

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A divine person is the prophecy of the mind; a friend
is the hope of the heart.

... Ralph Waldo Emerson

Friendship development is an important social developmental task. This study was conducted to explore the ecological context of friendship development of a target child in an inclusive classroom. The topic was investigated from multiple perspectives - the observer, the children, the teacher, and the parents.

Inclusion means that all children have access to and participate in their natural community. In the field of education, this means that disabled children attend the same schools and classrooms that their non-disabled peers attend (Caldwell, Lisowski, Snyder, Werts, & Wolery, 1995; York & Tundidor, 1995). Public Law 94-142 (1975) which was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, mandated that disabled children be educated in the least restrictive environment. PL94-142 set the federal guidelines for special education services and outlined the principles for special education practice (Friend, 1996, p.8). The six main provisions of the law were: free appropriate public education, least restrictive environment, individualized education, nondiscriminatory evaluation, due process, and zero reject/child find (Friend, 1996).

Among the scholarly literature on inclusion, three main issues are apparent. First, there are several ways to implement inclusion, with some yielding more positive outcomes than others. Second, inclusion may require that additional resources be provided for teachers. Third, implementation of inclusion requires systematic changes in school operations and educators' role definitions (Caldwell et al., 1995). Teachers' actions can be influenced by the issues surrounding inclusive education. This study explored the three issues mentioned above in relation to the teacher's role in friendship development within the classroom.

The first two issues (implementation strategies and resources) appeared to be connected and were combined for easier explanation. The resources to which teachers have access can influence teaching strategies. Research by Caldwell et al. (1995) indicated that teachers, administrators, parents, and resources all affect the implementation of inclusive practices. Teachers may require more or different resources in order to foster children's relationships appropriately in an inclusive environment. Caldwell and associates found that teachers requested additional training, materials (bathroom facilities, space), extra support staff, personal support (from families and the administration) and meeting times with all persons involved with the included child (1995). The biggest deficit between what

teachers needed and what they had was in the area of training. In the study conducted by Caldwell et al., 94% of the teachers reported that they needed in-service training at the beginning of the year. Only 27.6% of the teachers reported that they were receiving the desired training. Further, Caldwell and associates found that teachers who perceive that they are lacking in support and resources view their experiences with inclusion as unsuccessful. However, it is not known whether a causal relationship exists. The present study did not compare models but sought information on the functionality of one model of inclusion in terms of friendship development.

This study examined the supports and resources that were available to one teacher and the affect that they had on her role in the development of social relationships among her students. This included the perceived connection between the availability/unavailability of resources and the classroom environment provided by that teacher. Questions that addressed this issue were: Did the availability of resources encourage the teacher to create an inclusive social environment? What effect could this have had on the social relationships, especially friendship, in that classroom?

A final purpose of this study was to address the systematic changes required for inclusion to be implemented in such a way as to support friendship development among children. Specifically, school operations and roles of educators was of interest. It seems plausible to suggest that a change in either or both of these items, could affect the outcomes of the educational experience for the children and/or the teacher.

Theoretical Orientation

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System's Theory of Human Development (1979) provides a framework with which to examine changes in schools when inclusion is implemented. The basic premise of ecological theory is that behavior evolves as a function of the interplay between the person and the environment in which the child is seen as an active participant in lifelong development. This interplay must occur on a fairly regular basis and it must be enduring. Ecological theory also assumes that the environment is not a single setting but a combination of settings and the interactions between them. Bronfenbrenner stated that this process involves five overlapping ecological contexts: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. The microsystem includes the activities, roles and relations that a person experiences in a given setting. This is usually seen as the most proximal system and directly involves the person. Two examples would be school and peers. The mesosystem involves the interrelations between two or more systems in which the person is actively involved. This system could include the relationship between students and peers and/or students and teachers. The exosystem is a system in which the developing person is not actively involved but which affects the person in some way. One example for a child would be the parent's workplace. If a child's

parent has a bad day at work, then his/her interactions with the child, might be affected. Therefore, the workplace (exosystem) affects the child, even though the child may not interact directly with the individuals that make up that system. The macrosystem includes the belief systems and values that are important to a certain culture. The macrosystem is compared to a blueprint of the ecological environment (Miller, 1993). At the national level, commonly held beliefs about inclusion could influence teachers' views of inclusion. For example, if schools in Virginia were not wheelchair accessible, teachers might perceive this to mean that educating children with disabilities was not important. These feelings could, in turn, affect the teacher's relationship with students with disabilities. Finally, in Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, the chronosystem refers to patterns of change over time in a person's life. Examples of this would include the transition from preschool to elementary school and the birth of a sibling. For a diagram of all five of the ecological contexts, see Appendix A.

In the next chapter, it will become evident that the research on the ecological context of inclusion is mixed. Teachers who are more aware of the research that fails to provide support for inclusion might not be as comfortable teaching in an inclusive setting. What practices would evolve within the ecology of the classroom? How would this information influence the teacher's role in dealing with peer interactions?

In a school system, one of the crucial components is that of functional roles. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that a role is a set of activities and relations that are expected of a person in a certain position in society. In an inclusive school setting, the roles might have to be altered somewhat from those that were normally expected. Both teachers and students act in several different roles. For example, teachers can be viewed as encompassing the role of educator, caretaker, counselor, parent-figure, and nurse.

Students in any classroom operate in various social roles including: leader, instigator, teacher's pet, and friend. One of the key components of the classroom's social environment is the degree to which friendships are developed and supported. Bergen (1993) states that "For any child to have a sense of growth and genuine self-esteem, there has to be at least one truly caring, accepting friend". One study (Kozleski & Jackson, 1993) has indicated that for parents of disabled children, the development of enduring relationships by their child represents an educational priority. To these parents, it is just as important for their children to have friends as it is for them to acquire basic academic skills (Kozleski & Jackson, 1993).

One educational goal for the child with disabilities might include a positive self-identity that includes the impairment. Since friends are known to contribute to identity development, it seems pertinent to include friendship development as a goal of

inclusive education settings. The goal of inclusion is to create a supportive environment for all people while accommodating diverse individual differences in physical and psychological characteristics (Stainback, Stainback, East, & Sapon-Shevin, 1994). In an inclusive classroom, the teacher may need to take on a more active role in encouraging friendships in order to achieve the overall goals of inclusive education.

Bergen (1993) stated that friendships usually develop between peers who have similar traits. Friendship development might be compromised for students with visible atypical features. It can be more difficult for children with disabilities to recognize similarities in internal traits, such as common needs and interests, that they share with students who are not disabled (Bergen, 1993). Conversely, non-disabled students might not be able to recognize the commonalities they share with students who have a disability. The classroom climate that the teacher establishes and the experiences that the teacher initiates (e.g., cooperative learning) can assist children in establishing new friendships (Bergen, 1993). As Bronfenbrenner hypothesized, the placement of a person in a role evokes certain patterns of interpersonal relations consistent with those associated with the role (1979). In other words, if the students observe the teacher taking the role of "friend" to the disabled student, then they might be more likely to initiate contact with the disabled student. A part of this study involved assessing the teacher's behavior and attitudes as they co-occurred with the social behaviors of children in the classroom. Specifically, a target child and her identified best friend were studied in depth.

The environment is a key determinant factor in the quality of any educational setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that the physical and social aspects of a setting motivate the developing person to engage in increasingly more complex activities, patterns of interaction and primary dyadic relationships with persons in the setting. Teachers structure and maintain the learning environments using a variety of strategies. Some teachers use lectures to disperse knowledge, while others prefer more active experiences such as cooperative learning activities. In any classroom, there can be a large difference between the outcomes of these two methods. The classroom ecology serves as a context which facilitates or inhibits relationships between disabled and non-disabled peers. The crucial role of the environment was demonstrated in a study by York and Tundidor (1995). When parents were asked to identify facilitators of inclusion, one item mentioned was an instructional design that accommodated diversity, such as cooperative learning and whole language activities. These activities serve as a context for peer interactions which are essential for friendship development.

The teacher's expectations also influence the ecological context. General education classroom teachers have been found to have higher expectations for special needs students than special education teachers in self-contained classrooms (Kozleski &

Jackson, 1993). This finding has implications for the social ecology of the classroom. Kozleski and Jackson found that elevated expectations by a teacher lessened the amount of self-stimulation observed from a special needs child in that classroom (1993). By decreasing the amount of self-stimulation, teachers could increase the child's participation in class activities. When children with impairments are able to participate fully in the classroom, they are more easily assimilated into the peer culture with regular education students. It seems plausible to suggest that the expectations of the teacher can affect the interpersonal relations between the disabled and non-disabled children.

This research focused on the teacher's role in the development of social relationships in an inclusive classroom and how that role was defined and translated into practice. Documentation is provided on the interactions between the teacher and the students and the views of the teacher and the children. Peer interactions and student/teacher interactions were analyzed. The primary questions that this study explored were:

1. What are the perceptions of the teacher in relationship to the following issues: supports and resources, the ecological context of the classroom, and activities which support the development of friendships?
2. What are the perceptions of the children in the inclusive classroom in relation to friendship?
3. What are the perceptions of the building principal in relationship to the following issues: supports and resources, friendships, and the social environment of the school?
4. What do the researcher's observations suggest about the ecological context of the classroom and the friendships that are formed within that context?

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study focused on contextual components of friendship development in an inclusive primary grade classroom. Perceptions of the teacher, students, principal, and the researcher provided data for the study. In order to provide guidance for the research questions, the methodology and interpretation of results, a review of literature related to the topics of interest was conducted. The topics reviewed included: (a) inclusive education for children with special needs, and (b) developmental patterns in friendships among young school-age children.

To provide background for this study, the following searches were performed: ERIC Searches using the terms: zero-reject policy, principle of normalization, partial participation, inclusion, full inclusion, least restrictive environment, friendship, and special education. PsychLIT searches were conducted by limiting the searches to the articles that were located in the following respected journals: Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, Exceptional Children, Young Children, Journal of Special Education, American Educational Research Journal, Journal of Educational Psychology and Exceptionality: A Research Journal. Articles were selected for inclusion in this review, based on the following criteria: discussion of friendships between children with and without disabilities, information on resources and supports for teachers, and research based data on the benefits and concerns of inclusion. The final number of articles that met the criteria was small, underscoring the need for research in this area.

Research on Inclusion

Practitioners and policy makers who are searching for research data to guide practice and decisions on inclusion are discovering vast numbers of articles on the topic. However, very few of the articles are empirically based. Siegel (1996) discovered that, even though a search of PsychInfo identified over 600 citations on inclusion or mainstreaming, only a fraction of them were from peer-reviewed journals or were empirical studies. Most of the articles about inclusion were either position statements, policy reports or speculations. To date, only one group of researchers has reported longitudinal data on inclusion (Siegel, 1996).

In the field of education, pedagogical practice undergoes continuous examination and reconstruction, particularly in the area of special education. During the past 25 years, children with disabilities have been at times completely isolated in self-contained classrooms and at other times mainstreamed into regular education classes (Yell, 1995). Although, some people use the words "mainstreaming" and "inclusion" interchangeably, they are different terms. Mainstreaming is defined as "the placement of students with disabilities in general education settings only when

they can meet traditional academic expectations with minimal assistance, or when those expectations are not relevant" (Friend, 1996, p.3). Two examples include participating in recess and school assemblies. Mainstreamed children may or may not be receiving the supports necessary to meet their unique needs (Filler, 1996).

Currently there is no universally accepted definition of inclusion, but Odom, Peck, Hanson, Beckman, Kaiser, Lieber, Brown, Horn, and Schwartz (1996) have developed the following multi-faceted working definition:

First, inclusion is the active participation of young children with disabilities and typically developing children in the same classroom (e.g., in Head Start, public preschool, and private child care programs) and community settings. Second, services should be provided that support the child in accomplishing the goals established for him or her by the parents and a team of professionals. Third, these services are usually provided through the collaboration of professionals from different disciplines (e.g., early childhood education teachers, special education teachers, speech pathologists). Fourth, the effect of the inclusion program on children with disabilities is evaluated to determine if the child with disabilities is making progress toward goals established by parents, teachers, and other professionals. (Odom et al., 1996, p.18)

In the field of education, Odom et al.'s definition of inclusion is generally interpreted as implying that disabled children should attend the same schools and classrooms as do their non-disabled peers (Caldwell et al., 1995; York & Tundidor, 1995).

The rationale for inclusive education is multi-faceted and generally falls into three areas: (a) social justice, (b) the promotion of community, and (c) the questionable efficacy of current techniques. The manner in which these arguments influence behaviors of administrators and teachers varies greatly by both educational context and training of school personnel.

The first information that pre-service teachers receive about inclusion is typically about the laws and how they are to be followed. A major component of both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)(1990) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, is the principle of the least restrictive environment (Yell, 1995). Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination in settings that receive federal funds, including public schools (Friend, 1996, p.7). The least restrictive environment (LRE) mandate requires that "students with disabilities be provided with a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive

environment." It goes on to explain that "children with disabilities are to be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are not disabled" (Yell, 1995). From this policy comes the practice that children with disabilities cannot be removed from the regular classroom unless the severity of their disabilities prevents them from being educated, with assistance, in that classroom (Yell, 1995).

