BLAND, CAROL MASON, Ph.D, A Case Study of General Education Teacher Use of Picture Books to Support Inclusive Practice in the Primary Grades of an Inclusive Elementary School (2013).
Drs. William Bursuck and Judith Niemeyer. 129 pages

Scholars advocate the use of children's literature to help build awareness, understanding, and acceptance of disability in elementary school classrooms. Moreover, children's literature has been used as a component of disability awareness studies seeking to improve relationships between students with disabilities and their typically developing peers. Despite this interest in the potential for children's literature to positively impact connections between children with and without disabilities, there is a lack of empirical data describing general education teacher use of children's literature to support inclusive practice. This study was conducted to fill this gap in the professional literature.

General education teachers in Pre-K through Grade 3 classrooms (n=10) in an inclusive elementary school were interviewed to understand their views about school culture and climate, strategies for reading aloud, and knowledge of inclusive picture books, the format of children's literature most often read aloud in the primary grades. The results of the study suggested that teachers are trained to use interactive read-aloud practices but have little knowledge about picture books that feature characters with disabilities. Implications for practice include professional preparation of pre-service teachers and in-service professional development for practicing teachers regarding guidelines for selecting inclusive pictures books and how these books can be integrated into routine classroom read alouds.

A CASE STUDY OF GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER USE OF PICTURE

BOOKS TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE PRACTICE IN

THE PRIMARY GRADES OF AN INCLUSIVE

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL


by

Carol Mason Bland


A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of The Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy


Greensboro
2013


Approved by

Dr. William Bursuck
Committee Co-Chair


Dr. Judith Niemeyer
Committee Co-Chair

This dissertation written by Carol Mason Bland has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of The Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Committee Co-Chair_____

Committee Co-Chair_____

Committee Members_____

_____

_____

_____
Date of Acceptance by Committee

_____
Date of Final Oral Examination

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

# LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Children with disabilities are widely included in general education classrooms.

The 31th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act, 2008 (2012) documented that 63% of children with

disabilities ages 3 through 5 and 95% of school-age students with disabilities spend at

least part of the school day in a general education classroom with their typical peers.

Given the presence of children with disabilities in general education classrooms and the

common practice of shared reading and interactive read- aloud in the primary grades,

teachers should incorporate high quality inclusive picture books into their classroom

libraries and daily planning to help build inclusive classroom communities (Andrews,

1998; Gavigan & Kurtts, 2011; Hoffman, 2011; Wiseman, 2011).

**Conceptual Framework**

The benefits of reading aloud to children have been widely reported (Fox, 2008;

Krashen, 2004; Trelease, 2006). The heart of this study comes from  Horning's (2010)

description of sharing picture books:

> . . . the child's chance at experiencing any picture book as a whole is completely
> dependent on someone who is willing and able to read the text aloud. Because
> picture books function best as a shared experience between a fluent reader and a
> pre-reader – generally an adult and a young child – in order for a picture book to
> find true success, it must be *good enough* to spark this symbiotic relationship. (p.
> 87)

The conceptual framework for this study emerged from the relationship Horning (2010) described and is grounded in the work of Sipe (1998), Lambert (2006), and Snow (2002). Sipe (1998) explained the picture book experience as a "never-ending sequence" (p. 102) of the reader and viewer/listener interpreting the text in terms of pictures and the pictures in terms of text, thus inextricably linking reader, viewer/listener, and picture book in semiotic triangle. Lambert (2006) also constructed a triad of elements (reader, listener, and picture book) that contribute to the picture book experience. Horning (2010) focused on the experiential nature of picture book read aloud.

Every read-aloud experience occurs in a particular context. Snow (2002) noted the importance of the socio-cultural context for learning to reading comprehension, which can be considered a purpose for reading aloud. Accordingly, the socio-cultural context of the school environment and the learning context of the general education classroom is incorporated into the conceptual framework for this study. The influence of nested environments on the learner is also part of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This relationship between the school culture, classroom environment, learning context of read-aloud time, and the reader, listener, and picture book is illustrated in Figure 1.

This conceptual framework is the embodiment of this study. It provides the foundation for describing the problem to be addressed in terms of the representation of disabilities in children's literature (the books), the activity and purpose of reading aloud (reader and listener), and the learning context of the inclusive primary grade classroom (the socio-cultural context).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
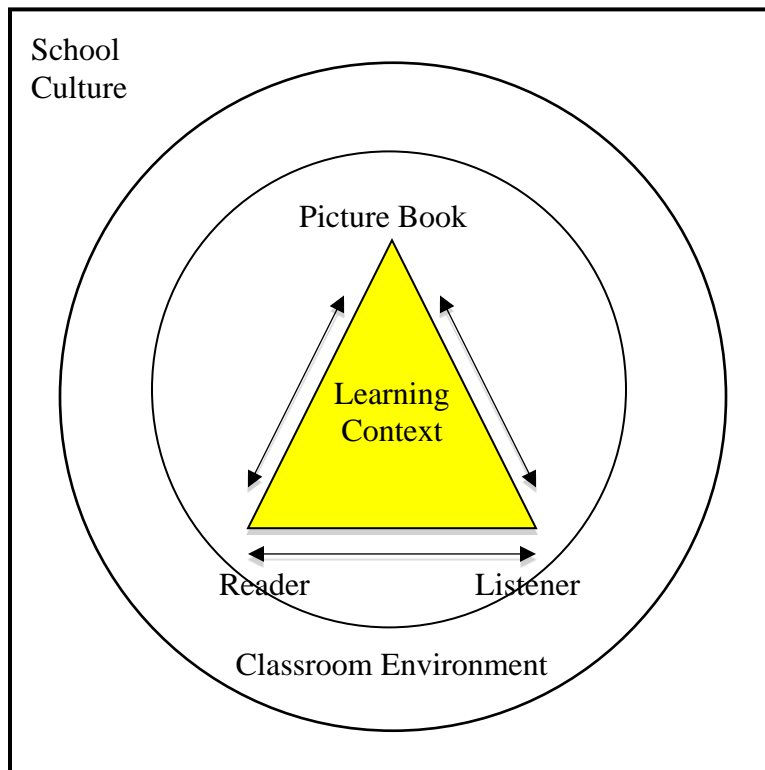


Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (2005), Lambert (2006), Sipe (1998), and Snow (2002).

## Statement of the Problem

The representation of people with disabilities in juvenile literature has been

analyzed by scholars in many fields including early childhood education, guidance and

counseling, library science, sociology, special education, teacher education, and nursing

(Beckett, Ellison, Barrett, & Shah, 2010; Gavigan & Kurtts, 2011; Haesler, 2009;

Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006; Kitterman, 2002; Maich & Kean, 2004; Prater, 2000;

Robinson, Hughes, & Manning, 2002; Wopperer, 2011). Beckett, et al. (2010) identified

problematic themes in children's literature from a sociological standpoint. They

discovered outdated language referencing disability, sympathy for characters with

disabilities, magic cures for disabilities, identification of the character with a disability as a curiosity, and suggestions that disability is a consequence of poor judgment, character, or behavior.

Conversely, other scholars described the desirable characteristics of children's books that consider disability (Andrews, 1998; Blaska, 2004; Heim, 1994; Matthew and Clow, 2007; Smith-D'Arezzo, 2003; Wopperer, 2011). Bland and Gann (2013) synthesized the previous work and developed the following evaluative criteria regarding picture books with characters with disabilities that are appropriate for read aloud: these books should portray disability in an accurate and balanced manner with multidimensional characters that have typical interactions with others, are engaged in meaningful relationships and situations, and written in honest, positive, respectful language.

Reading aloud to children is an important and valuable activity (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985; Fox, 2001; Krashen, 2004; Trelease, 2006). Read aloud is often used in early childhood and primary grade classrooms to build language skills and vocabulary (Blewitt, Rump, Shealy, & Cook, 2009; Crafton, Brennan, & Silvers, 2007; Lobron & Selman, 2007; Silverman, 2007; Wasik & Bond, 2001; Zucker, Justice, Piasta, & Kaderavek, 2010). Conventions of print can also be taught and reinforced through read aloud (Mol, Bus, & deJong, 2009; Sipe, 2000). In addition, comprehension skills can be honed through read aloud (Lane & Wright, 2007; Lobron & Selman, 2007). Dialogic read aloud can help develop language skills (Flynn, 2011). Hoffman (2011) and Wiseman (2011) suggested that interactive read aloud can not only

build vocabulary and comprehension skills but also build a sense of community in the classroom through the co-construction of knowledge between teachers and students.

This application of reading aloud with a purpose outside the realm of reading and literacy can be defined as bibliotherapy, an approach that uses books to effect affective outcomes such as understanding, coping with challenges, and promoting social-emotional growth (Gavigan & Kurtts, 2011; Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006; Lu, 2008; Maich & Kean, 2004). Haeseler (2009), Maich & Kean (2004), and Robinson, Hughes, & Manning (2002) explored helping children cope with difficult situations through bibliotherapy. Haeseler (2009) discussed the benefits of literature to support children with disabilities, children who have experienced loss or abuse, and children who struggle with identity in the community. Gavigan and Kurtts (2011), Kitterman (2002), and Prater (2000) advocated using literature to teach children about disabilities and made recommendations of specific titles. Iaquinta and Hispky (2006) and Maich & Kean (2004) explained the benefits of using literature in schools to cope with social emotional challenges in inclusive classrooms.

Inclusive classrooms are the instructional setting (for at least part of the school day) for 65.1% of children with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 5, and 97.8% of students with disabilities between the ages of 6 and 21, according to the 31th Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2012). Beyond placement, authentic inclusion hinges on access to and engaged participation in society with appropriate supports, resulting in a sense of belonging (DEC/NAEYC, 2009) and helping children with disabilities be "just one of the gang"

(Phelan, 2000). Andrews (1998) coined the phrase "inclusion literature" (p. 420) to explain an inclusive philosophy in children's literature described by Mellon (1989):

> The best approach to disability in juvenile books is one in which aspects of the disability are revealed, not as the main focus of the book, but through the unfolding of a story. In this way, characters can be developed as people who happen to be disabled, just as they happen to have red hair, or happen to hate spinach, or happen to be quick-tempered. (p.47)

Using these books during typical classroom read aloud may facilitate the development of inclusive classroom learning communities (Andrews, 1998; Beckett, Ellison, Barrett, & Shah, 2010; Gavigan & Kurtts, 2011; Haeseler, 2009; Kitterman, 2002).

Awareness of disability in children's literature, effective read-aloud practices, bibliotherapy applications, educational placement of children with disabilities in general education classrooms, and inclusion literature have been studied in isolation. Each body of literature describes how educators can use these separate ideas in school settings. However, there is an absence of empirical research exploring how educators apply this collective knowledge to read aloud in inclusive general education classrooms. Therefore, this study will investigate the following research question: How do general education teachers in the primary grades (Pre-K – Grade 3) use picture books to support inclusive practice?

The following sub-questions will be explored to fully investigate the primary research question:

    a. How does the book selection process support inclusive practice?

    b. How do the read-aloud strategies support inclusive practice?

6

In order to make clear the meanings of the language used to answer these research questions, it is necessary to specifically define the terms frequently used in the remainder of this work.

## Definitions of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, a learning community refers to a cohesive, caring group of students and teachers with a shared purpose whose members actively participate and feel connected to each other (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Shaps, 1997). This study focuses on inclusive classrooms and learning communities in Pre-K through Grade 3, where children are likely to be read to as part of classroom routines (Hoffman, Roser, & Battle, 1993).

Inclusion concerns the full access, engagement, and participation of children with and without disabilities in a wide range of activities and contexts that contribute to a sense of belonging, membership, positive social development, and learning to help all children reach their full potential (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Children's literature should facilitate and nurture an inclusive classroom community.

Inclusive literature is defined as books and other printed media that accurately portray characters with disabilities who "share the same kinds of life experiences, dreams, successes, and failures" (Andrews, 1998, p. 423) as persons without disabilities. Moreover, inclusive literature describes situations that foster understanding and acceptance without cultivating negative stereotypes (Andrews, 1998).

A picture book is a specific format of children's book that combines text and illustrations to form a kind of "dance" (Lambert, 2006, p. 33). The pictures and the text

complement each other to tell the story. Picture books are supposed to be read aloud, while children listen to the words and view the artwork; children read the pictures while the adult reads the words (Lambert, 2006; Lukens, 2007). Picture books are of special interest to this research study subject based upon evidence that picture books are the most frequently shared books between teachers and their students during routine classroom read aloud in the primary grades (Hoffman, Roser, & Battle, 1993).

Read aloud refers to a fluent reader reading a children's book aloud to a group of students to entertain them or improve their understanding of the world around them (Lukens, 2007). Only materials for children read aloud by certified general education teachers, not teaching assistants or other support staff, and the read-aloud strategies they employ will be examined by this research study.

**Summary**

This introductory chapter presented the study to be undertaken in a conceptual framework based on the relationship and shared experience of a reader, listeners, and picture books in the socio-cultural context of an inclusive primary grade classroom in an inclusive elementary school. The research problem concerns the lack of empirical evidence to suggest how teachers use picture books to support inclusive practice when not being directed by researchers interested in disability awareness programs. Research questions were listed and key terms were defined.

The remainder of this research proposal includes: Chapter II, a review of the related literature; Chapter III, an explanation of the research design and methodology; Chapter IV, an analysis of data; Chapter V, a discussion of the findings. Through

qualitative case study methodology, the results of this study may influence teacher

preparation and professional development regarding teacher use of picture books to

support inclusive practice in the primary grades.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

**Introduction**

Chapter I identified an absence of empirical research regarding the way teachers in the primary grades independently use picture books to promote understanding, awareness, and acceptance of students with disabilities. This is a noteworthy oversight, given Alexander and Entwisle's (1988) report on the importance of the first few years of school to build the foundation for children's attitudes about their future educational experiences. Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison (2006) and the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities identified a lack of student engagement as a key contributor to dropout rates for students with and without disabilities. A strong foundation of engaged participation built in the early school years may lead to improved outcomes for students with and without disabilities (Meadan & Monda-Amaya, 2008; Yazbeck, McVilly, & Parmenter, 2004). An intentional pattern of reading aloud and discussing inclusive children's literature in the primary grades may contribute to students' positive attitudes toward students with disabilities, enhancing the overall school experience for all students (Gavigan & Kurtts, 2011; Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006).

This review of the relevant literature is organized according to the conceptual framework described and illustrated in Chapter I based upon the work of Lambert (2006), Sipe (1998), and Snow (2002) and their representation of the complex relationship

between the book, the reader (or teacher), and the listener (or child), all happening in a particular social-emotional context (or classroom) (See Figure 1). First, the legal mandate for educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment will be established. Next, the relevant literature regarding children in the primary grades, their early attitudes about school and their perceptions of peers with disabilities will be explored.  The context of the read-aloud activity is studied for evidence of positive affective outcomes including acceptance, understanding, attitudes towards disabilities, influence on self-image, and evidence of an increased sense of belonging and feeling of engaged participation in a learning community for all students. The activities of the reader (or teacher) in preparation for reading aloud, identifying a purpose for reading aloud, and effective read-aloud strategies will be reviewed. The use of picture books will then be described and the topic of disability in children's literature will be reviewed within an historical context both before and after the passage of the Public Law 94-142 in 1975, the law currently known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004). Content analyses and criteria for selecting appropriate picture books will also be described. Finally, teacher use of inclusive literature will be discussed.

## Educational Placements for Students with Disabilities

President Gerald R. Ford signed the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142) into law in 1975. This landmark legislation evolved into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) that guarantees the right to a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to all school children in the United States. The least restrictive environment clause is often the subject of debate

as schools make decisions based on a mandated continuum of placements for serving students with disabilities. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2001), commonly known as "No Child Left Behind," ensures that students with disabilities have access to the general education curriculum. This combination of directives for student placement in the least restrictive environment and access to the general education curriculum has resulted in an increasingly widespread inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

The general education classroom is the context for student learning for at least part of the school day for 95% of school-age students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Within that context, teachers and students in the primary grades interact with children's literature during teacher read-aloud (Hoffman, Roser, & Battle, 1993). The relationship between the teacher, students, books, and the educational context is illustrated in Figure 1 in Chapter I.

## Children's Early Attitudes Toward School

The early school years are critical to the formation of students' attitudes about and perceptions of the institution of school (Alexander & Entwisle,1988; Valeski, & Stipek, 2001). Birch and Ladd (1997) suggested strong, caring teacher-child relationships are important to academic success and the quality of children's feelings about school. Kindergarteners and first graders who believe their teachers care about them are more likely to have positive feelings about school. Valeski & Stipek (2001) suggested that positive relationships with teachers in kindergarten and first grade may also lead to improved academic outcomes.

Alexander and Entwisle (1988) posited that children's attitudes about school that guide their trajectories of academic achievement are firmly in place by third grade. In fact, it is unlikely that any typical school experience after third grade will change a student's path to school success (Pianta & Steinberg, 1992). Given the established importance of the primary grades, creating a context for learning of authentic inclusion for all children is a significant need that needs to be addressed by teachers in PreK – third grade classrooms.

## Context for Learning

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory focuses on the context of learning but does not fully describe the setting in which learning takes place and the activities that most successfully support student engagement and learning. Battistich and colleagues identified features of caring classroom communities in elementary schools. Their definition of classroom community occurs when, "members (a) know, care about, and support one another and (b) have the opportunity to participate actively in classroom decision-making, planning, and goal-setting" (Solomon, Watson, Battistich, Schaps, and Delucchi, 1996, p. 722). This reference to active participation echoes the DEC/NAEYC (2009) definition of inclusion which calls for engaged participation for students with disabilities. For elementary school students, the classroom and school community where they spend the majority of their days is important for their social, emotional, and academic development. Therefore it is important for teachers and school leaders to understand the factors that create caring classroom communities where all students feel accepted, valued, and competent.

**Effective Teacher Practices**

Battistich, Solomon, Watson, and Schaps (1997) identified specific teacher behaviors that enhance students' sense of belonging in a school community, such as conveying warmth and support, promoting cooperation, encouraging student thinking and discussion, emphasizing prosocial values, and limiting the use of extrinsic controls. This study listed specific teacher behaviors, but other researchers documented the value of teacher-child relationships in school adjustment, acceptance, and belonging.

The effect of normative teacher support on engagement, acceptance, and belonging of low-achieving first graders was studied by Hughes, Zhang, and Hill (2006). They found that regardless of gender or ethnicity students in supportive, accepting, engaged classrooms model the teacher's acceptance of peers. This finding is critical to the inclusion of children with disabilities in the general education setting. We may infer that if students model the teacher's acceptance of all students that would include ALL peers, even the children with disabilities.

Baker (2006) investigated a similar situation regarding typical children and those with developmental difficulties and learning challenges in elementary school. She found that typical children benefitted from warm, nurturing teacher-child relationships. Children with developmental difficulties had fewer behavior problems, better school adjustment, and higher achievement when they had the protective effect of a close teacher relationship. Interestingly, the same was not true for students with learning challenges. Baker suggested that the benefits to those students were manifested in social adjustment and improved behaviors. This finding lends support to the importance of teacher-child

relationships regarding acceptance and belonging. An important element of the learning context and a vehicle for teacher practice in inclusive classrooms may be picture books that include characters with disabilities, the topic of the next section.

## Disabilities in Picture Books

Pictures books provide important insights into a society's beliefs and values (Saunders, 2004). Picture books were specifically chosen as a focus of this study based upon evidence that picture books are the most frequently shared books between teachers and their students during routine classroom read aloud in the primary grades (Hoffman, Roser, & Battle, 1993). Horning (2010) explained that picture books should not be confused with books for beginning readers. A picture book should be shared between a fluent reader and a prereader in an experience that creates a relationship between reader, listener, and text. This portion of the literature review explores the defining qualities of picture books, diversity and disability in children's literature, historical content analyses of disability in children's books, and selection criteria for disability literature for children and inclusive picture books.

