Progressive Inclusion: An Ethnographic Perspective

Dissertation

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Abstract

The present ethnographic study is designed to examine an inclusive classroom culture when the pedagogy is progressive. It takes a comprehensive look at daily events within the classroom, following four tracer children who reflect a wide range of abilities, through the rituals of teaching and learning within this classroom. The researcher acted as a participant observer using multiple methods of data collection for viewing the teaching practice, the co-construction of knowledge, the collaboration between educators and the experiences of the children. This study reveals that the progressive pedagogy is able to create an e/affective teaching and learning context for children with diverse abilities, which otherwise may be referred to as an “inclusive classroom.” The data yielded that progressive pedagogy builds an authentic, all inclusive community. When the pedagogy is progressive, a separate, articulated approach for children with disabilities who are included in the inclusive classroom may not be needed. This ethnography illuminates that socially constructed projects within the progressive practice are a teaching and learning context for all and diverse students, and progressive pedagogy offers an “invisible” layer of support for children of diverse abilities including those with identified disabilities. Additionally, intervention methods used in this classroom were explored from the progressive lens finding that views on pull-out intervention by the
children, a practice that contradicts progressive ideals, differs based on community membership.
Dedication

Dedicated to my children
Acknowledgments

Any journey worth making involves not only personal dedication and sacrifice, but requires the love, support and guidance of others. My journey could not have been made without the love and support of my husband and children, who gave up many hours of my time and attention in an effort to see me succeed. I owe them now and forever, my deepest gratitude.

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Fields of Study

Major Fields: Education
Special Education
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The present study is designed to examine inclusion within progressive elementary classroom. The central question that guided this study was: What is the nature of inclusion when the pedagogy is progressive? Sub questions included:

1. What is the nature of progressive practice?

2. What is the nature of teaching and learning for all children, with diverse abilities, within this progressive classroom?

The theories that progressive education are based on have been around for nearly a century. In the grand arena of educational literature, the recent number of books and articles published on this pedagogy are minimal (Semel and Sadovnik, 2006; Cremin, 1962; Norris, 2004; Hayes, 2007). However, specific components and practices of the progressive pedagogy, and some of the theoretical ideals with which it is based, can often be found in early childhood education literature. Many early childhood programs base their early educational practice on specific components of what is generally incorporated within a progressive pedagogy including: The Project Approach, (Helm & Katz, 2001; Katz & Chard, 1996); Emergent curriculum (Jones, Evan, Renkin, 2001), and Building Community (Sergiovanni, 1994). Educators often blend these curriculum models with aspects of other pedagogies, often
picking one component of progressive education to focus upon. For example, recent interest in “placing the child at the center of the curriculum”, often evident in progressive and more constructivist classrooms, also stem from the authentic learning experiences offered in Reggio Emilia, Italy, referred to as The Reggio Approach (Edwards, Gandini & Foreman, 1998). In many ways, the Reggio Approach can be compared to the United States’ Deweyan ideals of progressive education, blended with Russia’s Vygotskian idea of social constructivism (Madrid & Kantor, 2007). Interest in yet another progressive aspect in education, referred to as “curriculum integration”, in the K-12 grades is discussed by Bean (1997) and Drake and Burns (2004). Like progressive education, an integrated curriculum is emergent, integrated, democratic, child-centered, social, and authentic, with a focus on building a social learning community.

Progressive education’s ideas and practices are based on John Dewey’s theories of education (1902, 1915, 2001, & 2003). The Deweyian notion of democracy, social learning, and his ideas of building community, often linked by educators with the Vygotskian (1978) theory of co-creating knowledge and mediating within the learning process, tends to be where this pedagogy currently falls. Recent studies in progressive classrooms (also referred to as “informal”) have looked at peer cultures in the pre-school classroom (Kantor and Fernie, 2003); children’s cultures through morning meetings (Eirich, 2006); literacy
teaching and learning (Dantas, 1999); and building community (Wightman, 2003).

Each of these ethnographies have contributed to the current body of knowledge on informal classrooms and the progressive pedagogy. In each of these works, descriptions of children with diverse abilities were mentioned in different capacities, however they were not specifically focused upon. My training in both special education and progressive education provided me with a unique lens for this project and led me to focus on diverse children’s experiences within a progressive classroom.

Traditionally, the foundations of special education and the progressive pedagogy are based on contradicting theories. The training, and therefore practices of special educators tends to be grounded in Skinnarian behaviorism, including direct instruction, teacher-centered practice and the use of more prescriptive and behavioral teaching methods, which include pull-out services, prescriptive interventions and standardized assessments (Will, 1985).

Alternatively, to both special education and even many typical general education classrooms, progressive educators tend to practice more child centered teaching differing “from the traditional classrooms because the emphasis is placed upon the relationships between the students, parents and the teachers” (Eirich, 2006, p. 194). Based on the Deweyian notion of democracy and community, and the Vygotskian ideals of co-constructing knowledge, today’s progressive educators use
an emergent and integrated practice with authentic assessments to monitor individual and group learning.

The call for less of a separation between special and general education has been a topic for debate since the IDEA was first discussed and consequently passed in 1975 (Will, 1985; Dunn, 1968; William and Susan Stainback, 1984). Danforth (2001) identified the three models (views) of teaching children with disabilities. Although received by some as controversial, he clearly identified the three models in which special educators practice. These include 1) the functional limitations model, 2) the minority group model and 3) the social construction model. In a nutshell, this evaluation analyzed “the practical usefulness of these three models in light of democratic priorities” (Danforth, 2001, p. 343) and shed light on the widely accepted practices of special education.

Democracy, the Deweyan notion of applying democracy to education, which contradicts historically behavioral ideals, is supported by disability scholars who suggest a “social model of disability which shifts the view of disability away from an individual deficit orientation” (Mutua & Smith, 2006, p. 128). Although Brantlinger (2006) points out, that there is typically little evidence of a constructivist viewpoint in most special education texts, the constructivist theories are what general educators generally base their practice on. These theoretical differences may initially be cause for failure, or at least limitations, in the implementation of inclusive education and the
professional collaboration that is necessary for successful inclusion in public schools.

The perspective known in Disability studies in education (DSE,) offers a social viewpoint to educating children with disabilities, verses the “still unchallenged and highly individualized deficit/remediation model of disability most often result[ing] in the delivery of educational services along some continuum of locations each matched to the constellation of services believed to fit the identified type and amount of student deficit and disability” (Ferguson, 1995, p. 281).

If we take guidance from the disability studies in education (DSE) perspective and we “refocus on the students and suggest ways to create a welcoming and productive learning environment for all learners...We can actively consider the meanings we give to difference” (Reid & Valle, 2004, p. 474). Ferri (2008) suggests that ideologies of DSE can contribute to educational theories and practice. Furthermore, Danforth (2008) explores the link between Dewey’s ideas of educational democracy, and his theoretical contributions to the philosophy of intellectual disability. We can take from this, the idea of democracy and disability and use this idea as a guiding point for the theoretical possibilities of democracy in an inclusive classroom. This link may be one small step toward answering the questions of the practical concerns of teachers (Danforth & Gabel, 2006) who strive for a socially just way of teaching all children with diverse abilities.
In 2006, Kliewer made a call for scholarship and enacting paradigmatic challenges for inclusion that focus on both action and democracy. In part, Kliewer’s call, combined with my own interests, lead me to this exploration. “If we take up the assertion that there are no types of students, but rather, all students are different in different ways, and that these differences are not static but fluid, then we open up the tremendous possibilities for democratizing our practice” (Ferri, 2004, p. 512).

Ethnography provided me with a way to document and explore the social situation under study (Spradley, 1980) which in this case was a progressive classroom which included children with diverse abilities. “Ethnography yields empirical data about the lives of people in specific situations. It allows us to see alternative realities, and modify our culture-bound theories of human behavior” (Spradley, 1980, p. 16). Ethnography provided a lens with which to learn about the culture of this classroom. The language used, the ceremonies, the actors and their roles, the play among the children, the social interactions and the practices. Spradley (1980) defines culture as “the acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate behavior” (p. 6). My interest was to learn about the culture of a classroom, which in this case includes the practices of progressive educators, and to further explore this pedagogy when the classroom includes children with diverse abilities. Using Spradley (1980) as a
guide, this ethnography seeks to describe both the explicit and tacit culture of this classroom and to illuminate this pedagogy.

Inclusive classrooms aim to teach all children of all interests and abilities. Using the underlying principles of the progressive education tradition and informing them with perspectives from the field of disability studies (Danforth & Gabel, 2006), I suggest that the progressive pedagogy may be a teaching practice for inclusive classrooms. Understanding the ideals of inclusion and progressive practice separately, and looking at the possibilities that they offer together may directly respond to Kliewer’s (2006) suggestions for “a) scholars to expand energy on enacting paradigmatic challenges to the conventional text of disability, and b) suggesting inclusive practices that focus on action and democracy” (p. 101).

From the disability studies perspective of “why wouldn’t we include all children” (Ferri, 2008), Kliewer (2006) has made suggestions for the professional community and recommends that inclusive practice “focus on action and democracy” (p. 101), professional cooperation, and collaboration (Will, 1986), and a decrease of individual, academic, and social segregation in schools (Ferguson, 1993).

Additionally, Baglieri and Knopf (2004) believe that a “truly inclusive school reflects a democratic philosophy, whereby students are valued, educators normalize difference through differentiated instruction, and the school culture reflects an ethic of caring and community” (p. 525).
This project identifies and discusses a pedagogy I refer to as “progressive inclusion” through ethnographic case study. An interpreted description is used, as the reflections and analysis took place throughout the data collection, in a collaborative effort between by the investigator and the teachers.

The question which guided this study was:

*What is the nature of inclusion when the pedagogy is progressive?*

Sub questions included:

What is the nature of progressive practice?

What is the nature of teaching and learning within this class for all children?
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

For most of the 20th century, special education and general education have been two different fields. Typically, educational institutions have separated students whose development falls into the “norm” from those who do not.

Using underlying principles from the progressive education tradition, and informing them with perspectives from the field of disability studies (Danforth & Gabel, 2006), I argue that children with diverse abilities can be served in inclusive classrooms.

The roots of progressive education date back to the late 1800s when individuals such as Francis W. Parker, Joseph Mayor Rice, and John Dewey began to call for a pedagogy that would “form a community life” (Dewey, 1897, p. 23; Semel & Sadovnick, 1995). A community is one in which all members, young and old, actively participate in the decisions made in and for the group of citizens, whether a classroom or a town.

Dewey’s Pedagogic Creed and The Child and the Curriculum, “calls for the creation of a curriculum which would allow for the child’s interests and developmental level” (Semel & Sadovnick, 1995, p. 5). The ideas and practices of progressive education subscribe to a child-centered philosophy practicing an integrated, interdisciplinary curriculum, geared toward each individual’s talents and interests in
addition to providing many opportunities for group learning in an effort to build community. Learners’ strengths are shared and their needs invite help from peers. School is an opportunity to learn both independently and as a group for all individuals. Each educational experience influences children in naturally diverse ways, leading them often down very different paths. Still, children learn together through the authentic interactions with each other and their environment.

Compulsory attendance laws were passed first in Massachusetts in 1852 and last in Mississippi in 1918. “The crippled, the blind, the deaf, the sick, the slow-witted, and the needy arrived in growing numbers” (Cremin, 1962, p. 127). This meant that students from classes and groups who had previously avoided or been discouraged from attending public schools were now required by law to attend. Kliewer assists us in understanding the thought of the time in that, “Immigrants tended to be, after all, poor, and poverty was assumed to be a symptom of feeblemindedness” (Kliewer, 2006, p. 94).

“Since the 1800s, when individuals with disabilities first were segregated in the public schools for instructional purposes, there have been consistent calls for closer contact of such children with their nondisabled peers and for their more equitable, ‘normal’ treatment in instructional settings” (Osgood, 2005, p. 2).

Some progressive educators, such as Marietta Johnson from the Organic School (1913), actually “recruited ‘backward’ (disabled) children for whom the public schools made no provisions” (Semel & Sadovnik, 2006, p. 360), although this was not the norm. Most children
with significant disabilities were generally cared for by their families or institutionalized until the 1970s.

In the ’70s, the ideas of zero reject and mainstreaming were hot topics in the field of education, partly due to the passage of PL 94-142. Will (1986) points out that although this law did require special services for students who needed academic support, it still had its flaws. She suggested that special programs and regular education teachers be allowed to collaborate and share resources to better serve the needs of all children. In addition to educators working better as a team, she also suggested that curriculum based assessments may better serve students, emphasizing their strengths and weaknesses to be used for instructional purposes instead of their “momentary learning problems [being] viewed as failures but rather as opportunities for further instruction” (Will, 1986, p. 414).

Will also suggested that parents be included as part of the educational team in addition to supporting the idea that “an atmosphere of trust” (p. 414) must be created. Will’s ideas were for a push of collaboration and cooperation between educators attempting to decrease the isolation and separation of the child with special needs.

This law has been amended several times over the years and is now the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004. One would think that in nearly 30 plus years of a focus on services that the profession would have grown more than it has. In the efforts to specialize services for students with disabilities, Ferguson (1995) points out
that it is still “the job of the schools to determine what’s wrong [with each student] with as much precision as possible, so that the students can be directed to the tracks, curricula, teachers, and classroom that match their learning-ability profiles” (p. 281). She also points out that the general assumption in the field of education is that “when students don’t learn, there is something wrong with them” (Ferguson, 1995, p. 281). Ferguson makes an excellent point here. Should we not, as educators, look at our approach, style, and pedagogy if the students do not learn in the traditional educational model? It should not be assumed that this is always a “problem” with the children. In the field of special education, it is commonly believed that the child with disabilities must earn the “right” to be included with their “typical” developing peers.

It is my argument that every child has a right to be taught with other children, to be included, without first being segregated (Ferguson, 2005) in the educational setting. Disability Studies in Education provides an avenue for which to view this idea. Disability studies provides the framework “in response to this segregation” (Kliwer, 2006, p. 94) for which to support educators in their goal for full inclusion.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how the theories and practices of progressive education from past and present (Dewey, 1915/2003; Cremin, 1962; Semel & Sadovnick, 1995, 2006) can contribute to the inclusive classroom for young children with varying learning
abilities. I will describe the theoretical frameworks of progressive education, providing samples of historical practice, and demonstrate how disability studies perspectives (Danforth & Gabel, 2006) can inform these frameworks in order to create pedagogy for inclusion. Specifically explored are the theoretical frameworks and practices of progressive education, the theoretical frameworks of inclusion, as informed by disability studies, and then blended into a proposal for a progressive pedagogy of inclusion.

Part 1: Progressive Education, Past and Present

In a snapshot, today’s progressive education classrooms (also sometimes referred to as “informal” or “alternative” education) are child-centered, student-directed, and teacher-supported/guided, democratic and “social constructivist” (based on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978) and his followers in approach to education). Across classrooms even in a single building, there are many different interpretations and implementations of a progressive pedagogy, but they generally offer a hands-on, authentic, and active approach to learning, many times presented as a problem solving experience within integrated curriculum projects. Progressive curriculum is typically “emergent” (i.e., responsive to children’s input and ideas) and involves the use of short or long-term projects and authentic, hands-on learning opportunities.

Progressive education typically includes at least five components: integrated authentic curriculum; emergent curriculum; the
use of projects; dramatic inquiry; all including the use of nature, arts and the natural environment; and, finally a focus on building a “sense of community” or a community of learners. This pedagogy provides both individual and group learning experiences with alternative assessments such as portfolios and aesthetic works demonstrating knowledge of content.

The original progressive educators focused on public education in response to the many diverse cultures joining America in the waves of European immigration that occurred at the start of the early 20th century. Progressives of the early 1900s responded to a turn-of-the-century influx of Southern and Eastern Europeans, which often found themselves in urban areas. During this period, educators joined the social progressive movement whose focus was on democracy and the possibility of schools becoming a place to nurture and educate for democracy.

Progressive education has continuously evolved from the movement that began in America during the late 19th century, inspired by the American educational philosopher John Dewey. “Progressive educators believe that education must be based on the experiences that involve input from the child” and that “fosters a reorganization of classroom practice and curriculum” (Eirich, 2006, p. 2). Eirich (2006) identifies, “that progressive schools avoid the regimentation that characterizes most schools by having children learn in informal settings” (p. 2). Furthermore, “an authoritarian approach is replaced
by a more democratic mode and the ultimate goal, in John Dewey’s terms, is to be an “embryonic community” that provides a model for the larger democratic society” (Dewey, 1915; see also Cremin, 1962; Semel & Sadovnick, 1995, 2006; Eirich, 2006).

Dewey might say that a democratic, small-scale community would mean an active participation by all members, sharing experiences and constructing a reality where each individual is valued and part of the social, political, and economic decision process.

The theory and practice of progressive education are intertwined and cannot be clearly explained without attention to its historical contributions, which demonstrate how it became what it is today. The tradition of progressive education became what it is through its history and as explained below, the historical “school experiments” based on Dewey’s theories, lead the path for current progressive ideologies. Below are descriptions of specific components of progressive practices, recognizing that by pulling apart what by definition is meant to be integrated, you lose the power in the approach. However, the pedagogy is easier to understand when broken out into separate components. It is also critical to see the historical practices, which were based on Dewey’s own writings, and just how these early practices have contributed to the current definitions of progressive education.
Dewey joined the faculty at The University of Chicago in 1894 and opened his laboratory school in 1896 with his wife, Alice Chipman Dewey. It was at this time that the basic theoretical ideas of progressive education were experimentally explored and worked out (Dworkin, 1959). Although Dewey referred to Francis W. Parker as the "father of progressive education" (Cremin, 1962, pp. 21 & 129), he was not published and therefore not often given credit according to Cremin. In 1873, Parker became the superintendent of schools in Quincy, Massachusetts, and focused on active, authentic learning experiences, which quickly became known as the Quincy System, gaining much attention. Parker included art, drama and nature in his teaching, as a vehicle for self-expression, and urged others to do the same that taught in the system.

Joseph Mayer Rice, whose series on education appeared in the 1890s in the publication The Forum, was widely read. "Progressive education became a movement simply because Rice saw it as one in response to what he saw first hand in the American educational system" (Cremin, 1962, p. 21). His articles ran from October 1892 to June 1893 with his final article calling "all citizens to action, inviting them to explore the life and warmth of the progressive schools" (Cremin, 1962, p. 5).

Based greatly on his experiences with the Chicago laboratory school, Dewey shared his ideas with the world in articles and books
such as *My Pedagogic Creed* (1897), *The School and Society* (1899), *The Child and the Curriculum* (1902) and later *The Schools of To-Morrow* (1915/2003), *Democracy and Education* (1916) and *Experience and Education* (1938). These works, along with a desperate need for trying something different from the “traditional” formal, teacher-directed education in the face of social reform, lead so many to open their own schools across the country. The traditional schools were not successfully integrating all of the community’s diverse members. The increasingly diverse populations did not fit into the structured and very formal, rote methods of teaching that had been the norm.

Individuals who were educational leaders and became identified with the history of progressive education included Colonel Francis W. Parker (The Quincy Method); Jane Adams (The Hull House); Helen Parkhurst (The Dalton School, 1919-current); Mrs. Marietta Pierce Johnson (The Organic School, 1903-current); and William H. Kilpatrick (The Project Method). They simultaneously opened alternative, sometimes referred to as an experimental schools or ran a program pulling from the informal, progressive theory.

These educators informed Dewey as he, in turn, informed their practice. Together, their proposed teaching methods implemented in these experimental schools, provide examples of historical components of progressive education that have been carried forward into present iterations of the philosophy.
Each of the early pedagogical pioneers shared a common vision with each other and with Dewey. They each independently interpreted Dewey and based their school’s curriculum on his early writings. Simultaneous with the opening of these schools, Dewey continued to write, drawing inspiration from Rousseau, “who argued against an education based on subordination to a teacher and memorization (Hayes, 2007, p. 2). Dewey also drew upon his training under Granville Stanley Hall (1900), who focused on the needs of children. The work of William James and his late 1800 and early 1900 essays on pragmatism and psychology also heavily influenced Dewey. James worked to bring recognition to the field of psychology and argued for the field to be viewed as a science (which strengthened the progressive movement). “(He) saw in education a device for aiding people to a new and better world” (Cremin, 1962, p. 109).

Dewey strongly disagreed with the school methods of the time (very structured and traditional) and blamed the state of the schools, the passivity of its methods and the uniformity of its curriculum, on industrialism (Cremin, 1962).

Dewey (1899) contended that “we cannot overlook the importance for educational purposes of the close and intimate acquaintance got with nature firsthand, with real things and materials, with the actual processes of their manipulation, and with the knowledge of their social necessities and uses” (p. 117). He further added,
To do this means to make each one of our schools an embryonic life, active with types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society, and permeated throughout with spirit of art, history and science. Embryonic refers to the stage of growth and change over time with many contributing factors. When the school introduces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society, which is worthy, lovely and harmonious (p. 118).

Dewey’s ideas were not only instrumental in introducing the foundation for the components that are now referred to as progressive education; he also felt strongly that each individual is already a part of the society and as such, should be included in all aspects of the community life. If the community is that of the classroom, then the democratic way to participate in the classroom is to include the voice and the ideas of each of the community’s members.

Thus, Dewey’s theories became the base for progressive education past and present. Dewey “argued in My Pedagogic Creed, The School and the Curriculum and School and the Society, not only for a restructuring of school along the lines of an embryonic community, but also for a creation of a curriculum that would allow for the child’s interests and developmental level” (Semel & Sadovnik, 2006, p. 5).
Dewey’s theories on education called for an active, hands-on approach to learning or “learning by doing”. Dewey also argued for a core curriculum or “an integrated curriculum” as an effective means for education to attend to the “needs and interests of the children”, resisting a “fixed” curriculum (Semel & Sadovnik, 2006) that could not possibly meet the needs of all children. The idea of a fixed curriculum could not allow the educators to individualize for each child or for any particular group within a community. The idea was that the curriculum should initially base the study on what the children do know and expand their knowledge and environment through in depth investigation (projects) and “change as the social order changes or as the children’s needs and interests change” (Semel & Sadovnik, 2006, p. 9).

Dewey (1902) argued against school being a place that pits the child vs. the curriculum and the individual vs. social culture. He believed that the topics on the child’s mind occupies him completely, and the curriculum should attend to his personal and social interests. Therefore, content should not be an abstract experience.

Historically progressive education included many of the ideals used today in progressive education. Authentic, integrated active group experiences which included project work, nature study, dramatic inquiry, field trips, reflective experiences, use of literature, and very little use of textbooks except for reference of the facts. The drilling of academic skills occurred authentically throughout the day.
as the students completed their work. The goal of living within and building community was always evident.

Dewey felt, as did Vygotsky, that the social environment played a significant role in the educational process of learning (Glassman, 2001). Both theorists believe that “activity”, specifically social activity, is a basic part of learning. They did, however, differ somewhat on their ideas of what role the teachers should play in the classroom. As Glassman (2001), points out Vygotsky viewed the teacher as that of a mentor, being the more knowledgeable peer in the learning process offering guidance and supporting the child in his or her personal growth.

Dewey viewed the teacher as a facilitator, designing the environment, leading inquiry by the individual child and the group of children, a co-constructor of knowledge. Although the early experimental schools and many of the current progressive schools are based on the theories of John Dewey, I do feel that many current teachers are equally aware of Vygotsky’s (1978) theories of social construction of knowledge and implement many of his ideas into their progressive practice.

Curriculum Integration

As Dewey detailed in 1897:

“I believe that they [the subject matter] are not special studies to be introduced over and above a lot of others in a way of relaxation or relief, or as additional accomplishments. I believe rather that they represent, as types, fundamental forms of social activity; and that it is possible and desirable that the child’s introduction into the more formal subjects of the curriculum be through the medium of these
activities. I believe finally that education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and the goal of education are one and the same thing” (p. 27).

The statement above, drawn from Dewey’s *Pedagogic Creed of 1897*, signifies the importance of curriculum integration. Francis W. Parker, best known for what was called The Quincy system based on his work in Quincy, Massachusetts, applied these same ideas, along with what he referred to as “laws of the mind with the methods springing from the development of every child” (Cremin, 1961, p. 130). Parker eventually left Quincy for The Cook County Normal School in Chicago, where he became the principal, made it a community school and continued to work on his theories. Parker strived to create a child-centered school and implemented what we now refer to as an integrated curriculum. Parker’s ideas were the wellspring of our current understanding of integrated curriculum.

Parker’s ideas were the wellspring of our current understanding of integrated curriculum. Beane (1997) provides us with the four major aspects of curriculum integration, which include “experiences, social interaction, knowledge and curriculum design” (p. 4). Beane (1997) describes the possibilities as “unforgettable learning experiences” (p. 4) that can combine experiences and current knowledge with the possibility to obtain new knowledge through a very active and social experience attending sometimes to community issues. It can be a collaborative way to organize knowledge, which applies to the current topics in the classroom, yet can be generalized to everyday life.
present and future. Beane (1997) also provides ample examples of the devastation that can occur to young people's minds an interest in school with the separate subject approach.

The curriculum experiences offered in this type of approach often immediately offer the students an opportunity to work on a problem of "personal or social significance" (Beane, 1997, p. 9). The knowledge gained can directly be assessed through formal assessments, or through in-depth and long-term projects that can provide the students with the opportunity to "experience the democratic process of problem solving" (Beane, 1997, p. 9).

Beane (1997) points out that some schools reference another subject or teach a theme in all of the segregated subjects, and although it may appear to some, that integration is occurring however only on the surface level. There is another way to integrate, realizing that it is still not at the same level as curriculum integration and that is more of a multidisciplinary approach. This approach, if done well, has often opened the doors for teachers to “begin” integrating with supporting “project centered activities that call for the use of knowledge from all subject areas involved” (Beane, 1997, p. 12).

Dewey’s work suggested that the curriculum be related to the needs and interests of the children without disregarding the traditional disciplines, but suggested that the traditional disciplines be taught through authentic, hands-on (active) experiences that lead
toward a greater understanding of the individual, their cultural contributions and the ever-changing community as a whole.

Thus, curriculum integration is not a new concept. The ideas that support true integration have been around since the early 1900s and were supported by many including Dewey who believed, “interactions with the environment constitute a continuous process of learning” (Beane, 1997, p. 24). In 1907 in Fairhope, Alabama, Mrs. Marietta Johnson opened The Organic School where, “the aim of the school was to minister to the health of the body, develop the finest mental grasp, and preserve the sincerity and unselfconsciousness of emotional life” (Cremin, 1962, p. 149). The idea of “organic” stemmed from her idea that “spontaneity, initiative, interest and sincerity were to guide the child’s lives in and out of the classroom (Cremin, 1962, p. 150) and that education “should follow the natural growth of the pupil” (Dewey & Dewey, 1915/2003, p. 23). Her underlying principle was based on Rousseau’s central idea, “let children be children” and support development of mind and body to let the child discover more about themselves (Dewey & Dewey, 1915/2003, p. 19). She instituted life classes instead of grades and fully integrated the curriculum to develop the body, mind and spirit, insisting that forced tasks and ordinary examinations lead the pupil to a dislike of school that never leaves (Dewey & Dewey, 1915/2003, p. 24).

The organic school not only fully integrated the curriculum but supported a great deal of group work, the age groups or life classes
took away the emphasis that the “pupils’ failures and shortcomings were negative insisting that the slow or mentally prodded were not scolded or flunked” (Dewey & Dewey, 1915/2003, p. 27).

The authentic and integrated curriculum instilled a desire to learn, according to Mrs. Johnson. The Organic School taught specific skills simply through the art of “doing something” where the skill is taught when needed to actively continue with the learning experience. This idea is also seen in contemporary schools such as the acclaimed early education schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, where children learn skills, for example, the skill of painting and the use of colors as they paint their interpretation of an object or a process. The early progressive educators integrated the concept of learning by doing in authentic and meaningful ways.

Additionally, both Mrs. Johnson and Maria Montessori (1964) believed that through integration, intrinsic motivation to learn occurs in interaction with interesting yet common items that appear in our world naturally. Many of these educators did not view themselves so much as combining the traditional disciplines but as avoiding the fragmentation of life and authenticity that a traditional academic subject curriculum required.

Curriculum integration can be seen in Public School 45 in Indianapolis, where integrated and authentic work was embedded within the state standards during the first decade of the 1900s. The idea of “learning by doing,” not as much for vocation as for academic skills
that children could practice authentically was the main idea in Public School 45. Both the Francis Parker School in Chicago and the Cottage School in Riverside, Illinois, employed reflective writing to allow personal expression of ideas as an “opportunity for the drill in the required mechanics of writing” when grammar is not a separate subject but integrated into every aspect of the day (Dewey & Dewey, 1915/2003, p. 36).

The Phoebe Thorn Experimental School of Brynmawr College also implemented total blending of grammar into all subjects with very little time allotted to a separate or a specific time slot for grammar during the day. Grammar was not separate but totally integrated into everything insisting that the students “learn by doing” to make the curriculum more concrete, abolishing many textbooks (Dewey & Dewey, 1915/2003, p. 87).

Curriculum integration has remained a practice for progressive educators. A good current example is Central Park East Secondary School (CPESS). CPESS is a public school in New York City’s District 4 of East Harlem that mirrors the progressive practices of many of the early progressive schools in a modern urban setting (Semel & Sadovnick, 2006, p. 19). The student population of CPESS is predominately working class, African American and or Latino.

Established in 1985, CPESS is part of a collaborative in New York City, which consists of elementary, middle, and high schools. The collaborative encompasses such principles ad active and collaborative
learning; integrated, in-depth, and intra-disciplinary curriculum respectful of diversity; choice and community. Another key component of this program is trust and respect of both the student and the family. The teacher’s role is that of a coach with the student being the worker.

Drake and Burns (2004) provide us with many other examples of schools implementing successful integrated approaches, noting that there are different levels of dedication and comfort. Beane (1997) and Drake and Burns (2004) all provide us with examples of these different levels of integration, yet Drake breaks it down for the novice teacher, providing numerous specific examples with which to start. These include multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum integration with tiered examples in each category. One of these approaches to the concept of integrating the curriculum may be more palatable to the teacher who has had limited exposure to the concept and may be more weary of attempting it. Whereas, Beane (1997) supports total integration, Drake and Burns (2004) note that some is better than none. They feel that “educators that actually implement integrated approaches are the same educators who are interested in the most effective ways to teach” (Drake & Burns, 2004, p. 16).

The bottom line is, “Curriculum integration does not mean doing the same things differently, but rather doing something different” (Beane, 1997, p. 43). Integrating the curriculum is not a partial or occasional practice. It is working on academic content in an authentic
and purposeful manner that is valuable to the children and to the learning community.

Dramatic Inquiry

“I believe that much of the time and attention now given to the preparation and presentation of lessons might be more wisely and profitably expended in training the child’s power of imagery and in seeing to it that he is continually forming definite, vivid, and growing images of the various subjects with which he comes in contact in his experience (Dewey, 1897, p. 29).”

Historically, progressive schools have used dramatizations in all grades for a variety of reasons including both academic and social growth. This process supported the understanding of literature, the factual knowledge of social studies and geography, and the skill of public speaking. It was also an authentic and alternative approach to testing comprehension of content.

Drama was typically implemented with the underlying foundation of play and learning by doing. Dewey spoke of dramatization as method of “secure(ing) both attention to the thought of text and a spontaneous endeavor, free from pretense and self-conscious” (Dewey & Dewey, 2003, p. 121). Dramatic inquiry (Edmiston, 2010) appeared quite often in the early progressive experimental schools, specifically The Francis Parker School. This experimental school used the dramatic interest of the children, incorporating drama as an aid in teaching history, specifically Greek history and literature. This school also took advantage of the social value of drama to learn to act with others, have opportunities for self-expression and learn from shared
experiences. “This assisted in the spirit of unity often desired in a learning community as studying alone from a text is an isolated and unsocial experience” (Dewey & Dewey, 2003, p. 125-6).

In 1915, Dewey commented that, “Many progressive schools of today have begun to use drama as a way to amplify the curriculum” (Dewey & Dewey, 2003, p. 127). Amplification of the content areas of the curriculum was seen through acting out a reading assignment, extending a poem and acting out historical episodes to more fully understand the content.

For example, The Cottage School of Riverside, Illinois, used the child’s dramatic instinct to teach history. The Public School 45 integrated drama and pretend play into the teaching of social studies and geography. J.L. Meriam, at the Elementary School of the University of Missouri at Columbia, scheduled extensive time for play and drama into the daily curriculum. These schools did this by supporting and reading good literature, and then asking the children to tell a story about what they read or extend the story by acting it out.

Dramatic inquiry is an alternative pedagogy, which is part of progressive education, in which the teacher guides the children through an exploration of content in an active, playful and very personal way (Edmiston, 2008). Dramatic inquiry is a technique, used in England for years, and is actually “included in the Revised National Curriculum introduced in September 2000” (Bowell, 2001, p. 1). In the United States, there is an individualized, playful component to this very deep
and often very personal exploration. The educator has the goals in mind yet the process is very different from traditional education. Traditional education typically focuses on memorizing facts and rote procedures whereas progressive educations focus on learning how to think. The same required curriculum content is present, what differs is the process of just how to interact with and explore the content is very different.

Critical issues are often tackled through dramatic inquiry. For example, issues of racial segregation or issues of social injustice, may be examined by the entire class. The historical facts surrounding the events do not change and are learned as the children discuss the event. How the approach differs from traditional education is that once the facts are discussed, the children’s interpretations of the events are explored. How could they re-enact the history to change the events? For example, how did the individuals “feel” when forced to ride on the back of the bus? Or, if you were an advocate for American Indians, what would you have done for their young children when they were forced to cut their hair and not permitted to use their native language? The required content is learned, what is different is that the students are encouraged to learn from historical events (if used in social studies) and supported in finding “their voice” to use in the future to fight against social injustice.

Heathcote and Bolton (1996) would say that drama use in the classroom has multiple objectives, any of which can be achieved by
various routes. As is the case for much of progressive education, drama may be a long-term exploration or a short-term session but generally attends to the students on both an emotional, social, cultural, ethical and cognitive level. Learners who have a sense of ownership about their learning have a greater sense of commitment to it and gain more from it as a result (Bowell & Heap, 2001).

In the United States, the curriculum content area goals can be accomplished using dramatic inquiry, reaching far beyond the expectations of both the teachers and the students. As with many aspects of progressive education, the teacher gives up the power of total control and guides the children through the content exploration, allowing the students, over time, to become experts in a field as they take on responsibilities and explore specific content (Heathcote, 1996). The children become, or take on a role as an expert with power as they explore content in active, hands on, dramatic and playful way. This allows and encourages children to participate at a level that they are comfortable with and both cognitively and physically able.

Dramatic practice was used in a classroom for children with visual impairments by Edmiston. Edmiston’s “Mission to Mars” project (2007). During this project, Edmiston guided the children with disabilities on a tour of the planet of Mars using techniques from dramatic inquiry. Although the classroom was a segregated, special education classroom, he was successful in leading the students with visual impairments through the required science content about Mars and
onto their feelings about the planet. Students, especially those with disabilities, infrequently are permitted to explore their own interpretations on a subject as they so often spend a great deal of time memorizing the facts. It might be surprising just how many facts students might remember if they were supported in exploring the subject matter in a more diverse and personally meaningful way such as that of dramatic inquiry.

As seen in Edmiston’s project, dramatic inquiry can support interpersonal relationships that otherwise may not have had the opportunity to develop. Through the invitation to explore the material (content) in a more playful way, that encourages the children to pose or answer questions about the content from a different perspective, each student can provide valuable input to the process. This allows each individual with their own hypothesis to be seen in a different light. An in-depth inquiry may take place on a common subject, supporting the children’s creativity, problem-solving, negotiating, and even conflict resolution skills to be practiced in a safe and nurturing environment. The teacher is present to assist if a child gets stuck. A child may also watch the play instead of participating. Learning comes from listening, too, or nobody would lecture. Through drama and other methods of progressive education, children can shine in a variety of ways demonstrating their strengths through multiple venues.

*Emergent Curriculum*

“I believe that interests are the signs and symptoms of growing power. I believe that they represent dawning capacities. Accordingly,
the constant and careful observation of interests is of utmost importance for the educator.

I believe that these interests are to be observed as showing the state of development, which the child has reached. I believe that they prophesy the stage upon which he is about to enter.

I believe that only through the continual and sympathetic observation of childhood’s interests can the adult enter into the child’s life and see what it is ready for, and upon what material it could work most readily and fruitfully” (Dewey, 1897, p. 29).

The third component of progressive education is emergent curriculum. Emergent curriculum is co-constructed between the individual child or a group of children and their teacher. The teacher follows “each” child’s interests, strengths, and limitations as they collaboratively and actively construct new knowledge. It is up to the teacher to ensure that all opportunities for learning take place and standards are addressed.

Each child has interests and skills to share with the learning community and to explore individually with the guidance and support of the teacher. Dewey (1939) stated, “The planning must be flexible enough to permit free play for individuality of experience and yet firm enough to give direction towards continuous development of power” (p. 58).

Many of the early experimental schools felt strongly that the curriculum should be based on the growing and changing interests and needs of the child and demonstrated this in their work. Most individuals believe that knowledge provides us with power. In order to make decisions, children need knowledge. Knowledge of the past supports the decisions for the future. Knowledge of the facts (i.e., math) or
skills (i.e., reading) allows children to proceed to the next level. A firm grasp on the subject, taught by one who is more knowledgeable on a subject, allows a child to be more powerful in their own individual academic growth.

In 1915, Dewey and Dewey wrote (1915/2003) that teachers, “instead of having their classes read and then recite facts from textbooks, must change their methods” (p. 74). He urged that the “function of the teacher must change from a dictator to that of a watcher and a helper and the child to become active instead of passive; to become a questioner and an experimenter” (p. 172).

Semel and Sadovnik (2006) interpreted Dewey as proposing, “educators start with the needs and interests of the child” (p. 6) when planning their daily lessons. Dewey’s methodologies “rested on the premise that children were active beings, growing and changing, and they required a course of study that would reflect their particular stage of development” (Semel & Sadovnick, 2006, p. 5-6).

In the early 1900s, Mrs. Johnson’s Organic School practiced the idea that play leads to the desire to know and follows the natural growth of the young child. The idea that children’s intrinsic motivation to learn comes from interesting yet common items, and that children learn by doing was shared both by Mrs. Johnson and Maria Montessori (1964).

Projects

“I believe accordingly that the primary basis of education is the child’s powers at work along the same general constructive lines as
those that have brought civilization into being. I believe, therefore, in the so-called expressive or constructive activities as the center of correlation. I believe that this gives the standard for the place of cooking, sewing, manual training etc. in the school” (Dewey, 1897, p. 26).

Projects invite all children to investigate a topic in-depth (Katz & Chard, 2000; Helm & Katz, 2001) and can vary based on the children’s reading skills and ability to follow through with an investigation. This method was initially seen in 1918 in William H. Kilpatrick’s Project Method. Kilpatrick understood the method as “a wholehearted purposeful activity proceeding in a social environment” taking into account the child’s own interests and goals (Cremin, 1962).

Kilpatrick, who wrote extensively on the method, explained that the curriculum should be reorganized as a series of projects requiring four general steps: purposing, planning, executing, and judging. The method insured that the plans are those of the learners and not of the teachers (Cremin, 1962, p. 218).

In long-term projects, the children are immersed in everyday activities, which eventually lead toward an investigation of a topic that interests them (Glassman, 2001). It should be “the role of the teacher to step back and facilitate rather than mentor and let the students drive the inquiry based on their own goals (Glassman, 2001).

All children can actively investigate a topic, working on social and academic content in the process. Children can add their small to large contributions to the personal or group investigation of a topic through project work, depending on their abilities and interests.
Projects can provide contexts in which children’s curiosity can be expressed purposefully, and that enable them to experience the joy of self-motivated learning (Helm & Katz, 2001). Historically projects were seen in many of the early experimental schools, often with a focus on nature study, gardening or vocational work. Mrs. Johnson’s Organic School and Merriam’s Elementary School of the University of Missouri both used projects as a central part of the curriculum for all ages (Dewey & Dewey, 2003). Merriam (2003) felt that, “attempting to systemize and standardize the curriculum has ignored the need of the individual child” (p. 41). Children need to play, to explore, and to interact with their environment and with each other in an active way. Merriman’s school offered four periods each day, which included 1) play, 2) stories, 3) observation, and 4) handiwork. Each of these areas directed the flexible idea of active work in the form of a specific project.

Other early names that employed the use of Deweyan inspired projects in their teaching were psychoanalysts Anna Freud, Erick Erickson, and Peter Blos (Young-Bruehl, 1988). Together, they felt that children learn best when children are actively engaged and centered and put this idea to the test in Anna Freud’s early experimental “Whole School” in which the young Erickson and Blos were teachers.

As with other components of progressive education, projects can involve individual work, collaborations, or both. A project, seen in the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, can be teacher directed or child
directed based on student interests and needs, which allows each individual to contribute to the whole project based on their own unique ability (Edmiaston, 1998).

The projects are negotiated between teachers and students. The idea may come from the teacher, one or more students, or arise out of a dialogue of children and adults. Ultimately, wherever it first came from, the teacher and the group negotiate the content and process. Project work, as seen in The Reggio Approach, involve the community at large, inviting specialists to teach specific aspects of skill to the children as they move along. For example, if the children’s project calls for knowledge and skills of construction, a construction worker may come to teach the children about tool handling or woodworking (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998).

The Presidio Hill School in San Francisco, founded in 1918, continues to use projects today. The K-8 school curriculum “emphasizes student projects, cross-curricular activities, service learning, field trips, art, music, drama and poetry believing that no two children learn the same way” (Hayes, 2007, p. 148). Project work is not just seen in private schools. Public elementary schools also implement the use of projects in their classrooms. The Wickliffe Progressive Community School in Upper Arlington, Ohio (suburban), and The Indianola Alternative School in Columbus, Ohio (urban), are two public elementary schools that successfully use projects and part of their progressive curriculum.
Building Community

“I believe that the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends (Dewey, 1897, p. 22).” Dewey (1938/1997) felt that the process of education needed to be more democratic, and that experience through interactions needed to be a more influential piece of the educational process.

The principle that development of experience comes through interaction means that education is essentially a social process. This quality is realized in the degree in which individuals form a community group (Dewey, 1938/1997). Dewey felt that the classroom, like society, should be democratic. Democratic means that all citizens actively participate in the group decisions. All participants are equally valued and each voice is equally heard. The group needs all of the members and values all members equally. This applies to the classroom when each student, who already is a citizen of the group, interacts, discusses, and has a voice in the process of becoming a community of learners.

Dewey felt that the adult within the group had a key responsibility for modeling and setting the tone of the interactions and experiences within the group of learners. It is through this process of building community that the democratic space in the curriculum has the opportunity to develop. It is within this space, which is created together by the educator with the children, in the process of creating a learning community within the classroom. Within
this space, the participant’s experiences can take many different forms. The participants may take on the role of a powerful leader or follower or it may look more like a collaborative community of learners interacting with each other in meaningful ways (Dewey, 1902).

