests, the best way of helping them. However, if those parents' primary goal was to have their special needs child attend the local school, *their* perception of effective help would be to have their child *enrolled.*

Many parents of course would be grateful to have pointed out to them the different educational options in the area for their child and this may have been the case in this instance. However, the point being made here is that statements like these which argue that something is being done in a child's or parent's best interests can perform a function of disguising a paternalistic professionalism that is effectively denying the rights of some children with a particular label to enrol in their local school.

Summary

The three deficit discourses of disability, medical, lay and charity, have been illustrated in this chapter with samples of discourse from participants of this study. Firstly, discourse was presented that demonstrated a perception of disability as an illness, the statements implying that disability requires highly expert intervention and care. It was also illustrated how people employing this medical discourse tend to perceive students with disabilities in a deficit way. It is the students and their disabilities that are seen to be to blame for any educational failure, not the schools and their response to special needs. Parents of children with disabilities can also be perceived in a deficit way by people employing a medical discourse. The pay off of a medical discourse is that it provides a rationale for educators to maintain the present dual education system which enables regular teachers to avoid their responsibilities for meeting the needs of atypical children in their neighbourhood. And it enables special education teachers to continue to build a larger career structure, and professional identity of more status, and, often, mystique.

The lay discourse only appeared to be employed once in the study. However, two other principals referred to the lay attitude they had noticed in other people, particularly in the past.

Examples of statements reflecting a charity discourse of disability were described. Here, people with a disability are seen as primarily needing some sort of help or protection, often paternalistic help.

The justifications for separate special education within a charity discourse included the notion that it is in the atypical student's best interests and the regular student's best interest to maintain the dual system. A charity view of parents may also have been employed by one principal who expressed compassion for parents of students with disabilities but went on to suggest that redirecting a parent requesting mainstreaming to a segregated setting may be the best way to help them.

The next chapter illustrates the employment of the rights discourse of disability by participants in this study.

Chapter Nine

Discourse about Disability: The Rights Discourse

Introduction

This chapter draws on statements made by the participants in this study that illustrate the rights discourse of disability. This discourse has a very different approach to the pathological discourses of disability which view disability essentially as a deficit within a person. The rights discourse views disability as a characteristic of a minority group of people that has resulted in their oppression and exclusion from mainstream society.

Disability as societal oppression

The rights view on disability is revealed in discourse which refers to the oppressive nature of exclusion and the rights of students with special needs to be included in local schools. As one principal describes:

> It [mainstreaming] is saying to the person with the disability, - um - you do not come from Mars - you do not have to be shunned - *this is your world* as well as everybody else's world. You're just a bit different.
>
> *(Interviewer) You have a right to be here?*
>
> Yeah - it's like - it's the culture thing that I started off with. You know - it's inclusion rather than exclusion.

In a rights discourse students with disabilities are seen as a minority group that has been oppressed and excluded in ways similar to other minority groups as these two principals illustrate:

> Yes, I find it all quite Draconian, that people are looking at excluding children on *any* grounds - but on grounds of children being disabled, children speaking Maori, they're - It's almost just a whole throw back to that time when children weren't allowed to speak their own language

> in school. For me, that whole - richness the language opened and the different cultures and things that those people bring into a society - I find those sorts of trends quite - not only Draconian - but really frightening for us as a society, and I think the parallel can be drawn with children with disabilities. I think *we have to look at them as part of our society.* Why are we locking them away? - why are we putting them in special classes?
>
> It would be *wrong* not to have students with disabilities in a school, just the same as it would be wrong ... not to have Maoris in a school or ... not to have Samoans.

A third principal comments similarly:

> It concerns me that we are becoming a society where parents are making a conscious decision to exclude or protect their children from huge groups within society - people with disabilities are but one. Right, it really worries me that - to see reflected in schools, monocultural schools - schools where people of like thinking, you know, common thinking backgrounds group their children. It's reflected everywhere now - and I mean people talk about the Asian thing but it's not that. I mean here our school is 93% Maori and Pacific Island and that's not by accident. It's because the white people around here make the conscious decision not to have their children mix with our kids. I know from personal experience in my own upbringing, and I understand and experience it through the job, the benefits to society of having children - every child rubbing shoulders with children from different walks of life - and - um - having children with disabilities mainstreamed, alongside in the same classroom, Maori, Pacific Island, Asian, Pakeha children, Indian children and Afghanistan children.

Difference rather than deficit

Disability and difference, in a rights discourse, is perceived as adding to the richness of our society rather than being seen as a deficit (Biklen, 1989). This can be seen in the way the following principal talks about disability:

> I guess I see it [philosophy on mainstreaming] as this: it's every child's basic human right to have a good education, the best possible

> education and our job as educators is to provide that - that children with disabilities *are really just another dimension* of what is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-lingual society that is beginning to emerge. I think all those sorts of differences actually bring a very rich tapestry, if you like, to things, so that I encourage them.

The next extract shows a principal arguing explicitly against a deficit view of disability. He states that he doesn't like using the word 'disabilities' because he does not see disability as something that necessarily 'disables children' from 'joining in'. At the same time he does not want to deny the existence of disability, but prefers to conceptualise it as 'difference':

> I think that children with - *I don't even like using the word disabilities* - though they are - they are - what was the ... rather facetiously you could say they are 'physically challenged'. Yes, I mean, that's garbage, really - I mean - we do the soft shoe shuffle around issues like that too often. Let's call a spade a spade. These people are *different ...* and they are physically different to us and have specific needs as a result of that but you can't deny the fact that they have physical restrictions ... many of them ... but at the same time I don't see that necessarily as - as something that disables them from contributing or joining in and - just about everything else that people do.

Elsewhere this principal challenges the deficit charity discourse notion that atypical students need to be protected from regular students:

> I don't think that ... oh, no - I don't think there's a single problem with kids ... no, no, no, no, I know parents (of typical children) might use that as a smokescreen - I mean politicians and bureaucrats might but no way, no...
>
> *(Interviewer) They say there'll be too - they'll have a life of hell [the students with disabilities]..*
>
> That is absolute garbage ... by and large they [regular children] just - they take it in their stride and it's not a problem ... there's a fair - there's a huge degree of tolerance on the part of kids.

The deficit notion that students with disabilities are being included out of kindness (charity discourse) is unacceptable in a rights view. Here another principal makes clear that a child with severe disabilities is not to be patronised in this way. The student with disabilities, in this principal's view, gives 'as much to the corporate life of the school as mainstream children':

> I don't see it as us doing a good paternalistic thing for mainstream children. *I see children with disabilities giving as much to the corporate life of the school as mainstream children.* Our little multiple disabled child can't talk and she can't walk, but she certainly has a bearing on the lives of the other children in the school - positive - and I think they'll be better children - and better able to contribute to society for having known her.

A rights discourse argues that students with disabilities should be included in their local school as of right, like any other child, and that they add to the richness of our society. Viewing disability as a difference rather than as a deficit (and often as a bewildering complicated deficit which requires expert intervention), leads to a less fearful and more positive way of working with children with disabilities. Following is an extract from a principal who talks about how teacher's fear and 'conscientiousness' can get in the way of simply enjoying the child as a member of the class:

> *(Interviewer) Do you see [then] the main problem as teachers being scared?*
>
> Yes, and feeling that they have got to know all the answers. Teachers feel that they've got to - there are so many good teachers out there who are conscientious and actually the conscientiousness, actually gets in the way. They feel that if the child comes with cerebral palsy or a syndrome, or Down's, that they've got to in some way cure it, instead of a - celebrating the difference, not in a Pollyanna-ish sort of way, but getting on with enjoying the child in the classroom. And that should be the starting point, and unfortunately, it's not. The disability is seen as a major area of fright and it shouldn't be. Teachers won't solve all the problems but if - like all children - remember Maslow's theory that one

> of social physical wellbeingness - if there is such a word - needs to come into play. All children need to have their social needs met ...

Elsewhere the same principal said:

> Yesterday a teacher came to me and said, "This child is not going to learn". And I said, "Well is she working to her maximum?" And the teacher said "Yes." I said, "Well, be happy in that. Are you enjoying the child in your class?" And she said, "Well no, not really." And I said, "Look relax. You're not going to solve this child's problems this year. We may never, but just ensure that she's working to her potential, and the fact that you're enjoying her. Don't get caught up with trying to *solve* this particular child's difficulties".

Those speaking from a rights discourse may explicitly challenge the medical view of disability as deficit. Here, the same principal describes concern about labelling a child, that it can result in a programme which focuses on remediating a deficit to the extent of excluding a focus on the child's wider needs:

> [I enrolled a child classified as having gross motor problems] I sat and watched the child for two or three hours and it struck me that I didn't notice one thing different about that child and I was very concerned about the use of these labels. First of all, it was a major worry to the parents - the community was trying to treat their child differently, because they started to treat their child differently because the child had been into a box - a square box again. Secondly, that teacher had started getting these fears when she saw the involvement of ... the parents had used the words Gross Motor Deficiencies and the teachers started getting all tense and concerned, 'how are we going to solve all these problems?' As a principal, I've started thinking of well, how am I going to support the teacher and the child.? And the reality is - that the child probably [has] nothing or very little wrong with their gross motor, and our primary concern is: How are we best going to cater for this child's learning, and socially.