### Defining Qualities of Picture Books

The format designation of the picture book is relatively recent. The first American picture book was *Million of Cats* (Gág, 1928). Gág's inventive illustrations changed the way words and pictures tell a story (Horning, 2010). Since that time literary scholars have recognized the essential interplay between text and pictures that make picture books a unique literary format (Bang, 2000; Hoppe, 2004; Horning, 2010; Lambert, 2006; Lukens, 2007; Olney & Cushing, 1935; Schickedanz & Collins, 2012; Serafini, 2012;

Sipe, 1998, 2000, 2012; Wolfenbarger & Sipe, 2007). A picture book is more than simply pairing text with pleasing pictures; it is a complex transaction between words and illustrations (Sipe,1998). Moreover, Sipe (1998) used the term synergy to define a relationship in which pictures and text together create a level of meaning in the mind of the reader and listener, which is more than the sum of its parts. This co-construction of meaning is grounded in the conceptual framework of this study which inextricably connects the picture book, the reader, and the listener within a specific socio-cultural context (Lambert, 2006; Snow, 2002). From this foundation, picture books can be examined further in order to fully understand the nature of the books targeted in this study.

In an incomplete manuscript published after his death, Sipe (2012) analyzed picture books as metaphors, theoretical constructs, and phenomenological occurrence. Considering pictures books as metaphors, Sipe (2012) made comparisons between musical qualities of the language (rhythm and syncopation) and the duet between text and illustrations. Sipe also compared picture books to plays (words as the script and the pictures as the set, lights, and movement of the characters), to textiles (words and pictures woven together to create a single story), and to the science of ecology (every element relates to every other element). However, Sipe recognized that thinking of picture books only in metaphors does not fully explain the complexities of the form. Theoretical constructs such as irony can occur when text and illustrations portray ideas that are dissonant, incongruous, or contradictory. Overall, Sipe (1998, 2012) concluded that

picture books constitute a phenomenology of transmediation where one sign system (text) transfers meaning to another (illustrations).

Framed by Sipe's (1998) abstract ideas, Horning (2010) defined contemporary picture books in more concrete terms. Horning explained that a picture book follows a very structured format. Most frequently in 32 pages, a picture book combines the sequential nature of storytelling (Sipe, 1998) through specific patterned language, rhythm, rhyme, repetition, questions, predictability, and pace (Horning, 2010) with the spatial interpretation of visual art (Sipe, 1998) through line, shape, texture, color, and value, composition, media, and style (Horning, 2010). There are usually 15 or 16 segments of text, each moving the plot forward. Moreover, the pages should turn at strategic points in the story (Horning, 2010). Even though this study is focused on disability in picture books, it is important to explore the context of diversity and disability in children's literature overall. Then what is known about the representation of disability in the broad classification of children's literature can be distilled into the preferred qualities to look for in picture books featuring characters with disabilities.

**Diversity and Disability in Children's Literature**

The professional literature focuses on multicultural issues in children's books far more frequently than characters with disabilities. A preliminary search through the Academic Search Complete and ERIC data bases using keywords *multicultural children's literature* and *characters with disabilities in children's literature* revealed approximately nine times more references to multicultural children's literature (Academic Search Complete, 102; ERIC, 143) than characters with disabilities in

children's literature (Academic Search Complete, 12; ERIC, 15). The scholarly references to multicultural children's literature fall into four broad categories: using multicultural literature to bring awareness to the subject of cultural diversity (Cameron, Narahashi, Walter, & Wisniewski, 1992); teaching tolerance and understanding (Rasinski & Padak, 1990; Wan, 2006); analyzing the literary elements of multicultural children's literature, often accompanied by book lists (Harvley-Felder, 2007: Levin, 2007; Winograd, 2011); and describing how educators could use the identified books in classrooms (Cameron, Narahashi, Walter, & Wisniewski, 1992; Lazar & Offenberg, 2011; Morgan, 2009). Several scholars narrowed their investigations to culture-specific groups, such as Arab-Americans (Al-Hazza & Bucher, 2008), Native Americans and Asian cultures (Dowd, 1992), and Japanese children (Kelley, 2008).

Some scholars have advocated for an expansion of diversity in children's literature to include disability. Worotynec (2004) analyzed the New York Public Library's "100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know" for cultural diversity and representation of characters with disabilities. She found 15 of the books contained culturally diverse characters; none of the 100 books included a character with a disability. Beyond multiculturalism, Saunders (2004) noted increased gender equity in British children's literature but slow progress in the inclusion of characters with disabilities. She expressed concern that without quality representations of people with disabilities, we underestimate the power of children's literature to promote positive attitudes and we open the door to misunderstanding. Smith-D'Arezzo (2003) also asserted that diversity in children's literature should not be a racial issue, explaining that advocates for children

with disabilities in education should borrow the pluralistic goals set by leaders in multicultural education and strive to improve awareness, understanding, and acceptance of diversity of ability through children's literature. In increasingly inclusive classrooms, these affective variables may contribute to a sense of belonging and a feeling of community for students with and without disabilities (Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006). The appropriate representation of disability in children's books is critical to meeting these goals and can be understood through content analyses, the subject of the next section.

**Content Analyses of Books Including Characters with Disabilities**

It is helpful to view the representation of characters with disabilities in American children's literature from a historical perspective, both before and after the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142) in 1975. With the legal mandate for increased access to public education and enhanced engagement with typically developing peers, we may expect to see an increase in the number of characters with disabilities in children's literature represented in authentic ways after 1975.

**Disability in children's literature prior to 1975.** A history of disability in children's literature written solely by American authors does not appear in a search of the professional literature. British children's literature in the 19th and 20th centuries, however, has been reviewed for the representation of characters with disabilities (Davidson, Woodill, & Bredberg, 1994; Dowker, 2004; Keith, 2004; Saunders, 2004). These analyses of British literature provide useful historical trends, especially since some British books cited are considered classics in the United States, such as *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens, 1843) and *The Secret Garden* (Burnett, 1911). In addition, Dowker

(2004) and Keith (2004) discussed the representation of disability in books by American authors Eleanor Porter (*Pollyana,* 1913) and Louisa May Alcott (*Little Women*, 1868; *Little Men,* 1871; *Jack and Jill*, 1879). All these books may have influenced American readers' perceptions of disability for more than 100 years.

In the United Kingdom during the 19th and early 20th centuries, there were no children's books written specifically about disabilities. Disability, however, was often used as a literary device to provide tension and conflict or to teach a moral lesson. (Keith, 2004). Characters with vague disabilities were described as sick, crippled, idiot, witless, or mad. Specific disability traits labeled characters as blind, deaf, dumb, or mute (Davidson, Woodill, & Bredberg, 1994). Dowker (2004) classified most characters with disabilities prior to World War I as invalids, such as the character Clara in *Heidi*. Invalids were generally described as innocent and accepting, whose patient suffering would be rewarded with wisdom and a special place in heaven (Dowker, 2004; Davidson, Woodill, & Bredberg, 1994). Occasionally, a disability would be cured by strength of character or when a profound lesson was learned. Few medical explanations were given and successful medical interventions were rare (Dowker, 2004). The acquisition of disability was treated in different ways. For example, congenital disability was believed to be part of God's plan, an unfortunate but common fact of life. Further, a disability developed later in life may have been the result of an accident or poverty but was more often attributed to the carelessness of a drunken parent or stranger.  Characters with disabilities occasionally lived at home but often resided in hospitals, special schools, or institutions

(Davidson, Woodill, & Bredberg, 1994). Over time, the representation of disability in children's literature underwent few changes.

Keith's (2004) analysis of literature for adolescents noted that by the middle of the 20th century disabilities were treated as being more preventable and responsive to medical intervention and that characters with disabilities were less likely to die or be magically cured. However, a lack of accuracy and authenticity regarding disability was still common. Disability was still used as a vehicle for teaching the protagonist a lesson and considered a tragedy that must be overcome, such as Deenie's idiopathic scoliosis in *Deenie* (Blume, 1973) and Izzy's injuries from a car accident that require the amputation of her leg below the knee in *Izzy Willy Nilly* (Voigh, 1986).

**Disability in children's literature after 1975.** Shortly after the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, Hopkins (1980) noted the increased appearance of characters with disabilities in children's literature. She described characters who were deaf, had visual impairments, physical or intellectual disabilities and whose creators lifted them up as a means of teaching about disabilities and developing increased awareness and understanding. Hopkins also suggested that children with disabilities would feel a strong sense of identity as they related to characters they read about in books. This phenomenon was referred to as both "window and mirror," by Bailes (2002) a window into the lives of characters with disabilities and a mirror into which children with disabilities might see themselves. Blaska (2004) agreed that this issue of identity should be a hallmark of high-quality children's literature with characters with disabilities. Children with disabilities need to see themselves as whole, accepted,

productive members of their families, schools, and communities not only in their lived experiences but also in books as well. The way children see themselves represented in books can underscore their own self-image in a positive or negative way (Bailes, 2002; Blaska, 2004).

Gervay (2004) observed that the increase in the number of characters with disabilities after 1975 often came at the expense of literary quality and authenticity. Other scholars of disability in children's literature shared this concern for quality over quantity. It is not enough for characters with disabilities to appear in children's books. The way the characters with disabilities are portrayed is critical to the messages children receive about disabilities and the perceptions and attitudes they form and begin to internalize. Beginning in 1999, a series of publications presenting content analyses of the disability literature for children emerged.

In her 1999 publication, "Characterization of Mental Retardation in Children's and Adolescent Literature," Prater evaluated children's books according to characterization, point of view, relationships between characters, changes in characters, schooling, residence, employment, and recreation. She found most characters did not evolve and grow over the course of the book and were most often portrayed as a victims totally dependent on others for their well-being. The point of view most often came from a character without a disability. Relationships between characters tended to focus on characters without disabilities initiating friendships, though fear of the character with the disability was also found. Characters with disabilities were often used as a means for the typical character to learn and change. Most of the characters with disabilities were

22

educated in separate settings, lived at home, worked in a sheltered workshop, and seldom engaged in recreational activities unless they participated in Special Olympics. From this analysis, it appears that the characters Prater analyzed were presented in formulaic, pre-IDEA, stereotypical, clichéd terms and situations. For example, Angela (the character with an intellectual disability) in *Risk 'n Roses* (Slepian, 1992) gets tricked into cutting the prize winning roses off a neighbor's rose bush; conversations about Pete being institutionalized occur in *Who Will Take Care of Me?* (Hermes, 1983). From the title of the publication, which refers to "mental retardation," to the representation of disability in most of the books analyzed, the presentation of disability in Prater's 1999 publication does not meet contemporary expectations for equity for people with intellectual disabilities.

Ten years later, Dyches, Prater, and Leininger (2009) reviewed 41 books featuring characters with developmental disabilities including autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, and other unspecified disabilities. Using the same criteria as the 1999 study, the authors discovered some positive trends. Characters with disabilities remained in supporting roles most often, but the number of main characters with disabilities increased (39% main characters in 1999, 48% in 2009) and more characters with disabilities were considered dynamic, changing over time. Relationships between characters with and without disabilities continued to be one-sided with typical characters cast as care givers. Educational settings were more inclusive in the 2009 study. However, most characters with disabilities lived at home and participated in informal recreational activities like watching television or making art projects, unless

they were participating in Special Olympics. The authors recommended characters with disabilities be described in more authentic and meaningful ways, including an emphasis on decision making and self-determination (Dyches, Prater, & Leininger, 2009). During the ten years between the 1999 and 2009 studies, modest improvements in the representation of characters with disabilities were noted, but many stereotypes remained, such as characters without disabilities acting as care-givers and characters with disabilities participating in organized sports only through Special Olympics. These findings suggest that authors and publishers of children's books should take a more positive, empowering approach to the representation of disability (Keith, 2004).

At the end of the 20th century, characters with disabilities were still often outsiders and rarely the main character in adolescent literature. As Keith (2004) looked to the future, she hoped more children's literature would be written by authors with disabilities to bring an authentic air of identity and voice to characters with disabilities. Moreover, she anticipated the intended audience would not be only children with disabilities but all children. While progress has been made toward more balanced, realistic portrayals of characters with disabilities, there is room for further inclusion and representation of characters with disabilities in children's literature in numbers and status equivalent to the current school-based data. Many issues of disproportionality concerning characters with disabilities in children's books have been uncovered.

Ayala (1999) recommended the inclusion of culturally and linguistically diverse characters with disabilities in children's literature. Ayala analyzed 59 children's books that portrayed characters with disabilities using 15 content markers such as disability

portrayed, ethnicity, gender, and cultural emphasis and found the majority of characters

with disabilities to be white, English-speaking and male. Dyches, and colleagues found

the number of characters with disabilities was not representative of the number of

students with disabilities in public schools. Males and characters with autism spectrum

disorder and intellectual disabilities are over-represented as are Caucasian characters

(Dyches & Prater, 2005; Leininger, Dyches, Prater, & Heath, 2010; Dyches, Prater, &

Jenson, 2006, Dyches, Prater, Leininger, 2009). The different IDEA categories of

disability and characters from culturally diverse backgrounds are under-represented in

children's literature as well (Leininger, Dyches, Prater, & Heath, 2010; Dyches, Prater, &

Leininger, 2009; Prater, Dyches, & Johnstun, 2006). Referring back to Bailes (2002)

description of "window and mirror," children without disabilities need to see the full

range of diversity of ability, so as not to assume that every child that is "different" is a

white girl with Down syndrome or a white boy with autism. Likewise, children with

disabilities should be able to make connections to characters in children's literature that

look and think and navigate the world just like they do.

In another content analysis, Beckett, Ellison, Barrett, and Shaw (2010) reviewed

100 books available to primary grade students in the United Kingdom (UK) for

representation of disability. Not all the books analyzed were published in the UK. They

explored the presence of positive portrayals or negative stereotypes and identified

negative portrayals of disability in 86 of the 100 books analyzed. These portrayals

included problematic language, tragic view of disability, unrealistic "happily ever after"

endings, characters with disabilities as curiosities, and characters with disabilities being

held up as morality lessons. The authors also emphasized the importance of accurate illustrations, which were lacking in many of the books they reviewed. In spite of the negative portrayals, 40 books were judged to show disability as an element of diversity and 15 books had a positive, non-discriminatory message. Inadequate and inappropriate representation of disability in children's literature appears to be a challenge not only in the United States but in the United Kingdom, as well.

Since the passage of PL94-142, a few scholars have written about the representation of specific disabilities in children's books. Deafness is most often singled out in the academic literature, perhaps because deafness can indicate membership in Deaf Culture as well as a physical loss of hearing. The only reference to an alphabet book in this review of the relevant literature was found in Robinson's (2008) description of *The Handmade Alphabet* (1996) as a contribution to the diversity literature by showing children the way many Deaf individuals see, recognize, and interpret the alphabet. Because alphabet books are commonly shared in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and beginning first grade classrooms, this book is important to the current study. Brittain (2004) also investigated the representation of deafness in picture books. She examined 14 picture books and found them to fall into two categories  informational texts and storybooks. In describing one of the storybooks, *Dad and Me in the Morning* (Lakin, 1994) she suggested that writing about a deaf character was such a daring literary action that the illustrations had to be watered-down for the content to be acceptable. She contended that without creative illustrations, plot, or language the appeal of a picture book with a deaf character would be limited and that deaf children would not find the

book interesting. Despite these strong conclusions, Brittain did not provide any empirical evidence to support her claims. From the library science literature, we know that all high-quality picture books meet standards for character, plot, theme, setting, point of view, style, and tone (Horning, 2010; Lukens, 2007). Why would a well-written book be rejected by children simply because of a deaf character? Other researchers have investigated the portrayal of deaf characters.

Golos and Moses (2011) concluded that most deaf characters are portrayed according to the medical model of disability. They also noted that most deaf characters are cast as victims. These authors advocated for more Deaf authors and illustrators and the inclusion of more information related to relationships between Deaf characters to improve the authenticity of the representation of Deaf culture in pictures books. Unfortunately, Golos and Moses (2011) coded only text and ignored illustrations. Indeed, pictures are as important as the text in picture books (Horning, 2010; Lambert, 2006; Sipe, 1998, 2012) and should not be ignored in a scholarly critique.

In contrast to Golos and Moses's (2011) disregard for pictures, Hughes (2012) emphasized illustrations in her exploration of blindness in picture books. She recommended fictional texts stress the social-emotional development of children by encouraging relationships between students with and without disabilities and emphasizing appropriate language in both the description of disabilities and the characters who have them. Hughes (2012) noted that in Zelinsky's retelling of the fairy tale *Rapunzel* (2002) blindness is a symbol of defeat and is only cured by the love of a character without a disability. She provided a positive example in the description of

27

Etienne, a character with one eye, in *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (Selznick, 2007).

Etienne leads a full, productive life, complete with a meaningful career, hobbies, and

friends. Hughes (2012) also notes that the word blind does not appear in many picture

books with blind characters. Do authors avoid the word because of its negative

connotation or are they choosing language to convey acceptance and inclusion? Hughes

(2012) agreed with Heim (1994) that disability must be confronted, not ignored. In order

to clearly communicate an inclusive philosophy and mediate layers of meaning, "adults

will have to unpack the means of prejudice, tolerance, and inclusion with children and

will need picture books that treat blindness and other disability experience both implicitly

and explicitly" (Hughes, 2012, p. 46). Altieri (2008) addressed adults in her content

analysis.

Altieri (2008) described identification of the disability, instructional strategies,

and self-esteem for characters with dyslexia, or severe reading disabilities, as they appear

in books for children. The unique contribution of this work, however, lies in the portrayal

of the teachers. In general, Altieri (2008) found teachers were represented as being

inattentive to their students' reading disabilities, dishonest in their feedback to students,

inconsistent in providing instruction, uncaring, and even abusive. These observations

uncover the importance of balanced portrayals of teachers as well as students with

disabilities in children's books.

The treatment of disability in picture books is important to this study because it

may be a typical child's introduction to a disability or the first time children with

disabilities see characters like themselves in the pages of a book.  Unfortunately, the

mixed messages and varied portrayals of disability uncovered in this review may make

selecting appropriate children's books that feature characters with disabilities difficult for

adults. Adults need to be sure the books they select meet their academic or social-

emotional teaching objectives. Teachers, librarians, parents, and other educators may

benefit from selection guidelines to assist them in choosing books for children that

positively portray characters with disabilities. The next section will describe selection

criteria for two types of picture books that contain characters with disabilities.

**Criteria for Selecting Appropriate Picture Books with Characters with Disabilities**

When reviewing disability in picture books as a whole, two different types of

books emerge: disability literature and inclusive literature. In the following portion of this

review, disability literature includes books that focus on disability from a teaching-about-

disability standpoint. Andrews (1998) coined the term "inclusion literature" to describe

books that focus on a plot unrelated to disability and include a character whose disability

is incidental to the plot. This type of children's literature will be referred to as "inclusive

literature" in this review, a more contemporary term to describe a character with a

disability as being part of the story just like every other character. The unique

characteristics of these two types of books will be described and conclusions drawn about

the type of picture books that will be the focus of this study.