It is within this space that community can develop as long as the power from the teacher does not control the behaviors of the students. It seems that the process of creating a community comes from all individuals involved, as a community interacting equally with each other.

Dewey’s theories were often misunderstood. His focus on the child’s impulses, feelings, and interests were often viewed as permissiveness (Semel & Sadovnik, 2006). Dewey did not intend for the children to run wild without guidance from the teacher, but for a planned community of learners to work and learn together with a focus on the individual’s feelings, interests, needs, and preferences in learning.

This idea of building community was demonstrated in Mrs. Johnson’s Organic School. Many opportunities to participate in-group work were encouraged, and the divisions of the groups were in life classes to ensure that the emphasis was never on individual shortcomings. The Organic School also held a number of classes outside, in the open air, to study in groups, nature, and field geography such that children develop their own questions. Mrs. Johnson always ensured that “someone was there to help them try new things or to supply the
opportunities” (Dewey & Dewey, 2003, p. 30-31). Through group exploration and discussion, the community of learners emerged in addition to their own drive to know.

Mrs. Johnson and Meriam’s school both blended studies of the local community into the curriculum. Not only did they support group work, but they also felt that hands-on tool use supported the development of well-rounded human beings and members of society. The use of tools was seen in many early and current progressive programs. Authentic tool use is believed to allow the children to learn a skill in addition to respecting their interests and abilities in the classroom and in groups. They use real tools in the process of building, constructing both a structure and knowledge.

In agreement with Dewey, Noddings (2005) described an ethical process of “caring” in schools, not as a method or a prescription for teaching but as a way of building a sense of community among individuals, as an underlying foundation for everything else that may happen in the classroom. Noddings (2005) attends to the relational process of teaching and is clearly against the standards-driven curriculum. However, it is this very process of the teacher encouraging and supporting the “cooperative interaction” (Noddings, 2005) between the students, which serves as an important piece of “building the community”.

Noddings (2005) argues that, “caring should be at the center of our educational efforts” (p. 14). This concept is a critical piece of
her ideas of community building. Ideally, building community is at the 
core of early childhood education, a foundation for which everything 
else academic and social can be built. It is, however, important to 
mention that Noddings contrasts intellectual work with caring 
relationships and chooses the latter. Dewey saw them as interdependent 
as relationships are the lived context of learning.

Similar to Noddings, Kohn (1996) and Watson (2003) focus on what 
children need both individually and in a group in order to be happy, to 
learn to work together, and to learn to trust. They focus on building 
relationships within the community of learners and creating an 
atmosphere where everybody belongs.

Katz and McClellan (1997) focus on young children’s individual 
social competence and the teacher’s role in supporting children’s 
social development. They do not put forth a method, per se, but do 
offer many guidelines for the early childhood educator as a starting 
point from which to guide their work. Social competence is one aspect 
of community building.

Eirich (2006), in her first and second grade class, demonstrates 
the process of learning to become a citizen in a democratic classroom 
community. Influenced heavily by Dewey and Vygotsky, Eirich 
successfully demonstrates what it takes to become a member of a 
progressive classroom. Informed by the work of Kantor and Pernie 
(2003), Eirich discusses the social processes of young children 
learning how to participate in democratic community during the morning
meeting. It is a learned process that, when supported by a visionary educator, can benefit the entire learning community. It is both a personal and a group effort when learning to become part of the peer culture that is school. Part of learning how to become part of the school culture begins in the classroom. The accommodations made for each student as they learn to inquire, comment, and share, which supports them in their relationships and interactions in and out of school, can begin during the morning meeting (Eirich, 2003).

Relationships are an important part of the classroom community. Relationships between children, teachers, parents, and the community are also an important aspect of building the community in the progressive tradition. A safe environment where children have a sense of belonging, a sense of being accepted and valued, is critical when children are expected to take chances in a social situation (Noddings, 1995; Cohen, 2001).

**Part 2: Inclusion from a Disability Studies Perspective**

Prior to attempting to demonstrate how the theoretical frameworks of progressive education and disability studies inform my pedagogy for inclusion, it is important to understand exactly what inclusion is from a disability studies in education perspective (Danforth & Gabel, 2006). The idea of inclusion has a long history as I will demonstrate; however, the social justice issues of segregation of those “who are different” have an equally long history as well.
Kliewer’s (2006) discussion of how “inclusion started simply, naturally” (p. 100) at New York’s Jowonio School in the 1970s perhaps is a great opening on just why the inclusion discussion can benefit from disability studies. The Jowonio School was a preschool whose curriculum was “integrally linked to issues of economic and social justice” (Kliewer, 2006, p. 98). With this in mind, inclusion of children with special needs whose acceptance had been denied elsewhere was a natural step for the Jowonio community, even when the teachers had no special training. Inclusion is a human right. It is just the right thing to do.

From the disability studies perspective of “why wouldn’t we include all children” (Ferri, in press; Kliewer, 2006), Kliewer (2006) has made suggestions for the professional community (p. 101). His suggestions include:

Scholarship from perspectives of the disability studies be directed at affecting the lived experience of young children and their families in directions of democratic participation. Scholars must expand energy on enacting (i.e., putting into action) paradigmatic challenges to the conventional text of disability...for example, starting a teacher licensure program focused on inclusive education (p. 101).

Kliewer (2006) also recommends that inclusive practices “focus be on action and democracy” (p. 101), professional cooperation, and collaboration (Will, 1986), and a decrease of individual, academic, and social segregation in schools (Ferguson, 1995).
History of Inclusion: Disability Studies in Education’s Approach to Inclusion

Osgood (2005) points out that in the United States there has been a concern to educate children with disabilities with their non-disabled peers since the late 1800s, when segregation in public schools began. In 1902, the National Education Association (NEA) introduced the term “special education” to America’s professional educators. This led to “the establishment and support of a multitude of specialized, segregated classes and programs that assumed responsibility for most, and usually all, of the instruction of students identified as disabled” (Osgood, 2005, p. 3).

Osgood (2005) demonstrates that little has remained static about special education since then. Terminology and the disability categories have continued to evolve over the years. The concern to integrate students in the public school setting, specifically with those identified as having, what we now refer to as a mild learning disabilities, physical or behavioral disabilities, has also been an ongoing conversation. “Special education and the overarching construct of disability are both deeply rooted in constantly evolving or redefined assumptions, conditions, and understandings related to science, culture, society and certainly education” (Osgood, 2005, p. 5).

Although the terms and labels have evolved over the years, the central construct of disability has not. In addition to the construct
of disability as a “less than” or “different than” ideal, the educational thoughts which typically support separate and different academic and social classroom instruction, which began many decades ago, have not changed either (Osgood, 2005). In 1975, Public Law 94-142 passed in the United States, in an attempt to serve students with disabilities. Later amendments of this law lead to its current name, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990/1997. As a result, school districts individually interpret the IDEA and students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This, however, is up to the discretion of the school personnel based on individual assessment. “What this landmark legislation did not change, however, were the underlying assumptions about schooling for students designated as ‘disabled’” (Ferguson, 1995, p. 281). The assumption then and now is still that there is something different about these individuals and that they generally cannot benefit from the type of education provided to the rest of society’s young children. Instead of teacher training for full inclusion and collaboration, the academy, for the most part, still segregates the teacher education programs that, in turn, segregate the practicing educational professionals, the children and their experiences in the schools.

In 1986, Will proposed that educating students with disabilities should be the shared responsibility of all professional educators in a more collaborative effort. She pointed out that the “terminology used as a result of the IDEA is the language of separation” (p. 412). She
believed that special education programs originally were designed to utilize a specific approach to assist students in reaching educational outcomes. At the “heart of the special approach is the presumption that the students with learning problems cannot be effectively taught in regular education programs even with a variety of support” (Will, 1986, p. 412). Will contended that not only does the pull out method not always work, it further segregates students from their peers. The language of the law is the “language of separation, of fragmentation, and removal” (Will, 1986, p. 412).

Will (1986) encouraged educational professionals to change the direction of public education to be more inclusive of children with disabilities and their families. In her suggestions for change, she specifically called for “special education programs and regular education programs to collectively contribute skills and resources to carry out individualized education plans based on individualized education needs” (p. 413).

Specifically, for special education professionals “to establish a partnership with regular education to cooperatively assess the educational needs of students with learning problems and to cooperatively develop effective educational strategies for meeting those needs” (p. 415).

Will’s concerns were political, social, and pedagogical and greatly contributed to this conversation on inclusion. Additionally, Sailor (2004) suggests an agenda “that holds potential for capturing
the innovative elements of improvements and reform” (p. 173). Sailor (184), in order for “special education to achieve greater levels of integration with general education, offer[s] the more attractive possibility for a shared educational agenda for all students” (p. 184).

Gallagher (2005) discusses the “inherent inequality of segregated placements” and adds, “inclusion advocates have made progress toward raising inclusive education as a worthy goal” (p. 140). Baglieri and Knopf (2004) add that, “A truly inclusive school reflects a democratic philosophy whereby all students are valued, educators normalize difference through differentiated instruction, and the school culture reflects an ethic of caring and community” (p. 525).

Ferguson (1995) defines inclusion as “a process of meshing general and special education reform initiatives and strategies in order to achieve a unified system of public education that incorporates all children as fully active, fully participating members of the school community; that views diversity as the norm; and that ensures a high quality education for each student by providing meaningful curriculum, effective teaching, and necessary supports for each student” (p. 286).

To further support this discussion, Brantlinger (2005) describes an inclusive educator as one who “believes it is normal and acceptable for children to vary and that the teacher’s role is to engage and educate all types of children together (p. 129). The terminology continues to shift as the literature better informs our understanding of what is means to provide a truly inclusive early educational
program. DSE scholars’ views tend to be progressive in their thinking and practice. The views on inclusion and of children with diverse abilities need to be shaped by all into one of acceptance and that of typical practice. This conversation continues as inclusive educators, parents and students views grow and change into that of a truly democratic society.

The Concepts That Apply

The DSE literature on inclusion presents key concepts that apply to progressive inclusion, which I feel may serve as a response to Kliewer’s (2006) suggestions. The following discussion will include three of the key theoretical perspectives of DSE literature which include, 1) the social model view of disability; 2) professional training and collaboration;, and 3) building a democratic community of learners. These three concepts do not in any way cover the complete theoretical ideals of disability studies or disability studies in education. They do, however, begin to influence the pedagogy for inclusion from the progressive standpoint, which I feel directly responds to Kliewer’s suggestions for a) scholars to expand energy on enacting paradigmatic challenges to the conventional text of disability and b) suggesting inclusive practices that focus on action and democracy (Kliewer, 2006, p. 101).

Concept 1: The Social Model of Disability

“Culture has the power to disable” (McDermott & Varenne, 1995, p. 327). Currently in the United States, there are 13 categories of
disabilities identified by the educational system. Of the 13 categories, included are different levels of severity and only specific levels of an identified disability warrant special educational services. McDermott (1993) and McDermott and Varenne (1995) demonstrate how culture (classroom, educational, local) identify and categorize a disability and to some extent how culture creates these very disabilities. “The construction of LD, like any identity, depends on the complex interaction of people, places, and activities” (Dudley-Marling, 2004, p. 485).

The American educational system typically takes a deficit view of disability. The educational system specifically assesses and labels any child who does not fall into the accepted norm of development and typically begins the process of remediation focused on the goal of normalcy. Skrtic (1986/2004) argues that there is specific “theoretical and applied knowledge (about special education) and thus the unconscious assumptions of the profession have not changed over the years, only practice has” (p. 85). Skrtic (1986/2004) offers, Once one accepts the position that special education and disability can be viewed in alternative ways and, more important, that each perspective has different implications for children labeled disabled and their parents and families, the argument that special education should consider itself and its professional knowledge from alternative vantage-points is self-evident on ethical and moral grounds (p. 85).
Additionally he argues that “once one accepts that special education can be viewed in alternative disciplinary ways, and that each perspective has different implications for the lives of children labeled disabled...there is no morally or ethically defensible argument for special education to continue to rely on an exclusively biological/psychological interpretation of disability” (Skrtic, 1986/2004, p. 93).

McDermott (1993), McDermott and Varenne (1995), and Skrtic (1986) each makes valid points that are intertwined. Cultural perception of those with disabilities may inform the practice, yet the practice may equally inform local cultural perceptions of children with disabilities. From this standpoint, one could argue that in order to change cultural perceptions of disability, we could start with changing practice.

Charleton (1998) and Osgood (2005) add to this line of thinking. “Beliefs and attitudes about disability are individually experienced but socially constituted” (Charleton, 1998, p. 51). Changes in the labels of disability demonstrate social concern and attitudes towards the idea of social and educational inclusion. The development of the ideas of inclusion includes a “multiplicity of intellectual, social, practical, and ethical concerns [that] interact with human experience to create disequilibrium and generate reinvention” (Osgood, 2005, p. 5).
From the DSE perspective, Reid and Valle (2004) state that, “learning disabilities are not objective fact; they are historically and culturally determined” (p. 465). Disability studies in education explores this idea and “challenges the view of disability as an individual deficit that can be remediated and explores the external factors (e.g., culture, society, economics, politics) that define people and determine responses to differences” (Gabel, 2005, p. 11).

Danforth, Taff, and Ferguson (2005) lead us to wonder if typical learners are, actually, the majority of students that are currently in the educational system. Is there any such thing as a typical or normal learner since each individual has unique qualities, learning styles, and abilities? Taylor (2006) articulates for us the basic idea of DSE in that “disability is a social phenomenon” (p. xiv), which is supported by McDermott’s 1993 research.

Every culture holds general assumptions on what constitutes a disability and what needs may come with that disability. Reid and Valle (2004) wrote about the educational culture, “The very act of making decisions about which children deserve which resources for what purpose (i.e., determining the position of individual children within the educational system) constitutes the construction of meaning making about how we conceive a free and appropriate education for all children” (p. 466). DSE scholars would argue that a free and appropriate education should serve “all” children equally.
Armstrong (2005) argued that to be included is a human right and to be excluded based on a difference may imply that one is less human. One problem is that not all children necessarily learn the same way. Kliewer (2006) and Solis and Connor (2006) address the connection between disability studies and education with, as Kliewer stressed, “the focus being on action and democracy” (p. 101). One problem with the education system, specifically early childhood education, is that of conformity. Individuals are forced to conform to the perceived level of normality and the result is that schools all too often are forced (or choose to) teach with one type of child in mind. The prescriptive curriculum does not take into account the various abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and interests of the learner.

Children, as all people do, have a great number of skills, interests, and strengths. They have multiple avenues for sharing their knowledge, as do teachers for learning with the students and documenting their achievements as seen in the past and present descriptions of progressive education and examples of the authentic learning and assessments.

As Solis and Connor (2006) articulate, “It is simply not feasible to assume that all students with disabilities share practical interests, as if they constituted a homogenized, self-recognizing, and self-defined group” (p. 105). Participating in education with all children and the normal activities that occur during school is a right. It should not be “predicted [by] meeting specified pre-set eligibility
criteria” (Mutua & Smith, 2006, p. 124). Often students may only participate in typical classroom activities if they earn the right by behaving in such a way, determined by the adults, that earns them this right. This is unfair to the child that is consistently segregated from their peers because they learn differently or do not share the same strengths as others.

“A DS perspective calls everything into question-existing structures, labels, humans’ pigeon-holing of others, medicalization of the teaching profession, disability-as-deficit, etc.,” (Broderick et al., 2006; Danforth & Smith, 20XX). The idea that children are individuals with a variety of strengths, needs, abilities, and interests is a direct argument against these labels so often placed on any student that does not perform just like all of the rest. It is unfortunate that education policy and society typically strive for all those who do not quite fit the mold to be remediated instead of supported to build on their strengths of expression.

Overall, “DSE scholars work to uncover and eliminate the social, cultural and political barriers that prevent access to employment, academic, recreational, and residential opportunities afforded to those without the variations that society labels as impairments” (Baglieri & Knopf, 2004, p. 525). As Kleiwer (2006) wrote of the Jowonio community response, I borrow to apply to DSE in general as “an intellectual, emotional, and spiritual endeavor, but it [is] as importantly action in the form of a personal and communal commitment to struggle, advocacy,
political and cultural change, and democratic participation in the daily experience of individuals labeled disabled. Absent action there would be no disability studies” (p. 100).

Within the DSE framework, questions emerge such as how to teach all children, how does it impact teacher education and curriculum and pedagogy. One answer to this question for some may be through integrated, progressive, non-traditional education. Early childhood inclusive classrooms may benefit from a fresh look at an old paradigm. If nothing else, perhaps, a look into the alternative may inform inclusive practices with support from the DSE perspective.

Concept 2: Professional Training

Danforth, Taff, and Ferguson (2006) examine “the conflict of professionalism in inclusion” (p. 20) with a focus on teacher training or lack thereof to teach inclusive classrooms of children with mixed abilities. Allen (2006) discusses the challenges of introducing the concept of educational inclusion with pre-service educators in teacher education programs. Even upon graduation and licensure, not all teachers feel that they are equipped to teach children of diverse abilities (Young, in press).

A recent conversation with a special education teacher housed in a progressive school further fueled my investigation into this topic. This teacher said, “I support the progressive process, but still feel separated in the building, as the intervention teachers meet separately and often plan separately from the regular education teachers. Although
we are all a team with the same ideals, we are separate” (personal communication, March 2007). This conversation demonstrates what many educators feel – a disconnection from other educators, a lack of collaboration.

In addition to the lack of collaboration, Ferguson (1995) also identified that regular education teachers often seem to have trouble knowing how to “bond” with their new inclusion students (p. 283). “Even the protection of an individualized education program (IEP) – a key component of P.L.94-142 and now of the updated Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – seemed yet one more bonding ‘barrier to real membership’ for children with disabilities in the regular classroom” (Ferguson, 1995, p. 281). This continues to support Will’s (1986) statement that the language in the policy often encourages segregation in education.

Perhaps more of a DSE model of inclusion can be seen in the schools of Italy as discussed in Ferri (in press). Inclusion, though, can vary not only from school to school, but also from one country to the next. Ferri demonstrated how inclusion could be a mindset of “Why not?” as is the common, overlying assumption in Italy. The Italian school system and the general ethos in Italy is that all children are equal and welcome in their classrooms. Quoting Ferri, “Italy is an example of an advanced model of inclusion” (p. 352). Ferri discusses that one of the “most important aspect[s] of the Italian system of inclusion is the “sostegno”, or the support teacher, who serves as a
partner to the general education teacher” (p. X). Similar to what is referred to in the field, as a consultant in the United States, a degreed co-teacher collaborates with the regular education teachers in each classroom from “6-22 hours per week” (Ferri, in press, p. 5).

The idea of inclusion in Italy is demonstrated in the well-known Italian pre-school program in Reggio Emilia. “For North American educators, the process of inclusion does not unfold naturally as in the routines of the Reggio Emilia approach. Reggio’s powerful image of the child nourishes the authentic practice of maximizing each child’s capabilities,” (Gilman, 2007, p. 23). Children with special needs are described in Reggio as having “special rights” (Edwards et al., 1998) and are given priority in placement in programs with full professional support. Gilman commends Reggio’s approach to inclusive education and demonstrates just how these ideals and practices could be supportive of schools in North America, identifying the main components essential when creating an inclusive setting.

These include the Reggio values, which are shared among all, and are clear and steadfast. Included in these values are 1) the image of the child, 2) the role of the teacher as a nurturer and a guide, 3) the commitment to communication and collaboration with parents, and 4) the power of projects as described earlier in this paper. Embedded in the values is a focus on a quality childhood and the rights as a citizen identifying that a quality childhood will lead to a quality life and that the children are already citizens of the community. Additionally,
the Reggio approach and those in the community truly believe that children contribute and construct the culture. In Reggio, culture is not something that is taught to them. The culture, which is informed by the children’s abilities and interests, changes over time. Children as well as adults co-construct the ever-mediating culture.

Perhaps teachers in the United States could learn more from the Italian educator’s collaborative relationships. Uchida (2005) discusses the challenges to cooperative teaching between those trained in regular and those trained in special education. Co-teachers in an inclusive pre-school setting shared daily struggles with collaboration, pedagogy and issues of power.

Brantlinger (2006) points out that even the instructional methods textbooks used in teacher education programs often suggest different “prescriptions” for teaching children that can separate the two professions. Using texts written for either special or regular education courses to teach about inclusion of children with diverse abilities does seem somewhat counter-productive. Brantlinger (2006) additionally points out that there is typically little evidence of a constructivist viewpoint in the special education texts designed for teacher education programs, nor do they typically cover in-depth cultural aspects, let alone diverse ability aspects within the typical education classroom.

Mutua and Smith (2006) point out the “concerns (more precisely, fears)” (p. 122) that these pre-service educators often feel when
thinking about inclusion. The same pre-service educators may turn into teachers whose fears have never been alleviated, as Young (in press) demonstrates through her discussions with student teachers. Mutua and Smith (2006) suggest that “teacher candidates be exposed to the social model of disability which shifts the view of disability away from an individual deficit orientation” (p. 128). This deficit orientation is currently where special education, as it stands now, currently presides. Inclusion models vary greatly as does the general response to the ideals of inclusion. Typically, the practice of inclusion can range from a segregated special education classroom in a public school building to total teacher collaboration in a team teaching format. It could also be a regular education teacher teaching all children with either a pullout model (resource room) for intensive intervention services or a consultation model, or both.

Broderick, Reid, and Valle (2006) asked current and former pre-16 educators a variety of questions from the DS perspective. Their interpretation of the answers they received demonstrate just how difficult it is for educators to shift from the social construction of disability, supported by hierarchical mandates, to teaching from a DS perspective. Broderick, Reid, and Valle (2006), however, contend that the answers demonstrate multiple ways with which teacher education with a focus on DS perspectives can be successful.

Other challenges to the ideals of inclusion are offered as “labeling, teacher attitudes, and current practices marginalize
students labeled as having learning dis/abilities” (Bagleri & Knopf, 2004, p. 526). “Pre-service educator training and in-service educators’ lack of knowledge about children with disabilities, in addition to their lack of comfort collaborating, continues the cycle preventing true inclusion” (Bagleri & Knopf, 2004, p. 526). Teachers often express a variety of concerns about inclusive education (Gallagher, 2001; Bagleri & Knopf, 2004). These concerns range from the lack of confidence in meeting the needs of all children and their abilities to meeting performance standards on standardized assessments.

Many educators feel that differentiating the curriculum is one answer to educating children with a variety of abilities, ensuring that accommodations are made for all. This is one way and perhaps the best way to date to educate all children, although accommodating for children with labels is still segregation in some eyes as it is different from the typical curriculum (Bagleri & Knopf, 2004).

Concept 3: Building a Democratic Community

From a democratic perspective, every child has a right to a public education (Ferguson, 1995). In her efforts to understand just how to achieve inclusion, Ferguson (1995) explored the underlying assumptions of both special and regular educators. What she found was that even when teachers agreed to mainstreaming, the “still unchallenged and highly individualized deficit/remediation model of disability most often resulted in the delivery of educational services along some continuum of locations, each matched to the constellation of
services believed to fit the identified type and amount of student deficit and disability” (p. 281). However skeptical the teacher was on including a child with disabilities into the “regular education” classroom, the students seemed able to figure out just how to, “without adult intervention” include the child into their experiences.

Ferguson (1995) identified that her son’s experiences assisted her in “understanding more fully that learning membership was the most important dimension of inclusion and that it was an extraordinarily complex phenomenon, especially within classrooms” (p. 283). Ferguson would say that the biggest problems in inclusion are often the grown-ups.

Ferguson makes one very important point – the students figured it out. Perhaps one very important concept here is to follow the children when establishing a democratic community of learners. Reid and Valle (2004) suggest that we “refocus on the students and suggest ways to create welcoming and productive learning environments for all learners” (p. 474) drawing on both Vygotsky’s theory in addition to critical theory and pedagogy. Reid and Valle (2004) argue that together, these allow reflection to “actively consider the meanings we give to difference” (p. 474). As they elaborate,

Community building is a conscious and evolutionary process...and is the foundation that supports cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, and the formation of positive classroom relationships... To ensure successful implementation, teachers intentionally create
classrooms that engender a sense of safety and belonging, value for diversity, shared responsibility for the community and an overall atmosphere of support and caring (Reid & Valle, 2004, p. 475).

“Education and democracy share a mutual instrumentality – a flourishing democracy nurtures education: education nourishes democracy” (Goodland, 1997, p. X). A classroom community is a democracy where “people can live with a sense of empowered participation” (Goodland, 1997, p. 23). Informed by Dewey, Goodland suggests that education is as much about teaching as it is about community and democracy. Embedded in the sense of community enters the idea and act of nurturing (Kerr, 1996). “It is through consistent respect for and recognition of the particular child’s particular experiencing that the child develops a self, and in turn, can recognize, respect and trust others” (Kerr, 1996, p. 51). Kerr is speaking about the relationships between the students, the teachers and the parents; community both learning and the larger community and the individuality of those that make up the learning community.

Part 3: Progressive Inclusion

Perhaps Ferri (2004) said it best:

If we take up (the) assertion that there are no types of students, but rather, all students are different in different ways, and that these differences are not static but fluid, then we open up tremendous possibilities for democratizing our practice. We would not have to wait for a child to be demoralized by failure to intervene or
advocate on his or her behalf. If we see ourselves as contributing to the wider goal of making education accessible to and engaging for all learners, then we must seek to collaborate with general education in order to serve all students better all of the time. After all, students who struggle in traditional education contexts deserve to have the whole of their education transformed, not simply the hour or so a day that they are provided with “specialized” instruction (p. 512).

Ferri refers to the ideologies of disability studies in education and the contributions that DSE ideals can make to inclusive education theories and practices. Disability studies in education’s democratic stance fits in with the pedagogy of progressive inclusion, which does not segregate individual students based on their abilities, but designs the pedagogy to meet the needs of “all” students. This in and of itself is a progressive way of thinking and doing education.

Educational theorists commonly think of Dewey’s contributions to the progressive educational movement, not specifically though with individuals with disabilities. Danforth (in press) contributes to the inclusive literature by identifying a link between Dewey and the possibilities of the inclusive classroom. I argue that this connection can be made in support of an inclusive progressive educational system within the DSE framework. This link may directly answer the question the “practical concerns of teachers” (Danforth & Gabel, 2006) who strive for a socially just way of teaching from the DS perspective.
Semel and Sadovnik (2006) examined many of the early progressive idealologies against the principles steering the Network of the Progressive Educators drafted on November 10, 1990, which are:

1. Education is best accomplished where relationships are personal and teachers design programs that honor the linguistic and cultural diversity of the local community.

2. Teachers, as respected professionals, are crucial sources of knowledge about teaching and learning.

3. Curriculum balance is maintained by commitment to children’s individual interests and developmental needs, as well as a commitment to community within and beyond the school walls.

4. Schools embrace the home cultures of children and their families. Classroom practices reflect these values and bring multiple cultural perspectives to bear.

5. Students are active constructors of knowledge and learn through direct experience and primary sources.

6. All disciplines - the arts, sciences, humanities and physical development - are equally valued in an interdisciplinary curriculum.

7. Decision making within schools is inclusive of children, parents, and staff.

8. The school is a model of democracy and humane relationships, confronting issues of racism, classism, and sexism.

9. Schools actively support critical inquiry into the complexities of global issues. Children can thus assume the powerful responsibilities of world citizenship (pp. 18-19).

In response to the nine progressive principles, and to further develop my pedagogy for inclusion, it is important to begin to merge these nine principles with basic components of progressive education listed in part 1 of this paper, adding in the three concepts of DSE discussed in part 2 of this paper. I am drawn to specific aspects of
this framework as it applies to the theory for a new pedagogy for inclusion.

I do this in an effort to include the community in decision making, to create a democratic classroom and a learning community that everyone is valued, and has equal rights and finally to value each individuals abilities and cultures to create not just a better school community but a stronger world community. The connections made in this paper also directly answer Kliewer's (2006) call for scholarship and enacting paradigmatic challenges for inclusion that focus on both action and democracy (p. 101).

To begin with, the progressive principles drafted by the Network of Progressive Educators of November 10, 1990 (see Semel & Sadovnik, 2006, p. 18) state, “students are active constructors of knowledge and that education is best accomplished where relationships are personal and teachers design programs which honor the community” (p. 18). Although “linguistic and cultural diversity” are specifically mentioned, ability level also fits here as a component not mentioned. It should be the goal of education to include all kinds of human differences – those we capture under disability categories and those we do not. Teachers who give up the authoritative idea and begin to trust and learn with their students, inviting all of their ideas as a contribution to the learning community, are supporting the emergent process represented in the progressive pedagogy, and building a
community of learners building and supporting relationships represented in both the DSE framework and the principles of progressive pedagogy.

The very process of supporting and encouraging these relationships supports the principle of modeling democracy and humane relationships, confronting issues of racism, classism, and sexism. I argue that this process also prevents segregation of those with disabilities discussed by DSE scholars. This process of learning and working together provides access to all children to participate equally focusing on both individual and group needs while still focusing on the curriculum.

Principle #3, calling for curriculum balance is also addressed through project work and emergent interests in that a continued commitment can be maintained to children’s individual interests and developmental needs as they grow and learn together. Project work does not require each individual to participate in the same way at the same time. It does, however, require each individual to work on a group or an individual project in order to reach the next level of his or her personal growth and development. This process is carefully monitored, guided and supported by the educators, the individual student and the group as a whole.

The DSE concept of professional development and cooperation is clearly addressed in the principles of progressive education in that all disciplines are integrated. This requires professionals to collaborate, to learn from each other, and to work together as all...
subjects are equally valued in the curriculum. No one teacher or subject is more important than the next as each requires total integration and professional cooperation to complete the investigation of a topic. They are all integrated, requiring the educators to routinely share knowledge not only with each other, but also with the children. It requires a group effort to learn. “Curriculum integration is a curriculum design that is concerned with enhancing the possibilities for personal and social integration” (Beane, 1997, p. X), which invites all members of the group to interact with each other to become a community of learners.

To better reach the goal of principle #9 which suggests that schools actively support critical inquiry into the complexities of global issues, requires the commitment of each citizen of the class, their families and the community as all participants are equally valued. The wider community becomes one with the classroom to build a democratic group of learners while respecting individual cultures in the process. Each member of this community contributes to the powerful process of becoming a powerful world citizen inviting the decision making to come from all involved.

Progressive education offers children opportunities to practice their skills authentically and continuously, without reverting to a rote process. The students are actively involved in hands-on projects that support the construction of knowledge allowing them to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through alternative methods. They work
together to support each other’s growth, always with the educator guiding and designing both the environment and providing the opportunities. This process can be a response to DSE’s call for equal education without segregation for all children with diverse abilities. The process of learning then counteracts the constant assessment of skills as seen in the deficit theory (McDermott, 1993, p. 285) and does not continuously compare one student with the next, which can continue to divide students with identified learning disabilities from those who do not.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological framework that has guided this study’s data collection and analysis. The process of gaining entry, choosing a classroom, describing the participants, gathering data and finally, analyzing the data is discussed. Since the data gathering, and the analysis was a recursive and reflective process in order to guarantee the trustworthiness of the project, this is discussed as well.

Methodological Framework

Social science research includes both positivistic and naturalistic ontology and can be both qualitative and quantitative in design. The theoretical framework and the questions asked, often guide the method. This study incorporates the use of qualitative methods, which have become increasingly useful in regular and special educational research as they permit researchers to access traditionally unavailable data which often yield unanticipated findings (Crowley, 1995). The theoretical framework used in this study, fall within the social constructivist/interpretive framework exploring the “constructed reality” (Gergen, 1997, p. 3) of a particular classroom. As Gergen (1997) explains, interpretivism allows the researcher, through communicative relations, to “generate new orders of meaning from which
new actions can emerge” (p. 4). The interpretive paradigm seeks to uncover meaning and to understand the deeper implications revealed in data about contexts. New understandings may then provide implications for early childhood educators with which to add to, change, or contribute to their practice.

Interpretivism refers to a “family” of research and includes the methods used in this inquiry: an ethnographic case study. Methods are the whole system of principles, theories, and values that guide a particular approach to research. Interpretivists envision multiple realities that are both locally, and specifically constructed. These realities, are co-constructed through human interactions in specific contexts. There is a reciprocal relationship between the researcher, the context, and the individuals being researched, which support the dynamic of genuine participation toward the continuous understanding of deeper meanings (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). All involved, participate in structuring the inquiry through collaborative experiences, such as conversations and observations.

Another valuable aspect of interpretive research used here, is the process of telling the story. An important distinction must be made though. The story is very valuable; however, just as important is “the telling of the story”, in that both the speaker and the audience are implicitly included. This is where the interpretation comes in” (Ferguson, Ferguson, & Taylor, 1992, p. 2). As discussed in Ferguson, Ferguson, and Taylor (1992), it is the process of telling the story,
sharing our interpretation, and inviting the reader to interpret both the story and our analyses for themselves, that allows each of us to make sense of the world.

Interpretive research can be both qualitative and quantitative, but like Erickson (1986), I use the term interpretive here instead of qualitative, as the field of interpretive research investigates human action, and seeks to understand the social patterns within these actions. The paradigm’s key feature is its interest in exploring the human meaning in the social world (Erickson, 1986). The social world, that is the focus here, is that of the context of the classroom, and all of the aspects of the daily life with the participants.

It is the study of children, teachers, and their interactions in their unique context. Graue and Walsh (1998) define the context as, “a culturally and historically situated place and time, a specific here and now” (p. 9). It is within this context that “the stories” for interpretation occur. The children, the teacher, and the researcher are all equally able to inquire, and are equal producers of knowledge. Erickson (1986) suggests that interpretive research can assist us in making sense of our actions; construct action around our ideas as they emerge; share meanings through face to face interactions; and create meaning about the actions under reflection as all participants grow, change, and continue to learn about each other during time spent together. Erickson (1986) suggests that interpretations may be “restructured in response to changes in the researchers’ perceptions,
understandings of events, and their organization during the time spent” (p. 121) in the classroom learning community.

Ethnographic Case Study

Ethnography means “writing about people” (Goldbart & Hustler, 2005, p. 16) and its roots historically, are derived from the fields of anthropology and sociology. Ethnography is a tool for the study of relations between people, typically used by anthropologists, to describe and record the cultures of different people around the world (McDermott, 1977). “The distinctive features revolve around the notions of people as meaning-makers, around an emphasis on understanding how people interpret their worlds, and the need to understand the particular cultural worlds in which people live and which they both construct and utilize” (Goldbart & Hustler, 1995, p. 16). The focus of ethnography as demonstrated here, is an approach is to “study the everyday lives of people with particular attention to culture” (Anderson-Levitt, 2006, p. 279). As with anthropological traditions, ethnographers join in and gather data on a specific social setting in order to attempt to make meaning from their observations, and the participant’s experiences within that specific setting. The framing question in ethnographic work is always cultural, “concerned with developing theoretical ideas rather than testing out existing hypotheses” (Goldbart & Hustler, 1995, p. 18). Interpretivism, which can include methodologies such as case studies, ethnography and narrative inquiry— may include a focus on a wide variety of research
goals. Ethnography however, always has a cultural framework, that is, the research pays close attention to culture and the implications of culture as meaning is made from the everyday lives of the individuals being observed and lived with.

The ethnographer is typically an outsider to the group and attempts to gain an emic perspective by participating in the lives of the individuals within the group (case) in order to describe and interpret their findings. “Ethnographic methods are crucial tools for understanding real human behavior in all its complexity and, therefore, for seeking real and lasting solutions to human problems” (Anderson-Levitt, 2006, p. 279). An ethnographic study, such as this one, attempts to understand a particular group of individuals such as a small or a large community, a peer group, a school or a classroom.

When the focus is a classroom, the context of any particular ethnographic study extends beyond the classroom itself. The children, their families, the teachers, and the community all play a significant role in the classroom, and the interactions that take place within the classroom. The perspectives of all involved affect the actions and interactions of those in the learning community. The community can support even the pedagogies of the early childhood educators. Participant observation, ethnography, and case studies all can fall into the constructivist/interpretive ontology, according to Erickson (1986), and this is the basis for this conversation.
The process of ethnographic research places the ethnographer into a complex interaction of multiple relationships. It can describe the changes that may occur in a culture, a cultural tool, and an individual. It can describe the beliefs of the individuals within a community and the historical perspective behind the belief system of a classroom or a community. This project not only uses the daily observations for analysis, but also seeks to employ the site’s history and philosophical ideals as part of the analysis as these factors play a huge role in the participant’s actions and identity.

Used this way, it became a theoretically driven approach to studying the culture and the cultural practices of this particular group. Ethnography is a process that allows one to attempt to identify and understand an event or, for example, what counts in the teaching and learning process of a classroom community. Ethnographers seek to understand the patterns, actions, and beliefs of a social group. Moreover, it is through the observations of and participation in these experiences of the group, with which members of the group can interpret and seek to understand their meanings.

Erickson (1986) refers to the primary significance of interpretive approaches as leading the researcher to search for the methods that will be appropriate for the content under study. This statement supports my interest in employing multiple layers of interpretive data, as I explore an inclusive early childhood classroom using the progressive pedagogy.
Within Vygotsky’s sociocultural perspective, and by using the ethnographic process of interpretive analysis, I examine the cultural issues of relationships and social relations (Corsaro, 1985; Kantor, Eglas, & Fernie, 1993), which I felt provided this work with details far beyond what other methods could have.

A sociocultural perspective allows me to explore this classroom context as its own culture. Within this perspective, “meanings” are constructed through interaction (Green, 1983; Chandler, 1992). Classroom behavior, such as interaction with peers and participating in learning experiences, is socially constructed and shaped by these cultural “meanings” of a particular group. “Relationships are built in the context of the classroom” (Chandler, 1992, p. 39). These relationships often shape the interactions between group members and influence both individual and group, social and learning participation behavior.

When viewing the classroom as a cultural space, it is important to note that multiple layers of often complex histories and abilities, make up each group of individuals. Within each classroom culture, children “learn how to be students” (Fernie, Kantor & Klein, 1990) how to participate in this peer culture of the classroom (Corsaro, 1985, 2005). All participants, including the adults, become part of establishing and participating in the social and cultural practices of the group—interacting, interpreting and evaluating these patterns of learning together (Goodenough, 1981; Collins & Green, 1992).
Based on the idea that the classroom becomes its own culture, engagement in social and academic "knowledge-work" (Weade, 1992) is equal by all in the social-constructivist perspective. Within this perspective learning is "embedded within complex and dynamically evolving social context that is co-constructed by students and teachers, as they affiliate over time in pursuit of instructional and curricular goals" (Weade, 1992, p. 95). When teachers join in the learning with the students, they begin the process of co-constructing their own classroom culture and learning practices. Weade (1992) articulates that within the social constructivist ideals, "teachers join together with their students...side by side they pursue a joint, collaborative search for ways of proceeding and ways of responding to, and making sense of the material and conceptual artifacts of their interactions" (p. 93). The process is not a linear one, but a truly collaborative one, that changes as each group that make up a classroom becomes its own cultural community with peer relationships and learning practices.

Components of this ethnography, evident in all ethnographic work, include participant observation, narrative inquiry, interviews, conversations, collection of artifacts of the classroom culture (such as pictures of children’s work), and a record of the ongoing dialogue, which provided opportunities for more grounded conversations to emerge. Detailed observations provided a rich data source and when recorded they became thick descriptions, as defined by Geertz (1986). The human
aspect of the methods used in this educational research project, are
where the story is (Ferguson et al., 1992). Interacting with the
context, and with the data, assisted in generating rich and meaningful
interpretations. In the sense that specific details of observations
were recorded, specific questions were asked, choosing which stories to
tell, and specific cultural artifacts explored, ethnographic work is
subjective.

Framed by theory, yes, but still subjective in that emotions and
feelings of the participants are valuable, and are naturally part of
learning about the cultural meanings.

Included are the naturally subjective (emotions, knowledge,
experience, and values) perceptions of the participants through the
interpretation of their artifacts and experiences. Their stories of the
process are included, and contributed to the final analysis. The
individual, the individual in context, and the entire group is central
to this project, each individual, and the group in its entirety cannot
be separated from the context of the study.

Making the “familiar strange”, as Erickson (1986) suggests, would
require an event to be looked at from a different perspective, or with
a deeper understanding of the context. The mediation of the analysis
over the course of the study can be an incredibly interesting task,
allowing the researcher to flow with the data, to conceptualize the
themes, and allowing the data to lead the researcher in unplanned
directions. The framing question and supporting theory is only the
beginning. The study is emergent and grows as the context is explored. Within a particular context, “ethnography provides the opportunity to explore actions in their wider context and thus to describe the real-world complexity of human behavior” (Anderson-Levitt, 2006, p. 282) the participants as well the researcher collaboratively shape the ethnography. The tools of this process included an inductive analysis and approach, a generation of themes through the data, and constant comparison, describing and analyzing as the interpretation moves through the study. This Study seeks to explore and understand the culture of an inclusive classroom when the pedagogy is progressive.

The Research Site and Participants

Due to the uniqueness of this particular field site, research of the history and the philosophy of the school, has been compiled in part, to justify the choice of the research site for this project as suggested by Spradley (1980) in an attempt to provide grand and mini tours of this particular culture. The site had to subscribe to the ideals of the progressive pedagogy, as described in chapter 2, in addition to claiming to practice inclusion (also described in chapter 2).

Initial conversations with faculty and community members, informal observations in this school, and a rich history available through public archives, supported this school as a site for which to conduct this study.
Once entry to the site was granted, the process began in making the decision of which classroom to situate the study. The classroom had to be an early childhood classroom. This school offers K-5, so the choice was narrowed to a K-3 classroom. The principal left the decision of the classroom and the teachers, up to the faculty. My request was that the teacher had several years teaching informally, and the classroom had to be inclusive of children with diverse abilities. Several teachers volunteered initially. I provided each teacher with a copy of my IRB exception application to describe the study. Three teachers met and discussed the parent’s of the children in their class, wagering which classroom may receive the highest parent support and approval for research. It was decided by the faculty and approved by the principal that Mrs. Cooke’s classroom would be the best site for my proposed research project. I agreed as my initial impressions, and the reaction of her peers, identified her as an exemplary progressive educator.

It is important however to discuss what qualifies her as an exemplary early childhood progressive educator here. Mrs. Cooke (pseudonym) is a first and second grade mixed aged group general educator with over 20 years of teaching experience, 13 of them at Wickliffe. She has earned a master’s degree and has five years of doctoral work, however decided not to complete her degree. She was highly recommended by the principal, her fellow faculty, and parents, as an exceptional progressive educator with an inclusive classroom.
Mrs. Cooke’s classroom was inclusive and she worked with Mrs. Hyatt, one of the school’s intervention specialist. Intervention specialist is an Ohio term used for the more globally known name for a special education teacher.

Mrs. Hyatt (pseudonym) is an intervention specialist with a dual licensure: mild-moderate and moderate-severe, both K-12. She has 6 years teaching experience, all in Upper Arlington. As an undergrad, she worked as an ABA (applied behavior analysis) therapist. She has served as a reading/writing interventionist, and a cross-categorical (see chapter 4) teacher working with children with emotional/behavioral needs. She has spent the last 4 years, in her current position, in a cross-categorical classroom focusing on social and communication disorders. She too came highly recommended by both parents and peers, as she is an intervention specialist who has embraced the progressive teaching pedagogy. Rosalynn is a composite of the paraprofessionals in the room who aid children from Mrs. Hyatt’s room as written on their I.E.P.’s.