The principal goes on to refer to how myths and stories have developed due to this medical view of disability:

> As soon as you get a label everyone freaks out. They all relate stories of how they had a child seven years ago who was a Down's child - and this child used to attack them and it actually perpetrates stories and myths.

In the next excerpt, a principal tells a story which does not perpetuate the usual myths. He tells about an experience in his youth of making friends with a boy with an intellectual disability in the face of possible stigma. The story clearly reveals this principal's 'rights discourse' values about perceiving people with disabilities as people first, and the primary value of friendship which applies to all people, with and without disabilities:

> From personal experience ... I look back on with infinite pride - as a fifteen year old young spunk on the beach ... up north , you know, with long hair and a surfboard tucked under my arm and girls sort of trailling off in the distance - the world was my oyster and I was just Mr. Cool, you know? ... And I remember this guy who was physically bigger than me coming down the beach to me, who I'd never met before - I lived on the beach you see - This kid came down the beach and he just put his arms around me. I thought , what the hell is going on? And ok, to cut a long story short, he was an intellectually handicapped guy who didn't look to have too much in the way of disability, and I had a big question to ask: What do I do here? You know, do I shun this character, and assume my macho apppearance again, or do I show tolerance to this guy, and show him some love and spend some time with him? You know, and the girls went by the way, I put the surf board away, and for six weeks I developed a friendship with that guy, which lasted some years. His parents had a place at the beach and each summer they would come back and each summer we renewed our friendship. and I put all my own prejudices aside ... and I think, well, anyone who hasn't done that has missed out on something you know ... so I think that by having mainstream children with physical or intellectual disabilities, by and large everyone grows.

Rights as unconditional

A rights discourse does not qualify an argument for mainstreaming or make support of mainstreaming conditional upon other requirements such as resources, or student progress. Two of the Principals in the sample showed this kind of unqualified support for mainstreaming. When asked about enrolling a student with very severe disabilities into their schools they replied:

> I would accept any child into my school, no matter what.
>
> I would enrol them.

When the second principal talked of enrolling a student with severe disabilities the issues of resourcing and support were addressed. However, the enrolment of the student was not made contingent on the resources being there:

> I would enrol them.
>
> *(Interviewer) Yes*
>
> ... and talk to them about - and immediately - (I would hope that they would come to me a little earlier before the date of enrolment so that we could start to look at accessing these sorts of help we need.) For instance, we couldn't manage with our multiple disabilities, disabled little girl, unless we had the teacher aide support that we do - and also for the little one in the other area with the incontinence problem - we need the degree of support we've got there. So that those things - for it to function well, we do need that level of support standard. I would simply start accessing that straight away.

Rather than using lack of resources as a reason for excluding the child, this speaker is simply concerned with *accessing* the resources. This principal does not try to persuade the parent to go to another school which has resources because the right and the desirability of the child to attend this school is not being questioned. Later this principal refers to an educational philosophy that has no qualifiers, that is 'non-negotiable':

> There should be entitlement and rights. I believe very strongly that education is a basis human right ... and that as far as my philosophy goes, is just non-negotiable - and it's got to be seen within the framework of social justice.

The rights view on resources and support

Concerns are still expressed about inadequate resourcing for mainstreaming in a rights discourse. However the statements are qualitatively different to concerns about resourcing for mainstreaming which are expressed from the medical or charity discourses. While the latter two emphasise the special needs disability creates - a deficit view, a rights discourse emphasises equity and obligation. The following extracts from two principals demonstrate this:

> *Well to treat unequals equally, they have to be treated unequally - right?* That's the terms of the school and frankly, the school does not get the resources it needs to see that they get equity in the programme that they have.

> Now if it is Government policy to say to a group from Samoa or to a group from Taiwan or Hong Kong, "You're welcome in our country", then I believe there - there is an onus on Government to say, "We - if we're inviting you into our country, *we're obliged to ease your transition into our culture, our society, our community".* And that to me means funding.

One principal suggested that sometimes schools may apply for more resources than are necessary:

> I think, sometimes, people get on this resource oriented bit - they go overboard, and instead of assessing what we really need ...

When asked the reason for this, the speaker suggested :

> It could be the way out ... maybe a feeling of inadequacy of not knowing how to deal with the children, talk with them or to relate with them or interact with them. And rather than say, 'I feel inadequate in this way, can you help me?', its possibly easier to blame a lack of physical

> resources. So again, I still see that the human dimension is the one we should really be addressing here.

A rights discourse stresses human values over financial and material considerations:

> It's a bit like money - or things - I mean, somebody rammed into our car the other day and I said - it's okay - it's a car - it's a thing - it can be fixed. Instead, if the kids had been in it, I had a problem - but it was stationary and there was nobody in it - and I mean - it's a car - it's a damned nuisance and it costs money and I feel quite bitchy about it - but at the end of the day, it's a thing. *Human values are what I am talking to people about* - and human values are what's important and that's what I feel making inclusion or mainstreaming work. I don't see the - The resources are incredibly important and I don't want to downplay that and I think that's got to be Government responsibility. But at the end of the day, I still see the human aspect of it as the most important thing.

The next speaker describes how the argument which excludes some students on the grounds that there are not enough resources is essentially inequitable. It is stressed by this speaker that every child has a right to quality education in a local school and that excluding students on the grounds they don't fit or that there are not adequate resources to help them 'fit' goes against those rights:

> I think you get into the syndrome of 'yes but' (I'm going to sound like Marsha Forest). But the problem is not the resources - I'm not saying they are not important - but I believe that the schools can be creative. What happens if I get a child enter my school who doesn't speak English? Am I not going to accept that child? If I get a child who is a behavioural problem, am I not going to accept that child? If you don't have resources for every child you take into your school [who] is not ready to fit into that box, there will be many children who won't be accepted. Every child has a right to quality education.

Another principal similarly challenges the notion that children with disabilities should be excluded because of the extra time that they may require. It is pointed out that students with other needs not labelled as 'special' needs, such as slow readers, are not excluded on those grounds,

> I think that - that parents of children who are not disabled may feel threatened by having a disabled person in the same classroom as their children and they might fear that the teacher will spend a disproportionate amount of time supporting the person with disabilities and they may fear that their children will miss out ... And then - that need not necessarily be the case - I mean - it's very easy to label somebody with a disability as sitting in a wheelchair, but what about the kid in the classroom who's got a reading disability. The teacher gives *that* child a disproportionate amount of time - or should ...
>
> *(Interviewer) Yeah - and never keeps them out or anything.*
>
> No - no - and so it's really the same. I mean the person with a physical disability may, in fact, may get more time than other children, but that's okay, it's the way it should be.

A rights discourse thus emphasises the importance of attitudes over resources as a barrier to mainstreaming. The handicapping nature of our society and schools are seen as the source of primary disability, rather than the problem being seen essentially as a deficit within the student. As previously discussed, when disability is seen as a deficit within a student, solutions are seen to lie in 'fixing up the student'. Here, a principal speaks from a rights discourse when describing how people can be 'disabled' by an excluding environment. In the following statement, this speaker shows a perception of disability as being created by the environment at least as much as by the actual impairment of the student:

> But at the same time I don't see that [disability] necessarily as - as something that disables them from contributing or joining in and - just about everything else that people do - After all, you know, Brethren children - closed Brethren children - join us in schools. They are more disabled than physically disabled pupils because they are not allowed to join in with computer education, they're not allowed to watch videos,

> they're not allowed to join the other children for lunch, and yet they're mainstreamed. There's no difference. They are - they are ...
>
> *(Interviewer) They've been stopped from having access ...*
>
> Yep
>
> *To the main group?*
>
> Yep - and that is a disabling aspect of their religion in our culture.

When it is acknowledged that the environment makes an enormous contribution to the nature of disability, solutions are seen to lie in 'fixing up' the environment, that is the schools, rather than in 'fixing up' the student. And a central approach to that is in changing attitudes. This principal puts attitudes as the first barrier to main streaming:

> *(Interviewer) The main blocks [to mainstreaming] - would you put those in any order?*
>
> I would have to put teacher attitude first - actually, because I think that, you know, teacher expectation - is that huge determining factor - on how the children are accepted by other children.

Here, another principal puts attitude change as the first barrier to mainstreaming and consequently puts education of people as the first solution to this:

> All right. So you asked what were the things that impaired mainstreaming.
>
> *(Interviewer) Mm - yeah*
>
> It's people's attitudes, and it [is] money - the resources. That's how I see it - they are the two main things, and there was a double-barrelled question; what was the second part?
>
> *And how would they be overcome?*

> By education of people for the first one - people have to be educated. And you only do that ... by mainstreaming people.

