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THE ROLE OF THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL IN THE
INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN CONFERENCE

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Doctor Degree of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

by

Phyllis M. Wilson, B.S., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1995

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To My Daughter,
Mica
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Words cannot express my gratitude to Dr. John C. Belland, for his leadership and guidance throughout this long, arduous process. To the other members of my committee, Dr. Arewa and Dr. Zaharlick, my appreciation for your patience, your support, and your directions. Without the three of you, my dream might never have become a reality. Gratitude is also expressed to Larry Sullivan and Craig Toth who provided both encouragement and technical assistance. To my mother, Helen Fairchild, and my daughter, Mica Wilson, thank you for always believing in me and being there for me. To my grandmother, Idella Chiles, from whom I learned all the lessons of life. And to my many other relatives and friends, your kind words and caring acts throughout my study meant a great deal to me.

~

iii
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FIELDS OF STUDY

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Chapter I

Introduction to the Study

Background

James McCabe and Lois Capuzzi describe the principal's role in the special education process as one in which the principal directs the actual delivery of the program and handles all inquiries and complaints from the local school board, the community, parent groups, teacher organizations, and students (1982:1). Ronald J. Anderson and Robert H. Decker expand the principal's role to include convening and conducting the Individual Education Plan process. Anderson and Decker provide insight as to why the principal is the proper staff member to play this role in their statement:

One of the major reasons for the principal to conduct the evaluation or I.E.P. meeting is to insure that an appropriate effective climate is created and maintained. A cooperative and positive atmosphere can enhance the decisions and recommendations made concerning the pupil's program (Anderson et al., 1993:4-5).

Although federal laws do not specify any one person as the meeting convener, the principal has most generally been assigned this task with James Burr, William Coffield, Theodore Jensen, and Ross Neagley (1963) and the California Elementary School Administrators' Association (1968) citing
the basis for this designation as both financial and legal. The financial significance of the principal's role in the Individual Education Plan meeting encompasses representing the district in the determination of how resources will be allocated for individual services. These resources, as part of the district's legal obligation, must be provided by the district at no cost to the parents. Each child's Individual Education Plan meeting has the potential for costs beyond the district's ability to pay.

The legal significance of the principal's role in the Individual Education Plan was reviewed critically by the California Elementary Principals' Association and is described as the necessity to adhere to legal mandates with the designation of a single source for this responsibility as the best method for achieving the goal (1968:1). The Association further states that the ability of the principal to readjust the environment in a way that is most conducive to the educational process of the special education student is compatible with the principal's responsibility for proper conduct of the school and its program (California Elementary Administrators' Association, 1968:1).

Research on the role of the principal in the Individual Education Process has focused on the topics of time spent on education tasks (Raske, 1979); the technical steps required to have a successful Individual Education Plan conference (Michaelis, 1982); the monitoring role played by principals
in the implementation of Individual Education Plans (Dickson, Moore, 1980); the building-level activities involved in the classification of handicapped students (Wang, 1987); the competencies required by administrators (Nevin, 1979); multidisciplinary team activities (Yoshida et al., 1982) and; the principal's role in establishing a positive environment for all students (Stoops et al., 1968). The exploration of the principal's role in these areas provided the researcher with essential information for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine and describe how three elementary principals perform their role in the Individual Education Plan conference. The researcher studied the principal's actions as they conducted Individual Education Plan meetings. The major research question to be answered by this study will be: What are the experiences of elementary principals who conduct Individual Education Plan conferences? The specific research questions which guided the study were:

1. What are the specific characteristics displayed by principals as they conduct Individual Education Plan conferences?

2. How do conference participants describe the elementary principals' conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences?

3. What impact does the training principals receive have on their conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences?
Why study the role of elementary principals in the Individual Education Plan conferences? Much has been said about the many roles an elementary principal must assume. Everyday, the principal is expected to be leader, personnel manager, curriculum expert, professional colleague, public relations officer, program evaluator, disciplinarian, policy enforcer, contract keeper, facilities maintainer, and budget director. The advent of P.L. 94-142, called the Education For All Handicapped Children Act, added new expectations for the principal. The intent of the law is not strictly limited to the child and his or her characteristics, but provides guidelines as to the instructional implications of these characteristics (Meyer, 1982). When the learner is perceived as having different needs and requires specialized services, the principal must then assume the level of responsibility required by law and by district policy. The tasks required to fulfill this role, added to the multitude of other tasks required of the principal, define the principal's specific responsibilities and largely shape each day's crowded administrative agenda.

Research on the principal's role in special education describes the specific tasks the principal should perform but does not examine the principal's actions to determine if those tasks and steps are followed nor do the available studies provide insight as to how the principal performs his or her role.
Such examination will allow us to understand how the principal ensures the district's adherence to all legal mandates and achieves a careful balance of agreement and discussion between parents and the school staff, thus avoiding litigation.

Examining the nature of the principal's role in the conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences is required.

Examining the performance of three elementary principals as they conducted Individual Education Plan conferences seemed appropriate as a means of identifying behaviors and actions exhibited by principals. Study findings will assist in understanding how principals perform the designated role, identifying barriers and limitations faced by principals as they perform this role, and describing specific functions of the role which lead to successful Individual Education Plan conference conclusions. The study contains the unique aspect of investigating the principal's role by examining both the technical aspects of the role and the interpersonal dynamics displayed during the conferences.

According to Emory, Stoops, and Russell Johnson (1967), conducting the Individual Education Plan conferences has several implications for principals. First, the principal's participation in the Individual Education Plan process often occurs with little or no prior experience with special
education students. The principal is most likely to be the only one in the building who has not taught special education students. Second, the principal may possess little knowledge of the laws governing special education students since access to inservice in this area may be minimal or nonexistent. Third, duties and responsibilities for special education students must be integrated and measured against the principal's responsibilities for all students in the building (Stoops and Johnson, 1967).