These educators agreed and welcomed the investigator into their classrooms in early November, 2008.

Data Collection Process

The classroom observation typically occurred twice weekly and lasted from November 2008, through early February 2009. I began my first day by introducing myself to the group (Appendix C). The parents had already given permission and were sent a permission slip with an
introductory letter attached (Appendix D). It is important to note that some of the children, and their parents, were already familiar with me, as my own children also attend this school.

Initially, running records were taken of the classroom events along with a thick description (Geertz, 1986) of the environment, as I became familiar with the classroom and the participants. Observations were written daily into field notebooks/logs.

Both Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt reflected weekly or bi-weekly with the investigator, through discussions and in reflective writing in the field notebooks. This process was unique because both teachers read the investigators field notes and daily reflections. There was a reciprocal response system between the investigator and the two teachers. The teachers responded to the investigator’s field notes and reflections, as well as to each other, in the research logs. Additionally, they would each answer the investigators written questions in the research logs, offering comments to each other, and to the investigator. The investigator met with the teachers informally to reflect together throughout the data collection, and the analysis. This recursive practice served as the triangulation of both the data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000b) and a form of member checking (Hatch, 2002). Triangulation of data sources is used when it is important to understand the perspectives of the participants’ and their practice being observed, in order to gain multiple representations, as “an alternative to validation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000b, p.5). Member
checking (Hatch, 2002) measures were additionally used to gain the teacher’s own perspectives on the data and as part of the analysis. These findings represent a collaborative effort to understand the pedagogy of progressive inclusion.

**Tools Used in This Project**

**Participant Observation**

Observation is one of the most commonly used data collection tools and is required for all empirical research. Within interpretive work – or more specifically, ethnographic work – a specific kind of observation is used. Participant observation (Spradley, 1980) is way to observe the culture and become part of it. Spradley (1980) describes the two primary purposes of participant observation, including (1) to engage in activities appropriate to the situation, and (2) to observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of the situation (p. 54). In an attempt to gain an emic (insider) view, it is often best to inductively research the context as a participant observer. Over time and using an inductive approach, I obtained valuable insight, allowing the field notes to both describe and to analyze, as the project proceeded (Lutz, 1998). As Erickson (1986) points out, the purpose of this interpretive research was to learn the nature of the classroom as social and cultural environments for learning. Therefore I chose the tools that best allowed me to explore this particular context of interest. This process required me to participate in all aspects of the day in order to gain a clear picture of who is involved, how they are
involved, and what they say and seem to feel about their involvement during the experience in the culture. This process was used to participate vicariously in the setting that is described (Erickson, 1986), as well as to interpret and analyze the data in order to begin to make my assertions.

Since this ethnography was a case study “to examine, in-depth, a ‘case’ within its ‘real-life’ context” (Yin, 2006, p. 111), I used methods often used in a case study through an interpretive lens. The case study approach is most often used when “how” and “why” questions are being explored in a particular setting. Examples include a description such as “what happened” or a question such as “how does something work” (Yin, 2006, p. 112) which all apply to this study. The focus is on “the social construction of the case, the site of the social/educational encounter and the nature of the case as realized in social action” (Stark & Torrence, 2005, p. 33). Teaching and learning were explored in this project, in order to identify the social reality of this classroom and the practices used, not only from my perspective, but also from the teacher’s or student’s perspective (Stark & Torrance, 2006).

A case study such as this one, seeks to illuminate (Yin, 2006) a particular setting or situation and “assumes that social reality is created through social interaction in particular contexts” (Stark & Torrence, 2005, p. 33). From this perspective, this case study employed an interpretive approach, which can be aligned with ethnography and is
“very much within the social constructivist perspective of social science” (Stark & Torrence, 2005, p. 33). Cultural constructionist (Gergen, 1997) and sociocultural (Kantor & Fernie, 2003) researchers demonstrate just how to understand the meanings of different types of contexts, and the possibilities of learning from the shared knowledge from learning communities. Communities in this project, refer to classroom communities, classroom cultures, and the shared social knowledge that emerges from the classroom participants and their co-constructed learning experiences. It is my assumption that building knowledge is an active social process and not a passive one. This social activity describes the constructivist theory of knowledge.

Using an ethnographic case study approach with participant observation as the most valuable tool, this study seeks to “tell it like it is” (Stark & Torrence, 2006, p. 33) with rich description (Gertz, 1972) from the participants’ and the observer’s point of view. The interpretation of these detailed stories were analyzed from both the researcher, and the participants, to ensure the detail is represented as true as possible.

Design and Methods

Through an interpretive lens, employing an ethnographic case study approach, this project looks at how one inclusive learning community uses progressive pedagogy to teach all children. I acted as a participant observer in an attempt to gain an emic understanding of one
classroom’s process of becoming an inclusive progressive learning community.

I concentrated on the social and cultural aspect of the learning community. Eventually, I earned a spot in their classroom culture, and became equally involved with the children, teachers and the support staff. Through collaboration with the children and the teachers, together we explored their interactions, conversations, and group project samples (artifacts), as they each contributed to the process of creating knowledge collaboratively and becoming their own inclusive community.

As my goal was to learn just what inclusion might look like when the pedagogy is progressive, I observed in one particular classroom that was both progressive and inclusive. My methods were systematic and emergent, as the process developed, the data emerged and the analysis began.

The narrative aspect of this process required me to be “self-consciously aware of everything that happens in [a] space” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). Therefore, I acted as a participant observer within the classroom community once I was invited to do so, which began in late December and early January.

As the data collection grew, I continued to follow up on any emerging information and allow the information, stories, and conversations to guide me in my search to understand the social and cultural context.
Within this framework, this study attempts to “describe, interpret, and understand a deeper, fuller sense of understanding” (Ferguson et al., 1992, p. 6) the aspects of not only a progressive classroom, but an inclusive and a progressive classroom. “The power of the interpretivist paradigm to reveal the experience and meaning of disability in our culture in richer terms than normally achieved” (Ferguson et al. 1992, p. 7) will be a goal, as will the entire social, academic and cultural experience during specific aspects of this classroom.

Setting

This class has 21 children and is a mixed age-grouping of first and second graders, ranging in age from 6-8 years. The practice of looping, is observed at this elementary school. Looping, is when the teacher stays with the same group of children for two years. If a child is placed in a classroom during their first grade year, they will remain in this classroom during their second grade year.

There are 10 boys and 9 girls. There are 8 first graders and 11 second graders. Three children have an I.E.P (individualized Education Plan and 1 child has an IAT (Intervention Assistance Team plan) and receives intervention services based on specific learning needs. Of the 21 children in the classroom, the investigator received 19 parent approvals to include their child in this case study and two refusals. Two sets of parents did not approve of their child participating. The general education teacher, Mrs. Cooke, the cross-categorical teacher,
Mrs. Hyatt, and the two paraprofessionals all agreed to participate. There are two paraprofessionals in the room, however one comes in the morning and the other in the afternoon when the two boys from the cross-categorical room are in this general classroom. The data from the two paraprofessionals were collectively analyzed, and the pseudonym, Rosalynn was assigned.

The Process

I initially visited the classroom on Tuesdays and Thursdays, varying the visit between morning and afternoon observations, and spending time in each classroom, to obtain a sampling of different times and contexts (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Initially I began to place observations and classroom events into categories, which followed the school’s foundational principles (see chapter 4) through a reflective process with the teachers. This initial process allowed me to begin to understand why the teachers did what they did in their practice. As this process continued, it became apparent that there were specific children that I wanted to learn from. I wanted to understand their experiences in order to understand this classroom culture more fully. Having collected significant data on the entire class, I turned my focus to 4 children, representing those with diverse abilities, although I remained focused on the teaching practices. It became important to follow these four children, in order to understand their individual experiences in relation to the teaching practice, and the layers of context within this classroom culture. I began to follow
these four children through a large project on the rainforest, asking them questions in order to understand their perceptions of the process, and their interpretations of their role in the classroom. Their answers generally guided more in-depth observations and initiated additional questions and conversations.

At the same time, and based on some initial analysis, I became interested in the parent’s perspectives and understandings of the teaching practice used here. I sent out a three question parent survey to every parent in the classroom just before the winter break. Only one came back before break, so I sent them out again in January.

The questions were:

1. Why Wickliffe? What contributed to you choosing progressive education over traditional (contemporary) for your child’s education?

2. What thoughts do you have about the teaching practice of progressive education? (Celebrations, concerns, questions, comments, etc...)

3. If your child has any specific learning needs (gifted, learning disabilities...), how does progressive education support them (or not support them)?

Following suggestions from Erickson (1986), I shared my interpretations and initial thoughts with the both teachers, and gained theirs, through informal conversations and field journals responses. This was critical, as it was through a collaborative process that the analysis began to take shape. Initially, the data was explored over and over, in an attempt to organize the events. The first cycle involved placing the data into 10 categories which followed the school’s 10
foundational principles (see chapter 4). This process included the use of 10 colors of highlighters, which were each assigned to one of the 10 foundational principles. The data was read and re-read by all, until each piece of the field observations were organized, assigned, and agreed upon.

Having organized and categorized the data initially with the participating educators, into their school’s foundational principles, the analysis took a different direction. Data analysis is “not linear but rather cyclical and recursive, with findings from one analysis often leading to new questions and additional analysis” (Kantor, Miller & Fernie, 1992, p. 188). Although the questions did not change, the analysis began to take shape. Through a look at the initial categories, a larger picture emerged.

Patterns in the Data

“Analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among parts, and their relationship to the whole. Analysis is a search for patterns” (Spradley, 1980, p. 85).

The coding had been ongoing throughout the data collection. Upon completion of field site observations, another look was given to the data, and to the initial and beginning analysis.

It is safe to say that both systematic and deductive analysis were used in analyzing the data. Inductive analysis identifies emerging patterns found in the data, and deductive analysis applies those
emerging patterns to theorize possible explanations (Graue & Walsh, 1998) and one’s assertions (Erickson, 1986).

My Role as a Researcher

I was initially asked to only observe and was granted permission to help a child if needed. Due to the fact that there are always two adults in this room, and often more when parents join the class, the educators were fearful that this may be too confusing and distracting to the children. I only observed for the first several weeks. Over time and as we got to know each other better, I became more active in the daily events. By the end of the field observations, I was a full participant in the classroom and became very involved in the project work.

As with anything new and perhaps unfamiliar, a sense of trust has to be built by all involved. The teachers had to get a sense of what my role was, and become comfortable asking me for assistance. Each time I shared my field notes with the educators, and asked for their personal reflections to the data, they became more trusting of the experience. As the practice of inclusion became more evident in the analysis, any fears they may have had about the research process, seemed to subside.

Please note that throughout this project, I was in the building as both a researcher and a mom. I also often acted a parent volunteer in my own children’s classroom, in addition to acting in the role as a researcher. This was helpful in establishing myself as more than a
researcher, but as part of this school community. As the children in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom became familiar with me, they made the connections of who my children were in the building. Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hyatt and Rosalynn began interacting with me as both a researcher, and a mother. I am also a teacher in the local community, which became known to the teachers in this study. Having had real life experience as an educator, that they could identify with, contributed to building our relationships.

Limitations

I acknowledge that not every teacher in this building may embrace the progressive pedagogy nor are there common opinions on inclusion and professional collaboration between general and special educators. This warrants further research about how the pedagogy of this school impacts the overall special education continuum of services.

The weakness of any case study is its generalizibility from one context to another. Each context, its events, and its participants are unique, which serve as a valuable insight into the group, yet are impossible to duplicate. Information derived from this study could, however, be used as an informative model for which to guide or inform the practice of others, or to aid in the development of theory.

The opportunities for exploration in this field site were too numerous to allow one to follow every lead during the data collection. The focus was on the progressive pedagogy and how it was used in one inclusive classroom. This example contributes to the current knowledge
about just how inclusion could work using this particular pedagogy. It would be beneficial to gain an even greater perspective by looking at more classroom examples in the building, as each educator implements their unique teaching styles within the framework of the progressive ideals. Also, each intervention specialist in the building may not share the views of the general education staff and their progressive teaching practice.

Case studies are typically one snapshot into one situation. In this case, a snapshot into one inclusive classroom and how it works when the pedagogy is progressive.
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate inclusion within a progressive elementary classroom. The central question that guided this study was: What is the nature of inclusion when the pedagogy is progressive? Sub questions included:

1. What is the nature of progressive practice?
2. What is the nature of teaching and learning for all children, with diverse abilities, within this progressive classroom?

This study took place over an eight month period, three months of which involved gaining a deep understanding of the school, its history, its place in the community, and the community as a whole. During this initial period, I also began collecting field notes in the classroom. I spent 4 months in the classroom in total, visiting on average two days each week. Additional time was spent meeting with the teachers, reviewing field-notes, and discussing my unfolding understandings with them. Documentations were general at first, using thick descriptions (Geertz, 1986) of events in my field notes. Initially I was an observer. However, during the third, fourth and fifth month of data collection, now solely in the classrooms, my focus shifted from Spradley’s descriptive stage to what he describes as a more focused stage of data collection. At this point, I became more of a participant.
observer. During the last three months of data collection, once again
in and out of the classroom, and following the initial analysis of
data, my research became more selective in that my questions were
refined based on the early analysis. This period was spent
interviewing key individuals in the classroom, and both the school and
district, collecting key information from the students, parents,
administration and teachers.

My presence, although initially noticeable, blended in over time.
My goal was to be as unobtrusive as possible. Since I am a teacher and
subbed in the building the year prior to beginning my research, my
mannerisms tended to resemble that of the teaching staff. I am also a
parent of children in the building, so I was often in the halls, the
playground and the classrooms as a parent. The staff and students
often did not always know which role I was in: researcher, teacher or
parent. This allowed me to interact with individuals more freely in
the building. Throughout the data collection, the field notes were
shared with the two main teachers on a bi-weekly basis. Mrs. Cooke and
Mrs. Hyatt read the notes, responded to questions in the notes,
commented on my reflections, responded to each other and clarified some
observations if necessary. This process served as one model of
triangulation through member checks.

Repeated and systematic readings of my notes, using the
ethnographic analytic tools of Spradley helped me to see patterns or
themes in the data. A group’s culture can be described by many
patterns in social situations; patterns of behaviors, artifacts and knowledge (Spradley, 1980). Based on early ethnographic analysis, which is a search for parts of the culture among the parts and their relationship to the whole, I began to see categories of meaning that I wanted to explore further. Drawing upon other studies of progressive classrooms which have yielded information on peer culture (Eirich, 2006), building community (Wightman, 2003) and literacy teaching and learning (Dantas, 1999), I made the decision to additionally focus on another important piece of this pedagogy—projects. My interest was to explore projects as a pedagogical practice, in an effort to look more deeply at children’s social and academic engagement in an inclusive classroom. Projects in this classroom, included children at all levels of ability spanning over two grades (first and second) and three ages which included 6, 7, and 8 year old children. Since the classroom included children with diverse abilities, it became apparent early on in addition to exploring the children’s project work, I wanted to understand the support services that some children received from special educators (intervention specialists).

I conducted a domain analysis following Spradley to uncover the categories of meaning within the classroom, and the building as they are situated within the larger community. In the first section, I provide a “grand tour” (Spradley, 1980; Kantor and Fernie, 2003) of the community and the school. The school’s genealogy (history) are key aspects to understanding the classroom culture under study, therefore
an analytic domain analysis was conducted. Additionally, I conducted a “taxonomic analysis” to investigate the parent’s reasons and feelings about their school of choice in addition to ways that this classroom builds community.

In order to understand the experience of individuals within the group and because of my interest in the inclusiveness of this classroom, tracer children, that is specific children to trace through the life of this classroom (Kantor, 4/28/2009; Dantas, 1999) were identified and followed throughout the remainder of the data collection. The goal was to capture these four children’s experiences in this classroom. The second section is dedicated to describing these four children, their relationships with each other and to the classroom community. In each section, I present the findings of “mini tours” (Spradley, 1980) of specific cultural domains analyzed and interpreted to gain a deeper understanding of those domains.

In Section three I describe in detail the semantic relationships discovered through the domain analysis of the teaching, the learning and the tracer children’s experiences during project work. In section three, I also begin to discuss what I interpreted as an invisible layer of support that children with special needs receive when participating in project work, and then, in section four, I further explore this and other support systems set in place for children who are at risk or with identified disabilities. Across several domain and taxonomic analyses, which culminate in a final componential analysis, I share and discuss
my findings. The data in all of these sections include field observations, grounded interviews, informal conversations and open-ended written surveys from all participants.

The above figure illustrates the relationship of the social situation and the key cultural components under investigation. The grand tour (section 1) explores the place in significant detail. In Section 2 on the tracer children, I discuss the actors and in sections three and four discuss the activities of this classroom. The final componental analysis, in chapter five, presents my understanding of the social situation. The actors each are given pseudonyms to protect their privacy. In chapter five, I revisit the findings in relation to
the extant literature in the field and raised implications from my study.

Grand Tour

In order to understand the classroom in which this study took place, I first explore the larger community, its history and the school system’s organization and thoughts on pedagogy. The ethnographic perspective situates a social scene in its larger contextual layers. This classroom is not just anywhere; it is in a particular community with a particular orientation within the district.

Upper Arlington (UA) is a middle-upper class, predominantly white suburb of Columbus, Ohio situated near the Ohio State University (OSU). “Upper Arlington is a community with a long history, strong traditions and parents who have been and remain very involved with the school system,” Wickliffe parent, 2008.

The community initially became recognized as a school district in 1918. Much of the development of the community is contributed to the vision and monetary contributions of Ben and King Thompson, who are most well known in central Ohio for their real estate ventures and company.

Currently the community has five public elementary schools (K-5), 2 public middle schools (6-8), and one public high school (9-12). These buildings were built between 1924 and 1961. Upper Arlington also has two parochial schools (K-8) and one private school (K-12). Additionally the district runs an early childhood center for preschoolers with
special needs and their paying peers. A kindergarten enrichment program, also offered in this building, as the district’s current kindergarten program offers half day programming. The lowest scoring 20% of the district’s kindergartners, when assessed on the kindergarten screening the spring prior to entering kindergarten, are encouraged to attend the kindergarten enrichment program. Several churches in the area also offer preschool opportunities. The district runs a before and after-school program (SACC).

The district feels pride in their schools as evidenced on their website.

“The Upper Arlington City School District... serves nearly 5,700 students. Each of our schools has been cited for excellence by the U.S. Department of Education on the annual report card... Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT) scores are in the top 2 percent of the nation, and approximately 95 percent of Upper Arlington high school graduates go on to attend colleges and universities... More than 70 percent of our teachers have earned a master’s degree or higher” (http://www.uaschools.org/).

Data taken from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau of the Census (http://www.census.gov/) showed that in 2000, the total population of UA was 33,686. In 2005, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning commission estimated the total population as 33,816 (http://www.ua-ohio.net/) which has actually decreased since the 1970 city count of 38,630. Based on the 2008 City of Upper Arlington Resident Guide, there are 13,985 households with a median family income of $90,208 and an average home value of $324,200.
The racial community makeup according to the 2000 census statistics is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>31,906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 2000 UA Racial Make-Up

I want to return the focus to the schools, specifically the public elementary schools. Out of the five district elementary schools, there are two types of educational practice currently used. These include contemporary (traditional) and informal (progressive). When asked to describe the differences, one teacher replied,

“Contemporary is the typical educational practice seen in most of the United States, and most generally known, understood and accepted. It is the current style in which most teachers are trained. Contemporary education often heavily relies on traditional paper tests, text books and prescriptive teaching programs to direct their teaching, although this description does
not represent all contemporary educators. In contemporary education, the disciplines are taught separately rather than integrated into the curriculum. Progressive education is the practice that revolves around the philosophical ideals of John Dewey, putting the child at the center of the education, focusing on the individual’s strengths and weaknesses, and the social emotional development, while growing and learning together. We often use a wide variety of alternative assessments to guide teaching. There is a major focus in our building on citizenship and democracy. Most student’s learning styles generally match one or the other teaching practice. The choice, in our district, is up to the parent’s perception of how their child learns, and often boils down to what the parent is most comfortable or familiar with.” (teacher interview, October, 2008).

Three of the elementary schools offer only contemporary, one offers both, and one only offers progressive which is Wickliffe Progressive Community School (Wickliffe). This aspect makes this particular school fairly unique as the only public school within the district that uses only the progressive pedagogy. Actually, it is one of the very few public school within the United States that offers only a progressive curriculum. It is in this school that this research project is situated.

As of 2008, the three elementary schools whom only offer contemporary (traditional) education house 403, 517 and 447 students from K-5th grade. The largest and oldest elementary, Barrington, offers both types of educational practice, houses 731 students from K-5th. The fifth elementary which houses 448 students K-5 and only offers informal (progressive) educational practice is the Wickliffe Progressive Community School.
The Upper Arlington Informal Alternative Program, established in 1972, is one of the few progressive programs that are a public education option, and is available only to those who live in the district. Although the terminology for alternative practices has been used interchangeably, the label “informal education” was more common in the British school setting than it was in American classrooms. Informal education grew out of a set of educational practices in the 1960’s and early 1970’s known in different settings as open education, integrated day, the informal classroom, and the British infant school model and was literally a classroom without walls. In the United States, a drastic move in the early to mid 1960’s became known as Open Education, and was perhaps partially due to the political and social unrest in the country at that time. “It is fairly well accepted that the idea originated in England, but the terminology of “open” began in this country” (Norris, 2004, pp. 101). Although, the architecture may have been modeled after the schools in England, the attempt at the teaching practice, which aimed to be child centered and include the environment in all aspects of education, did not always work in the United States. This may have partially been due to our teacher training programs coupled by the parent expectations of what education should be.

Although the UA teachers may have been responding to this trend in the United States at that time, they feel as if they were more grounded in the progressive theory. “Progressive education is an
educational theory” (Norris, 2004, pg. 14). Actually, the time referred to as the progressive era began in this country in the late 1800s to the early 1900s, and is strongly linked to the work of John Dewey. Dewey argued for a restructuring in schools, calling for embryonic communities and for a creation of a curriculum, which would allow for the child’s interest and developmental level (Dewey, 1899, 1902). This also occurred at a time when the United States was at social unrest. Therefore, a move to open education in the mid-sixties may have been another response to civil uncertainties.

Informal/progressive education shares a strong commitment to the child as an able, competent learner, and a commitment to classrooms as settings that should be richly provisioned and responsive to children’s needs and interests, with a commitment to direct engagement and experience as the foundation for children’s learning. In 1981, Walker offered a definition of Progressive education that may have been closely linked to the school of thought at the time which included the following.

1. Education that is “child-centered.”
2. The idea that children all possess certain natural tendencies that contribute to their ability to learn;
3. Children must have autonomy to grow naturally;
4. The inherent ability in children to learn naturally correlates nicely with the idea of creativity;
5. Learning does not occur until the child is ready to learn;
6. Legitimate curriculum can and is somehow linked to the natural curiosity of children. (Norris, 2004, pg 13).

In Dewey’s lab school at the University of Chicago, students studied the academic subjects through an integrated curriculum and insisted that schooling must be part of a process of social progress (Semel & Sadovnik, 1995). These ideas may have emerged once again due to the times in the United States (Vietnam, civil rights, etc.) just as when the industrial age in the early 1900s caused unrest for educators and parents. It seems that during times of social and political unrest, the focus often turns to the country’s children and their well being as they will be future leaders.

Whatever the reason, the history of the informal program in Upper Arlington began during the 1970-71 school year when one teacher in one building (Carol Kane) taught first grade using progressive educational practice (then also referred to as an open classroom). In August 1971, ten UA teachers began a reading / language arts workshop at The Ohio State University taught by Moira McKenzie, Dr. Martha King and Dr. Charlotte Huck. The workshop was entitled “Educational Programs for Informal Classrooms”, which ran from 1971-1996 in Ramseyer Hall at the Ohio State University College of Education.

“In the 1970’s Dr. Martha King and Dr. Charlotte Huck were responsible for the initiation of an innovative teachers education program (Educational Programs in Informal Classrooms—EPIC) which was recognized as a model for excellence in teacher education and is still being used” (MLK-BIO). King and Huck’s interest in the informal classroom grew from their previous
research together, which prompted a joint trip to England to discover more details of the practice. The informal schools were well established in England, and King and Huck returned to Ohio State to initiate the EPIC program. "In 1974, Martha wrote Informal Learning in which she defines and explains informal education, and discusses the new roles for teachers, how to evaluate learning, and the importance of relationships in the classroom" (Language Arts, 2003).

Some of the participants of the EPIC program were Marylyn Reed, Gay Su Dunn (Pinnell) and Pat Blume. Like King and Huck, Pinnell is known for her work in the area of children’s literacy and the development of reading skills in children with Irene Fountas (2009). In fact, in 1974, King, Dunn and Mckenzie co-authored an article which discussed informal education and the differences between learners being passive vs. an education that is active and engaging (MLK-BIO).

"Following the workshop and at the start of the new academic year, the teachers returned to their elementary schools to try out these new informal methods. The methods included a language based reading instruction, which was more individualized than it had been in the past. A process-oriented curriculum verses a prescribed, scripted curriculum, and the idea of allowing the children to have more of a say of the topics of study, which were more authentic and democratic. Thus, the idea of democracy here was born," reported one Wickliffe teacher (informal interview, 2008).

This statement refers to a more “individualized education that it had been in the past.” Further exploration into this idea of individualizing, leads one back to Dewey in that it is the idea of one’s contributions within society, and had less to do with curriculum programs. Norris (2004) discusses that Dewey’s idea’s of “individualized instruction” was actually meant to be a more “humane
mode of schooling that would support the individual” (pg. 104). Likewise, Finn (1981) points out that “Dewey made serious distinctions between education that could be considered “individualistic” (that which is imposed by external standards that compared one person against another) and education that was considered for the individual (which capitalized upon the strengths, interests, and potential contributions of the individual” (Norris, 2004, pg. 105). Currently in the field of education, this idea has been taken to the extreme, in that when most hear the term “individualized instruction”, our immediate response is a prescriptive program designated by an Individualized Education Plan written for children with specific learning disabilities. This, as Norris and Finn point out, was not at all what Dewey has intended.

At the end of the 1971-72 school year, the children and the parents from Pat Blume’s first grade informal classroom requested that she move to second grade so that they could have her, and her teaching practices again. Reportedly, she wanted to remain teaching first grade, which led to the parents going to the school board for an informal second grade classroom and teacher. The board surveyed the Upper Arlington parents to discover that 25% of the parents in the district would be interested in the informal program if it were to be offered.

In June of 1972, the UA school board officially established 14 open (informal) classrooms in three of its elementary schools, which were Greensview, Barrington and Windermere. Marilyn Reed, a teacher who
attended the EPIC workshop, went on special assignment during the 1972-73 academic year to coordinate the open concept approach in the 14 classrooms. (The terms open approach and the informal approaches were used interchangeably when conducting this research). It is not until more recently that the term “progressive” began to take the place of both of these original terms in this community. These original fourteen classrooms enrolled 329 students. Marilyn Reed continued to direct the program until she retired in 1985.

In 1977, Upper Arlington opened its first informal kindergarten at Barrington elementary. In 1979, the informal program was offered at one of the middle schools (Jones) to seventh graders and the following year, 1980, to eighth graders in the same building. During the 1984-85 school year, the district’s informal program had a total enrollment of 679 students.

In 1987, the UA informal staff held a retreat at the Fawcett Center on the OSU campus. One teacher remembers it as a math meeting that, after dinner, became an informal brainstorming session. “By 10:00 p.m. we had a plan and the counter proposals ready‖ reported Frank Hatcher, an informal educator with 35 years teaching experience. The plan was for the district’s entire informal program to move into an empty school building in the district called Wickliffe. The board approved, but required that the program needed at least 200 students, many who would leave their neighborhood school, for complete board approval.
August 30, 1987: Wickliffe Informal School opened with 411 students

The newly established informal building was forced to close enrollment that August, as there was simply no more room for students that year. Many of the district’s informal elementary teachers from the three buildings moved to the new site that offered only informal teaching practice. The oldest building, Barrington, continued offering both informal and contemporary pedagogy. In April of 1990 (the 18th-22nd), a large and popular wooden playground was constructed at Wickliffe with the help of hundreds of volunteers, following years of fundraising to generate the necessary funds. Reportedly, it resembled an “old-fashioned barn raising” with food and equipment donated by local businesses. Work continued around the clock until it was constructed. It currently is still used by the students and the UA community and serves as an icon of the community spirit surrounding the school.

During 1990 and 1991, the informal option was offered to the sixth and seventh, and eventually the eighth graders at the second middle school (Hastings). In July of 1992, eleven informal Upper Arlington teachers, with other informal teachers from other local schools, traveled to the University of Maine, to hold workshops on informal educational practices for other interested school-age educators. Four of them still work for the district and still teach in the progressive program. One of them, Dr. Fred Burton, became the principal at Wickliffe in 1996 (until he retired in June 2008) and two
(Dr. Brian Edmiston and Dr. Pat Enciso) currently are faculty in the College of Education at OSU. One of the teachers that traveled to Maine, Dr. Mark Carter, became the co-director of the program for the 92-93 school year, and continues to teach in the district today.

During the 1997-98 year, The Upper Arlington Informal Program celebrated its 25th anniversary and all came together during a dinner banquet. The official program for the evening provided much of the history and dates for the above section.

There have been five principals of Wickliffe, and one administrative secretary, Mrs. Sheila Millard who began in 1978. The principal of Wickliffe began with Marylin Reed, Dr. Steve DeLapp, Dr. Dave Heigle, Dr. Fred Burton, and the fifth and current principal is Mr. Chris Collaros. During this time, each principal continued and built upon an informal parent newsletter that started with the first principal Marilyn Reed. The newsletters are entitled “Thought Ramblings”. Much of the information in the following section was obtained from these newsletters located at the Wickliffe School website (http://school.uaschool.org/wickliffe/default.html).

During the 38 years that the program has been serving children of the community, there have been five principals, with the newest, Chris Callaros starting during the 2008-2009 academic year. The first four principals also served as faculty at one time or another in the informal program. Over the years, topics printed in the thought ramblings have been revisited many times, addressing the pedagogy each year with current issues that may be on the minds of the local parents.
Therefore, many citings in this section may refer to the most recently published newsletter, which most likely were originally written by an earlier Wickliffe principle.

Thought Ramblings, The Upper Arlington Informal Alternative Program Newsletter, serves “To Inform and Provoke Thought” for the parents and the community (May, 2006). Each issue (newsletter) is to inform, educate, report or spark conversation among the readers. Some issues were written to discuss topics such as high stakes testing, multi-age grouping and to remind the community to remember the “whole child” in education. Many of the issues of Thought Ramblings included the “10 Foundational Principles of the Informal Alternative Program” (for the district and a description of what these principles mean for the parents, the teachers and the children in the program). Ideas for the principles initiated from The Progressive Education Association developed in the 1920’s and tweaked to meet the needs of modern day students. The informal faculty compiled the UA version, referred to as “The Ten Foundational Principles of the Informal Alternative Program”, collectively in 1997. The Wickliffe parent handbook and the most recent school newsletter from January 2008 written by Wickliffe’s newest principal, Mr. Chris Collaros, included the 10 principles for the Wickliffe Community.
"We, the staff at Wickliffe Progressive Community School, believe schools are essential to a democratic society. Therefore,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We structure experiences that actively engage the children producing rather than solely consuming knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. We integrate thematic units of study and foster authentic learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. We provide opportunities for the arts to occupy an integrated place in curriculum as an essential way to acquire and express knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teachers and children use time and space in a flexible manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. We respect diversity among children and variation in their development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. We collaborate with parents as co-educators in meeting children’s needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Teachers raise children’s social consciousness by encouraging them to examine and confront complex issues within society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. We value ongoing reflection and self-evaluation by children and adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. We guide child-choice and decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. We view our school as a center for learning for all ages.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Wickliffe’s 10 Foundational Principles

In a newsletter written for the parents from October of 2008, the principal at that time, Dr. Fred R. Burton, touched upon the historical markers of Progressive Education referencing work from Francis Parker (1800’s), John Dewey (1890’s), Lawrence Cremin and wrote a bit about the district’s informal program. Through his writing, he informed the parents about the deep historical roots of progressive education and
then took them to what it means today in the field of education and especially at Wickliffe. In five points, Dr. Burton summarized five features of progressive education for the modern day educators, students and their families:

“A project-Method approach to curriculum

• From a curriculum, that is a mile long and an inch deep to one that is rooted in child development and interest, real life experiences, and utilizes applied knowledge across disciplines. Interdisciplinary studies going typically from three to nine weeks are the norm. Basic skills and academic rigor underlie each unit of study.

• Children’s “multiple intelligences” are acknowledged, planned for, and activated

• From a static, narrow view of intelligence to a view of children as active learners who acquire and express knowledge through a variety of modes such as the visual/performing arts, technology, and movement as well as through reading, writing and math.

• Nontraditional use of time and space is the norm.

• From compartmentalized learning periods to fluid use of time and cross-age groupings. Community, service, and character is emphasized and celebrated through Town Meetings as well as through daily life at school.

• A commitment to democratic principles and purposes of schools. From schools governed by a factory metaphor to one that features teacher, parent, and child choice. There is a commitment to teaching the skills necessary to participate actively in a democratic society—skills such as organizing and interpreting information, making informed choices, creative conflict resolution, and consensus building decision making process.

• A view of childhood that characterizes children as naturally inquisitive and intrinsically motivated.

From a success for a few to success for all.”
Dr. Burton reminds the parents and staff in this same newsletter that although progressive education has a rich 120 year history, their “task at Wickliffe is to live and interpret the principles of progressive education today...and for the future” (Burton, May 2006).

In 2006, the “future” began with two significant changes to the school. The name of the school changed from “Wickliffe Informal” To “Wickliffe Progressive Community School”. In 2004, the Wickliffe staff applied for, and were granted a $50,000 Community School Grant from The Ohio Department of Education. A year or so later the staff was again awarded a grant of $150,000 to continue their work. This grant allowed the faculty “to work with one of the most prestigious research groups in the country over an extended period of time” (Burton, May 2006). This grant supported a relationship with two Harvard University Project Zero Consultants, Mara Krechevsky and Melissa Rivard over three academic years. During this time, the Wickliffe faculty began an in-depth personal, professional and collaborative study on documentation strategies and Making Learning Visible (MLV). Burton (October 2007) referred to this as a “collaborative adventure called Making Learning Visible (MLV)” and explained the three core ideas of the MLV work as:

1. “Participation in group learning experiences deepens and extends the individual learning experiences of children and adults.

2. The act of reflecting on the documentation of the learning process and curriculum content deepens the understanding of children and teachers and

3. Understanding and creating knowledge, culture, and core values of a democratic culture.”

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Burton also explained in this same 2007 issue that year 1 of the MLV project was "exploratory", year two was to be one of "skill building" for the faculty. MLV work prompts questions and promotes conversations among children and adults that deepen and extend learning.

The goal was to take the 10 Progressive Principles to the next level. "To take the abstract learning...and make our learning apparent in concrete ways in the classroom". At the end of year 1 (spring, 2006) an evening exhibition, drawing over 200 guests from the community, shared the culmination of learning, featuring words, images and artifacts that "made visible" the learning of the children, teachers and parents.

In part, the school’s name change was directly related to this grant and obtain a "community school" status from the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). ODE defines a "community school as a public, nonprofit, nonsectarian school that operates independently of any school district under contract with an authorized sponsoring entity" (http://www.ode.org/). Community schools are required to take the same exact tests as public schools in the state of Ohio. In this case, the sponsoring entity is the Upper Arlington school district; therefore, Wickliffe Progressive Community School follows the same schedule, expectations and requirements as the sponsoring district (Thought Ramblings, September 2006).

Reportedly, there was an added benefit to this name change for the faculty. There are many definitions and interpretations of both the terms "informal and alternative" in the field of education that have developed over the years, neither that represented who and what
the Wickliffe community was and believed in. For this reason, the Wickliffe faculty and parents welcomed this name change.

The Progress Report

An important and unique piece of the school is the use of the informal progress report instead of the traditional and formal grade card. Since the teaching and learning at Wickliffe is child centered and authentic, the documentation of each child’s individual and unique progress must also reflect this. The best way to understand the progress report is by reading the official description sent home to all parents with the report (Appendix E). However, The Thought Ramblings from November 2004 discusses that

“It is not a grade card in the traditional sense...as children and their learning are much too complex and interesting to be reduced to a simple letter grade... and that while there is a lot of information on our progress report, it is still only a paper-pencil snapshot of your child”.

The faculty chose the first section of the progress report Community, Compassion, and Civility (Appendix E). According to the November, 2004 issue of Thought Ramblings, the staff was influenced to create this section and to place it first in response to the research from Howard Gardner of Harvard University and Robert Sternberg at Yale University. The next sections holds the area of academics, and again are not issued a traditional letter grade, but a descriptor (i.e. emerging, developing, achieving and extending) as development is constant and continuously evolving for all children (see Appendix E for the explanation of the progress report). The teachers also hold parent
conferences twice each year that coincide with the dissemination of the progress reports, to review, reflect and discuss the child’s growth with the parents.

It is with this example of the informal progress report that the focus on each student should become a bit clearer. Not only is the teaching more child centered and authentic, but the assessment of each child’s progress is more child centered and authentic. In fact, in an issue of Thought Ramblings from September of 1999, Dr. Burton responded to a few myths of the progressive practice with the reality. A few details that this newsletter shared was that

“Every good [progressive} classroom has at least two good teachers: the teacher and the environment, providing a schedule, structure and a set of academic and behavioral expectations. It is in this classroom that children are not expected to be passive consumers of education, but rather active producers. They are expected to make choices and take ownership in their learning”

Dr. Burton continues in this newsletter by stating that this type of education “is one that is much more inclusive, community-driven and is grounded in the highest ideals of democratic life”. In his written attempt to respond to the myth that progressive education is only for gifted children or children with special needs, he wrote “Why yes it is, And that all children are gifted!!” going on to refer the newsletter readers to the work again of Howard Gardner and his Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

“...I think that his ideas can challenge our staff and stretch us to be better educators...To think more deeply about teaching and learning.”
In 1983, Gardner proposed the theory of multiple intelligences (MI) in which he initially discussed seven ways of being intelligent, "claiming that all human beings possess not just a single intelligence (often called "g" for general intelligence)...rather, as a species we human beings are better described as having a set of relatively autonomous intelligences" (Gardner, 2004, p. xv). These intelligences are not often considered when designing assessments or necessarily attended to in a typical curriculum. Although, Gardner clearly states, "no direct educational implications follow from this psychological theory, but if people differ in their intellectual profiles, it makes sense to take this variation into account in devising an educational system" (Gardner, 2004, p. xv). When Gardner suggested the MI theory, he did so with interest in developmental psychology, in the possible educational implications, and how intellectual competencies are fostered in a cultural setting. Gardner also hoped that with the knowledge of his theory, it might affect "policy makers and practitioners charged with the development of other individuals" (Gardner, 2004, p. 10). The theory contends that each individual is unique and has the capacity for an individual set of intelligences that include linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, special intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, and personal intelligence. In 2006, he added naturalistic intelligence to the core seven to make eight.
It is important to note that most of the Wickliffe faculty come to be progressive educators following an intense practical training or mentoring from current faculty in the UA informal program. Many Wickliffe teachers were mentored, or student taught, under the direction of seasoned UA informal educators either at Wickliffe, or at the Barrington elementary school informal program.

The Parents of Wickliffe

The process of discovering specific key aspects about the pedagogy embraced at Wickliffe, led me not only to the community and the school’s genealogy, but directly to the parents. This school is a parent choice of options for children living in the district. The parents, as well as the teachers and the children, are important actors in this study. The stories begin with the families that choose Wickliffe, and why they do. Culture is made up of many patterns in social situations… patterns of behaviors, artifacts and knowledge and according to Spradley (1980), “analysis is a search for patterns” (pg. 85). The analytical strategies used were not always sequential, however each step in the process informed another (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

Interpretive analysis is necessary in order to understand the social relations of those involved (Eirich, 2006; Corsaro, 1985; Kantor et al., 1993) and may begin with the parent’s choice of sending their child to this school.

Due to the overwhelming parent participation in this classroom, I became interested in the parent’s perspectives of the progressive
pedagogy. I sent home a brief questionnaire with the students. The questionnaire had three questions on it. They were invited to anonymously answer and return them to school or call me at home with their responses. I received nine written responses back and received five phone calls to answer the questions. My questions were:

1. Why Wickliffe? What contributed to you choosing progressive education over traditional (contemporary) for your child’s education?

2. What thoughts do you have about the teaching practice of progressive education? (Celebrations, concerns, questions, comments, etc...)

3. If your child has any specific learning needs (gifted, learning disabilities...), how does progressive education support them (or not support them)?

Two out of three of these questions are explored here, with the remaining question addressed in later section. In an attempt to understand the events that lead to each parent sending his or her young child(ren) to this progressive community school, a “domain analysis” was conducted from the parent responses. Spradley (1980) referred to a “domain analysis” as including an exploration and interpretation of the “semantic relationships” found within a context. This is done to organize and interpret meaning within a cultural domain. In this case the goal was to interpret meaning from 1) the parent’s reasoning behind choosing a progressive elementary for their children, and 2) their understanding of the pedagogy itself. Three patterns emerged as important factors of choosing progressive over traditional education.
from the parent’s perspectives, based on their responses to question one. They were “ways of”

- learning,
- feeling,
- teaching.