Elsewhere, this principal speaks of how sometimes claims for extra resources may not be necessary and are based on people's understanding of (and attitudes towards) the effects of mainstreaming. It is argued that these beliefs can be changed through education:

> You know - to think that your child needs a certain amount of teacher time - an equitable amount - is not necessarily so. I think that probably classrooms can be managed easily ... but people - parents - need to be educated so that they understand that somebody with a physical disability in the classroom is not going to - unduly negatively influence their child's [chance] of getting educated.

Another principal speaks similarly from a rights view, arguing that more teacher aide support is not necessarily the answer to more effective mainstreaming. This speaker feels people often use finding more teacher support as a 'quick answer' because they are panicking. Referring to the importance and power of attitude change, the principal recommends that treating a student with dignity (i.e. an attitude change) can lead to improvements and changes in an education programme:

> My staff this morning, when I told them where I was coming, said make sure you tell the truth, we need resources. We got talking about the resources and some of them started to question, yes maybe the issue wasn't that. Maybe it was people making decisions somewhere along the line and maybe it comes down to - we need more information about how decisions are made.
>
> *(Interviewer) Resources are what everyone talks about and then it's as though they don't need to think any further.*
>
> When I was teaching in South Auckland it was the same thing. Oh God, these children don't speak English - we need teacher time, teacher aide time, and that's not the answer. When I take a session for staff

> everyone wants a quick answer, a quick technique. What are these quick techniques? *Well start treating people with dignity, that's the first thing.* When you start treating people with dignity you'd be surprised at how quickly that changes the child or the learner will change. So will the person giving that affirmation. Resources are only part of the answer. I wonder whether they're that important. Some children, yeah, can't do without it but I'd say for a good 80% of them we've gone overboard with our resources. I sat in on the SES allocation meeting at the beginning of the year and there were schools putting in applications of thousands - they had gone overboard. I think they were panicking because they didn't know any other answer. It's interesting that in many countries around the world it is against the law to take children from their regular classroom. It may be hard on people but it forces them to be clear, to face up.

The rights view on teacher stress

A rights view on the mainstreaming of students with disabilities actually places the rights of the students before the rights of the teachers. This contrasts with the medical and charity views which focus concern on protecting the teachers. Here a principal explains that the reason for not placing some students with an unsympathetic teacher was *not* to protect the teacher, but to ensure the child had a warm, caring environment:

> I try not to put them - the children - with teachers that I think would be unsympathetic, not because I want to protect the teacher, but to protect the children. I feel they have a right to a warm, caring environment as well.

This principal went on to say that teachers who will be sympathetic to the schools inclusion philosophy, are specifically advertised for, stressing that while teachers can choose to go to another school, students cannot:

> And in fact, for this school now, because we consider ourselves to be an inclusive school, that's one of the criteria for teachers coming into this school. So if they don't want to deal with children with disabilities in the classroom, they don't apply for the school. And that's just the long and the short of it. And whether it sounds fairly dictatorial ... *but adults*

> *have choices - the children don't - and that's their [the teachers'] choice.*
>
> *(Interviewer) I noticed on your mission statement out there - 'value in diversity' - it's a central kind of thing here.*
>
> And that *would* be one of our central philosophical thrusts. And as far as I'm concerned, disability is simply a diversity that we bring - and - I think adults have choices and teachers have choices - and - but *children* don't ... and they - if that is a concern for them, well we make it very clear in any advertisement or any interview - we're up front about it: "This is what our school is ... so if you have a problem it's [this school] is not for you. "There still *is* a hangover in teacher's attitudes from the times of the Act, and I don't think we'll change that - it's comparatively long-entrenched. But as I say, the thing that I did as a Principal was to try to ensure that children are catered for first and foremost.

Another principal similarly stresses the importance of teachers going along with the school's inclusive philosophy. This principal talks of protecting staff, but not of protecting them by excluding students with disabilities from their classes. Rather, the staff working directly with students with disabilities are protected from other staff's negativity by all staff being reminded of the school's commitment to inclusion:

> I think the principal is quite crucial in establishing the - the place of Special Education in the school and maintaining it, and just not allowing those pressures that come from time to time or staff who have new theories on 'this isn't a good idea' you know - I think the Principal is there to protect the staff who are working with these students quite often by saying ... "this is the way we do things here." The school is committed to various philosophic principles and you know, we've got to maintain those even when the pressure's on, you know - we had some pressure early last year when the numbers in the unit greatly exceeded the - the support that was available and we were sending students out in the mainstream classes unsupported for a time, because we just didn't have the people to cover ...

This principal goes on to express the essence of a rights discourse of mainstreaming: It is unconditional; it means "commitment at any price":

> You have to get in there and say to teachers ... Okay, you know it's a bit tough at the moment but *it's a commitment at any price, you know, just got to do it.* We'll get there.

Summary

The rights discourse of disability in relation to mainstreaming was described and illustrated by quotations from participants in this study. Statements made which reflected a belief in disability as social oppression rather than as a personal deficit were cited. A rights discourse was shown to have an unconditional perspective on mainstreaming in contrast to pathological discourses of disability which suggest that mainstreaming is conditional upon requirements such as resources or student progress. The rights of students with disabilities were seen as at least equal to the rights of teachers in regular schools.

The next chapter introduces and describes two further discourses that emerged from the analysis of the data.

Chapter Ten

Two Further Mainstreaming Discourses: The Critical Discourse and the Proactive Discourse

Introduction

Two further discourses emerged from the analysis of the interview transcripts which did not clearly fit into either the pro status quo discourse or Fulcher's four identified discourses, the medical, charity, lay and rights discourses. I named these two discourses the critical discourse and the proactive discourse. I believe they make a significant contribution to the study of discourse in the mainstreaming debate because they go further than the other discourses in challenging the current education system. They both explicitly critique the status quo and construct arguments in support of an alternative education system. The proactive discourse goes even further by expressing and exploring alternative ways of dealing with diversity in school populations.

1. The Critical Discourse

The system as deficit

The critical discourse involves a critical awareness of the shortcomings of our current education system, particularly in relation to the inadequacies of the system to cater effectively for students with special needs. In other words the critical discourse sees the *system* as deficit *rather than* the child with special needs as having the deficit. The critical discourse critiques the mainstream educational system as not coping well with complexity, as these two speakers illustrate:

> Class numbers are rising. More pressures are put on teachers to cater and cope with ... over a wide variety of situations, and mainstreaming is not an easy task because of the complexity of the programme that has to be considered. So one has to be very careful when we introduce a child [with special needs] into the environment.

> I see that schools cater to a very - well, to the middle group of our society, not necessarily middle-class, but the 'normal' type of child,

> with inverted commas. Anyone who is different, the gifted child, the child who needs a lot of support, the child who speaks three or four languages, and the child who looks a wee bit different, dyes their hair red, or something, anyone who is different, schools find very hard to cater for.

Teachers as deficit

Now that students with special needs are being lead off less and less into the alternative special system, regular schools are trying to find ways of teaching more diverse classes. One principal was quoted earlier, in the pro status quo discussion:

> We cater for a homogenous group so to speak, eh?
>
> *(Interviewer) Right ...*
>
> But in order to cater for others who don't fit that homogenous group, we need the resourcing ...

However, a critical discourse goes beyond seeking a 'quick fix' solution of 'more resources' for regular schools. The critical discourse recognises that teachers have been traditionally expected to teach a homogenous group *and* that they now need to be re-trained in the skills (and attitudes) necessary to cater for difference:

> *(Interviewer) Mm ... and so what then in your opinion, are the main barriers to mainstreaming students with disabilities in special schools - into ordinary schools?*
>
> In the first instance, there is the staff. The staff in most instances are too scared. *They feel they have no training.* They feel they need all sorts of resources and hours from the Ministry, those issues and because of that, they can't see that they're coping with anyone who is different. We must remember that many schools like to put everyone in a little box, and keep them in that little box. If anyone comes in a round or a diamond-shape, it's very very difficult to fit into a box - um - they have to knock the rough edges off. It's very very difficult for schools to be creative in their management of these students.

Three other principals provide illustrations of this:

> Teachers, because they're also under stress and strain, in a sense aren't emotionally prepared to take yet another step to look after yet - as they see it - yet another problem, you see. *They want to teach a homogenous group that's keen and eager.* Dream on! But you know, that is a problem because these kids are seen as being often, very difficult, and they're a bit scared sometimes.
>
> Primary teachers are trained best and automatically through their training know that they've got to accommodate these kids in their classes and some of our secondary trained teachers, who are more subject orientated, although these days it is becoming more person orientated, perhaps either haven't got the ability or have got the ability, but don't realise they've got the ability, to really cater for these kids needs.
>
> The other thing, and this has always been an issue in New Zealand education, and that is that *we do not re-train our staff adequately.* You know to meet new situations. And dealing with - like mainstreaming students with disabilities, is reasonably new, in our schools - like historically - on the scale that we have now. And the majority of secondary school teachers, are not being adequately prepared to deal with this, and we won't be from the Government. And it's not just that, it's with *language* as well. You know the new - the new Kiwi - the language issue. The majority of our secondary school teachers have never been taught to cope with youngsters with second language or - you know - other language problems - and they are not going to be, by the Government, because the resourcing would be phenomenal. Just as they are not adequately being re-trained to meet - to cope with the new requirements in education that have been recently ... They have all these new curricular requirements. Now all these sorts of things - ones between school and tertiary - you know the new programmes, new programme structures - leaves precious little time now.