**Disability literature.** Advocating the use of children's literature to teach about

disability is a common theme in Prater's writing. (Dyches, Prater, & Leininger, 2009;

Prater, 1999; Prater, 2000; Prater & Dyches, 2005; Prater & Dyches, 2008; Prater,

Dyches, & Johnstun, 2006). Prater (1999) recommended using children's literature where

29

disability was NOT the focus of the story, yet her subsequent publications concerning

teaching with these books concentrated on teaching about disability through children's

literature. Other contradictions were discovered in Prater's writing. Dyches, Prater, and

Jenson (2006) claimed to have eliminated anthropomorphic characters in their analysis of

Caldecott winners but included blind mice and a lame horse. In the 2005 piece, Dyches

and Prater advocated realism in this genre of children's literature but noted " a fantasy is

an ideal genre where character with disabilities can be free from their disabilities for a

time" (p. 213). In the 1998 Caldecott winner, "Rapunzel," the prince's blindness is cured

by Rapunzel's tears (Dyches, Prater, & Joenson, 2006). This example seems inconsistent

with the premise that disabilities should be depicted realistically and is in direct

opposition to the Beckett, et al. (2010) contention that disability is not something that

needs to be fixed and that fantastic cures may lessen the significance of a disability.

Other scholars have offered criteria for choosing books that feature characters

with disabilities. Heim (1994) collected and analyzed juvenile novels as a response to her

son's intellectual disability. She recommended selecting books that portrayed disability

accurately and without stereotype and advocated for high-quality literature that

confronted disability but did not dwell on it. Heim observed that a character with a

disability is often used to teach a typical character some sort of lesson that allows the

typical character to change and grow in a positive way, while the character with a

disability remains unchanged. She insisted that a character with a disability not be used in

this manner.

Stelle (1999) also selected books based on character development and made curriculum connections in her recommendations. Unfortunately, many of the books she recommended contained the common negative features of disability literature identified by Beckett, et al. (2010) and Brittain (2004) such as non-human characters, magic, heroism, negative stereotypes, and discriminatory language. This finding highlights the need for teachers to be trained to select books according to contemporary, inclusive standards of equity in children's literature. Blindly following a published list may not always provide the best guidance.

Kitterman (2002) and Smith-D'Arezzo (2003) raised issues of acceptance not related to the books per se but that were nonetheless important to the impact of books on children. Kitterman (2002) commented on the importance of teacher acceptance of students with disabilities in general education classrooms as an indicator of successful inclusion, while Smith-D'Arezzo (2003) emphasized the significance of teacher enthusiasm for the books they read aloud to their students. Without acceptance of students with disabilities and enthusiasm for the books that include them, a sincere, authentic image of students and characters with disabilities is unlikely to occur.

The majority of references to disability in picture books is explanatory in nature. Disabilities are described as medical or biological conditions that limit the character with a disability in some way, subscribing to the medical model of disability (Saunders, 2004). Mellon (1989) saw disability in children's literature differently. She believed providing information about a specific disability was not enough. She recommended children's literature addressing disabilities focus on similarities between characters with disabilities

and their typical peers. She was at the forefront of what Andrews (1998) called "inclusion literature."

      **Inclusive Literature.** Disability is only one aspect of a person or character in a book. Mellon (1989) observed that characters with disabilities have, ". . . a life to live, talents to find, friends with whom to laugh, siblings with whom to fight, parents with whom to deal, and an annoying and obtrusive outside world to keep at bay" (p. 47). She continued that information about a disability should unfold, when necessary, to help the reader and listener understand the character and the plot. Disabilities, according to Mellon, should not be the entire focus of the book.

      Inclusive literature can be a form of realistic fiction (Andrews, 1998; Blaska, 2004; Wopperer, 2011) or a work of nonfiction, which portray disability through text and illustrations in ways that are accurate and balanced (Andrews, 1998; Becket et al., 2010; Blaska, 2004; Heim, 1994; Wopperer, 2011). These books should have multidimensional characters (Andrews, 1998; Becket et al., 2010; Heim, 1994; Mellon, 1989), who have typical interactions with others (Matthew & Clow, 2007), and who are engaged in meaningful relationships and situations (Andrews, 1998; Becket, et al., 2010; Blaska, 2004; Helm, 1994; Mellon, 1989; Wopperer, 2011). Inclusion literature should be written in honest, positive, respectful language (Andrews, 1998, Becket et al., 2010; Blaska, 2004; Wopperer, 2011). Disability should NOT be the main focal point of the book (Mellon, 1989).

      In realistic fiction or non-fiction, the characters in inclusive picture books must be believable and relatable to young children. Characters should be human not animals, as

anthropomorphism of animals or other inanimate objects detracts from the authenticity of characters with disabilities (Dyches, Prater, & Jenson, 2006). All seven literary elements, character, plot, theme, setting, point of view, style and tone (Lukens, 2007), should work together in an inclusive picture book to provide the reader and the listener an accurate and balanced representation of disability in the text, if necessary, and in the illustrations (Andrews, 1998; Becket et al., 2010; Blaska, 2004; Heim, 1994; Wopperer, 2011). For example, the setting should allow the character(s) with a disability to access the action and interact with other characters in the story; all of this should be represented in text and illustrations. The style of an inclusive picture book is equally important. Lukens (2007) explained that picture books should be presented in a style that holds the interest of young children and helps them find subtle meanings while enjoying playful language.

Another aspect of inclusive literature is person-first language which should be used to describe a character with a disability if the condition warrants an explanation in the text. Disability should be explained in honest, positive, respectful, and age-appropriate language to the degree that is necessary to advance the plot or develop a character (Wopperer, 2011). Negative stereotypes that depict characters with disabilities as objects of pity and sympathy should not appear as they represent disability as a condition that needs to be fixed. Moreover, characters with disabilities should not be portrayed as magical, heroic, or miraculous (Becket, et al. 2010). They should not be used as a means for typical characters to learn and grow (Heim, 1994).

Characters with disabilities should be thoughtfully portrayed as whole, multidimensional, and believable. They should contribute to the plot (Andrews, 1998;

Beckett, 2010; Heim, 1994; Lukens, 2007) such that the reader and listener learn about the child, not the disability. A well-developed character emphasizes the similarities not the differences between characters with disabilities and typically developing characters (Mellon, 1989). In adhering to this idea characters with disabilities may need accommodations to interact with other characters in an inclusive picture book, but the quality of the interaction should be completely typical (Stelle, 1999). For example, in *Brian's Bird* (Davis, 2000) the main character Brian has a visual impairment and uses a white cane to assist him with mobility allowing him to walk independently around his neighborhood. However, his interactions with his older brother Kevin are completely typical as the boys figure out how to capture a pet bird that has escaped from its cage.

Similarly, the plot of an inclusive picture book should allow characters with disabilities to engage in meaningful relationships and situations with characters without disabilities. According to Wadham (1999), children need stories as a way of making human connections and understanding each other. Wopperer (2011) agreed that plot should be universal and appealing to all readers. Wopperer (2011) stressed the importance of plot, realistic characters, an accurate representation of disability, meaningful illustrations, and person-first language. It is noteworthy that Wopperer quotes school librarians regarding how they promote literacy and carry out library programming with inclusive literature, but she does not investigate how teachers use these books in their classrooms. This underscores a glaring omission in the professional literature concerning how teachers use books with characters with disabilities in their classrooms. Focusing on actual usage is critical, as teachers plan and deliver the school-based

educational experiences that help to shape the knowledge, understanding, and attitudes of their students.

## Teachers' Use of Inclusive Literature

Successful picture book experiences are characterized by facilitated discussions between adults and children. Lambert (2006) argued that picture books should be evaluated as complete read-aloud experiences, not only as the books alone. In order to understand the full potential of inclusive picture books to affect attitudes of children with and without disabilities when shared during routine classroom read aloud, effective teacher read-aloud practices are explored in this section. Read-aloud practices for academic skill development will be recognized, followed by read aloud to address affective variables such as awareness, understanding, and acceptance of disability through bibliotherapy. Read aloud to teach students about disability will also be investigated.

### Using Read Aloud to Build Reading Skills

Reading aloud to children is critical for creating the foundational knowledge and skills they need to become fluent readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, and Wilkinson, 1985). Abundant research about reading aloud for this purpose has been published. A comprehensive review of all the read-aloud studies is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, an overview of the academic literature relevant to this study revealed evidence that reading aloud may increase vocabulary, improve listening comprehension, promote syntactic development, and increase word recognition (Lane & Wright, 2007). To accomplish these goals, scholars have advocated dialogic reading (Flynn, 2011; Hargrave

& Sénéchal, 2000), shared reading (Blewitt, Rump, Shealy, & Cook, 2009), interactive reading (McGee & Schickedanz, 2007; Wasik & Bond, 2001), and repeated reading (Martinez & Roser, 1985). Other authors advocated Text Talk (Beck & McKeown, 2001) and anchored instruction (Silverman, 2007) to improve literacy skills in children. Where and how teachers should read aloud was described (Heath, Sheen, Leavy, Young, & Money, 2005; Lane & Wright, 2007), and two studies were identified that explored how teachers read aloud without the intervention of a researcher (Hoffman, Roser, & Battle, 1993; Jacobs, Morrison, and Swinyard, 2000).

Regardless of the approach to read-aloud described, each of these studies incorporated one or more of four key teacher activities: careful book selection, thorough book introduction, enhancement techniques throughout the read-aloud, and follow up discussion that lead to a successful read aloud experience in terms of meeting teachers' educational objectives. Books were chosen for clear illustrations, minimal text, and a developmentally appropriate plot that was new to the students. Teachers conducted a thorough book introduction, briefly explaining the characters and the problem. Teachers used techniques to enhance student understanding, such as pointing to illustrations, using gestures, inserting definitions, and modeling the behaviors of a skilled reader. Effective read-alouds include the discussion of open-ended questions that prompt student thinking about the book from beginning to end. Using effective read-aloud strategies is germane to this discussion because the use of these strategies when reading aloud books about students with disabilities may facilitate the development of critical affective variables such as awareness, understanding, and acceptance of disabilities, the purpose for using

36

books about disabilities in the first place. Using books to effect affective outcomes is sometimes referred to as bibliotherapy.

**Using Read Aloud to Address Affective Outcomes**

Several authors have advocated the use of children's literature to change attitudes and improve understanding (Dobo, 1982; Haeseler, 2009; Maich & Kean, 2004; Robinson, Hughes, & Manning; 2002). Similar to Wiseman's (2011) approach using multicultural literature to influence acceptance and understanding of social justice issues, Maich & Kean (2004) advocated the integration of inclusion literature during typical classroom read aloud to facilitate the development of inclusive classroom learning communities. Iaquinta and Hipsky (2006) also specifically targeted inclusive classrooms in their recommendations to use children's literature about children with disabilities to help students accept differences. Andrews (1998), Beckett, Ellsion, Barrett, & Shah (2010), Haeseler (2009), Kitterman (2002), Stelle (1999), and Wopperer (2011) concurred about the benefits of this approach. These studies relate to the recommendation by Battistich, et al. (1998) to use literature to promote a sense of community in the classroom. Matthew and Clow (2007) agreed, and argued that teachers should go beyond delivering information about disabilities and include characters with disabilities as part of the typical selection of books they share with their students. Hughes (2012) and Lobron and Selman (2007) suggested that diversifying the classroom collection of picture books could give children positive foundational knowledge about social justice issues.

While several authors advocated the use of inclusion or disability literature to increase awareness, understanding, and acceptance of disability through a

bibliotherapeutic approach, only two articles reviewed offered specific recommendations that relate to teacher behaviors for effective read-aloud discussed earlier, one regarding book selection (Gavigan and Kurtts, 2011), the other regarding the delivery of the story (Heath, Sheen, Leavy, Young, and Money, 2005). Gavigan and Kurtts (2011) recommended selecting books that portray disability in a realistic manner where characters with disabilities engage in meaningful relationships with peers without disabilities. Heath, Sheen, Leavy, Young, and Money (2005) provided general guidelines for selecting books for bibliotherapeutic applications but stressed the delivery of the story. They claimed that teacher tone of voice, volume and rate of speech, responsive expressions and gestures, and eye contact with the listeners are as important as asking appropriate questions and providing post-reading activities. These authors make their recommendations based on clinical best practice, without providing empirical data to support their advice. However, a careful search of the literature did reveal several empirical studies that address this issue. These are summarized next.

**Using Read Aloud for Students with Disabilities**

Trepanier-Street and Romatowski (1996) studied the effects of a program of read-alouds and follow up activities with carefully selected books that featured characters with disabilities. They found kindergarten and first grade students' attitudes toward children with disabilities were positively influenced by the read-aloud program. In a series of studies, Favazza and Odom (1997), Favazza, Phillipsen, and Kumar (2000), and Nilolaraizi, et al. (2005) used the Acceptance Scale for Kindergarten (ASK), then the Acceptance Scale for Kindergarten – Revised (ASK-R), along with the Inventory of

Disability Representation (IDR) to measure attitudes of kindergarten students before and after a multi-component intervention program comprised of direct, indirect, and no contact with children with disabilities. Direct contact involved face-to-face playtime, while indirect contact consisted of storybook reading with follow-up activities. The findings of the 1997 study suggested that more exposure to students with disabilities resulted in more acceptance of disability by typical peers. Moreover, Favarra and Odom (1997) noted that the kindergarten teachers in their study did not have books about disability in their classroom libraries and recommended adding these books as an inexpensive way to increase exposure during the natural setting of kindergarten story time.

In the follow up to the 1997 study, Favazza, Phillipsen, and Kumar (2000) tested the reliability of the ASK-R with children of color and low socio-economic status during a similar intervention of direct, indirect, and no contact with children with disabilities. They found children who received the indirect exposure to disability through story books, follow-up school activities, and a home component increased their level of acceptance equivalent to the children who had direct contact with children with disabilities during a play group. Not only did scores on the ASK-R increase butalso teachers observed their students greeting and interacting with children with disabilities throughout the school day and including children with disabilities in their artwork. These results suggested that the purposeful and careful use of children's literature featuring characters with disabilities may make a positive impact of inclusive attitudes of young children. In the same study, a

teacher questionnaire confirmed that the teachers had limited knowledge and resources to introduce disability to typically developing children.

Based on the results of these studies, Nikolaraizi, et al. (2005) recommended that books and follow up activities be systematically integrated into the curriculum to encourage positive feelings toward children with disabilities. Still questions linger. Indeed, researchers directed the interventions in these studies. Would classroom teachers follow these recommendations on their own? Without access to a university library database, membership in a professional organization, or subscription to an expensive professional journal, it may be unlikely that practicing educators would even have access to published advice from leaders in the field. Certainly, the results of these studies support for the need to investigate the knowledge and use of inclusive literature in primary grade classrooms by general education teachers without the support of researchers.

## Summary

This review of the literature related to the proposed research study investigated the educational placement of students with disabilities and children's early attitudes toward school. Disability in picture books was analyzed and teacher practices regarding read aloud and community building in the context for learning were explored. Studies that examined teacher use of children's literature during routine classroom read aloud to support inclusive practice when not implementing a disability awareness program are noticeably absent from the professional literature. This omission provides a foundation and rationale for this study to explore the following research question and sub-questions:

How do general education teachers in the primary grades (Pre-K – Grade 3) use picture books to support inclusive practice?

a. How does the book selection process support inclusive practice?

b. How do the read-aloud strategies used support inclusive practice?

The following chapter will describe the qualitative research design and methodology that will be used to investigate these phenomena.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

**Introduction**

This research study employed a qualitative approach to explore the following

research question and sub-questions:

How do general education teachers in the primary grades (Pre-K – Grade 3)

use picture books to support inclusive practice?

a. How does the book selection process support inclusive practice?

b. How do the read-aloud strategies used support inclusive practice?

Creswell (2007) advised disclosure of a researcher's philosophical assumptions,

paradigms, and interpretive communities in preparation for determining the appropriate

research design to study a particular phenomenon. Philosophical assumptions, according

to Creswell (2007), include the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and

methodological perspectives of the researcher. The guiding paradigm or worldview

involves the set of beliefs the researcher brings to the study. Finally, a reference to

influential interpretive communities is required to reveal the interpretive lens through

which the researcher views the problem to be investigated.

The five philosophical assumptions that guided this research provided insights

into the researcher's views on the nature of reality (ontological), the nature and scope of

knowledge (epistemological), the role of values (axiological), the language of research

(rhetorical), and the process and procedures adopted to explore the research questions (methodological). The researcher acknowledged the existence of multiple realities determined by the various roles, responsibilities, and lived experiences of the participants in the study. These differing perspectives were honored, respected, and reported as adding richness to the data collected. The nature of the knowledge tapped by this study reflected the attitudes and actions of certified general education teachers in the primary grades of an inclusive elementary school. The scope of this knowledge was limited by the participants' own education and experience as well as their willingness to report their views. The researcher recognized that this study was value-laden and that biases of both the participants and researcher regarding the full access to and engaged participation in the school community for students with disabilities may have influenced the results of the study. The recognized biases of the researcher will be revealed in the subjectivity section of this proposal. The outcomes of this research were reported in a narrative style, including quotations from participants, in an effort to accurately represent the attitudes and actions of the individuals interviewed. These philosophical assumptions about this research study allowed a qualitative research methodology to emerge. My paradigm or worldview of this study will be explored next.

The goal of this research study was to understand how general education teachers in the primary grades use picture books to support inclusive practice in an inclusive elementary school using a social constructivist/pragmatic paradigm. By focusing on understanding the context of these teachers' work, as well as the attitudes and actions they reported, a meaningful interpretation of the phenomenon being studied emerged.

Moreover I am acutely interested in applying the results of this study to teacher

preparation and in-service professional development, thus the pragmatic position. The

interpretive lens for this study will also be examined.

Creswell (2007) and Mertens (1998) might define the interpretive lens for this

study as a disability perspective. They characterized research that examines an element of

inclusive practice in schools from multiple sources of data as disability inquiry. This

study was focused on picture book read aloud as a means of supporting inclusive

practice. Data were gathered from ten general education teachers across grades Pre-K

through Grade 3 with varying years of teaching experience. Before identifying and

describing the design of this qualitative research study, researcher subjectivity should be

addressed.

### Subjectivity

Peshkin (1988) asserted the imperative for a researcher to systematically disclose

her subjectivity. The identity, culture, and voice (Faircloth, 2009) of the researcher will

influence the approach to this topic of research. Researcher biases are described

according to Peshkin's (1988) six aspects of subjectivity.

Peshkin (1988) termed his potential ethnic bias *Ethnic Maintenance*. At the time

of the study, the researcher was a middle-aged, middle class white woman born, raised,

educated (K-12 and post-secondary), and employed in predominately white communities

and schools. During her doctoral studies at The University of North Carolina at

Greensboro (UNCG), issues of equity education were revealed in ways not previously

imagined. An exploration of this awakening is beyond the scope of this proposal, but the

researcher intentionally and consistently checked her exceedingly white, middle-class values as the study was conducted. Nevertheless, ethnicity may have influenced the study in ways that cannot be predicted. At the same time, the researcher's idealistic and naïve wish for students of differing race, ethnicity, gender, and ability to work together as a classroom community may fall under Peshkin's (1988) label *E Pluribus Unum*.

*Community Maintenance* behavior influenced the approach to this research. Since the study addressed building community in classrooms, the researcher brought her own attitude about the significance of creating a sense of classroom community and belonging as a prerequisite to learning to this work. From this belief in the importance of community and the necessity for all members to be valued comes another significant area of subjectivity, *Justice Seeking*.

The researcher started first grade in the fall of 1965 in a small city in northern Virginia. The school system implemented homogeneous grouping. It was not until high school that she shared a classroom with a person of color. She never had a teacher of color. She never knowingly had a student with a disability in any classes. Despite the presence of children of migrant workers every fall, she was never introduced to an English language learner. This pattern continued into her undergraduate college days. There were no women of color in the all-girl dormitory or sorority, and though there must have been students from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds in her classes, she cannot say that she ever befriended anyone who didn't look and talk like her.