The least restrictive environment mandate has been challenged in several court cases. In 1991, the case of Greer vs. Rome City School District was presented in a circuit court. This case was based on the fact that the school system had removed Christy Greer from a regular education classroom because they felt that they could not educate her in that setting. The family challenged the decision and won the case. The court ruled against the school system for three reasons: 1. the school failed to consider services and aids that Christy could have received; 2. modifications of the curriculum were not considered; 3. the school had developed Christy's IEP prior to the IEP meeting (Yell, 1995). This case is important because it sets up some standards that school systems must meet when they are including children in a regular education classroom. School systems must make accommodations for students with disabilities and provide them with necessary services. The student's inability to fit the "normal" expectations is not reason enough to remove them from a regular education setting according to the legal interpretations.

As previously mentioned, there is also philosophical support for inclusive education. This can be found in the zero reject policy (Wolfensburger, 1972), the principle of normalization, and the idea of partial participation (Baumgart et al., 1982). All three of these concepts hold that people with disabilities should be allowed to participate in the same activities and environments as their peers, even if they cannot demonstrate all of the same skills (Wisniewski & Alper, 1994). Further, these philosophies hold that children with disabilities have a right to be educated in heterogeneous settings (Yell, 1995) and that they do not have to prove that they are worthy of admittance. It is reflected in this statement by Meyer (1994): "Readiness is not something that children must be - it is something that our schools must do."

Concerns about Inclusive Education

In most discussions about inclusion, a central argument against inclusive education is that teachers are not prepared to work with students with disabilities (Sharpe, York, & Knight, 1994). Many teachers feel that they are not qualified to work with disabled individuals and they don't think that the training that they need is available (Caldwell et al., 1995). In other instances, teachers who have had negative experiences with students with disabilities are unwilling or reluctant to work in an inclusive setting. Caldwell et al. found that teachers who had experienced negative situations, reported a higher discrepancy between the number and type of resources they needed to participate in inclusion and the availability of those resources.

In fact, the discrepancy was five times higher than the responding teachers who had experienced positive situations with disabled individuals. Obviously, successful inclusive education requires provision of resources needed by teachers.

Children's Friendships

Friendship formation and maintenance is a central developmental experience in children's lives from age three through adolescence (Rubin, 1980). Rubin (1980) defines friendship as a nonfamilial relationship which can foster a sense of identity and belonging. Friendships are very important because "children who have friends are more socially competent and less troubled than children who do not; they are more sociable, cooperative, altruistic, self-confident, and less lonely" (Hartup, 1996, p. 4). Six functions of friendship have been described in the literature. They include: companionship, stimulation, physical support, ego support, social comparison and intimacy/affection (Santrock, 1996). These functions remain the same as the children grow older even though there are developmental changes in friendship patterns.

Robert Selman proposed a developmental model of changes in friendship. He identified five stages within the model (Selman, 1980). The first stage is known as momentary friendship and is seen in children 3 - 7 years of age. During this time, a friend is valued because of nice toys and proximity. Children between 4 - 9 years of age, are thought to be in the second stage, known as one-way assistance. At this point in time, friends are valued because they do what is wanted of them. Selman's third stage is known as two-way fair weather assistance. Children between 6 - 12 years of age, are included in this level. Friends at this level are involved in a two-way relationship that is stable during good times. These friendships usually are unable to withstand problems. This is followed by intimate, mutually shared relationships. Selman believed that this type of friendship, could be present in children between the ages of 9 and 15 years. The fifth, and final, stage of Selman's model, focuses on autonomous and interdependent friendships. Selman stated that this type of friendship was typically present after age 12.

As children move through Selman's stages of friendship, the strategies that they use to form friendships also change. Children who view friendship as a momentary encounter, form the friendships by playing with other children (Rubin, 1980). Older children, see friendship as a more lasting relationship. These friendships are formed gradually. "It just grows on you. You find out that you can talk to someone, you can tell them your problems, when you understand each other" (Rubin, 1980, p. 40).

Based on Selman's Developmental Model, children's friendships grow and change throughout childhood and adolescence. However, as these changes are taking place, the literature states that certain perceptions that children have, remain quite stable. Vaughn, McIntosh, Schumm, Haager, and Callwood (1993) discovered

that peers' perceptions of classmates were relatively stable. This was especially true when the perceptions were negative. They found that early peer rejection was associated with negative outcomes later on. Hartup (1996) also found this to be true. In one long-term investigation of eleven-year-old children, Hartup found that having both friends and sociometric status predicted future successes and aspirations (1996). Both of these findings highlight the important role of teachers. Since children's perceptions of their peers are stable, the influence of teacher intervention at an early age can have a profound effect. Vaughn et al. (1993) found that one factor that influences peers' perceptions of other children is the perceptions of the teacher. That is, children imitate the teacher's attitude and acceptance/rejection of children.

Predictors of Friendship

Although it is impossible to predict friendships, there is one single predictive principle that is commonly used when studying friendships (Rubin, 1980). Most children are attracted to individuals who are similar to themselves. Similarities include: age, sex, size, intelligence, and physical maturity (Rubin, 1980). Another component of most friendships is complementarity. There must be a "fit" between the two people, so that each person is gaining something from the relationship (Rubin, 1980).

Several studies (Howes & Wu, 1990; Noll, Leroy, Bukowski, Rogosch, & Kulkarni, 1991; Vandell & Hembree, 1994) have examined social status in relation to friendship. Vandell and Hembree (1994) found that social status was not a predictor of friendship. In their study, some neglected and rejected children had friends and some popular children did not have friends. In 1990, Howes and Wu described peer relationships in an ethnically diverse school setting. No connection was found between social status and ethnicity, or between social status and friendship. Children with cross-ethnic friendships were just as popular as those students with fewer cross-ethnic experiences. In 1991, a very similar study (Noll et al.) was conducted with children with cancer, and the results were equivalent to those found by Howes and Wu. There were no significant differences between popularity and mutual friendships of children with and without cancer. All three of these studies seem to support the idea that children who are considered "different" by their peers, can still be viewed as popular and can maintain mutual friendships. These pieces of research are very important and may have implications for understanding friendships between disabled and non-disabled students.

Since friendship formation and maintenance plays a central role in the normal sequence of developmental tasks, it is important to learn how friendships of both disabled and non-disabled children are perceived by children in the inclusive classroom context. The present study was conducted in order to gain information about the perception of friendships held by

children in an inclusive primary grade classroom.

Friendship and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

The primary purpose of this study was to examine friendship patterns of special needs children in an inclusive setting. After the focus child of this study was identified by the inclusion specialist, the researcher learned that this child was labeled as having attention deficit disorder (ADD). Although the focus of this study was not on ADD it seemed pertinent that the researcher be aware of the symptomatology of ADHD. The DSM-IV Training Guide for Childhood Disorders (1996) provides the following diagnostic criteria for identifying children with an attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

Either (1) or (2):

(1) Six (or more) of the following symptoms of inattention have persisted for at least 6 months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with developmental level:

Inattention

- (a) often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, work, or activities
- (b) often has difficulty sustaining attention in tasks or play activities
- (c) often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- (d) often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand instructions)
- (e) often has difficulties organizing tasks and activities
- (f) often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort (such as schoolwork or homework)
- (g) often loses things necessary for tasks or activities (e.g., toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools)
- (h) often easily distracted by extraneous stimuli
- (i) often forgetful in daily activities

(2) Six (or more) of the following symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity have persisted for at least 6 months to a degree that is maladaptive and inconsistent with developmental level:

Hyperactivity

- (a) often fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat
- (b) often leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected
- (c) often runs about or climbs excessively in

- situations in which it is inappropriate (in adolescents or adults, may be limited to subjective feelings of restlessness)
- (d) often has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly
 - (e) often "on the go" or often acts as if "driven by a motor"
 - (f) often talks excessively
- Impulsivity
- (g) often blurts out answers before questions have been completed
 - (h) often has difficulty awaiting turn
 - (i) often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations or games)
- (p.144)

In addition, the onset of symptoms must occur before age 7 and be present in two or more situations. There must also be a significant impairment in social or academic functioning (Rapoport & Ismond, 1996).

To learn more about the current research on ADHD, several research databases were explored. A Psychlit search yielded over 700 citations concerning attention deficit disorder (ADD) and/or attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Within the 700 citations, there were three apparent themes: (1) biological etiology, (2) comorbidity, and (3) behavioral and pharmacological treatment. A search of Child Development abstracts also found these three predominant themes. However, no empirically based data was available on the connection between ADD and friendship even though "As many as 50% of children with attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are estimated to have significant peer relationship difficulties, including a high rate of peer rejection" (Guevremont & Dumas, 1994, p.164).

Guevremont and Dumas (1994) provided empirical data on the connection between disruptive behavior disorders and peer relationship problems (Guevremont & Dumas, 1994). This article focused primarily on the social skills of children with ADHD. Research on the topic has identified four distinct social skill deficit areas: (a) high-rate overt behaviors, (b) deficient communication and reciprocity, (c) biased social-cognitive performance, and (d) poor emotional regulation (Guevremont & Dumas, 1994). In the area of communication and reciprocity, it was found that non-disabled boys tended to be more responsive to communication efforts of a child with ADHD than the child with ADHD was to the communication of non-disabled peers. In fact, the boys with ADHD typically ignored the verbal interactions of their peers. It was also suggested that children with ADHD have difficulty responding to social cues and interpreting social information. This, in turn, could lead to inappropriate social interactions by the children with ADHD (Guevremont & Dumas, 1994).

The suspected effects of ADHD on social interactions has been found to have lasting results in at least two studies. An

eight year follow-up study found "adolescents with ADHD to be rated as less socially competent than their non-disabled peers" (Guevremont & Dumas, 1994, p.166). A second follow-up study found that "approximately 30% of the adolescents with hyperactivity were described by their mothers as having no steady friends" (Guevremont & Dumas, 1994, p.166). Currently, three alternative intervention methods are being considered for use with children with ADHD: (1) setting events, (2) peer involvement, and (3) medication. However, very few empirical attempts have been directed at these strategies (Guevremont & Dumas, 1994).

Selikowitz (1996) provided clinical observations that still needed to be supported with empirical findings. One observation (Selikowitz, 1996) focused on the social clumsiness of children with ADHD. Selikowitz purported that this social deficiency was caused by an "immaturity in the part of the brain responsible for social cognition" (1996). He identified twenty social competence deficits that children with ADD might have: 'social blindness', egocentricity, lack of appropriate inhibition, insatiability, insensitivity to style and convention, over-talkativeness, poor metalinguistic skills, difficulties reading facial expression, aggressive tendencies, lack of judgement, poor understanding of group dynamics, pacing difficulties, misinterpreting feedback, tactlessness, poor social prediction, poor social memory, lack of awareness of image, poor behavior modification strategies, and lack of correction strategies (Selikowitz, 1996, p.48-52). One or more of these social deficits could cause a child to experience rejection by their peers and/or become loners. Treatment options that were identified were: medication, cognitive training, social skills training and environmental changes (Selikowitz, 1996).

The sparse literature on ADD/ADHD and peer interactions indicate that the topic warrants attention of researchers who are interested in social development of children with special needs.

Social and Academic Effects of Inclusion

In 1994, a study was conducted to investigate the impact of inclusive education on the academic performance of students without disabilities (Sharpe, York, & Knight). The four performance measures were: Science Research Associates (SRA) Assessment Survey, reading level, academic performance (grades) and general performance (conduct and effort). After comparing the results from the pre-inclusion group and the inclusion group, no statistical differences were found in the areas of reading, language arts and mathematics. Their results are also consistent with the findings from studies on social effects. For example, in 1994, Staub et al. examined the social relationships between students with disabilities and students without disabilities. The study presented four case studies of students with disabilities. Data were gathered using both interviews and observations. The relationships between each of the four children and their closest friends were explored. The researchers attempted to discover how each friendship was initiated and it's strengths and weaknesses. The study indicated that all four friendships began with

nontutorial activities. However, strategies were employed in the classroom to encourage interaction. In another study on social relationships, Kozleski and Jackson found that the teacher played a critical role in developing the level of social inclusion within the classroom (1993). Apparently, when teachers directly support social inclusion, positive changes can take place in the interactions between children with and without disabilities (Odom et al., 1996).

One strategy employed by teachers to facilitate social integration involves creating a "circle of friends" for the disabled child. This is done by allowing children to volunteer to be in a child's circle and then offering weekly meetings on friendship issues for those students. Staub et al. (1994) pointed out that one interesting feature of friendships between disabled and non-disabled individuals, is that each person brings different needs to the relationship. When needs are complementary, relationships are functional and mutually beneficial.