There is recognition, in a critical discourse, that regular teachers need to learn more strategies now that specialist alternatives are not as readily available.

> Well, you know, it's a pity that all those specialist things have gone ... in a sense. Because you know, there's a fairly steep learning environment for teachers here, to teach deaf children ... You know, we have had a boy who was almost deaf, but had a little bit of hearing, who's been here for several years, so he has to wear special things in his ears, sit up the front with this - all that sort of stuff ... He got a bit of stick from kids, but he formed his own circle of friends and that was good. Teachers didn't really do anything different with him and I think, maybe, we *should* have. He got some in-class learning support.

A critical discourse recognises and comments on teacher fallibility. It recognises that many teachers perceive students with disabilities as a threat, as well as an 'add on', a need they were not previously expected to meet:

> Generally, I think it's a - a very good idea - I guess my views have changed as I've seen it implemented and seen the benefits that I believe it does bring to both mainstream children and - and the children with disabilities. But I think it's the concept that people find threatening - and I think that it's something that they see as an add-on and all these things. And "Oh, it's going to take away from regular children's resources that are being fed to them etc." A similar sort of argument in a way is being used at the moment regarding English as a second language, which I find quite horrifying.

A critical discourse describes segregated special education systems as harmful or not beneficial for students as these two speakers show:

> There has been a marvellous sort of acceptance of her, by the kids at large, you know. There's been very little sort of negative teasing comment and all that horrible stuff, really, for her, *and if she'd been sort of tucked away in a specialist place , that wouldn't have done her any good at all*. But she's learnt to survive and the others have learnt something from her survival here in the school, and in a sense, it's there, [that] we rest our case, isn't it?

> I'm 100% for it [mainstreaming]. I believe that all children have the right to education of the highest quality, and in my very limited experience, I've seen these special schools providing in some areas a great education, but in the areas of life skills, very poor opportunities for these students to grow. All schools are called to develop the wholeness of the child, and I don't know if special schools, by their very nature, are able to do that.

The historical impact of the dual education system

A critical discourse also similarly critiques the impact on schools of the historical establishment of special and satellite classes on site. This has lead, as one principal describes in this interview extract, to the formation of distinct separate groups of children in the school:

> It's from a culture point of view. There's almost a kind of cultural - right - presence in the school.
>
> *(Interviewer) There's really a disproportionate number ... for the community isn't there?*
>
> Yes, of a different kind - of - of - Yeah - of cultural minority, really.
>
> *Right. And do they form their own culture, do you think?*
>
> Yes, they do I think - because there are quite distinct groups within those students, who even though we have quite advanced mainstreaming programmes, there is still quite a strong feeling of belonging to the group. I guess that's inevitable - they do spend some of their time there. Their home base is in the - in the unit. They do do activities like special riding for the disabled, kids like that together, so you'd expect there to be the same kind of group identity there that you'd find in a Third Form class or a Fourth Form class.

Another principal refers to this problem too, within a critical discourse:

> Probably socially - at lunchtimes and whatever - the youngsters wouldn't [integrate] - although they're all around the grounds - they probably are together.

A critical discourse acknowledges that a disproportionate number of students with special needs in a school can lead to the nature of the school no longer reflecting its community:

> And the third issue, if I can just raise it for it is quite a key one - We're a school of [population given]. We now have [x] special education students in the school. What's that point where you finally so alter the nature of the school that you've done something to it? And would you find out too late that all of a sudden we'd become a school that's characterised as a special school.

Another principal's statement shows how the critical discourse critiqes current systems of providing financial support as bureaucratic, inequitable and often ineffective:

> *(Interviewer) So what in your opinion then, would be the main barriers to mainstreaming?*
>
> Resources. I think you'll probably get this story from a lot of principals. I think the farce that we go through at the moment in applying for special education hours and that's certainly not the fault of special education or the psychologists or anyone else involved. We apply for the hours. Nobody minds doing that. The paperwork has relatively been cut to a minimum for schools - now with just a small application form - that's not a problem. It goes into the Ministry, from where it is couriered over - or however it gets there - to special education. They make the decision. The thing goes back to the Ministry who then notify the school.

Elsewhere the same principal comments further,

> Exactly - so I mean there are two things to it. At the end of the day, I think again, you know, why are we paying the high powered bureaucrats to courier something over there, which could go directly there. Why are we doing it twice a year. Children's needs don't change that much over a year.

The point is made by another participant also,

> The Ministry has a role in releasing resources. I mean, I'm not stupid enough to deny that. They have a very important role in doing that. But I believe there's quite a lot of money in the educ ... the special education budget. The allocation of it - um - probably possibly needs to be looked at. But wiser people than I can talk about that.

Critical discourse also may recognise and describe ways the system is exploiting the people who are maintaining current support for students with special needs - teachers aides and support teachers:

> Why are we paying for all that bureaucratic running around when the people, finally, the people who actually do deliver the service, are paid minimal - I think it's $9.40 for the top of the teacher aide hours. Normally, they are women, their hours are half an hour a day here, half an hour a day there - I mean, they are a group of people who do, I think, a very difficult job - you know - they've got *all* these things, and I don't think, I don't think they are valued and I don't think that they're going to attract high quality people to work with these special needs children.

Another principal makes a similar point,

> At the moment I have eight teachers - we call them teachers. They're crucial - they're crucial - we call them support staff - support teachers and they're crucial members of our - of our - enterprise, and I cannot tell them what the basis of our climate will be after July. And that's - I mean - not only is it industrially illegal - I mean you actually can't employ people on that basis. It's professionally just damaging - it's got grave implications for the programme - it's not the way to treat people who are playing an important role.

Alternative strategies inhibited by system

A critical discourse also may refer to the difficulty of accessing resources for alternative - and possibly more creative and effective - methods of supporting students:

> You know - we got thoroughly caned when they expanded the units for the second IH unit. And part of it, we got the two buildings joined together to a really peculiar shaped room, and turned it into a computer suite, a totally secure computer suite. We had to answer the allegations that we did somehow pull a swifty and produced a facility for the rest of the school. Um - and I said , "Well where do you draw the line?" I mean, those computers will be used 90% of the time by the students who are getting special education resources, but I'm not going to say they will never be used by anyone else, because sometimes other students will be down there with them, working with them - sometimes they'll be in their rooms with them, you know, so yes it is an additional facility to the school, but it's part of our general special education thrust ...
>
> *Right, very interesting*
>
> You know, the whole area - this isn't really - the whole current thinking isn't really designed to cope with programmes like that ...

An inclusive school attempting to provide education for students with special needs alongside their peers finds that unless it applies for funding for segregated support strategies they will get penalised. Another principal similarly described having difficulty being allocated hours for alternative ways of utilising a teacher aide for such things as massage (of a student with severe physical disabilities):

> *(Interviewer) So you're using alternative methods and the system doesn't necessarily support those.*
>
> No - they - they want - some of them want simple - um - like - computers are very trendy at the moment. If we were using computers we could possibly get the funding.
>
> *Right ...*
>
> And we're using computers with some children. But it comes down to different answers for different children. Every child is an individual.

One principal looked critically at the very notion of support, pointing out that attitudes need to recognise *all* people's need for support and that the education sytem needs to move away from the individualistic ideal of striving for 'normality' in the form of independence, or working alone:

> *(Interviewer) I think when a support person is in there, they actually stop the student from being naturally integrated. The kids are aware that you've got an adult there.*
>
> Well, in some cultural contexts that might be so, but you could say that if you develop a culture that has in it a notion of support ... that becomes part of the culture, that is normal. It is normal and in fact it's part of the world isn't it, it is probably more normal to work in a supported kind of way than it is to box on by yourself. I mean that is a peculiar white British notion in a way.

Catering for a diverse school population will demand critical thinking and creative solutions that our traditional bureaucratic system has difficulty responding to. A critical discourse recognises this as a central barrier to mainstreaming.

Interestingly, however, all those who speak in a critical discourse do not necessarily also maintain a rights view of students with disabilities. Some, by arguing that schools are not competent to cater for atypical learners, use a critical discourse to *justify exclusion* of students with special needs. Here, as Skrtic has pointed out, those on different sides of the mainstreaming issue actually concur (Skrtic, 1991a, p.65). People both in support of and against the Regular Education Initiative share a belief that the education system is at fault, not the disability of the student.