Following college graduation she decided to become a teacher and received a job as an instructional assistant in an inclusive elementary school while completing the

requirements for licensure. Early discomfort around children with disabilities slowly evaporated over the next few years, and the researcher became a staunch advocate for including students with disabilities in the general education classroom with their typically developing peers. Since coming to UNCG, her passion for inclusive practice has been strengthened and extended to encompass children from diverse backgrounds. It will be impossible for her to fully suspend her attitudes toward inclusive practice. *Justice Seeking,* especially for children with disabilities, certainly influenced this research.

Finally, because the researcher is a teacher at heart she struggled with the role of *Pedagogical-Meliorist*. From observing student interns and their cooperating teachers, the researcher learned that she wants to jump into classroom situations and demonstrate effective, interactive read aloud. It was difficult for the researcher to silently listen to educators describe teaching practices that she did not embrace and had to remind herself of her role as a researcher. Because the researcher so strongly associated her identity with "teacher," the *Nonresearch Human* appeared throughout the study, especially in the research site, the researcher's home school system. The researcher's familiarity with the school and teachers allowed her to begin with the trust of the participants but may have interfered with her ability to report their practice. Having disclosed the researcher's philosophical assumptions, worldview, interpretive lens, and subjectivity brought to this study, the next section will identify and describe the research design implemented to answer the research question and sub-questions.

**Research Design**

Research questions, researcher control over events, and a contemporary or historical focus drive the selection of the research design and methodology of a study (Yin, 2009). When a researcher is interested in how and why questions, has no control over participant behavior, and is interested in contemporary events, Yin (2009) recommended the use of case study research to study a phenomenon. The proposed study fits these criteria and may be considered an explanatory case study because it investigated the how and why of decision-making by general education teachers regarding the use of picture books to support inclusive practice.

Case study research encompasses five elements of research design (a) research question(s), (b) study propositions, (c) unit(s) of analysis, (d) links between data and propositions, and (e) criteria for interpreting the data (Yin, 2009). The primary research question in this study concerns the use of picture books by general education teachers to support inclusive practice in the primary grades of an inclusive elementary school. The study propositions are the school environment, the learning context, teachers who read the books aloud, the students who listen to the stories and view the illustrations, and the picture books themselves. How did these educators select the books they shared with their students and what read-aloud strategies did they employ to engage their student in the read aloud experience? Supporting inclusive practice through read aloud suggests some understanding of disability in children's literature. How much did the educators in this study know about the representation of disability in children's literature and did they

have access to high-quality materials for children that portray characters with disabilities in appropriate ways? These propositions help define the units of analysis.

The units of analysis to be studied for this case study research study were the read-aloud decision-making and activities of a group of Pre-K through Grade 3 general education teachers in an inclusive elementary school. These data were collected through interviews with the study participants. Categorical analysis was used to link the study propositions to the data collected (Yin, 2009). The decision-making and activities of the identified educators were represented within and across grade levels, educational background, and length of service (both to the profession and to the selected school site) by themes identified after thorough analyses of the interviews.  The findings were interpreted as they applied to elements of the study's conceptual framework.

Care was taken to ensure the quality and credibility of this research study. Through the triangulation of data sources, member checking, peer review and debriefing, honesty in disclosing researcher bias, and presenting the findings in careful, detailed, descriptive writing, trustworthiness of the findings was established  (Creswell, 2007).

**Site Selection**

The sites and participants were selected for this study and data were collected in accordance with the requirements for conducting research with human subjects through the Office of Research Compliance at UNCG. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted permission for this study before any data collection commenced and the protocol described in the IRB application was followed strictly and consistently. All IRB

documents (IRB approval, informed consent form, and recruitment form) appear in Appendix A.

The Magnolia County (pseudonym) school system embraced an inclusive philosophy. While a continuum of placements for students with disabilities was in place, the majority of students with disabilities were included with their typical peers for most of the school day in the primary grades. This school system was chosen as the research site because school leaders and educators have embraced an inclusive philosophy of special education for more than 20 years. The Virginia Department of Education reports Least Restrictive Environment Data for all Virginia school districts (http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/index.shtml). Magnolia County's commitment to inclusive practice was documented through the high percentage of students with disabilities included in general education classrooms. It is noteworthy that Magnolia County's percentage of students spending more than 80% of their time in regular classrooms exceeds the state-wide figures. Table 1 compares the Least Restrictive Environment percentages for Magnolia County and the Commonwealth of Virginia between 2005 and 2011 (the most recent date available).

Table 1

Comparison of Least Restrictive Environment Percentages: 80% or More of Time Inside

Regular Classroom

| School Year | Magnolia County | Virginia |
|---|---|---|
| 2010-2011 | 82% | 55.3% |
| 2009-2010 | 83% | 59% |
| 2008-2009 | 90% | 56% |
| 2007-2008 | 88% | 57% |
| 2006-2007 | 89% | 54% |
| 2005-2006 | 89% | 56% |

This long-time commitment to inclusive practice allowed the researcher to successfully

recruit a purposeful sample of classroom teachers to share their thoughts about school

climate, picture books, read-aloud, and how these propositions work together to support

inclusive practice.

Paddington Farms Elementary School (pseudonym) was chosen as the inclusive

site for this case study. After extensive redistricting in the county, a larger more diverse

student body entered a new school building in the fall of 2012. An additional result of

redistricting was uniting teachers from several existing schools as well as teachers new to

the profession. There were several sections of each grade level, providing opportunities to select all ten participants from the same school.

**Participant Selection**

Ten primary grade teachers (Pre-K – Grade 3) were recruited to participate in the study through electronic mail invitation in accordance with the IRB protocol. Through consultation with the principal, one experienced teacher (more than five years of service) and one novice teacher (five or fewer years of teaching experience) were recruited for the study, except in first grade where there were only experienced teachers. All teachers recruited for the study accepted the invitation to participate.

**Data Collection and Instrumentation**

Data collection began by gathering demographic data on the school and personnel participating in the study. No individually identifying characteristics of the school or the participants are being reported and pseudonyms will be used to protect the identity of the participants. The demographic data collection sheet for individual participants can be found in Appendix B.

In order to elicit responses to the research questions, interviews were conducted with each of the participants. The interview questions were based on the professional literature on community building in elementary schools; children's literature as a means to promote awareness, understanding, and acceptance of disability; effective read-aloud strategies; and disability in children's literature. Table 2 illustrates the alignment of interview questions to the research questions with references to the professional literature.

Table 2

Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions

| Research Questions | Interview Questions | Links to the Literature |
|---|---|---|
| Background: | • Tell me about your school culture or climate. | Baker (2006) |
| | | Birch & Ladd (1997) |
| | • Describe any particular school-wide mission, philosophy, or theme that guides your work with children. | Battistich, Solomon, & Watson (1998) |
| | | Battistich, Solomon,Watson, & Schaps (1997) |
| | • Describe the social or extra-curricular school-sponsored activities your students participate in. | DEC/NAEYC (2009) |
| | | Meadan, & Monda-Amaya (2008) |
| | • How are students with disabilities included in those activities? | Solomon, Watson, Battistich, Schaps, & Delucchi (1996) |
| | • Describe how you build a sense of community among the children in your classroom (school). | Valeski & Stipek (2001) |
| | • How do you promote cooperation? | |
| | • How do you foster or encourage positive relationships between students with and without disabilities? (e.g. seating them near each other, grouping them for class activities) | |

| Research Question: How do general education teachers in the primary grades use picture books to support inclusive practice? | • Tell me about the ways you use picture books in your classroom. <br> • Teacher Assigned Review? <br> • Student Selected Review? <br> • Teacher Read-Aloud? <br><br> • How do you think read-aloud time could contribute to community building, especially for students with disabilities? <br> • Do you think your read-aloud time supports inclusive practice? | Andrews (1998) <br> Dobo (1982) <br> Favazza & Odom (1997) <br> Favazza Phillipsen, & Kumar (2001) <br> Gavigan & Kurtts (2011) <br> Iaquinta & Hipsky (2006) <br> Lobron & Selman (2007) <br> Maich & Kean (2004) <br> Morgan (2009) <br> Trepanier-Street & Romatowski (1996) <br> Wan (2006) |
|---|---|---|
| Sub-Question 1: How does book selection support inclusive practice? | • How do you select the books you read aloud to your students? <br> • Are the selections mandated by curriculum or your choice or both? <br> • Do you consider characters with disabilities when you select the books to read aloud? <br> • If yes, can you give me some examples of your favorite children's books that feature characters with disabilities? <br> • If no, why not? <br> • Have your choices and decision making about read-aloud changed during this school year, with the | Beckett, Ellison, Barrett, & Shah (2010) <br> Hoppe (2004) <br> Kitterman (2002) <br> Matthew & Clow (2007) <br> Mellon (1989) <br> Prater & Dyches (2008) <br> Saunders (2004) <br> Serafini (2012) <br> Sipe (1998) <br> Wolfenbarger & Sipe (2007) <br> Wopperer (2011) <br> Worotynec (2004) |

opening of your new school and
the changes in the school
population from years past?

- Are you reading different kinds of
  books?
- Are you selecting books with
  different types of characters?
- Have you had any professional
  preparation or inservice PD
  regarding disability in picture
  books?
- Is that a topic that is of interest to
  you?

| Sub-Question 2: How do read-aloud strategies support inclusive practice? | • Tell me about read-aloud time in your classroom | Beck & McKeown (2001) |
|---|---|---|
| | | Hoffman (2011) |
| | • Frequency, time of day, topics covered? | Hoffman, Roser, & Battle (1993) |
| | • What are your goals for read-aloud time? | Jacobs, Morrison, & Swinyard (2000) |
| | • How do you determine whether or not those goals have been met? | Lane & Wright (2007) |
| | | Martinez & Roser (1985) |
| | • How do you engage your students during read-aloud time? | McGee & Schickedanz (2007) |
| | • Describe the discussions or activities that follow read-aloud time. | Sipe (2000) |
| | | Sipe (2012) |
| | | Wasik & Bond (2001) |
| | • Have you made any changes in the activities you use to follow-up read-aloud time? | Wiseman (2011) |
| | | Zucker, Justice, Piasta, & Kaderavek (2010) |

- Have you had any professional
  preparation or inservice PD
  regarding read aloud?
- Is that a topic that is of interest to
  you?

General education teachers were interviewed individually at times selected by the

participants during January and February 2013. Interviews took place on site either in the

teacher's classroom or conference room depending on the preference of the participant.

Participants were not interviewed in any specified order. Participants were interviewed to

understand their insights about read-aloud, the books they select to share with their

students, and how read-aloud can build classroom community and support inclusive

practice for students with disabilities. The interview questions appear in Appendix C.

Interviews were recorded on a digital voice recorder and transcribed verbatim. These

transcripts were used for data analysis.

**Data Analysis and Representation**

The goal of data analysis in case study research is to describe the case and setting

in detail, learn how different sets of data collected relate to each other, and help us make

sense of the phenomenon being studied (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). The data collected in

this case study was analyzed through an iterative process. Transcripts were read

repeatedly and critically and then coded. Recognizing the repetition of codes across many

interviews may be considered categorical aggregation (Stake, 1995). These aggregated

codes were collapsed to identify common themes. These themes were analyzed by and

across teachers, grade levels, and years of teaching experience (Cooper, 2009; Creswell

2007). Primary grade general education teacher access to, knowledge of, and engagement with picture books to support inclusive practice in an inclusive school were reported from the data analysis. The emergent findings offered insights into possible avenues for teacher preparation and in-service professional development concerning teacher read-aloud to build classroom community and support inclusive practice.

**Establishing Trustworthiness**

Establishing the trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be accomplished in many ways. The current study followed the criteria recommended by Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001); credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity. Credibility refers to the accurate representation of the information participants' reported. This was accomplished by sharing the findings with the participants to verify that their meaning has been correctly represented, a practice called member checking (Creswell, 2007). This was accomplished following the data analysis by electronic mail correspondence with each participant. The text of the electronic mail to establish credibility through member checking appears in Appendix D. Each participant received a copy of the verbatim transcript of her interview and the emergent themes of the interview. The participants reported no discrepancies between their thoughts, feelings, and perspectives and the identified themes. Authenticity, or the inclusion of many perspectives, was achieved by gathering information from general education teachers across five grade levels. Criticality of the entire study was monitored through the use of peer review and debriefing (Creswell, 2007). A second researcher read and reviewed 50% of the data gathered by studying the transcripts of one interview per grade level in the study. Following the

second researcher's identification of categories and themes, a peer review and debriefing meeting occurred. Differences in interpretation regarding two themes were noted and discussion followed until consensus was reached on the wording of the themes. Integrity of the study was preserved through maintaining a chain of evidence (Yin, 2009), following the procedures of data collection, analysis, and interpretation with fidelity and faithfulness.

**Summary**

This research study responded to the research question for these general education teacher-participants in this school. Careful site selection, purposeful sampling, attentive listening to teacher interviews, and thoughtful interpretation of the findings came together to provide the researcher with sufficient data to learn how general education teachers in the primary grades (Pre-K through Grade 3) in one inclusive elementary school use picture books to support inclusive practice in their classrooms. This knowledge may inform teacher preparation and in-service professional development activities regarding children's literature to support inclusive practice.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to discover the ways teachers in the primary grades
of an inclusive elementary school used picture books to promote understanding,
awareness, and acceptance of students with disabilities, thereby supporting inclusive
practice. A review of the relevant literature identified a lack empirical research studying
this phenomenon, despite recommendations for teachers to use children's literature for
this purpose (Andrews, 1998; Beckett, Ellison, Barrett, & Shaw, 2010; Gavigan & Kurtts,
2011; Haeseler, 2009; Kitterman, 2002) and researchers' efforts to implement disability
awareness programs that included children's literature (Favazza & Odom, 1997; Favazza,
Phillipsen, & Kumar, 2000; Nikolaraizi, et al., 2005; Trepanier-Street & Romatowski,
1996). A qualitative case study design was employed to explore the research question and
sub-questions:

> How do general education teachers in the primary grades (Pre-K – Grade 3)
>
> use picture books to support inclusive practice?
>
> c.  How does the book selection process support inclusive practice?
>
> d.  How do the read-aloud strategies support inclusive practice?

This qualitative case study included collection of demographic data regarding the
research site and teacher participants, as well as interviews with ten teachers two teachers

from each grade level Pre-K through Grade 3. Interview questions were developed from the related literature concerning school climate, community building, read-aloud practices, and disability in children literature. This chapter will present the demographic data collected and an analysis of the interview data gathered.

## Demographic Data

### Site

Paddington Farms Elementary School had a 2012-2013 enrollment of 389 students in grades Pre-K – Grade 5. The total number of students with disabilities was 39 (10%). None of the students with disabilities were taught in a separate classroom for students with disabilities. All 39 students were assigned to general education classrooms. The school's student ethnic summary showed 91.26% white, 3.86% black, 1.03% Asian, and 3.86% mixed or bi-racial students. Free and reduced lunch was served to 54.2% of the student population. There were two sections of Pre-K, five sections of kindergarten, four first grade classes, three sections each of second, third, and fourth grade, and two fifth grade classes. The average number of students in each class was 17 (K. B. Wertz, personal communication, February 6, 2013).

### Participants

After acquiring informed consent, demographic data were collected. The participants in this study were ten general education teacher two teachers from each grade level, Pre-K – Grade 3 and they are all white females. Their length of service to the profession ranged from six months at the time of the interview to 20 years of teaching experience. Table 3 summarizes the demographic data collected from each of the teachers with participant

names (pseudonyms) and alphabetical by grade level for clarity of discussion. Teachers new to Paddington Farms Elementary School during the 2012-2013 school year are noted with an asterisk.

Table 3

Demographic Information by Grade Level

| Participant Name (Pseudonym) | Grade | Length of Service | Degree | Major Area of Study | Gender | Race |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Alice* | Pre-K | 20 years | Bachelors | Curriculum & Instruction, PreK-5 Special Education, PreK-12, Mental Retardation | F | W |
| Anna* | Pre-K | 6 months | Bachelors | Elementary Education, concentrations in Special Education and History | F | W |

| Betty | Kindergarten | 12 years | Masters | Curriculum & Instruction, PreK-6 | F | W |
|-------|--------------|----------|---------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Bonnie | Kindergarten | 2 years | Bachelors | Curriculum & Instruction, PreK-6 | F | W |
| Carly* | First | 15 years | Masters | Early Childhood Education/Child Development | F | W |
| Colleen* | First | 12 years | Bachelors | Early Childhood Education | F | W |
| Daisy* | Second | 6 months | Masters | Curriculum & Instruction, PreK-6 | F | W |
| Diana | Second | 13 years | Masters | Curriculum & Instruction, K-4 | F | W |
| Elaine | Third | 4 years | Masters | Curriculum & Instruction, concentration in Library-Media Studies | F | W |
| Emily* | Third | 2 years | Masters | Early Childhood | F | W |

| | Education, PreK-3 |
| --- | --- |
| | Early Childhood |
| | Special |
| | Education, Birth- |
| | Kindergarten |

* Indicates a teacher new to Paddington Farms Elementary School

Each teacher was interviewed following the collection of demographic data. Each interview began with a conversation about the school culture or climate at Paddington Farms Elementary School and progressed through the interview questions listed in Chapter III.

## Interview Questions

The interview questions were developed from the review of the literature. They addressed the school culture and climate, as well as the research questions. It was important to understand the underlying school culture and climate in order to evaluate the impact, if any, of school culture and climate on teacher read aloud practice. The interview questions appear in Appendix C.

The following themes are organized in two areas school culture and climate and how read-aloud supported inclusive practice. A discussion of the relationship between these two areas appears in Chapter V.

**Themes**

The data analysis procedures outlined in Chapter III produced a number of themes in response to the interview questions. The Paddington Farms Elementary School culture and climate were characterized by two overall themes and provided useful foundational information about the way of life at the school:

- Teachers put children first, build community, and make connections between home and school without regard for student ability.

- All school-sponsored extracurricular activities include all children regardless of ability.

The following themes emerged in response to the research questions:

- Teachers use daily read aloud to foster community building and a love of reading and books, with grade level differences in academic goals for read-aloud time.

- The picture books read aloud are not inclusive and teachers lack knowledge about inclusive picture books.

- Teachers believe their read alouds support inclusive practice.

Each of the themes will be discussed and supported by data from individual teachers.

**Teachers put children first, build community, and make connections between home and school without regard for student ability**

Strategies for building community were shared by the teachers. Many teachers described Morning Meetings (Kriete, 2002) in which students begin each day by greeting each other, sharing experiences, and sometimes problem-solving challenges in their

classrooms. They also described Bucket-Filling (McCloud, 2006) a practice of caring for

others and performing kind deeds. Colleen explained:

> In the school this year we've had a school-wide theme about being bucket fillers,
> you know, based on some literature, how full is your bucket, have you filled a
> bucket today, just talking about how to, to help people feel good and to avoid
> hurting their feelings, so that, you know, we do a lot of get to know you activities,
> a lot of brainstorming about how we can treat each other with kindness, what are
> some things that hurt people's feelings, we do some role playing, and then there's
> lots of talking in the moment when things happen.

Teachers described community building as a priority, even above academic achievement.

Many teachers mentioned putting the needs of children first. Alice, a Pre-K teacher said:

> You know the theme of community and um, especially in, in preschool having
> um, that first connection making the children feel like they're part of their school
> community, you know, as well as we support their, their home and we, you know,
> kind of interweave those two together.

She continued, "before any kind of learning or anything can take place, that community

that, um, that feeling has to be there." Carly, a first grade teacher, echoed that sentiment

"caring for the children in an overall setting is more important than anything we really do

academically."