Another observed effect of inclusion involves attitude change. High school students have reported that their experiences with students with disabilities, lessened their fear of differences and increased their tolerance of others (Peck, Donaldson, & Pezzoli, 1990). One case quoted a student as follows:

I was really scared at first. I didn't know what to expect. Then we went down to Roger's Ice Cream. I saw what they ordered and what they liked which was just like what we would order. They didn't order anything different. It was just like what anyone would eat who was a normal teenager. The same as us.
(p. 245)

The experiences that these high school students had with individuals with impairments, increased their degree of acceptance. The obvious benefits to non-disabled students of increased acceptance, increases the support base for inclusive education.

Statement of the Problem

There seem to be several issues that are addressed in the current research on inclusion. Many articles focus on pros and cons of inclusion and discuss whether or not this practice is deemed effective within a certain school system. Other articles focus on the social and academic effects of inclusive education. However, there is a deficit of information about strategies that facilitate social interactions. In this study, I addressed this issue. The goal was to explore the teacher's role in the development of social relationships in an inclusive classroom and how that role is defined and translated into practice. Moreover, in terms of social development and friendship, the outcomes for disabled and non-disabled children was of interest.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this project was to create a detailed description of the teacher's role and its impact upon the social interactions of children in an inclusive classroom. Of specific interest, were the children's friendships.

This research was conducted primarily by using a qualitative methodology in order to develop detailed descriptions of the interactions that took place within the classroom. Qualitative data was supplemented with quantitative descriptions of peer status, which was obtained using a sociometric scale.

Rationale for Qualitative Methodology

A qualitative methodology was selected for the advantages it offered to this project. "In essence, qualitative research is oriented toward the search for meanings, that is, the interpretations and meanings people give to events, objects, other people, and situations in their environment" (Stainback & Stainback, 1988, p.5). Qualitative methodology (also known as ethnography) was deemed appropriate for this study, because the researcher examined the meanings that teachers gave to the children with disabilities and peer interactions. Also of interest were the meanings that the disabled and non-disabled students attributed to their teacher's actions. Another reason for using qualitative methodology was the theoretical and sociological perspective that underlies it. Phenomenology is an emphasis on "the subjective aspects of people's behavior: the motives and beliefs behind people's actions" (Stainback & Stainback, 1988, p.2). Therefore, the task of a phenomenologist, is to identify the process of interpretation. This study was conducted to examine students' interpretations of friendships. What determines who becomes a friend? What activities can be implemented to foster these friendships, and how are these activities interpreted by the students? These are among the subjective questions that were a part of this study.

Participant Observation

In this study, I acted as a participant observer. The primary method of ethnography is participant observation (Woods, 1986). Participant observers have two main purposes: engaging in appropriate activities and observing people, places and actions (Spradley, 1980). This allowed the researcher to experience the inside and outside (Spradley, 1980) perspective of the activities. Inside and outside perspectives can be more clearly explained through an example. A researcher wanted to conduct a study about the interactions that take place between individuals on a college cheerleading team. In order to be a participant observer in this situation, he became a member of a cheerleading team. This unique position, allowed him to learn the various stunts and cheer at the games (insider view). While doing this, he also studied the other cheerleaders and examined his role as one of them (outsider view).

Acting as participant observer, allows researchers to conduct an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon of interest.

The degree to which participant observers are involved in their research, is a decision that they must make. The five commonly known levels of participation are: nonparticipation, passive participation, moderate participation, active participation and complete participation (Spradley, 1980). In this study, I acted on a moderate level of participation. This level allowed the researcher to maintain a balance between "being an insider and an outsider, between participation and observation" (Spradley, 1980, p.60). In the beginning of my fieldwork, I used my time in the classroom to observe and take notes. However, as I became more familiar with the class environment, I assisted with class activities and attended to student needs. This differs from an active level of participation, because I was not attempting to take on the role of the teacher. An active participant observer, tries to do what the other individual is doing and take on the responsibilities of their position.

Participants and Context

Ethnographers have acted as participant observers in a variety of social settings (Spradley, 1980). There are three primary elements that all social situations contain: a place, actors and activities (Spradley, 1980). In this study, I placed myself in one elementary school classroom. The primary focus was the friendship behaviors of students and its facilitation by the teacher. The majority of my attention was focused on the interactions and activities that took place within the classroom, especially friendship development among students.

This study took place in a third grade classroom at Creekwood Elementary School (fictitious name). Creekwood Elementary is located in Southwest Virginia and is a public elementary school. The participating classroom was selected based on the input of the inclusion specialist at the school. An inclusion specialist oversees the inclusive environment of a school and provides the teachers with support (i.e. adapting lesson plans, suggesting new strategies). I asked the inclusion specialist to choose a third grade classroom that had a teacher who felt prepared for inclusion. The student participants from the classroom ranged in age from 8 to 10 years of age.

This study was conducted in a third grade classroom because the social development of children between the ages of 9 and 11 years of age is a sensitive period for friendship development. In the Developmental Model of Changes in Friendships, Selman identifies five types of friendships. Intimate, mutually shared relationships are thought to begin at the age of nine. In this study, I was interested in sustained friendships. Therefore, a third grade classroom was selected for the study because the children were in the age range when sustained friendships are likely to develop. Based on Selman's model, the student participants (ages 8-10) should be beginning to engage in intimate

relationships. An intimate friendship refers to a relationship in which the participants disclose information about themselves to the selected friends.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted and took place during regular school hours and involved normally scheduled activities. Since qualitative data are collected in a naturalistic setting, the social interactions were investigated. According to Stainback and Stainback, "... this method allows for variables that naturally influence the data being collected to continue to operate without interference" (1988, p.7). Most of the observations took place in the afternoon, because of my work schedule. However, I was in the classroom three mornings, so that a balanced picture of the day was presented. I also observed the students during one music class and one school-wide assembly.

Structure of Data Collection

This study began March 18, 1997 and data collection was concluded on April 11, 1997. A letter describing the study was sent to the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services (see Appendix B). All studies that are conducted at a school in this county, must be approved by the Assistant Superintendent. A reply, granting permission for the study to take place, was received from the Director of Programs, K-12. She served as the school system contact person for this study. I spoke with her after receiving the letter and she indicated her willingness to support the project.

I met with the school's inclusion specialist, to make arrangements for meeting the classroom teacher who was recommended for participation. During this meeting, his/her participation was requested and the consent form was signed (see Appendix C). A letter explaining the study was sent home to the parents of the children who were enrolled in the classroom. There was a consent form attached that was to be sent back to the classroom teacher (see Appendix C). After all consent forms were collected, I began the observations.

This study involved me as a participant observer in the selected third grade classroom. Ten observations took place in the class, with each one lasting 1 1/2 hours. I provided assistance for students as needed. While doing this, detailed field notes were taken. Throughout the first two observations, I was recording primarily descriptive observations (Spradley, 1980). The main goals at this point were to: determine the structure of the day, identify the classroom procedures that were used, and become acquainted with the names and special needs of the children.

Observation method. Spradley (1980) identifies two types of descriptive observations: grand tour and mini tour. A grand tour observation identifies the major features of the social situation. This can be compared to a tour of a home, during which the owner

points out the different rooms of the house. When making grand tour observations, there are nine dimensions that researchers should consider: space, actor, activity, object, act, event, time, goal and feeling (Spradley, 1980). Mini tour observations allow researchers to expand on specific information that has been discovered about those nine dimensions (Spradley, 1980). For example, grand tour observations within a classroom might reveal that the children attend a writing session for one hour each day. Mini tour observations would examine specific activities, especially social interactions, occurring during that session. In this research, the composite of both the grand tour and the mini tour were included.

Focus of observations. According to Spradley (1980), after recording descriptive information, researchers must determine what they will focus on in the social situation. Spradley (1980) recommended that researchers should ask the same focused questions repeatedly as they observe. "Remember, your goal is not to find a single answer to a question, such as a single danger signal or way to deal with danger. Rather, you want to ask the question over and over and find as many answers as you can" (Spradley, 1980, p.110). In this study, I was focusing on three things: student-student interactions, student-teacher interactions, and teaching strategies that were used to facilitate positive peer interactions, especially friendships. I selected three students and the teacher to observe, in order to focus on the constructs of interest. One of those students was a child with an identified disability.

At the conclusion of each observation, I reflected on the field notes (see Appendix D) and added additional details. This prevented me from forgetting pertinent events that occurred. The goal of these observations was to provide a holistic view of the inclusive environment and it's ramifications in the classroom. I also maintained a personal fieldwork journal throughout the period of data collection. "A journal represents the personal side of fieldwork; it includes reactions to informants and the feelings you sense from others" (Spradley, 1980, p.71). By writing this record, I was able to account for her feelings and her personal biases and how those biases were connected to the research (Spradley, 1980).

Interviews with children. During this four week time period, I also conducted brief interviews with three children in the participating classroom. One of the children (the focus child) that was interviewed, was a child with an identified disability. The child needed to be able to communicate in some form (verbal, communication boards, computer, sign language) and be willing to participate. After interviewing the child with disabilities, I asked the child to identify one close friend and one student that was not a friend. The two selected children were also interviewed. By interviewing a student that was not a friend of the disabled child, I had an opportunity to find out what inhibited the relationship. This provided me with the children's

perspective of friendship within the inclusive environment (see Appendix E). I audiotaped and transcribed the interviews with the children. The tapes were coded and anonymity was maintained. The audiotapes will be erased after three to five years.

Sociometric measure.

Children's friends can be identified in four main ways: (a) by asking the children, their mothers, or their teachers to name the child's friends and determining whether these choices are reciprocated; (b) by asking children to assess their liking for one another; (c) by observing the extent to which children seek and maintain proximity with one another; and (d) by measuring reciprocities and coordinations in their social interaction. Concordances among various indicators turn out to be substantial, but method variance is also considerable; the 'insiders' (the children themselves) do not always agree with the 'outsiders' (teachers) or the observational record. (Hartup, 1992, p.2)

During the observational period, I had all of the students complete a sociometric rating (See Appendix G). I developed this rating after studying other scales that had been used in previous research (Vaughn et al., 1993). This rating was sent home with the student and was completed at home. I requested that all of the ratings be returned to the classroom teacher. This rating provided the students with an opportunity to identify the children within the class, with whom they liked to spend the most and the least amount of time. The students were asked to identify which students they would like to go visit and with whom they would enjoy having lunch. All of the results were compiled to show which students were selected as high and low preferences. This quantitative information allowed me to see the children's relationships with their peers, including those with and without disabilities.

Interviews with teacher and principal. After conducting observations in each classroom, I held in-depth interviews with the teacher of the third grade class and the principal of the school. These interviews were crucial to the study, because they provided the perspectives of the class leader and the school leader. Both the classroom teacher and the principal influence the ecological context of the school. I decided to conduct the interviews at the conclusion of the observations, in order to minimize bias by the teacher's answers. I had a list of open-ended questions for the interviews, but the teacher and principal were allowed to lead the discussion. The questions (Appendix E) were focused on three primary issues: ecological context, friendship, and inclusion. Each interview was audio-taped and then transcribed. This freed me from note-taking and allowed me to obtain all of the details from the interviews. The tapes were coded and anonymity was maintained. All of the cassette tapes will be erased after three to five years. See Appendix F for a summary of the pilot interview with a teacher.

Data Analysis

After all of the data was collected, I analyzed the materials by conducting a speculative analysis. This involved reading through the information and recording comments beside the actual transcription (Woods, 1986). By doing this, the field notes were complemented by personal thoughts and ideas. Woods (1986) suggested that performing this step during analysis, keeps the researcher's thoughts out of the data records and helps to connect the analysis to the discussion section.

Spradley (1980) defined analysis as a search for patterns. "But, in order to move on and describe the cultural behavior, the cultural artifacts, and the cultural knowledge, you must discover the patterns that exist in your data" (Spradley, 1980, p.85). I began this search for patterns by developing a classifying and categorizing system, in which the various pieces of information fit. "The object is to render one's material in a form conducive to those pursuits, and that means ordering data in some kind of integrated, complete, logical, succinct way" (Woods, 1986, p.125). The first step in this process is to identify the major categories of data and the issues that fall into these categories (Woods, 1986). This can also be thought of as an identification of themes (Spradley, 1980). My goal was to discover the assertions that recurred in several different places within the data. While completing this search, I was careful not to eliminate any possibilities. "In beginning to search for themes, the ethnographer must identify all that appear, no matter how broad their general application" (Spradley, 1980, p.142). Upon completion of this analytical step, if the researcher has developed appropriate categories, then every piece of information will be accommodated by the system.

After these steps were taken to analyze the field notes, I combined the data from the sociometric rating and tallied the results. This quantitative data provided further understanding of the classroom environment and the interactions that took place between the children.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The present chapter summarizes the results of a study conducted to explore a teacher's role in facilitating social experiences of the children in an inclusive classroom. The author/researcher acted as a participant observer in a third grade classroom in which one child with a disability was included. Additional information was gathered through interviews and a sociometric rating. These results represent a summary of information compiled after collection and analysis of five components of data. The components were: classroom observations, sociometric rating, interview with the classroom teacher, interview with the principal, and individual interviews with three students in the classroom.