The significant aspect of the critical discourse is that it sees our social systems, including schools, as the problem for mainstreaming, rather than the students with a disability. This is a position which leads to the recognition that schools need to change, not just manage by excluding challenges they cannot cope with. The proactive discourse, to be described next, goes further, and explores the *ways* schools might change. Further, the proactive discourse, unlike the critical discourse, is always firmly embedded in the rights perspective of unconditional mainstreaming.

2.The Proactive Discourse

> Schools need to change and change quickly about what they're here for. We've really got to teach those people skills and identify existing skills and strengths. Principals need [skills] too. I'm not meaning to be negative on teachers. I think many teachers are wonderful, but we get caught up in a system and we don't really stop and challenge it (Research participant).

The proactive discourse recommends change and ways of changing. It goes beyond the critical discourse of challenging and criticising the system, and beyond the rights discourse of claiming equality for students with disabilities or special needs, to describing a vision of an alternative education system, a system which could respond more flexibly to the educational needs of a diverse school population. The kinds of vision described appear close to Skrtic's description of adhocracy, or flexible adaptable organisation, which he recommends as a necessary alternative system structure to the current bureaucracy of our schools (Skrtic, 1991a, p.234).

Changing the teachers

Proactive discourse often centers on professional development for teachers as the first or primary concern:

> *(Interviewer) So how could these [barriers to mainstreaming] be overcome, these problems, do you feel?*
>
> The barriers - well, I think that teachers need a lot more professional development in those areas, and that's the starting point, I suppose.

and, another principal's comment,

> Teachers just have to expand their range of skills to cope with difference.

A proactive discourse recognises that teachers feel afraid, and feel - and possibly sometimes are - inadequate to the job of effectively including a student. However, rather than use this as a justification for excluding students with special needs from regular classes as in the pro status quo discourse, or the medical model discourse (which claims teachers have to be specialists to cope), the proactive discourse recommends enskilling the teachers so they *can* cope:

> But basically they [regular teachers] would have a fear, an in-built fear, based on yesterday's stereotypes. What - how am I going to deal with this? You know, and I believe that that - that is a major issue in all of this - that teachers have to be guided and supported and their attitude will change, knowing that they can deal with this.

The previously cited principal is advocating for teachers to be "guided", or trained and empowered. It is not being argued that students should be excluded because the teachers do not have the skills. It is made clear in the next comment that this principal is aware that talking of teacher training needs can be construed as excuse-making. It is emphasised that the need for teacher training is a 'genuine and real problem' for teachers, not an excuse to fail to mainstream students with disabilities:

> I think it's a genuine and real problem for teachers, that in order for a child to receive the benefits of mainstreaming, the teachers have to be committed to it and understand the benefits and take it all on board and go with it.

The speaker elaborates on this, and probably few principals would disagree with the following statement of advocacy for resources for teacher training:

> Because you've got a child who's mainstreamed in a class where the teacher isn't comfortable with it, then you're fighting a losing battle battle. Because the teacher's going to really find it tough. A lot of this is a part of the cost thing again, you see, because teachers have to - teachers have to be - receive professional development in this area and that's where there is an added cost.

> *(Interviewer) Mm. You're not getting it?*
>
> No. Because it's - it's how to handle not only the physical side of it but, you know, what are the educational needs of that child? How do you go about including a physically-disabled person in the extra-curricular things that you do and all that you know, and people have to taught how to do that and I think that's fair.

What is significant about this piece of discourse is that there is no hidden agenda in this argument which aims to exclude students with special needs on the grounds of lack of teacher training, which is what identifies a medical model discourse. Also, another difference between the approach this discourse takes towards teacher training and the medical discourse is that the medical discourse recommends considerable extended training and emphasises the special nature of a disability. The proactive discourse recommends training teachers for more generic skills such as effectively including and involving a child in the regular programme. This principal recommends enskilling teachers to enskill children for more effective mainstreaming processes:

> *(Interviewer) Set the scene. What do you mean by that?*
>
> What I mean by that, is ... the children they are with most of the time, have to be actually taught to accommodate and care for these children.

Some principals made proactive suggestions for challenging the traditional specialist role of 'special ed' teachers, describing how mainstreaming or true inclusion can be enhanced if the disabled students' 'special teacher' is viewed as a resource for *all* students. The excerpts that follow from three different principals illustrate this:

> The other thing is with the teachers - and my objective was - (we've achieved that) - to make sure that the teachers weren't just labelled as the Special Ed teachers - and dealt with those kids alone. So we have those Special Ed teachers out - like they're together - like all the other teachers. They do duties with the other teachers, they take sports teams with the other teachers, you know, so they deal with the mainstream

> kids with their sports teams and for all their other interests, but they also have their mainstream classes.

> Well the way in which we manage the support is that when the support teacher goes into the programme, while they have a special responsibility for the differently able students, they do support *any* student in the class ... And so, they are there as a support teacher and they - and I mean I have observed them on many occasions helping students who are in the mainstream, if you like, because their job is to support and they just keep their eye on their special responsibilities, but they don't limit themselves to that, because quite often those students are working happily without support.

> The teacher is integrated so that the teacher is not looked at as being just their special teacher.

Proactive suggestions evidencing a proactive discourse include proposing different, often more flexible, ways for a teacher to organise the class programme:

> Then the classroom teacher has to be able to make time in organising his or her classroom to be able to focus on that child at least from time to time. That has its problems, too, depending on how you structure your classes, I guess, and the personnel within them.

The following statement shows a principal being proactive about mainstreaming by recommending that teachers re-group their classes to recognise the different needs:

> They [students with special needs] may need to go into the mainstream classes as well - that in itself presents a problem to the teachers - that's where they may have to have another extra level in the classroom - like where here they may be working at three different levels, you may need a fourth level.

A non proactive discourse would simply recommend students with special needs stay out of regular schools. Proactivity looks for solutions, and attempts to change the mainstream so that the child with a special need can be included. Another example is the next statement by a principal who is recommending an educational programme which caters flexibly for difference, by creating a situation where students can enter and leave at different levels of attainment:

> Once a teacher takes on board the notion that these students are different and therefore organises a programme that kids can come into at different points and their outputs are of different character because they are different students and have different skills, then I don't see the problem that one of those should be disabled, should have a disability that is called IH and another one should have a feature that is called ESL and another one should have a feature that's called 'coming from a broken home and bloody angry with the world'. You know that's all just individual difference.

Significantly this piece of proactive discourse challenges the labelling of students as largely irrelevant when aims of education are described as specific outputs. Student's different needs are seen as 'all just individual difference'.

Another principal tentatively explored the alternative organisational possibility of students having a number of education providers at the same time. This is however a suggestion that is very close to the 'pull out' concept favoured by the pro status quo discourse:

> It may be that we also need to have areas or clusters of schools where each school will - may have different specialist teachers who can accommodate kids. But I can see that with a whole lot of courses - like even mainstream courses - that in the future students may have a number of different education providers. They may be in a traditional school for part of the week and somewhere else for part of the week or - you know ...

Another principal stressed, as a proactive strategy for mainstreaming, the importance of collaborative class programmes where students support each other:

> You know, if you're working in a collaborative kind of programme, the other students are supporting each other and that includes the special education students - so I think that's quite important really.

One principal, when asked about ways to overcome barriers to mainstreaming, directly challenged the prevalent medical discourse notion that the best way was to simply provide 'more resources'. From the rights perspective this principal stated "But the resources aren't the issue. In a sense. The issue is that the child has a right." As a proactive strategy for mainstreaming this principal recommends setting up a support network. Here it can be seen that the rights discourse forms part of the basis for the proactive discourse:

> One [way of overcoming the barriers] is setting up a support network within a school for teachers. They need ... Some of these children - not probably a lot of them, *are* stressful in the classroom. And I think that is life. Just as there are other children who are stressful in the classroom who I'd say are discipline or behaviour problems. Well, teachers need time out - just as the children need time out. So we've got to give real and practical support to that teacher. It may be taking that child out of that classroom for a couple of hours a day - putting them into another class. If the teacher needs to go on a course, look at sending the teacher on that course. The teacher needs to go spend some time with that child, do so. We set up a network of parents at this school, who will come in and support the teacher - give them extra resources. Give them resources. If there are resources we identify we need to buy, if we can afford it we will buy it, if we can't afford it we still buy it actually and then we try and get the money out of the Ministry, or the Minister to pay for it. But the resources aren't the issue. In a sense. *The issue is that the child has a right.* I think if you keep arguing on the resources one, I think there's a major philosophical problem of what education's all about.

Once again the features of a proactive discourse can be identified here. The principal is recommending and describing practical ways of how to get on with the job of including students with special needs in regular classrooms, not, as with a pro status quo or 'disability as deficit' discourse, using the challenges as a reason against mainstreaming.