Seymour Sarason (1971) acknowledged the leadership complications placed upon principals to implement services and programs as they conducted Individual Education Plan meetings. Not only are the complications extensive, there are a large number of services involved that are beyond the principal's area of expertise as well as not being under his jurisdiction (1971).

**Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for a varied number of reasons. First, the study provides an in depth view of the principal's role in the I.E.P. process as it is actually occurring. The actual experiences of the three selected elementary principals distinguishes the expected and required from the real. It is only through these experiences that the nature of the principal's role can be understood.
A second area of significance for the study was the provision of multiple perspectives on the principal's role. Special education teachers, regular education teachers, parents, and the principals themselves describe the principal's role in the I.E.P. conference. The insights obtained from these multiple perspectives will prove useful to other principals and district planners.

A third area of significance was the use of qualitative techniques in the study. A qualitative approach allowed for the in depth probing and questioning necessary to understand the I.E.P. conferences. Qualitative practices further allowed the researcher to focus on the instructional dynamics occurring between study participants. Multiple data gathering techniques were utilized (tape recording, interviews, surveys) to examine how principals conducted I.E.P. conferences. The principals, themselves, provided dialogue and reflective comments about their roles including barriers faced and training received.

Lastly, there are few data available for principals from principals that could assist them with understanding their role as it is played out in real world experiences. Data available provide sequential steps for conducting I.E.P. conferences. The present study utilizes the I.E.P. conference arena to determine if these steps are followed. Examination of conferences based on the experiences and
comments of conference participants, focusing on the principal themselves, do not presently exist.

This study, through the exploration of three elementary principals' role in the Individual Education Plan conference, expanded the limited body of knowledge available in this area. The study provides information that will increase school district awareness of what is needed to best prepare principals to effectively perform this function and suggests successful approaches principals can use which are conducive to positive interaction with parents.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study was conducted in a suburban school district with a few number of elementary participants. For these reasons, generalizing to other dissimilar settings may be problematic. However, behaviors displayed by the principals appear to be representative of those displayed by principals in general as they attempt to conduct the Individual Education Plan conferences.

Another limitation of the study was the generally successful conclusion of the conferences. No conferences were observed that resulted in conflict and disagreement. Dates and times of I.E.P. conferences were randomly selected with no attempt on the school district or principals' part to restrict the researcher from I.E.P. attendance. The successful outcome of all conferences observed appeared to occur by happenstance, not by design.
Definitions of Terms

Central Office Administrator - supervisory personnel with districtwide responsibility with office assignment at the main administrative building.

Due Process - "means the safeguards to which a person is entitled in order to protect his or her rights" (Rules For The Education of Handicapped Children, 1982:5)

Elementary Principal - an administrator assigned by the Superintendent or his designee to a school building that houses students in grades kindergarten through fifth grades. "The elementary principal is required to fulfill multiple roles including educational leadership, personnel operations, support management, school public communication and professional leadership (California Elem. School Admin. Assoc., 1968:2)."

Individual Education Plan - a legally binding document that identifies the type of services to be provided, the personnel designated to provide the services, the initiation and duration of the services and the extent to which the student will interact with his nondisabled peers (Lietz. 1982).

I.E.P. Conference - means a meeting of appropriate persons in order to:

1. Review the multifactored team report;
2. Determine the nature and degree of special education intervention needed, if any;
3. Develop an I.E.P. for a child determined to be in need of special education in accordance with all requirements of Paragraph E of Rule 3301-51-02 of the Administrative Code (See Appendix); and

P.L. 94-142 - Federal legislation passed in 1975 which assures that "all handicapped students will receive an appropriate education at public expense" (Stoops and Johnson, 1967).

P.L. 101-476 - (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) Federal legislation passed in 1990 which is the revised
version of P.L. 94-142. This law added two disabilities and the responsibility for transition services.

**Related Services Teacher** - person certified to provide corrective and/or support services for students identified as disabled.

**Regular Education Teacher** - person certified to provide instruction based on the standard curriculum as well as some instructional modifications.

**Special Education Teacher** - the teacher certified to provide specially designed instruction for students identified as disabled.

**Student with disabilities** - means a person below the age of twenty-two who has one or more disabilities *(Rules For The Education of Handicapped Children, 1982:6)*.

**Dissertation Structure**

The first chapter provides a summary of the study history and purpose. Included in this chapter are an overview of current literature, study limitations and significance along with a rationale for utilizing a qualitative approach.

The literature review provided in chapter 2 describes the findings of numerous other studies and related research information. The integration of the available literature into the study's conduct is also discussed in chapter two.

Chapter three discusses the methodological techniques applied to the study with detailed description provided on the topics of participant observation, data collection, study participants, and data analysis. Chapter four describes the setting, findings, and other information obtained. The final chapter (five) summarizes study conclusions and recommendations concerning the role of an
elementary principal in the Individual Education Plan conference.
Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

This chapter will focus on the specific areas of providing a brief historical summary of available research and literature on the topic of the principal's role in the Individual Education Plan process. A full summary of the most recent research information available on the topic will be described in the following pages. The research information gathered provides the framework for comprehending the actual role of the principal as it occurs in a natural setting.

History of Principal's Role

The origin of special education programming was accompanied by classroom placement separate from the mainstream of general education. Meyer suggests, historically, educational programs for the handicapped student were initiated with the concept that "survival" in the mainstream of regular programs was impossible or highly unlikely (Meyer, 1982:5).

Advocacy groups challenged separate programming in the 1960's. The enactment of P.L. 94-142 in 1975 specifically intended once again to remind general education that the responsibility for the education of handicapped students was
a joint one shared with special education. No longer could administrators and teachers utilize the service delivery model of separate classes and schools as the rationale for placing responsibility for special needs children solely in the lap of special educators.