> Alice also talked about ensuring that children feel safe and loved:
> I often tell the kids . . . I'm kinda like your mommy here and I would you know,
> make all the decisions based on your safety and your love. I give you food, I take
> care of any needs that you have and you know all of these children are like your
> brothers and your sisters and it that's, that's really important is the care and the
> love we give each other.

She also helps young parents understand the importance of putting their children's needs above their own, "Many of times their parents are very young and they're very self-driven. They very, their parents are very selfish and unfortunately is all about you know what the parent needs." She shared the school's commitment to home visits and delivering food to families in need, "You know we do you know some home visits and we try to deliver some food and we do kinda some home visiting type, type things." Another teacher mentioned that the commitment to caring includes staff, as well as students.

Carly noted the family atmosphere at the school, where everyone works together and takes care of each other. She went on to say that teachers and staff not only support children but support each other on a daily basis, "I'm seeing that that really is the case as a teacher that it's just a large family and everyone is very working together, looking out for each other, and figuring out how to best support each other and the kids." Daisy, a first year teacher in second grade, agreed:

> I think there's also a desire community amongst the staff here and even though this year that has expanded a little bit, I think that [the principal] has worked very hard to try and keep that Paddington Farms community of people knowing each other, people knowing what's going on in each other's lives, so that we can support each other, um because there are days that it's hard and if you don't feel like you know anyone and you don't have support it's hard to get through those difficult days and come back to school the next day.

The concept of caring was also emphasized by Emily, a third grade teacher:

> I feel like here at Paddington Farms that we really try to make the community, our class, our culture, and our school to be something that feels open, welcoming, it's

a safe place, and we really try to make sure that all of our children feel cared for and because they're cared for they will learn.

She continued, "I need to make sure that they know no matter what happens, when they come here I care about them." In Emily's classroom, all students must "check in" with her first thing in the morning so "I can kind of gauge their mood." She also insists on saying a personal goodbye to each student at the end of the day, "They are not allowed to walk out the door until they say goodbye to me and usually we do it one of three ways, they can give me a high five, a hug, or a handshake." Emily believes in maintaining a caring classroom where "everybody talks to each other and nobody is left out or excluded at any time."

Another third grade teacher, Elaine, became emotional when describing the way she fosters relationships between students with and without disabilities:

> Oh, how do I foster relationships? I would say, I really don't try to differentiate in that way. We're all just people in this classroom and I don't really try to say let's go help this person. I think that through our class meetings, [pause] I think I'm gonna cry, [teacher cried, then laughed] I think that through, I'm sorry, it's just something that's kind of near and dear to my heart. Just that through modeling the class meetings and the teacher being a caring person that hopefully students see that and will be kind to one another.

Another teacher also talked about building relationships between students with and without disabilities. Betty, a kindergarten teacher, described a child with a disability in her class:

> I have a little boy who's visually impaired so he often requires someone to help him get to a certain area or to navigate something we're dong and they're wonderful, I mean, they ask to do so, we talk about you know, what a great friend

66

you are to be able to help do that, so the next I have four people line up to help do that, so I think that's gong really well. My only concern is I don't want them to be his helpers, I want them to be his friends, so we're really careful to make sure that he's doing something, as well, you know he carry something for them or he can take something to them.

The treatment of a student with a disability was mentioned by other teachers, as well.

Diana, a second grade teacher, described her inclusive classroom community, "It has to be the community and that child can't be disabled child, that kid needs to be the kid in the community." She emphasized respect and kindness in her classroom:

My classroom is all about respect and respect for everybody, for everything, so the first thing the kids learn when they come in is that I respect them and I expect them to respect each other. I mean that's the big thing at the very beginning, I mean that's my big word, is respect and respectful. I expect them to be kind to each other, even if they hate each other. We have had some personality clashes and I tell them that it doesn't matter if they like each other and they have to be kind and respectful.

Diana also finds value in taking time to get to know each other:

That's, that's one of the ways I build a community is by, they get to tell their own stories to me and those stories are very, very important to me and so for the first probably six weeks of school, we spend a lot of time getting to know each other very, very well and telling each other our own personal stories.

Diana carried the ideas about community building over into academics when she described the flexible and cooperative learning groups in which her students work throughout the day:

You notice the tables are set up in cooperative learning groups, but the kids, their names are on the chairs. I move them all over the place. They put their stuff in their desks, but they never know if they're going to be at that table or somebody

else's table and the way I teach, using daily five [word study, listening, writing, reading to a friend or listening to someone read] everybody works in different groups all the time.

Daisy takes a similar approach in the ways she groups her students for their academic work:

We do lots of small group work. They're paired with different students to when they have their reading groups um that mostly stays the same, but when we do science and math and social studies that allows fir different grouping and so they'll work with the kids at their table or I'll pair them with someone they've never worked with so that they're getting used to, they're not, they're not suck in one group and they always work with this one person so in doing that they have to learn how to communication and work with each other.

This foundational theme indicated that the teachers were intentional about including students with disability during all aspects of the school day whether building classroom community or delivering academic content. The inclusive school community applied to the extracurricular activities offered to the students, as well, and is explained in the following section.

**All school-sponsored extracurricular activities include all children regardless of ability**

All of the teachers listed many extracurricular activities in which students can participate. Clubs to teach chess and German are offered, as well as a Junior Master Naturalist Club. Physical fitness is promoted through a walking/running club. Elaine explained the Family Book Club:

Anyone can take part in it, not everyone chooses to, but a lot of times classroom teachers will opt to read the book in their classrooms so that all students can take

part in it. And then sometimes there are questions on the announcements about the book, there are often bulletin boards that are put up and then it usually culminates in a reading celebration. For example, last year we did *Heidi* and we had a celebration all about *Heidi* and we had snacks that revolved around the book like goat cheese and what not and we had a real yodeler come in, so that involved school-wide reading as well as parents and teachers.

Homework Club was offered for grades three through five and a special music group met after school and performed concerts for the community. The community was involved in other extracurricular activities.

The teachers explained the role of local universities providing Big Brother/Big Sister mentors for children who need additional adult support and mentoring. Literacy Volunteers also came from the universities to tutor students in reading. Emily explained a new program called Eye-to-Eye:

It's specifically for children who are identified as ADHD and the girl who runs it, she actually is diagnosed with ADHD herself and so she runs this program for the kids because she had to deal with while she was being educated, and now she's an educator living with ADHD, so she kind of shows the children things that they can do, give them activities, she works with them, they do fun things.

Alice added, "The whole purpose of the program is for kids to have a mentor who can say, you know, these are the things that I've gone through, here's some things that can help." The school also maintained a fee-based before and after school care program available to all families called Connections. Elaine explained:

With Connections the person who's leading it is really wanting that to be, he wants there to be a liaison between Connections and the school community so that kind of, it's not just like you finish school and you to your after school care, there's a connection there.

When asked if all these programs were available to students with disabilities, the answers were overwhelmingly, "yes." Membership in some programs such as Homework Club and the music ensemble were limited by grade level, but participation was not dictated by ability. Anna, a Pre-K teacher, sponsors the Homework Club, "that's offered for all kids, three through fifth." Carly said when speaking about the music group, "I honestly couldn't tell you if there were children with disabilities in there or not because everybody's included in such a natural way." Emma agreed, "We choose not to exclude any child."

**Teachers use daily read aloud to foster community building and a love of reading and books, with grade level differences in academic goals for read-aloud time**

During the portion of the interviews concerning the read-aloud process, the teachers addressed a number of factors related to that time of the school day. Teachers talked about the frequency, timing, and location of their read alouds as well as the how they selected the books they shared with their students. Teacher goals for read-aloud time were reported and the role of technology during read-aloud time was described. Finally the teachers explained any training they may have received concerning reading aloud to children, whether through professional preparation in college or in-service professional development. This section shares the teachers' thoughts about these features of their read-aloud time.

The teachers in this study shared a commitment to reading aloud to their students every day. The most common times of the day to read aloud were Morning Meeting times, after lunch, and at the end of the school day. Teachers choose the books they read

70

to their students based on their personal favorites, recommendations from other teachers, student interests, and student situations, such as a new baby in the family or the death of a pet. None of the teachers changed their read-aloud practices based on the new student population at Paddington Farms Elementary, but veteran teachers noted that their book choices change from year to year with the needs of their students. Regarding reading aloud Elaine said, "It's not a waste of time."

In describing read aloud time in their classrooms, teachers consistently talked about gathering students together on the carpet, being in close proximity to one another, and making connections with each other. Elaine said, " I think that just being on the carpet in general is different than being in your, at your desk, so there's more of a not a loose feel, but relaxed." She went on, "I want them to feel comfortable in their surroundings and feel like they're free to learn and free to ask questions."

Alice commented, "that time on the carpet, that time that we're together, just teaches them that togetherness, that community." The carpet was a focus for Emily's read-aloud time, as well:

> I usually read aloud at our carpet where we can all sit together. It's a cozy place where we can be close to each other and um, you know, when they sit at their desks it just seems like they need to be you know on top if it, and very you know, paying attention, and you know when we're reading we can relax and it's a fun thing and it's a happy thing, it's something we want to do.

Some teachers specifically mentioned students with disabilities during this part of the interview.

Regarding read-aloud time and students with disabilities, Carly said:

> For students with disabilities you have to make those, you have to help the kids
> make those connections and, and really see that child as just another kid in the
> classroom and not the kid with disability or the kid that has the full time aide with
> im all the time or the kid that has all, you know, or the kid that can't talk to us like
> we talk.

Carly continued

> Children's literature at this age is a great way to model for them and let them see
> other characters doing that and also just to help them kind of break down those
> walks and see that all kids are just kids and that they all can play and they all like
> to be liked, and they all like to be cared for, and they all want to be treated nicely,
> and so I feel like children's literature can help with that piece of it just that
> common, and it also gives them a common connection, so if there's not a common
> connection if they've both heard the same read aloud then maybe that's a
> conversation starter.

Diana also talked about the importance of the shared experience that occurs during read-

aloud time:

> When you are sitting on the carpet, talking to everyone around you about the story
> or if you cannot speak, but everyone around you is accepting and happy because
> when you are listening to the stories and you are part of those stories, then
> everyone around you who is listening to that story becomes a part of the entire
> story community.

Daisy focused on the connections made between students during that shared experience.

Daisy explained:

> I think when they get to talk to each other and they get to hear each other, they're
> getting to know each other a little better and so I think as they do that you know,
> they're in a sense building their own community as we do read aloud because of
> what is being said is coming from them. You know, I'm reading the book, but

that's you know, that's about it, so they are they're gaining some ownership and independence in their leaning as they learn together um, and I think another thing that helps build community is that they bounce off of each other, you know one child will share a story and then you know this little girl will think of something and then this little boy will then think of something.

Several teachers talked about academic goals, as well as community building goals for read-aloud time.

The academic goals for students varied by grade level. The Pre-K teachers wanted their read-aloud time to reinforce the "letter of the week." Anna said, "I'll usually find a book that is about something with that letter like yesterday I read one about monsters, *Going on a Monster Hunt*." The kindergarten teachers began building comprehension skills by asking their students questions. Betty explained:

We want to have the comprehension, I want them to understand what the story's about. I want them to be able to sit on the carpet and listen, to practice those skills, and for us to have discussion about it, for them to be able to talk about what they're hearing.

The first grade teachers, however, had a different perspective.

Carly stated, "one goal is just to give the children more time of being read to because I like lots of our students are missing those lap reading hours that we know they need." She continued, "a second goal is to expose them to lots of literature because kids know a lot about TV, but I don't know that they know a whole lot about books." Carly mentioned academic skills, but suggested they are not her priority when she is reading aloud:

Of course we have those teachable moments we talk characters and setting and plot and why the author put those words in all capital letters and how you use speech bubbles and the teachable moments that go along with it, but that's not the goal of reading aloud time.

Colleen, the other first grade teacher, concurred:

I think my number one goal is to build community. I think that's a great time to just come together and start the day or start the afternoon and just relax you know. We've come in from buses or breakfast or whatever it is that we've been doing and it kind of just brings us together. And, and I mean the kids love the stories, they love to hear the stories.

Colleen also suggested that academic goals are secondary to enjoying the books:

Another goal is, is you know to bring in some of those teaching components, to ask 'em comprehension questions and to guide that comprehension as we move through the story, have kids ask questions, have them think about you know if they were that character, what would they do and that kind of think. So I definitely know that I bring those into the into the read aloud, but my number one goal is just to sit down and enjoy each other and not feel pressured to move to the next thing.

The second grade teachers made a connection between the enjoyment of the story and academic goals. Diana explained her goals for read-aloud time this way:

My biggest goal is for them to enjoy the story. That's my biggest goal. If they don't enjoy the story, then what's the point? They're not gonna lean any of the other things if they don't enjoy that story. The other things that I want them to do, my goals, enjoy the story, learn how to listen to an extended story over many days, learn how to summarize or retell the story so that it makes sense and then all of those other comprehension things like predicting, and telling the trying to figure out the main idea, but once again I don't beat them over the head with those things.

Daisy emphasized the social aspects of learning, as well as the academic goals during read aloud:

> Another goal is to, to bring those kids out who are not, who are not as engaged for one reason or another, whether they're distracted or they don't understand what's going on or they don't feel comfortable speaking up, pulling them out a little bit and encouraging them to, to step forward in an environment that is a little more informal and a little safe.

She identified another goal for her students:

> I think getting them to talk, to talk about their ideas, to have those those meta-cognitive skills come out, talk about what they're thinking and why they're thinking it, um, because that's what we're trying to do across the board in all content areas.

Daisy also acknowledged the role of interactive read aloud:

> I want it to be an interactive experience where we stop and talk about the vocabulary or we read the beginning of the chapter or the title of the chapter and then they have to then say what's gonna come next, knowing what they know already about what we've read about Matilda what do they anticipate or what do they predict?

By third grade academic goals were a priority during read-aloud time. Emily described her read-aloud strategy this way:

> So while we're reading aloud, I do a lot of modeling of my thinking. I know that we're talking about cause and effect, oh, I just saw something happen. I saw something happen. I wonder what the result's going to be? So I'm doing a lot of reading aloud and I'm thinking aloud to tell them how I want them to be thinking. This is what we're looking for, so this is what I'm going to be thinking while I'm reading. And you we've talked before that, when good readers read, they're always think so you know they're predicting, making good guesses, they're inferencing, they're doing all these things that good readers do we do a lot of modeling.

Elaine has many goals for read-aloud time:

> Definitely working on the oral language part, working on being a good listener, looking at the person who's speaking, also lately we've been working on visualizing quite a bit, so as I'm reading I want them to visualize. Sometimes they'll come to the carpet with their reading response notebook. And I'll have them, I'll stop the story and then they'll get to draw a picture of what they're read, and um turn and talk to the person beside them so I'm trying to incorporate all those elements of language.

The way the stories were delivered to the students came up in several interviews.

Alice brought her iPad to the interview to demonstrate one of the ways she shares

picture books with her students:

> I brought my iPad to show you some of the new ways. There're so many good you know interactive picture books that the kids are using and the way I use this in my class is I will put, um, I will plug in the um, sound into the you know the main sound so the kids can hear it and I'll either project it on the ELMO and then we'll read it together.

The first grade teachers also talked about sharing picture books electronically. Carly said:

> I've also started using the SMART Board this year for read aloud, so keeping the kids on the carpet, but projecting the book on the smart board just so it's easier for them to see and just to change it up a little bit, so it doesn't become the same old.

Colleen has used an electronic approach sometimes:

> What I have been kind of pushing myself to do more because the kids really seem to enjoy it, too, is using the document projector, turning out the lights, and I'm actually at my desk and they're looking at the smart board and they see the story on the screen.

Different ways of sharing picture books and how teachers learned to conduct a read-aloud time were discussed.

When asked about how the training teachers receive to read aloud to children, Elaine talked about learning about read aloud in a children's literature course during her master's program. Daisy and Anna both had some instruction about read aloud in college courses. Bonnie revealed that her college course in read aloud addressed chapter books but not picture books. Elaine, Diana, Carly, and Colleen had all participated in a half-day professional development sponsored by Magnolia County focused on interactive read aloud. In all, seven of the ten teachers interviewed had had some training in reading aloud to students.

**The picture books read aloud are not inclusive and teachers lack knowledge about inclusive picture books**

In response to the question "Do you consider characters with disabilities when you select the books to read aloud?" all but one of the teachers said, "No." The only affirmative answer was from Carly who said:

> I do, I try to. I just want to make sure they get a wide view of all the people that they're going to encounter in this world, that not everybody's gonna be just like them and that making sure I mean my class is predominantly white, making sure they see African American characters in their books, making sure that they see Asian characters in their books, making sure that they see children with disabilities in their books, so I don't think it's just disabilities I just am trying to make sure they understand that there's such a wide group of people that they're and that everybody has strengths that they bring to the table.

Carly credited her family experience with her awareness of disability. Her younger brother was originally given a "mental retardation" label many years ago and sent to "a

self-contained class at a different school that wasn't even our home school." By middle

school his label had changed from "mental retardation" to "autism" and he was placed in

inclusive settings for the rest of his school career. In summarizing her family experience

with disability, Carly said:

> It shapes who I am because that whole process of what he, what I saw with him when he was in elementary school shaped what I wanted to do and who I wanted to be, so it does definitely play a part in my story.

Carly's colleagues had various responses to the idea of selecting picture books

that contain a character or characters with disabilities. Elaine said:

> As a classroom teacher, I have not, but I wouldn't disregard a book because it had a student with a disability in it. When I was a special ed aide, some of the books I looked at were not necessarily books that had students with disabilities in them, but the topics dealt with thing my student needed to know.

When asked how she might use books that contained characters with disabilities, she

said, "not learning about a disability, No, just social skill." Conversely, Betty embraced

the idea of teaching about specific disabilities through picture books:

> Our librarian, or special ed. department, I think if they could have resources available for us, it's very difficult to find those it's not an easy thing to do, so if they had a library that we could go and pull books about children that had certain disabilities would be great.

She continued:

> It would be wonderful that is not just about physical impairments, but about autism and about children that are just anxious like to the not, not just normal anxiety, but serious you know problems. I think it would be wonderful if there

78

was a way to have a story about the little boy who's under the table and won't come out for three hours, you know. I don't know that that's there and I don't know how to get that literature into our hands if it is.

Betty expressed a desire to add to her classroom library, "I don't know that I have a lot of the books that I would want to have. I'm not even sure where I would get those." Teachers were asked to name specific books that include a character with a disability.

When asked if they could recall a book that featured a character with a disability, both Betty and Bonnie remembered seeing a Mercer Mayer book that had a character in a wheelchair and Anna shared a *Franklin* book that had a character in a wheelchair. Anna read the *Franklin* book in preparation for a new student who had cerebral palsy and used a wheelchair:

I wanted the kids to see that he was treated normally in the book and the kids had fun with him and no reason to be scared, no reason to hover, just to be normal, that he's just different in this way, but we're all different in other ways.

Not every teacher was so open to reading books that talk about disabilities.

Daisy had a very different response to the suggestion of disability in picture books, "I shy away from that because, not shy away from that, that's the wrong word, I'm nervous about what kinds of things will come up as a result and I think that's one area that I'm not incredibly confident in." Daisy also expressed concerns about parent response to books containing characters with disabilities, "I think that the conversation will be perhaps awkward at times and these kids will go home and tell their families about what we talked about in school and whether or not families will be OK with that."

79

Daisy added, "I have not come across many books where the kids have disabilities."

Daisy's consideration of disability in picture books was not shared by all the teachers.