The goal of the investigation was to identify the perceptions of the teacher, principal and students in relation to the following issues: supports and resources, the ecological context of the classroom, and activities which support the development of peer friendships. These perceptions will be identified and considered in this chapter.

Classroom Observations

During the data collection phase of this study, I conducted ten classroom observations that each lasted one and one-half hours. During these observations, I acted as a participant observer. I focused on the actions of the teacher and students in the classroom context with special attention to social interactions and friendship behaviors. A focus child, who had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder based on the suggestions of the classroom teacher, was given specific attention.

Physical Context. The first observation focused primarily on the physical characteristics of the classroom. The descriptions of the physical environment were constructed by conducting what Spradley (1980) labeled a grand tour observation. The following nine dimensions were included in the tour: space, actor, activity, object, act, event, time, goal, and feeling. As the nine dimensions were observed, the researcher began to understand the ecological context of the classroom which is one microsystem for the students enrolled there.

Creekwood Elementary School is an "open" physical space which means that there are no permanent walls between the various classrooms. Rather, one large room is divided by partitions, cabinets and shelves into classrooms. The classroom where this study took place was surrounded by three other classrooms and contained one outside wall. At the top of the outside wall, there were six small windows which were partially blocked by boxes. Shelves, cabinets and portable bulletin boards separated the space from the surrounding three rooms. Two-thirds of the classroom was

carpeted and one-third was covered in brown tile. The other large objects in the classroom (cabinets, desks, chairs) were made of hard substances. Throughout the room, a few stuffed animals were visible but there was a general lack of soft items. Displays of children's work was also lacking. I also heard many different sounds while observing in the classroom including: a teacher talking in the adjacent classroom, papers shuffling in another class, the intercom in a neighboring class, teachers talking within the classroom and chairs moving across the floor in the adjacent classroom. These noises could be distracting to some students, especially those with attention difficulties.

Social Context. Twenty-two students (13 boys, 9 girls) made up the third grade classroom in which this study was conducted. The classroom was staffed by one female teacher, one female student teacher and one female aide. Each student had a desk and the desks were arranged in groups of three or four. I observed students within the desk groups talking quietly, but students did not get up and move to a new desk group to talk. The children's behavior seemed to reflect an environment in which verbal interaction among children was discouraged.

This was confirmed by observing the instructional practices. Throughout the ten observations, the teacher and student teacher frequently reminded the children of the rule about talking. For example, while the children were changing classes after math one day, three or four children began to talk about the men working in their classroom. The teacher and student teacher reminded the children "not to lose control" and continued by saying that "they needed to work on changing classes" and that it (talking) was "the worst problem." On another day, Rachel (a student) returned to her desk after being reminded of the rule by the class aide and said, "We never even get a chance to speak." This comment further documented that talking was consistently discouraged in the classroom. Verbal communication among the children was also restricted during lunch. At Creekwood the children ate lunch in their classrooms, each sitting at his/her own desk. Students could earn a ticket to sit next to someone outside of their desk group.

Target Child. While conducting observations in the third grade classroom, I focused on the actions of the classroom teacher and a child with a disability. The focus child of the study was Jennifer who had been labeled as having Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). I wanted to learn how Jennifer's social interactions were being facilitated and the status of her friendships. What I found was that the teacher was not actively supporting friendships for any of the students in the classroom, including Jennifer.

From the beginning of the year, both the school personnel and Jennifer's parents were concerned about Jennifer's lack of friends. Jennifer's mother told the school personnel that she believed that Jennifer only had one friend and she had moved away. During the first three observations, I observed several things

about Jennifer: 1) she rarely made eye contact with other people, 2) she had a tendency to stare at the other students (when they aren't looking), 3) most of her interactions were initiated by other people, and 4) she was alone during most activities.

It was obvious that Jennifer did not have many social connections with the other students in the class. For example, during one observation, when the children went outside for recess, Jennifer walked in front of the equipment, looked at it and then played on the jungle gym alone for about twelve minutes. Then Jennifer walked over to the classroom teacher and asked "How much longer are we going to be on the playground?" When the teacher told Jennifer that they would be out for about twenty more minutes, she went over to the jungle gym and sat down by herself. For the remaining recess time, she sat and watched a group of girls playing without ever attempting to join in their play.

As mentioned above, I noticed that Jennifer rarely made eye contact with other people. I also discovered that Jennifer rarely initiated contact with others. For example, when she was on the playground she watched the girls play but did not try to join in.

During the third observation, I conducted two event samplings for thirty minutes each. The goal was to count the number of interactions that Jennifer had during that time and to record who initiated each interaction. During the first sampling period, the children were working on some seatwork. Jennifer was sitting in her desk group with an aide sitting between her and another student. Eleven interactions took place during the thirty minute period and three of them were initiated by Jennifer. All three times, Jennifer raised her hand to answer a question. The teacher acknowledged her hand on the third time. The final seven interactions that took place during the sampling period were initiated by the aide sitting next to Jennifer, and were directed at Jennifer. Each interaction received only slight acknowledgement by Jennifer. In addition, when she answered the aide, she did not make eye contact with her. During the second sampling period, the students were working in small groups. Seven interactions that involved Jennifer took place within the group and two of them were initiated by Jennifer. The other students in the group initiated the other five interactions to Jennifer. However, when the students made a comment to Jennifer she responded in some way, typically looking at the other child. It appeared that Jennifer was waiting for the other students to make the first move.

By the sixth observation, I planned and initiated direct contact with Jennifer. The decision was based on the premise that if she could connect with Jennifer then it might be possible to facilitate social interactions within the classroom. I felt that this could be done best if she approached her during one of the normal class activities. Therefore, when the children went to the playground, I walked to the monkey bars where Jennifer was sitting and spoke directly to her saying, "Do you like playing on the

monkey bars?" Jennifer answered with a simple yes/no response but she did not make eye contact with me. Jennifer also made no attempt to continue the conversation. Sensing that Jennifer was not ready to interact with me, I went to the jungle gym and started playing with the other students. After about two minutes I was surrounded by students who wanted to play. It appeared to be a novel experience to have a teacher become actively engaged in their play. A later observation seemed to confirm this. Renee (a student) stated that the teacher "was very strict, even on student teachers" and felt that she would not approve of what the student teacher was doing (playing ball). As I continued to play with the children, Jennifer walked over to the jungle gym and watched for about five minutes. When I started to climb on top of the equipment Jennifer said, "You're taking a chance of killing yourself." That was the first verbal contact between Jennifer and me. As recess continued, Jennifer began to make eye contact with me and followed the group of children as they moved around the playground.

I continued to make contact with Jennifer during her next visit and Jennifer responded mutually. I ate lunch with Jennifer and asked her about a book that she was reading. Jennifer responded by describing the characters and explaining the plot of the story. Before the conversation was over, the student sitting behind Jennifer had turned around and joined in the book discussion. Jennifer appeared very accepting of his contributions and they cooperatively told about the book. This appeared to be a large step for Jennifer because she had interacted socially with a peer. During the next two observations, I continued to talk with Jennifer and interact with the other students. In several instances Jennifer even initiated the conversation.

During these observations, I noticed that Jennifer frequently talked with and smiled at Carol. When Carol and Jennifer were placed in the same group, they interacted positively with each other. Jennifer made eye contact with Carol and initiated some conversations. Jennifer joked with Carol and made physical contact with her (i.e., tapping her with a pencil). This type of interaction was very new in my observations of Jennifer. Carol provided the reinforcement for Jennifer. For example, Carol looked at Jennifer when Jennifer spoke to her and Carol responded to Jennifer's comments. This reflected change from the initial observations. By the 8th observation, Carol was still maintaining the active role, but Jennifer was no longer as passive as on previous occasions. Instead, she participated in mutual interaction by making eye contact, responding to specific comments, and laughing at comments that were made.

During the final (10th) observation, I played with Carol and Renee on the playground. It was an interactive game in which the girls initiated contact with me and then I responded by jumping or making a loud noise. Jennifer approached the group and began interacting with only the researcher. As I reinforced the actions of all of the girls, Jennifer began interacting with Carol and

Renee. Before the thirty-minute recess was over, the three girls were mutually and actively involved in a game of their own and I withdrew from the game to watch the social interaction.

Sociometric Rating

Each of the 22 children in the third grade classroom which was the focus of this study received a sociometric rating and a consent form. These two items were given to the children by the classroom teacher and completed at home. See Appendix G for a copy of the sociometric rating. Eighteen ratings (82%) were returned to the classroom teacher. Seventeen of the ratings (77%) had been completed. One child decided not to complete the rating even though parental consent had been given. I compiled the data by recording every child who was nominated for each activity category and tallying the number of nominations that each child received.

After the data from all seventeen completed ratings had been compiled, several things were evident. The number of children nominated for each activity category ranged from nine to fifteen. This seemed to suggest that the social environment was not dominated by one or two children who were looked upon as the "elite" individuals. Rather, many children in the classroom were viewed favorably by their friends. For example, when the children were asked to identify the child with whom they would like to sit with at lunch, fourteen children were identified.

Although seventeen children in the class received at least one nomination on the sociometric rating, Jennifer (the focus child in the study) was not nominated at all. This was surprising to me since I had observed Jennifer interacting consistently with one other child in the classroom. I expected that she would at least receive a nomination from that child. However, when this information was shared with the classroom teacher, she was not surprised. She informed me that she did not think that Jennifer would receive any nominations. She believed that Jennifer was simply ignored by the other children. Later, upon close examination, I discovered that Jennifer's name had been written on the rating of the child with whom she had interacted consistently (Carol) but, it had been subsequently erased. There was no explanation for this change.

The sociometric rating presented several interesting trends in relation to the frequency with which children nominated other children. Of the 17 participating children, 14 (82%) nominated one friend (Friend A) for at least three activity categories. Seven children (41%) nominated one friend (Friend A) for at least five activity categories. Jennifer fell into this category. She nominated Carol (i.e. Friend A) for the following five activity categories: child you would like to work in a group with, child you would like to sit with at lunch, child's home you would like to visit, child you would like to have come to your house and play, and child you would sit with on a class trip. Carol did not nominate Jennifer in any category, while Jennifer nominated Carol

in five categories. Three children (18%) nominated one friend (Friend A) for all seven activity categories. Of these three children, two of them were boys.

Interview - Classroom Teacher

I interviewed the teacher of the third grade class in which this study was conducted. The interview took place during the normal school hours while a student teacher was instructing the class. I hoped to learn about the perspectives of the teacher on the social relationships within the classroom and the techniques that she used to facilitate those relationships. During the interview, the teacher talked about four primary topics: teaching strategies, inclusion, information about Jennifer (the focus child), and the roles of the students.

This study was conducted to explore teachers' roles in facilitating friendship development of the children in an inclusive classroom. Therefore, I needed to understand how the teacher viewed her role in the classroom and the strategies that she used to operate in that role. In the beginning of the interview, I asked Mrs. Toby (pseudonym) to describe her third grade class. She stated that she felt it was an "average third grade group" that had learned to work together. She explained this statement by saying that they had not worked well in the past and some of the children had to be separated in third grade. When asked about what she had done to assist them in working together and interacting socially, Mrs. Toby identified several things. At the beginning of the school year, she conducts a unit on friendship. During the unit, the class members participate by making a bingo game and obtaining different information about others in the class (i.e. siblings, birthplace). "Just different things about each other. We work on that and then I, personally, feel like them getting along is important to their academic success too." In addition to these activities, Mrs. Toby talks to her students a lot. She lets them know that "whether we like it or not we are together for nine months" and she compares it to a family. She indicated that she believes that the children can relate to this because they might not always get along with their brother, but they still have to work together and treat each other respectfully. Cooperative learning is also present in her classroom but only after the Winter holiday. She reported that she doesn't use cooperative learning much before that time because she feels the students are too immature to handle it. Of all the strategies that she identified, the one that became predominant during the interview was talking with the students. She seemed to rely on that for many situations.

Mrs. Toby also initiated discussion of inclusion and teaching children with special needs. She believed that some children with disabilities had inappropriate social skills and she tried to help the other students appreciate the positive points of those children. She did this by talking with the children and encouraging them to put themselves in the disabled child's shoes. However, in general, she felt that the included children were

reasonably well accepted by the other students in the classroom. Mrs. Toby attributed her success in the inclusive classroom to the support that she receives from the special education personnel and to her academic training and experience in special education. "I have a background in special education having taught it eight years, so I guess I'm lucky in that way in that I do know how to deal with them generally and different problems. But, with one teacher and twenty-two kids, if I didn't have the support that I have from the special education personnel, then I don't think it would be going nearly as smoothly." In her classroom, Mrs. Toby has a part-time aide and a part-time inclusion specialist who make accommodations for the students. Mrs. Toby also indicated that she perceives a lot of support from the principal of Creekwood Elementary. "Right, and I think I am at a school that it is important to the principal. She wants to provide the support." Mrs. Toby repeatedly stated how much the special education staff did for the classroom teachers. It was evident from her statements that she felt very supported.