C. Lamar Meyer (1982), Albert Shuster (1973), and Carole Michaelis (1989) explore in depth the leadership role of the principal post-1960's when challenges to the education of handicapped children resulted in increased responsibility for principals to monitor and evaluate special education services, including the implementation of the I.E.P. Shuster maintains that the principal's leadership role is one of,

bring about the needed changes in attitudes, feelings, and relationships. The school must set the pace for good human relationships and community living. Goals should be established for the affective domain just as they are for the cognitive domain (Shuster, 1973:9).

The responsibility for designing or implementing an I.E.P. rests with each local school district. The principal acts as the district's designee in the fulfillment of this responsibility.

Successful conduct of the role of district designee is more likely to occur when there is a consistent belief in education and a caring for children. When handicapped children are accepted in an environment, they will be well provided for. The principal as administrator for the school
must be sure that the system of I.E.P. design and implementation developed by a local agency includes a systematic procedure for parental notice (McCabe, Capuzzi, 1982:13). The actual membership of the I.E.P. committee (required by P.L. 94-142) consists of the child's teacher, one or both parents, the child (when appropriate), one member of the evaluation team, (or other personnel member knowledgeable of evaluations) and a representative of the local education agency other than the child's teacher who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education (the elementary principal).

A building principal is most effective in his role of district designee for the I.E.P. meetings when the district has developed a plan for educating children with disabilities. P.L. 94-142 mandates the development of an administrative guide describing the specific steps necessary to evaluate, identify, plan, and develop services for students with disabilities. An investigation by Jeremy Lietz contends that the building principal can assist in the design of a district-wide Educationally Handicapped Children plan by doing the following: Assisting in the development of appropriate forms for referrals, identifying a team manager for referrals; providing projections for number of students with disabilities and number of hours needed for related services by district personnel (i.e., school psychologist, speech pathologists, etc.) and providing
information on student and staff needs for central office personnel (Lietz, 1982:11).

The principal's involvement in district-wide planning efforts for students with disabilities provides opportunities for increasing the principal's comprehension of tasks required. Involvement also provides principals with the opportunity to establish positive, meaningful relationships with parents.

Research Perspective on the Principal's Role

Available studies tended to focus on the successful termination or conclusion (knowledge of special education regulations, interaction with and involvement of parents, and conducting the conference itself); and the types of activities performed by principals as members of the multi-disciplinary team, and the distribution of time for special education tasks allocated by principals. The areas found in literature that were compatible with this study were time allocation, I.E.P. tasks performed, a description of the I.E.P. and special education programs, parental involvement conference participation, the range of roles for the principals, the conduct and outcome of I.E.P. meetings, factors affecting parent's perceptions of principals, district responsibilities for assisting principals and monitoring the I.E.P.
Review of Related Literature

A study by Raske (1979) documented the amount of time general administrators reported spending on special education tasks. The administrators reported spending 14.6% of their time performing fifteen different special education duties...participating in I.E.P. meetings (18.2% of that time), filling out special education forms (16.7% of time), reviewing referrals for special education (8.3% of time), and supervising and coordinating the annual I.E.P. and follow up systems (8.1% of time). Most of the special education duties performed by general education administrators were within the referral, planning, and placement process. The principal performs the tasks most crucial to implementation of instructionally relevant aspects of special education policy.

A random poll of ten elementary principals in a large urban central Ohio school district conducted by the researcher confirmed that the time spent by currently practicing administrators has changed little from Raske's findings. The information provided by Raske's study further validates how these time allocations for students with disabilities further add to the vast number of other duties and time demands experienced by the principal.

An interview of thirteen elementary principals conducted by Richard Dickson and David Moore (1980) determined that during the I.E.P. meeting, these principals
neither identify a student's level of performance nor do they directly participate in generating annual goals. I.E.P.'s were described as generally useful to special educators and related service personnel as an instructional tool. Principals saw the I.E.P. as having limited utility for classroom teachers. A common pattern of functions performed by the principals did not emerge in the interviews. Outcomes of the I.E.P. meetings which did emerge were placement, compliance with Federal and State laws, and fulfillment of a contractual obligation between parents and the school (Dickson, Moore, 1980:8).

The Dickson and Moore (1980) study further found that although the principals acknowledged their responsibility for seeing that students who require special services receive it, they neither monitored nor evaluated the implementation of I.E.P.'s by general and special educators. However, the extent to which the specially designed instruction/related services accomplish their anticipated outcomes (goals and objectives) is assessed by these principals (Dickson, Moore, 1980:9).

Ensuring the implementation of the I.E.P. is one phase of the principal's responsibility least actualized. The 1.5 to eight hours for an average of 3.5 per week principals report spending on special education generally did not include ensuring that the I.E.P. was implemented. To a large extent, the success of such a meeting (I.E.P.) depends
on his or her (principal) leadership skills (Anderson, Decker, 1993:3).

The Individual Education Plan meeting is one of the most crucial decision-making meetings held for students with disabilities. The principal, as the district designee, by necessity, assumes full responsibility for the meeting's outcome. It is the principal's endorsement of collaboration that encourages regular and special educators to work closely to provide services for students with disabilities. Principals (Dickson, Moore, 1980) fully endorsed the concept of mutual collaboration between general and special educators in the achievement of student goals. The endorsement of both mutual collaboration and the achievement of student goals have made general and special educators more aware of the demands placed upon each other as they attempt to respond to the needs of both student populations - general and disabled (Dickson et al., 1980).

Once the principal accepts the responsibility as district designee for conducting individual Education Plan conferences, he or she must also accept the responsibility for ensuring that the documents adhere to all legal requirements. The I.E.P. is a legally binding document which is viewed as the road map for special education services. The plan identifies the types of services to be provided; the personnel designated to provide the services; the initiation and duration of the services; and the extent
to which the student will interact with his non-disabled peers.