Alice and Bonnie both admitted that they had never thought about characters with

disabilities in picture books. Colleen had not considered disability in picture books but

did remember sharing a Scholastic News with her students on Veteran's Day that

featured an amputee:

> There was story about a veteran who had lost a leg an how he had a helper dog
> with him and he had a robotic leg and there was just I think it was actually a
> Veteran's Day issue, and so of course my goal was to talk about Veteran's Day
> and why we, you know, honor our veterans there was just there was probably a 20
> minute discussion, well maybe how do you think he lost his leg or how does that
> leg work or why does he have that dog and who else has dogs and there's so
> actually was it kind of eased into a discussion what other people have helper dogs
> and why they have, you known, service dogs and things like that.

Colleen stumbled upon the article about a veteran with a disability but had any of the

teachers had any training to look for similar reading materials?

None of the teachers had taken any course work during their professional

preparation concerning disability in picture books. Moreover, no one reported receiving

any in-service professional development activities on the topic. When asked if this was a

topic that was of interest, every teacher answered, "Yes." Diana said:

> Of course, I always want to learn more about read alouds and how that helps
> children and I always like to learn more about any kind of disabilities and how to
> best serve those kids not just them as having a disability, but all of the rest of the
> kids around them.

Daisy not only wanted to learn more about the book, but also wanted to see this type of read aloud modeled:

> I'm the type of, of learner that I have to, well, I do best when I see someone else doing it first. So not just reading about it or someone telling me about, but seeing it in action or have a very concrete example.

Emily said:

> I absolutely think it would be helpful, especially since here in Magnolia county we're an inclusive school system, so we have children with all ranges of disabilities, mild to severe disabilities that are in our classroom all the time and I, for me, it's not even a professional development thing necessarily as much as it would be an understanding and an empathy for the children to just to know more because I, I can, I know things about disabilities, but they may not, so I think it would be beneficial to have them brought in, just so it gives the children more of an understanding, so I would love to have more training on that.

Elaine agreed and added an additional benefit for parents:

> Especially having an inclusive classroom and being able to able to offer that as a resource to parents, to students, as the need would come up. Just to have those kind of in your back pocket so you would know what books to offer as well as if someone with a disability were in my classroom or the question came up, then I would know like I would go to this resource to have to be able to read.

Emily and Elaine both specifically mentioned read aloud in their inclusive classrooms, a subject of inquiry for all ten participants.

**Teachers believe their read alouds support inclusive practice**

Each interview ended with the question, "Do you think your read aloud time supports inclusive practice?" Alice, Carly, and Colleen answered, "Yes," without further comment. Diana replied:

I do and one of the things that I really like about what not all the kids, but there's a good handful that they will um, they'll sort of complement each other and they'll say oh, I really what so-n-so said and that makes me think of this and so then those students who speak up are, are getting that peer affirmation and encouragement and I think a lot of time that holds more weight than what I say and so, I, I think it does.

Bonnie also talked about students interacting with each other during read-aloud time:

Everybody gets a chance to talk you know and share and that's what I said right now I don't feel like anybody you know feels left out or things like that. I feel like we all work, listen together, and we all answer. She continued, we're working on not judging, you know, what other people say and comments and things like that so I think we're headin' in the right direction.

Diana was hopeful that her read-aloud time is inclusive and shared an example:

Kids interact with the environment in so many different ways. There's some kids that they want to be right in the middle, some kids that want to be on the outside, some kids that want to be way someplace else, but they're still listening, they're part of the group that their they have reasons for not being in the middle of all of the hub-bub on the rug. I have never been one of those people that says everybody has to be here, everybody has to be sitting with their hands in their lap, doing, you know, looking at me, because everybody has a different way of interacting with the thing that I'm reading. I have one little guy in here that sits at the computer and I noticed the other day he was sitting at the computer, he was working on the computer, but he had pulled the headphone away from one ear, so he could still hear. And a different day he was working on the computer and he was very angry and I was reading *Minnie and Moo*, of course, and all at once he was in the middle of the group.

In addition to this description of her inclusive read-aloud time, Diana offered her own

definition of inclusion:

Inclusion is not something that you do. Inclusion is something that happens when you're doing the right thing. So sometimes I get a little I don't know pissed off at people that they're talking about inclusion-this and inclusion-that and I'm

thinking just do your job, just teach the kids. I'm really glad that kids, that all kids, don't learn the same way because this is the most boring thing in the world.

Other teachers were also committed to including every student.

Emily shared her thoughts about her read-aloud time and inclusive practice:

Even though some of my children don't have disabilities, I'm being inclusive at all times, even to children without disabilities because I'm doing things at their level. They may not have an identified disability, but I'm not excluding them.

She went on, "I know where they are in their reading levels and in their reading careers."

Anna and Betty were more measured in their responses.

Anna made a distinction between her read aloud process and the materials she shares with her students:

I would say it supports it as far as all of us being together in one place at one time all listing, all looking at me. I think that, yes, but I can say maybe my reading materials I would like to improve on.

Betty also talked about the books she reads aloud:

I'm really not sure how to answer because I think some of the things we do, but certainly not all, there are certain books and things that I read and I think, 'Mmm, that could've been better.' You know when I finish I look back and think, 'I wish I would have done that differently, or I wish the book had gone a different road with that.' So I think there's definitely room for improvement there. I think it's an area that I don't know that I have a lot of the books that I would want to have.

Emily gave the most direct and confident answer to the final question. She provided not only an opinion about her own read-aloud time but also a response that was

83

reflective of the school culture and climate of Paddington Farms Elementary School. Emily stated, "I think everything I do supports inclusive practice."

**Summary**

This chapter included demographic data gathered from the school and the ten participants. Through a process of categorical aggregation of the interview transcripts, a number of themes emerged. The school culture and climate were described by the following themes: 1) Teachers put children first, build community, and make connections between home and school without regard for student ability; and 2) All school-sponsored extracurricular activities include all children regardless of ability. Three themes emerged in response to the research questions: 1) Teachers use daily read aloud to foster community building and a love of reading and books, with grade level difference in academic goals for read-aloud time; 2) The picture books read aloud are not inclusive and teachers lack knowledge about inclusive picture books; and 3) Teachers believe their read alouds support inclusive practice. These themes were reported and supported by evidence collected during the interviews.

The following chapter will discuss these themes in the context of the conceptual framework of the study. Chapter V will provide an overview of the study, as well as a statement of the problem, the information collected, and a re-statement of the research questions. The findings from this study will be reported and conclusions drawn about the meaning of the findings. Limitations of the study will be recognized. Implications for practice and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

**Introduction**

Scholars advocate the use of children's literature to help build awareness, understanding and acceptance of disability (Andrew, 1998; Gavigan & Kurtts, 2011; Hoffman, 2011;, Wiseman, 2011). Moreover, children's literature has been used as a component of disability awareness studies seeking to improve relationships between students with disabilities and their typical peers (Favazza & Odom, 1997; Favazza et al., 2001; Nikolaraizi et al., 2005; Trepanier-Street & Romatowski, 1996). Despite this interest in the potential for children's literature to positively impact connections between children with and without disabilities, there is a lack of empirical data describing general education teacher use of children's literature to support inclusive practice. This study was conducted to fill this gap in the professional literature.

This chapter will provide an overview of the study, as well as a statement of the problem, a re-statement of the research questions, and the information collected. The themes identified in Chapter IV will be discussed in the context of the conceptual framework and suggestions made about the meaning of the themes. Finally, limitations of the study will be recognized. Implications for practice and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

## Summary of the Study

This qualitative case study investigated the use of picture books to support inclusive practice in the primary grades of an inclusive elementary school. The rationale for this study is the dearth of empirical data documenting how general education teachers in the primary grades of an inclusive elementary school read aloud to their students and whether or not they read picture books that feature characters with disabilities. Demographic data were collected from the school and the ten teacher participants. Interviews were conducted and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were analyzed according to the procedures outlined in Chapter III and themes were identified that described school culture and climate and teacher read-aloud practices that respond to the following research question and sub-questions:

How do general education teachers in the primary grades (Pre-K – Grade 3) use picture books to support inclusive practice?

    c. How does the book selection process support inclusive practice?

    d. How do the read-aloud strategies support inclusive practice?

The responses to the research questions will be discussed in relation to the conceptual framework of the study in the following section.

## Findings

The themes identified in Chapter IV will be discussed in the context of the five elements of the study's conceptual framework to explain the findings in a meaningful way. Lambert (2006) and Sipe (1998) emphasized the relationship between the reader, the listener, and the book during read-aloud time. Snow (2002) grounded the read aloud

experience in a socio-cultural context, which this study defined as the learning context within the school environment. The conceptual framework for the study is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework
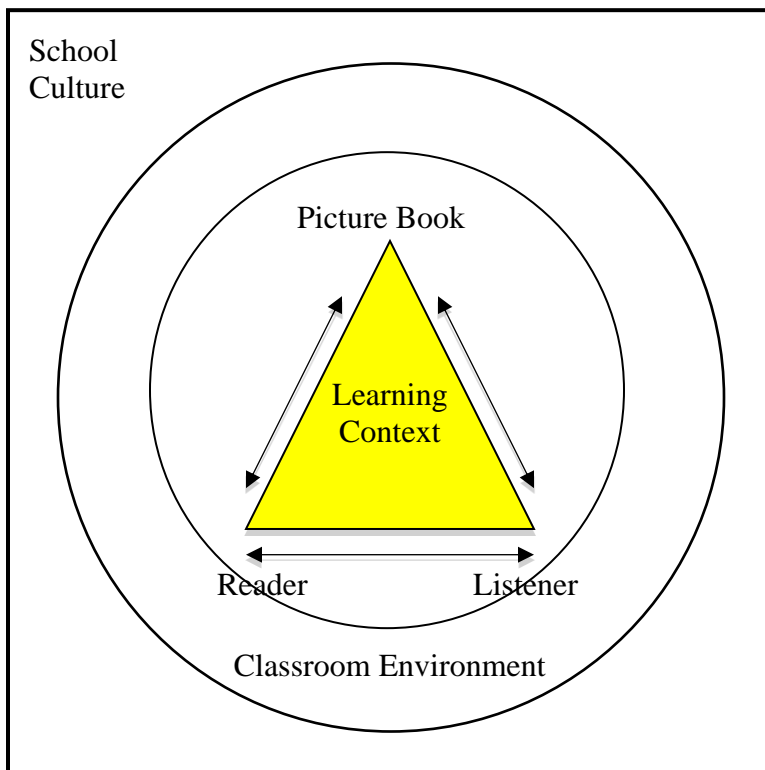


Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (2005), Lambert (2006), Sipe (1998), and Snow (2002).

The school environment, learning context, reader, listener, and pictures books are addressed in the following sections in order to paint a comprehensive picture of what was learned from this study.

**School Environment**

The first theme that emerged from this research, "Teachers put children first, building community, and make connections between home and school without regard for student ability," suggested a high priority on building relationships that support an inclusive school environment. For example, the teachers promoted cooperation, encouraged student thinking and discussion, and emphasized helpful conduct behaviors that Battistich et al. (1997) identified as necessary to enhance a sense of belonging for students in a school community. Likewise, teachers modeled acceptance of all students, which Hughes et al. (2006) identified as another key component of belonging in a school community. Therefore, Paddington Farms Elementary appeared to be a school where building community matters.

Friend (2008) defined the school as "the smallest meaningful unit of inclusiveness," (p. 12). Moreover, the DEC/NAEYC (2009) joint position statement on inclusion defines inclusion as the full access, participation, and engagement of all children with and without disabilities. This suggests that the practice of including all students may extend beyond the school day to encompass the extracurricular activities at the school. The students at Paddington Farms Elementary were included in the extracurricular activities such as playing chess, taking morning walks, and presenting musical performances. All students were invited to participate in every club open to their grade level. The second theme, "All school-sponsored extracurricular activities include all children regardless of ability," illustrated a philosophical commitment to inclusive

practice that encircled every aspect of the school environment. Where does this broad philosophy of inclusive practice originate?

The Magnolia County Public School system has a long history of including students with disabilities in general education classrooms. This information was documented in the least restrictive environment data presented in Chapter IV, as well as the researcher's experiences with the school system. The system-wide and school-wide philosophy of inclusion was also demonstrated in the learning context of read-aloud time in individual classrooms.

**Learning Context**

Lane & Wright (2007) recommended a designated space for read-aloud time; time after time teachers in this study brought their students together on the carpet to read aloud and share a story. The designated space and learning context for read-aloud time at Paddington Farms Elementary School was all about the carpet. The proximity of students with disabilities to their typical peers is not a defining characteristic of inclusion, but there cannot be full membership in the classroom community without togetherness (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). As inviting as "the hub-bub on the rug" may be, one teacher recognized that some children prefer to put a little distance between themselves and the other students gathered together on the carpet. This teacher was at ease with a student listening to a story from the periphery but also allowed the students the freedom to join the group mid-story if he so desired. Lave and Wenger (1991) referred to this as legitimate peripheral participation in their discussion of the socio-cultural approach to

situated learning. This acceptance of fluid, flexible togetherness respected the needs of each individual learner.

Teacher attention to individual student needs was a key element of the social-emotional context for learning and led to an unexpected finding. All the teachers in this study received their professional preparation at one of the two universities within a 30-mile radius of Paddington Farms Elementary. Perhaps these teacher preparation programs emphasized differentiated instruction, addressed meeting the needs of all students, and stressed the three key elements of an inclusive learning context access, participation, and supports (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). The teachers described different methods of engagement, expression, and expression; characteristics of Universal Design for Learning ([www.cast.org](www.cast.org)). Tomlinson et al. (2003) identified process, content, and product as the three means for differentiating instruction for individual students. Content or student competency was not the focus of this study; however teachers differentiated their read aloud process by granting all students access to and engagement with the books by using traditional books, iPads, and SMART Boards to share stories. The products or representation and expressions they expected during and after the read-aloud time were differentiated, as well. For example, students were asked to demonstrate their understanding by offering verbal comments, drawing pictures, or writing in reader response notebooks. As students got older and moved from grade to grade, the complexity of the products evolved. For example, students in Pre-K answered simple color recognition questions while third graders made written predictions and inferences. Regardless of grade level, consistent use of the principles of Universal Design for

Learning and differentiated instruction across the teachers may be the result of similar teacher preparation experiences.

Another key element of the learning context was the engaged participation of all students in the shared experience of read-aloud time. This was the most inclusive characteristic of read-aloud time in this study because teachers intentionally included all students regardless of ability during the read-aloud experience. Hickey (2003) called engaged participation the "centerpiece" (p. 411) of socio-cultural learning and the requisite activity for building classroom community. *DEC Recommended Practices* (2005) also described the importance of inclusive learning environments that promote engagement and interaction for all children. Whether sitting at the teacher's feet, choosing to sit at a distance, or sitting in a wheelchair or assistive seating device, the students in this learning community were listening and interacting with the story, the teacher, and their peers. Given this attention to togetherness, differentiated instruction, and engaged participation in shared experiences, the theme, "Teachers believe their read-aloud time supports inclusive practice" was not surprising. The next section will specifically address the reader's (teacher's) role in the read-aloud process.

**Reader**

The reader's (teacher's) task in this conceptual framework was to select the books read aloud and present the stories to the listeners (students). Book selection will be discussed in the picture book section of this chapter. Teacher purposes for read aloud and the strategies they used to engage their students are discussed here.

The teachers in this study used read aloud to build community and address academic goals, as described in a theme that addressed teacher read-aloud practice, "Teachers use daily read aloud to foster community building and a love of reading and books, with grade level differences in academic goals for read-aloud time." According to Lukens' (2007) the purpose of read aloud is to entertain or improve understanding of the world. The teachers presented picture books to their students in accordance with this purpose and followed accepted best practices for reading aloud. To enhance student understanding, Blewitt et al. (2009) and Hoffman (2011) recommended that teachers ask questions and encourage discussions about the books. Moreover, Lane and Wright (2007) and McGee and Schickedanz (2007) encouraged teachers to stop at strategic points in the story to check student comprehension, elicit responses, and ask for predictions How did these teachers learn these interactive read-aloud strategies?

An interesting finding was that the teachers who had most recently completed their professional preparation had some coursework guiding their read-aloud practices. This suggested an interest in and attention to the value of read-aloud in primary grade classrooms by the curriculum developers of the teacher preparation programs of the local universities. Likewise, several experienced teachers had participated in in-service professional development regarding read-aloud strategies, which implies a similar recognition of the importance of read aloud by the school system administration. The next section will address the listener in the context of the conceptual framework.

**Listener**

A full investigation of the impact of read-aloud time on the listener (student) was not the focus of this study; however, teachers expected students to interact with each other during read-aloud discussions. This result refers to the previous discussion of socio-cultural learning in the section on learning context (Hickey, 2003) and the themes that aligned with the Reader and the Learning Context: "Teachers use daily read aloud to foster community building and a love of reading and books, with grade level differences in academic goals for read-aloud time" and "Teachers believe their read alouds support inclusive practice." Students willingly interacting with each other and helping their peers who may be struggling is an example of Vygotsky's (1978) focus on the child in activity in context learning from more-skilled peers. Having children with disabilities in their classes was not a novelty to most of the students at this inclusive school because it is their lived experience (Creswell, 2007). Perhaps inclusive picture books may be a vehicle for encouraging peer acceptance and exploiting the similarities among children while acknowledging their differences.

**Picture Books**

The theme, "The picture books read aloud are not inclusive and teachers lack knowledge about inclusive picture books" was linked to this element of the conceptual framework. McGee and Schickedanz (2007) emphasized the importance of careful book selection for an effective read aloud; however book selection in this study was limited because teachers were not aware of inclusive picture books. This finding is associated with Favazza and Odom's (1997) observation that teachers did not have books that

featured characters with disabilities. This was an important finding because without teacher awareness of appropriate representation of disability in picture books and the means to locate such books, an important aspect of diversity in society was overlooked in book selection. Despite the inclusive school culture, the teachers' beliefs that their read-aloud time supported inclusive practice, and the teachers' use of interactive read aloud strategies, the read-aloud time was not fully inclusive because of the content of the books. Teachers were unaware of inclusive picture books and did not know how to find books that feature characters with disabilities. In other words, their read aloud process was inclusive, but the materials read were not.

In Chapter II it was noted that there were many more references to multicultural children's literature in scholarly databases than there were references to characters with disabilities in children's literature. There appeared to be increased awareness of diverse culture, ethnicity, and race in children's literature: Brooks & Browne (2012) posited a specific reader response theory to allow children to make meaning of cultural diversity through multicultural children's literature; Morgan (2009) advocated the use of picture book biographies to improve cross-cultural understanding and awareness of multiple points of view; and Low (2013) linked multicultural children's literature published in the last twenty years to the Common Core standards. In these discussions of the benefits of addressing diversity through children's books, however, none of these authors included differences of ability as an aspect of diversity. Studies such as this and subsequent publications may bring increased attention to the under-representation of disability in children's literature and the absence of disability from the diversity conversation.

Unfortunately, classroom teachers rarely have access to the scholarly literature in which such papers appear. Perhaps school personnel responsible for professional development can provide access to the professional literature so teachers can investigate the current research regarding disability as an element of diversity (as well as many other school and curriculum related topics) for themselves.

None of the teachers had had any professional preparation or professional development regarding disability in picture books;  all of the teachers expressed an interest in learning more about these books and using them in their classroom. It is especially important for teachers in inclusive schools to incorporate these books into the daily read-aloud routines so the children with disabilities in their classrooms can see themselves in the books and typical children can better understand their peers with disabilities. This idea is what Bailes (2002) called both "window and mirror," a window into the lives of people with disabilities and a mirror into which children with disabilities might see themselves. Suggestions for increasing teacher knowledge about inclusive picture books appear in the implications section of this chapter.