Some of the categories of meaning were often shared by another domain. The three categories and these overlapping relationships have been shown in the table below. Since many of the parent responses were similar, I chose the clearest response to share.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning</th>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child behind, wanted mixed age group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>United, consistent teaching philosophy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positives of learning communities.</td>
<td>Teaching in learning groups.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in children producing knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student decision-making.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student decision-making.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 Categories of Meaning Based of Progressive Pedagogy Based on Parent Surveys.
Table 4.3 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>With progressive education come the progressive minded families and teachers.</th>
<th>I hated traditional schooling and I wanted my children to experience something different.</th>
<th>I hated traditional schooling and I wanted my children to experience something different.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I hated traditional schooling and I wanted my children to experience something different.</td>
<td>Feels like more of an extension of our home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children should be invested and excited about learning.</td>
<td>Children should be invested and excited about learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wickliffe offers a warmer, more nurturing environment than the other choices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt that I could put more trust in them than any other place.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt that the learning and passion was visually evident in the halls and the classrooms at Wickliffe.</td>
<td>Felt that the learning and passion was visually evident in the halls and the classrooms at Wickliffe.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication, hard work and passion for teaching.</td>
<td>Dedication, hard work and passion for teaching.</td>
<td>The teachers here demonstrate dedication, hard work and passion for teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-centered education- they really value every child and the contributions they make.</td>
<td>Child-centered education- they really value every child and the contributions they make.</td>
<td>Child-centered education- they really value every child and the contributions they make.</td>
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Continued
Table 4.3 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Studies show that group learning and group inquiry works best for many children.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teachers here seem to be educated, dedicated, and knowledgeable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was in the gifted program as a child. Our education was enriched with the progressive teaching style such as projects, and I wanted that experience for my children.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I researched the options, and felt as a parent that this was the best match for my child’s style of learning.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Many of the responses overlap into different categories of meaning, yet each response demonstrates the thought that went into the parent choice of school and program. It was then imperative that I gain an understanding of the teaching practice from the parent’s perspectives. The responses were surprising to me in that they demonstrated very educated responses with a language unique to the culture of this school.
Parent Thoughts About Progressive Practice

- Progressive educators consistently are open minded and flexible.
- The authenticity of the education.
- The children are empowered.
- It extends their learning.
- Lots of group work to produce a project.
- The focus on social-emotional development.
- My child’s passions are embraced and enhanced.
- My child’s interests are used to increase his skill in reading and writing through projects.
- They want parents involved in their school.
- Child choice.
- Child responsibility in their own learning.
- Professional growth of the faculty and interest in learning more about teaching.
- We moved our children from a traditional classroom where the teacher used a scripted curriculum, they were treated like cattle and they spent their day doing worksheets. They hated it. Since coming to a progressive school, they love it and can’t wait for the next day.
- My child has learning disabilities, yet is academically challenged and socially accepted as an important part of his classroom.
- The children love thematic studies.
- Tailoring teaching to the students needs.
- I feel progressive ed. focuses on the whole child and helps the children to be life-long learners.
Students become caring and compassionate citizens due to the teaching practice of this school.

The teachers love what they are doing and believe in it.

The hands-on learning opportunities.

Town meetings are a place to celebrate learning.

I love the complete acceptance and inclusion of all children.

Benefits of a multi-age classroom.

Celebration of differences.

The parent’s responses to these questions support our understanding from their perspective. Each parent chose a progressive school for very specific reasons. Their answers suggest that the progressive practice was explored by the parents, prior to making a family choice. Notice the specific language used by the parents in this community. Many of the themes derived from this portion of the data reveal that the Wickliffe community may share a common language about children, learning and teaching. The teachers and the parents alike seem to make use of common phrases such as “hands-on-learning”, “teaching the whole child” and becoming “life-long learners and good citizens”. Some of these key phrases can be found on the progress reports, school newsletters, weekly classroom letters home, in addition to adults and children using this language during conversations at school and at home.

These patterns of understanding and language signify cultural knowledge of this educational community (context) and according to
Spradley (1980), reflect moving from a social situation to discovering a cultural scene. When defining contexts as cultures, social interactions have cultural meaning and interpretive analysis is necessary to understand the social knowledge, behaviors and relationships within a particular culture (Kantor et al. (1993), Corsaro, 1985, Spradley, 1980).

Perhaps for many, the school choice was made due to their own educational experiences, or was based on their knowledge of just how their own child (ren) learn(s). Either way, I feel the parent responses are similar in that they narrowed in on specific aspects of the practice that each of them felt was an important experience to provide for their children. It is important to remember that this school is a public option between traditional (contemporary) and progressive teaching practices. The answers also lead me to believe that the parents in general, feel very strong about being part of this learning community. There were zero comments, which I would consider negative or concerning, found on the parent surveys. This may be due to the option that the parents have between teaching practices, as the school and its program are parent choice.

The Classroom

In the following focused mini-tour of the classroom (Spradley, 1980) I offer descriptions of the teachers and the students; the activities that take place (the daily schedule); the physical setting; the actions, rituals, and events; and the goals and feelings that are
present in this classroom. Each of these events represent different aspects of the context of this particular culture. The examples of the daily schedule are coupled here with samples of data. The following sample of daily events serve two purposes. The first is to provide a tour through the daily routine (the daily schedule) of this classroom with examples of what social and learning events are experienced during each period of time. Secondly, they serve as an introduction to the four children traced throughout the data and how these children, with diverse abilities negotiate the progressive curriculum. As with any ethnographic analysis, when attempting to understand a context, not only do the parts count, the relationships among these parts are equally important when examining the group cultural life of this context.

Mrs. Cooke (pseudonym) is the general education teacher of this first and second grade “split” classroom, which contains 19 children. She has over twenty years of teaching experience in public school, and has directed a pre-K/Kindergarten program. Mrs. Cooke has a K-8 teaching certificate, a Masters degree and has completed five years of doctoral study. She feels that progressive education is the only educational philosophy that aligned with her background in early childhood education. Mrs. Cooke has taught at Wickliffe for 8 years. Her classroom is made up of ten boys and 9 girls. Of the 19 children, I received 17 permission slips granting approval and two that did not grant approval to include their children in my study.
Mrs. Hyatt (pseudonym) is the intervention specialist who teaches children in the K-2, social/communication cross-categorical room at Wickliffe. A cross-categorical classroom is described by the district as designed for children who,

a) spends greater than 50% of their time in a separate classroom learning center based on a 3-5 year achievement gap between placement and performance level; or

b) spends 50% of their time or more in a special class or learning center based on behavior that interferes with classroom performance, and adaptive behavior deficits of 2 or greater in no more than two areas

(UA Intervention Services Rubric 1/17/2008; see Appendix F).

Based on Wickliffe’s history and the principles that the faculty base their practice on, the idea of a separate classroom for certain children contradicts the progressive culture of the school which hopes to create a unified teaching and learning environment. My research lead me to further understand that although Wickliffe is a community school, which is progressive, it still falls under the district’s academic calendar, financial support, and guidelines for special education services as mandated by federal law. The general education faculty at Wickliffe are interviewed and hired by the Wickliffe staff based on their own unique guidelines, however, the special educators are interviewed and hired by the district under more traditional (contemporary) guidelines, and placed in any of the district’s buildings as needed. Therefore, it is only by chance that special educators work at Wickliffe and do not necessarily embrace the
progressive philosophies that are necessary, when hired as a general educator in the same building. Furthermore, since the district maintains the special education services for all of the students who may qualify for them, a more traditional design of special education services is seen in each building. Although this traditional design of special education is counter-progressive, they exist even at Wickliffe. Further exploration into implementing this design of traditional special education services is explored later in this chapter in the section on pull-outs.

Mrs. Hyatt has a bachelor of science in education with a dual licensure in mild-moderate K-12, and moderate to intensive learning needs, K-12. Mrs. Hyatt has been teaching in the district for six years, with three of them being at Wickliffe. She has undergraduate experience as an aid in a multi-handicap room in a self-contained county school, and as an applied behavior analysis ABA therapist.

Rosalyn follows two boys with autism in Mrs. Cooke’s and Mrs. Hyatt’s room each day. She feels that their role in the regular education classroom, "is to provide academic and social support for students with I.E.P’s..., children who need extra support by an intervention specialist and an extended team (SLP, OT, APE). My goal is to allow as much independence as possible to maximize their success in the classroom as well as appropriate social interaction among peers in and out of the classroom. It is also important for these students not to feel marginalized by my presence and or my interaction. By helping other children in the regular education classroom, this allows this to be possible” (12/11/08). Mrs. Hyatt’s concern with the marginalization of her students through special education services is explored later in this chapter.
Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hyatt and Rosalyn are three constant adult figures in this classroom. The daily schedule, which is also fairly consistent, provides us with not just a tour of the classroom routine, but provides an insight into the rituals of this social group as discussed Eirich (2006), Kantor, Schultz & Fernie (2007) and Spradley (1980).

Each snapshot is a representative sample of the events within the daily schedule. I provide samples that represent the culture of this classroom, the actors, the physical environment, the practice and the routine. For each piece of the grand tour of this classroom, I describe the look and feel of this chunk of daily life followed by an analysis. Each event was analyzed by 1) looking at the event as a cultural element, 2) how does the element reflect the progressive pedagogy, and 3) how the focus children manage their participation in the event.

The Daily Life of this classroom: A focused look at rituals, events, norms, focal concerns, and interactions.

A Snapshot of the Daily Ritual Known as "Morning Meeting"

Nate, the “meteorologist”, walks over to and looks out the window. After sizing things up a bit, he turns walks over to Mrs. Cooke, who is sitting at her computer. He compares the official forecast from her computer, to his own observational data before returning to the rug. The children are quietly waiting for his return. He reports his weather forecast to the group of children sitting on the rug before him. “It is cloudy and cool. And I think it might snow today.” He begins to graph this data on a number grid. Most of the children are all sitting nearby, listening intently. One boy announces, “I hope it does snow!” Others respond, nodding their heads in agreement. As Nate is graphing, Bobby stands up and announces “Today is November 11, 2008”. He holds the number counter/pointer and points to the name
of the month as he says “November”. Bobby moves the pointer to the 11 on the calendar and asks, “can everybody see this?” Many children answer, “YES” in a song like manner. Bobby then moves the pointer to the year on the calendar and says again, “It is 2008”.

Mrs. Cooke joins the morning meeting at this point and gets an index card ready. This day (11/11/08), the children initiate a conversation among themselves about negative temperatures and snow. “It has to be 32 degrees to snow.” “Yea, but it will be 40 degrees today!” “I wonder how much snow we would get if it was negative 40?”

Today is unusually cold and there were overnight snow showers. Mrs. Cooke joins the conversation and shares that it is Veterans Day. One child immediately offers the meaning of the title yet defines “veterinarian”. “I know what that is...we take our dog to one”.

Mrs. Cooke responds that, “There is often a relationship between words and definitions, but not this time”. She shares the meaning of THIS day in history and moves on.

“November 11, 2008 is the 54th day of school”. Mrs. Cooke asks the children for other names for 54. The children take turns giving answers and she records them on the index card, which is now on the board.

“53+1”
“454 - 400”
“55 - 1”
“51 + 3”
“-4 + 58”

(This was a wrong answer so it was discussed but not written)
“2 quarters and 4 pennies”
“54 pennies”
“54 tally marks”

Once finished, Mrs. Cooke paper clips the card to the corresponding number on the number line, which goes across the top of the room. There were now 54 cards attached to the number line, each with other ways to say every number 1-54.

Morning Meeting as a Piece of Classroom Culture:

The above description is a typical sample of the morning meeting in this classroom which serves as an important cultural event and part
of the daily routine. The entire group of children in the class is present (no options for non-participation and no “pull outs”), and each child participates how and when he/she wants which represents an aspect of the progressive pedagogy (self-determination rather than heavy requirements). At this point in the year, the children are able to lead the entire beginning of the meeting without the teacher (who is back at her desk gathering information from her computer for the meteorologist).

Children offered correct and in-correct answers on “other ways to write 54”. Some of these children have been identified as gifted and others as having a learning disability. Some of the children, considered “typical” while a few were identified as having autism, and yet others were identified as having a learning disability representing the inclusiveness of this classroom. Each contribution was valued and documented, as the speaker (child or adult) responded to every comment, or the teacher wrote the child’s answer, (another way to say “54”), on the index card. This provides students with an active opportunity to participate in a group experience (or an opportunity to look and listen if they prefer to learn more passively). This also provides the teacher with a quick, yet non-traditional, authentic assessment of the student’s abilities to think about the number 54. Young children often think aloud, learn from hearing other’s responses and watching the teacher write the answers.
Events and routines such as morning meeting, are constructed in face-to-face interactions and over time, as an event the group has in common with one another. This experience also provides those who did not share another way of writing “54” with some modeling for the next day and for their independent seat-work. The children do run a portion of the morning meeting independently, however, the teacher is nearby to assist and assure if needed, as are the peers who are not in charge for the day. Repeated practice on just “how” to be a meteorologist and how to run the meeting enables the children to become familiar with the routine and to gain confidence in the procedure.

Nate, one of the study’s tracer children, was the meteorologist for the day. He spoke in front of the group with no trouble, he looked outside to check the weather and he compared his findings with the teacher and the internet, before announcing the weather. Nate did slow down as he graphed the expected temperature, but several of his peers from the audience encouraged him and assured him that he was correct. He continued to graph silently and Bobby took this as his cue to begin the calendar part of the morning meeting routine. It was early in November. School had been in session for approximately two and a half months. The students seemed to know this routine, and how to help each other if there were a need. To an outsider such as myself, at this point, I did not know who had been labeled with a learning disability, and who had not. Nate and Bobby seemed to do equally well with the routine and the children responded equally to them during the morning
meeting. Only later did I discover that Nate struggled with reading and math, even though being a meteorologist, even for a day, required that he use both reading and math skills in an authentic way.

The democratic, child-centered and integrated aspects of this classroom were becoming evident during the first few weeks of observation, and remained so throughout the four months of weekly visits. The morning meeting was almost completely run by the children by this point in the year, although, the rituals and procedure for morning meeting were initially demonstrated by the teacher at the start of the year. The morning meeting included content from the areas of math, reading and science, each of them integrated into the morning routine. The jobs, chosen daily by the children, are taken very seriously as evidenced in the meteorologists’ report of the daily weather, and recording the data onto the graph during this day’s morning meeting. The children verbally offered to assist their peers many times during the daily job session.

Morning meetings however are more than a pleasant morning ritual. Eirich (2006) discusses the ritual as a critical place for children to become “informal (aka progressive) students, simultaneous with their development as peers. Eirich looked at the intersections of school and peer culture that can occur during the informal morning meeting. She described the morning meeting as a “whole group classroom event...that supports an emergent curriculum. It is in this space that the content, and the threads of interest become visible to both the teacher and the
student. The teacher then weaves the district and state curriculum in with the interests of the children (Eirich, 2006, pg. 211). This ritual becomes a space for the children to initiate a conversation, to compare and contrast facts, to make predictions on upcoming events, and to discuss research that they have been participating in project work. It can also be a space to share current events, to get to know their peers and to express concern with others. All of these opportunities support the continued development of the “community” and are important aspects of the progressive pedagogy.

The Progressive Principles at Work in This Event

The ten foundational principles that guide the work at Wickliffe are seen in the daily events. A closer look at this morning meeting reveals several of these principles below.

A. Morning meeting

1. Active engagement/ produce knowledge
   a. children lead meeting (different children take different parts of meeting based on their job responsibilities (teacher nearby, but initially not in group)
   b. children collecting data from outside observation and computer forecast (Nate)
   c. children graphing data on number grid (Nate)
   d. child job title “meteorologist”
   e. children initiate and participate conversation about negative temperatures

2. Foster authentic learning opportunities and integration of curriculum
a. The weather report is given based on observed data, then double checked with the website of a local news station on the internet; discussed with the group

b. Calendar (day, date, year) is shared and an announcement of the number of days in school. This prompts the teacher to ask for other ways to write 54 (54th day of school). The children’s answers are written down, discussed if incorrect, and hung when everyone who wants to contribute has.

c. Teacher introduced the read-aloud book by asking the children to make predictions on the book based on their recent research (the morning book is generally related to a current project topic)

d. Based on the title of the book and the front picture, the topic is about builders/construction workers, therefore the children were asked to create a list of tools that they believe this profession may use

3. Respect Diversity

a. Nate took his turn as the meteorologist, as did every child. The children and the teacher supported him if he seemed to hesitate, they responded to him when he presented the information, and Mrs. Cooke stood where he could see her but behind the group as he presented the weather. He often glared towards her and she smiled, but he presented the information on his own.

b. Jimmy contributed and when his words took longer than the other children, the children waited to hear his words.

The environment in the classroom that surrounds the children also reflects the foundational principles. Particular aspects of this environment are easily visible during the morning meeting and from the children’s tables as they work. Specific aspects such as the birthday graph, the letter wall and the job assignment board specifically
address the authenticity of the children’s shared history and work
during the first few months of the school year.
The outline below reflects the progressive principles and how they
relate to the environment of this classroom.

**Physical Classroom Environment**

1. Authentic learning experiences AND using time and space in
   a flexible manner WHILE integrating the curriculum
   
   a. Birthday Graph: the months of the year are graphed by
      the children who designed, decorated and cut out their
      own birthday cakes with their names on them
   
   b. Job assignment board: written, decorated and completely
      created by the children in the class to use for the
      duration of the year
   
   c. Letter wall: student created letters And pictures to
      represent the first letter in the title of the item or
      action. Children’s names (written by the children) also
      in the columns with the corresponding letter and
      pictures.

**The Cultural Event Known as “Writing Workshop”**

“Each of you should check your unfinished work folder. I want you
to continue with, or edit a writing task, currently in rough
form, before you start a new project”. Mrs. Cooke gives the
students this direction almost every day as she releases them
from the morning meeting to enter the next event which is the
writing workshop.

Sally staples blank paper into a sheet of wallpaper. She looks
around the room and her eyes meet Madison’s, “Want to write a
book with me?” Madison nods, and grabs her pencil and they scurry
to the rug to grab an open spot. “I’ll write and you illustrate.”
They lie down side by side on the rug and quietly work on their
book.

Sandy walks over to me. I’m in my usual spot in the back of the
room, during the early days of my observations.
“Do you want me to write you a book?” I replied, “Why yes~ I would love one.” “Do you have a preference of the topic” asked Sandy in a very professional tone. This took me by surprise coming from a six year old. “You pick”, I said. She smiled and walked back to her table.

Children were all over the room, working both independently and together. Some went to their writing workshop work folders and gathered unfinished work from the day before. Others started new writing projects. One of the building’s special educators (who was not part of this study) slipped into the room and helped to set Nate up on the computer with his reading/writing comprehension series. Others were typing on their current projects (Wickliffe Riddles, to be explained later) on the other computers. As I looked around the room on this day during writing workshop, I noticed that other children were:

- working on handwriting her first and last name (Lisa)
- making a book cover for his book using construction paper and cutting and gluing shapes on it (Brandon)
- gluing computer print outs of pictures onto their Wickliffe Riddle (Lynn)
- working on a large poster board, gluing handwritten index cards next to hand drawn pictures as an ending to an independent research project (Michelle)
- working on self-studies. Their topics included Old English sheepdogs, wolves, Barack Obama, gerbils and koala bears (Johnny, Nate, Sandy and others)

The daily event known as writing workshop follows the morning meeting every day. The children each have an idea of what he/she wants to write about during this time, where they want to write and with whom
they want to write. Children leave the meeting rug and go directly to their writing material, which may be located in their unfinished work folders from the day before. Other children may begin a new writing task, which may be unique to a specific interest, or may be related to a long-term research project. Writing workshop happens every day, at the same time, and the expectations for this event seem understood by all.

The above examples of events during writing workshop, were chosen to illustrate the open-ended and collaborative nature of this group’s activities, which represent another aspect of the progressive pedagogy. Additionally, Mrs. Cooke always uses the official term when referring to jobs, the work, and the participation of the children in all aspects of learning. For example, you will hear her using terms like “meteorologist, research, editing, rewrite, illustrate, deadline, and visual representation” on a regular basis throughout the day. You will also see that the official terms are used for specific items and content during project work such as the “emergent layer” of the rainforest, the “professions” of the employees, etc. This introduces new vocabulary in addition to providing numerous opportunities to hear and understand new terms and concepts.

The daily and repeated mention of “editing and rewrite” not only supports these young writers in developing skill and procedure, but serves as a reminder for children who may forget what to do next or are not yet following more than a one step direction. The unfinished work
folders also provide each child with the option of finishing their work and turning it in, taking a break from their work, coming back to it later, or the next day if time runs out or placing the unfinished work someplace safe until an adult or peer is available to assist them. These are all common practice among each child in the classroom, therefore no child is singled out as ever being behind everybody else.

The class work time is not micro-managed. The children seem to know what is expected of them. They work collaboratively yet, often independently on their own tasks, although they are side by side. I was surprised by the level of dedication to their work, and their willingness to stop and help a peer when asked. Quiet chatter created a constant yet quiet buzz in the room as the children worked. Each child was writing during the writing workshop, however each child was working on his or her own task. Children who were in near proximity of each other discussed their own, and each other’s work, without losing sight of their own writing task. Each member of this community had contributions to make. It did not seem to matter to Johnny that Nate has a learning disability, he still wanted to collaborate on a book project with him as seen below.

Johnny walks over to Nate’s table. “Do you want to write a book with me?”

Nate replied, “Yes, but I want to finish my book first”

Johnny, excited by Nate’s answer, replies, “OK, so I’ll make a book for us while you finish yours! So it’ll be ready-OK?”

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As you can see, Nate has his own agenda. He takes his work seriously, yet wants to write a book with Johnny. Johnny’s response indicates that he respects Nate’s current work and that he will prepare for their impending collaborative work while waiting. It did not seem to be just something they “have to do”. These tasks, were not designed by the teacher, but are initiated, planned and worked on by the students. The topics for these books are personal and authentic, as the topics are often related to a research project, or a current interest of the children. Generally there is no deadline, just the end of this particular work period. The unfinished work goes into a folder and can be finished at a later time.

Once the daily assigned writing work was completed, the children independently moved to a writing choice. Nate needed to complete his unfinished work from the day before, but did want to write with Johnny once he was done. During the writing workshop “choice time”, and the math “choice time”, in addition to the assigned work time, the children seem to work “collaboratively” It was always “OK” that they were working in teams, as long as they were on task. Below is an example of peer collaboration between a first grader and a second grader.

Lynn, a first grade girl, took a book that she had been writing in all morning over to her second grade friend, Michelle. “Can you help me draw a bunny ‘cause you’re really good at drawing.”

Michelle immediately and enthusiastically answered, “Sure”. Michelle nonchalantly took Lynn’s book. She quickly drew a picture of a bunny in the book, sketching as though she were a true artist. Michelle handed the open book back to Lynn.
“Thank-you” and Lynn turned and went back to her seat, seemingly satisfied with her friend’s contribution.

Michelle tipped her head, somewhat triumphantly before returning to her poster board. After a few minutes, she looked up at me. Seeing that I was taking notes, she informed me that she must create a “visual representation” (Michelle’s words) of her research to share.

Following each “writing workshop” (Graves, 1983) a few of the children get to read and share their completed work with the rest of the class in an author’s chair, which the children sign up for daily. All of the children were reading and writing in some capacity. (I will discuss the before mentioned “Wickliffe Riddles” in more depth later in this chapter in the section on projects.) Writing workshop involves “children writing in a variety of texts” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) every day. The writing choices seemed to be self-directed and individual, yet they all had a task in mind. Once a current assigned writing project was completed and self-edited, it was to be checked by the teacher. Upon receiving her approval, the children were to make another writing choice.

The opportunity for child choice seen during my experience with their writing workshop, and was that of individual and authentic work and is directed by the children. There was always a quiet chatter between the children as they worked, encouraging teamwork, collaboration, and in an attempt to create and support the classroom learning community.

The Writing Workshop and the Progressive Principles
A. Integrated, active, authentic
1. writing choices were based on the interests of the children

2. quiet chatter of children discussing stories, planning a wall paper book, illustrating their writings together and inviting another to collaborate

3. discussion of font size and where periods go in a sentence as children typed their research and copied their project work for display

4. writing from reading research

5. child choice of additional topics to read and write about

6. children collaborating on projects

7. teachers and Rosalyn supporting children’s work

B. Using time and space in flexible manner
   1. Children permitted/encouraged to move around room to write together, read together, type together
   2. Time during workshop to write and illustrate books to read to class; children must move around room to obtain supplies for this work

C. Child-choice and decision making
   1. children need to complete task that needs to be finished/assigned; then free to choose another topic to read or write about with their “choice” being key
   2. children encouraged to manage their time during work periods

The Nature of the Tracer Children’s Participation

A. Nate and Jimmy requested help as needed from adults, just like every other student.

B. Each student paced themselves differently. Some spent more time on writing, some on reading and others on illustrating.

C. Rosalyn stayed near Jimmy and offered him assistance if requested, along with other children who summoned her help.
D. Dictionaries were available, the word wall was available, peers could be accessed as well as teachers during the hour long writing workshop.

E. Mrs. Cooke moved around room individualizing mini-lessons as needed during her stop at each table.

F. Johnny copied his research neatly for display, practicing his handwriting, which he has struggled with in the past.

G. Johnny uses the opportunity to interact with others and discuss his work with others. Academically he is at age level, but still very shy.

H. Nate uses this time to practice his reading and handwriting in a seemingly low stress and collaborative environment. He takes his time, finishes his current task, then joins a peer for another writing task.

I. Jimmy takes his time writing about his research, but with Rosalynn’s help, he finishes some days and returns to it on other days.

J. Jimmy and Nate can take a break from writing if their hands get tired. During these breaks, they can read or research on the computer, or collaborate in creating/planning a story to write, and then come back to writing later.

"The Choices"

The writing and math choices were not officially posted in the classroom, yet when I inquired, Sandy offered to inform me of them. Little did I know that this same first grade girl would take it upon herself to become my unofficial research assistant, throughout the duration of this project. During the course of my observations and participation in her classroom, Sandy would often offer to read to me whatever it was that I was looking at, and answer any questions that I might have. On one day in-particular, as I read the class rules to myself, she came over and offered to read them to me and did so,
commenting that, “Every person in this classroom must know these rules”, insinuating through her tone that I, too, must know them. The class rules are posted and signed by each child in the class in permanent marker. This small but visible poster is hanging on the east wall of the classroom, between two of its many windows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Be Safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Be Kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Take care of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Take care of things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do your best</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.2 Class Rules

Unfortunately, I was not present at the beginning of the year to observe the writing of these class rules. I did however hear the children often reference them, sometimes quoting them during conversations and work time. The official list, which the children created, still hangs in the classroom for all to reference. Mrs. Cooke described this event as one that she initiated, but that the children participated in. The children created a much longer list, and she then guided them in writing just the five highlights.

Sandy would often answer my questions, hand me yellow highlighters from the class highlighter bin, and provide me with the
following list of the reading and writing choices. She informed me of them, and I wrote them down as she told them to me. Each subsequent day, she would add to this list if they were doing something that she had not already informed me of. One day as Sandy entered the classroom, she came to me and said, “Did you have any questions from yesterday? I was out sick.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading/Writing Choices</th>
<th>Math Choices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Writing stories in wall paper books</td>
<td>• Computer math game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writing from computer research</td>
<td>• Number scroll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writing from reading research</td>
<td>• Math games (i.e. place value, cubes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writing about our project</td>
<td>• Dice game</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 Choices.

Mrs. Cooke informed me that the concept of choices was introduced to the children, at the beginning of the year, and the options have increased, as she felt the children were ready. So, the reading, writing, and math choices are picked from a number of teacher-approved learning opportunities. Each include both individual and small group activities, which promote an understanding of the content specific material, and promote collaboration and communication between the children. Each day during writing, reading and math in the daily schedule, the children get to choose their own activity from this list, once their assigned work for the day is completed. However, what the
children decide to do within their choice of options is up to them, as long as the class rules are respected. The idea of child choice is a democratic way to support child decision making, encourage time management, support social development while providing additional opportunity for interaction with content specific material. All are examples of progressive ideologies, allowing for interaction with materials either alone or in small groups.

The Significance of Having Choices

The relationship of having “choices” to the progressive pedagogy represent both the foundational principles of the practice, in addition to the theoretical aspects of democracy imbedded in the practice. One of the ten foundational principles states, “We guide child-choice and decision making” which is evident from the data during choice-time and in co-constructing the project work. The class rules are simple, clear and can be carried outside of the classroom and applied to every aspect of life therefore are very authentic. The rules, “Be safe, be kind, take care of people, take care of things, do your best” are what individuals should strive for at all times and are general enough to cover many minute details of everyday life. They are also open to individual interpretation, allowing each member of the community to individualize their meaning. For example, the level with which one may “take care of other people” may be unique to the person and to the situation, therefore open to one’s interpretation, which requires one to ponder the meaning of each rule and apply accordingly. Based on
this example, the rules require active thought of each individual
without limiting their individuality.

The choices take the direct control away from the teachers
although the teachers have designed the options to guide growth and
support skill development, the children take charge of how they will go
about doing this. For example, the wall paper books still needed a
title, a beginning, a middle and end and a storyline, however the
children did not seem stressed about writing them. Many children often
wrote these books about a topic that they were personally interested
in, such as fairies, insects, aliens, star wars, and pirates. Many
children wrote and illustrated their writing choice with a friend while
lying on the rug or sitting in the corner. The children had many
choices within their learning experiences which guided their growth and
development which signified a democratic way of learning on so many
occasions in the data.

The class rules and the choices are known by every member and
apply to every member of the community. Every member may remind others
of them, if forgotten. At times Rosalyn or Mrs. Hyatt could be
overheard providing Jimmy with options within the choices during work-
time (i.e. writing options). The data also revealed that peers were
often overheard suggesting viable options for others within the choice
categories thereby supporting each other in the social learning
process.
Morning Math: A Snapshot

Two-second grade boys, Johnny and Brandon, began working on their math together. They were observed taking turns reading word problems aloud to each other, then quietly working the problem alone. Sometimes they compared notes as to how they reached their answers. At one point, they were making up their own word problems.

“If the farmer has 21 cows and his wife has 13 chickens, and their son has 8 bunnies that all need to get to the fair, how many cages do they need?”

“I think we only need to add the bunnies and the chickens, ‘cause cows wouldn’t go in a cage.”

“Yea, could you imagine a cage for a cow! It would be HUGE!”

“So, let’s add 8 plus 13.”

They both look at their papers and write the math problem.

This cooperative work continued for half an hour, sometimes discussing with each other how they got the answer. It was OK that the boys briefly got off topic as they discussed a cage for a cow, their math work was not affected. Quiet chatter is a constant in this classroom and collaborative problem solving such as this is encouraged. Social learning is key in the progressive pedagogy. I noticed Joe (a younger second grader), sitting near Brandon and Johnny, listening to their conversation. He seemed to be working along with these two boys and seemed to be gaining some support through their conversation, although generally chose to work more independently. This leads me to wonder if Joe, who chooses to work by himself, gains some support or a form of mentoring by listening to the older boys work through math problems such as these.
At yet another table, Michelle worked with a Nate. Although neither student received special education services from Mrs. Hyatt, they summoned her over to ask a question about addition. After they got their answer, Michelle tells Mrs. Hyatt that they are working on their math together, so she “guesses that they are sort of copying?” Mrs. Hyatt responds that working and learning together is not copying. As Mrs. Hyatt walked away, Michelle looked at Nate and said, “Ok, so where were we?”

The children were encouraged to work together to solve problems and to co-construct new knowledge, as commonly seen in progressive pedagogy. They were welcome to obtain assistance from any adult in the room, whether a teacher, a paraprofessional or a parent.

Jimmy finishes his math journal work, shuts his book and gets up from his table to return it to the bin. Seeing this, Michelle, in a friendly tone, asks him from her table if he wants to play an addition game with her. Michelle and Jimmy do not usually play together. Jimmy usually prefers to look at books alone and rarely joins in a social game, even when it is choice-time. Jimmy tends to stay near Rosalynn, who often has to offer him two choices and he will pick one of them.

Not looking at her, he replies sharply, “No.” Michelle makes no response, or facial expression, as though she expected it.

“Jimmy,” Mrs. Hyatt calmly advised, “Why don’t you tell Michelle why you don’t want to play with her?” Mrs. Hyatt suggests to Jimmy that he could tell Michelle, “I don’t feel like playing right now because I already played two games.”

Once she makes this suggestion to him on how he might do this, she supports him in looking at her as he says, “I already played two games.” He then quickly turns and walks away. Michelle responds as he walks from her, “OK- maybe next time”.

Mrs. Hyatt smiles at Michelle as she walked over to a child who had just taken about 20 tissues to blow his nose. She asked him, calmly, quietly and discretely, “How many tissues did you think
you might need to blow your nose?” The child answered, “1”. She then offered him her help, or anybody else’s help, to get just one, especially if they are stuck together.

Jimmy was still walking around the room. Mrs. Hyatt asked him, “Jimmy, what would a good math choice be?” Several nearby children chimed in, offering their ideas, which included—“templates, number scroll, Toppit….” Jimmy, without ever making eye contact, listened to their ideas, and without another word, made a choice and began working independently.

Mrs. Hyatt supported Jimmy (one of the tracer children) in responding to Michelle in a more socially acceptable manner. In Mrs. Hyatt’s classroom, Jimmy often worked on social skills such as these, so it was helpful that they could continue to work on these social skills in the general classroom context as the need and opportunity presents itself. Jimmy could have pulled skills learned from the mini lessons from Mrs’ Hyatt’s room and applied these skills to authentic events in Mrs. Cooke’s room. Mrs. Hyatt was nearby and supported him with this social lesson, as Mrs. Cooke assisted other children with their math assignments.

Mrs. Hyatt was also nearby to assist another student who had autism with the tissues, welcoming peer guidance from other students. The children will frequently raise their heads from their work to contribute to a conversation or an idea being discussed by others in the room. In general, they share their expertise on an issue, then, return to their work without missing a step. It seems as though they are aware of other happenings in the room, yet still able to focus on their own task.
The Progressive Principles at Work in This Event

A. Teachers raise social consciousness…

1. This principle is evident in many aspects of each day and integrated into this math time in an authentic manner when Jimmy needed support interacting during choice time with another.

B. Collaboration with parents as co-educators

1. Parents were present during every math workshop to support the group of children, work one-on-one as needed and to work with Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt as an equal.

C. Continued evidence of community building yielded from this data

1. Collaboration between Johnny and Brandon as they worked through the word problems.

2. Collaboration between children during the math choices with no lack of invitations extended to children identified as having special needs.

The routines described in this section all demonstrate cultural classroom events. Each event represents specific aspects of the progressive pedagogy. Nate, Sandy, Johnny and Jimmy are four children in this classroom, each with unique and diverse abilities. In the above section, Jimmy can be observed managing participation in this inclusive classroom with the support of Mrs. Hyatt, a special educator. Mrs. Hyatt does not simply assist Jimmy. She assists other children who need her help, even though they may not have autism. Mrs. Hyatt also supports Jimmy in interacting during choice-time, with Michelle, providing an authentic learning opportunity in the classroom. This example also provided Michelle with a better understanding of Jimmy and
his individual traits, which may serve as a support for future interactions or collaborative work.

This initial look at the classroom, in part, begins to answer the question of “What is the nature of progressive practice?” Through initial discussions with the teacher, it became clear that she was taking the schools “10 foundational principles” and extending them to include an overarching theme in her classroom; that of “building community.” This initial look into the classroom offers many examples of “integration of the curriculum” and the “guidance of child choice and decision-making”, however it is as important to look at the overall sense of democracy within this learning community. It became apparent that each child was permitted to work at their own pace. They were able to place unfinished work in a folder to come back to later or another day. The learning experiences allowed each child to be active and to be up and moving around as many young children need to during this particular developmental period. This also permitted those with attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) to participate without the pressure to remain seated in one spot.

The Routine of Conference: A Snapshot

Just after lunch and recess every day, Mrs. Cooke holds conferences. Conferences are small reading groups. They can be one on one with the teacher, or they can be small guided reading groups (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996) in which children are grouped by reading ability, not necessarily age. While Mrs. Cooke is in conference with a specific group, the rest of the children are reading quietly to themselves. This may occur at their table, or anywhere in the room that they feel comfortable. Certain
children, who are receiving reading intervention, may go to their Reading Recovery session (Gómez-Bellegue, 2006) or to a Leveled Literacy Intervention group (Fountas and Pinnell, 2009) with a reading interventionist in a learning lab.

This time slot during the day does provide an opportunity for the reading interventionists to hold small reading groups with their students in the classroom who may need it, instead of pulling small groups of children out of Mrs. Cooke’s room to read with children from other classes or by themselves. When I inquired about this, I was told that the special education teachers do not have enough time in their schedule to visit each classroom during “conference” time each day. Some however were in favor of the idea, but their caseload prevented them from doing this, even though the general education teachers have the luxury of scheduling their reading time during any time slot each day.

In this classroom however, reading and writing is integrated into everything throughout the day in an attempt to learn about literacy through reading and writing (Clay, 2001). Each conference group does not meet every day, but those who do, participate in guided reading instruction with the teacher.

Jimmy receives much of his reading instruction in Mrs. Cooke’s room, but occasionally, if he needs extra help, will bring work with him to Mrs. Hyatt’s room.

Timmy wondered around the room, stopping at each table to see what others were reading. This was often disruptive to the other kids. Finally, he sat down next to Jimmy, “What are you reading?” Looking at the book and before Jimmy answers, Timmy announces, “Oh wow, that book is hard!” Seeing that Jimmy was being distracted, Sandy gets up from her table and walks to the bookshelf. After only a second or two, she returns with a book much lower than his reading ability. “Here Timmy, read this and quit bugging Jimmy.” She is very kind, but matter-of-fact.

Timmy, exhaling loudly and appearing a bit exhausted, takes the book to the rug and positions himself behind the bookshelf, perhaps to hide from Sandy. Sandy casually returns to her table, and Jimmy’s eyes return to his book.

Mrs. Cooke was on the other side of the room holding a reading conference, and I was in the back of the room near Jimmy, Timmy and Sandy. I am not surprised by Sandy taking this initiative, yet I am
impressed by these this interaction between these three first graders. It is not often that an interaction such as this occurs between three 6-7 year old first graders. Timmy is currently receiving an intervention program known as Reading Recovery during individual pull out sessions, and often will make comments to others such as, “You read that whole book!? I could never read that much!” Timmy seems to often be impressed by the second graders book choices, and perhaps a little intimidated at the same time. Timmy often is off task during work time. He is easily frustrated in the classroom, and cries often during social situations with peers. Few children ask him to play math games or offer to write stories with him. I observed on many occasions, that when he was asked to collaborate with a peer, he demonstrated difficulty sharing and taking turns and following directions. The children in the class would often attempt to help Timmy, by repeating the directions or by explaining the process. Timmy generally needed Mrs. Cooke to assist him. Perhaps Timmy is young for his grade, or he needs additional social-emotional support. Below is another look at the progressive principles at work during the cultural event known as conference time.

The Progressive Principles at Work in This Event

A. Respect diversity in children and variation in their development.

1. Mrs. Cooke meets with children individually and in small groups daily. The lesson is implemented to this child/group and is based on where he children fall in ability level.
2. The silent readers have many options of books to read at their individual level.

3. Rosalyn or Mrs. Hyatt is available to the other children as needed.

A Focal Concern: Social-Emotional Development

Focal concerns, in ethnographic work, are general issues to which the cultural group directs attention. In this case, the educators and the Wickliffe parents seem to value what they refer to as “social-emotional development in their youngest community members”. Some of the descriptors used by teachers and parents include “social skills, knowledge of feelings, sensitivity, good communication skills, problem solving skills, a sense of empathy, knowledge of self and others, social confidence, emotional learning” etc... This focal concern spans across classrooms, the playground, the lunch-room and specials such as art, gym and music. Many teachers, in collaboration with the school guidance counselors voice this developmental domain as one of significant importance. Parent seminars were offered as part of a continuing series in which guest speakers share their views on this subject with attendees. These events, generally scheduled by the school counselors, are open to parents and teachers. A few topics this year covered “Bullying, and Boys and Social Development.” The district also offers in-services free to parents and teachers covering topics such as “Helping with homework...without tears” which a parent reported to me was very helpful for her.
In the district design of the cross-categorical room for social and communication support, Mrs. Hyatt’s room is to teach these skills to children with autism or on the autism spectrum, assuming that they will be practiced and generalized in the general education classroom. In Mrs. Hyatt’s room, the lessons also often focus on the social and emotional development of each child in part to attend to a foundational principle, which makes up the progressive practice (*Raise social consciousness by encouraging children to examine and confront complex issues within society.*)

To learn these skills in isolation from the majority of their peers is a contradiction of basic ideas of progressive education which include, 1) the idea that every learning opportunity is a social one, and is integrated with a variety of academic disciplines along with social and emotional experiences and 2) a segregated classroom goes against the democratic notions of community. On the other hand, when Jimmy does not contribute socially or academically during group learning experiences in the general education classroom, he may lack skill or he may lack the confidence with an unfamiliar or novel event. Mrs. Hyatt sees her small group mini lessons as an effort in addressing both of these issues in order to increase Jimmy’s skill level and confidence in contributing when in the larger group setting. Jimmy tends to respond to large group social experiences in Mrs. Cooke’s room with more confidence, if he has had practice opportunities in a smaller group with Mrs. Hyatt. Jimmy does not tend to participate or contribute
in the large group setting if the situation seems unfamiliar to him. Mrs. Hyatt’s goal is to decrease the segregated class time that Jimmy has with her and to increase the time in the general education classroom with her supporting his social contributions as they authentically occur.

Mrs. Cooke feels that if adults model caring, accepting and supportive behaviors, the children learn to be caring, supportive and accepting to others. The focus of social consciousness on a large scale, begins by learning how to treat others on a smaller scale, and serves as an intentional step towards reaching this foundational principle in a grander sense. In the classroom, you will often hear Mrs. Cooke say,

“It is important to look at how we treat others with different abilities in the classroom and on the playground. Our behaviors influence how others act and how others feel”.

Occasionally the children have small issues (somebody cut in line, etc...) and feelings were hurt or a child became angry. Each time these episodes occurred both teachers were observed asking the child to meet them in the hall. The other children kept on working. In the hall, Mrs. Cooke, in a calm and quiet voice, would ask the crying or angry child to tell her the story of what happened so that she could help. She attempts to gain an understanding of the child’s perspective of the situation, in order to help. If another child was part of the conflict, they were also asked to join the group in the hall. The problem is discussed, and when the crying child felt better,
they could come back in, typically, when they feel ready to join the group. No child was embarrassed or ridiculed. Problems are solved through discussion. If Mrs. Hyatt was present and a student with autism was involved, she too took the same approach. She would often use the opportunity to support her student in communicating with another as the problem was solved.

Town Meetings: A Critical, School-Wide, Cultural Ritual and Event

Town meetings are an important ritual of this school’s culture. Town Meeting is a bi-monthly time to share project work with the entire school community. All of the children, teachers and staff gather with many parents who come to a Friday morning, student lead assembly. Typically, three classes are assigned to share projects that they have been working on. Art, music, poetry, skits and facts are shared, in a variety of formats on a specific topic studied by each class. “It is a time to celebrate learning and to enjoy our community” (parent comment, 2/23/09).

Mrs. Cooke’s class participated in Town Meeting in December (2008) to share their study on professions and to introduce their “Wickliffe Riddles.” Every student in the class practiced for the event and Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hyatt and Rosalynn supported this practice. During the final practice, a type of dress rehearsal occurred the Thursday afternoon before the Friday morning town meeting. Stress was mounting, yet the students were excited and looking forward to it.
Mrs. Cooke feels that "Town Meetings are important to the children. Performing gives them the opportunity to be in front of a large group of people and practice those skills necessary to present." Mrs. Hyatt adds that, "Town Meeting is listening, sharing and valuing the group work going on in the classrooms. It is regularly getting together as a school to celebrate and validate us as a community."

Parent meetings occur several times throughout the year and Mrs. Cooke (as do most others in the building) sends home a weekly parent letter, updating parents on the week’s events. The principal sends out monthly newsletters, as does the PTO president. Most parents reported feeling welcome to stop by the classroom any time to talk with the teacher in addition to staying in e-mail contact with Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt.