The I.E.P. has specific components which are legally mandated. According to Jeremy Lietz, the items which must be included, each of which are specific to the diagnostic team evaluation and recommendations, are a statement of present level of performance, annual goals, short term instructional objectives, educational services with the percentage of time for regular education participation, initiation and duration date for services evaluation criteria, and a review date (Lietz, 1982). Jeremy Lietz's study provides a specific list of personnel generally involved in the I.E.P. conference along with the responsibilities expected of each. (See Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Richard Dickson et al. define the Individual Education Plan as specifically designed instruction which responds to the unique needs of the student with reference to what is taught and how it is taught, and where it is taught—in general and special education settings (1980:9-10).

The principal is expected to assume the leadership role in the provision and structuring of interactions between general and special educators. By so doing, the principal is creating an environment that will increase the interaction for both general and special education students.
### Responsibility Items

#### For Each IEP (*)

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<td>1. General Statement, Problem</td>
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<td>2. Present Performance Level(s)</td>
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<td>3. General Goals, Objectives</td>
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<td>4. Type &amp; Level of Program Needed</td>
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<td>5. Measurable Objectives to be Reached</td>
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<td>6. How That Performance Will be Measured</td>
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<td>7. Acceptable Performance Levels</td>
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<td>8. Projected Objective Completion Date</td>
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<td>9. Services Needed to Meet Objective</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Recommended Interventions/Techniques</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Recommended Materials</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Home Support/Involvement</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*): Optional - Where Appropriate

(a) General Education Staff
(b) Guidance Counselor
(c) Medical Personnel (e.g. School Nurse)
(d) Parent or Guardian
(e) Principal (As Building/Diagnostic Team Coordinator)
(f) Psychologist
(g) Social Worker
(h) Special Education Administrator
(i) Special Education Teacher
(j) Speech Pathologist

---

**Figure 1** The Individualized Education Program: Items and Personnel Involved

(Leitz, 1982:130)
**Figure 1 (Continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility Items</th>
<th>Personnel Involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a b c d e f g h i j k l</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. General Education Support</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Designation of Room/Building</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Projected Date of Enrollment</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Date Objectives Reviewed</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Periodic IEP Updates</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Projected Duration of Service</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Responsibility</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Responsibility; Reviews, Retesting</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Record Keeping (General)</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Due Process Procedures</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Parent Involvement</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Names, Dates, Steps</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Meeting Dates</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Review, Retesting</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Signatures</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Statistics</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Writes IEPS</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Daily IEP Update</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Reviews IEPS (Adequacy)</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1.) Condensed & Revised from WDPI (no date)

k. State Department of Public Instruction

l. Superintendent

(Lietz, 1982:131)
Carole Michaelis (1980) explores another aspect of the principal's role in the conduct of I.E.P. conferences--ensuring the involvement and participation of parents. Michaelis stresses in her writings that "the school must discuss with the parents what they think the child needs" as well as exchange information necessary for helping the child develop (1980:221). Once the plan is developed, the principal's responsibility extends into the realm of ensuring that the agreed upon program is implemented. The principal must consistently exhibit skill in the comprehension and interpretation of regulations applying to special education (Michaelis, 1980; Meyer et al., 1987; O'Reilly et al., 1985; Sires et al., 1993).

When changes in special education practices and services are required, the building principal is given the added responsibility of spearheading needed changes. Special education changes continue to be the most difficult to achieve since a large number of special education services do not fall under the principal's jurisdiction, creating complications for the principal in the areas of leadership, responsibility, and power (Sarason, 1971).

A review of administrative competencies provided by Ann Nevin (1979) reflects eight of forty-seven as being most essential to the performance of job responsibilities. The eight competencies include assuring due process, interpreting federal and state laws, using appropriate
leadership styles, records compliance with due process and confidentiality guidelines, program personnel conflict resolution, program revisions based on evaluation dates, and deciding staff functions and qualifications in order to provide appropriate educational programs for learners with disabilities (Nevin, 1979:2). The forty-seven Vermont administrators identifying the eight essential competencies consisted of superintendents, assistant superintendents, and principals. Training in these competencies were believed to enable "all educational administrators to become special administrators" (Stiles and Pettibone, 1980).

A study of the roles of multidisciplinary team members conducted by Kathleen Fenton, S. Yoshida, R. Maxwell, and J. Kaufman (1979) resulted in a list of twenty-five multidisciplinary team activities clustered into five types. For principals, there was positive consensus about three of the five types of activities, i.e., evaluative, maintenance, and administration. Other team members viewed maintenance and administrative activities as appropriate for principals (Fenton, et al., 1977). Maintenance activities include keeping the group on task, encouraging others to participate, resolving conflicts of opinion, and critiquing members' actions. Administrative activities include determining team membership, delegating team tasks to members, establishing meeting dates, assigning responsibility for implementation of the student's special
education program, disseminating the team decisions to appropriate personnel, and communicating team decisions to parents (Fenton et al., 1977:2). The Richard Dickson and David Moore study probes the responsibility of the principal to schedule the opportunity for school staff to attend the I.E.P. meeting. Scheduling an opportunity for staff members to attend I.E.P. meetings requires skillful actions on the part of the principal. Coordinating the attendance of needed participants can be accomplished through the creation of a master schedule which allows all teachers of the same grade level to be available for meetings at the same time during a given day (Dickson et al., 1980:11). The study provides recommendations for principals faced with the need to craft staff time for meetings. Varying the starting time of meetings to align with the availability of the teachers further enhances scheduling. A final alternative to scheduling problems would be to assign a floating substitute teacher who could free classroom teachers to attend meetings. Not only must the principal assume responsibility for scheduling staff's attendance at I.E.P. meetings, he or she must also assume the initiative in clearly defining the roles of each professional (Dickson et al., 1980:11).