While conducting this study in Mrs. Toby's class, I focused her observations on a student named Jennifer. Jennifer was an identified special education student and her social interactions were very important. The classroom teacher's reaction to Jennifer and the way that she interacted to her was also crucial. When I mentioned Jennifer in the interview, Mrs. Toby had many things to say. A sample of her comments follow in a brief excerpt from a transcription of the interview.

RESEARCHER: Do you, I guess as far as Jennifer, right now, have you done anything specific to try and build friendships for her? Have you seen a need for that?

TEACHER: Yes, all of us that work in the room have seen a need for it and of course, her mother was concerned about it and talked to us at the beginning of the year. Um ... I think the big break through for Jennifer has been going on Ritalin.

Mrs. Toby described Jennifer as a child who couldn't be dealt with using normal strategies prior to her use of Ritalin. Mrs. Toby reported that when she tried to talk with Jennifer about more appropriate behavior, the information would not appear to "sink in" and Jennifer would return to her inappropriate behaviors. She was often uncertain about how to approach Jennifer and she felt that the other students in the class had the same problem. "But they really just couldn't relate to her. It was really just kind of a neutral thing." This seems to suggest that Jennifer was either aloof or ignored by the other students, not rejected. "They didn't know how to deal with that and it is hard. For me it was too.", reported Mrs. Toby. In her opinion, everyone in the class was going through the same things in reference to Jennifer (before Ritalin). Mrs. Toby described Jennifer as being in a different world when she wasn't on Ritalin. A world that she could not connect with. "We would get, this really happened, I think we were going to lunch but I had told the kids to line up and Jennifer, she just sat there. She was in her own world or

something. And everybody around her could get up and move and be over here and kids were kind of looking at her." In comparison, after being on Ritalin, Mrs. Toby saw Jennifer as being focused, quieter and more easily understood. Mrs. Toby seemed to feel that Ritalin, not changes with the strategies/techniques within the classroom, was a causal factor in behavioral changes.

Another change that Mrs. Toby identified was in Jennifer's dress. She stated that Jennifer wore dresses that were more appropriate for a first grader. When looking at the class as a whole, Jennifer did not blend in because the other students were wearing t-shirts and jeans. However, Mrs. Toby did not believe that Jennifer's mother realized how atypical the dresses were and in Mrs. Toby's opinion, Jennifer's mother "just doesn't catch on" to some things. As the year has progressed Mrs. Toby has noticed a distinct change in Jennifer's dress. Although she does not know what provoked the change, she did state that she tried to comment on Jennifer's clothing when she was dressed like a "regular" third grader.

During the class observations, I noticed some interactions between Jennifer and another student named Carol. I believed that there was a friendship forming and probed for information during the interview in hopes of gaining the teacher's perspective on the interactions. Mrs. Toby was unsure about a friendship between the two of them because of an incident from earlier in the year. According to Mrs. Toby, at that time, Carol was sitting in the same desk group as Jennifer. Carol became very upset because Jennifer seemed to be staring at her all of the time. Finally, Carol asked Mrs. Toby to move her to another desk. Mrs. Toby acknowledged that the move was very upsetting to Jennifer. She did not perceive the potential for a friendship between the two of them.

In closing the interview, I asked Mrs. Toby about the roles of the other students in relation to friendships and peer interactions, specifically, their willingness to reach out to children and involve them in group activities. Mrs. Toby stated that half of her students would reach out to include children and half of them would not. However, she had seen progress throughout the year. "And they will do better for a while. And I think if they were consistently made to think about other people, it would make a big difference. But I only expect it to go for third grade and you know, I don't even think it will carry on after that."

Interview - Principal

The principal at the school where this study was conducted met with me during school hours one afternoon. I had already discussed the idea of an interview with the principal and she had agreed to participate. My goal was to gain insight into the perspectives of the building principal, who has the responsibility for overseeing all functions within the school. During the interview, the principal focused on three main ideas: social environment, teaching strategies, and inclusion.

The first idea that the principal introduced was that of the social environment of the school. She felt that it was exemplified by the school motto: "At Creekwood, each child matters". She stated that the school community strived to live up to that statement. In doing so, they attempted to promote a feeling of family within the school building. She also tried to promote a positive social environment by writing a letter to all of the children on the Monday of each week. In the weekly letter, she typically highlighted a social skill (e.g., respect, honesty) that she would like to see the children practice. In discussing the social environment, she appeared dedicated to making Creekwood a positive social environment.

Based on the questions that I had given to her, the principal continued by addressing the issue of strategies that her teachers use to promote positive peer relationships for the students. "As far as the role that the adults play here at this school in peer relationships, I think that we lead by example. And when children see adults interacting in a friendly manner, that's an example to them." Therefore, in her opinion, almost everything that the teachers do can have an impact on the children. The principal also felt that her teachers used role reversal quite a bit. "I do think we often say to children, that how would you feel if someone did this to you." By engaging in social perspective taking, they are able to understand instead of retaliate. Creekwood Elementary also offers a buddy system in which teachers are able to get students involved. The fifth grade students serve as buddies to the younger students. When teachers sense that a child is having difficulties with peers, then they can match the child with a buddy. In turn, the buddy can help the child work through the problem and/or serve as a mediator in a dispute. The principal indicated that she felt that the teachers were very aware of this project and were making good use of it.

The final issue that the principal addressed during the interview was that of inclusion. "As far as inclusion, I think that the inclusion program that we have here at Creekwood, has been extremely successful. Because we HAVE had support. We HAVE had resources available to us." Because of the resources that she has access to, she is able to send her teachers out to observe children that they will teach the next year. This helps the teachers plan ways to accommodate and include such children. Without financial and human resources she did not feel that an inclusion program could succeed. However, she did not believe that resources alone could make inclusion succeed. "So, we are growing in our understanding of each others' roles and I think cooperation and that's truly what it is. It HAS to be a cooperative effort." Her acknowledgement of roles, supports the theoretical orientation of this study. Bronfenbrenner stated that a role is a set of activities and relations that are expected of a person in a certain position in society (1979). In an inclusive school setting, the roles might have to be altered somewhat from those that are normally expected. The principal and teaching

staff at Creekwood Elementary School have begun to make some changes and appear to be reaping the rewards. "Everyone is beginning to get the feeling of ownership of these children and that we are all involved. It is not teacher X's responsibility only. It belongs, the responsibility belongs to all of us."

INTERVIEW - THREE STUDENTS

Three students from the third grade class that was the focus of this study were interviewed during the afternoon of a school day. The first student interviewed was a student with a disability (Jennifer - the focus child). The other two students that were interviewed were selected by Jennifer. At an earlier date, I had requested that Jennifer tell her the name of a friend in her class and the name of student in her class that was not a friend. Carol was identified as a friend and Rachel was identified as a non-friend. On the day of the interviews, all three interviews were conducted in the same outdoor setting with the same questions being asked.

I asked Jennifer, the child with a disability, if she would be willing to talk with her. Jennifer readily agreed and we went outside to conduct the interview. I read the consent form to Jennifer and then allowed her to read it before signing it. Although Jennifer appeared willing to be interviewed, she seemed unsure of what to say when I asked her a question. She answered the majority of the questions using short statements and answered nonverbally two times. Although her statements were brief, the interview was beneficial because it allowed me to hear Jennifer's perceptions of friendship and compare them to those of the other two children that were interviewed.

I began the interview by asking Jennifer to identify her friends in her class. "Well, my friends are: Carol, kind of Renee, Carla and the rest aren't in my class." This statement was surprising to me because Jennifer had been heard saying that she "didn't have any friends." This statement had been made earlier in the year but still was very different from her answer to the interview question.

I continued to explore Jennifer's ideas about the friendships by asking her to identify her best friend in her class. Jennifer stated that it was "probably Carol." This corroborated with my observations, since Jennifer interacted primarily with Carol. As Jennifer described her relationship with Carol, she talked primarily in terms of "I" and "her".

RESEARCHER: How did you get to be friends with Carol?

JENNIFER: Well. First, I just started hanging out with her. Then, I invited her to my house and instantly she just started to love me.

RESEARCHER: What can you tell me about Carol? What makes her your friend?

JENNIFER: Well, she is nice and fun to be around. She, she doesn't make like mean comments and stuff.

Jennifer seemed to believe that Carol was the controlling factor in the friendship. In her eyes, the reason that they became friends was that Carol starting loving her. The reason that the friendship had continued was because Carol didn't say mean things to her. Jennifer did not appear to accept any of the responsibility for the relationship. Rather, Carol initiated and maintained the relationship, according to Jennifer.

The perception of friendship held by Jennifer, was very different than that expressed by the other two students who were interviewed. Carol was identified as a friend by Jennifer. When Carol was asked to describe her friends, she stated, "They like a lot of things that I like, which that would be: writing, drawing, and riding bicycles and stuff like that." Carol's perceptions that her friends enjoyed doing the things that she liked to do included the element of mutuality. Her interests and abilities were a vital component of the friendship. Carol identified Jennifer as her best friend, which was not surprising to the researcher. "She is a really good friend and she's nice to talk to if you have something wrong. She's just a really good friend." Based on observations, the researcher believed that this friendship was growing though perhaps it needed some encouragement. Behaviors which indicated a possible developing friendship included: 1) talking with each other about non-academic things, 2) playing together on the playground, and 3) physical contact when talking/playing (i.e. tapping on the shoulder, pushing each other on the equipment). Since Carol and Jennifer both identified the other as a best friend, this friendship could be considered mutual. However, Carol viewed her role in the friendship very differently than Jennifer.

RESEARCHER: How did you get to be friends with Jennifer? Did you meet her at school?

CAROL: I met her at school. We just got to start being friends in the third grade. I mean before third grade we were just polite to each other, but not like we would invite each other to our house or anything. But now we are really good friends.

Carol's usage of the pronoun "we" is a crucial part of her answer. She perceived the friendship to be a joint mission. Both she and Jennifer were starting to be friends and both were previously just polite to each other.

Another crucial component of all three interviews was the discussion concerning the role of their classroom teacher. I was interested in finding out how the students perceived the teacher's actions in relation to friendship issues. This was explored by asking the children about anything in school that helps them make friends and/or anything that the teacher does that helps them make friends. Each of the three students answered this question from a different angle but there was one commonality. All three students introduced the role of the guidance counselor and expressed their feelings concerning his role.

RESEARCHER: Does your teacher do anything that helps you make friends?

JENNIFER: Um ... No.

RESEARCHER: No, she doesn't. Okay. Does she ever have any activities or lessons about friendship, to help everybody?

JENNIFER: No, but that's why we have guidance.

RESEARCHER: Okay, so the guidance counselor does things about friendship and helps with friends and problems. Okay. Well, how do you feel about your guidance counselor doing that? Is that good or is that not so good?

JENNIFER: It's pretty good.

RESEARCHER: Oh. Okay, so you like that? Has that helped you make friends?

JENNIFER: Pretty much.

RESEARCHER: Does your teacher do anything to help, help people in your class make friends or help you make friends?

RACHEL: Oh, she settles fights.

RESEARCHER: Does she ever have lessons or activities about friendship that help you?

RACHEL: Well, not really. The guidance counselor is the person who really talks about stuff like that. He's the one who like does movies and projects about friendship and family and things like that.

RESEARCHER: So, is it more his job or more Mrs. Toby's job?

RACHEL: Well, they're sort of equal because Mrs. Toby, like I said, she settles fights and tells us like we shouldn't be fighting and stuff like that. But the guidance counselor is more, more the person who helps us.

RESEARCHER: Well, is there anything that your teacher does that helps people in your class make friends or do you just make them on your own?

CAROL: Well, I know that my teacher, Mrs. Toby, likes to move people around to get people to know each other better and so she doesn't have to be like the guidance counselor in the room, to solve every single little problem.

RESEARCHER: Oh, okay. Does she ever do activities or lessons that are about friendship?

CAROL: I think that only our guidance counselor does that.

RESEARCHER: Oh, okay. So that's just his job?

CAROL: Yeah.

Although Carol and Rachel could identify things (settle fights, moves desks around) that their teacher did to help students make friends, both of them referred to the guidance counselor as the primary teacher of friendship issues. Neither could identify any lessons and/or activities that Mrs. Toby had done on friendship, but Rachel was able to name two techniques (movies, projects) that the guidance counselor used. Jennifer did not even believe that it was the teacher's job to deal with friendship. In her eyes, that was the guidance counselor's job.