Ways This Classroom Builds Community

Next, I conducted a "taxonomic analysis" (Spradley, 1980) that looks at ways to build community across the daily events and cultural elements described above. According to Spradley, (1980), a taxonomic analysis allows a search for categories of cultural meaning. Dewey often referred to this goal when he spoke of education. On the earlier discussed parent questionnaire, many parents used this term "community", to support what they liked about the school and specific aspects of the practice that they hoped for their children. As I observed each portion of the daily routine, and read through the field notes multiple times, this theme kept resurfacing. The school
principles and the philosophy both claim to “build community” yet did not specify just how this is done. The “taxonomic analysis” allowed me to look for similarities based on the same semantic relationships within the domain of the “idea of community”. I did this by exploring the data from the components of data discussed thus far, during the grand tour and the classroom mini-tour in an effort to illuminate ways this classroom builds community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ways this group builds a Classroom Community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. School Choice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Significant school-to-home communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Education to community of philosophy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Active involvement of parents in classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Well education faculty: willingness to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Faculty and parents eager to work together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Morning meeting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Child run; respect the speaker’ take turns when speaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Encourages teamwork.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Encourages student collaboration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Values participation and sharing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Invites student ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Expectations of respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Minor movement permitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Writing workshop</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Encourages collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social and individual writing opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Peer support and direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Teacher support and direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Quiet chatter permitted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Teamwork encouraged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Minor movement allowed.</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 4.5 Taxonomic Analysis of Community Domain
Table 4.5 continued

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Any adult in the room can assist any child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>No penalty for not completing work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Unfinished work goes into child’s unfinished work folder.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Math time

1. Social and individual learning opportunities.
2. Encourages collaboration through math games.
3. Peer support and direction.
4. Teacher support and direction.
5. Quiet chatter permitted.
6. Teamwork encouraged.
8. Movement allowed.
10. Any adult in the room can assist any child.
11. No penalty for not completing work.
12. Unfinished work goes into child’s unfinished work folder.

E. Conferences

1. Time for social and individual reading opportunities.
2. Individual goals addressed.
3. Peer support and direction in reading.
4. Group goals addressed.
5. Minor movement allowed.
7. No penalty for not completing work.
8. Unfinished work goes into child’s unfinished work folder.

F. Choices

1. Computer choice often involves the collaboration/cooperation of two or more students.
2. “Our” project: This reference identifies that two or more children will be playing/learning together.
3. Math games/dice games: again “games” implies that two or more students will be playing/learning together.
4. Writing/illustrating books is often done in pairs.
5. The basic idea of “choice” implies that the children choose. They decide for themselves from a pre-established set of cooperative and independent learning opportunities that extend learning.
Table 4.5 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H. Town Meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Each individual is responsible for sharing aspects of group project work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Each classroom in school presents approx. 2 times per year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Parents and community invited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Entire school gathers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Student run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Everyone in class participates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hyatt, and Rosalyn all assist all children to prepare and share knowledge with the school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In my reading of the data and early analyses, a similar theme kept repeating itself. The idea of the importance of “belonging”, the importance of being a part of the learning group, a community, and a valued member of the classroom were continuously repeated (Sergiovanni, 1994; Noddings, 1995; Kohn, 1996; Watson, 2003; Christenson & Havsy, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2004; Mugno & Roseblitt, 2001) by the faculty, the parents and in the historical artifacts. This idea of building relationships and community is not only important between peers in a classroom but in a grander sense between peers, teachers, parents, and school, which are interchangeable and collective. Belonging (a sense of being accepted and valued), participation, identification, and school membership are all vitally important as pointed out by Christenson and Havsy (2004). “Teachers who are working to construct positive, secure child-teacher attachment relationships are simultaneously working to construct a sense of community in their classrooms” (Howes & Ritchie, 2002, p. 133).
The mention of “community” is not listed in Wickliffe’s “10 Foundational Principles” however, this idea is common to the progressive literature. Cooperative learning has been a pedagogical ideal greatly informed by the progressive ideas of Dewey. Dewey wrote of cooperative learning in a sense that he believed that “the subject-matter of the school should mark a gradual differentiation out of the primitive unconscious unity of social life and that this social life be the center of school studies” (Dewey, 1897, p. 24). Cooperative learning practices are often the foundation of a progressive classroom, allowing the children to work together to co-create knowledge, understanding, and to build relationships necessary in becoming a learning and social community.

Katz and McClellan (1997) specifically discuss the idea of building community in their work. Like Noddings (2005), Katz and McClellan (1997) blame the changes in society and school structure, for the decrease in the “sense of community” that our young children experience today. “In the past, children’s need for a sense of community and belonging, emotional and social bonding, and nurturance were met by the family, extended family, and larger community” (Katz & McClellan, 1997, p. 24). The “relationships in communities are characterized by the kinds of emotions – personalization, authenticity, caring, and unconditional acceptance – found in families, extended families, neighborhoods, and other social organizations” (Sergiovanni, 1994, p. xvi). Noddings (2005) described an ideological process of
“caring” in schools not as a method or a prescription for teaching, but as a way of building these relationships and a sense of community between individuals. Furthermore, Noddings’ argument is that, "intellectual development is important, but it cannot be the first priority of schools" (p. 10). Noddings suggests the “academic purpose of the school drives everything” (p. 13), yet argues that “caring” should be at the center of our educational efforts (p. 14).

Kohn (1996), influenced by the theories of Piaget and Dewey, in addition to the current work of Kamii and Devries (1993), Sergiovanni (1994), Noddings (1995), Watson (2003), and Katz and McClellan (1997), defines a community as, “a place in which students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other;...they feel connected to each other; they are part of an us” (p. 101). Kohn argues that as a “result of this, they all feel safe in their classes, not only physically but emotionally” (p. 102).

Watson (2003) suggests that a classroom community contain seven key points initiated by the teacher and infused into the curriculum so much so that it becomes part of the pedagogy. These seven components include: “1) build a sense of group membership, 2) use inclusive language, 3) build a shared history, 4) highlight shared goals, 5) highlight shared values, 6) build interdependence and responsibility, and 7) encourage students to help one another” (Watson, 2003, p. 107). This supports the idea that “achieving a sense of community entails that children understand that they are a part of a larger group and
that being thoughtful and cooperative with others benefits both them and the entire group” (Howes & Ritchie, 2002, p. 133).

The commonly held commitments and values demonstrated by the participants in this classroom were evident through their social interactions and their work habits. The routines, the norms, the expectations, concerns and values were displayed throughout each day by both teachers, the parent volunteers and the paraprofessionals. Each student, whether first or second grade, were expected to equally participate in the group conversation, the group activities and the process of learning. Children with and without IEP’s were supported by peers and by the adults in the room. Additionally, each of these children were expected to complete the same work with equal expectations, at their own pace.

*Tracing the Experiences of Four Diverse Children Though the Classroom Culture*

Throughout the initial phases of analysis of the classroom as a whole, I became increasingly interested in certain children’s experiences within this curriculum. At this time my observations became more selective (Spradley, 1980) as I identified four children as “tracer units” (Kantor, Eglas, & Fernie, 1993) in order to follow and understand their experiences within the group. Graue & Walsh, (1998, p. 163) discuss tracer units as “interpretive elements” or threads woven throughout specific events that may provide a way of thinking about the data. This can be focused observations of an individual
child’s experiences within the curriculum or social setting (Kantor, Eglas, & Fernie, 1993) or to “illuminate layers of contexts” within learning and teaching (Dantas, 1999, p. 88). My interest at this point was to explore the learning experiences within the progressive pedagogy, specifically the use of projects with an inclusive group of children with diverse abilities. Therefore, I chose four children to follow, each of whom had a unique path through the classroom and the curricular even of a project. I chose one girl and three boys, of who two were in the first grade and two in the second. Each of these four children were mentioned often in the cultural events that made up the daily routine discussed in the first section. Nate, Johnny, Jimmy and Sandy illustrated how four children with diverse abilities managed participation, during the daily cultural elements, which reflected the progressive pedagogy in section one.

In order to reflect on the inclusive nature of learning in this classroom culture, these four children’s interactions and experiences are documented throughout the day, and through project work. One student represents a typical child’s experiences, and one represents the experience of a child who is gifted. Another student has been identified as having autism, while another is identified as having a learning disability while at school. In this section, I introduce each of these children in detail. In the next section, I provide a mini tour (Spradley, 1980) of project learning and look at these four children’s path through a project individually and as a group.
Nathan (Nate)

Nate, a friendly eight year old, second grade boy seemingly well liked by his peers. He is soft spoken and Mrs. Cooke refers to him as good natured. Nate is fairly tall for his grade, and enjoys playing both indoor games and outdoor sports. His mother shares that he has some developmental delays, which may be attributed to what she calls an “interrupted childhood” due to an international adoption at age 3.5 years. Until age 3.5 years, Nate lived in an orphanage, which his mother shared, kept him safe and fed in a crib for the first three years of his life.

Socially Nate enjoys interacting with friends and family and seems to learn best in the social context, but also loves to spend time one-on-one with his family members and friends. He has friends at home that range from age four to age twelve, and interacts well with them all. Mom reports that Nate often appears to prefer playing with younger toys, especially toys with music commonly seen in the toddler and preschool isle. Nate’s mother reports that he often has difficulty following directions at home and feels that he may not always understand the meaning of the directions. Nate’s mother shares that he has difficulty comprehending some intricate directions with specific expectations at home and school. At home, Nate displays some anxiety and checks in with mom often. He often expresses not knowing what to do and how to do something. His mother shared that he fears being left
behind by his family and friends, which may be directly related to his “interrupted childhood”, or it could just be his own personal makeup.

Nate will pose questions such as, “What would I do if I got lost at Disney World?” even though a trip has not been planned. Nate checks base often with his mother when he is outside playing with friends. At home, Nate will also entertain deep thoughts in conversation such as, “Does lightning go into poles and then into our plugs so we can have lights?”

Nate participates in social group activities outside of school. He plays soccer, swims and takes gymnastics. He plays with his older sister and has regular play dates with friends from school. He has a small group of favorite friends who are important to him. During play, Nate prefers fantasy games verses games with rules.

At school, Nate sits back and observes others, and chooses who to interact with and when to interact. This may supported to his family discussions on “good choices, bad choices and his choices”.

Nate attended a local preschool and received early reading intervention in kindergarten, reading recovery in first grade and currently he has an Educational Team Report (formally an IEP) and receives pull out intervention in the Learning Lab (Resource Room) for reading, writing and math in a small group setting. He receives speech therapy 40 minutes each week at school. According to the intervention specialist that he works with daily in the resource room, Miss Night, when he has free time, he chooses to play games by himself or work with
pattern blocks independently. In a small group setting with a kindergartner, he interacts willingly and comfortably. Nate seems to prefer engaging in activities that are for younger children, for example assembling an alphabet puzzle. In social group, held by Miss Night, Nate is very quiet and tends to keep to himself unless Miss Night directly asks him a question. This social group is comprised of several boys, most of them older than Nate, each who have a current educational team report (ETR), and receive educational instruction from Miss Night. Several of these boys also have a current behavior plan written by Miss Night, addressing specific behaviors such as bullying, impulsive or aggressive behaviors towards other children in a classroom, or on the playground. Behavior plans are written for children at Wickliffe who have a behavior that a member of the special education faculty wants to change for a variety of reasons. Typically, behavior plans at Wickliffe, are written to decrease a socially unacceptable or negative behavior. The teachers and the parents decide what behavior needs to be changed and just how they might go about changing an unwanted behavior. Typically, a reward system is created for the wanted behavior, such as more computer time or extra library time. Behavior plans are commonly used in special education. This particular social group mixed several boys who had behavior plans for bullying with Nate, who was in it to gain skills in social interactions and sharing ideas. I found this to be an interesting choice for a special “intervention” social group. Mainly because Nate did not have
behavioral concerns by the faculty, and tended to be reserved in this setting according to his mother.

In the learning lab with Miss Night, Nate uses lined paper when writing and sometimes needs a visual model of letters to use as a reference. She reports that academically, Nate has a “weak working memory” and it is sometimes difficult for him to hold all pieces of information together during an academic task. Miss Night reports that self-monitoring when on an academic task is extremely difficult for him to do. He has a reading folder that has an alphabet chart, specific sight words, word sorts that he has completed and which he can use as a reference if needed. He also has a math folder with number words, symbols, quantities, a 100’s chart, and a calendar to use for reference when he is working on a math problem. Recently Nate has been working on his writing and practicing self-editing. Miss Night reports that she feels the need to prompt him with the editing stages every day, even though he has been working on this for several weeks.

In the learning lab, Nate displays the interest in “doing the right thing”. He wants to please Miss Night, and to be successful in his work. She shares that he often has difficulty following oral directions, perhaps due to his skills with cognition and language processing, and needs to have the steps broken down for him (task analysis). When he writes, his hand fatigues easily. He begins writing strong and by the second line of print, his hand weakens, and he begins to lose focus (attention). Miss Night feels in her room, that Nate does
his best work in a one-on-one situation as Miss. Night feels Nate is often distracted by other children, during group learning situations.

Nate expresses his ideas verbally and enjoys sharing personal narratives to Miss Night. She encourages this strength in verbal ability and creating narratives, to be applied when remembering directions and when writing. It is common in education to support a student in using their strengths to help with their weaknesses or areas of less interest. For example, if a child is physically coordinated, yet socially very shy, a teacher may encourage this child to teach others how to bounce a ball, who may not know how. This provides the opportunity for the coordinated child to shine as a mentor to others, while providing him/her with the opportunity to practice interacting with peers, hopefully in a more comfortable setting. It is this technique that Miss. Night is referring to with Nate’s ability, and interest, in creating narratives.

Miss Night shared that at first, Nate did not like to leave Mrs. Cooke’s room and go with her to the learning lab. He often expressed concern that he felt he was missing what the others were doing in his classroom and seemed to fear a loss of connectedness with the group. Over time, he seems to be used to the routine and no longer expresses this concern. His mother however shared that at home Nate expresses that he is still unhappy leaving his home classroom.

In his home classroom with Mrs. Cooke, Nate has many friends and works both independently and in small groups. He completes his work
slowly, and has the option of taking unfinished work to Miss Night’s room, or saving it in his unfinished work-box. When Nate is working on a project, he appears to have a mental plan, and works on his projects in a slow yet organized fashion. For example, at his table, he was painting a Harpy Eagle for the rainforest mural, which would also need a written description. Nate shared with me that he would let the paint dry overnight and set it aside. He then proceeded to get an index card and his fact sheet to begin writing as “he could do nothing else with his art until it dried.”

Johnny

According to Mrs. Cooke, Johnny is a “typically developing”, and very shy, second grade boy. Johnny is athletic and enjoys playing sports such as soccer, baseball, swimming and wrestling. His mother shares that he has a small but special group of friends that he socializes with outside of school. He is also very involved in church activities, loves pets and playing outside. Johnny will play computer games and build with Legos, but his parents report that he prefers to be outside. Johnny attended a local and popular, play-based preschool which focused on social-emotional development over academics. Many children at Wickliffe also attended this same pre-school. Johnny remains friends with two boys from pre-school. Johnny has an older brother with autism, who also attends Wickliffe. Mrs. Cooke feels that socially, Johnny has come a long way since first grade. Initially (in first grade with Mrs. Cooke) he was very shy and quiet. He did not
interact much with friends or adults. Johnny did not often raise his hand or share his ideas. Although he now will raise his hand and interact with others, it is still hard for him to go to an adult and ask questions. He will now share his ideas in class, although this does not happen frequently in front of a large group. Johnny does have a close set of friends, in and outside of his classroom, and with them—he talks freely. Mrs. Cooke reports that Johnny does take more risks socially and academically, now that he did in the past and is more likely to share if it is a fact than an original idea.

Over the two years in this classroom, Johnny has become more active working in small groups, and is willing to participate in a number of artistic activities. During these activities you will often hear him say, “Oh, I do this at home.” Johnny is physically very capable, although he has an odd grip on his pencil, which contributes to sloppy writing, according to Mrs. Cooke.

Johnny received reading intervention during his first grade year, and is currently reading at grade level. He was observed collaboratively problem solving with others during math, and seems to enjoy working on his number scroll during math choice as he would often pick that choice. Mrs. Cooke shares that Johnny often becomes very involved with his research, often taking certain ideas in multiple directions.
Jimmy

Jimmy is a first grade boy with two brothers, one who is his twin. Jimmy went to a special needs pre-school which was both play-based and academic. Jimmy has been diagnosed with autism and spends approximately 50% of his school day in a cross categorical classroom with Mrs. Hyatt, for children with communication and social deficits, or in occupational and speech therapy. The other 50% of his day is spent in his home general education classroom with Mrs. Cooke. When he is in the general classroom setting, or in specials, he and another boy are accompanied by a paraprofessional, Rosalyn. Rosalyn situates herself beside, or in between Jimmy and another boy.

Mrs. Hyatt reports that Jimmy is socially immature, for example, he doesn’t yet read social cues from others to see if they like the type of interaction they are having with him. He does not respond to his peers when they ask him to stop touching them or hugging them. She also shares that Jimmy occasionally displays poor coping skills during group work. For example, he may cry, run away or begin screaming if he is asked to do something that he does not like or if it is recess time and he is asked to go outside to the playground. Jimmy is able to follow directions if the directions are clear to him. If he seems to be hesitating, an adult, usually Rosalyn, will state the directions in another way, or demonstrate to him. Jimmy typically responds to this by beginning his work.
Mrs. Hyatt and his physical education teacher report that his gross and fine motor skills are below age level, and he receives adaptive physical education (APE) for gross motor, and occupational therapy to work on his fine motor skills.

Jimmy stays on task during preferred activities, however for non-preferred or novel activities he may need adult prompting. Jimmy is generally able to work independently if the activity is familiar or routine. For example, he does not require any assistance during quiet reading time, where he is able to get his own book box, sit in one spot, and read silently for 15-20 minutes. For non-preferred activities, such as writing, or novel activities, he often bites his nails, or will go to get a book and begin to reading, seemingly attempting to ignore the writing task at hand. Rosalynn reports that Jimmy often needs an adult to sit with him for prompting when writing. The adult may need to modify the writing assignment, or scribe when he fatigues. Mrs. Cooke feels that this often holds true for other classroom activities. If suggested by, and supported by an adult, Jimmy will play a math game with peers. During project work that requires higher-level thinking and cooperation skills, Jimmy often receives adult support from Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hyatt or Rosalynn.

According to his teachers, Jimmy’s academic ability is generally above average. They describe his reading and decoding skills as on the fourth grade level, and his math skills as on grade level. They report that his writing skills are below grade level as are his reading
comprehension skills. Jimmy does not often take risks either socially or academically. He is sensitive and easily embarrassed when an adult asks him about something he may have done that was against the rules. Jimmy’s teachers report that he rarely extends an idea from the factual part of the idea, or shares deep level thinking on a particular topic. It does not seem to come naturally to him. Jimmy participates in parallel play and some cooperative play with adult support.

Sandy

Sandy is a bright and very social first grade girl reading above grade level. She interacts often with peers and with adults. Sandy often plays with others outside of school.

During conversations, she is very articulate and aware of her surroundings. Mrs. Cooke feels that she completes her work quickly, because it comes easy to her. When this occurs, Mrs. Cooke encourages Sandy to write more in-depth on a topic, challenge herself with a higher book, or expand beyond the required first grade research. It was observed that Sandy often seemed to prefer making another choice instead of re-checking her work or going more deeply into a topic. Sandy seems to keep tabs on her friends, and is quick to join in other’s conversations and work. She plays games with her peers and appears to always follow the rules, making sure that everyone else does too. Some children may be somewhat intimidated by Sandy as she tends to boss her same age peers, and therefore do not always seek her as a first choice to play with. As the year progressed, this changed a bit
and she began developing stronger, more equal relationships with her peers.

Mrs. Cooke reports that academically, Sandy is reading and writing above grade level and her math skills are also strong. She is often interested in projects that take minimal time and although very social, often prefers to work alone to get her work done quickly. Sandy typically ensures that peers in her classroom stay on task by directing or reminding them. She is very artistic, exploring colors and shapes, illustrating her stories with great detail, often choosing the artistic pieces of project work to dive into. Mrs. Cooke reports that Sandy seems to enjoy music, art and gym.

By following Nate, Johnny, Jimmy and Sandy through the daily events in the first section, and through project work in the next section, I attempt to shed light on their unique individual and group experiences, both socially and academically. Through the exploration of a specific example of the progressive practice, I attempt to illustrate not only their line of thinking and actions, but study a specific aspect of this pedagogy. Choosing four children with diverse abilities, is a way to represent the multifaceted personalities that comprise a classroom. Understanding that this classroom includes children from both first and second grade, and children who are on different levels of social and academic development is important when exploring the progressive practice. These four children are representative of all of the children in this inclusive classroom. By
exploring their daily paths, engaging with this curriculum, we seek to understand their experiences more fully. Finally, this study seeks to understand inclusion, what it looks like and how it works, in a progressive classroom.

*Constructing Projects in a Progressive Classroom*

Through the reflective work of the team (the teachers and myself), the first four foundational principles with the ninth, relisted below, became visible as we explored the following:

- Structure experiences that actively engage the child in producing, rather than solely consuming knowledge.
- Integrate thematic units of study and foster authentic learning opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for the arts to occupy an integrated place in the curriculum as an essential way to acquire and express knowledge.
- Use time and space in a flexible manner to maximize student opportunities for in-depth inquiry.
- Guide child choice and decision-making.

For this ethnography, sample observations from projects serve multiple purposes. First to illustrate just how project work, common in progressive education, is designed and implemented. Secondly to follow four children, with diverse abilities’ experiences while participating in project work (done more so in the Rainforest Project).

In November 2008, when I initially entered this classroom, I discovered the children to be in the midst of the final weeks of a project on “professions”. It was the class plan to report on this
project work during an upcoming Town Meeting. The plan was also to display their interactive “Wickliffe Riddles” in the hallway. Much of this work has been discussed in the earlier section entitled “writing workshop” which is where I initially saw the children working on this particular project. In this classroom, project work is not limited to just the afternoon project “work-time”. Project work is integrated throughout each day just as the academic disciplines are integrated into each project and each aspect of almost every day.

The children planned to share this particular work with their parents during a private open house one evening for this class only. The second project was on The Amazon Rainforest, which I observed in its entirety. Finally, the beginning of a project on “Nutrition” started as the rainforest study and my weekly observations were wrapping up. Thus, I observed three projects as they were constructed in the classroom. Projects often overlapped and the students seemed to be able to differentiate between them.

Projects in Mrs. Cooke’s room are designed “around a big idea that the faculty feel is important in the lives of children; they [the children] bring in their own ideas and questions” which add to and often help to direct the study. Mrs. Cooke looks at all the curriculum standards to help her with the planning as well as when the study is completed. She reports that often, due to the children’s emerging interests, additional standards are covered during a project that may initially have been unintentional but are an added bonus. For each of
the projects, I conducted a taxonomic analysis identifying the tracer children’s participation in the project. The project data is discussed and followed by the taxonomic analysis.

Project 1: Community Workers

Tim, a first grader, asked Nate, who is standing next to him at the computer, “How big?” Nate responds, “We want the font kinda big.” After some brief conversation on the matter, they decided on “20”.

While the children were typing the names for the riddles, I observed them assisting each other in opening a new document on the computer and which button to hit in order to print the document. Mrs. Cooke feels that this type of opportunity supports children’s growth in the use of technology, collaboration, independence in authentic ways, while learning the required academic content.

Mrs. Cooke, walked around the room and would often say, “I am so proud of your writing.” She would often offer a specific comment for specific details she found in their writing. She continued to teach individual mini lessons as needed on grammar, or the use of commas and periods, or capitalizations, as she walked around the room, stopping to check on each student’s progress. She also informed the children that if anybody felt that they needed a break from writing, they could make a reading or another writing choice, and return to their project later. Individual mini-lessons were offered in addition to the large group lessons on content. The writing workshop, offered Mrs. Cooke “the time
to check on each student and provide support as they need it, when they need it.”

This year was an election year and Mrs. Cooke felt that it was important to study this process in some manner. She however, did not want the focus of this project to end up being on which candidate the class parents were voting for, and the class discussions to be political debates between 6, 7 and 8 year old children. Mrs. Cooke’s idea to study “professions” as part of a social studies standard came about because of this. The students and Mrs. Cooke discussed her idea, and together they agreed on a variety of community workers that they wanted to know more about, with the president being one of the professions studied.

Mrs. Cooke introduced the concept of professions by reading books and holding discussions with the children during morning meeting. Together the children created a list of professions that they were interested in exploring. Once the list was complete, they divided up the workers by raising their hand if interested when Mrs. Cooke called them out. More than one child could research a particular profession based on personal interest. The initial professions included firefighters, teachers, police, construction workers, doctors and the president. The children read books and searched on-line about each type of profession, and what might be some of their job responsibilities. The children wrote details about each job on an index card, then placed these cards on the painted and stuffed, paper creation of what each
worker might wear and look like. These models, designed collaboratively by the children who chose the same profession, were about three feet in height, and were shared at Town Meeting. Each student in Mrs. Cooke’s room read their 3-5 sentence reports to the entire school during Town Meeting.

As the children explored the teaching profession, they interviewed and sent out questionnaires to the school faculty. Mrs. Cooke shared that as a class, there was so much interest in this particular project that during one morning meeting, the group decided to expand their research and study about other school employees. A request, written by the students, went out to adult workers in the building. Replies came in from many professionals in the building. Mrs. Cooke’s class ended up receiving information from a kindergarten teacher, a paraprofessional, the music teacher, another first/second teacher and a third/fourth grade teacher in the building. The children, who had completed research on their first community profession, chose among the new school-based options. They then practiced their handwriting by copying the staff’s responses, word for word, neatly on a sheet of paper. This process took several days to complete, however during this process the unfinished work, as always, was kept in their unfinished work folders. The completed copies, checked for neatness and accuracy by the teacher, then placed into a finished workbox. As the children had time, they glued the handwritten cards onto a large piece of construction paper. The construction paper
was folded in half. Inserted in the closed section, was a picture of the Wickliffe staff member with a typed nameplate glued under their picture. Referred to as the "Wickliffe Riddles", they were placed on the walls in the hallway. As passers-by read the riddle, they were challenged to guess just who the school employee might be. They were able to check their guess by flipping open the folded part to see if they were right.

Two fourth graders looked at a Wickliffe Riddle posted in the hall, just outside of Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. They read the description silently and then loudly announced, in unison, "It’s Mrs. Binns!" Laughing at this, they opened the top of the riddle to discover if they were right or wrong. "We were right!" they exclaimed, and ran down the hall to the cafeteria.
The children took great pride in their work, often working together in the gluing, typing and printing. They would comment, critique and compliment their own and other’s work in a constructive and supportive way. The children offered each other advice, such as just how to fit all of the words onto one page. Rosalyn and Mrs. Hyatt assisted Jimmy and others by helping them with the copying process. Jimmy struggles with his handwriting, so copying appeared to be exhausting to him. He took several breaks as he wrote, and would often
get up and go get a book to read. Rosalynn would gently remind him that he is allowed to take breaks, but de did need to come back to the copying eventually. She would allow Jimmy to read for about five minutes, then request that he try the writing again. By the third break, she suggested that he place this work in his un-finished folder, and they would “get back to it” tomorrow.

Johnny copied neatly and quickly asking only for help from a nearby adult when reading some unfamiliar words. Nate started out writing neatly, but his hand fatigued, so he took many breaks when he was copying. Mrs. Cooke and his mother both reported that Nate often gets very tired when attempting to write for long periods of time. They shared that although he starts out strong and writing neatly, he slows down and his writing becomes messier as he continues.

Jimmy only had a few lines to copy. The first graders were given fewer sentences than the second graders. Nate and Johnny were both second graders and therefore had as much as a page to copy. Nate took several breaks, and typed or glued. He took several days to complete this piece of the project. The children did not appear to me to focus on how long it took each one of them to finish this assignment, as many children took several days to complete their work for a variety of reasons. Sandy completed her copying quickly and neatly and proceeded to the next task.

As the children worked, the teachers reminded all of them to stay on task if they seemed to be wondering off topic by saying, “If you are
working on copying, then you need to focus on your writing.” Each child in the classroom was responsible for completing at least one riddle, and some who finished early had the option of doing two.

I did not get the sense that there was a need to feel rushed or pressured if they did not complete their work at the same time as their neighbor. It felt as though each child expected to finish their work at a different time than their neighbor. The emphasis, during this particular work-time, was on letter formation and accuracy. The opportunity to practice their writing skills, were provided through the copying of the letters both correctly and neatly. The children were reminded by Mrs. Cooke, to “pay attention to capital letters, tall letters, spaces between words and complete sentences”, as they copied their answers. The teachers provided any child who needed or requested it, with a letter guide. I observed the teachers walking around the classroom providing individual assistance to children who requested it. I also observed the children reading their work to each other, and checking each other’s work when asked. The children who struggled (special needs or not) would request, and receive assistance from peers. Two children were overheard discussing their progress on completion of the task.

“Hey, are you done over there?” (Johnny)
“No, I have a lot to do yet” (Nate)
“I’m almost done!” (Johnny)
“I’ll help you when I am done, OK?” (Johnny)
“Sure” (Nate)
The teacher responded to this conversation by saying loud enough for all in the room to hear,

"You know, different people work at different rates, so nobody will be finished at the same time and that’s OK."

Johnny finished neatly copying his riddle information onto his sheet and printing the picture of the person at the computer. Once he had glued, he began walking around the room helping others do the same. Other children, as they waited for the computer to print out the picture and to type up the person’s name, helped those who were typing— as though they were all on a typing team. As the children typed, I could overhear two young children discussing the use of periods, and how to know just where to place them in a sentence.

“I think you put it at the end of every line”
“No, it is at the end of every sentence”
“How do you know when your at the end of a sentence?”
“It is right before the big letter.”

During work sessions, students were found to be very complimentary of each other during my observations. Not once did I overhear any negatives about another’s skills in any area. Timmy discussed with Johnny, what a good writer Brandon was.

“He wrote a whole sentence without even taking a break. Actually, he wrote the whole thing without taking a break!”

The plan was to share this project at an upcoming Town Meeting. As the projects on community professions and the Wickliffe Riddles, came to a close, the rehearsals began in preparation to share their
work with the rest of the school. Mrs. Hyatt attended the rehearsals for Town Meeting with Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. She attended the rehearsals primarily to support the students with autism, however, as always, Mrs. Hyatt assisted any student who needed her support. She situated herself near two boys with autism, but served as a classroom helper for the entire class. The practice for this event occurred for Jimmy in the large group setting. Based on Jimmy’s concerns, he, along with another boy, discussed “things that may come up during town meeting” in Mrs. Hyatt’s classroom during a small group lesson. Mrs. Hyatt presented examples of what might happen during town meeting and during their class presentation, and what they could do if these events actually did happen. Likewise, Mrs. Cooke had similar discussions with the entire group, including Jimmy, before and after the group rehearsals.

Each child in the classroom was expected to contribute to the research, the writing, the typing, the painting, gluing, cutting, and the speaking in Town Meeting during project 1. Mrs. Cooke shared that she had expectations for the academic work based on grade level, and she hoped that each student would enjoy sharing their work with their peers in the school. Although each child could proceed at their own pace, and could request assistance when needed from an adult or a peer, the work must still be their own. Mrs. Cooke expected that each student would complete their assigned work so that it could be shared at Town Meeting, the parent open house, and in the hallways near their
classroom. In order to create work to share, one must edit their writing, critique their own art, and be comfortable with their finished project.

In summary, this project integrated social studies, reading, writing, computer work, collaboration, planning and editing to name a few content areas and developmental domains represented during this particular project. Other important aspects of this work include the presentation at the town meeting, a focus on jobs/community employment, sharing their new knowledge, displaying the artwork for the community, all developmental and disciplinary domains integrated—all supporting the progressive principles, which guide much of what is planned and implemented in the classroom. A taxonomic analysis was conducted show the ways in which the tracer children participated in this project.

If we would look at their individual goals, and through discussion with Mrs. Cooke on a variety of the lessons and activities throughout this project, we can see on figure 4.4, just a few of the common skills that Nate, Jimmy, Johnny and Sandy practiced. We can also see some of the invisible support that the tracer children received throughout their participation in this project.
Project 2: The Amazon Rainforest

The rainforest project began on Monday, December 8, 2008 with a field trip to the Wexner Center of the Arts, on the OSU campus, to view
the film, “Riana 2: An Amazon Adventure,” which was part of their Zoom Family Film Festival. This field trip was shared by our first/second grade class and their “Big Buddies” from a third/fourth grade class, as the two neighboring classes would be working together on the rainforest project. I have picked this particular project to share in great detail. I was present for this entire project and followed certain children, with diverse abilities, through this learning experience. Like the progressive pedagogy itself, my stories and examples are integrated and cannot always be separated into neat little sections. I just have organized the bulk of my examples into a three-project format.

As always, parents were invited to participate by chaperoning the class. This science-geographic study began during writing workshop and continued during the afternoon project block of time in the daily schedule. Throughout each day over the next several weeks, the children worked on their project. Many non-fiction books were read during the read-aloud times of the day covering many different aspects of the Amazon rainforest. Most covered plants, animals and insects that live in the rainforest. The Magic Tree House research guide on rainforests (Mary Pope Osborne) was available to the students as a study guide.

Mrs. Cooke began a morning meeting by introducing the inhabitants of the rainforest (both insects and animals) that she had printed out from the computer. Each sheet had a sketch of an animal or insect,
with a typed paragraph or two describing its diet and habitat. During a morning group, Mrs. Cooke flipped through her stack of printouts and read the name of an inhabitant until each child in the class, had responded to one that interested them. She handed each child in the class at least one sheet (an animal or insect) to start with, as she dismissed them from morning meeting.

Their initial assignment was to become familiar with their research species by coloring the inhabitant. Each student had to use a book, or the internet to find out what colors they had to be. Some simply read the written description on the handout to color the picture. As always, the unfinished work went into their work folders to finish during another work session. Over the course of the next few days, the children painted the leaves on the trees on the mural in the hall. The third/fourth grade class next door began the mural background and could go no further until our class created the leaves for their trees. Mrs. Cooke designed the initial activities. She reports that she typically designs initial activities and as the projects progress, she often takes suggestions from the group on how to extend the study.

In small groups (of their own choosing), the children went to the hall. Mrs. Cooke had discussed the fact that “the trees could not be too big because the fire marshal has rules for safety in schools”. Some of the leaves were painted and some were in 3-D and made with construction paper. In addition to the leaves, the children decided to
add moss and other native species found in the rainforest based on their readings. The children painted in approximately 5-minute intervals. Mrs. Cooke could be heard responding to the painting of the children with comments such as, “great texture” and “good use of colors.” The following is a sample of the conversations between Sandy, Nate, Johnny, the tracer children and their first grade peer, Tim. The children were painting the mural in the hallway. This conversation was recorded as they talked among themselves.

Sandy: “You want to just dab it” (showing Tim how to paint with the brush).

Tim: “You only want it to go one day” (for this portion of the project).

Johnny: “Hey guys, can you help me with this?”

Nate comes to help Johnny by painting roots on the tree as Johnny paints on the moss.

Nate: “Anything else?”

Johnny: “hmmm...yes down here.”

Nate: Looking around the mural, “Oh, there’s vines we missed!”

They worked together painting for a while

Johnny: “OK, that’s good.”

Tim (observing the mural, spreads his arms far apart in a grand gesture): “It stops right here with its hugeness!”

Sandy: “Why is there sunlight able to get through? I’m adding more leaves.”

Jimmy, walking on the opposite side of the hall and looking at the fire alarm is gently escorted to the mural by Mrs. Cooke. Mrs. Cooke helps get Jimmy focused by painting the outline of a tree so that he could simply fill it in.
This brief encounter is just one example of 5 children with diverse abilities working together with a common goal in mind. They were applying their knowledge about the rainforest when creating a background mural in the hallway just outside their classroom. They were often unattended by an adult, yet stayed focused and worked together. They understood their role and the purpose for completing this task. Mrs. Cooke made no special comments and did not draw any attention from Jimmy’s peers as she simply painted the outline of a tree for him to fill in. Jimmy needed something familiar and simple to paint as initially he did not show any interest in participating. No words were spoken. An outline of a tree was painted, and an expectation by Mrs. Cooke that he would fill in the trunk. She handed him the brush with the brown paint already on it. Jimmy began painting right away with no assistance. He painted green leaves on one tree for a minute and reported that he was “finished.” This was fine as every contribution on the mural counted. There were no expectations on the amount of painting that one had to do.

Nate helped Johnny by working together to complete some rather intricate details on the mural. Sandy seemed to enjoy painting. She also seemed to assume the role of directing her peers while they painted.

During the next step in this project, the children had to create a visual representation of their first inhabitant of the rainforest. The students had to represent the animal or insect by using the correct
color, size and scale of the species, which might take some more individual research. They could use paint and construction paper, and other art supplies such as glue on eyes, and pipe cleaners for legs, but it needed to be a true visual representation, with the correct colors, of the inhabitant. Once completed, it was to be cut out, so that it could eventually be placed on the mural. One trick was that it needed to be sized to scale within the existing mural.

One day, during writing workshop, the children read about their Amazon animal or insect from the original printout. The first grader’s assignment was to search for their inhabitant’s diet and habitat. The second graders also had these same two questions to answer, but were required to find and document two additional facts about their species. Rosalynn, Mrs. Cooke and I, all assisted the children with this reading. We highlighted the information that they needed to collect with the children, and they then began to copy these facts onto an index card. Once the cut out and the index card were ready, they were mounted and placed onto the mural in the correct spot in the rainforest based on where they live (i.e. the emergent layer) or what they ate.
The children continued adding to the mural with additional details, as they discovered them, over the next several weeks. Through reading and research, the children discovered that flowers thrived in the rainforest. The children decided to create flowers with tissue paper, then glued them on the mural. Many children made several more replicas (with a research card) on inhabitants to place in the correct spot on the mural based on their natural habitat.
The winter break occurred in the middle of the project, but the children returned to it in early January. Towards the end of the project, and for the first time, Mrs. Cooke began discussing the “project deadline” which was only a few days away. The children were having their individual parent open house to share their rainforest study, their Wickliffe Riddles and their project on professions.

During one morning meeting, after lunch count and the read aloud, the children had to share their “work-plan” with Mrs. Cooke. Each child had to identify his/her plan of action, before dismissal from group. The following sample of this conversation was recorded, as the children responded to Mrs. Cooke by reporting their work plan as they were called on.

Nate: “My writing”
Sandy: “my facts and eyeballs”
Jimmy: “animal”
Johnny: “writing facts about a slug”

Each child had a mental plan and knew exactly where they needed to begin working. Although each child was at a different phase in their project work, they knew where to begin and what needed to be done. The goal was never to work exactly at the same speed as another child, or to prepare an exact replica of their neighbor’s work, but to complete the required task and to contribute to the class project as a whole. Imbedded with each step of the project were specific learning objectives from many different academic content standards.
Upon release from the group, Jimmy went to another table to read a peer’s facts about another animal. Rosalynn called him to his workstation (his table). Jimmy responds by saying, "No, I don’t like that table." Rosalynn informed him that he had “a job to do, and that he could choose to do it in this classroom, or upstairs in Mrs. Hyatt’s room, but he had to complete his work.” Without speaking, Jimmy joined Rosalynn at his table and began working.

The Googly Eyes

Jimmy was at his table with Rosalynn and three other children writing their facts. I asked him what animal he was studying and he responded, without looking up or stopping his work, “I don’t want to answer a question.”

When asked what Sandy was studying she replied, “A blue Morpho Butterfly. I need help finding the food and habitat facts.” I offered to assist and together we looked at the fact sheet. I highlight in yellow two sentences containing the facts that she needs to complete her fact card. Her butterfly cut out is complete and on her table ready to be hung on the mural, once the fact card is complete.

Nate replies, “I am studying the Harpy Eagle.” He was looking on the internet for a picture and facts about the Harpy Eagle. As he asked for my assistance, Sandy handed him a fact sheet on the Harpy from a pile.

Sandy, “Here, look at this for the right colors. Nate, “Thanks” and he returned to his table and began outlining the picture with a fine marker. He then went to get the watercolor paints, as he chose to paint the eagle prior to cutting it out. Once painted he laid it out to dry, “I’ll cut it out tomorrow.”

Nate leaves the table returning with the digital camera. He asked me to set it up so that he could go and take a picture of the teacher assigned to him so… that he could finish his Wickliffe Riddle. As I assist Nate, Johnny turns to me and says, “I’m copying facts about the slug.”
Jimmy copies his facts and then goes to free choice. After a few minutes, he goes with Rosalynn to the hallway to glue his picture and the fact sheet on the mural. Johnny copied his facts—then independently mounted them onto an index card. He then asked me to help him glue the slug and the fact card on the mural. I asked him where he was planning to place it on the mural. He responded, “They eat insects and fungus and live in the dirt of the rainforest.” He glued it on the forest floor.

I find Sandy in the hall. As I approached her, she began teaching me about the forest canopy and the emergent layer of the rainforest. She showed me both of these on the mural.

On the final day of the rainforest project, with the open house only a few hours away, I asked each of the children for their final thoughts. I invited comments on the mural as we gazed at it together.

Sandy: “It’s pretty, cause the flowers look pretty. It was fun.”
Johnny: “The rainforest has lots of trees”
Jimmy: “It’s lovely.”
Kami: What was your favorite part of the project?
Johnny replied, “Making the waterfall on the mural.”
Sandy answers, “The flowers, painting, waterfall and painting.”
Nate comments, “Making the leaves, making the animals, cutting it out and writing the words. Jimmy simply but directly responds, “The googly eyes.”
Kami: “How about the most interesting fact you learned?”
Johnny: “Some slugs eat meat.”
Sandy: “The blue morpho butterfly drinks the juice out of rotten fruit.”
Nate: “the Harpy Eagle is the good “preyer” in the whole entire jungle and he is the biggest bird in the whole entire rainforest.”
Jimmy: “The piranha.”
Each student had his or her own ideas about the project. Some of their experiences and ideas were directly related to their own research, and some were more global. The students tended to take their research very seriously, and become immersed in the project. Jimmy’s favorite part of the project was the “googly eyes” that he glued on his piranha, which also served as his most interesting fact.

Nate tended to contribute very rich details about the Harpy eagle. He also had a mental plan of which tasks to complete and in which order. He was observed to be a very independent worker, and seemed to great pride in his work. He was overheard on several occasions telling a peer, “I’ll help you when I am finished”, or “When I finish this, I’ll write with you.” I noticed that he would always seem to finish specific steps in his work, before starting on another task. For example, during one work session, he had two projects going at one time, the riddle and his Harpy Eagle. I watched as he water-colored his eagle, pushed it to the side saying “now I’ll let that dry” and then he got up to bring me the camera. “While that dries, I want to take a picture of the teacher that I am working on. Will you set up the digital for me?” I took the camera and set it up for him, handed it back, and saying “Thanks, he headed out the door and down the hall. He didn’t ask, he just went, however Mrs. Cooke knew his work plans for this period as each child shared it before leaving the group meeting. After a few minutes, Nate returned and handed Mrs. Cooke the camera, asking her to download and print the picture he had taken. Waiting by
the printer, Nate gets the picture and returns to his desk, all independently. He cut it out, glued it on his prepared construction paper with his typed description, and folded it down. Nate then got up, placed his work in the finished bin for Mrs. Cooke to check, then returned to his eagle painting. He began to check to see if the paint was dry. Noticing that it was not, he took it over to the heater in the room and laid it on top. As he was doing this, Mrs. Cooke announced that it was time to clean up.