According to the Dickson and Moore study (1980), the principal should provide a summary of the I.E.P. process and expected contributions from general educators. The principal is obligated to also provide opportunities for the
general educator to observe, prior to actual participation, other I.E.P. and multidisciplinary meetings as a means of allowing general educators to better understand the entire process. The same type of participation and awareness should be provided for parents (Dickson et al., 1980:11-12).

The more organized and planned the principal's approach to addressing the needs of handicapped students, the greater the likelihood that I.E.P. development will be successful (Michaelis, 1980). The principal needs to become actively involved in the periodic monitoring of I.E.P. goals and objectives as a means of ensuring appropriate placement and currency with student needs. Initiating periodic meetings to assess the child's status is incumbent upon the principal. Dickson et al. advise principals to schedule small staff meetings for the purpose of discussing the general progress, status, and any other issues pertinent to the child. Any determination of I.E.P. changes at these meetings should result in the involvement of parents in order to alter or modify the child's I.E.P. (Dickson et al., 1980:12). Since the placement of children is the principal's responsibility, the I.E.P. must stand examination for educational quality (O'Reilly et al., 1985:2).

Albert Shuster and Wilson Wetzler provide a framework for principals to utilize in the conduct of I.E.P. meetings in their summary of principal duties: pre-planning for the
conference by considering the purpose, objective, and discussion points; opening and closing the conference on schedule; presenting unfamiliar, important data to conference participants; keeping the discussion focused on the objective while encouraging all participants to contribute; providing any needed clarification and interpretation; mediating differences so that agreement is achieved; and summarizing the conclusions (1958:1973). This summary highlights, once again, the wide range of roles the principals must play in their involvement with I.E.P. conferences.

The range of roles for principals described in the research includes serving as the appropriate representative of the child's local district of residence and incorporating many other areas of ensuring adherence to due process procedures, communicating parental rights, arranging for the participation of necessary support such as translators or interpreters; assigning and defining roles of staff members; appointing evaluation team members within his or her (principal) jurisdiction; facilitating decision making in the role of chairperson, assessing the learning environment, and forwarding these results and reports to the identified persons (Witkowsky, Cronin, 1979:47-48).

Jeremy Lietz's comprehensive review of the principal's role produced the added areas of specifying questions, meeting format, and evaluation report requirements;
designating responsibility for parent notification, meeting determination, and evaluating assessment team efficiency (1982:12). The principal's monitoring of the process assures that the assessment information is combined with full awareness of the child's special qualities and the child's placement in the least restrictive environment--percentage of time spent in regular and special environments. The principal must also insure that the assessment results are translated into specific program goals and objectives contained in the I.E.P. (Lietz, 1982:12).

Robert O'Reilly and Mary Sayler (1985) contend that the principal's role has a unique aspect resulting from the fact that the contract with the local education agency distinguishes the employee (principal) from the officer (superintendent). Thus, a principal "engaged in some wrongful act, will probably be unsuccessful in any attempt to shift responsibility upward to the superintendent" (O'Reilly, Sayler, 1985:1-2). In the role of I.E.P. conductor, the principal must continue to be vigilant in the adherence to due process regulations. The principal is generally not the primary target when civil suits are filed on behalf of students with disabilities, since the principal would be able to provide only limited damages. Therefore, the principal is usually one of a long list of defendants (O'Reilly, Sayler, 1985:1-2).
Interwoven with the principal's conduct of the I.E.P. conference is his or her relationship with the parents. Wang et al. (1987) identify the components affecting the parent's image of the elementary principal as socioeconomic status, performance and ability of their children, expectations of the school, and unique needs presented by their children (Wang et al., 1987). Less fortunate parents' relationships with the principal may be characterized by distrust and the correlation of the principal with "the law." James Burr, William Coffield, Theodore Jensen, and Ross Neagley (1963) assert, in less than satisfactory relationships, there is no expectation that the principal will assist with problem resolution, respond sympathetically or keep them informed about important school matters. More fortunate parents expect the principal to be efficient, helpful, and largely responsible for the policies and practices of the school and that he or she (the principal) makes careful studies before any changes are made (Burr et al., 1963:10). The principal is encouraged by Wang et al. (1987) using multiple study findings to utilize the influence of the home environment or learning characteristics to better prepare Individual Education Programs for implementation.

Another role played by the principal as I.E.P. meetings are conducted is that of solicitor of parental involvement and participation. Robert O'Reilly et al. describe the type
of assistance offered by the principal to the parents in the transfer of I.E.P. information, a step preceded by the identification and planning process. If the information transferred to the parent is rejected, the principal's role once again shifts to an even more pressure-filled one. The principal may choose to relay the information himself or delegate the responsibility to another; yet, the acute nature of the transfer remains undiminished. Cases that result in disputes require the principal's full participation and knowledge of the circumstances which created the dispute. Robert O'Reilly et al. summarize the principal's involvement in the I.E.P. conference as having the ability to have a voice in every conference even though every I.E.P. conference may not include the principal. Such an opportunity is of primary importance since it is the principal's responsibility to place children, and the I.E.P., as the placement document, must stand examination for educational quality (O'Reilly, Sayler, 1985:4).

When principals ensure the full participation of parents, they are fulfilling a major area of their responsibility. Full participation of parents in setting goals and prioritizing those goals for the child is the surest method of writing a program that will continue to be acceptable to parents. According to Carole Michaelis,

if the questions are not asked in the meeting, they will be asked later when the school is locked and there is no one to answer.
Dissatisfied parents talking about their dissatisfaction to one another can create more dissatisfaction (Michaelis, 1980:28).