The findings discussed address each element of the conceptual framework. The elements of the conceptual framework (school environment, learning context, reader, listener, and picture books) are aligned with the themes in Table 4.

Table 4

Conceptual Framework Elements Aligned with Themes

| Elements | Themes |
|---|---|
| School Environment | Teachers put children first, build community, and make connections between home and school without regard for student ability. |
|  | All school-sponsored extracurricular activities include all children regardless of ability. |
| Learning Context | Teachers believe their read alouds support inclusive practice. |
| Reader | Teachers use daily read aloud to foster community building and a love of reading and books, with grade level differences in academic goals for read-aloud time. |
| Listener | Teachers use daily read aloud to foster community building and a love of reading and books, with grade level differences in academic goals for read-aloud time. |
|  | Teachers believe their read alouds support inclusive practice. |

| Picture Books | The picture books read aloud are not inclusive and teachers lack knowledge about inclusive picture books. |
|---|---|

**Intersubjectivity**

Intersubjectivity in this study must be recognized (Granek, 2013). This epistemological orientation which values the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and the participants is relevant to this study because of the researcher's prior experience as a teacher in this elementary school. The impact of the researcher's relationship to the school was most evident during the peer review of the data and debriefing. The peer reviewer noted the inclusive mind-set of the participants. The inclusive philosophy of every teacher was so firmly established and integral to the school climate that it did not appear remarkable to the researcher. The value of peer review was underscored through this experience.

**Limitations**

Several limitations were identified in this study. Because there were no observations of classroom read-aloud time, findings were based on demographic and interview data only. This is a limitation because actual classroom read-aloud activities may differ from what the participants reported. Further, teachers reported a lack of knowledge about inclusive picture books however no content analysis of classroom or school library collections was conducted to confirm a lack of inclusive picture books in the school. If there are no inclusive picture books in the classroom or school libraries, the

trustworthiness of the information shared during the interviews would be enhanced. Finally, there was no cultural, ethnic, or gender diversity of the participants. All participants were white females and it is unknown whether or not culture, ethnicity, or gender may have influenced the data. It has been documented that multicultural children's literature receives more attention in the professional literature and in publishing. Teachers from diverse cultures, ethnicities, or races may have an increased sensitivity to all types of diversity in the books they share with their students.

## Implications

The findings of this study have implications for teachers, school librarians, parents, and other adults who read aloud to children. None of the teachers in this study had any pre-service professional preparation or in-service professional development regarding disability and inclusion in picture books yet all of them indicated a desire to learn more about this type of children's literature. Therefore, efforts should be made to create and implement in-service professional development activities regarding these books. Moreover information about inclusive picture books should be introduced in pre-service teacher preparation, perhaps in children's literature coursework or language arts methods courses that teach book selection for effective read aloud practice.

While classroom teachers were the only participants in this study, school librarians should be made aware of this classification of children's literature, again through pre-service preparation and in-service professional development. The school librarian is the go-to person for advice and recommendations in selecting books to share with students in schools. Additional information and enhanced knowledge about

disability in children's literature may contribute to more inclusive literature being added to school library collections and additional suggestions from librarians to teachers to include these books in their classroom read-aloud activities may take place. Once school librarians have received training regarding disability in children's literature, the next step would be to see if the librarians are acquiring these books, sharing the books with their students, and recommending inclusive literature to teachers.

Parents, especially parents of children with disabilities, and other adults who read aloud to children may benefit from improved teacher and librarian knowledge regarding inclusive picture books. These books can be excellent resources for parents to show their children the similarities between children with and without disabilities by focusing on common feelings and experiences. Parents of typically developing children may also wish to share these books and look for them in their visits to school and public libraries and bookstores.

<div align="center">

**Future Research**

</div>

This research study lays the groundwork for continued work in three major areas school culture and climate, read loud process, and read-aloud materials.

**School Culture and Climate**

Where does the inclusive mind-set of these teachers come from? Is it a product of a teacher preparation program? Research to identify these inclusive dispositions and determine their origin is warranted. Are the teachers being assimilated into the inclusive school climate and culture at Paddington Farms Elementary School or do teachers bring a personal commitment to inclusion to the school and classroom? Is there an element of

both? Data concerning these issues could be useful in facilitating more successful inclusive settings for students with disabilities in public schools.

**Read-Aloud Process**

This research could be replicated in a school with separate settings for students with disabilities and the results compared with the findings of this research. Are the current results a product of the inclusive philosophy of this school or did some other factor influence the findings? Further study of the phenomenon could add trustworthiness to the current study.

The study could be expanded to include other instructional personnel who regularly read aloud to children. It would be interesting to learn how school librarians, guidance counselors, reading teachers, special educators, and specialty area teachers such as art and music read aloud to students and if they have a similar lack of knowledge about inclusive picture books.

It was noted in the limitation section that the current study relied on teacher interviews only. Observing teacher read-aloud practice and comparing the read-aloud strategies the teachers reported to the teacher practices observed could address this limitation.

Alice, the Pre-K teacher with iPads for her students opened the door for an investigation of teacher use of e-books and e-readers during read aloud. How widespread is the use of technology in sharing picture books? Is one delivery method more effective than the other for meeting student needs and teacher goals?

**Read-Aloud Materials**

The teachers in this study reported a lack of knowledge regarding inclusive picture books. A content analysis of books in classroom libraries and the school library center would determine whether or not the teachers have ready access to books that include characters with disabilities. If such books are found, then circulation data should be evaluated to see if the inclusive books in the existing collections are being loaned and who is borrowing these books.

A system for identifying inclusive picture books is a critical need. The more inclusive a picture book is, the less likely a reference to disability will appear in the subject headings on the copyright page of the book. Despite teacher interest in inclusive picture books, these books will not be shared with students if teachers cannot locate the books. Moreover, an ongoing evaluation of newly published picture books for representation of disability should be carried out to continually add new books to a bibliography of inclusive picture book titles appropriate for young students.

## Summary

The purpose of this study was to learn how general education teachers in the primary grades use read-aloud time to support inclusive practice in an inclusive elementary school. This topic was addressed to fill a gap in the professional literature that overlooked this aspect of read-aloud time.

Previous research suggested that using children literature in disability awareness programs can increase awareness, understanding, and acceptance of students with disabilities in the primary grades (Favazza & Odom, 1997; Favazza et al, 2000;

Nikolaraizi et al., 2005; Trepanier-Street & Romatowski, 1996)). The results of the current study suggested that improved classroom teacher understanding of inclusive picture books may increase the use of these books during routine classroom read alouds, provide opportunities for children to see disability as one facet of human difference, and facilitate the authentic inclusion of children with disabilities in general education classrooms.

A combination of factors came together to create an inclusive environment for learning at Paddington Farms Elementary. A history of inclusive practice may have created a mind-set among classroom teachers that all students should be taught in general education classrooms regardless of their ability. Local university teacher education programs may have prepared the teachers to differentiate instruction to serve all students, which may have added to the inclusive dispositions and skills of the teachers. The missing piece in the conceptual framework was teacher knowledge and use of inclusive picture books during routine classroom read aloud. Perhaps through the implications for practice and continued research outlined here, teacher knowledge of and access to inclusive picture books may increase and create an additional layer of inclusion to an already inclusive school community.

REFERENCES

Alcott, L. M. (1868). *Little women.* Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers.

Alcott, L. M. (1871). *Little men*. Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers.

Alcott, L. M. (1879). *Jack and Jill.* Boston, MA: Roberts Brothers.

Al-Hazza, T. C. & Bucher, K. T. (2008) Building Arab Americans' cultural identity and
   acceptance with children's literature. *The Reading Teacher, 62,* 210-219.
   doi:10.1598/RT.62.3.3

Altieri, J. (2008). Fictional characters with dyslexia: What are we seeing in books?
   *Teaching Exceptional Children, 41*(1), 48-54. Retrieved from
   http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Publications2/TEACHINGExc
   eptionalChildren/default.htm

Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. G. (1985) *Becoming a
   nation of readers: The report of the commission on reading.* Washington, DC:
   National Institute of Education.

Andrews, S. E. (1998). Using inclusion literature to promote positive attitudes toward
   disabilities. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 41,* 420-426. Retrieved from
   http://www.reading.org

Alexander, K. L. & Entwisle, D. R. (1988). Achievement in the first 2 years of school:
   Patterns and Processes. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child
   Development, 53* (2). Retrieved from http://www.srcd.org/

Association for Library Service to Children. http://www.ala.org/alsc/

Ayala, E. C. (1999). "Poor little things" and "brave little souls:" The portrayal of

individuals with disabilities in children's literature. *Reading Research and*

*Instruction, 39*(1), 103-117. Retrieved from

http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/ulri20/current

Bailes, C. N. (2002). *Mandy*: A critical look at the portrayal of a deaf character in

children's literature. *Multicultural Perspectives, 4*(4), 3-9. Retrieved from

http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hmcp20/current

Baker, J. A. (2006). Contributions of teacher-child relationships to positive school

adjustment during elementary school. *Journal of School Psychology*, *44,* 211-229.

doi:10:1016/j.jsp.2006.02.002

Bang, M. (2000). *Picture this: How picture books work.* San Francisco, CA: Chronicle.

Battistich, V., Solomon, D., & Watson, M. (1998, April). *Sense of community as a*

*mediating factor in promoting children's social and ethical development.* Paper

presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San

Diego, CA.

Battistich, V., Solomon, D., Watson, M., & Schaps E. (1997). Caring school

communities. *Educational Psychologist,* 32, 137 – 151. Retrieved from

http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hedp20/current

Beck, I. L. & McKeown, M. G. (2001). Text talk: Capturing the benefits of read-aloud

experiences for young children. *The Reading Teacher, 55,* 10 – 20. Retrieved

from http://www.reading.org/

Beckett, A., Ellison, N., Barrett, S. & Shah, S. (2010). 'Away with the fairies?' Disability

    within primary-age children's literature. *Disability & Society, 25,* 373-376.

    doi:10.1080/09687591003701355

Birch, S. H., & Ladd, G. W. (1997). The teacher–child relationship and children's early

    school adjustment. *Journal of School Psychology, 35,* 61–79. Retrieved from

    http://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-school-psychology/

Bland, C. M. & Gann, L. (2013, in press). From standing out to being just one of the

    gang: Guidelines for selecting inclusive picture books. *Childhood Education.*

Blaska, J. K. (2004). Children's literature that includes character with disabilities or

    illnesses, *Disability Studies Quarterly, 24*(1).

Blewitt, P., Rump, J M., Shealy, S. El. & Cook, S. A. (2009). Shared book reading: When

    and how questions affect young children's word learning. *Journal of Educational*

    *Psychology, 101*(2), 294-304.

Blume, J. (1973). *Deenie.* New York, NY: Bradbury Press.

Bridgeland, J. M., Dilulio, J. J., & Morison K. B. (2006). *The silent epidemic:*

    *Perspectives of high school dropouts.* Retrieved from

    http://www.civicenterprises.net/

Brittain, I. (2004). An examination into the portrayal of deaf characters and deaf issues in

    picture books for children. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 24*(1). Retrieved from

    http://dsq-sds.org/

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). The bioecological theory of human development. In U.

    Bronfenbrenner (Ed.), *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives*

    *on human development* (pp. 3-15). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brooks, W. & Browne, S. (2012). Toward a culturally situated reader response theory.

    *Children's Literature in Education, 43*, 74-85. doi:10.1007/s10583-011-9154-z

Burnett, F. H. (1911). *The secret garden.* London, UK: Heinemann

Cameron, A., Narahasi, K., Walter, M. P., & Wisniewski, D. (1992). The many faces in

    children's books. *School Library Journal, 38,* 28-33. Retrieved from

    http://www.slj.com/

Cooper, C. W. (2009). Performing cultural work in demographically changing schools:

    Implications for expanding transformative leadership frameworks. *Education*

    *Administration Quarterly,* 45, 694-724. doi:10.1177/0013161X09341639

Crafton, L., Brennan, M. & Silvers, P. (2007). Critical inquiry and multiliteracies in a

    first-grade classroom. *Language Arts, 84*(6), 510-518.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five*

    *approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Davidson, I. F. W. K., Woodill, G., & Bredberg, E. (1994). Images of disability in 19th

    century British children's literature. *Disability & Society, 9*(1), 33-46. Retrieved

    from http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/carfax/09687599.html

Davis, P. A. (2000). *Brian's bird.* Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Co.

DEC/NAEYC. (2009). Early childhood inclusion: *A joint position statement of the*

    *Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the*

*Education of Young Children (NAEYC).* Chapel Hill: The University of North

Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute.

Dickens, C. (1843). *A Christmas carol.* London, UK: Chapman & Hall.

Dobo, P. J. (1982). Using literature to change attitudes toward the handicapped. *The*

*Reading Teacher, 36,* 290-292. Retrieved from http://www.reading.org/

Dowd, F. S. (1992). Evaluating children's books portraying Native American and Asian

cultures. *Childhood Education, 68,* 219-224. Retrieved from http://www.acei.org/

Dowker, A. (2004). The treatment of disability in 19th and early 20th century children's

literature. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 24*(1). Retrieved from http://dsq-sds.org/

Dyches, T. T. & Prater, M. A. (2005). Characterization of developmental disability in

children's fiction. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 40,* 202-

216. Retrieved from  http://daddcec.org/Publications/ETADDJournal.aspx

Dyches, T. T., Prater, M. A., & Jenson, J. (2006). Portrayal of disabilities in Caldecott

books. *TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus, 2*(5) Article 2. Retrieved from

http://escholarship.bc.edueducationtecplus/vol2/iss5/art2

Dyches, T. T., Prater, M. A., & Leininger, M. (2009). Juvenile literature and the portrayal

of developmental disabilities. *Education and Training in Developmental*

*Disabilities, 44,* 304-317. Retrieved from

http://daddcec.org/Publications/ETADDJournal.aspx

Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 6319.

Favazza, P. C. & Odom, S. L. (1997). Promoting positive attitudes of kindergarten-age

children toward people with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 63*, 405-418.

Retrieved from

http://www.cec.sped.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Publications2/ExceptionalChildren/default.htm

Favazza, P. C., Phillipsen, L., & Kumar, P. (2001). Measuring and promoting acceptance of young children with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 66,* 491-508. Retrieved from http://www.cec.sped.org

Flynn, K. S. (2011). Developing children's oral language skills through dialogic reading: Guidelines for implementation. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 44*(2), 8-16.

Fox, M. (2008). *Reading magic: Why reading aloud to our children will change their lives forever.* New York: Harcourt.

Friend, M. *Co-teach! A handbook for creating and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools.* Greensboro, NC: Marilyn Friend, Inc.

Gag, W. (1928). *Millions of cats.* New York, NY: Coward-McCann.

Gavigan, K. W. & Kurtts, S. (2011). Using children's and young adult literature in teaching acceptance and understanding of individual differences. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, Winter*, 11-16. Retrieved from http://www.dkg.org

Gervay, S. (2004). *Butterflies:* Youth literature as a powerful tool in understanding disability. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 24*(1). Retrieved from http://dsq-sds.org/

Golos, D. & Moses, A. M. (2011). Representations of deaf characters in children's picture books. *American Annals of the Deaf, 156,* 270-282. Retrieved from http://gupress.gallaudet.edu/annals/

Granek, L. (2013). Putting ourselves on the line: the epistemology of the hyphen,

   intersubjectivity and social responsibility in qualitative research. International

   Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 26, 178-197.

   doi:10.1080/09518398.2011.614645

Haeseler, L. A. (2009). Biblio-therapeutic book creations by pre-service teachers:

   Helping elementary school children cope. *Journal of Instructional Psychology,*

   *36,* 113-118. Retrieved from http://goliath.ecnext.com/coms2/browse_R_J065

Hargrave, A. C., & Sénéchal, M. (2000). A book reading intervention with preschool

   children who have limited vocabularies: The benefits of regular reading and

   dialogic reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly. Special Issue: Evaluating,*

   *interpreting, and debating early interventions: The case of the comprehensive*

   *child development program, 15*, 75-90. Retrieved from

   http://www.journals.elsevier.com/early-childhood-research-quarterly/

Harvley-Felder, Z. C. (2007). Get a global education through multicultural children's

   literature. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin, 73*(2), 5 – 14. Retrieved from

   http://www.dkg.org

Heath, M. A., Sheen, D., Leavy, D., Young, E., & Money, K.  (2005). Bibliotherapy:

   A resource to facilitate emotional healing and growth. *School Psychology*

   *International 26*, 563–80. Retrieved from http://spi.sagepub.com/

Heim, A. B. (1994). Beyond the Stereotypes: Characters with mental disabilities in

   children's books. *School Library Journal, September,* 139-142.

Hermes, P. (1983). *Who will take care of me?* New York, NY: Harcourt.

Hickey, D. T. (2003). Engaged participation versus marginal nonparticipation: A

stridently sociocultural approach to achievement motivation. *The Elementary*

*School Journal, 103*, 401-429. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org

Hoffman, J. L. (2011). Coconstructing meaning: Interactive literary discussion in

kindergarten read-alouds. *The Reading Teacher, 65,* 183-194.

doi:10.1002/TRTR.01025

Hoffman, J. V., Roser, N. L., & Battle, J. (1993). Reading aloud in classrooms: From the

modal toward a "model." *The Reading Teacher, 46,* 496-503. Retrieved from

http://www.reading.org/

Hopkins, C. J. (1980). Developing positive attitudes toward the handicapped through

children's books. *The Elementary School Journal, 81*(1), 34-39. Retrived from

http://www.press.uchicago.edu/ucp/journals/journal/esj.html

Hoppe, A. (2004). Half the story: Text and illustration in picture books. *Horn Book*

*Magazine, 80* (1). Retrieved from http://www.hbook.com/horn-book-magazine/

Horning, K. T. (2010). *From cover to cover evaluating and reviewing children's books*.

New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Hughes, C. (2012). Seeing blindness in children's picture books. *Journal of Literary &*

*Cultural Diversity Studies, 6*(1), 35-51. doi:10.3828/jlcds.2012.3

Hughes, J. N., Zhang, D., Hill, C. R. (2006). Peer assessments of normative and

individual teacher-student support predict social acceptance and engagement

among low-achieving children. *Journal of School Psychology,* 43, 447-463.

doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2005.10.002

Iaquinta, A. & Hipsky, S. (2006). Practical bibliotherapy strategies for the inclusive

    elementary classroom. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 34*(3), 209-213.

    Retrieved from

    http://www.springer.com/education+%26+language/learning+%26+instruction/jo

    urnal/10643

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004)

Jacobs, J. S., Morrison, T. G., & Swinyard, W. R. (2000). Reading aloud to students: A

    national probability study of classroom reading practices of elementary school

    teachers. *Reading Psychology, 21,* 171-193. Retrieved from

    http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/urpy20/current

Keith, L. (2004). What writers did next: Disability, illness and cure in books in the

    second half of the 20th century. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 24*(1). Retrieved

    from http://dsq-sds.org/

Kelley, J. E. (2008). Harmony, empathy, loyalty, and patience in Japanese children's

    literature. *Social Studies, 99*(2), 61-70. Retrieved from http://www.heldref.org

Kitterman, J. F. (2002). Children's books and special needs students. *The Reading*

    *Teacher, 56,* 236-239. Retrieved from http://www.reading.org

Krashen, S. D. (Ed.). (2004). *The power of reading: Insights from the research.*

    Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Lakin, P. (1994). *Dad and Me in the Morning.* Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whiman.

Lambert, M. (2006). InFORMed reading: Evaluating and using picture books, beginning

    reader books, and illustrated books. *Children and Libraries, 4*(3), 31-33, 54.