The statements of the three students implied that the guidance counselor played a very important role in their lives. This idea is supported by the consistency with which they identified his role in friendship issues. Rachel spoke repeatedly about things that the counselor had told her and ideas that he had shared. "Since the guidance counselor says think before we get mad ... It's just that I have, well the guidance counselor, he's really nice, and he just says that I have good ideas." It seems apparent to me that in the eyes of these students the guidance counselor played a larger role than the teacher in the area of friendship. As Rachel stated, "But the guidance counselor is more, more the person who helps us." In her eyes, the guidance counselor is the adult at school who has taken on the caregiving role. It seems logical that if these three students were faced with a friendship problem, they would turn to their guidance counselor.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to create a detailed description of the ecological context of friendship development in an inclusive classroom. Of specific interest, was the friendship development of a target child diagnosed with special needs. This topic was investigated from multiple perspectives: the researcher/observer, the students, the teacher, and the principal. These four perspectives intertwined and resulted in specific conclusions and generalizations. Without one of the pieces, the puzzle would not have been complete.

In this chapter, I will review the findings of this study and suggest positive changes to strengthen the social atmosphere of both elementary school classrooms and teacher education programs. Information from this study might be helpful to teachers in inclusive classrooms as they prepare to meet the needs of their students. The results of this study provide insights that might stimulate practitioners to reflect upon their roles in providing support for social development of children in an inclusive primary grade classroom.

Classroom Observations

After conducting ten observations in a third grade classroom at Creekwood Elementary School, one main idea seemed important to me: the importance of the classroom ecology. Bronfenbrenner (1979) stated that the physical and social aspects of a setting motivates the developing person to engage in increasingly more complex activities, patterns of interaction and primary dyadic relationships with persons in the setting. One of the primary aspects of Mrs. Toby's classroom was the importance of silence. The children were frequently reminded to lower their voices or stop talking completely. There seemed to be a strong aversion to noise and the children were aware of it. As Rachel said, "We never even get a chance to speak." When observing the children, I noticed that it was almost as if they were conditioned to be quiet. The criticism of talking concerned me from the very first observation. If children were not allowed to talk at any time, how could they develop friendships with their peers?

One possible reason for the silence in Mrs. Toby's room could be the design of the school. Creekwood Elementary was an "open" physical space which means that there were not any permanent walls between the classrooms. One could assume that if all of the classes were talking and interacting, the noise level could become unbearable. Therefore, each teacher might be extremely sensitive to the noise level within his/her own classroom. Mrs. Toby could be afraid to use techniques that involved elevated volume of sound for fear of disturbing the other teachers. Research by Caldwell et al. (1995) showed that the physical space of the classroom was a concern to teachers working in an inclusive classroom. Approximately 76% of responding

teachers reported the physical layout of the room as a necessary support to inclusive education. However, only 41% of teachers reported receiving this support. This in turn could be affecting the social relationships within her classroom because the classroom ecology serves as a context which facilitates or inhibits relationships between peers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The physical space is a vital component to the classroom ecology, which affects the social interactions with the classroom. This suggests that there could be a problem with open school settings. Many elementary programs are using cooperative learning as a primary way of teaching children. This type of learning is based on the idea that children work and talk together to construct their solutions. Cooperative learning also provides children with an opportunity to interact socially and potentially develop friendships. As these types of learning experiences grow in popularity and gain support through research, the design of school buildings must be carefully considered. Children should not be limited by their environment. Rather, their environment should enhance their learning experience as well as social development.

I also observed the lunch arrangement at Creekwood Elementary School. As mentioned in the results section, all of the students ate lunch in their classroom and sat at their own desks. This seemed very limiting to me since children need to spend time with other individuals in order to develop friendships. It would appear that the ecological context of the classroom and the expectations of the teacher would need to change in order for friendships to be facilitated within the classroom.

Throughout the classroom observations, my attention was primarily focused on Jennifer (the focus child). I discovered that Jennifer had difficulty making eye contact with other people and she was alone during many activities. It seemed as if she was afraid to reach out to other people and therefore tried to keep herself at a distance. If she didn't make eye contact with her peers, then it was much more difficult for them to communicate with her. I felt that Jennifer wanted to be involved in the discussion but she was not willing to make the first move. In social interactions, Jennifer typically took on a passive role and made the other children maintain an active stance. This could explain Jennifer's limited interactions during the observational periods. If Jennifer depended on the other person to make the relationship succeed, and the other students were not willing to put in the extra effort, then Jennifer's friends could stay few in number. It could be difficult for Jennifer's peers to always make the first move, especially if she did not make eye contact with them or stared blankly at them. Her peers needed reinforcement when they tried to communicate with her, just as she needed reinforcement as she tried to build relationships.

Many of the behaviors that Jennifer exhibited (e.g., avoiding eye contact, ignoring comments directed towards her) were directly connected to the diagnostic criteria used to identify children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) and to the clinical

observations of Selikowitz (1996). One criteria states that the child "often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly" (Rapoport & Ismond, 1996, p.144). Throughout the classroom observations, children spoke to Jennifer without receiving any acknowledgement or response. It was as if she was not listening to their comments. In addition, when children would gather around Jennifer's desk and talk, she did not acknowledge their presence. Selikowitz (1996) identifies this as a lack of responsiveness which is due to the child's egocentricity. Jennifer also seemed to fit into Selikowitz's (1996) social competence deficit known as poor understanding of group dynamics. He had observed children having this difficulty on the playground. During my classroom observations, I saw Jennifer on the playground many times. Most of the time, she was on a piece of equipment by herself. At other times, she would be on the jungle gym where there were many other children, but she would not be interacting with them. Jennifer also seemed to have difficulty working within a literature circle. During these times, there were five children in a group reading a book together. Jennifer rarely made eye contact with the children and rarely participated in the verbal exchanges, even when they were directed towards her. Selikowitz also found that children with ADD lacked correction strategies (1996). When they made a social mistake, they did not know how to compensate. This appeared to be very true for Jennifer. If she spoke to children and they laughed at her, she did not know what to do. I observed her pulling back and shutting down when this happened. It seemed likely that many of Jennifer's social difficulties were directly connected to her attention deficit disorder. However, even with all of these hindrances, I believed that Jennifer needed someone to help her make the connections with her peers. As a participant observer, I decided to interact with Jennifer during the observational periods.

During the sixth observation, I attempted to interact with Jennifer on the playground. As stated in the results section, the interaction did not take place immediately, but it did indeed occur. As I continued to interact with Jennifer during each observation, Jennifer became a more active participant in the social interactions. During the final observational period, Jennifer participated in a game with her peers while I watched the exchange at a distance. It seems plausible to suggest that I had successfully facilitated the social interactions for Jennifer. By initially connecting with Jennifer and making her feel safe and at the same time getting to know the other students in the class, I was able to bring them together. It appeared that Jennifer just needed someone to scaffold her attempts to make connections with her peers. The students in the class were able to play with me and then connect with Jennifer with my assistance. It was a winning situation for all of the students. If the classroom teacher had taken on the role of facilitator, it would seem possible that she could have assisted Jennifer in making friends from the beginning of the year.

One way in which the teacher could have facilitated the

friendships would have been by developing a "circle of friends" for Jennifer. This is done by allowing children to volunteer to be in a child's circle and then offering weekly meetings on friendship issues for those students. Staub et al. (1994) pointed out that one interesting feature of friendships between disabled and non-disabled individuals, is that each person brings different needs to the relationship. Therefore, the weekly meetings on friendship issues can assist all of the children in various ways. When needs are complementary, relationships are functional and mutually beneficial.

Possible Effects of Direct Interaction. As I spent time in the third grade classroom at Creekwood Elementary, it became obvious to me that I was not going to see the classroom teacher facilitate friendships for Jennifer. It just did not appear to be her priority. After observing Jennifer, I believed that what she needed was exactly what she was not receiving. Jennifer seemed to need someone to help her connect with her peers. As a participant observer, I became a minimally involved teaching assistant and within that role I had several situations that involved direct contact with her. During the time that I spent getting to know Jennifer, I began bridging the gap between her and her peers. Although I believe that this was a crucial step in my study, I also acknowledge that it could have influenced my findings. When I entered into Jennifer's interactions, I brought my own belief system with me. Woods (1986) notes that by "participating, one both acts on, and is acted upon by the environment. But one must try to combine deep personal involvement and a measure of detachment" (p.34). I firmly believed that Jennifer could successfully have friends but the context was inadequate to support her friendship development. It was very difficult to watch her spend so much of her time alone. My interactions with Jennifer were invariably affected by my belief system, just as the classroom teacher's actions were driven by her belief system. Had I not entered into direct interactions with Jennifer, I do not believe that my study would have provided as much information. My role allowed me to hear Jennifer's thoughts on situations and to see how her peers might feel as they spent time near her. Woods (1986) believed that participation aided in appreciation. "In time, the researcher becomes a member, and can proceed by reflection and analogy, analysing own reactions, intentions and motives, as and when they occur during the process of which one is a part" (Woods, 1986, p.34). I feel that it provided me with an enlightening viewpoint of the overall situation.

Sociometric Rating

In this study, I obtained a sociometric assessment rating from 17 of the 22 students in the third grade classroom. The rating asked the children to identify which students they would like to go visit and with whom they would enjoy having lunch. The children were asked to respond to a total of seven questions. After tallying the results of the 17 completed scales, I noticed three very important pieces of information. First, 17 of the 22 children in the classroom received at least one nomination. This

led me to believe that many of the children in the classroom were thought of favorably by their peers. This also seemed to suggest that the social environment was not dominated by one or two children who were looked upon as the "premier individuals."

Secondly, Jennifer (the target "special needs" child) was not nominated at all. I interpreted this to indicate that Jennifer was either rejected or neglected by her peers. However, I had to look at additional pieces of the puzzle to determine whether she was rejected or neglected. While conducting the observations, I never viewed any of the children treating Jennifer badly. She did not appear to be the target of ridicule or banished from class activities. Rather, Jennifer seemed to be ignored by her peers. If she was standing on the jungle gym with a group of children, they just moved around her and carried on with their play. It was as if she was invisible. In my opinion, Jennifer was a neglected child in Mrs. Toby's third grade class. Very few of the children took the time to get to know her and try to build a relationship with her. This suggests that more class activities could have been done to help the children break down the walls of uncertainty and get to know each other. This will be addressed further in the section on the interview with the teacher, due to the closeness of the issues.

Finally, I noticed a distinct difference between Jennifer's sociometric rating and Carol's (Jennifer's identified best friend) rating. As the results showed, Jennifer nominated Carol for five categories while Carol did not nominate Jennifer at all. When this information is viewed in respect to Selman's levels of friendship development, Jennifer's perception of her friendship with Carol seems to be between stage two (one way assistance) and stage three (two way assistance). She does not view it as a momentary friendship (stage one) because it is not dependent on a specific physical variable. Jennifer wants to be with Carol at school, home, and on class trips. From this rating alone, the motivation for this choice cannot be discerned. It is possible that Jennifer wants to be with Carol because Carol does what she wants her to do. This is a typical indicator of a one way assistance friendship. It might also be plausible to suggest that Jennifer's friendship with Carol is not a mutually shared friendship. The differences in nominations suggest that the friendship is not at the mutual, intimate level (stage four of the stages described by Selman).

Interview - Classroom Teacher

After interviewing Mrs. Toby, I was struck by two points: 1) Mrs. Toby could not identify any activities that she had used to help Jennifer and 2) Mrs. Toby stated that she did not expect her social strategies to extend past third grade.

When asked about specific strategies that had been used to facilitate friendships for Jennifer, Mrs. Toby was not able to identify any activities. Instead, her focus was on the Ritalin and it's effects on Jennifer. During the discussion about

Jennifer, she brought up Ritalin several times. She even stated that she thought "the big break through for Jennifer has been going on Ritalin." This would lead me to believe that Mrs. Toby felt that her social role with Jennifer ended when the Ritalin began. Her ideas about Jennifer fell into two categories, before and after Ritalin.

At the conclusion of the interview, Mrs. Toby made a statement about the social skills that her students had learned. "But I only expect it to go for third grade and you know, I don't even think it will carry on after that." Of all of her statements during the entire interview, this one seemed to be the most powerful because it highlighted her intentions. It appeared that she was not trying to facilitate development in the schemas which could be used in future peer relationships. Instead, she was just trying to survive the school year. In my opinion, there is a big difference and it sheds a different light on her other statements during the interview.

Interview - Principal

When talking with me, the principal focused on two aspects of her school environment: teaching strategies and inclusion. As covered in the results section, the principal thought of her school as a family and viewed the teachers as models for the students. In my mind, this meant that the teachers could also promote negative behavior and/or relationships if their behavior was inappropriate. In a school setting, leading by example could be both positive and negative depending on the teachers. School-wide standards (i.e., sarcasm is not allowed) for the teachers' classroom behavior would appear to be a valuable tool for encouraging proper role modeling. This would allow all teachers the opportunity to clarify their ideas about certain strategies.

The principal also talked extensively about the inclusion program at Creekwood Elementary and the components that had made it successful. She highlighted the accomplishments of the special education staff and the financial support of the school system. The principal seemed proud of the inclusiveness of her school and was willing to give credit to those individuals who had made it successful.