I.E.P. discussion with parents centers around the type of services needed to provide a free and appropriate public education. The principal has the responsibility for ensuring that the services are provided as agreed to in the planning meeting. The principal can also clarify contributions to the I.E.P. process made by educators and parents. Areas known best by educators include evaluation techniques, behavior reinforcement, medical and educational terminology, rules and policies of the school, and problems at school (Michaelis, 1980:42-43). Areas known best by parents are developmental history, medical history, social and educational history, favorite toys and activities, amount of sleep and rest, medication and diet (Michaelis, 1980:42-43). The mandated opportunity for parents to withdraw consent for the I.E.P. makes it a fluid document subject to change at any appropriate time.

The Individual Education Plan contains a number of important items--long and short term goals, related services, the persons who will provide the services, the amount of time to spend in regular and special classes, duration of services, placement, and evaluation of progress. The building principal, acting on behalf of the district, should supervise the I.E.P. implementation and provision of services and require parent participation when any changes
or adjustments are made to the I.E.P. Jeremy Lietz's study reports that the principal can best insure parental participation by providing them with ample notification and scheduling meetings at mutually convenient times (Lietz, 1982).

Monitoring I.E.P. implementation is another aspect of the principal's role. Such monitoring is aided when the principal determines whether or not progress is being made, observing the program activities to determine if services are appropriate and beneficial and ensuring full team cooperation and involvement while avoiding any unilateral actions or decisions on his or her part (Lietz, 1982:13-14). I.E.P. monitoring requires the principal to keep at the forefront, parental wishes and desires.

Reynold Bean and Harris Clemens (1978) and Jeremy Lietz (1982) provide authoritative studies of principal activities for acquiring and maintaining positive principal/parent interactions throughout the conference. Bean and Clemens recommend reframing the child's behavior in a positive way prior to sharing problems, offering concrete examples of the problems, listening to parents and recommending some specific things they can do and using the end of the conference to build parent's self-esteem by encouraging and supporting them in what they need to do (Bean and Clemens, 1976:173). The encouraging, supportive, and positive reframing methods utilized by the principal increase the
likelihood of conferences ending in a mutually cooperative and pleasant way. The principal’s role in establishing positive parent interaction affects the outcome of any I.E.P. conference.

Carole Michaelis explores methods principals can use to establish an environment for parents that is conducive to positive conferences. She suggests that the principal should carefully plan the meeting environment confirming room availability prior to setting a definite date and time. The conference room should be a comfortable, pleasing place with refreshments such as coffee and juice available (Michaelis, 1980). Notetaking or tape recording arrangements should be made and checked prior to the meeting. Only if parents are not there should the conference beginning time be delayed and after a reasonable delay, parents should be given a follow-up call to determine whether or not a problem exists (Michaelis, 1980). Depending upon whether or not this is the first meeting, the meeting’s structure should include reviewing the last I.E.P. at all subsequent meetings. (See Figure 2).

Progress reports should include parental observation, suggestions, input, and questions (Michaelis, 1980).
I. Introduction.
Purpose of the meeting
Introduction of those present, including a statement
of how each worked with child

II. Review materials.
Content of referral form
Reading of any previous Individual Education Programs

III. Report on evaluations.
Formal evaluations made
Informal evaluations
Progress made by the child since last conference

IV. Parents make statement of the child's progress.

V. Complete the developmental checklist for the child.

VI. Discuss needs as shown by the checklist.

VII. Decide which are priority needs.

VIII. Write goal statements for these needs.

IX. List related services needed for the child.

X. Discuss appropriate setting to deliver needed
   educational services.

XI. Sign forms, if agreement--set another meeting time if
   necessary.

Meeting will adjourn at ________________________

Figure 2 Agenda for Parent Conference

(Michaelis, 1980:200)
Concerns brought forward at the meeting should be fully addressed and if those concerns require further evaluation before planning can be completed, the meeting should be rescheduled until all evaluations are completed (Michaelis, 1980). Evaluation information should be organized in an understandable way so that the whole child is pictured. Checklists of skills acquired and needed will assist in the planning process. Checklists are an objective method for showing the child's strengths and needs, guiding the discussion, and neutralizing awkward topics. Checklists eliminate parents feeling as though they have been personally attacked (Michaelis, 1980). The principal through the direction provided in the I.E.P. conference allows the information to be shared in a thorough, productive manner so that the program developed will best meet the child's needs.

A self-examination of his or her role in the I.E.P. process by the principal should result in specific strategies the principal can utilize to foster positive parent/professional interactions in the school setting. Carole Michaelis provides a pictorial presentation of such a climate. (See Figure 3). The principal's personal preferences and prioritization of tasks impact the degree of attention given to the role of I.E.P. conductor.
Figure 3  Professional Response to Parent Attitudes

James Burr et al. (1963), Albert Shuster et al. (1968), and Jeremy Lietz (1982) support the theory on the manner in which individual principal preferences are reflected through the emphasis placed on the various aspects of administrative duties. Certain administrative functions exist for all schools such as leading staff personnel, providing materials of instruction, and directing other educational operations (Shuster, Wetzler, 1958:3).

The many factors influencing the principal's leadership practices encompass legal factors, socioeconomic conditions, and local educational concepts, nature of a given school,
changes in educational theories, principal's personality and training (Shuster, Wetzler, 1958:25-27). Along with these factors, each elementary principal applies his or her unique, personal insights to the prioritization and performance of duties.

The principal's special education duties are multiple in nature. Special education responsibilities are comprised of monitoring and evaluation of special education services to ensure that goals and objectives are met and that program delivery occurs in the least restrictive environment (Dickson, et al., 1980). Jeremy Lietz describes the principal's relationship to the I.E.P. as a management tool that the principal must use to plan (Lietz, 1982:13).