    Retrieved from http://www.ala.org/alsc/compubs/childrenlib

Lane, H. B. & Wright, T. L. (2007). Maximizing the effectiveness of read aloud. *The*

    *Reading Teacher, 60*(7), 668-675. Retrieved from http://www.reading.org

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*.

    New York: NY: Cambridge University Press.

Lazar, A. M. & Offenberg, R. M. (2011). Activities, allies, and racists: Helping teachers

    address racism through picture books. *Journal of Literacy Research, 43,* 275-313.

    doi:10.1177/1086296X11413720

Leininger, M., Dyches, T. T., Prater, M. A., & Heather, M. A. (2010). Newbery award

    winning books 1975-2009: How do they portray disabilities? *Education and*

    *Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities, 45,* 583-596. Retrieved from

    http://daddcec.org/Publications/ETADDJournal.aspx

Levin, F. (2007). Encouraging ethical respect through multicultural literature. *The*

    *Reading Teacher, 61,* 101-104. doi:10.1598/RT.61.1.13

Lobron, A. & Selman, R. (2007). The interdependence of social awareness and literacy

    instruction. *The Reading Teacher, 60,* 528-537. doi:10.1598/RT.60.6.3

Low, J. (2013). Twenty years of multicultural publishing. *Booklist,* January 2013.

    Retrieved from http://www.booklistonline.com

Lu, Y. (2008). Helping children cope: What is bibliotherapy? *Children and Libraries,*

    *6(*1), 47-49. Retrieved from: http://www.ala.org/alsc/compubs/childrenlib

Lukens, R. J. (2007). *A critical handbook of children's literature. 8ᵗʰ edition*. New York, NY: Pearson.

Maich, K. & Kean, S. (2004). Read two books and write me in the morning! Bibliotherapy for social emotional intervention in the inclusive classroom. *TEACHING Exceptional Children Plus, 1*(2) Article 5. Retrieved from http:/escholarship.bc.edu/education/tecplus/vol1/iss2/5

Martinez, M., & Roser, N. (1985). Read it again: The value of repeated readings during storytime. *Reading Teacher, 38,* 782-786. Retrieved from http://www.reading.org/

Matthew, N. & Clow, S. (2007). Putting disabled children in the picture: Promoting inclusive children's books and media. *International Journal of Early Childhood, 39*(2), 65-78.

McGee, L. M. & Schickedanz, J. A. (2007). Repeated interactive read-alouds in preschool and kindergarten. *The Reading Teacher, 60,* 742-751. doi: 10.1598/RT.60.8.4

Meadan, H. & Monda-Amaya, L. (2008). Collaboration to promote social competence for student with mild disabilities in the general classroom: A structure for providing social support. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 43*, 158-167. doi: 10.1177/1053451207311617

Mellon, C. A., (1989). Exceptionality in children's books: Combining apples and oranges. *School Library Journal, October*, 46-47. Retrieved from http://www.slj.com/

Mol, S. E., Bus, A. G. & deJong, M. T. (2009). Interactive book reading in early

    education: A tool to stimulate print knowledge as well as oral language. *Review of*

    *Educational Research, 79*(2), 979-1007. Retrieved from http://rer.sagepub.com/

Morgan, H. (2009). Picture book biographies for young children: A way to teach multiple

    perspectives. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 37*, 219-227.

    doi:10.1007/s10643-009-0339-7

Morgan, H. (2009). Using read-alouds with culturally sensitive children's books: A

    strategy that can lead to tolerance and improved reading skills. *Reading*

    *Improvement, 46*(1), 3-8. Retrieved from http://www.projectinnovation.biz/ri.html

Nikolaraizi, M., Kumar, P., Favazza, P., Sideridis, G., Koulousiou, D., Riall, A. (2005).

    A cross-cultural examination of typically developing children's attitudes toward

    individuals with special needs. *International Journal of Disability, Development*

    *and Education, 52*, 101-119. doi: 10.1080/10349120500086348

Olney, E. E. & Cushing, H. M. (1935). A brief report of the responses of pre-school

    children to commercially available pictorial materials. *Child Development, 6* (1).

    Retrieved from

    http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291467-8624

Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity – One's own. *Educational Researcher,*

    *17*(7), 17-21. Retrieved from http://www.aera.net

Phelan, C. *The Booklist, 96*(12), 1104. Retrieved from http://www.booklistonline.com/

Pianta, R. C. & Steinberg, M. (1992). Teacher-child relationships and the process of

adjusting to school, *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 57*,

61-80. doi: 10.1002/cd.23219925706

Porter, E. H. (1913). *Pollyanna.* Boston, MA: L. C. Page

Prater, M. A. (1999). Characterization of mental retardation in children's and adolescent

literature. *Education & Training in Mental Retardation & Developmental

Disabilities, 34,* 418-431. Retrieved from

http://daddcec.org/Publications/ETADDJournal.aspx

Prater, M. A. (2000). Using juvenile literature with portrayals of disabilities in your

classroom. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 35*(3), 167-176.

Prater, M. A. & Dyches, T. T. (2008). Teaching about disabilities through children's

literature. Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited.

Rasinski, T. V. & Padak, N. D. (1990). Multicultural learning through children's

literature. *Language Arts, 67,* 576-580. Retrieved from

http://www.ncte.org/journals/la

Robinson, L. (2008). Let's start at the very beginning. *The Horn Book Magazine, 84,*

157-166. Retrieved from http://www.hbook.com/

Robinson, S., Hughes, K., & Manning, K. (2002). Children's books: a resource for

children's nursing care. *Paediatric Nursing, 14*(5), 26-31. Retrieved from

http://paediatricnursing.rcnpublishing.co.uk/

Saunders, K. (2004). What disability studies can do for children's literature. *Disability

Studies Quarterly, 24,* Retrieved from http://www.dsq-sds.org

Schickedanz, J. A. & Collins, M. F. (2012) For young children, picture in storybooks are rarely worth a thousand words. *The Reading Teacher, 65,* 539-549. doi: 10.1002/TRTR.01080

Selznick, B. (2007). *The invention of Hugo Cabret.* New York, NY: Scholastic.

Serafini, F. (2012). Taking full advantage of children's literature. *The Reading Teacher, 65*, 457-459. doi: 10.1002/TRTR.01067

Silverman, R. (2007). A comparison of three methods of vocabulary instruction during read-alouds in kindergarten. *The Elementary School Journal, 108*(2), 97-113. Retrieved from:

http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=elemschoj

Sipe, L. R. (1998). How picture books work: A semiotically framed theory of text-picture relationships. *Children's Literature in Education, 29,* 97-108. doi: 10.1023/A:1022459009182

Sipe, L. R. (2000). The construction of literary understanding by first and second graders in oral response to picture storybook read-alouds. *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*(2), 252-275. Retrieved from http:www.reading.org.

Sipe, L. R. (2012). Revisiting the relationships between text and pictures. *Children's Literature in Education, 43*. doi: 10.1007/s10583-011-9153-0

Slepian, J. (1992) *Risk 'n roses.* New York, NY: Philomel.

Smith-D'Arezzo, W. M. (2003). Diversity in children's literature: Not just a black and white issue. *Children's Literature in Education, 34*(1), 75-94.

Snow, C. E.(2002). *Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension*. RAND Reading Study Group. Santa Monica, CA. Retrieved from http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1465.html

Solomon, D., Watson, M., Battistich, V., Schaps, E., & Delucchi, K. (1996). Creating classrooms that students experience as communities. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 24,* 719-748.

Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stelle, L. C. H. (1999). Review of children's literature: Children with disabilities as main characters. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 35,* 123-128. Retrieved from http://isc.sagepub.com/

Spyri, J. (1885). *Heidi.* (first American edition) Boston, MA: Cupples, Upham, & Co.

Tomlinson, C. A., Brighton, C., Hertberg, H., Callahan, C. M., Moon, T. R., Brimijoin, K., Reynolds, T. (2003). Differentiating instruction in response to student readiness, interest, and learning profile in academically diverse classrooms: A review of literature. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 27*, 119-145. Retrieved from http://jeg.sagepub.com/

Trelease, J. (2006). *The new read-aloud handbook.* New York: Penguin.

Trepanier-Street, M. L. & Romatowski, J. A. (1996). Young children's attitudes toward the disabled: A classroom intervention using children's literature. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 24*(1), 45-49. Retrieved from http://jeg.sagepub.com/

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services,

Office of Special Education Programs, *31st Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2009*, Washington, D.C., 2012. Retrieved from http://www2.ed.gov/about/reports/annual/osep/index.html

Valeski, T. N. & Stipek, D. J. (2001). Young children's feelings about school. *Child Development, 72,* 1198-1213. Retrieved from http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/%28ISSN%291467-8624

Voigt, C. (1986). *Izzy—willy-nilly.* New York: NY. Fawcett Juniper.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wadham, T. (1999). Plot does matter. *The Horn Book Magazine, 75,* 445-450. Retrieved from http://www.hbook.com/

Wan, G. (2006). Teaching diversity and tolerance in the classroom: A thematic storybook approach. *Education,* 127, 140-154. Retrieved from http://www.projectinnovation.biz/education.html

Wasik, B. A. & Bond, M. A. (2001). Beyond the pages of a book: Interactive book reading and language development in preschool classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 93*(2), 243-250.

Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 11,* 522-537. Retrieved from http://www.sagepub.com

Winograd, K. (2011). Sports biographies of African American football players: The

racism of colorblindness in children's literature. *Ethnicity and Education, 14,*

331-349. Retrieved from http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals

Wiseman, A. (2011). Interactive read alouds: Teachers and student constructing

knowledge and literacy together. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 38*(6), 431-

438. doi 10.1007/s10643-010-0426-9

Wolery, M. (2005). DEC recommended practices: Child-focused practices. In Sandall, S.,

Hemmeter, M. L., Smith, B. J., & McLean, M. E. *DEC recommended practices: A*

*comprehensive guide for practical application in early intervention/early*

*childhood special education.* Missoula, MT: Division for Early Childhood

Wolfenbarger, C. D. & Sipe, L. (2007). A unique visual and literary art form: Recent

research on picturebooks. *Language Arts, 84* (3). Retrieved from

http://www.ncte.org/journals/la

Wopperer, E. (2011). Inclusive Literature in the Library and the Classroom. *Knowledge*

*Quest*, 39(3), 26-34. Retrieved from

http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl/aaslpubsandjournals/knowledgequest/kno

wledgequest.cfm

Worotynec. Z. S. (2004). Contrived or inspired: Ability/disability in the children's picture

book. *Disability Studies Quarterly, 24*(1). Retrieved from http://www.dsq-sds.org

Yazbeck, M., McVilly, K. & Parmenter, T.R. (2004). Attitudes toward people with

intellectual disability: An Australian perspective. *Journal of Disability Policy*

*Studies, 15,* 97-111. Retrieved from http://dps.sagepub.com/

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Zelinsky, P. O. (2002). *Rapunzel.* New York, NY: Puffin.

Zucker, T. A., Justice, L. M., Piasta, S. B., & Kaderavek, J. N. (2010). Preschool

    teachers' literal and inferential questions and children's responses during whole-

    class shared reading. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 25*(1), 65-83.

    Retrieved from http://www.journals.elsevier.com/early-childhood-research-

    quarterly/

# APPENDIX A

# IRB APPROVAL DOCUMENTS

THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA
## GREENSBORO

**OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE**
2718 Beverly Cooper Moore and Irene Mitchell Moore
Humanities and Research Administration Bldg.
PO Box 26170
Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
336.256.1482
Web site: www.uncg.edu/orc
Federalwide Assurance (FWA) #216

**To:** William Bursuck
Specialized Education Services
436 School of Education Building

**From:** UNCG IRB

*[signature]*
Authorized signature on behalf of IRB

**Approval Date:** 8/29/2012
**Expiration Date of Approval:** 8/28/2013

**RE:** Notice of IRB Approval by Expedited Review (under 45 CFR 46.110)
**Submission Type:** Initial
**Expedited Category:** 7.Surveys/interviews/focus groups,6.Voice/image research recordings
**Study #:** 12-0288
**Study Title:** A Case Study of Certified School Personnel Use of Children's Literature to Support Inclusive Practice in the Primary Grades of an Inclusive Elementary School

This submission has been approved by the IRB for the period indicated. It has been determined that the risk involved in this research is no more than minimal.

**Study Description:**

The purpose of this project is to learn how educators use children's literature to support inclusive practice in the primary grades of an inclusive elementary school.

**Investigator's Responsibilities**

Federal regulations require that all research be reviewed at least annually. It is the Principal Investigator's responsibility to submit for renewal and obtain approval before the expiration date. You may not continue any research activity beyond the expiration date without IRB approval. Failure to receive approval for continuation before the expiration date will result in automatic termination of the approval for this study on the expiration date.

Signed letters, along with stamped copies of consent forms and other recruitment materials will be scanned to you in a separate email. These consent forms must be used unless the IRB hasgiven you approval to waive this requirement.

You are required to obtain IRB approval for any changes to any aspect of this study before they can be implemented (use the modification application available at http://www.uncg.edu/orc/irb.htm). Should any adverse event or unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others occur it must be reported immediately to the IRB using the "Unanticipated Problem/Event" form at the same website.

CC:
Judith Niemeyer, Specialized Education Services
Carol Bland
ORC, (ORC), Non-IRB Review Contact

page 1 of 1

# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

## CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM

Project Title:   A Case Study of Certified School Personnel Use of Children's Literature to
Support Inclusive Practice in the Primary Grades of an Inclusive Elementary School

Project Director:   Dr. William Bursuck and Dr. Judith Niemeyer, Co-Principal Investigators,
Carol Bland, Student Researcher

Participant's Name: _____

### What is the study about?
This is a research project. The purpose of the project is to learn how certified school personnel use
children's literature to support inclusive practice in the primary grades of an inclusive elementary school.

### Why are you asking me?
You have been recommended to participate in this study by your school principal. The study includes
certified school personnel who work directly with students in inclusive classrooms in the primary grades.

### What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?
You will be interviewed by the student researcher concerning your school's inclusive philosophy and the
role children's literature plays in supporting inclusive practice. The interview will last approximately 30-
45 minutes. No follow up interview is anticipated. If you have any questions about your participation in
the study, you may contact the student researcher, Carol Bland, at 540-230-6645. No experimental
procedures are involved in this study.

### Is there any audio/video recording?
Yes. Interviews will be audio-taped.
Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the tape, your confidentiality for
things you say on the tape cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the tape
as described below. No video recording will take place.

### What are the dangers to me?
The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that
participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants.  You may experience some discomfort in
describing attitudes about including students with disabilities in general education classrooms. If you feel
any overwhelming emotional distress, the interview will be ended.

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated or if you have questions, want more
information or have suggestions, please contact Eric Allen in the Office of Research Compliance at UNCG
toll-free at (855)-251-2351.
Questions, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this
study can be answered by Dr. William Bursuck and/or Dr. Judith Niemeyer, co-principal investigators,
who may be contacted at (336) 334-5843. You may also contact Carol Bland, student researcher, at 540-
230-6645 or cmbland@uncg.edu.

### Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?
The results of this research may contribute to the knowledge base in the fields of general education,
special education, library science, school counseling, and educational leadership concerning the role of

UNCG IRB
Approved Consent Form
Valid 8/29/12 to 8/28/13

122

children's literature to support inclusive practice in the primary grades.

**Are there any benefits to *me* for taking part in this research study?**
You may acquire improved knowledge and understanding of the value of children's literature to support inclusive practice in the primary grades.

**Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?**
There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

**How will you keep my information confidential?**
Participants will be identified by number only. No identifiable information will be collected. Audio-taped data will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the Specialized Education Serves Department storage area on the UNCG campus. Converted electronic data will be kept in password-protected files. No personally identifiable information will be stored in the audio or electronic files. No identifying information will be shared when the data are disseminated. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

**What if I want to leave the study?**
You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state.

**What about new information/changes in the study?**
If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**
By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you read, or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate, or have the individual specified above as a participant participate, in this study described to you by Carol Bland, student researcher.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

UNCG IRB
Approved Consent Form
Valid 8/29/12 to 8/28/13

123

Bland_Recruitment Email

Greetings,

You have been recommended by (Building Principal) to participate in a research study concerning the use of children's literature to support inclusive practice in the primary grades. This research study is being conducted by Carol Bland, a student researcher at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, under the direction of Drs. William Bursuck and Judith Niemeyer. The purpose of this research study is to learn how educators use children's literature to support inclusive practice in the primary grades of an inclusive elementary school.

You are being invited to participate based on the principal's recommendation and your role as a certified school employee who regularly works with students in inclusive classrooms in the primary grades. Non-certified school personnel (instructional assistants, student teachers, parent volunteers) are not included in this research study. Your participation in the research study will involve one 30-45 minute audio-taped interview, which will take place at (Name of School) at a time and location of your choice. You will not be identified in the data collected during or disseminated after the completion of this research study. You will not receive any compensation or reimbursement for your participation in this research study.

If you would like to participate in this study, please reply to this email or call Carol Bland, the student researcher, at 540-230-6645. Thank you for your kind consideration of this research study.

(Signature)

APPROVED IRB
AUG 29 2012

124

APPENDIX B

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Position of Person Interviewed:

Grade Level (if applicable):

Length of Service in this Position:

Level of Education:

Major Area of Study:

Gender:

Race or Ethnicity:

Date:

Time:

Location:

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your school culture or climate.

    a. Describe any particular school-wide mission, philosophy, or theme that guides your work with children.

    b. Describe the social or extra-curricular school-sponsored activities your students participate in.

    c. How are students with disabilities included in those activities?

2. Describe how you build a sense of community among the children in your classroom (school).

    a. How do you promote cooperation?

    b. How do you foster or encourage positive relationships between students with and without disabilities? (e.g. seating them near each other, grouping them for class activities)

3. Tell me about the ways you use picture books in your classroom.

    a. Teacher Assigned Review?

    b. Student Selected Review?

    c. Teacher Read-Aloud?

4. Have you had any professional preparation or in-service professional development concerning read-aloud and/or disability in picture books?

    a. If so, what did it involve?

    b. If not, is that a topic of interest to you?

5. Tell me about read-aloud time in your classroom

    a. Frequency, time of day, topics covered?

    b. What are your goals for read-aloud time?

    c. How do you determine whether or not those goals have been met?

    d. How do you select the books you read aloud to your students?

        i. Are the selections mandated by curriculum or your choice or both?

        ii. Do you consider characters with disabilities when you select the books to read aloud?

            1. If yes, can you give me some examples of your favorite children's books that feature characters with disabilities?

            2. If no, why not?

    e. How do you engage your students during read-aloud time?

    f. Describe the discussions or activities that follow read-aloud time.

6. Have your choices and decision making about read-aloud changed during this school year, with the opening of your new school and the changes in the school population from years past?

    a. Are you reading different kinds of books?

    b. Are you selecting books with different types of characters?

    c. Have you made any changes in the activities you use to follow-up read-aloud time?

7. How do you think read-aloud time could contribute to community building, especially for students with disabilities?

a. Do you think your read-aloud time supports inclusive practice?

APPENDIX D

MEMBER CHECKING CORRESPONDENCE

Dear _____,

It's time for me to complete a process called "member-checking" to be sure the data I collected are trustworthy.

Attached you will find the categories and/or ideas that emerged from our conversation AND the transcript of that conversation.

I need to know whether or not you agree that the ideas I identified are consistent with the message you intended to convey. Please let me know by Wednesday, April 17 if you **<u>disagree</u>** with any of the categories and/or ideas I gleaned from our meetings. If I do not hear from you by next Wednesday, April 17, you are acknowledging that the categories and/or ideas are consistent with your thoughts and feelings.

Thank you again for participating in my study.