Interview - Three Students

While interviewing Jennifer, I was surprised by one of her answers. When Jennifer was asked to identify her friends, she named three children and then stated that her other friends were in the other class. This was a very different answer than she had given a few months earlier. When asked the same question earlier, Jennifer had stated that she didn't have any friends. This can be interpreted in at least two ways. Jennifer could have been embarrassed to tell me that she didn't have any friends. This does not seem to fit with Jennifer's character because she appears uninhibited about reporting her perceptions. It is also possible that Jennifer had made a few friends since she first made the comment about not having any friends. Based on my observations of

Jennifer's interactions, however limited at times, the latter seems to be more likely. Whether the identified friendships were mutual is debatable.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to create a detailed description of the teacher's role and how it affected the social environment of the classroom. Based on the data that was collected, I would like to make two suggestions for future improvement of the ecological context of elementary school classrooms. These suggestions are: (1) teacher preparation courses should include additional information focusing on developing the social environment of the classroom and inclusive education, and (2) greater attention should be given to meeting the social needs, including friendships, of children in elementary school.

As a graduate of an undergraduate teaching preparation program, I participated in the training that pre-service teachers receive. While student teaching, I was required to take classes about how to teach math, language arts, and science. However, no course was offered that focused primarily on the social environment of a classroom and/or friendship development. It seems plausible to suggest that if teachers are going to be able to create appropriate social environments for their students, training should be provided. Evidence of this need for training can be found in the results of a study by Caldwell and associates (1995). The results indicated that 94% of teachers felt training was necessary, but only 27% felt they were receiving that type of support. In addition, the study notes that training in inclusive education needs to be personalized in order to be effective. Therefore, teachers must be able to ask questions about specific situations and concerns. It is my opinion that the ecological context is the basis of the classroom and therefore determines what the children will learn about math, language arts, and science. Therefore, college programs must provide courses that are limited in size, to allow for personal attention and support.

Teachers should also receive support and guidance on social issues from their supervisors. It would also seem important for the teacher to be evaluated on the social environment of the classroom. In one county in Virginia, the evaluation form for teachers, identifies 43 indicators that fall within four categories. Of these 43 indicators, two mention a nurturing environment and positive interactions with the students. This seems to imply that the social environment and the interactions of the students are not valued. If the form does not demonstrate the value of social interactions, then teachers might interpret that to mean that the social development of the students is not important.

The evaluation systems that are currently in place in many school systems are developed at the county and state level. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory would identify these two levels

as the exosystem (county) and the macrosystem (state). In both instances, the teacher is not directly involved in the level but is affected by it. The decisions that occur at those two levels, influence the actions of the teacher in the classroom. The belief system of the teacher is also affected. If the county evaluation form places emphasis on discipline and classroom management, then the teacher will most likely adopt those priorities.

This influence can also be found at the state level. In Virginia, officials at the state level developed and adopted the Standards of Learning (SOL's) that all teachers must follow. Within this macrosystem, decisions are made which affect classroom teachers. The state of Virginia did not issue social SOL's and therefore children's social development is typically overlooked. Not all children can make friends naturally, although this might be the assumption. Educators and those individuals making decisions that affect them, must be mindful of children's social development. In turn, this focus must be shown some value throughout all levels of the system. Therefore, I recommend that the evaluation process for teachers be closely examined.

Future Studies

As this study evolved, several issues arose that I was not able to expand upon within this study. However, they would be worthwhile topics for future endeavors. While I was collecting my data, I did not look at Jennifer's IEP to see what her short term and long term goals were. It would have been interesting to have known whether or not peer relations was included as one of her goals. It would also have been interesting to learn how the teacher was following the IEP. What steps was she taking to make adaptations for Jennifer? If peer relations had been a goal of Jennifer's IEP, then would the teacher have made more of an effort to support and facilitate the relationships? How would this have affected the way that the teacher viewed her support system? In this study, the teacher stated that she had quite a bit of support and she felt that that was one reason inclusion was working within her classroom. Would she have felt as much support if she was expected to facilitate Jennifer's friendships? Exploration of the IEP and the teacher's adherence to it would have provided further insight.

I also believe that it would have been valuable to explore the teacher's belief system. As evident in Bronfenbrenner's theory, a person's macrosystem can influence the way in which they interact with other individuals. It would have been helpful to know the teacher's personal feelings about friendship. As a teacher, her belief system was an important component of her teaching style and the classroom environment that she created. This would be an informative addition to future studies.

Finally, while I was interviewing the three students from the focus classroom, I noticed that each of them identified the school guidance counselor as a person who supported them in their friendships. Due to the time constraints of this study, I was

unable to interview the guidance counselor and gain his perspective. It would have been interesting to have heard his beliefs about friendship and the ways that he facilitated friendships amongst the students at Creekwood Elementary School, specifically those in the third grade classroom.

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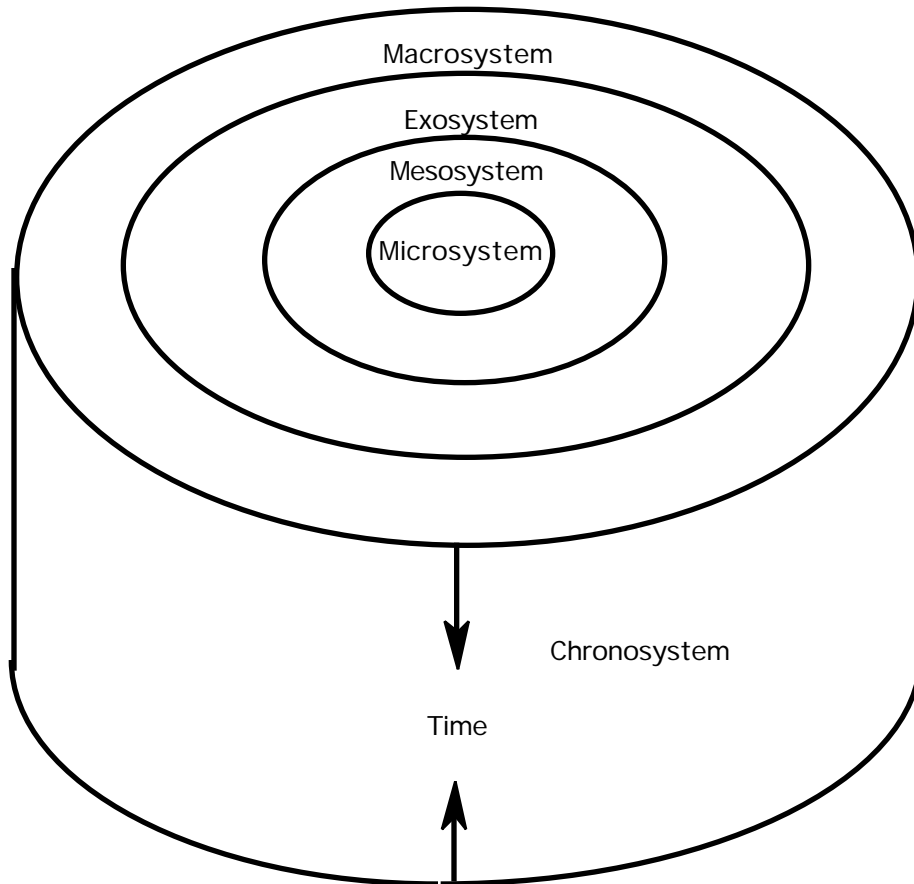
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APPENDIX A

ECOLOGICAL CONTEXTS



APPENDIX B

LETTER TO XX. XXX XXXXXXXX

1615 Kennedy Avenue
XXXXXXXX, VA 24XXX
January 16, 1997

Dr. XXX XXXXXXXX, Assist. Superintendent for Instructional Services
XXXXXXXX XXXXXX Public Schools
XXX XXX Street
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX, VA 24XXX

Dear XX. XXXXXXXX:

My name is Cindy Clemens and I am currently a second year graduate student in Child Development at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am writing you concerning a research project that I would like to conduct in two elementary schools in XXXXXXXX County.

My study will be focusing on inclusion, specifically on the interactions between the teachers and the students. I would like to conduct observations in two, third grade, elementary school classrooms and interview each teacher that is involved with the students in those classes. Each class would be observed 10 times, with each observation lasting approximately 1 1/2 hours. The interviews with the teachers would take place one time, after the observations were complete and would last approximately 1 hour. The only participation necessary from the majority of the children, would be to attend school and participate in the normally planned activities. Three students in each classroom would be interviewed briefly. Parental consent would be on file before the interviews took place. There would be minimal or no risk involved for the children. University approval for this research project is currently being sought from the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects.

I hope that you will give favorable consideration to my proposal and notify me of your decision. I will be more than happy to answer any additional questions that you may have. Please feel free to contact me at XXX-1915.

Sincerely,

Cindy Clemens

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects -Teacher-

Title of Project: Ecological Context of Friendship Development in
an Inclusive Classroom

Investigator: Cynthia L. Clemens

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH/PROJECT

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' roles in facilitating social experiences of children in an inclusive classroom. Children's perceptions of peer interactions and the development of friendships patterns, are of specific interest. The participants in this study will be: one principal, one classroom teacher, and one class of third grade students.

II. PROCEDURES

While conducting this study, the researcher will conduct 10 observations in your class. Each observation will last approximately 1 1/2 hours. Throughout the observations, field notes will be written and pictures of the class environment will be taken. You will be interviewed one time for approximately one hour in a location that is suitable to you and the researcher. The interview will be audiotaped and your identity will remain confidential.

III. RISKS

The risks of harm anticipated in this research are not greater than those encountered in daily life.

IV. BENEFITS OF THIS PROJECT

You will benefit from the study because you will be able to read the results of the study. This will provide you with additional information about your students and a better understanding of friendship, which might inform strategies. No promise of other benefits is being made to encourage you to participate.

V. EXTENT OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

You will be identified by a pseudonym to allow anonymity. The researcher will be the only person who knows the name that is associated with the pseudonym. That information will be kept at the home of the researcher and will be stored in a locking file drawer. It will be destroyed after the defense of the thesis. After being transcribed, the audiotape of the interview will be sealed in an envelope and stored at the home of the researcher in a locking file drawer. The only person who will have access to the tape, will be the researcher. The audiotape will be erased after the defense of the thesis.

VI. COMPENSATION

There will not be any compensation for participation in this study.

VII. FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without any penalty. You are also free to decline answering any questions.

VIII. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Family and Child Development and the Montgomery County Public School System.

IX. SUBJECT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

- *being interviewed one time
- *having my classroom observed ten times

X. SUBJECT'S PERMISSION

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Cynthia Clemens (Investigator)	951-1915
Dr. Cosby Rogers (Advisor)	951-2657
H. Thomas Hurd, Ph.D. (Chair of the IRB)	231-5281

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents,

My name is Cindy Clemens and I am a graduate student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am majoring in Child Development and I am certified to teach NK-5. I am currently working on my thesis and I am conducting my study in your child's classroom at Harding Avenue Elementary School. In my study, I am exploring peer relationships in an inclusive classroom.

I have attached two consent forms and a friendship scale to this letter. The parental consent form should explain exactly what my study will involve and how your child will be participating. If you agree for your child to participate, I would appreciate you signing the consent form and returning it to your child's teacher. After talking to your child about the study, if he/she agrees to participate, then he/she can sign the consent form at home. In order for your child to participate, I will need to have both the parental and child consent form. After your child agrees to participate, please ask your child to fill out the friendship scale. The scale should be returned with the two consent forms no later than May 8.

If you have any other questions concerning this study, please contact me at XXX-1915.

Sincerely,

Cindy Clemens

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent for Participants
of Investigative Projects
-Parent-

Title of Project: Ecological Context of Friendship Development in
an Inclusive Classroom

Investigator: Cynthia L. Clemens

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH/PROJECT

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' roles in facilitating social experiences of children in an inclusive classroom. Children's perceptions of peer interactions and the development of friendships patterns, are of specific interest. The participants in this study will be: one principal, one classroom teacher, and one class of third grade students.

II. PROCEDURES

During this study, your child will be answering some questions about friendship.

III. RISKS

The risks of harm anticipated in this research are not greater than those encountered in daily life.

IV. BENEFITS OF THIS PROJECT

Your child will benefit from this study, because he/she will be able to express his/her feelings about friendship. No promise of other benefits is being made to encourage your child to participate.

V. EXTENT OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

No one will ever know your child's name. When the study is written, a false name will be used instead of your child's name. All of the answers that your child gives, will be kept in a locked drawer.

VI. COMPENSATION

There will not be any gift for participation in this study.

VII. FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW

Your child can stop participating in this study at any time without any penalty. Your child can also refuse to answer any questions.

VIII. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Family and Child Development and the Montgomery County Public School System.

IX. SUBJECT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

I voluntarily agree for my child to participate in this study. My child has the following job:

*answering some questions about friendship

X. SUBJECT'S PERMISSION

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I understand what I have read and I agree for my child to participate in this project.