Albert Shuster et al. (1958) provide a review of the leadership skills needed by the principal to successfully implement and monitor the I.E.P. and incorporate past and present actions. The positive gains of the child and principal's actions create respect and acknowledged leadership, not the title. Assuming responsibility for creating an environment conducive to learning requires examination of the entire environment. Shuster et al. (1973) highlight the most important considerations to include in a school self-examination process as: Evidence of personal acceptance of each child regardless of his social and/or economic status, racial origin, or religious belief; kinds of marking practices in use/forms and
applications of discipline; number of negative responses
given to certain children regardless of cause; opportunities
for each child to interact positively with all other
children in the classroom; emphasis given by each teacher to
his personal beliefs and values in setting class standards;
source of decision-making power which affects each child
(Shuster, Stewart, 1973:8).

The conscientious principal is aware that no list can
fully portray each and every effort he or she makes to meet
the needs of students, parents, board members, community
members, superintendent, etc. Careful attention to the
I.E.P. process and requirements for students with
disabilities is the best assurance of the creation of an
environment in which all students feel accepted and have
their needs met. Such an environment will nurture and
encourage all children for whom the elementary principal is
given responsibility.

Lysa Jeanchild cautions:

while the I.E.P. is, of course, a legal document
(and as such, can help prevent children's exclu-
sion or segregation), our exclusive focus on its
legal purpose over the last twenty years or so has
led us away from the I.E.P.'s potential as an
educational tool. In other words, as a legal
contract, the intent of the I.E.P. has been to
ensure access to public education in settings
that do not deny children their right to be
free from unnecessary restraint or segregation
(Jeanchild, 1992:1).
Constructing a Recent View of the Principal's Role

The previous sections have provided a clear analysis of the role and duty ranges for the principal in the conduct of I.E.P. conferences. Absent from this perspective has been the examination of the principal's role as it is carried out in today's world. The integration of the duties required of the role into the many other duties demanded from the principal must occur for the greatest effectiveness. Exploring how this integration occurs and the modification of the role to best meet the needs of the principal, staff, parents, and students is necessary to provide guidance for other principals.

The technical aspects provided by available literature must be measured against interpretation and conduct of the role held by today's principals. Such measurement correlates well to Stephen Hencley, Lloyd McLearcy, and J. McGrath's representation of the principal's role as having great diversity in its definition (1970). The definition includes responsibility and accountability for the results of programs to the degree principals are involved (California Elementary School Administrators' Association, 1968). Delegating aspects of his responsibility to others in the school setting does not relieve or minimize the principal's role in ensuring the proper conduct of the school and its program (California Elementary School Administrators' Association, 1968). The scrutiny resulting
from parental dissatisfaction with special education services requires principals to always keep this reality in mind.

Summary

The singular focus of this study on the role of the elementary principal in the Individual Education Plan conference was explored by reviewing available literature. The available literature provided confirmation as to the multiplicity of expectations and requirements for principals as they interact with special education students. The most significant aspect of the principal's role is that of acting as the district's "designee" in the I.E.P. conference. As the district designee, the principal must ensure adherence to due process mandates, be able to commit district resources, and obtain agreement from all involved parties as to the contents of the I.E.P. No balancing act is of more importance and no result so fraught with danger in the form of legal action, as that of conducting I.E.P. conferences. How this role unfolds in the real world will be carefully scrutinized in the following chapters.
Chapter III
Methodology

The purpose of this study was to examine and detail the experiences of three elementary principals as they conducted Individual Education Plan conferences. The researcher applied the methodological decision questions suggested by Michael Quinn Patton in the decision-making process of quantitative vs. qualitative. 1) Who is the information for and who will use the findings? 2) What kinds of information are needed? 3) How is the information to be used? For what purposes is evaluation being done? 4) When is the information needed? 5) What resources are available to conduct the evaluation? 6) Given answers to the preceding questions, what methods are appropriate? (1990:12). John Creswell's comparative chart showing the specific elements for both qualitative and quantitative paradigms are shown in Figure 4.

The decision to use qualitative methods for this dissertation, allowed the researcher to provide informative data that responded to the research questions:

• What are the specific characteristics displayed by principals as they conduct Individual Education Plan conferences?
• How do conference participants describe the elementary principal's conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences?

• What impact does the training principals receive have on their conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences?

In addition to Lincoln and Guba's suggestions, the researcher incorporated Amy Zaharlick's essential characteristics of an anthropological ethnography:

   Through firsthand, long term, participant observation, using themselves as research instruments and using an eclectic approach to data collection and analysis, ethnographers view human events in the larger context in which they naturally occur (1992:119-121).

   The use of a qualitative design is naturalistic since the researcher made no attempts to manipulate the research setting which is a naturally occurring event, program, community, relationship, or interaction that has no predetermined course established by and for the researcher (Patton, 1990:40-41). As described by Michael Quinn Patton, the point of using qualitative methods is to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring state (1990:41). Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen provided the researcher with the five characteristics of qualitative research applied to this study. 1) Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument. 2) Qualitative research is descriptive. 3) Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Quantitative Paradigm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Researcher's Worldview</td>
<td>A researcher's comfort with the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions of paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Training and Experience of the Researcher</td>
<td>Technical writing skills, computer statistical skills; library skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Researcher's Psychological Attributes</td>
<td>Comfort with rules and guidelines for conducting research, low tolerance for ambiguity; time for a study of short duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Nature of the Problem</td>
<td>Previously studied by other researchers so that body of literature exists; known variables; existing theories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Audience for the Study</td>
<td>Individuals accustomed to/ supportive of quantitative studies</td>
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**Qualitative Paradigm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Quantitative Paradigm</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) A researcher's comfort with the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical, and methodological assumptions of the qualitative paradigm</td>
<td>4) Exploratory research; variables unknown; context important; may lack theory base for study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Literary writing skills; computer text-analysis skills; library skills</td>
<td>5) Individuals accustomed to/ supportive of qualitative studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Comfort with lack of specific rules and procedures for conducting research; high tolerance for ambiguity; time for lengthy study</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
4) Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively. 5) "Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach (1992:29-32). The researcher was most cognizant of the issue of generalizability that applies when using case studies. Justification for such use if found in writings of Robert Donmoyer (1988) who emphasizes that the standard concept of generalizability applied by social scientists lacks compatibility with modern views of the research needs in the applied social sciences of education and social work. Robert Donmoyer further supports the use of case studies as a means of providing vicarious experiences just as do captivating stories on films which can create a reality "within our imaginations" (1988:24), allowing us to experience people, places, and situations otherwise unavailable or not yet experienced--precisely what case studies also do. Once these five characteristics were deemed compatible with the study's intent the researcher proceeded to determine the sampling type most appropriate for this study.