Changing the organisation

Proactive suggestions regarding different organisational responses to mainstreaming from the status quo responses similarly involve an attempt to enable 'special' resources to be accessible to *all* students, not just those labelled as having 'special needs' or being 'in special ed'. Two principals here refer to withdrawal space or the 'special unit' as being available for *all* students when they experience a need of some kind:

> Any children with special needs, whether it be for special abilities, can then go over to that unit and perhaps have quality time over there so that the room is seen as a special room recognising other people's abilities as well.

The second principal describes how the special education unit is referred to as the social education unit, and is clearly used as a resource for all students in the school:

> We never use the word 'special education' in the school. We talk about the social education unit. Now the social education unit is also where every student in the school goes to for social education, so it is normal to be in the unit, every student in the school has programmes in the unit, and it's just another complex. There's the tech department workshops. There's the computer suite. There's the social education unit. There's the gymnasium. I mean it's just a specialist teaching area within the school. Now we know that there are - I mean it would be totally unknown to most kids that there are kids here who have IEP's and they get resources in this way and all the rest of it - they're just students in the school - all part of the kind of mosaic, I suppose, that makes up a school.

This kind of proactive approach avoids the stigmatisation that occurs when a unit is designated as specifically for students with disabilities.

The way another principal talks about a special unit or withdrawal space can be viewed as another sample of proactive discourse because the aim of the space here is clearly as a *temporary* withdrawal space for support, not as a device to protect the teacher from having to deal with the students special needs:

> The kids probably need to be treated the same, but yet differently, in terms of being able to have withdrawal space, where they - where if it really gets too tough - or even if it doesn't get that tough, where they can withdraw and get some sort of support.

When the 'pull out' approach is justified from a medical discourse point of view, its purpose is seen as meeting highly specialised needs more effectively, thus labelling the child primarily in terms of his or her disability. When justified from a pro status quo discourse, a withdrawal room is seen as useful because it enables the regular students to continue their learning, and the regular teachers to continue their teaching, in a standard programme (not designed to cater for difference) without disruption. However, from a proactive discourse, a withdrawal space is seen as available to *all* students in a school, *and* as a *temporary* space for individuals, rather than a permanent, separate, specialised programme.

Developing an inclusive culture

A proactive discourse either directly or indirectly refers to developing a culture of inclusion and acceptance of students with special needs in their schools, as this principal's account reveals:

> In the middle of this group of sixty kids, there's a bean bag and it's plonked - absolutely in the middle - all the kids around it and J is in it. J is on her bean bag - and just listening, and her head going and the noise. She's singing with them but the difference is that she is in the heart of that singing group. Before, she was always on the periphery and I said to the Mum yesterday, because I walked in there this afternoon and she was in her wheelchair and often in her wheelchair she has her head hanging down, but yesterday for the first time I have seen her actually holding her head up and going like this from side to side with her head. And I thought, yes, when it's really from the heart and not because you

> have to do it .... It makes such a huge difference but it also makes such a huge difference to, well, not only to the little girl, but to the other kids. And nobody's saying , "Oh, it's your turn today to be with her" - there's always somebody just there with her, and she's just part of [the group] ... Now that has come from the teacher. That is teacher attitude. The kids would do it anyway, but if it's modelled - the kids will pick up on it and it's an absolute - it *is* an object lesson in mainstreaming or inclusive education. I think it's more inclusion than mainstreaming. It's an object lesson in... it's just an acceptance of where we all are at.

Here are two more examples from other principals :

> This school is a school that over a long period of time has developed a mentality that's inclusive and so all the students in this school have - know that at school that's what you do - you accept people who are differently able from yourself and if they need a bit of help and a bit of a hand from time to time you give it to them.

> You've got to set the scene for these kids ... What I mean by that is - the children they are with most of the time, have to be actually taught to accommodate and care for these children.

The role of the principal

The proactive role of the principal in establishing and maintaining the inclusive culture of a school is clearly significant. One principal refers to this quite explicitly, describing it as P.R. (public relations) work:

> *(Interviewer) You said it [the role of the principal] was crucial - or something ...*

> Well it is, because all of those things that you've talked about as disadvantages. Parents accept children, their peers accepting them, parents and community accepting and encouraging people with disabilities, and teachers being committed to mainstreaming - will only happen if there's a lot of P.R. work happen and that has to come from the principal. Not necessarily *all* from the principal, but has to be supported by, encouraged by and accepted by the principal. Yeah. And

> we're all different, you know, as principals. We're all different, and we all have different styles - and we're all different people, and we're all seen differently by our - by our parents and kids, and the community, so there's no formula that you pick up on and run with. It's a - you just have to create the acceptances and push the understanding of the - and the tolerance of this, and I would say, it has to be - it would have to be done over a period of time. But you see, if the principal is not actively supportive of the concept, then the principal must be seen as against the concept. You see?
>
> *Mm*
>
> It's like anything. Curriculum initiative, whole language approach, to the teaching of language, that is, you know, integration of written language and reading together, in developmental style. If my assistant principal here suggested at a staff meeting that we needed to look at whole language approach teaching of writing and reading and as principal I sort of went, "Ho hum - yeah, I suppose, but don't forget the three r's", you know, then it wouldn't happen. I mean, an initiative like that has to be clearly seen as, not necessarily promoted by, but certainly supported by the principal and if it isn't, then it is seen as - not agreeing with it. So I think that. And of course, the principal is going to be the person that the questions are asked of. You're here asking me today. Why aren't you asking my *teachers?* Why aren't you asking my parents? And the children. Because you understand that principals have a clear role in it. And a parent is going to ask me. You know, so the [principal is the] stamp of approval really and the support of it from the top. It's got to be understood - it's got to clearly be understood and agreed and, philosophically, principals must be behind mainstreaming.

The proactive discourse explores ways teachers and schools can change so they can effectively include students with disabilities or special needs. It rests in a belief that students with special needs have a right to attend their local school and that therefore the challenge lies in adapting schools to cater for individual difference, rather than in further developing and refining a separate special education sytem. Much literature on schools and how to change them today emphasises the pivotal importance of the culture of a school and the impact of the principal on that culture. The proactive discourse addresses this. Evidence of a proactive discourse amongst school principals is an indicator that some schools are attempting to address the challenge of truly including atypical students in our community schools.

Summary

Two further discourses emerged from the analysis of the data in this study - the critical discourse and the proactive discourse.

The critical discourse involves a critiquing of our current education system. People speaking from this discourse make statements that indicate they perceive the school system has a deficit, rather than students with special needs, in that the speakers perceive regular schools are failing to meet all children's needs. This is an important difference from the pro status quo discourse, which may *acknowledge* that regular schools cannot meet all needs, but use this point to argue that therefore atypical students should be catered for elsewhere. Speakers from a pro status quo discourse do not expect regular schools to be able to meet special needs because they perceive the students with disabilities as having the deficit. It is seen as the students' problem because they cannot adapt to the current school system. Proponents of the pro status quo discourse believe the dual system solves this dilemma, by providing separate, alternative education for those students who do not fit in. The critical discourse, on the other hand, critiques the current system. It acknowledges the historical legacy of the dual system is that schools with very large and growing special units do not have a typically representative population of students with disabilities. These large groups of students with special needs tend to form a separate identity in the school which works against inclusion. The critical discourse further recognises that creative alternative pedagogic strategies are restricted by the traditional regular school system.

However, the critical discourse is not a discourse that moves into making new and creative suggestions for change. It is critically aware but largely reactive. It is an improvement on the pro status quo discourse for the purposes of increased mainstreaming mainly in that it sees the deficit as lying with our school system, rather than as lying within students with disabilities. Therefore it implicitly charges schools with the responsibility of changing, rather than students.

The proactive discourse, on the other hand, moves on to explicitly promote change in schools. Acknowledging the critical discourse on the limitations of the status quo, it moves on to make constructive suggestions for alternative ways of being. The proactive discourse therefore largely centres on the importance of professional development for teachers and on changing schools' systems of organisation. Those employing a proactive discourse do not pose as a solution segregated programmes for students with disabilities, and this indicates that the proactive discourse rests in a rights perspective or discourse of disability. The right of all children in the neighbourhood to be included in regular class programmes in regular schools is seen as foremost. To this end, developing an inclusive culture is a notion reflected in proactive discourse. The role of the principal in building this kind of culture is significant.

Seven discourses have been described and illustrated in this section of the report. The next chapter will discuss the significance of these discourses in relation to each other, and in relation to how they have been variously employed by the different speakers in this study. Conclusions will be drawn about the significance of the findings of this study for the mainstreaming or inclusion of students with special needs in our regular schools.

PART FOUR

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Chapter Eleven

Discussion and Conclusion

> The reasonable adapt themselves to the world; the unreasonable persist in trying to adapt the world to themselves. Therefore all progress depends on those who are unreasonable (Adapted from George Bernard Shaw. Cited in The Third World Almanac (1994). Oxford: New Internationalist).

Introduction

Varius discourses evident in the mainstreaming debate have been described and illustrated in the previous chapters. Some of these discourses recommend that educators endeavour to adapt children with special needs to fit our current regular education system, or, failing that, place these children in alternative settings. Other discourses recommend that educators adapt the system so that it is inclusive of children with special needs. This chapter discusses the results of this study in the light of the significance of these different discourses.