I was impressed by the level of independence from Nate during this work period. He had a plan and he seemed to follow it. He managed to work on two different projects during this period, completing one of them and saving the other for another day. Four days each week, this time slot was designated for project work. Nate had reported his plan, and based on my observations, kept to his plan. He was busy the entire hour, not really interacting much with others, except occasional comments to neighbors or answering questions asked of him.

During this same hour and conversation (as noted above), Sandy simply chose to respond to the painting, with little detail. During this work period, she chose to create approximately 25 tissue flowers which she added to the mural. She had completed her inhabitant research about half way through the work hour, and chose not to start on another today. I took this as one example of her interest in art and aesthetics.
Johnny was fascinated with the fact that some slugs eat meat. I watched as he read this fact allowed to several children, and continued to explore this particular fact in depth. He searched on the internet for more information about meat eating slugs. He told me that he thought slugs would be vegetarians because they lived underground and “eat my mom’s plants all the time.” Johnny expanded his research by reading more about slugs and searching for additional dietary facts about them on the internet.

Figure 4.6 Jimmy’s Piranha and Sandy’s Flower.
In preparation for the open house, the entire class practiced reading their fact cards to each adult in the room (including me) and to each other in preparation for the open house. The children finished their riddles. Everything was glued and taped, in its place in the hall.

Mrs. Cooke stayed in the room assisting the children. Rosalynn and I situated ourselves in the hallway. The children were in and out of the hallway, getting their work done.

The final lesson was held during reading that day. On the rug, Mrs. Cooke asked for a title for their mural. Jimmy offered, “Layers of the rainforest.” This prompted a discussion about everything that the mural teaches and it was decided by the group, that the layers were only a part of it. Others suggested “The Amazon Rainforest.” This title gained the agreement by all. On a sentence strip, the kids took turns sounding out, and then writing the title with the guidance of the Mrs. Cooke.

“Am a zon”
They clapped and sounded it out as a whole
“Rainforest”
“This is a compound word. What are other compound words we know?”
The children answered one at a time.
Brandon: “chainsaw”
Jimmy: “sunshine”
Nate: “Football”
Michelle: “Baseball”
Lynn: “Softball”
Mrs. Cooke invited the children to clap and say rainforest.
“rain for est”
Three children wrote the chunks on the sentence strip. The title was written collaboratively, and the mural now had a title.

Figure 4.7 The Amazon Rainforest.

In long-term projects such as this, the children are immersed in authentic activities, which eventually lead toward an investigation of a topic that interests them (Glassman, 2001). The topic may be decided ahead of time by the teacher, and may be based on specific content standards. According to Glassman (2001), it should be “the role of the
teacher to step back and facilitate rather than mentor and let the students drive the inquiry based on their own goals.” I agree that the teacher should step back and facilitate, but do feel that the mini-lessons Mrs. Cooke provided throughout this project provided a needed form of mentoring on an individual basis. For example, Mrs. Cooke supports Johnny’s interest in exploring meat eating slugs, but insisted that he record his findings on paper after he read them (to give him more practice writing). She also provided individual mini-lessons on punctuation as the students worked. Finally, she incorporated a lesson on compound words as she asked for a title for the mural.

Independently and collaboratively, all of the children actively investigated a topic. As is demonstrated here, the focus may be joint goals such as learning about the layers and the inhabitants of the rainforest. These goals may be academic as well as social. Each member of the group had specific tasks to complete such as coloring, researching, recording the data about the species under study, and duplicating the species for display. Once the initial requirements were met, children may contribute to the project over and above those basic requirements, depending on their skills and knowledge based on their abilities and interests. For example, Sandy added the flowers to the mural once the children discovered that they thrived in the rainforest. Johnny added additional dietary facts on the slugs and Nate made more than one species to display.
As I followed specific children through these projects, I discovered that although each child may have had individual experiences, the overall learning and participation was very similar between these four children. Projects such as this do allow each child to be an active and contributing member, yet work at their own pace. Although there were academic guidelines and a central focus designed by the teacher, each contribution is unique and equally valued. Expectations were high by the teachers, and the support was provided authentically as needed.

Nate who needed more support in the reading and writing piece of the project, excelled in the planning and painting of the mural. He absorbed numerous detailed facts about his species, the Harpy Eagle, and contributed to the group work by sharing these details. Nate’s abilities in reading and writing did not seem to be noticed by his peers in a negative way. He took longer to read his facts than he did with writing these same facts, however, he remembered even minute details that he read and wrote about. He worked both independently and in a group setting. His peers requested his advice and assistance with a variety of needs. Nate is invited to write books, work on the computer and play math games with a variety of boys in his class. He is also interactive at his table with girls when an aspect of work was being discussed. He does not raise his hand often, but when he does, he makes meaningful contributions. Nate tends to double check with an adult if he was completing a task correctly, but seems to have solid
ideas and generally seemed to understand what was expected of him during project work. This work seems to make sense to him and he completely immersed himself in this work.

Based on my observations and through conversations with Mrs. Cooke, I notice that Johnny is generally quiet in a large group as is Nate. Johnny seems to share factual knowledge when working on projects. He tended to do his work quickly and efficiently. Johnny did not tend to focus on quite as many facts as Nate did, however he added a little creativity to his work. Johnny painted with others, problem solved with his peers (as seen at the mural and in math) as well as stayed on a reading or writing task independently for quite some time. Johnny seemed to finish his writing tasks in one setting, and pushed himself to begin additional projects. For example, Johnny finished his first rainforest species, and started on and completed two more before the project ended. Johnny also extended ideas learned in project work to other aspects of his daily work time, that was not necessarily mentioned by Mrs. Cooke. During a writing workshop, he created an alien species and designed a habitat in the universe that would sustain this species. This idea, unique to him, mirrored some of the rainforest project work on species, dietary needs and habitats. He wrote facts about his imagined species, describing the habitat and the dietary requirements and illustrated his work. This of course sparked an interest in several others, mainly boys, to do the same during their writing workshop one day.
Jimmy, generally focused on only the task at hand, did not always seem to be immersed in the large group conversations, yet would often contribute ideas that were very relevant, along the same lines as every other child in this class and contributed the group conversation. He shared an idea for the title of the mural, and shared a compound word when everybody else was sharing. Although Jimmy did not seem to extend his ideas in other areas of his work (such as the alien design initiated by Johnny), he always participated in some way. For example, he did not join the other children on his own at the mural, nor did he pick an outline to fill in with paint on his own. He did however walk to the hallway when it was his turn to paint, and when guided to the mural, he filled in a freshly painted tree trunk (created on the spot by Mrs. Cooke). Jimmy tended to complete his tasks needing more adult direction than some of his peers. This, more one-on-one direction, was generally provided by Mrs. Hyatt, or Rosalynn. Jimmy, is a first grader, and although he has autism, this was similar to other first graders who needed more direction from the teacher from time to time.

When Jimmy lost interest in a specific task, Mrs. Cooke would request that he do another, different but related task, which served as a break. For example, when the classroom was becoming noisy during project work-time, Jimmy appeared to be becoming a bit agitated. He stopped working, held his hands over his ears and walked to the book corner. Seeing this, Mrs. Cooke suggested that Rosalynn take Jimmy to
the supply room to get large pieces of green paper to create the larger leaves for the top canopy of the rainforest. This task was still on topic, a necessary task, still contributed to the larger group project, yet gave Jimmy a necessary break from the commotion of the classroom. Every child in the room at that time was working on a different piece of their project work. Some were working together and some independently. It was not uncommon for every student to be working on a different piece of the project, and in a different place in the room or hallway. Therefore, Jimmy leaving to get green paper to make the leaves was nothing unordinary. When he returned with the paper, Mrs. Cooke announced “Jimmy brought the paper for the leaves, so if anybody wants to help Jimmy make leaves, they can all meet in the hallway.” This was an open offer to Jimmy’s classmates to collaborate with Jimmy on leaf making. A few peers walked towards Jimmy and Rosalyn and made leaves. Jimmy received some support in using scissors from Rosalyn, but stood side by side with his classmates when doing so.

Like Jimmy, Sandy, also in first grade, often worked on her project alone, although she would have conversations with others as she worked. Sandy also tended not to expand on her work by taking an idea in a new direction or demonstrating knowledge in a variety of ways other than what was expected by the teacher. As with Jimmy, her work generally followed only the basic directions. I observed that Sandy was very social and articulate with adults and answered questions quickly and completely, however, did not seem to expand on the factual details
of rainforest species as Nate and Johnny did. Perhaps developmental/grade differences play an important role in developing these skills and the second graders, who do expand on content, serve as models, or as Vygotsky would say, the more knowledgeable other (1978) for the first graders. The second graders served as models to the first graders in expanding a unit of study from minimal expectations to a more in-depth investigation.

Each child in the class was responsible for the same work (based on grade) with the same level of quality expected. The second graders were expected to investigate topics more deeply, record more facts and write longer reports than the first graders. The level of support provided was different for every student. The opportunity for expanding on the minimal expectations was unique to each student. For example, Johnny and Nate investigated their species as instructed, finding out about their habitat and diet. They then took their investigation further to explore the variety of shades that the Harpy eagles feathers were, what kind of parents eagles are, what other countries these eagles lived in and if Johnnies slugs might be related to the species of slugs in the United States.

The speed at which the work was to be completed was also unique to each student and this was acceptable, both during project work-time and in other areas of the day such as morning math, writing workshop, and reading conferences. Students could choose to work independently or in small groups and on most occasions they could decide which location
in the classroom (or hallway) best supported their work based on the
day and the assignment. Collaborative problem solving was encouraged
as was seen during the morning math, the computer time, the book
writing in writing workshop, the mural painting, the placement of
species on the mural and the title for the mural. We have discussed
each time of the day, with the project work-time generally ending the
typical day. Embedded in each time-slot are opportunities to work at
one’s own pace, practice skills independently and with support, problem
solve and plan collaboratively, revisit one’s work, edit one’s work,
critique one’s work and share one’s work.

In the two projects discussed, the content and skills addressed
were integrated in every aspect of each day. The rainforest project
required reading, writing, research, typing, computer skills, library
skills, measuring, planning, art, cooperation, collaboration, following
directions, geography and science were all areas touched upon almost
daily in an integrated format. Each child, first or second grade,
experienced the same tasks of research and writing, yet the assignments
were often grade specific. Adults were available to assist and
support. The children edited their work and often proofed a peer’s
work. The children asked for support and guidance from adults and
peers. They negotiated the number of flowers to place on the mural and
checked the canopy of the mural to see if enough sunlight could get
through to sustain the ecosystem. The animals and the insects not only
had to resemble the species, but research had to completed to determine
their placement on the mural. Each representation had to find food, water and shelter on the mural. The entire school would see this mural and it was meant to teach those who looked at it all about the Amazon rainforest.

The Wickliffe Riddles were also researched and interactive for the entire school. Reading, writing, research, typing, cooperation, planning, interviewing were all also a part of this integrated unit. The professions, a social studies unit, required more reading, writing, research, typing, art, planning, cooperation and collaboration. Each project, integrated throughout the day, was also emergent as the project progressed, adding tasks to answer emerging inquiries. The assessments are authentic and judged individually and eventually be recorded in the children’s progress reports.

Special Education services at Wickliffe including Intervention

Pull-out

Intervention services at Wickliffe serve as another layer of context within this particular school culture, and provides an important part of the story for four focal children. These services are provided to children, by the school district, who qualify at Wickliffe, therefore a mini tour (Spradley, 1980) of how the district and the administration view special education services adds yet another layer of understanding this context. During the 2008-2009 academic year, the Upper Arlington school district served approximately 480 students with disabilities and employs approximately 105 special education staff.
Since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) in 1975, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, students with disabilities have been identified for special needs services through a multi-factored evaluation (MFE), and placed in the least restrictive environment (LRE), as identified on their Educational Team Report (ETR; formally called the individual education plan or IEP). The educational team, which includes the parents, identifies the educational placement that they feel is the best fit with the student’s needs and learning styles. At Wickliffe where parent participation in general is highly valued, the intent to include the parents certainly seemed consistent with the progressive philosophy. However, a close study of the IEP team process was beyond the scope of this study. In general, placements may range from a complete placement in the general education setting with consultative services from a special education teacher (intervention specialist), to some pull out for intensive intervention, to a blended form of services by both an intervention specialist and a general educator, to complete educational support in a special education classroom. “Each child has unique learning needs and vary in the amount of intervention and special support needed, as determined by the IEP team” (Mrs. Hyatt, informal interview, January, 2009).

The district also offers identification and programming for students who fall into the gifted and talented category. Every student in the district, is screened during the spring of the year, with the
exception of second graders who are screened in the fall of their second grade year, with a nationally approved identification assessment. If a child is identified, based on the initial screening, further assessment is administered to determine if they qualify for gifted special education services.

Wickliffe currently houses many special educators, who work in a variety of capacities. These include one resource room with three special educators for specific intervention in identified areas (also referred to as a learning lab), two cross-categorical classrooms for children with social and communication difficulties and space for occupational, physical therapists and speech pathologists. There are also two reading recovery teachers, one gifted teacher, and one Orton-Gillingham (a specific reading intervention program) teacher. The paraprofessionals vary year to year, and sometimes the numbers change during the year based on student needs or students who move into or out of the district.

A cross-categorical classroom is for children who a) spend greater than 50% of their time in a separate classroom learning center based on a 3-5 year achievement gap between placement and performance level; or b) spend 50% of their time or more in a special class or learning center based on behavior that interferes with classroom performance and adaptive behavior deficits of 2 or greater in no more than two areas (UA Intervention Services Rubric 1/17/2008). Each student receiving special education services varies on their time with
the special education teacher and in the general education classroom based on how the local team perceives and defines the child’s unique needs. The special education faculty seem to follow their own formula, based on professional experience, as to what specific types of needs warrant what amount of time with the special educator. The team discusses this quantity of time during a student’s ETR meeting and either agrees or modifies time in and out of the general classroom and in or out of the learning lab. The parents must sign off on the plan.

Children who spend less than 50% of their time in a special learning lab receive intervention services through consultation and collaboration with their general classroom teacher, or in small group pullout to focus on specific skills to support their individual growth and participation in the general classroom setting. This is at least the starting point, based on district policy, with which to begin the team discussion.

Services are offered for children identified as gifted on district assessments, and for those identified by educators as needing the Orton-Gillingham reading program or the Reading Recovery reading intervention. These programs, as well as other interventions, are often decided upon by the district’s special education administration in collaboration with faculty who rely on their unique and close relationship with faculty at The Ohio State University and published research. In many cases the faculty who have researched a specific program, such as the SERRCS, and request that the district purchase the
books or materials to support the use of these interventions. One special education teacher reported that “due to the proximity and the professional relationship that our district has with The Ohio State University, we often have researched specific interventions or programs designed by the professors at OSU. Our (UA) faculty, is often trained in these programs, during professional development in services, or certain research has been conducted in our schools. This is often very helpful when we are exploring new ways to teach and support children in their learning. This is actually how we became familiar with and began using the Reading Recovery program, that is also used in many of the local districts in Columbus” (informal interview, April 2009). Other special education faculty blend a variety of interventions and use different aspects of programs based on their perception of students’ needs and their philosophy regarding how to address those needs.

During informal interviews with several special education staff at Wickliffe, three younger special education faculty reported feeling less support by the administration if they mix intervention strategies to match to unique learning styles, than if they used pre-packaged programs/interventions that may not apply to every child. During the same informal type conversations, a few special education faculty that have been teaching for the district longer shared that they felt more comfortable with the pre-packaged interventions. Not only were they based on evidence and research, they were easier to administer than to create something unique for every child. These same teachers reported
feeling less interested in collaborating in support of inclusion and co-teaching, while the special education teachers with fewer years of teaching experience shared a stronger interest in collaboration, co-teaching and inclusion.

Interestingly enough, I did not experience as strong a split in inclusive ideals among the general educators. Many of them that I spoke with shared an interest in teaching children with and without special needs, as long as they had support from the special educators. The special educators also seemed split on their knowledge of the progressive pedagogy and their interest in learning it. The special educators that I spoke with that had more years of experience, reported feeling comfortable in their techniques and preferred pull-out. The special educators that I spoke with, that had fewer years of teaching experience, shared that they were willing or interested in learning about the progressive pedagogy, and in working closely with the general education faculty and the parents. One special educator with more teaching experience reported that initiating interaction with parents was not part of her typical practice, although she is always willing to respond if they have any questions which strongly contradicts Miss. Night and Mrs. Hyatt’s daily and weekly parent-teacher interactions. Mrs. Hyatt feels that it is her job to support her students in the general education classroom as much as possible and as much as is right for the individual student, eventually decreasing their intervention services, if they no longer need them. This contradicts another
special educator in the building that assumes “if a child needs special education in the younger grades, we should assume that they will need them in even more in the older grades.”

The history at Wickliffe of the cross categorical classroom begins in 2003. Originally, children on the autism spectrum were together in a cross-categorical classroom, with children with emotional disorders, children who fell into the mild-moderate, and moderate to severe category, at another elementary school in the district. In April of 2003, due to increasing numbers in these classrooms, the school board approved opening another cross-categorical classroom at Wickliffe to provide special needs services to students primarily with social and communication needs. In 2004, the cross-categorical classroom split due to increased enrollment. The children diagnosed as having emotional disorders stayed at the original elementary (Tremont), and the children who fell on the autism spectrum were moved to the newly established room at Wickliffe. The unit originally opened as a K-5 classroom with five students. In 2005, the cross-categorical classroom split into two rooms, primary (K-2) and intermediate (3-5) hiring a new teacher for the intermediate class. From 2006-to present, the original title of “Autism Support Unit” is still a cross categorical classroom, but is now officially a unit “focused on social and communication needs.” The Wickliffe general educators, the parents, along with the special education team determine the child’s least restrictive environment for their education. Each child is generally placed in a
general education classroom as their homeroom, and reports to the cross
categorical classroom, as needed, for support and intervention. I do
not know whether this shift in the district was an easy one or one
fraught with conflict and discussion.

Wickliffe also houses special education teachers, who offer
reading-writing intervention, reading recovery, and intervention in
other academic content areas such as math, science and social studies.
All children at Wickliffe are assigned to a general education classroom
for their main classroom, although when specific individual
intervention or therapy services are needed, they may report to another
classroom. The district has an Intervention Services Rubric (appendix
F) which categorizes the services available in each building and has
supported some of the information in this section in addition to
discussions with Wickliffe teachers.

*Inclusion within Wickliffe’s Progressive Pedagogy: Work in Progress*

Several years ago the district hired Margaret A. Searle as a
consultant for three years, to offer staff development in-services to
support the faculty in team-teaching and their growth in becoming more
inclusive. Margaret Searle is an education consultant and served as an
education advisor to President George H.W. Bush. She has worked
closely with the Ohio Department of education and presents nationally
on issues surrounding intervention, collaboration, co-teaching and
differentiated instruction.

“Wickliffe embraced this idea of co-teaching” reported one
teacher (May, 2009) “and many teachers began co-teaching and
team-teaching with special educators. After a few years, a few teachers began expressing some concern that for some children with severe learning needs, the fundamentals needed more attention. Then when the NCLB act was passed and “the standardized assessments gave little room for developmental growth outside of the norm, we unfortunately had to take a look at this model and once again tweak it a bit”, (teacher comment, May 2009).

Based on this interview, it seemed that at least for a time, the district was moving towards more inclusion through co-teaching and away from cross-categorical rooms, but teachers in several schools, including Wickliffe worried that some basic skills (e.g., phonics, number concept) may not be addressed in the general classroom enough to teach children with learning disabilities. Based on these concerns, the co-teaching between the general and special educators decreased, and the separate classroom model returned for the district, including Wickliffe. A few teachers reported “feeling OK” with this chain of past events, and others felt as if “they should have worked harder to fix these issues.” Separate classrooms for some children is a direct contradiction to progressive education which focuses on democracy and building community. Is this affected by the fact that general educators are interviewed, chosen, and trained by seasoned Wickliffe (progressive) faculty; and the district’s special educators, who are hired by the district administration, “just happen” to be placed at the “progressive school”? There seem to be mixed opinions on this issue from the current Wickliffe faculty.

During an informal conversation, a current Wickliffe regular educator commented that, “We are still working on
inclusion. I think we do a lot of things right, but that is still one concept that we, as a whole, are still striving to get better at. The staff seem to be willing to work and to learn from one and another, and some general educators and some special educators are more comfortable trying it than others. Some embrace the ideas and some are still fearful.” (informal interview, March, 2009.)

It is common to hear among the staff that some teachers may “need a break” from teaching an inclusive classroom and yet other general educators request an inclusive classroom every year. Likewise, some special educators in the building report that “their students” need one-on-one instruction or small group instruction that cannot be taught in the general classroom. This is a contradiction to what I found during my observations of Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt. Very often, the children in Mrs. Cooke’s room were working in small groups with each other, with Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hyatt or Rosalynn or a parent who was volunteering for the day.

The special educators at Wickliffe, like the general educators, varied in their thoughts on inclusion as reflected during conversations held in April and May, 2009. Some reported that the district’s central administrators decide how intervention services are designed and implemented across all of the schools in the district without school-level input. Others expressed that “there are not enough special educators to go around” which constrains the level of inclusion and collaboration in the buildings. “We simply cannot be in every classroom all the time working with one or two children as we have kids from four or five general classrooms” informal conversation May, 2009.
Interestingly, other teachers report that they want more inclusion, co-teaching and professional collaboration. One special educator reported that “the teachers here at Wickliffe are extremely professional. They work together, plan together and push each other to learn and reflect more. Sometimes however, they forget to include the special educators in that planning and reflecting.” Meanwhile, a team of two educators (one general and one special) shared that they work and reflect together often and it really benefits their students.” This particular pair does hope to plan and co-teach more in the future.

We can see that at Wickliffe, the special and general educators may not be all on the same page. Additionally, some of the special educators reportedly are still learning how to implement Wickliffe’s 10 guiding Principles, if they feel that they should, while others have embraced them and “wholeheartedly believe in them.” Other members of the special education team admitted that they “mainly focused on the scores of “those annual assessments” and “really can’t worry about the 10 principles.”

The faculty in this building all have their own opinions based on personal experiences and professional beliefs about inclusion. Some are for it and others aren’t sure if it best for the students. Having strong opinions seemed to be present across the board, in general educators and special educators. Based on these conversations, I think that the issue of inclusion and collaboration should be addressed at the administrative level and discussed with the faculty in more depth.
Perhaps the vagueness of the answers and the opinions of the faculty on this particular subject need the attention of the faculty as a whole to develop a more cohesive understanding of the possibilities of inclusion and the expectations of the district and the parents. There seems to be a lack of unity and clarity on the subject of inclusion.

Osgood (2005) assists us in understanding the thoughts on inclusion during the early 1990's, immediately following the passage of the IDEA. The “decisions and laws, culminating in the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL 94-142) in 1975, compelled schools and other public institutions to formulate and support such efforts— to move the integration/segregation debate past the question of whether and on to the question of how.” Osgood (2005) discusses how pilot projects were implemented all over the country, and although the law did not use the terms integration, mainstreaming or inclusion, districts were challenged to provide a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. At that time, not only were the general school districts in America struggling to figure out just how to educate children with diverse abilities, the scholarly community could not seem to agree on how to do it in the general classroom either (Osgood, 2005). The laws passed in 1975 mandated services, however did not specify necessarily how to implement them. Will (1983) suggested that the education community share the responsibility; the regular education teachers and the special
education teachers share resources and skills to collectively serve children based on their individual needs.

At Wickliffe the discussion of how to best implement inclusion is a work in progress for both the regular education teachers and the special education teachers. Furthermore, inclusion is not fully embraced nor clearly articulated by the progressive educators, nor is progressive education fully embraced, implemented and understood by the special education teachers. This was acknowledged in the interviews with faculty as incomplete work.

*Intervention and Support In and Out of the Classroom for the Four Tracer Children*

Two of the four tracer children receive intervention services from teachers other than Mrs. Cooke. Jimmy receives intervention services from Mrs. Hyatt and Rosalynn. Nate receives services from Miss Night. Jimmy receives specific intervention both in his general classroom and out, and Nate receives most of his intervention services out of Mrs. Cooke’s room. To fully understand the nature of inclusion in a progressive pedagogy, I needed to understand both the experience of diverse inside the classroom and when, how, and why individual children were pulled out of the classroom. Due to the collaboration between teachers, I also felt it valuable to discover the student’s perspectives about the roles of these different adults in Mrs. Cooke’s room through conversation and student surveys.
Therefore, the next step in this analysis took me to Mrs. Hyatt’s and Miss Night’s classrooms with Jimmy and Nate. To further understand their intervention services, both teachers granted me several interviews that were conducted as ethnographic interviews; in other words, it was not the case that I used a standard set of prescribed questions but rather generated questions in the context of the interviews to gain a complete understanding. Lastly, I gained an even greater perspective on pull-out intervention services through conversations with children and parents to add to the analysis.

Mrs. Cooke’s Room

The four tracer children receive the same instructional plan as the rest of the children in the class through progressive pedagogy. As demonstrated throughout the findings, the progressive pedagogy, by definition, provides for a wide range of diverse abilities. Therefore, concepts like curricular adaptation and differentiation for special needs were not discussed by progressive educators. Many aspects of “work time” allow children to proceed at their own pace. The academic requirements are the same for all of the children, yet the style of the assignments do not negatively or necessarily identify who needs more help, and who needs less help. Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hyatt and Rosalynn each know who may need specific assistance based on their learning needs or styles. Due to the multi-age grouping of the first and second graders, the teacher spends instructional time teaching for two grade levels, which serves as a review for the second graders who need it and
an opportunity for high achieving first graders to continue their growth.

Each child is encouraged to organize their thoughts and design a plan for their research. Weekly the children have the opportunity to sign up for library time during conferences. This occurs without the teachers and is offered as an opportunity to further their own research. One day three girls and three boys signed up. I took this opportunity to follow them. I was interested in how much support Nate might need as he researched and read without the teacher. Much to my surprise, Nate found three books, on his topic, and began exploring them. Nate spent the entire time researching, asking for the librarian’s assistance only once. Two first graders began playing on the computer, giggling when they clicked on something and (it made a noise and they ran to the back of the library). They were both sent back to Mrs. Cooke’s room Two other boys read an encyclopedia side-by-side and the two girls walked around collecting books to sign out. Nate informed me that if “you had a lot of borrowed books at home, you had to bring them back before getting more”. Today, he had to read them in the library.

Nate was independent and organized in the library. Without additional support, he found books on his topic and looked through them. He did not write anything from them, but neither did anybody else from that group on that day.
Active participation is encouraged and expected by the members of this classroom, although individual contributions may differ. Each contribution is valued. During group-time, the children were listening to a non-fiction book about animals that live in the rainforest. The discussion lead the group to the idea that often animals live in a certain habitat and that based on what they eat, it may influence where they might live. The discussion lead to a comparison about what rainforest animals may also live in Ohio.

- Sandy offered an idea based on a project that she did last year (in kindergarten) on an Ohio animal and its habitat.

- Nate raised his hand and waited patiently to be called upon while others offered ideas and responses without raising their hands. Nate, once called upon, offered that “some animals are herbivores and some carnivores, and what they eat affects where they live.”

- Jimmy raised his hand and shares that “millipedes eat leaves, and we have leaves in Ohio.”

This surprised me as Jimmy did not appear to be paying attention to the discussion, and was redirected several times by Rosalynn during this group. Jimmy tends to flip through the math workbooks located near the group rug during a group meeting if he is not sitting by Rosalynn. Nate responded with specific details, offering a very rich contribution to the question. The context of the discussion was fresh to the children, as they were in the midst of the rainforest project, and had just heard a book on the topic. Sandy reflected back to kindergarten instead of responding with an answer, which may have been more related to her current project.
Another interesting and reoccurring ritual in this class that served to support the four tracer children, was that of the un-finished work folder. The schedule remains fairly constant each day. During every time slot (reading/conferences, writing workshop, math, project work) an assignment is given. The children are expected to complete their work and have it checked by their teachers. They however are permitted to collaborate on most assignments and once completed, make a related choice. If the assignment is not completed, the child may place their work in an unfinished work folder to be completed during another work session. You will often hear Mrs. Cooke saying, “It is OK if you do not finish this morning, you can finish your work this afternoon.” It is not the speed, in most cases, that the work is completed, it is the quality of the work and the experience itself. Not all children work at the same pace nor do they need the same level of support, however, they each need to learn the same content and practice the same skills.

Baglieri and Knopf (2004) feel that “a truly inclusive school reflects a democratic philosophy whereby all students are valued, educators normalize difference through differentiated instruction, and the school culture reflects an ethic of caring and community” (p. 525). As I spent more and more time in this classroom and became increasingly aware of the pedagogy used, I began to see numerous concrete examples of how I interpreted what Baglieri and Knopf may have had in mind when they wrote this. During the first week or two, I kept searching for
specific examples of what many educators refer to as “differentiated instruction” (Tomlinson, 1999) for example, through tiered assignments and assessments. Initially, I did not see evidence of this clearly spelled out. As I became more familiar with the pedagogy however, I began to recognize multiple practices that were evidence of differentiation offered to all of the children; for example, the unfinished work folders allows all the children to pace their work, the teaching formats allow a variety of peer and adult support as described earlier.

*Student Perspectives of Adults in Room*

Neither the children, nor the adults seem to give much attention to the paraprofessionals, or the special educators as they came in and out of the room throughout the day; It does not seem to be a disruptive event. These professionals provide specific assistance to specific children, yet at first glance, they seem to be looked at, by all of the children, as just another teacher in the room.

I was curious about the children’s perceptions and decided to survey them about the jobs of specific faculty in their classroom. I asked them to write about Rosalynn, Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hyatt and Miss Night. A sampling of their responses is provided below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rosalynn</th>
<th>Mrs. Cooke</th>
<th>Mrs. Hyatt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;hlps me rit&quot; (helps me write)</td>
<td>&quot;res box to me&quot; (reads books to me)</td>
<td>&quot;hlps me&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;helps pepol&quot;, &quot;helps&quot;, &quot;helps kids&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;thech&quot; (teacher); &quot;is a techr&quot;, &quot;our teacher&quot;, &quot;she teacis kids and helps kids&quot;, teaching kids&quot;, &quot;teacher&quot;,</td>
<td>&quot;help kid&quot;, &quot;halps (Jimmy)&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;helps us and specl needs people&quot;</td>
<td>&quot; she wrks with pepol&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;wrks with pepol tat have probloms&quot;, &quot;helps kids with spesl neds&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;she helps people who need help&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;she helps us lreen&quot; (learn)</td>
<td>&quot;She helps us at math time. She doesn’t just help people who need help she oso helps us a loot&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;an aide&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;she techis the class&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;helps us and specle needs people&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;helps kids with speshl neds&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;she teaches 1st and 2nd graders stuff like math and sinence&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;an aide&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;tacs car of (Jimmy)&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;helps us with our projects&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;helps people with O.t and heating and stud like that&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;helps kids who need help&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Teaches 1st and 2nd grade. She sits in her rocking chair and reads and gives out papers&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;helps kids focus more&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;helps people listen&quot;</td>
<td>&quot; She is techg math, spalling and reading and she reads to her clles&quot; (class)</td>
<td>Continued</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.8 Student Responses on Adults in the Room
Figure 4.8 continued

- “helps people behave”
- “Makes me come downstairs. She lets me make a choice”
- “teaches us”
- “works with {Jimmy)”
- “teaches”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Miss Night</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“helps me read me rit”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“red’s with pepol”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“reading”, “reding techr”, helps with rieders”, “she helps kids read”, she helps people read”, “reading teacher”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I read the student’s responses to this questionnaire, certain themes became apparent. Most of the children identify Miss Night as a reading teacher. Others responded with more original and personal ideas. If we look at Mrs Hyatt’s responsibilities according to the children, some children gave very genuine answers such as, “She helps us at math time. She does not just help people who need help she “oso helps us a loot” and “helps kids focus more”. These responses do not appear to be scripted or simply a repeated adult definition. Notice some similarities between Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt’s jobs based on the children’s responses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hyatt</th>
<th>Cooke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“teaches us”</td>
<td>“she helps us lreen”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“teaches”</td>
<td>“she techis the class”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“helps me”</td>
<td>“she teaches 1st and 2nd”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.9 Children’s Perceptions of Teacher Roles
There are clear ways that the children view the adults differently. Rosalynn is described repeatedly as working with kids with disabilities and as a helper not a teacher. Four statements about Mrs. Hyatt specify that they are aware that she works with kids with disabilities. One child refers to her as an aide. But, importantly, Ms. Cooke, Ms. Hyatt and Rosalynn are viewed as part of the community with clear roles; Ms. Night’s role does not seem to be as consistently clear.

*Jimmy in Mrs. Cooke’s Room*

While Jimmy’s participation in the curriculum is relatively seamless, his social participation in the classroom is marked by his ongoing challenge to regulate his frustration level and manage his screaming in those moments. There are many strategies used to support Jimmy. A first level response is provided in the environment. Jimmy has a folder near the window with social stories, which have been written by Mrs. Hyatt. These stories are about different events that may happen during his day, and provides him with examples of actions for which to pull from when needed. Written earlier in the year, the collections of social stories are added to, as Jimmy encounters a new and unfamiliar social event in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom or elsewhere in the school. Social stories are short, simple stories, which are written from the child’s perspective. These stories are commonly used with children with ASD, to introduce them to different social situations in
a classroom like waiting in line, taking turns to talk, and so forth. These stories provide visual prompts and text instructing the child on positive and appropriate social behaviors (Gray & Garand, 1993). “Social stories follow and explicit format of approximately 5-10 sentences describing the social skill, the appropriate behavior, and other’s viewpoints of the actions” (Spencer, Simpson & Lynch, 2008). This strategy was designed by Gray (2000) for use with children who have autism spectrum disorder. Many have found this intervention effective for children with autism spectrum disorder (Ozdemir, 2008; Crozier & Tincani, 2007; Spencer et al, 2008) and for use in the inclusive classroom with children not on the spectrum (Whitehead (2007).

A second level response is provided for Jimmy, by the teachers in the classroom. Jimmy often requires (a verbal or physical) redirection from the teachers for certain off task behaviors that he displays in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. To help him with frustrating times that may initiate a socially unacceptable behavior, he has a behavior plan as part of his ETR.

Additionally, another environmental prompt provides support to Jimmy. Posted on a small sheet of paper on the side of a bookshelf in the back of the room, is a list of “Have-to-do’s” written for him to look at if needed.
Have-to-do’s | Choices
--- | ---
Put my coat and my backpack in my locker | I can choose to put them in first or after my friends
Sit on the rug in group | I can choose where on the rug I want to sit
Let Mrs. Boyd know if you are buying or packing | I can choose to say it aloud or point at a picture if I don’t want to talk
I have to do the work Mrs. Boyd gives me to do | I can choose which order I want to do them in
I have to go to recess with my class | I can choose what I want to do (read a book, play, sit and watch)
I have to have a quiet voice. I may not scream in school | I can choose to take a break if this will help me not to scream
I have to go to special areas | I can choose where to sit and stand in special areas

Table 4.6 Jimmy’s Have-To-Do’s and Choices

A more structured and intense intervention is a more specific “behavior plan” that was written by Mrs. Hyatt, to aid Jimmy in decreasing his screaming when he is frustrated or does not want to do something. A behavior plan is commonly used in special education when the focus is to decrease an undesired or socially unacceptable, negative behavior. Behavior plans are based on Skinnerian behavior theories typically not used in progressive education, and in fact are antithetical to progressive thinking. Progressive educators would view them as controlling a child’s behavior instead of supporting, teaching or modeling more socially appropriate actions necessary to be included in the group. In this particular case, Mrs. Cooke steps back and let’s Mrs. Hyatt and Jimmy’s parents take the lead on writing the plan, although she contributed as she felt she needed to. Although Jimmy was
not part of writing this plan, he was required to acknowledge the plan and encouraged to sign it. When I inquired about the behavior plan, it was described by the teachers as something that is done if needed, when a child receives special education or has autism. Although a few children in the building, who do not have an educational plan but do have negative or unwanted behaviors, also have behavior plans similar to Jimmy’s. They described “if needed” as when a child refuses to do something the teacher asks of him or her, that is generally accepted by their peers as “school behavior”, like outdoor recess, and responds with unacceptable school behavior, for an extended period of time. It is then planned as to just how the team plans to decrease a behavior.

Jimmy’s screaming can happen when he becomes confused or challenged to do something that he does not want to do such as writing or outdoor recess. He can choose to take his work to Mrs. Hyatt’s room; however, according to Mrs. Hyatt, this may have become too rewarding to him over the course of this year. The new principal, Mr. Carter, has recently offered his office as a place that Jimmy can go to calm himself if he is feeling over whelmed or feels like he needs to scream if frustrated. If Mr. Carter is in the building and available, Jimmy is welcome to sit with him a bit until he feels ready to join the classroom again. These are not punishments or rewards, simply an opportunity to calm himself if he feels that he needs it.

During work time, Jimmy will occasionally become restless, inattentive and might walk away from his work or an interaction. The
teachers take this to mean that Jimmy needs a break from the work or the social expectations. One day, during the rainforest project, Mrs. Cooke noticed Jimmy becoming what she described as "agitated". Jimmy began staring at the wall and running his hands along the cement blocks, ignoring Mrs. Cooke and raising his voice to a peer when they asked him a question. Mrs. Cooke suggested that the Rosalynn take Jimmy and a friend to get more green paper for the leaves on the mural.

Another day, Jimmy began singing during a group time, which was distracting to the other children, and he asked Rosalynn for some gum. Jimmy typically is able to sit in-group for about 22 minutes, even if it is interactive. Mrs. Hyatt and Rosalynn carry gum with them. They informed me that they do this as they have found that gum chewing seems to help Jimmy focus on specific tasks and provides him with some added sensory stimulation while he focuses on academic tasks. Jimmy has the option of using his special seat at group, or sitting on a small chair next to Rosalynn. Occasionally, he sits up front on the rug by Mrs. Cooke. About 3/4 of the time, he listens and participates in group meetings and lessons. The other quarter of the time, he tends to flip through math journals or other books that are nearby. Jimmy is not the only child in the class that occasionally is redirected during groups.

Rosalynn writes a daily list of events, which is placed daily in the pencil bin on Jimmy’s table. This is unique to only Jimmy and Rosalynn and began earlier in the year when Jimmy would repeatedly request to know what was “coming next” in the day. The list of events,
although on the board for the entire class every day, is written on a smaller sheet of paper for Jimmy to reference at his seat, as he wishes. Rosalynn will also show Jimmy what is coming next, when if he asks. The following is an example of his “To Do” list from 1/14/09.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/14/09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.M.</th>
<th>Quiet reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>math journal</td>
<td>Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>template drawing</td>
<td>Recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choice</td>
<td>Worktime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.M.</td>
<td>Jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Home!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.10 Jimmy’s To-Do List

Mrs. Cooke decides how the children are grouped at their work-tables in her classroom, yet generally, two boys with autism are together at the same table, to have equal access to the paraprofessional “as defined on their plans”, according to Mrs. Hyatt. Rosalynn, the paraprofessional, pulls up a chair to sit near the two boys with autism, however assist the other two children at the same table, in addition to any child in the nearby vicinity, or around the classroom that needs her assistance.

Mrs. Hyatt shared that, “Her goal, with these students in particular, is to not always have them grouped together as their level of independence grows and as peers become more comfortable and successful in prompting, and encouraging them to maintain an appropriate level of collaborative participation.”
Mrs. Hyatt and Mrs. Cooke have a unique working relationship. Even though Mrs. Hyatt has a separate classroom for some children part of the day, she spends part of each day in Mrs. Cooke’s general education classroom supporting not only students with autism, but any student who needs it. In the current literature on collaborating in inclusive classrooms, this model would be referred to as co-teaching, with one teaching and one supporting (Learner & Johns, 2009). Cooperative teaching is a collaborative effort between general and special educators (Freund & Rich, 2005). There are several models of co-teaching which include this model, team teaching (both equally teaching), parallel teaching (each teaches a group at the same time) and station supportive teaching (lesson split and each teaches a piece of the lesson) (Learner & Johns, 2009). When in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom, Mrs. Hyatt serves as a supportive teacher while Mrs. Cooke’s role is that of the lead teacher. However, in the following section, Mrs. Hyatt’s role changes as she returns to her classroom with Jimmy. Although in a separate location, Mrs. Hyatt’s lesson’s focus on specific social aspects of Jimmy successfully participating more fully in his general education classroom. In this respect, Mrs. Hyatt is participating in something similar to what Learner and John’s (2009) would refer to as “station supportive teaching” with one exception, they are in a different room. In “station supportive teaching” the content is divided into two parts and each teacher hosts a station. Typically, each child would spend equal time at each station. In this
case, all children spend time in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom, and only a few spend time in Mrs. Hyatt’s room. It is not an exact model of station teaching, but is in the ballpark.

Although the opportunity to develop social skills is present in Mrs. Cooke’s room through group work during the day, the teachers feel that Jimmy still would benefit from more support and practice in this area in a smaller group setting. The team consists of his parents, a representative from the district’s administration, both teachers and his occupational therapists and speech and language specialist. It is this same team that decides the amount of time Jimmy should spend in his least restrictive environment, and out of it. This is based on earlier observations from the large class setting from first grade this year, in combination with other assessments implemented by his teachers and his speech and language pathologist, this year. The parent’s request for small group social skill teaching is also an important factor in Jimmy’s time in Mrs. Hyatt’s classroom.

Therefore, it was this same team that has decided that Jimmy would best be served focusing on social skill development in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom with support, and in Mrs. Hyatt’s classroom in a small group setting. Unfortunately, I was not involved in any of these conversations to be able to explain the private conversations that took place between the team more clearly.
Jimmy in Mrs. Hyatt’s (Cross-Categorical) Room

Part of Jimmy’s work with Mrs. Hyatt in the cross-categorical classroom is to practice working in a group, on skills that all children need in a classroom such as listening, answering questions, following directions and sharing ideas. Each day, Mrs. Hyatt has a small group lesson for the students in her classroom. The daily lesson differs each day, but Mrs. Hyatt plans on each lesson to support the kids with skills that will benefit them in their general classroom. The hope is that Jimmy will become familiar and comfortable enough with this experience, that he will contribute socially more often and with more confidence in Mrs. Cooke’s room. Mrs. Hyatt notices that Jimmy tends to share his idea’s more often when a situation is not a novel, or an unfamiliar one. Mrs. Hyatt hopes that Jimmy will generalize (Cooper, Heron & Heward, 2007) the behaviors, focused on in her room, to other social situations in the general education classroom. She does keep careful records of certain skills at different times, based on what her goals for him are both in her room and in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. The idea of generalizing behaviors is best describes in the applied behavior analysis literature (Cooper, et al, 2007,) which suggests that teaching, generalizing and maintaining any desired behavior comes from repeated practice, and rewarding the appropriate behavior when it occurs during that practice. The hope is that the student will perform the practiced skill in other areas as the
opportunity arises with acceptable accuracy and speed (Johnson & Layng, 1994; Heward, 1987).