If my child participates, he/she may stop at any time without penalty. I agree for him/her to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Cynthia Clemens (Investigator)	951-1915
Dr. Cosby Rogers (Advisor)	951-2657
H. Thomas Hurd, Ph.D. (Chair of the IRB)	231-5281

APPENDIX C

-Child-

Friendship

By: Cynthia L. Clemens

This will be read to the children by their parents:

Ms. Clemens wants to learn about how kids get to be friends. Your principal and your teacher and the other kids in your class are going to help her. She has been in your class for a few days and now she would like for you to answer some questions.

No one but Ms. Clemens will ever know how you answered the questions. If you decide you don't want to answer the questions, then it is okay to stop. If this is okay with you, Ms. Clemens would like for you to write your name on the line so she will know for sure you said it was okay.

ACTUAL CONSENT FORM BELOW:

I agree to be in the project about friends. I am willing to answer questions about making friends. If I decide I don't want to answer any questions, I can quit.

Signature

Date

If I have any questions, I can have my parents call one of these people.

Cynthia Clemens (Investigator)	951-1915
Dr. Cosby Rogers (Advisor)	951-2657
H. Thomas Hurd, Ph.D. (Chair of the IRB)	231-5281

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent for Participants of Investigative Projects -Parent of Child Interviewee-

Title of Project: Ecological Context of Friendship Development in
an Inclusive Classroom

Investigator: Cynthia L. Clemens

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH/PROJECT

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' roles in facilitating social experiences of children in an inclusive classroom. Children's perceptions of peer interactions and the development of friendships patterns, are of specific interest. The participants in this study will be: one principal, one classroom teacher, and one class of third grade students.

II. PROCEDURES

Your child will be interviewed one time for approximately 15 minutes in a location that is suitable to you and the researcher. The interview will be audiotaped and the tape will kept in a locked drawer. The tape will be erased after my thesis has been accepted.

III. RISKS

The risks of harm anticipated in this research are not greater than those encountered in daily life.

IV. BENEFITS OF THIS PROJECT

Your child will benefit from this study, because he/she will get to express his/her feelings about friendship. During the interview, your child will get to talk openly and express his/her ideas. No promise of other benefits is being made to encourage your child to participate.

V. EXTENT OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

No one will ever know your child's name. When the study is written, a false name will be used instead of your child's name. The audiotape will be kept in a locked drawer.

VI. COMPENSATION

There will not be any gift for participation in this study.

VII. FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW

Your child can stop participating in this study at any time without any penalty. Your child can also refuse to answer any questions.

VIII. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the

Department of Family and Child Development and the Montgomery County Public School System.

IX. SUBJECT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

I voluntarily agree for my child to participate in this study, if he/she chooses to do so. If he/she agrees, my child has the following jobs:

*being interviewed 1 time for approximately 15 minutes

X. SUBJECT'S PERMISSION

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I understand what I have read and I agree for my child to participate in this project.

If my child participates, he/she may stop at any time without penalty. I understand that it is his/her responsibility to obey by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Cynthia Clemens (Investigator)	951-1915
Dr. Cosby Rogers (Advisor)	951-2657
H. Thomas Hurd, Ph.D. (Chair of the IRB)	231-5281

APPENDIX C

-Child Interviewee-

Friendship

By: Cynthia L. Clemens

Verbally this will be said to the children:

I want to learn about how kids get to be friends. Your principal and your teacher and the other kids in your class are going to help me. I have been in your class for a few days and now I would like to talk to you and a few other kids in your class. I also want to ask you some questions.

In this project it is okay to talk about how you feel. No one but me will ever know what you said. If you decide you don't want to talk to me about how you make friends, then just tell me and I won't ask any more questions. If this is okay with you, I would like for you to write your name on the line so I will know for sure you said it was okay.

ACTUAL CONSENT FORM BELOW:

I agree to be in the project about friends. I am willing to answer questions about making friends. If I decide I don't want to answer any questions, I can quit.

Signature

Date

If I have any questions, I can have my parents call one of these people.

Cynthia Clemens (Investigator)	951-1915
Dr. Cosby Rogers (Advisor)	951-2657
H. Thomas Hurd, Ph.D. (Chair of the IRB)	231-5281

APPENDIX C
Informed Consent for Participants
of Investigative Projects
-Principal-

Title of Project: Ecological Context of Friendship Development in
an Inclusive Classroom

Investigator: Cynthia L. Clemens

I. THE PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH/PROJECT

The purpose of this study is to explore teachers' roles in facilitating social experiences of children in an inclusive classroom. Children's perceptions of peer interactions and the development of friendships patterns, are of specific interest. The participants in this study will be: one principal, one classroom teacher, and one class of third grade students.

II. PROCEDURES

You will be interviewed one time for approximately 30 minutes in a location that is suitable to you and the researcher. The interview will be audiotaped and your identity will remain confidential.

III. RISKS

The risks of harm anticipated in this study are not greater than those encountered in daily life.

IV. BENEFITS OF THIS PROJECT

This study will provide you with information about the peer friendships and the strategies that one of your teachers is using to facilitate them. No promise of other benefits is being made to encourage you to participate.

V. EXTENT OF ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

You will be identified by a pseudonym to allow anonymity. The name of the school will also be identified by a pseudonym. The researcher will be the only person who knows the names that are associated with the pseudonyms. That information will be kept at the home of the researcher and will be stored in a locking file drawer. It will be destroyed after the defense of the thesis. After being transcribed, the audiotape of the interview will be sealed in an envelope and stored at the home of the researcher in a locking file drawer. The only person who will have access to the tape, will be the researcher. The audiotape will be erased after the defense of the thesis.

VI. COMPENSATION

There will not be any compensation for participation in this study.

VII. FREEDOM TO WITHDRAW

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time without any penalty. You are also free to decline answering any

questions.

VIII. APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Family and Child Development and the Montgomery County Public School System.

IX. SUBJECT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:

*being interviewed 1 time

X. SUBJECT'S PERMISSION

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project.

If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty. I agree to abide by the rules of this project.

Signature

Date

Should I have any questions about this research or its conduct, I may contact:

Cynthia Clemens (Investigator)	951-1915
Dr. Cosby Rogers (Advisor)	951-2657
H. Thomas Hurd, Ph.D. (Chair of the IRB)	231-5281

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHER

Demographic Information

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Age: 20-25 26-30 31-40 41-50 51+

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your classroom and the children that are in it.
2. Is this class any different from previous classes you have taught? How?
3. How would you describe a "successful" inclusion program? What resources and/or supports do you feel are necessary for inclusion to be successful? Are these supports and/or resources available?
4. Describe some of the main strategies you use in your classroom that relate to child-child interaction?
5. Are the strategies that you use affected by the availability/unavailability of supports and/or resources?
6. What do you feel your role is as the classroom teacher in terms of social relationships? What responsibilities do you take care of?
7. What is the importance of peer friendships in your classroom? Do you initiate any activities to support these friendships? If so, what are they?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN

1. Tell me about your friends in your class at school.
2. How did you become friends? What makes him/her your friend?
3. How do you feel about being in a classroom with children that have disabilities?
4. Is there anything different about this classroom compared to other classes that you have been in? Tell me about those differences.
5. Does your teacher help the children with disabilities? How do you feel when your teacher does this?
6. Does your teacher plan activities that help you make friends? If so, what do you like/dislike about these activities? Can you give some examples?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPAL

1. How would you define success in an inclusion program? What resources and/or supports do you feel are necessary for inclusion to be successful? Do you feel these supports and/or resources are available?
2. Are the inclusive strategies that are implemented in this school, affected by the availability/unavailability of these supports and/or resources?
3. How important are friendships within the classroom?
4. What role do you feel the teacher should play in relation to peer friendships? Are the teachers aware of your expectations?
5. What type of social environment do you try to create? Is the environment any different, when there are children with disabilities included in the classrooms?

APPENDIX F

PILOT STUDY - TEACHER

Demographic Information

1. Gender: Female
2. Age: 39 years old
3. Current Grade: 2nd
4. # of Years Teaching: 10
5. # of Years Teaching in Inclusion: 4

Interview Responses

In Amy's second grade classroom, she had one child that was identified as Developmentally Delayed in preschool and as a slow learner and learning disabled in elementary school. She also had some children that were very close to being qualified for special education services. Most of these children had ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) tendencies. There were several gifted children in the classroom also. In Amy's math class, which was the lower group, there were a few children who were identified as learning disabled. Amy felt that she knew some things about disabilities, but she said that she needed to know more. She was aware of the identification process for learning disabilities. In the process, a teacher looks at the way a child processes information and the difference between a child's achievement and ability. A child can also be identified as learning disabled if there is a difference between their ability in math and language arts. Amy also stated that she was aware of the following classifications, but did not know that much about them: emotionally disturbed, autistic, mental handicaps, epileptic, physically impaired, visually impaired, hearing impaired and multiply handicapped. When asked where she had gotten her information, Amy stated that most of it came from her personal and professional experience. She has attended child study meetings, asked questions and done reading on disabilities. She remembered that she had one class in college about disabilities but she could not remember learning anything in it. There were about 300 people in the class and asking questions was not feasible.

From talking with Amy, I could tell that she had very positive feelings about children with disabilities and inclusive education. She commented that she really enjoyed teaching children with disabilities and compared it to a puzzle that you had to figure out how to put together. Amy believes that she learns things from the disabled children and that their peers learn from being educated with them in the same classroom. In order to help the children with disabilities, the regular education children have to rephrase their learning and find ways to help the disabled child understand. She feels that the "normal" children are enriched by being educated with children who have disabilities. In her opinion, they learn that people with disabilities have strengths and weaknesses just like they do. Amy

believes that they learn a lot. The disabled children also bring things to the peer relationship because at times they can help their peers and be a leader.

When asked if her classroom was different when she had children with disabilities in it, she said that it was. However, she believed that the class would be different even if she did not have children who were identified as being disabled. Her feeling was that the class make-up changes based on the personalities that the children have. All children have strengths and weaknesses, but you expect the same things from the class overall. She commented that the expectations that the teacher has, determines how the children react and behave in the classroom. Amy also noted that the children that typically cause problems in the classroom, are not the identified children.

Amy had definite feelings about who had the most influence on the feelings of the non-disabled children in the classroom. Although a child's peers, parents and experience influence what they do, the classroom atmosphere is set by the teacher. The way that the teacher sets expectations and treats the children, has a very big influence on how the children treat those that have disabilities. For example, if a teacher allows the less tolerant children to harass the children with disabilities, then it will continue to happen. If the teacher models the attitude that it is okay to have a disability and/or be different in other ways, then the children will pick on up that attitude. In fact, Amy believes that if the children demonstrate an "okay" attitude, that they will begin to challenge their parents' and peers' beliefs (if they are different).

Finally, Amy stated that she would prefer to teach in an included classroom. One reason was that having children with disabilities in the classroom, enriches everything about the educational experience. A second reason was that the "real world" will be an included environment. If the children do not learn about disabilities in school, where else will they learn it. She also stated that children with disabilities model the behavior that they see. If they are in a contained classroom, they will not have a chance to see "normal" behavior. In an included classroom, they are exposed to many behaviors and many different types of children. If Amy could choose the classroom that she would teach in, it would be an included classroom.

The interview with Amy was a very positive experience. She had many ideas about inclusive education and how it should be done. She felt very good about her previous experiences with included children and was looking forward to more positive experiences in the classroom.

APPENDIX G

SOCIOMETRIC SCALE FOR PEER INTERACTION

Activity Category	High Preference	Low Preference
Child you would like to sit next to in class	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Child you would like to work in a group with		
Child you would like to sit with at lunch		
Child's home that you would like to visit		
Child you would like to have come to your house and play		
Child you would like to sit with on a class trip		
Child you would like to play with on the playground		

Curriculum Vita

Cynthia Louise Clemens

Education

Master of Science, Family and Child Development

December 1997

Area of Specialization: Child Development

College of Human Resources and Education

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Blacksburg, Virginia

GPA: 3.8/4.0

Thesis Title: Ecological Context of Friendship Development
in an Inclusive Classroom

Bachelor of Science, Family and Child Development

May 1995

Area of Specialization: Early Childhood Education

College of Human Resources

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Blacksburg, Virginia

GPA: 3.8/4.0

Experience

First Grade Teacher

August 1997 - present

Montgomery County Public School System

Belview Elementary School

Radford, Virginia

Graduate Assistant

August 1995 - May 1997

Virginia Tech Child Development Laboratory School

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Blacksburg, Virginia

Student Teacher

August 1994 - May 1995

Montgomery County Public School System

Montgomery County, Virginia

Presentations

New River Valley Association for the Education of Young Children

October 1997

"Hopping Down the Bunny Trail" (Reggio Emilio Approach)

Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education

March 1997

"Emergent Curriculum"

New River Valley Association for the Education of Young Children

November 1996

"Children's Choices: How Do We Know What They Like?"

Nature Through the Eyes of a Child: An Exhibit of Children's Work/Teacher's Work from the New River Valley

March-June 1996

"We are Scientists"

"Tommy the Bear Travels the World"