Discussion

The discourses

Discourse analysis of the accounts of the school principals interviewed for this study revealed examples of the four discourses which Fulcher identified as common when people are speaking about disability; the medical, charity, lay and rights discourses. Examples of statements made from a discourse that supported the status quo of our dual education sytem, the pro status quo discourse were also described. Further, two more (previously unidentified) discourses were identified and named: the critical discourse and the proactive discourse.

Each of these seven discourses tends to fall into one of two main categories. The first category essentially argues that the student with the disability is the source of the problem, that students with special needs must be adapted, developed, adjusted and undergo special training so they can fit - without disrupting - our bureaucratic school structures, and that therefore those students who cannot learn to fit should be catered for separately. The second category contains discourses which essentially argue that the problem lies with schools. Schools must be adapted, developed and adjusted and undergo special training so that they can include all neighbourhood children, regardless of their differences. Fulcher (1989) has referred to the former as a divisive discourse, and this would include the pro status quo, medical, charity and lay discourses outlined in this study (See Table 2). Divisive discourses place the interests of school organisation and of one group of students, 'typical' students, over the interests of another group of students - those labelled as having special needs. These discourses are in effect denying the equal rights of students with special needs access to our schools and they center on disability. The latter discourse, which recommends changing schools rather than children, is described by Fulcher as an inclusive discourse. In this study, the inclusive discourse included the rights and the proactive discourses. It was discussed in the previous chapter how the seventh discourse, the critical discourse, can be employed as either a divisive or inclusive discourse.

Table 2. The discourses

Divisive Discourses	Inclusive Discourses
Pro status quo	
Medical	Rights
Charity	Proactive
Lay	
Critical	

Patterns within and between the discourses

It has been shown how the participants in this study collectively demonstrated the full range of these discourses. However, it was not made clear how consistently each individual spoke from a particular view. Table 3 conveys this information by showing how often each participant was cited as referring to a particular discourse, and examination of this table draws attention to important aspects of the mainstreaming debate.

It can be seen, looking at the ratio column, that the speakers tended to speak more from one category than another, from either a divisive or inclusive discourse. Further, some discourses appear to be largely exclusive of other discourses. This is important because it indicates that some discourses are incompatible with other discourses while others are compatible and mutually supportive. For example, speakers with the highest number of references to a medical discourse (Principals 5 & 7) have made no references to a rights discourse. This suggests that the medical discourse, one identified by Fulcher (1989, p.26) as very commonly used by professionals, is one which is largely exclusive of consideration of rights and equity.

Further reference to the table shows that the four speakers with the highest number of citations from a medical discourse are the same four with the highest number of citations from a pro status quo discourse (Principals 7, 5, 1 and 8). This reinforces the suggestion that the medical and the pro status quo discourses are very closely related and this in turn reflects the discussion in the literature that the current education system, our status quo, is closely linked to a medical conception of disability.

On the other hand, those principals cited as speaking often from a rights discourse (Principals 2 and 4) made no reference to either the pro status quo or medical discourses. The people in this study, speaking primarily from a rights discourse, appeared to reject a pathological conception of disability and also to critique the status quo of our education system. The two main discourses, then, the

Table 3

Discourse Distribution
Number of times participants cited as drawing on a particular discourse.

	Pro Status Quo	Medical	Lay	Charity	Critical	Rights	Pro-active	Ratio of Divisive: Inclusive Discourse (excluding critical discourse)
Primary Principals								
1.	9	3	-	1	-	-	2	13:2
2.	-	-	-	-	5	10	1	0:11
3.	1	1	-	1	0	4	4	3:8
4.	-	-	-	-	4	6	3	0:9
5.	13	4	-	2	1	-	-	19:0
Secondary Principals								
6.	4	1	-	1	-	-	1	6:1
7.	14	7	1	-	2	-	2	22:2
8.	7	3	-	6	3	-	5	16:5
9.	5	2	-	2	6	3	5	9:8
	Divisive Discourses					Inclusive Discourses		

divisive and the inclusive, with some exceptions, appear to be mutually exclusive.

Explaining an exception

One principal who does not fall quite so clearly into either the divisive or inclusive 'category', and with whom different categories do not appear to be mutually exclusive, was Principal 9, whose ratio of divisive to inclusive statements is 9:8, and who shows evidence of referring to both the rights view of disability *as well as* to pathological views of disability, and to the proactive discourse*as well as* to the pro status quo discourse. These kinds of inconsistencies are not unusual in studies of discourse. People do tend to switch discourses to support the argument they are making at a particular point in time (Lee, 1992, p.51).

Why this conflict appears to be more evident for Principal 9 than for most of the others in this study, may lie firstly in the fact that this principal is from a secondary school, and secondly, in the fact that he showed a strong awareness of equity issues in general. Secondary schools have much more stringent timetabling and organisational structures which, it can be argued, make it more difficult to reconcile or implement a philosophy inclusive of atypical students. The discourse of Principal 9 also revealed an evident awareness and concern with wider equity issues, such as the rights of students from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. This principal appeared in his discourse to be struggling with reconciling the divisive and inclusive discourses in an effort to simultaneously meet the equal rights of students with special needs and at the same time to find ways to 'fit' them into the current school structures. Other principals, such as Principals 1, 5 and 7 showed little signs of such a struggle, often not referring to equal rights at all as an issue in the debate.

One primary school principal who did have a closer ratio of divisive: inclusive discourse references (Principal 3) similar to Principal 9 also had a similar strongly voiced concern about equity issues in education, and appeared to be similarly struggling with reconciling these concerns with his/her support of some aspects of the status quo, the medically based school system. It appears, then, that principals who take an equity stance on other issues such as racism and sexism, either fall firmly into the inclusive side of the mainstreaming debate, or show strong signs of conflict and struggle in order to reconcile the contrasting stances of the inclusive and exclusive discourses. It also may be that it is more difficult to reconcile this debate if you are a secondary school principal. In this sample, primary principals seemed to fall more easily into one category or the other. Perhaps Principal 9 would have had less evidence of conflict and a discourse more dominated by inclusive views, a more exclusively proactive discourse, if s/he was managing a primary school, which has more flexibility, or to use Skrtic's word, more 'adhocratic' potential (Skrtic, 1991a), where equitable beliefs could be implemented with fewer organisational barriers.

The importance of identifying discourses in the mainstreaming debate

Fulcher has argued that the medical professional discourses must be identified and decoded for the "moral retreat and political discourses" that they are, and, furthermore, that we must institute a new discourse on pedagogy and teaching to take their place (Fulcher, 1989, p.277). Both actions have been undertaken in this study. It is essential to identify and decode discourses which have divisive outcomes for many of our community's children. It is also essential to identify and build on discourses which have the potential to create positive alternatives to separate educational systems, proactive discourses.

Proactive, inclusive discourses which emphasise pedagogical concerns rather than disability are becoming more common. They are evident in pedagogical techniques promoting inclusion that are being developed and slowly implemented in schools. They include collaborative consultative models of teacher support (Porter, 1991a), cooperative learning approaches (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), multi-level instruction strategies (Collicot, 1991); teacher problem solving teams (Porter, 1991b) and 'circle of friends' strategies for peer inclusion (Forest & Pearpoint, 1992). They also include alternative planning techniques such as 'MAPS' (Forest & Lusthaus, 1989), and PATH (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope) (Forest & Pearpoint, 1993). Principals in this study, speaking from a proactive discourse, referred to the need to create different organisational responses to mainstreaming, including making 'special' resources available to all students in a school, and creating more flexible ways of organising class programmes, and perhaps most importantly, they referred to developing a school culture of acceptance and inclusion in their role as school principals.

Reading through the proactive comments of principals in this study it becomes clear that effective responses to the challenge of including students with special needs in our schools lie in this discourse, which proposes more flexible, more adaptable schools. It has been previously noted that discourse of school principals, in particular, is a powerful tool for administrative influence (Gronn, 1983). Ultimately, ensuring our educational practices will be effective in facing the challenges of the future, including the challenge of including students with special needs may require discourse which recommends eliminating the traditional classroom itself (Skrtic, 1991a, p.202; Meighan, 1988; Husen, 1985). It is not within the scope of this study to explore this proposal but it is useful to point out that Skrtic has stated that the values orientation of the mainstreaming movement will be the value orientation of the future, the one necessary to deconstruct the values and systems of the twentieth century and to reconstruct those of the twenty first century (Skrtic, 1991a, p.203). The relevance of the mainstreaming debate to all educational debate is therefore clear. In fact, the challenge of including students with disabilities in our schools can be seen as a catalyst with potential to totally revolutionize our education system.