Figure 4.11 Daily Group Focus

The SCERTS Model

The SCERTS Model’s framework allows for “topics/themes to be supported in the classroom, while learning at a child’s own pace. These topics/themes for the week are presented, key concepts and vocabulary are identified and pre-taught in .individualized teaching time and supporting materials are identified and created or obtained by the special education teacher” (The Inclusion Notebook, 2007, p. 4).

Mrs. Hyatt often uses “The SCERTS Model” (Social, communication, emotional regulation and transactional support) created by Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin, Laurent and Rydell, (2006) in her teaching.

The SCERTS Model is an approach that “prioritizes Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, and Transactional Support as the primary developmental dimensions that must be addressed in a comprehensive program designed to support the development of young
children with ASD and their families” (Prizant, Wetherby, Rubin & Laurent, 2003, p. 296). This model intends for children (age pre-school through 11 years) to be taught in their local school and in an inclusive setting “prioritizing learning in a variety of settings... learning skills that occur naturally as part of their daily routine” (Inclusion Notebook, 2007, p. 9). A child would have specific SCERTS learning objectives for lessons that they participate in every day in any setting. For example, during a story-time, a child would have a social-communication goal of raising their hand to gain his/her teacher’s attention and responding when called on. For an emotional regulation goal, a child might have a SCERTS objective to stay in the group and pay attention to the story being read without flipping through math books or leaving the group before the story is over. Finally, the SCERTS transactional objective for this story-time may be to support a child’s strategies that enable him/her to participate in the learning activity, such as using picture cues to participate; or using a visual to remain in his/her space on the carpet or using an arm stretch to signify how to maintain an acceptable distance between themselves and their neighbor which respects one’s personal space. SCERT objectives are personal and are used in any lesson in any location (The Inclusion Notebook, 2007, pp. 3-4). The SCERTS model is a “comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to enhancing communication and socioemotional abilities (Prizent, et al, 2003, p. 298) of students with ASD and “is flexible enough to incorporate different perspectives
The SCERTS model is used in education for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and was designed to be adapted "to meet the unique demands of different social settings for younger and older individuals with ASD including home, school, community. It allows teams to draw from a wide range of effective practices that are available...and can incorporate practices from other approaches such as ABA, TEACCH, Floortime, RDI, Hanen and Social Stories...SCERTS differs from traditional ABA in that it promotes child-initiated responses...drawing on research in child-development (http://www.scerts.com).

Designed by Mrs. Hyatt and following the SCERTS model, the plans written for Motor Monday focus on activities that increase fine, gross and oral motor skills. The lesson for Talking Tuesday hopes to increase communication skills, or provide practice using oral language to interact, contribute, share thoughts in a group setting and take turns sharing ideas. The lesson for this day may also focus on taking turns during a conversation, or reading the social cues to verbally respond during a conversation. Wacky Wednesday is a term that signifies the focus may change, but often provides the students with an experience in telling funny stories, writing silly stories and responding to funny "things" such as these and jokes for example. Thinking Thursday focuses on comprehension reading skills. On Friday, each child is encouraged to bring a friend with them, from Mrs. Hyatt’s room, to cook and eat together. Generally, the focus of a group is on skills such as staying in a group, listening and participating in the group conversation.
Jimmy has many of the same social opportunities in Mrs. Cooke’s room as he does in Mrs. Hyatt’s room, however, Jimmy does not contribute quite as often as the team would like for him to in Mrs. Cooke’s room. While for some teachers, a low level of participation is acceptable, for others, it is not. Mrs. Hyatt shares that Jimmy also will “exhibit anti-social” behaviors in Mrs. Cooke’s room on occasion such as screaming, responding sharply “NO” to any question asked by a peer or an adult or simply ignoring any request by Mrs. Cooke or Rosalynn in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. From time to time every child may be anti-social, however, Jimmy may be several times each day. Since trouble communicating, and participating in social situations is often a characteristic of autism and is counter-productive to him being part of the larger classroom group, the team feels that he may benefit from some smaller group practice in social situations. The hope is that these skills will become more comfortable for him and will be generalized into Mrs. Cooke’s room, where he can continue to practice these skills authentically. It was reported by Mrs. Hyatt and Rosalynn, that “Jimmy is more comfortable when certain aspects of his day are familiar to him so that he can pull from prior experiences. We will use upcoming classroom events (in Mrs. Cooke’s room) to plan some mini lessons in my room ahead of time. This allows Jimmy to be familiar with a situation and may provide him with the confidence to participate more fully or to contribute more often” (Mrs. Hyatt).
Mrs. Hyatt occasionally uses the curriculum, “Expanding Expression” designed by Sara L. Smith, (2007, 2004) which is designed to support the development of functional and communication skills. The focus of these groups is to help the children in developing those skills needed in the academic and social arenas in and out of school.

Mrs. Hyatt attended a conference several years ago and was introduced to the SCERTS model of intervention. It intrigued her as one that fit the best with the progressive practices. Mrs. Hyatt comments,

“What I like about SCERTS is that it breaks the necessary skills for social/communication and learning, to regulate oneself, and to take control of one’s own learning and interactivity into small, clearly defined flexible steps. It fits with the progressive philosophy and can be individualized for each child.”

Although trained in traditional special education and ABA, Mrs. Hyatt sees the benefits of the progressive pedagogy and has embraced the practice. She admits that the progressive pedagogy often contradicts with the expectations of the special education division in the district as a whole, and is still working out the marriage of the two entities. However, choosing the SCERTS model with which to base some of her pull-out lessons seemed to be a start in the right direction for her.

On 11/18/08, I spent the day in Mrs. Hyatt’s room. Upon entering the room, it was immediately noticeable that the environment was a bit softer. The fluorescent lights are covered with blue transparency, to make the room a little calmer with light. There were curtains on the
windows and the bookshelves had matching curtains covering the materials. These are some techniques used so that the room is not over-stimulating for the children. There were picture cues next to typed words for directions, songs and materials.

On this day, Mrs. Hyatt read a social story that she had prepared entitled, “Choices and Have-to-do’s at School.” Mrs. Hyatt uses a variety of techniques and interventions daily with different children, depending on her own assessments and professional decisions. She introduced the topic by asking the two boys to discuss (verbally list) what they thought they had to do at school.

“What are the expectations of school?” They created a short list, naming things like fire alarm and writing under “Have-to-do’s” and math choice under “Choices.” The book also discussed the ways that the boys might be able to tell the difference. Mrs. Hyatt mentions that “sometimes the boys tell Mrs. Cooke that they do not want to do something that she asks of them, so this is a good lesson to review occasionally.”

Later in the week, they created their own list in Mrs. Hyatt’s small group. The group continued with “skill time” in which they directly worked on techniques while practicing their writing.

Included or More Separate: A Pivotal Event

In late May I met Mrs. Hyatt for another regular chat. In tears she shared with me the story of Jimmy’s most recent team meeting. Mrs. Hyatt wants more inclusion for Jimmy in Mrs. Cooke’s room and feels
that with her support, he will excel. However, due to recent increased “outbursts and melt-downs”, the parents and the district administration want less time in the inclusive setting and more time in Mrs. Hyatt’s segregated classroom. Mrs. Hyatt has worked very hard all year to support Jimmy in Mrs Cooke’s classroom and everything planned in Mrs. Hyatt’s room directly relates to skills that Jimmy needs to be successful in Mrs. Cooke’s room but are really struggling with. Although they have opportunities in Mrs. Cooke’s room to practice these skills, the parents want Jimmy to continue to receive specific support and “training” in Mrs. Hyatt’s room. This classroom is also a place where the boys may retreat to when they feel they are over stimulated and request some quite and the parents feel that his recent negative behaviors are related to his self-regulation issues that may be brought on by the larger classroom activities. Mrs. Hyatt assures the team that the “ER” in SCERTS is for emotional regulation and that they practice strategies to cope with everyday stress in both classrooms. She feels strongly that the skills can be learned authentically in a variety of environments. The parents, who reportedly tend to not follow through with programming at home, still urged for less inclusion. The team reports that they stay in contact with the parents, and through notes home, emails, phone calls and face-to-face meetings, attempt to share their teaching techniques with the parents in hopes that they will also work on these goals at home. Mrs. Hyatt felt defeated on this day and less supported in her work by her team than she usually did. Mrs. Hyatt
feels that she may be one of a smaller group of special educators at Wickliffe who is pro-inclusion for all children.

Mrs. Hyatt feels “the goal as an intervention specialist is often to improve social or academic deficits as well as increase the likelihood that they will be successful participating in projects in their general education classroom”. While content is valued and encouraged in Mrs. Hyatt’s room, the “focus is often on problem solving and practicing the foundational skills needed to be a contributing group member”. Typically, in the cross-categorical room, Mrs. Hyatt concentrates on the “social curriculum to target/teach/practice his social skills” needed to participate in the general classroom, and his writing goals due to fine motor deficits. She feels the SCERTS Model supports this idea, but doesn’t define it through a scripted curriculum which allows the teacher to individualize the lessons, making them more authentic”.

Mrs. Hyatt shares that she often needs to break the learning and the group process down into its smallest parts. The focus is often to support the children with goals such as:

“How do you ask (inquiry) questions?”

“How do you find the answers to your questions?”

“How do you decide who does what when working with another person?”

This is somewhat similar to a task analysis, designed for social interaction in a group-learning situation. Typical modifications
include using visuals and social stories/scripts for use in the group learning process. Checklists, and reinforcers are often used, if needed by a particular child to help them learn the steps of a process.

Mrs. Hyatt shares, “My goal is to help these students feel and be motivated by the success they have in small group/project work in my room; so they will have the steps/skills needed to join in and contribute to group projects in their classrooms.” Mrs. Hyatt feels that the approach of supporting specific skills through the SCEERT curriculum, the daily focus groups, and the breakdown of learning, are each a direct link to being successful in their regular education curriculum. Mrs. Hyatt hopes that each of these interventions provide the children with needed skills to be successful both academically and socially, without drawing attention to these specific needs in Mrs. Cooke’s room and in front of their social peers. Jimmy has an experience to pull from, Mrs. Hyatt feels, which was covered in an earlier SCERTS lesson, while still receiving support from Mrs. Hyatt or Rosalynn, with which to gain entry to the social culture of his classroom. Project work in this room varies on the content needed to cover, student strengths, needs, and requests/ideas from what the regular educators are working on. Mrs. Hyatt shares that often in her room the projects are often more about the process and practice of working in a group than the actual content and results.
A Buddy Talk

On another day, Mrs. Hyatt invited me to observe a “Buddy Talk” in a mixed third and fourth grade general education classroom. The faculty and the students at Wickliffe use the term “buddy” to refer to a friend in many different contexts. There are “big buddies” (a fifth grader befriending a second grader) and little buddies (that second grader). Mrs. Hyatt named herself designed talks with other classrooms after this idea as each would be familiar with the concept. She does her “Buddy talks” to educate other children and teachers in the school about her job, in understanding autism, in addition to inviting other children to join her in her room for a variety of lessons and activities. She joined the students on their group rug.

Mrs. Hyatt begins by asking, “Who has seen me in the halls?”

“Who knows my name?”

“Who knows where my room is?”

She takes the groups answers to her questions.

A student responded that they have seen her, but didn’t know her name. Another guesses that her room is down the hall as that is where they have seen her.

She introduces the students to a book, Ian’s Walk: A Story About Autism by Laurie Lears and Karen Ritz (Paperback - Mar 2003) and discusses that it is about thinking differently. This picture book is about a young boy with autism taking a walk in the park with his older sister. The boy, Ian, experiences the walk in a very different way than his sister, which opens the door to a conversation about those differences and perhaps why there are differences.

Mrs. Hyatt asks the children to “Pay attention to Ian and Julie and what they do during the story”
Once read, she asks the students to discuss with her what they noticed in the story and the characters in the story. Mrs. Hyatt asks the group what they noticed about Ian on this walk.

They respond...

"I noticed that Ian didn’t talk a lot"
"He was in his own world"
"He made different choices than I would have"
"He noticed things that many kids don’t, like the ceiling fan"
"He didn’t notice the ice cream, just the ceiling fan!"

Mrs. Hyatt asks them what they noticed about Julie on this walk?

"She treated him like any other sister or brother." One student responded. Her tone is little surprised. Others in the class agree and shake their heads.

She then lead them through a process of “perspective taking” from both of the two main characters in the book Ian and his sister Julie.

“Close your eyes and think about what you know about Ian, Where do you think he might be?” (Ian gets lost during the story, and before Mrs. Hyatt gets to the part where Julie finds her brother in the book, she stops and asks the students to think..based on what they know about Ian.

The students answers included,

- “he went home”
- “swinging”
- “watching the water”
- “sand box”

Mrs. Hyatt finished the story and Ian was found under a bell, ringing it loudly.
"Would any of you do this?” she asked the group.

Most of the children said “no” although a couple said yes. Many of the children talked about the embarrassment it would cause them. Some mentioned that it would bother others in the park. A few mentioned that they would have been afraid to “break the rules.”

Mrs. Hyatt invites the group to share their thoughts about how Julie treats her brother Ian in the story.
Their answers include:

- "She treats him nice"
- "She lets him do what he wants, but doesn’t act like him"
- "She doesn’t copy his behavior"
- "Yea, she accepted his behaviors"
- "let him try things"
- "let him lead after loosing him"

Mrs. Hyatt shares her idea with the students, "accepted his differences without being embarrassed."

A fourth grader then shared that, "she did choose to try some of the things that he did and didn’t try other things."

This conversation takes place about the book and its characters, which leads the group into a general discussion about children who think differently.

Mrs. Hyatt finishes the group by telling the class about her two jobs at Wickliffe.

1. She teaches kids who think differently like Ian, and help them to understand others
2. Help all of you to understand kids who think differently so that you can learn together

"It is our job as a Wickliffe community member to bridge the gap between all here at Wickliffe"

The floor was then opened to all, for questions and comments. Then some brainstorming about how to get involved and make new friends.

The kids’ ideas included:

- Get involved
- Protect others from bullies
- Be kind
- Say Hi
- Learn their names and talk to them

Mrs. Hyatt explained that the two hardest things for some children, is to learn how to communicate and to figure out how to be a friend. "It is my job to help and I need your help with that."
The invitation was then presented to the third and fourth general education students, if interested, to sign up to be a recess “buddy”. You can come as often as you want and be put on or taken of the list at any time.

A recess “buddy” is a person who joins a student with autism in Mrs. Hyatt’s class for a fun activity of some sort. Such as, playing a game or cooking and eating something special. This is a unique way to bring the members of Wickliffe together on another level. The students are familiar with the “Big Buddy” concept. Every child in the school (K-5), beginning in kindergarten, receives a “big buddy”. Older classes are matched with younger classes for an entire year and typically meet on Friday afternoons. During their time together, about an hour, they participate in specific activities or projects. Every child in the school has at least one big/little buddy.

As students age, they go from being a little buddy to a big buddy. This serves as a precursor to being invited to be a recess buddy with a child who has special needs. The activities are similar, yet it is by choice. However, every child who receives intervention services in the school also has a home classroom in which they already have a big buddy for the year. Some children end up with two buddies. This is not a unique occurrence. For example, many times a fourth or fifth grade class will buddy up with a first or second grade class for the year, typically visiting their buddies on Friday afternoons for some kind of lesson or activity. If the younger class has a different
number of students than the older class, somebody gets more than one buddy for the year, and somebody shares for the year. Likewise, if there is a first/second grade class without an older class, one older class will take on two younger classes, giving many children a shared or a double buddy for the tear. The idea of having more than one buddy is not just for individuals with special needs.

The emphasis on enlisting others in the school to become involved with students who are not in their class seems to be an effort of mentoring and building a learning community. It is also very apparent to me, that the faculty bases a great deal of their practice on research. When asked, each educator was able to immediately pull from, and discuss published research, and curriculums and interventions, which support their classroom, practice.

The staff feel that they work together to promote both social and academic growth in all students, not just the students assigned to them. The members of this school seem to make every effort to become knowledgeable of other’s names and their interests, all supported by the faculty. The section on the Progress Report, on Citizenship, is often rated based on the children’s response to these teaching efforts.

Nate and the Learning Lab

Some children from Mrs. Cooke’s classroom also spend time in a learning lab (resource room) with Miss Night, for specific intervention in reading, writing or math as determined by their classroom teacher, their IAT or their ETR. Instruction in the learning lab is based on
individual assessments of skills and not necessarily related to the classroom curriculum. Miss. Night’s classroom is separate from Mrs. Cooke’s and Miss Night does not co-teach in any way with Mrs. Cooke. Nate spends time in this learning lab for math, reading, spelling and writing. Until recently, he just went with an intervention specialist for reading. Based on the concern of Mrs. Cooke, his reading teacher, and his mother, he was assessed (MFE) and it was based on these assessments that most of the team felt he would benefit from more individualized instruction in additional areas. Pull out services were not the first choice of Nate’s family, however, the special education services for children with learning disabilities in the district is designed for pull out intervention.

Pull-out intervention once again contradicts the progressive ideals of a democratic community in that, as Dewey would say, the community would mean active participation by all members, constructing a reality based on these members. When children leave the community, the remaining members feel a loss as do those leaving the group. In fact, the early progressive educators designed their programs to reach those who were at-risk or developing differently. This pull-out model, which is practiced in most schools, is generally based on the deficit-orientation (Mutua and Smith (2006) and focuses on teaching skills out of home classroom context and away from the classroom community.

On the other hand, many special educators, general educators and parents still request special one-on-one or small group intervention,
even at Wickliffe. In fact, some interventions (I.E. reading Recovery and Orton Gillingham) used at Wickliffe are designed to be implemented in this type of setting. Although contradictory to the progressive philosophy, some teachers at Wickliffe feel that interventions that offer short term support for some children, enabling them to gain confidence as their skills increase, allow certain children to re-enter their general classroom contributing and participating much more than they did prior to the intervention. Mixed feelings were shared by many of the general and special educators about the long-term, pull out interventions.

Nate is now in Mrs. Cooke’s room for project work, which covers science, social studies, health and the reading and writing that is part of that work. In this respect, the intervention specialist and Mrs. Cooke have separate areas of study for him. Although, he may take “project” specific writing tasks to the learning lab when he needs extra support with something. This change in his schedule occurred during this study and was still too new to focus on. Even with the morning change in his routine half way through the collection of data, it was observed that he was completely involved in all project work in the afternoon. Nate collaborated with peers on the work and contributed to every study project that was observed. Upon entering the general classroom, Nate joined in with his peers and became involved. Only on one occasion did I hear him ask, “What are we doing?” On most occasions, once the focused observations began, I spent time in Mrs.
Cooke’s room in the afternoon during project work and did not see Nate come and go from his morning pull-out intervention services. I also did not have the permission of other students in the learning lab to observe, nor did I have the permission of the other faculty in this lab to observe, therefore, much of this information is from interviews with Miss. Night, Nate, his mother and Mrs. Cooke.

Miss Night feels that she would much prefer to visit Nate and her other students in their general classroom, however due to the increasing numbers of children, in multiple classrooms in the building, she feels that the opportunity to do this has decreased in recent years. Miss. Night feels that there is a need for more intervention faculty to support a more inclusive structure for all. There are three special education faculty that teach every child with an Educational Team Report (ETR) from K-fifth; two teachers that teach the two cross-categorical rooms, two reading-recovery teachers, one Orton-Gillingham teacher and one gifted teacher at Wickliffe.

Miss Night shares that she has an open door policy for the students that are assigned to her. She wants the kids to feel free to bring a project to her room to work on if they feel the need. If they need to come at a time that is not scheduled, they are free to do this. Miss. Night reports that many of her students do this. She does not leave her room for co-teaching with general educators so she is generally in her room to assist students who choose to seek out her help. In an attempt to connect her students to their classroom and to
allow them to act as the “expert” in their regular classroom, she recently has begun a pet-lending library. Any of her students who want to research the animal (such as a hamster) and make pamphlets for their class, can present the information to their home classroom and take the pet (hamster) into their home room for a month. This allows each child to feel like an expert on one topic, taking questions and teaching about the care and feeding of the animal to their peers. This has also been done in an effort to connect the student’s two classrooms.

To explore further connections between the teachers, the pedagogy, the children and their parents, I asked a third question on my parent survey discussed earlier in this section.

Parent Perceptions of Special Needs and the Progressive Pedagogy

If your child has specific learning needs, how does progressive education support them?

The following are a synopsis of the parent’s answers.

- Teachers are very willing to adapt to his learning needs as all of the learners are unique.
- Gifted child is thriving.
- My child does not feel like an outsider.
- My child doesn’t realize that he is a poor reader as he is equally included in the projects.
- Lots of support.
- Lots of parent involvement in the reading intervention. It is a group effort.
- My kids love the projects, even though they need extra help.
The general teachers go out of their way to communicate with me.

I felt very important and valued at the IEP meeting.

The general classroom helps my child with social skills.

My child struggles with reading and writing. I feel that there is a great deal of support for him here and he gets so many opportunities to practice both of these skills throughout the day.

My child is in the gifted program and it has been great. She is also in a regular classroom and her teachers have always been more than willing to accommodate for her learning styles and needs.

As you can see from the parent’s responses, most feel very involved and included in their child’s progressive education. They are positive responses for the most part, and are supportive of their interaction with the educators. Although I did not get the feeling that any children resented being pulled out of their general classroom from this survey, for individual reading intervention, based on the parent’s responses, it seems as though some children (does not say what class) in the school may not like being pulled out. Most parents feel very informed about their child’s education, however at least one parent responded that they did not feel well informed by a child’s pull-out reading teacher (there are several in this school). I decided to explore the perceptions about pull-out intervention when the “progressive” piece was deleted and the focus less on the progressive pedagogy in the regular class and more in the intervention in the form of pull-out services. The results to this question are sharply
different by both the parents and the children. This question was posed to two groups of parents, from several classes informally and verbally. Likewise, the children were asked informally in a conversational manner in early June, 2009.

**Child Comments on Pull-Out Intervention**

- “I wish I did not have to go any more”
- “I like when she comes down to my real class”
- “Please don’t make me go”
- “It is alright I guess”
- “When can I be done?”
- “She helps me. Sometimes I have trouble concentrating in my other class”
- “Why do I have to do this?”
- “I can read now”
- “She is nice, but I don’t like to leave my class”
- “I’d rather stay up there (in Mrs. Hyatt’s room) and not go outside”

The children’s comments share their honest feelings about pull-out intervention services. They range from loving it to a strong resentment towards pull-out. I did not get the feeling that the resentment was directed towards the intervention as much as the pull-out process itself as can be seen by this response, “She is nice, but I don’t like to leave my class.” Other children seem to see the benefit of the intervention in a pull-out session as evidenced by, “She helps
me. Sometimes I have trouble concentrating in my other class.” Still at least one would rather stay in the intervention class than go outside.

**Parent Comments on Pull-Out Intervention**

- My son enjoys spending time in both of his classrooms. He feels lucky to have two teachers!
- My older child hates being pulled out of his class for reading intervention.
- Reading intervention helped to get my son to grade level.
- My (child) is very anxious about pull-out.
- We had to set up a reward program at home to get (my child) to agree to go.
- My (child) likes his reading teacher, but HATES being pulled out for reading.
- I like the daily and weekly interactions with his special teacher. She keeps me in the loop.
- (Child) is very nervous about not being with his group when pulled-out.
- I hope he catches up quickly so he doesn’t need to go anymore.
- (child) has a strong bond with his IS. He is making great progress.
- Why embarrass these kids by making them carry a reading bag down the hall and hanging it on their door?
- Homework from her general ed. teacher and her special ed. teacher every night is absurd. Homework should be only from one or the other- or neither at this age.
- “several interventions later and he can read!”
- Small group pull-out has kids from other classes that may have similar academic needs, but no social connecting points
Out of fifteen responses to this question, nine parents expressed negative feelings about the idea of pull-out intervention while five parents shared a positive response. Again, I did not get the sense that the issue was necessarily with the intervention or the idea of intervention, nor was it with the special education faculty. The negative responses seemed to be directed at the idea of “pull-out” as an intervention service option. This survey was open to parents from many classrooms and with possibly more than one child attending Wickliffe or older children attending other district schools. Therefore in at least two responses that I am aware of, the children receiving intervention pull-out services, that the parents were responding to, were not of these teachers listed in this report. Due to the question being addresses to “parent feelings on pull-out intervention”, their responses may have had nothing to do with Wickliffe. On the other hand, sending their children to Wickliffe was a parent choice and this choice is generally based on an interest in the progressive pedagogy. Pull-out intervention is not generally discussed in the literature on the progressive practice and in fact is directly oppositional from the Deweyan ideals that the practice is based on. This fact may play into the parent’s responses and feelings about pull-out intervention.

Parent and Professional Communication

To involve the parents, Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Hyatt and Miss. Night send home a weekly parent letter. Mrs. Cooke emails the letter to every parent in her class every Sunday afternoon. This newsletter
informs the parents of homework, special upcoming events, and odds and ends that the parents might need to know.

Mrs. Hyatt sends home a daily or weekly parent note with every child in her classroom. She has three parent communication logs/letters designed and the children decide which one they want to use (Appendix G). One is in a guided format in which the children fill in for themselves as a form of self reflection. Another focuses on sensory and behavioral issues and the third focuses more on academics.

Miss. Night stays in constant contact with her parents through email. She also sent home work samples and progress reports often. Miss. Night encourages her students to personally and accurately reflect on their own behavior and time management, which is then shared with the parents.

Many of the learning experiences in Mrs. Cooke’s room and in Mrs. Hyatt’s room, seem to often be coordinated and complimentary. Mrs. Hyatt’s curriculum, namely the SCERTS, offers specific support for Jimmy in an attempt to participate socially in the group-work required in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. The SCERTS lessons can be integrated into lessons in both Mrs. Cooke’s room and Mrs. Hyatt’s room. Both teachers and Rosalynn, feel that they “work together to ensure the success for the children.” Their availability to each student in the class does not identify these professionals as solely “Jimmy’s teacher or helper” as they each support any student who requests it in the learning process while in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom.
Jimmy will often ask to go to Mrs. Hyatt’s room, and Nate requested to have reading with a smaller group. I do acknowledge that this may be a unique case between these particular professionals, or it may be due to the uniqueness of the site and the teaching practice. Since the children are in and out of the room, the hallway and the library, as their learning environment is greatly expanded in this classroom, little notice is given to who comes and goes. For example, children sign up and go to the library daily during reading conference time. The children come and go so often in this classroom for a variety of reasons, that it seems to be expected by this group of children, therefore it is not always noticed as a negative when particular students leave this room for intervention services.

In summary, the progressive pedagogy allows access to the same curriculum for each of the four tracer children by the virtue of its defined priorities and commitment to democracy. Additionally, multiple examples provide an understanding on how this pedagogy provides an invisible layer of support to the tracer children followed through their participation in the curriculum throughout this study. However, Jimmy demonstrated an example of supported social participation in this classroom such as, having an aide and specific teaching strategies like social stories, behavior plans, and “Have-to’s”, which are all designed as differentiated support for Jimmy related to his self-regulation and his social place in the community. Progressive pedagogy alone could not provide all of what Jimmy needs. To “pull-out” or to “be included” is
not a simple decision. The conflict felt by Mrs. Hyatt and the parents is poignant and deeply felt.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The findings in chapter four illustrate the daily life of the culture of this progressive and inclusive classroom. Through grand and mini tours (Spradley, 1980), detailed, rich descriptions of daily events (Geertz, 1986), and following tracer children (Kantor, Eglas & Fernie, 1993) through the daily events, I illustrate this particular classroom culture as I viewed it with specific questions in mind. Throughout the data collection and the analysis, it was my goal to explore and understand the layers of context intertwined which make up this classroom culture. Through the presentation of specific layers of this particular context, we are able to explore and better understand the progressive pedagogy at work.

Through an ethnographic lens, with my guiding question in the forefront, three main themes emerged from the data. The main question, which guided this ethnographic case study was: What is the nature of inclusion when the pedagogy is progressive? Sub questions included: 1) What is the nature of progressive practice, and 2) What is the nature of teaching and learning within this class for all children?

The cultural theme which emerged from the data, with these questions in mind, was that the progressive pedagogy is able to create an e/affective teaching and learning context for children with diverse
abilities which may otherwise be referred to as an inclusive classroom. I found that the 1) The Progressive Pedagogy builds an all inclusive community, and that 2) The Progressive pedagogy is an authentic version of inclusion. When the pedagogy is progressive, a separate, articulated approach may not be needed yet supplemental pull out interventions for children with identified disabilities were part of this progressive school. The issue may not be pullout or staying in, but rather how is pull out negotiated. I say this based on my findings, which suggest that:

A. Socially constructed projects within the progressive practice are a teaching and learning context for all and diverse students.

B. Progressive pedagogy offers an “invisible” layer of support for children of diverse abilities including those with identified disabilities

C. Pull out intervention is better received, when the special educator is viewed as a member of the classroom community.

Progressive Practice Builds an All Inclusive Community

The idea of all children having a sense of “belonging”, the importance of being a part of the learning community, and a valued member of the classroom is discussed in the literature (Sergiovanni, 1994; Noddings, 1995; Kohn, 1996; Watson, 2003; Christenson & Havsy, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2004; Mugno & Roseblitt, 2001). This idea of building relationships and community in the classroom is not only important between peers, but in a grander sense between peers, teachers, parents, and school, which are interchangeable and
collective. Belonging (a sense of being accepted and valued), participation, identification, and school membership are all vitally important as pointed out by Christenson and Havsy (2004). “Teachers who are working to construct positive, secure child-teacher attachment relationships are simultaneously working to construct a sense of community in their classrooms” (Howes & Ritchie, 2002, p. 133).

Building community is important in every classroom, and according to Sapon-Shevin, “all classrooms benefit from a sense of community and connections among students, teachers, and staff, inclusive classrooms demand attention to community from the beginning and throughout every aspect of the school day. Without a strong community, inclusion cannot work” (2007, p. 143). In her book, Sapon-Shevin discusses the practice of inclusion. Her scholarship in a classroom challenges the notion that inclusion is absent, even when the physical location of students with disabilities, and proximity of their bodies simply sharing space to their non-disabled peers. She argues that this type of inclusive classroom is not inclusive. There is “no interaction, no friendships and minimal participation” between the students (Sapon-Shevin, 2007, p. 159). Inclusion therefore is about belonging. It is about being part of a group that is not whole unless all members are present, as each member is valued and needed.

Mrs. Cooke’s classroom incorporates every child, with diverse abilities, into the routine and every child has a job responsibility each day. Some jobs require two workers. Children are encouraged and
expected to assist each other during work time, which includes both their daily jobs, and their academics. The teacher acts as a supportive leader and a collaborative learner, making a space for the children to learn from each other and with her, as she learns from them. The teachers in this classroom seem to honestly care about the children, their learning and their relationships.

Noddings (2005) described an ideological process of “caring” in schools not as a method or a prescription for teaching, but as a way of building and supporting these relationships and a sense of community between individuals. Noddings attends to the process of teaching and is clearly against the standards-driven curriculum. However, it is the process of encouraging and supporting the cooperative interaction between individuals that Noddings focuses on. Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt both encourage the interactions between the children as they work throughout the day. They create opportunities; they wait patiently for their responses, and most important, they acknowledge that interactions and contributions can look different in different groups. Even during independent work time, the children are supportive of one another, plan together and solve problems together as demonstrated on many occasions. The quiet buzz of conversation that was always present in the classroom was from children solving math problems, writing books, researching on the computer, planning a mural, illustrating recent writings, all done “together”. Special needs or not, each child was found to collaborate on a project, or was invited to work or play with another. It was a
common assumption that most work was done with a peer, even if it was just at the planning or editing stage. The teachers in the classroom supported this collaboration, even acknowledging that during silent reading; children often chose to lie next to each other or share a close spot in the hallway.

Noddings (2005) identifies that through the current standards-driven curriculum, “the pervasive goal is control of the teachers, of students, of content” (p. 9). She points out that content is important, but not more so than the process of learning, of caring and of developing and growing together. In this classroom, the children have a great deal of input into their independent research, the construction of the class projects, and who to work with throughout the day. Each student makes individual decisions daily as to what math or writing choice to make, as well as whom to play games with during these choice times. The content is covered, but as Noddings suggested, I feel that the other areas of importance is also equally addressed. The students, together with the teacher, design the class rules and assist each other in following them. The content is directed by the standards, but the learning community has a lot of power as to how to extend this content.

Furthermore, Noddings’ argument is that, “intellectual development is important, but it cannot be the first priority of schools” (p. 10). Noddings suggests the “academic purpose of the school drives everything” (p. 13), yet argues that “caring” should be at the center of our educational efforts (p. 14). My initial impressions were
that the progressive pedagogy, as demonstrated in this classroom by these educators, respects the overall growth of each individual through a caring and attentive relationship between each member of the class, which is modeled by the teacher. Neither Noddings nor progressive educators would choose caring over content learning; however they would argue that without caring, many children will not access the content learning.

The example of the daily schedule shows that parents are in and out of the room on a regular basis. Other members of the school community are also in and out of the classroom regularly, including one of the school’s TA (teaching assistants), who is also a parent of a second grade girl in this room. Even the principal pops his head in now and then, as his office is near-by. About once a month, the district’s superintendent also stops by this classroom to observe for a few minutes.

The teacher and the children continue with their work, as they do without the visitors and observers. The parents who join the class, enter the room and just begin assisting. It seems normal to the children to have community members in their classroom and little to no attention is paid when the extended community joins this class.

Katz and McClellan (1997) specifically discuss the idea of building community in their work. Like Noddings (2005), Katz and McClellan (1997) blame the changes in society for the decrease in the “sense of community” that our young children experience today. “In the
past, children’s need for a sense of community and belonging, emotional and social bonding, and nurturance were met by the family, extended family, and larger community” (Katz & McClellan, 1997, p. 24). This classroom accepts and seems to expect community members to take a significant role in the learning events that take place.

Kohn (1996), influenced by the theories of Piaget and Dewey, in addition to the current work of Kamii and Devries (1993), Sergiovanni (1994), Noddings (1995), Watson (2003), and Katz and McClellan (1997), defines a community as; “a place in which students feel cared about, and are encouraged to care about each other;...they feel connected to each other; they are part of an us” (p. 101). Kohn argues that as a “result of this, they all feel safe in their classes, not only physically but emotionally” (p. 102). The students in this class interact regularly with each other and are encouraged to do so. This is demonstrated by the numerous opportunities throughout the day to work together.

Watson (2003) suggests that a classroom community contain seven key points initiated by the teacher and infused into the curriculum, so much so that it becomes part of the pedagogy. These seven components include: “1) build a sense of group membership, 2) use inclusive language, 3) build a shared history, 4) highlight shared goals, 5) highlight shared values, 6) build interdependence and responsibility, and 7) encourage students to help one another” (Watson, 2003, p. 107). Each of the seven suggestions, made by Watson, can guide a teacher,
both in the art of teaching as well as in building a classroom community. This supports the idea that “achieving a sense of community entails that children understand that they are a part of a larger group and that being thoughtful and cooperative with others benefits both them and the entire group” (Howes & Ritchie, 2002, p. 133).

Mrs. Cooke’s classroom practice, reflects and demonstrates many of Watson’s key points. There is a sense of a group membership by all of the children. They know the ritual of the morning routine, and the choices that are available to them during writing, reading and math choice time. Johnny chooses to wait for his friend Nate to write a book, when Nate is upstairs receiving reading intervention. Other examples include the co-construction of a set of classroom rules and their shared responsibility for the care of the classroom environment. Language that reflects community is used in this classroom, as Sandy repeated to the investigator the rules of “our” classroom and that “everybody” who is part of “our classroom” must know these rules.

A shared history had been built by the first day of my observation in that the class had, through various projects, created the alphabet symbols and graph, created 54 number cards on the number line, and created and worked the job board themselves. Watson (2003) lists shared goals and values on her list. The students demonstrated their dedication to their work, how they chose to display their completed independent projects in order to share them at the end of the
writing workshop. These children also shared the goal of creating the rainforest mural and displaying their Wickliffe Riddles in the hall.

Even second grade Michelle, mentions to a peer, that she must complete her “visual representation” (her own words) of her independent study, and it must “look good” before she shares it with her class. The collaborative work between the children observed during their daily writing workshop, job time and project time, were examples of the components of building Watson’s interdependence and responsibility in an attempt to build a learning community.

Wightman (2003) discusses how children build community and make it visible in an informal classroom setting. The Wickliffe faculty reference the Reggio philosophy (Rinaldi, 2001) quite often, and use these ideals in their practice of both building community and making learning visible. The Reggio philosophy demonstrates a practice using a theoretical relationship combining cognitive and social constructivism. The Reggio schools use a documentation strategy to demonstrate children’s learning and building a learning community. Wightman (2003) using both the Reggio philosophy and informal (progressive) practice captures how a community is created through dialogue and documentation in her effort to make a classroom community visible.

In this classroom, the learning became visible through the process of the student’s research. As they created the mural, the Wickliffe Riddles, the number line, the birthday graph and the alphabet
line, they were learning both together and individually; sharing goals and creating a shared history. Every child in the class was present and participated in these events. All of the children negotiated, planned and supported each other as they worked. Students with special needs and those without were present for all project work, town meetings, morning and afternoon meetings, field trips, specials (gym, music, art) and yes, lunch and recess. Although a few children left the room for intervention during the day (different children left at different times) during reading and math times, which is contradictory to the progressive philosophy, it did not have the same effect on either of the children being pulled out of the learning community as a whole. Therefore, I do not feel that pull out intervention is always a good idea, nor is always counter-productive, but a close look at each child within each context must be considered. It is through these same examples of building a community that also offer this invisible support to each student, not just those with identified special needs.

On a smaller scale, and to address the pull-out intervention, specific learning experiences in the classroom each day may be affected by the absence of a few children who leave for intervention. On only a few occasions, when children were looking for Nate to work with, did I hear a student say, “He is at reading.” In fact, when this did happen I saw two different responses from different children. One boy, who wanted to write a story with Nate only to find out that he as gone, simply chose another boy with which to write his story. Johnny, on the
other hand, put his book to the side and waited for Nate’s return, choosing to do something else until Nate returned to class. Based on some of the children’s, and some of the parent’s feelings on pull-out intervention, I found that certain children find it difficult to re-enter the classroom community after being separated for even a short time, while others worry about what they are missing or what the other kids think of them when they have to leave for intervention.

Interested in understanding the two types of pull-out intervention at Wickliffe (academic-oriented intervention in Miss. Night’s LD program and the social/language interaction in Mrs. Hyatt’s room), I conducted a componential analysis (Spradley, 1980), searching for the attributes or the components of meaning associated with the cultural categories of special education, embedded in the larger culture of this classroom. Spradley’s tools and process search for the attributes and dimensions of contrast. This allowed me to understand how these experiences were similar and different from each other.

What I discovered was that there seemed to be less negative connotations about going to the cross-categorical room shared by the students and the parents than going to the learning lab/resource room. The students who also spent time in the cross-categorical room, spent in some cases, fifty percent of their day with Mrs. Hyatt either in Mrs. Hyatt’s room or in Mrs. Cooke’s room with Mrs. Hyatt present. These children had been diagnosed as having autism or a significant
social/communication delay. The students who spent time in the learning lab, typically a smaller portion of their day with their special education teacher working on very specific, but usually different content than they did in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. The children and their parents seemed to admire and respect both Mrs. Hyatt and Miss. Night equally. Reportedly, both were well liked by their respective children and their families. Both teachers had strong relationships with their students and interacted well and often with the parents, yet there were still strong differences in the general responses to leaving Mrs. Cooke’s classroom and going to either Mrs. Hyatt’s room verses Miss Night’s room. After many observations and conversations, I believe the difference to be the relationship that each of these special educators have with Mrs. Cooke’s classroom community.

The students view Mrs. Hyatt as a member of Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. She is present in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom, working with all of the children every day for at least one full hour during math. Mrs. Hyatt participates in Town Meeting practices with Mrs. Cooke, while she supports the students that she shares with Mrs. Cooke. Every child in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom knows Mrs. Hyatt, has learned with Mrs. Hyatt, and has summoned assistance from Mrs. Hyatt at one time or another throughout this school year. Students from Mrs. Cooke’s classroom are occasionally part of Mrs. Hyatt’s classroom, as different children are invited up there every Friday for a SCERRT lesson with Jimmy. Mrs.
Hyatt is part of this classroom community. She is a member of the group, with a shared history and important contributions.

In contrast, in the eyes of the students, Miss. Night is not part of Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. She does not participate in classroom events nor does she know every student. Only the children who receive intervention from her in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom know Miss Night. Furthermore, she is not viewed by all the children, as a member of “this” community. Nate, and others go to her room and later, they simply return. There is no co-teaching, although there is some consultation and discussion about Nate’s needs, it is done behind the scenes. Miss. Night was not present in Mrs. Cooke’s Room, whereas Mrs. Hyatt was. There are also physical reminders in Mrs. Cooke’s room. Mrs. Hyatt had created lists (Jimmy’s Have-to and Choice List) which hung on a book-shelf. Social stories designed by Mrs. Hyatt were in the classroom for all of the children to read, even though they were created for Jimmy. There was no physical evidence of Miss. Night’s presence in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom. Occasionally she may pop in, but this is rare.

Relationships are extremely important in a community. However, not all relationships were equal in this classroom community. Mrs. Hyatt is considered a full member of the classroom, due to her participation in this classroom, while Miss. Night was not. Miss Night was viewed by Nate, and the other children, as an outsider to this particular classroom culture. Both special educators, equally liked by
the children whom they teach, and the parents, yet the children respond differently to going to their pull-out classrooms. Jimmy, a child diagnosed with autism looked forward to visiting Mrs. Hyatt’s classroom and in fact, did not always want to return to Mrs. Cooke’s room. Nate, diagnosed with a learning disability never wanted to go to the pull out classroom. Autism is primarily a sensory challenge and perhaps time away from the general classroom is a “sensory break” for Jimmy. The response of the rest of the classroom however, seemed interdependent of the children’s diagnosis and more related to the status of the respective special education teacher in the classroom community.

The relationships in the community seem to be the key as discussed by Wightman (2003), Sergiovanni (1994) and Noddings (2003; 2005). Relationships between teachers and students are critical in building a sense of community (Sergiovanni (1994). Although both special educators had what seemed to be a good relationship with their own students, the membership in the inclusive classroom community was very different. While community building is not one of the official ten principles at Wickliffe, it is a basic Deweyan ideal and the foundation of the progressive pedagogy. Community building is also not necessarily a goal shared by the special education teachers in the building. It is commonly discussed in literature on teaching methods for early childhood and elementary classrooms (Watson, 2003; Howes & Ritchie, 2002), and strongly suggested as something parents should look for in a classroom for children by Kohn (1996 and 1998). The idea of
community building is not as prominent in the literature in special education, inclusion or co-teaching as it is in the progressive or the early childhood literature. Relationships between professionals are important in co-teaching (Friend & Bursuck, 2002; Friend & Cook, 2003; Gately & Gately, 2001) however, a large focus on student relationships in the context of building a classroom learning community is not as evident in the special education literature.

“Inclusion is about reconceptualizing classrooms so that they meet the needs of diverse groups of learners. Inclusion is about acceptance. Inclusion is about belonging. Inclusion is about seeing all people (including ourselves) as complex and valuable” (Sapon-Shevin, 2007, p. 217). It is about re-evaluating “societies ongoing denial of literate citizenship for people with perceived intellectual disabilities” Klewier, Bilken & Kasa-Hendrickson, 2006, p. 163) and examining intervention approaches that may “actually impose[d] further restrictions and needless limitations” (Klewier, et al, 2006, p. 168) which are different than the teaching practices used in the general education classroom. Inclusion calls teaching strategies into question and demands that not only should the art of teaching be reflected upon, an inclusive culture (Zollers, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999) needs to be present.

During their 1999 study, Zollers, et al. “entered the field expecting to identify educational practices that contributed to the success of inclusion” (p. 162) during their year long ethnography.
Their analysis revealed that the success of inclusion at the school under study was not simply the contribution of the teaching practices, but it was the overall school culture which was inclusive. Zollers’ study advances the notion that a school’s culture can contribute to the success of inclusion when four components are present, in addition to a flexible teaching practice including, “inclusive leadership, a broad vision of school community, and shared language and values” (p. 163). Although this study acknowledged the contributions made by the leadership, (the principle of the inclusive school under study was blind) to the overall inclusive culture of the school, the study also contributes to the idea that a positive inclusive culture also builds community among members of the community.

Deeply embedded in the progressive concept are beliefs about all children, education, and the art of building relationships within a community of learners – that is, a community co-constructing knowledge as they continuously build relationships with each other within their classroom and school. Progressive pedagogy, with its focus on community and each individual child, aims to affect the school climate in such a way that the students, faculty, and parents’ social and emotional well-being are supported. After all, social and emotional education should become an integrated part of the overall curriculum (Elias et al., 1997; Noddings, 1992).

Relationships between children are an important factor and are associated with overall academic performance (Flook, Repetti, & Ullman,
2005). These researchers suggest that, “social, emotional and cognitive development are fundamentally interrelated...and suggest that the promotion of positive relationships with peers can contribute not only to children’s social development but to their emotional and cognitive as well” (Flook, Repetti, & Ullman, 2005, p. 325). As important as peer relationships are, the teacher-child relationships are just as important. Teachers should offer both emotional and instructional support and in doing so, be “aware of and responsive to student’s needs...and create(d) a positive classroom climate in which the teachers and students enjoy(ed) each other and their time in the classroom” (Hamre & Pianta, 2005, p. 962). By “responding to children’s social and emotional needs, teachers may not only help children adapt socially, but may allow these children...more positive academic experiences (Hamre & Pianta, 2005, p. 954).

In the constructivist tradition, Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1952, both felt that social knowledge is knowledge on which cultural or social groups come to agree by convention; therefore, knowledge is co-constructed. “Examples of social knowledge are rules, laws, morals, values, ethics, and language systems” (Wadsworth, 1989, p. 22). Cultural knowledge must be modeled, supported, and valued in the classroom, in order for it to become a cultural norm within the school community. Likewise, the classroom culture must be created, understood, and shared by all who are part of it. This process is included in the constructivist literature, which emphasizes the “cooperative nature of
the constructivist teacher-child relationship and the influence of the child’s entire school experience on the child’s development” (Devries & Zan, 1994, p. 3). Although each special educator had what seemed to be a good relationship with their own students, what was different was their membership in this classroom community. One was an outsider to this culture, and one was an insider.

Inclusion requires a strong community, which is more than placing physical bodies of children with disabilities near bodies of students without disabilities (Sapon-Shevin, 2007). Classrooms which “move bodies into shared space and call it “inclusion”, are set up for failure, and they miss the educational, social, and motivational power of inclusive classrooms” (p. 144). Sapon-Shevin continues, that “in order for inclusion to be successful, all students need to be full members of their classroom community” (p. 144).

For this particular classroom community, it is the group of people, and not simply a place. Mrs. Hyatt and Jimmy are not a constant in Mrs. Cooke’s physical classroom yet are considered part of the community. Nate is also an equal member of this community, even though he is absent for part of most days. There also seems to be a commonality of teaching ideals and philosophies between Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt that did not seem to be as apparent between the before mentioned and Miss. Night. Although Miss. Night values the idea of project learning and including the families in the child’s education, she feels that she has to “get the kids where they need to be
academically and behaviorally which may look different than the general education classroom.” “Often instruction in special education and inclusive settings attends to only the remediation of the individual with a dis/ability, rather than, as is mandated by law, access to the general education curriculum” (Baglerie & Knopf, 2004, p. 526).

To the children in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom, Miss. Night is an outsider. Miss Night reports that she used to be able to participate more inclusively in the general education classrooms. In recent years, her caseload has increased and she feels pressure to teach in preparation for the standardized tests. She too acknowledges a decrease in her participation with the general education teachers and their classrooms.

The progressive pedagogy builds an inclusive community among its members. Membership however takes time, work and participation as community relationships are constructed and maintained. Community membership is not a given, it is earned through participation within the community. Therefore, pull out intervention, on the surface is antithetical by definition to a progressive philosophy because it has the potential to disrupt those important relationships. Given the passion for community by the progressive teachers, it surprised me that they seemed to accept the practice of “pull out” so readily. They didn’t seem to think it was an option, but they also didn’t seem to voice strong objections. There did not seem to be a tension between general and special educators surrounding the topic pull-out
intervention. Overall it seemed to be generally accepted without in-depth conversations challenging the best location for each child to receive intervention services.

The case specific data in this study, however, revealed the negotiated character of pull out. In other words pull out can be more inclusive or less inclusive, and can affect the community as a whole, or the child being pulled out in positive or negative ways. The choice is not “pull out” or “staying in” but rather how do we manage a pull out program in a progressive environment. These data would suggest the importance of the special education teacher’s membership in the general education classroom.

The Progressive Pedagogy is an Authentic Version of Inclusion

When the pedagogy is progressive, a separate, articulated approach for children with identified disabilities, may not be needed. The data in this study provide evidence of support for diverse children participating in the regular classroom. This does not mean that there is not a place for pull out intervention services, I simply suggest that whether or not to pull out, and the duration and frequency of a pull out program should be evaluated and re-evaluated especially in a progressive program well suited for inclusion. Jimmy’s response to taking a sensory break from the busy classroom, is at least one example of when it might be useful.

Socially constructed projects within the progressive practice are a teaching and learning context for all and diverse students.
Additionally the progressive pedagogy offers an “invisible” layer of support for children of diverse abilities including those with identified disabilities. It is important to note however that the treatment of the four tracer children was equitable, not necessarily equal. The children with diverse abilities received individualized treatment that was equitable yet unique. Equal treatment would insinuate that their disabilities were invisible. Unique characteristics such as race, color and abilities should be celebrated and, as was the case in this classroom culture, were identified and respected. For example, during the student interviews and surveys, the children identified the different roles between Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt and Rosalynn. They were fairly clear about the difference in abilities, yet did not seem to focus on them. Nate and Jimmy were included in play, conversations and work equitably.

Through an examination of this project work and how this work is integrated into the daily schedule, we can explore the dual ideas of this “invisible layer of support” and just how “project-work”, as part of the progressive pedagogy, supports all children in an inclusive classroom.

Projects can provide contexts in which children’s curiosity is expressed purposefully, and one that enables them to experience the joy of self-motivated learning (Helm & Katz, 2001). The projects seen in Mrs. Cooke’s room are integrated, emergent, authentic and child-directed, yet attend to the state curriculum content standards on
multiple levels. Content areas of math, science, reading, writing, social studies and geography, all were covered during the three research projects, which took place during my observations.

Beane (1997) describes the possibilities offered through curriculum integration as seen at Wickliffe, and projects as “unforgettable learning experiences” (p. 4) that can combine experiences and current knowledge with the possibility to obtain new knowledge, through a very active and social experiences. It can be a collaborative way to organize current knowledge, plan for ways to gain new knowledge, and access new information. Examples of these collaborative learning experiences were observed during the projects observed in this class.

Projects offer an avenue for creative ways to obtain and to demonstrate new knowledge. Each participant has a role and each member is equally valued. Teamwork is encouraged, expected by all, and this was demonstrated through the “Wickliffe Riddles”, community professions and the study of the Amazon rainforest. Since each child needs assistance at one time or another, no one child is singled out as having a special need more so than any other. Project work-time also allowed the educators to teach individual and small group, authentic mini-lessons as the need arises. For example, in constructing the name for the mural, the entire group of students contributed ideas, then received a lesson on compound words. Another example of this would be when the children were writing up their research, individual children
were given “mini-lessons” on punctuation and capitalization. Opportunities to practice these skills were repeated daily, but were not a “skill and drill” type of lesson. These lessons were authentic and individualized for as needed. There were also numerous opportunities for small group instruction during every time slot during the day. Reading conferences gave way to an ongoing small group instruction by Mrs. Cooke. Another teacher could easily participate during this time and hold other conferences within the room. Math already has two groups of teachers teaching with two age levels of assignments (based on grade) going on as is. Furthermore, the opportunities to practice these reading and math skills continue throughout the day in an integrated format. The success of cooperative teaching between Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt seems to go beyond the four walls of Mrs. Cooke’s classroom.

The teachers, paraprofessionals, and the parents, assist all of the children in the room. Support is always available from an adult or a peer. Children can also seek support from published works (i.e. dictionary), from child created materials (i.e. the wordwall), or from tools such as calculators or multiplication tables. All resources are available to the students and they are encouraged to access them as they need them. There is also time to take a break from research and make other choices. There is no penalty for not completing a task every day as the unfinished work can be and is, placed in the unfinished work folder, which every child in the class has and uses.
The point is not just to complete the work, but the construction of ideas, the collaboration, and the learning that takes place, which is a valuable part of the process.

Projects involve a wide variety of forms of participation from highly active to highly passive. Projects involve multiple social configurations such as individual, pairs, and small groups, which make for a highly supportive learning structure for a wide range of learners. Likewise, there are generally both intellectual and artistic steps, as well as group and individual aspects in project work. The students are actively producing knowledge, generally through documentation or a visual representation of this knowledge. This is accomplished through creative use of both the arts and language arts. Each child has the opportunity to use time and space as they need it, to both acquire, and to demonstrate their new knowledge. This is accomplished through creative use of both the arts and language arts. Each child has the opportunity to use time and space as they need it, to both acquire, and to demonstrate their new knowledge. Not every child learns in the same fashion, nor does every child learn at the same pace. Projects allow children to construct new knowledge according to their own learning style and developmental abilities.

Integrated projects such as the rainforest project and the Wickliffe Riddles, have specific requirements and steps. Each child’s participation in the process of project research, counts as much as the completed product. In 1897, Dewey said something very similar in that
"education must be conceived as a continuing reconstruction of experience; that the process and the goal of education are one and the same." Perhaps these historical words hold as much modern day truth about children and learning as they did in the past.

There is no script or prescription for project work, as projects change and grow over time depending on the interests and needs of the children. The children in this inclusive classroom each have different interests and learning needs, which this project work allowed for. The projects mediate as the children grow, both academically and socially. There is time for, and expectations of, the children to revisit work that needs editing, and to reflect on one’s work, individually and collaboratively, with adults and peers.

The outcome of progressive pedagogical practice which includes the construction of projects, as described by Noddings (2005); is one of “exploring new ideas, discovering new interests, and expressing thoughts in art, drama, music, and writing...students should be given opportunities to learn how to care for themselves, for other human beings, for the natural and human-made worlds, and for the world of idea” (p. xiii). The ideas and practices of progressive pedagogy, heavily influenced by Dewey (1897, 1902), subscribes to an integrated, authentic, active, and child-centered curriculum implementing strategies such as projects, like these discussed, and documentation of the learning process instead of solely relying on standardized tests.
During project work, the social norms and classroom expectations, and the child’s position in the learning community are socially constructed (Fernie, Davis, Kantor & McMurry, 1993) and often guide the individual and group roles in the learning process. Since much of the learning process is collaborative, each child has an obligation to participate, yet also has an acceptable choice of working independently. The work is designed to allow each child to join and leave the group as they need to. The work, also designed to allow children to spend more time on certain aspects of their learning, allowing others to speed up, without negative repercussions. The contributions are valued by all, which focuses on “action and democracy” of every member of the group (Kliewer, 2006).

The four tracer children followed during this project work, each had very similar experiences. Although their contributions were individually unique, each participated in every aspect of these particular projects. Each child presented their work at the town meeting, had their riddle hung in the hallway, researched an inhabitant of the rainforest, painted on the mural, and created a species to hang on the mural. Although their work was unique to their developmental skills, they each were expected to meet the standards for their grade level. The amount of support they requested varied based on the type of skills required to complete each specific task. Every student in this classroom required assistance in different areas on different days. Every child worked at a different pace and every child
contributed ideas at different times. Nate, Johnny, Jimmy and Sandy reflect the full range of abilities of the class in that every student has different strengths and needs.

Constructing projects allows for individual, unique contributions through art, reading skills, understanding math concepts, social networking, group planning skills, writing talents and so on. Each child, special needs or not, had strengths to share. Nate, who struggled with reading excelled at remembering facts that others could not recall. Jimmy excelled at reading, but lacked the social skills that Sandy had. Johnny although shy, was artistic and could mentally plan and organize his ideas. Johnny could write Nate’s facts down and Nate could encourage Johnny to share his facts in the social setting. Project work allows for this type of collaboration between students of all abilities. These projects continued for weeks, allowing each student to become completely involved in the process. The student’s dedication to this work was often surprising. I observed six and seven year old children write for up to an hour at a time while they did research, yet on one rare occasion that I observed them working on a non-related, generic worksheet given by a substitute teacher, they showed no interest, became fidgety and lost interest. The worksheet was not personal or important to them. Their project work was very personal, authentic and they seemed to be personally dedicated to it. They also had a commitment to the group to do their share of the
research, painting, writing and typing for the final presentation of the work.

The projects are not micromanaged, or so structured that the children’s interests and voices are not heard. In fact, the projects, which serve as a specific aspect of the progressive pedagogy that also builds community, requires that each individual, regardless of their ability, has a say in what they might study, and how they contribute to the groups’ documentation and co-construction of the knowledge, which brings in the democratic ideals of Dewey (1938). Dewey did not categorize students into ability levels. He took this ideal even further to encourage educators to re-evaluate social democracy within the schools as a step attending to social injustice of overall diversity.

Dewey reaffirmed the aim of education as supporting the development of the skills and knowledge needed for responsible and caring participation in a democracy. He emphasized the importance of teaching students to recognize and value human differences and to learn to solve problems in nonviolent ways. Dewey’s work, and that of ensuing generations of progressive educators focused on a series of pedagogic strategies that recognize not only academics, but also the social, emotional, and ethical domains of learning (p. 5).

Dewey believed that education should reflect a child’s powers and interests and that this education should be an active one, with room for their emotions and supporting the children in sharing a social
consciousness (Dewey, 1897). Dewey’s (1915) ideas of democracy lead us to ponder the importance of relationships and community in the educational setting and can be a step towards building a more global democratic society. Through projects in Mrs. Cooke’s classroom, each child has a voice, a place and is a full member. Each child can participate and is expected to participate. Every child can ask for support and share their strengths with others. Project work provides a context for democratic learning and the construction of new knowledge.

Scholars and practitioners in education, interested in all children participating in general classrooms, are continuously searching for the best practices for inclusion. Collaborating and co-teaching (Friend and Cook, 2007) is a partnership between special and general educators which takes on the unique qualities of any partnership, and will look different in different settings. Friend and Cook identify six different cooperative teaching arrangements between special and general educators. Cooperative teaching offers students with the opportunity to benefit from educators with both specialties. An example of this is seen each day during math, between Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt. The math period between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. daily is an example of one teaching and one supporting according to Friend and Cook (2007) in that both teachers are present. Mrs. Cooke teaches the larger lesson and Mrs. Hyatt supports her students and others who need it during work-time.
Practices for inclusion also include ways of thinking about teaching and learning, beliefs about how children learn and that learning communities are important. One such philosophy is referred to as differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 1998, 2000, 2008). According to Tomlinson (2008), differentiated instruction “is student aware teaching...which maximizes student potential” (p. 27). Developing awareness and trust are as important as gaining mastery of the content. Tomlinson (2008) argues that teachers who differentiate “strive to build trust, ensure fit, strengthen voice and develop awareness” (p. 30) of the students in the classroom. Differentiated instruction “must be a refinement of, not a substitute for, high quality teaching” (Tomlinson, 2000, p. 1). Differentiated instruction, supported by Baglieri and Knopf (2004) is a recommended practice ideal for inclusive classrooms, that can “be designed for the education of all students in the differentiated classroom” (Baglieri and Knopf, 2004, p. 527; Tomlinson, 1999). Many of the ideals suggested in the differentiation literature discuss that the “standards tell us what to teach, differentiation tells us how” (Tomlinson, 2000, p. 3) based on how children learn. This view of children and learning seem to gain support from Vygotskian ideas in that the more knowledgable person supports, mentors and challenges the learner to grow both academically and socially. According to Tomlinson (2000), differentiating addresses issues of pace, community and authenticity in learning. Additionally, Nodding’s (1994) affective ideas about teaching seem to also be
incorporated into the differentiated line of thought through concentrating on human relationships and trust which she argues must be present in the classroom. Mutual respect and trust (Eirich, 2006) must be present in order to take risks and “without risk-taking, there is no learning and without trust, there is no risk-taking” (Eirich, 2006, p. 257). Educators who differentiate may encompass each of these beliefs and may support each child in developing on multiple levels. Learning and mistake making often involve taking risks, collaborating, observing others and becoming a learner. There must be support along the way from teachers and peers, and areas in which one can work towards and gain at least occasional success in their own eyes. Progressive education, supported by Noddings (2006) and Eirich (2006), and as seen in this classroom, incorporates many of these teaching and learning ideals throughout the day. As we have discussed, this classroom offers the children an opportunity to work at their own pace, build community and the projects offer authentic learning experiences. Based on factors such as these, I feel the progressive pedagogy offers a differentiated curriculum in and of itself, which offers students with special needs an invisible layer of support.

Based on this line of thinking, another framework for teaching and learning that may fit into this pedagogy is referred to as Universal Design for learning (UDL). UDL stems from the field of architecture, which designs the environment to fit the needs of all individuals. UDL is “instruction that provides students with multiple
means of expression, supports strategic learning and creates several
alternatives for demonstrating what learners know” (Jimenez, Graf &
create multiple means of engagement support affective learning by
tapping into learners’ interests and offering appropriate challenges to
increase their motivation” (p. 45). These two descriptions align with
much of the progressive thoughts on how children learn and how
progressive educators teach. Often UDL is thought of in relationship
to CAST, which is the Center for Applied Special Technology, founded in
1984 by David Rose and Ann Meyer, with the purpose to use technology as
a primary resource to make classrooms accessible to learners with
physical disabilities. Gargiulo and Metcalf (2010) compare UDL and
differentiated instruction and find similarities in teaching, learning
and sharing learned knowledge as “UDL supports differentiated
instruction” (p. 199). Due to similar lines of thought on education,
both UDL and differentiated instruction correlate with the progressive
pedagogy.

Final Thoughts and Limitations

A pedagogy, like the progressive pedagogy described in this
study, if used in the typical general education classroom, might free
up the general educator to collaborate more with the special educator,
in an effort to design a plan which would provide complete support for
inclusion. It might create the professional “space” for more open
attitudes for general education teachers, who perhaps feel burdened by
having to create lesson plans, and then differentiate those lessons to accommodate for children with diverse abilities. This pedagogy by design, invites contribution from each member of the learning community and is open to large group, small group and individual learning opportunities, in addition to what is commonly known in the field as tiered or leveled content assignments. This analysis implies that progressive pedagogy builds an all inclusive community, which include children of diverse abilities, and the adults who learn with them. In spite of the pull out intervention which was implemented in this school, I found that socially constructed projects within the progressive practice are a teaching and learning context for all and diverse learners. The projects allowed each child to attend to the content, participate individually and socially in constructing new knowledge, and contribute to the shared vision of the group. The progressive pedagogy provides an opportunity for multiple modes of expression of knowledge and authentic, alternative assessments to express knowledge of content and personal growth. As one progressive educator with almost 30 years of teaching and administrative experience put, “It is just good teaching that allows me to reach every student.” This pedagogy invites professional, parent, and peer collaboration within the community and supports those who learn in diverse ways and on diverse levels.

When Jimmy was having trouble controlling his sensory melt-downs in the general education classroom, the administration and his parent’s
answer to this was to pull him out of the Mrs. Cooke’s classroom more, and separate him in the cross-categorical more. The traditional styles of, and thoughts on education is what they were familiar with, and unknowingly compromised Mrs. Cooke’s and Mrs. Hyatt’s more progressive ideas about inclusion and professional practice. More collaboration between Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt, with the support of administrators and the parents could have produced the strategies to help Jimmy in the general classroom setting.

The general school of thought in education is comfortable and familiar with the division of fields and specialties. There is regular education and there is special education. The pre-service programs are typically separate, the methods classes are separate, and different textbooks are used for each major. The separation of fields need not be so definitive, as demonstrated by the collaboration between Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt. Their collaboration and team teaching represented two professional specialties working together to teach children in two grade levels, with varying levels of cognitive and social abilities, and across curriculum content areas. The data illustrates multiple ways in which they negotiated their respective specialties without issues of power, as they worked together to teach all children in an integrated curriculum through the co-construction of projects.

The analysis also yielded that progressive pedagogy offers an invisible layer of support for children of diverse abilities, including
those with identified disabilities through the mini lessons, peer modeling, large group lessons, individual attention and multiple opportunities to express new knowledge. Through the exploration of the layers of context within this classroom culture, I discovered that classroom community can extend beyond the four walls of the classroom, and that pull-out intervention services have different implications within the same classroom.

I found it curious that educators committed to the theoretical ideals of progressive education, unquestionably accept pull-out intervention. Perhaps the division between the fields of regular education and special education is so deeply established, even progressive educators are reluctant to question the wisdom of pull-out intervention.

Furthermore, Mrs. Cooke and Mrs. Hyatt negotiated and managed pull-out in a unique sense, because they created a space for a social learning community to develop between the children and among themselves. Pulling-out or keeping-in, is not always the main question, but just how this affects the child and the classroom community that may be the question. This data illustrates that pulling-out does not necessarily mean a break from the community, as was the case with Mrs. Hyatt and Jimmy. Jimmy would request to be pulled-out on occasion to go to Mrs. Hyatt’s classroom. Pulling-out for Nate was a very different experience as the data reveals, for Nate, being pulled-out of Mrs. Cooke’s classroom, was an unwanted break from
his learning community. Perhaps increased collaboration and co-teaching between Mrs. Cooke and Miss. Night could prevent this feeling for Nate, while still providing him with the academic support the teachers in this study felt that he needed.

This picture of the progressive pedagogy allows this study to contribute to Kliewer’s (2006) request for paradigmatic challenges for inclusive education. The theoretical frameworks and practices of progressive education, the theoretical ideals of inclusion when informed by disability studies, and the findings from this ethnographic case study, together, offer a proposal for and a definition of Progressive Inclusion.

The opportunities for exploration in this field site were too numerous to allow one to follow every lead during the data collection. The focus was on the social access within the progressive pedagogy, and how it was used in one inclusive classroom. This example contributes to the current knowledge about just how inclusion could work using this particular pedagogy. Perhaps unquestioned pull-out intervention should be re-evaluated and another look at co-teaching and more collaboration might be considered.

It would be beneficial to gain an even greater perspective by looking at more classroom examples within the building, as each educator implements their unique teaching styles within the framework of the progressive ideals. Additionally, each special educator in the building may not share the views of the general education staff, nor
their progressive teaching practice, therefore the collaboration practices would vary with each professional team. Although there are many layers of cultural context that I feel, could be explored in this particular school, in order to more deeply understand and reflect on the progressive pedagogy and inclusion on a grander scale, this study seeks to provide inside on how it works in one classroom.

This study focused on the social aspects of inclusion in this particular classroom, including the social participation and the access to the curriculum, when the inclusive classroom is progressive. It would be beneficial to explore and measure the academic gains made by the children in an inclusive and progressive classroom, which this study was not designed to study. This study was not designed to document evidence or lack of evidence of academic gains. This study does however provide evidence for social opportunity and accessibility to the curriculum for children with diverse abilities.

The findings in this study can inform general early childhood and elementary educators looking for possible practice to use in their own inclusive classrooms to support social interaction and a more differentiated and individualized learning experience. The data can inform progressive educators and special educators who collaborate with general educators in providing intervention services to young students. The findings suggest that special educators, that strive to become part of the general classroom community may be better received by children and their parents, than special educators who do not.
APPENDIX A

IRB EXEMPTION LETTER
October 14, 2008

Protocol Number: 2008F0660
Protocol Title: CONTRIBUTIONS TO INCLUSIVE PRACTICE, Rebecca Kantor Martin, Scott Dunforth, Kami Darling, Teaching & Learning.
Type of Review: Request for Exempt Determination
ORRP Staff Contact: Cheri M. Petrey
Phone: 614-688-0389
Email: petrey.6@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Kantor-Martin

The Office of Responsible Research Practices has determined the above referenced protocol exempt from IRB review.

Date of Exempt Determination: 10/14/2008
Qualifying Exemption Category: 1

Please note the following:

- Only OSU employees and students who have completed CITI training and are named on the signature page of the application are approved as OSU Investigators in conducting this study.
- No procedural changes may be made in exempt research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, instruments, enrollment numbers, etc.).
- Per university requirements, all research-related records (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for a period of at least three years after the research has ended.
- It is the responsibility of the investigator to promptly report events that may represent unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This determination is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance 00006378.

All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the ORRP staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Cheri Petrey, MA, Certified IRB Professional
Exempt IRB Administrator

Exempt Determination Version 1.0
APPENDIX B

SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVAL LETTER
October 17, 2008

Kami Darling  
1474 Bridgeton Drive  
Columbus, OH 43220

Dear Kami Darling:

Your research project entitled *Progressive Inclusion — A qualitative study of Progressive Pedagogy and its contributions to inclusive Practice* has been approved.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Debora K. Binkley, Ph.D.
Associate Superintendent

c: Mr. Chris Collaros, Principal
Wickliffe Progressive Community School
APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTION TO CHILDREN
To the children: first and second grade

(spooken script to introduce myself)

My name is Kami Darling. Just like Mrs. Boyd, I am a teacher. Just like all of you, I am also a student! I hope that you will all teach me more about your classroom.

I plan to spend some time here with you over the next several weeks. I can learn a lot about what your teacher does by observing her teach you. I can also learn a lot about how this classroom works by observing the things you do together as you learn.

I will typically (or initially) just watch. If Mrs. Boyd asks for my help, or any of you ask for my help, I will be very glad to do so. Just like all of you, I learn by doing!

I hope that I can learn enough about your classroom and how it works, to teach other teachers. I think that your school is very special and many other teachers could really learn a lot by hearing about how your classroom learns together.

I will write down the things that I see and hear. I will also need all of your help, so I may ask each one of you questions about your work. We can reflect together and teach each other.

Will you help me?
APPENDIX D

PARENT/FACULTY PERMISSION SLIP
Dear parents,

My name is Kami Darling. I am a doctoral candidate at The Ohio State University in The College of Education, School of Teaching and Learning. I would like to conduct my dissertation research project in your child’s classroom. My interests are learning about the progressive pedagogy through observation, and determining what contributions it may offer to inclusive teaching practices. I plan to do this through observing your child’s classroom, their teacher and interacting when invited to do so. All names will be changed when the project is written up. This is the final project required in my doctoral program.

I plan to spend 3 mornings and/or afternoons a week in the classroom for one quarter, more if needed. Be assured that I will not disrupt the typical classroom routine. I am here to observe, support, reflect with, and to participate, so that I may learn about progressive education. The children will be informed of my purpose for being in their classroom.

Please provide me with your permission to spend time learning with your children and from their teacher. Feel free to contact me with any questions. My home number is 670-4563 and my home email address is darling@wowway.com. Call or email at any time. I would love to include any of you in the reflection process. Thank you.
Name of student: 

I ___________________________ give Kami Darling permission to conduct a research study on pedagogy in my child's classroom.

Pedagogy is defined as the "art or science of teaching". I understand that this project includes observing their teacher, the students and interacting and reflecting with the classroom members. I understand that in order to fully understand this pedagogy, the co-investigator will:

- Take notes from observations
- Take notes on conversations about learning, project work or during a group lesson
- Reflect on teaching, the lessons with the children and the educators
- Discuss and perhaps photograph samples of student collaborative projects
- Ask questions to the educational team, the students and or parents to better describe the pedagogy
- Watch and identify how IEP goals are attended to in the general education classroom through the progressive pedagogy. This means that if your child currently has an IEP, you provide me with permission to look at their goals and to document how and when they are addressed in the inclusive classroom. I also understand that no child, nor their goals will ever be identifiable.
Child's Name________________________________________

________________________________________ DO NOT GIVE Kami Darling
permission to reflect with or to include my child in her observations or her project on progressive education. I realize that the project may go on, however, documentation will not include samples of my child’s reflections on learning, samples of my child’s comments during a group lesson, nor will the final analysis include samples of a project that my child has worked on. Also, if my child has an IEP, the co-investigator may not see the goals.

Please return to the classroom as soon as possible. Thank you.
Faculty/paraprofessional consent

As an employee at Wickliffe Progressive Community School, I am aware of and in support of the research project; Progressive Inclusion, planned by the Ohio State University doctoral candidate, Kami Darling. I am aware that the research project intends to understand the progressive pedagogy and to explore the contributions that the progressive pedagogy may lend to inclusive practice. I understand the study will be an ethnographic case study.

I support this research and will accommodate the researcher to the best of my ability. I understand that my support will include allowing her access to the classroom, teachers, and children. Additionally, I am also aware that the researcher requests that I reflect on the data with her and requests that she see and discusses my lessons with me. I am aware that she will be provided access to the classroom on a regular basis while the researcher observes and interacts with the children (when invited to do so), in order to understand the progressive pedagogy used in this classroom. As the teacher/paraprofessional, I am also aware that I may be participating in conversations and professional reflections with the co-investigator. The researcher asks that she be permitted to be permitted to listen to planning sessions, collaboration sessions etc., in addition to looking at the IEP’s of the children in this particular classroom.

I understand my rights to personally withdraw from this research project at any time, without penalty. I understand that questions about my rights as a research locality may be addressed to the Office of Responsible Research Practices at the Ohio State University.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at: 614-670-4563

Sincerely,

Kami Darling

____ I consent to participate.

____ I do not consent to participate.
APPENDIX E

PROGRESS REPORT
Thought Ramblings

Wickliffe Progressive Community School: Progressive Newsletter “To Inform and Provoke Thought”

Chris Collaros, Principal

THE PROGRESS REPORT

Soon you will be receiving your child’s Classroom Progress Report. The purpose of this issue of Thought Ramblings is to provide you with information about the Informal Progress Report in particular and to briefly make some points about student assessment in general.

The Informal Progress Report is not a “grade card” in the traditional sense. Children and their learning are much too complex and interesting to be reduced to a simple letter grade. While there is a lot of information on our Progress Report, it is still only a paper-pencil “snapshot” of your child.

One of the first things that you will notice on the Wickliffe’s Progress Report is a section called Living in Society. It is no accident that this section appears at the beginning of the Progress Report. The staff intentionally placed this section, which addresses community, compassion, and civility on the first page. Research by Howard Gardner at Harvard and Robert Sternberg at Yale clearly demonstrates that the descriptors in this section often are the most important (and the most overlooked) indicators of “successful intelligence” — i.e. the kind of intelligence that often “makes or breaks” the effectiveness of adults working in the world. It is a section that is also very consistent with the 35-year tradition of progressive education program choice in the Upper Arlington School District.

You will also find a definition of the descriptors (i.e. “emerging,” “developing,” “achieving,” and “extending”) that are used on the developmental continuum that appears throughout the Progress Report. Although we meet as a staff to discuss marking these descriptors consistently, it would be inaccurate to characterize the marking as a “perfect objective science” (and I know scientists who say there is no such thing as “perfect objectivity!”). As adults, we sometimes long for “bottom line” thinking — one mark to tell us everything about a child — but to do so unrealistically reduces who your child really is and so also tends to create a caricature of teaching and learning. Instead, these marks are based on teacher observations and a variety of ongoing assessments. Teachers use this information to reflect on what children have produced as well as to think about the various “stories” that have played out over time as a child works, struggles, and finds successes in various social and academic and social areas.

On the pages of the Progress Report you will find information on various content areas, integrated thematic studies, and a separate box for basic facts in math. Teacher comments may be included as well. Generally, because of the opportunity to communicate face-to-face in the parent-teacher conferences, comments generally do not appear on the fall report.

FINAL THOUGHTS ON COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Who is this Progress Report for? Primarily parents. However, the effort section is a component of the evaluation that children can best understand and, in turn, act on for improvement. In many cases a child’s conscious improvement in personal effort is the most critical variable contributing to improved performance overall. We hope that you will support this attitude by communicating to your child how much you value the effort he or she puts into their school work. The developmental continuum marks are more difficult to use as an effective communication tool with elementary age children. At the end of this newsletter there is a metaphor that compares the descriptors to riding a bicycle. In past years, parents have reported that this “bicycle” metaphor was helpful when talking to their child about learning.
Can't the descriptors "emerging, developing, achieving, and extending" be substituted for letter grades? Not really. This is certainly tempting to do, but it simply is NOT the same as a letter grade. Instead it is a "descriptor" that is intended to reflect the broad range of a child's development. In fact, your child may be marked on the continuum between two descriptors to indicate that he/she is transitioning to a new level of understanding. Often when we parents request letter grades, what we really want to know is how our child "stacks up" in comparison to other children. While the Progress Report isn't intended to communicate this information, we encourage you to ask this question at anytime during the year. The teacher, given experience with various children over time, can offer up a judgment that addresses this question.

By the end of the year, should I worry if my child is not marked "extending" on the continuum in all areas? Not at all. While you're right in assuming that the continuum is an assessment of your child for this particular year, children's development and understanding varies a great deal even within a particular academic area. For example, in mathematics, your child may excel at computing fractions, but struggle with spatial awareness necessary in the study of geometry.

What if my child is reading above grade level, will he/she be marked as "extending" in reading? Not necessarily, although a teacher will know and share at what grade level your child is reading. Reading, like other areas, is described by the objectives appearing on the Progress Report. For example, your child may comprehend reading material above grade level, but never choose to read. Also, does your child only read mysteries rather than a variety of genres like poetry, biography, etc.? If so, this would be reflected on the continuum as well. In short, your child may be marked differently on the various objectives on the Progress Report that describe his/her reading simply because we are trying to give a more detailed picture of your child's learning.

Finally, we certainly don't expect all children to be marked "extending." For example, look at the bicycle metaphor at the end of this Thought Ramblings. Notice that "achieving" indicates that your child can do a skill independently. That's very, very, good. Now read the description of "extending." To reach the level of extending would be very unusual.

Should I be worried if my child is marked "emerging" or "developing." Not necessarily. If your child's teacher has a concern, it will be communicated in the "comment" section (or by phone, in person, etc.).

What should I do with the progress report once I get it? It is yours to keep. Please sign and return the envelope.

THE REAL "BOTTOM LINE"
Earlier, I mentioned bottom lines and implied that we cannot use a factory metaphor to think of our children as "products" moving down an assembly line. However, if there is a "bottom line," it is this...no letter grade, single number, or mark on a developmental continuum can ever replace teacher observation, actual work produced by children, and ongoing parent-teacher conversations about your child and his/her progress. Rather than expecting a paper-pencil progress report to do it all, we hope that you will simply use it as one data source among many that will serve as a springboard for conversations with your child's teacher throughout the year.

The Bicycle Metaphor
Emerging: You want to ride a two-wheeler, but have trouble doing it by yourself. You need lots of help.

Developing: You have help. Other people who are experienced tell you what to do and how to do it. They give you support. They may even hold on to the bicycle seat to help you.

Achieving: You can do it! No one needs to help you. You can do the basics. You can ride, stop and turn without falling off. You can ride your bike to the store.

Extending: You use your skills in a new way. You learn several tricks like mountain bikers or racers do!
Upper Arlington City Schools * UAHS
Informal Kindergarten Progress Report

Name: Starr, Zest Barton
Grade: Kindergarten
Year: 2008-2009
Teacher:

"At the heart of the educational process lies the checkmark." (The Teacher's Report)
Learning is a journey, not a destination. This progress report documents one step along the way.

Living in Society
"Without a sense of caring there can be no sense of community."
- Anthony J. D'Angelo

Community, Compassion, and Civility

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Understanding the Continuum Descriptors

Emerging:
- Beginning awareness of concepts or skills

Developing:
- Progressing towards understanding of concepts and skills with assistance from teacher, peers, and parents

Achieving:
- Demonstrates understanding while applying skills and concepts independently

Extending:
- Utilizes skills and concepts in innovative ways

Example:
- Indicates "Developing" in grading period 1 and "Achieving" in grading period 2.

Teacher's Comments:

Work Habits

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<tr>
<td>Checks for quality work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manages personal property</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effort
"The will is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action."
- John Dewey

Effort Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Taken initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Engages in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Engages in learning with support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Rarely engages in learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Promotion Notice
Grade level next year: 1E

We value ongoing reflection and self-evaluation by children and adults.
### Upper Arlington City Schools * UAHS
Informal Kindergarten Progress Report

#### Language Arts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Period 1</th>
<th>Period 2</th>
<th>Period 3</th>
<th>Period 4</th>
<th>Effort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looks at books independently</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joins in classroom reading activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies and creates rhyming words</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates knowledge of concepts of print (e.g., book handling, title, directionality)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies letters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies letter sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reads (on and below grade) by sight (one-syllable, high-frequency words)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses pictures to support meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses knowledge of sounds/letters to help determine unknown words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses context to help determine unknown words</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recalls information from a story and informational text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Period 1</th>
<th>Period 2</th>
<th>Period 3</th>
<th>Period 4</th>
<th>Effort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participates in shared writing and interactive writing experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizes and develops ideas through various forms of writing</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expresses ideas through pictures</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expresses ideas in writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms letters appropriately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses spelling approximations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spells high-frequency words correctly</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Listening - Speaking - Viewing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening - Speaking - Viewing</th>
<th>Period 1</th>
<th>Period 2</th>
<th>Period 3</th>
<th>Period 4</th>
<th>Effort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participates in conversations (e.g., small group discussions)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaks understandably with consideration for the audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expresses ideas effectively</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares ideas related to topics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expresses different types of ideas and to communicate information (e.g., books, newspapers, magazines, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher's Comments: Language Arts**

No skill is more crucial to the future of a child, or to a democratic and prosperous society, than literacy. Los Angeles Times, "A Child/Literacy Initiative for the Greater Los Angeles Area"
**Upper Arlington City Schools * UAHS**
Informal Kindergarten Progress Report

Name: [Redacted]

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### Mathematics

"The essence of mathematics is not to make simple things complicated, but to make complicated things simple."
- A. Einstein

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Achieving</th>
<th>Extending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher’s Comments: Mathematics**

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### Integrated - Authentic Curriculum

Social Studies, Science, Health, Applied LA, Applied Math

You can teach a student a lesson for a day, but if you can teach them something interesting, curiosity will sustain the learning process as long as it’s alive.
- Clay T. Borkoski

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integrated - Authentic Curriculum</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Achieving</th>
<th>Extending</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teacher’s Comments: Integrated - Authentic Curriculum**

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### Themes Studied

[Blank space for themes]

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### Teacher’s Comments

[Blank space for comments]
# Intervention Services Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Descriptors</th>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mild: Consult/Collab Small Group</td>
<td>• One to two years below grade level, and;</td>
<td>• Regular Education with accommodations</td>
<td>• Consultation</td>
<td>• Few if any accommodation on state assessments. District assessments taken without accommodations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 100% in regular ed.</td>
<td>• Benchmarks and grade level indicators remain the same.</td>
<td>• Supportive Instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Two to three years below grade level, and;</td>
<td>• Focus on essential indicators and key concepts based on regular education benchmarks</td>
<td>• IS is not the teacher of record</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Less than 50% of the time in special classroom or learning center</td>
<td>• Classroom paraprofessional to facilitate classroom management (i.e., differentiated instruction, mainstreaming, behavioral support, etc.)</td>
<td>• IS is not the teacher of record</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Two to three years below grade level, and;</td>
<td>• Accommodations on state assessment may be required. In rare cases an alternate assessment may be administered. District assessments taken without accommodations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Room</td>
<td>• Less than 50% of the time in special classroom or learning center based on a three to five year achievement gap between grade placement and performance level, or;</td>
<td>• Classroom paraprofessional to facilitate classroom management (i.e., differentiated instruction, mainstreaming, behavioral support, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greater than 50% of the time in special classes or learning center</td>
<td>• Curriculum provided in all major curriculum areas (i.e., writing, reading, math, science and social studies)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Behavior deficits of 2 SD's in no more than 2 areas.</td>
<td>• Classroom paraprofessional to facilitate classroom management (i.e., differentiated instruction, mainstreaming, behavioral support, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate: Cross Categorical</td>
<td>• Greater than 50% of the time in special classes or learning center</td>
<td>• Full-time placement for direct instruction in writing, reading, math, citizenship and science</td>
<td>• Alternate Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greater than five year developmental/achievement gap between grade placement and performance level, and;</td>
<td>• Classroom paraprofessional to facilitate classroom management (i.e., differentiated instruction, mainstreaming, behavioral support, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adaptive behavior deficits of 2 SD's in more than 2 areas</td>
<td>• Alternate Curriculum which focuses on accessing the State Content Standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe: Multiple Disabilities</td>
<td>• Greater than 50% of the time in special classroom or learning center</td>
<td>• Alternate Benchmarks</td>
<td>• Alternate Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greater than 5 year developmental/achievement gap between grade placement and performance level, and;</td>
<td>• Board approved Alternate Curriculum which focuses on accessing the State Content Standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adaptive behavior deficits of 2 SD's in more than 2 areas</td>
<td>• Alternate Benchmarks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/17/2008
APPENDIX G

HYATT COMMUNICATION LOG
Weekly Parent Letter

Date:_________________________________________________

Dear Mom and Dad,

This week at school was _______________________________________

One thing we talked about in group this week was _________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

In reading, one book I read was _______________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

I wrote about__________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

In math I_______________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

This week at recess I liked to_____________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

My favorite special area was ________________________________
I liked it because we ________________________________

_____________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________

Love,
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www.census.gov

www.ode.org
Upper Arlington Schools 2007-08 Student and Staff Success; A local achievement report. [WWW.UAschools.org]


Young, K. (in press, unpublished manuscript). I don’t think I’m the right person for that: Theoretical and pedagogical questions about combined credential programs.