Conclusion

Fulcher (1989, p.278) argues that the answer to confronting divisive accounts about mainstreaming lies in critical, reflective dialogue, and recommends teaching professionals about the nature of politics and its discourses. Hopefully, this is what this study may achieve for its readers. Fulcher acknowledges that teaching politics is a very controversial proposal, especially given the New Right pressure to make education focus on producing a better labour force - which presumably would mean an unquestioning acceptance of labour arrangements of the status quo. However, critical awareness and dialogue about these issues will be essential as educators face the challenges of educating children for an unknown future.

This study has made an important contribution in applying Fulcher's identified discourses to the discourse of significant power holders, school principals, in the New Zealand setting. Fulcher's identification of the medical, charity, lay and rights discourses has been invaluable in providing educators with a tool to analyse their own and other's rationales in the mainstreaming debate, to trace their language and reasoning back to their grounding values, and to look at those grounding values with a critical awareness. This study further identified and illustrated three more discourses: the pro status quo discourse, the critical discourse and the proactive discourse. The identification of these has increased the potential for critical analysis of the mainstreaming debate in three main ways.

Firstly, debaters are now made more aware that they may be unwittingly drawing on a pro status quo discourse which simply is reflecting how things always appear to have been, and how they always should be. The naming and acknowledgement of this discourse might alert some educators to think their views through further.

Secondly, the naming of the critical discourse is significant in that it has been important to point out that it is an improvement on the pro status quo discourse and the 'disability as pathology' discourses. Those drawing on this discourse need to be acknowledged for recognising that they are not perceiving students with disabilities as the problem, as with the pro status quo and 'disability as pathology' discourses. The shift in perspective that has ocurred when people are employing the critical discourse means that at least our schools and our society are being recognised as the problem, (and therefore the solution), not disability itself.

Thirdly, the identification of the proactive discourse alerts educators to recognise and value the discourse of change agents, and shows them ways to become change agents themselves. Speaking from a rights perspective alone is not enough to achieve inclusion if it does not lead on to the proactive discourse of recommending alternative educational practices to achieve equity.

The challenge of educating students with special needs has been achieved, up until recently, largely by discourse which labelled atypical students and ultimately segregated them into different programmes. This discourse and practice was based on prevalent basic assumptions about the nature of disability and the nature of schooling, as well as the nature of organisational practices. These assumptions need to be challenged, and alternative paradigms explored and instituted, in order to create better schools - better schools for everybody.

Recommendations for action emerging from this study

It is significant that when describing a process necessary to prepare administrators for developing fully inclusive schools, Servatius, Fellows and Kelly name the first step as: "helping candidates to clarify their own beliefs" (Servatius, Fellows and Kelly, 1992, p.271). The next two steps of the six they name are: "to encourage critical self reflection", and "to provide opportunities for exploring alternative perspectives" (p.271) (i).

This study clearly addresses the first three steps Servatius, Fellows and Kelly have proposed, by describing and illustrating a critical tool administrators and other educators can employ to clarify their beliefs in regard to the mainstreaming or inclusion of students with disabilities in regular schools. The application of the seven discourses illustrated and identified in this study is also likely to lead towards the achievement of the second and third steps proposed for training of administrators by Servatius et al (1992) critical self reflection, and the exploration of alternative views. The proactive discourse is particularly useful for the latter step because it provides a model, a way of viewing and conceptualising mainstreaming issues that has the potential to inform and inspire school principals to develop alternative, inclusive ways of thinking, speaking and acting.

It is recommended that this study is used primarily in these three ways.

Suggestions for further research

Application of the seven discourse categories discussed in this study to the discourse of people other than principals involved in mainstreaming would be beneficial. The investigation of the discourses of stake holders such as classroom teachers, special educators and people with disabilities could be illuminating. It may also be informative to explore contrasting patterns in the ways different groups talk about and perceive the issues, such as the views teacher union groups hold compared with those of advocate groups specifically for people with disabilities.

Further investigation could be undertaken of the ideological nature of this debate, something only touched on in this study. Also, Skrtic's notion (Skrtic, 1991a) of adhocracy could be explored in more depth and applied to administrators' discourse on mainstreaming.

Part of any strategy for change is to challenge old paradigms and to critique current approaches. This is an important recommendation for future research. An equally essential part of any strategy for change is to create new visions, new ways of doing things. Research which identifies and explores discourse which contributes to and actively builds these new visions is imperative. The future research I would recommend most strongly, then, would be research which further explores and illustrates the 'proactive discourse', the discourse which builds new ways, new styles of school leadership to create inclusive schools and, ultimately, inclusive communities.

Footnote i. The final three steps these writers recommend (Servatius, Fellows & Kelly. 1992) are: field experiences in schools; providing practice in facilitating intragroup communication; and, ensuring the development of meaningful class activities.

Reflections
- an epilogue

I had the idea for this thesis during a vacation course lecture at Massey University where we were being presented with examples of different kinds of research methods. Discourse analysis was being described, and Judith Simon's study on ideology in the schooling of Māori children was being used as an illustration. One of the teachers participating in Simon's study was cited:

> I treat children as equals. I don't look upon them as being different because of their ethnic origin ... children are children - Rosemount (Simon, 1986, p.30)

The failure of this teacher to take cultural factors into account by treating 'everyone the same', was described in this study as monocultural and ultimately ideological, egalitarian, and maintaining the advantaged status of the Pakeha and the disadvantaged status of the Maori.

I saw connections immediately with discourse in the current debate on the mainstreaming of students with disabilities in regular schools. I was very familiar with this debate through my eight year involvement in special education teacher training and before that as an advisor supervising mainstreaming through many parts of New Zealand. I felt that when people argued that mainstreaming *could not go ahead without* more and more resources there appeared to be a similar ideological base to that in the Maori education debate; the rights of the privileged were being protected and defended by arguments which stressed a deficit perspective of other students, in this case, students with special needs or disabilities.

The main problem with carrying out a study in this area hit me simultaneously. How could I undertake a study which is likely to be critical of many of the participants? I had to acknowledge my own perspective. I was biased. Clearly so. I was, and still am, committed to all children having equal entry to their neighbourhood school. I feel uncomfortable with conflict, and I felt uncomfortable, too, at the thought of critiquing the views of people who would be generously giving their time to contribute to my study. The ethical issues were evident. I discussed this problem at length with my supervisors, my colleagues, with Judith Simon and even with some of the principals themselves in the study after their interviews. The methodology section of this thesis describes the ways in which I ultimately dealt with this issue.

What is interesting from a reflective point of view, here, however, is, "What did *I* learn? Did *I* change?" My supervisor asked me this recently, eyeing me with curiosity. He knew I had entered the study with strong opinions. I had to answer, "Yes ... something has shifted. No, I haven't changed my stance or my values. I am still firmly on the inclusive side of the discourses on mainstreaming. The difference is that I now feel more *understanding* and *regard for* where others are coming from."

I actually enjoyed the interviews with the principals very much. This surprised me at the time because I had felt very apprehensive - as previously mentioned - about tackling such stake holders as school principals on such a controversial topic, particularly at a time when they appeared to be under a lot of pressure as a result of current educational changes. However, at every school I was warmly welcomed and generously given time and attention. At every interview I felt I was in the company of a very professional person who thought carefully about educational decisions and endeavoured to make them with integrity. I began to respect more strongly the fact that people think their beliefs and decisions through with reference to their own value and belief systems. They make moral decisions in their own contexts. This is not saying that every view, therefore, is valid: a kind of liberal pluralistic acceptance of all. The moral issues must be dialogued. My supervisor expressed my 'new' perspective well, suggesting, "You seem to have developed a 'critical distance' from the issues".

The most important purpose of this study was essentially to encourage educators, including myself, to develop a critical distance, to critique their own value systems, to consider alternative ways to structure the issues, to consider and develop alternative premises, alternative value bases, and most importantly of all, to consider and understand the wider systems and institutions lying behind what we had each named our 'personal' beliefs. Open, exploring, critical but non-judgemental, and self reflective discourse is more essential than ever today in education as we face the unknowns of the future.

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Appendix

Initial letter to participants

Dear

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed for the research I am doing this year on school principals' views on mainstreaming. I know how very busy principals, in particular, seem to be these days and I do appreciate the time you are giving.

As I explained on the telephone my purpose in this study is to interview a range of principals from primary and secondary schools to explore the different positions people hold on this issue. I will analyse the transcripts using a technique called discourse analysis and attempt to draw conclusions on implications for mainstreaming. The usual research ethics of full confidentiality and protection of the identity of all participants is assured - I am aware these issues can be sensitive and controversial. I will write to you all towards the end of the year to keep you informed on how the study is progressing, and when it is completed (early 1994) I will make sure you all have access to the final report if you are interested. The study will be published as a thesis for my Masters Degree in Educational Administration at Massey University. (I also may be taking a workshop on this study at the New Zealand Education Administration Society Conference in Auckland next January).

I am attaching some examples of the kinds of questions I will be asking in the interview in case you want to think about them before I come. Looking forward to seeing you on at .

Yours sincerely,

Jan Thorburn
Senior Lecturer, Special Education
Auckland College of Education