Questions formulated prior to conducting the research were best addressed through the selection of representative cases. A logical approach was adopted for selecting a purposeful or critical case sampling that would provide information within the time frame allotted. According to Michael Quinn Patton, "critical cases are those that can
make a point quite dramatically, or are, for some reason, particularly important in the scheme of things," (Patton, 1990:174). For with "critical" cases one can make the assumption that "if it happens there, it will happen anywhere" or, vice versa, if it doesn't happen there it won't happen anywhere" (Patton, 1990:174). Critical cases may not always allow for broad generalizations; however, sound and logical conclusions and generalizations can be drawn from the information gathered. Yvonne Lincoln and S. Guba provide a visual picture of the flow of naturalistic inquiry using purposeful sampling. (See Figure 5).

In keeping with the strategy of critical case sampling, the researcher was aided by a key informant" (the Pupil Personnel Director), thus, allowing the researcher to focus on acquiring an understanding of what was occurring in the "critical" cases (Patton, 1990:174). Key informants were carefully and wisely selected with their experiences and knowledge given great credence while recognizing "that their perspectives are limited" (Patton, 1990:273-274). The key informant reinforced Patton's concept that "if that group is having problems, then we can be sure all the groups are having problems" (Patton, 1990:174). The researcher applied the following criteria to the critical cases selected of resources (i.e., time, number of conferences occurring during the school year), sites that would "yield the most
information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge”, (Patton, 1990:174).

**Figure 5  The flow of naturalistic inquiry**

*(Lincoln, Guba, 1985:188)*

Information gathered from these sites was utilized as the framework for developing generalizations. These generalizations emerged logically from the data. Michael Quinn Patton suggests, "Logical generalizations" were made
from the weight of evidence produced in studying a single, critical case" (Patton, 1990:175).

The use of a case study design in this study, is likened by Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen (1982) to a funnel-like process (See Figure 6) in which the researchers scout for possible places and people that might be the subject or source of data, find the location they think they want to study, and then cast a net widely trying to judge the feasibility of the site or data source for their purposes" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982:59). In this study, the researcher examined the possibility of utilizing a large urban school district as the research site. The school district was eliminated as a possibility due to the time of the year when I.E.P.'s would be scheduled and the nature of the researcher's relationship with the district's principals. (The researcher occupied a position of authority and the ability to direct principal's behavior related to students with disabilities.) Such a relationship had the potential to be an interfering factor in the observation of the site. Contacts made with other school districts in the area assisted the researcher to make the final selection.

The researcher utilized clues to determine not only the feasibility of the sites, but data sources, and availability of staff for any follow up actions required.
Obtaining permission to conduct the research required gaining the full support and approval of various individuals i.e., Pupil Personnel Director, principals, parents, special and regular education staff, and related services personnel. The researcher prepared written information that responded to the series of questions posed by Bogdan and Biklen: 1) What are you actually going to do? 2) Will you be disruptive? 3) What are you going to do with your findings? 4) Why us? 5) What will we get out of this? (1982:123-124) (See Appendix B). The questionnaire developed by the researcher and utilized with study participants encouraged open communication. Information shared and my ability to gauge the subjects' feelings and openness were significant factors impacting the relationship that I developed with the study participants. Early
interactions were limited to frequent one hour contacts. The frequency and the ongoing nature of the contacts enhanced trust development.

**Data Collection**

As advised by Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen (1982), "the researcher began to collect data, reviewing and exploring it, and making decisions about where to go with the study. They (researchers) decide how to distribute their time, who to interview, and what to explore in depth" (1982:59).

Participant observation was the major source of data collection in this study. The process of participant observation allowed the researcher to "share as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the people in the program" (Patton, 1987:75) in order to develop an insider's perspective of events. The researcher was able to both observe and become engrossed in the experiences of the participants, i.e., the principals, the special education teachers, regular education teachers, and parents. Michael Patton acknowledges the duality of participant observation by separating it into both experiencing an environment as an insider (the participant part) and the observer side (Patton, 1987:75). The researcher's involvement ranged from a "complete observer" who sat silently through some of the activities (I.E.P. conferences, classroom observation,
pre-conference meetings) to "complete" site involvement and interaction with participants, i.e., asking questions during the interviews, responding to comments. Changes from one end of the continuum were greatly dependent upon the activity and participants (i.e., actual I.E.P. conferences) and the phase of the study (i.e., earlier in the study as opposed to later). Such variations in the level of participation were explained as not unusual by Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen during the first few days of participation observation when the researcher often is waiting to be accepted, shifting to increased participation as the relationship develops (1992).

Michael Quinn Patton considers the extent of participation a continuum that varies from complete immersion in the setting as full participant to complete separation from the setting as spectator with a great deal of variation between these two extremes (1990:206). Corrine Glesne and Alan Peshkin describe participant observation in a research setting as differing:

in that the researcher carefully, systematically experiences and consciously records in detail the many aspects of a situation. Moreover, a participant observer must constantly analyze his or her observations for meaning (what is going on here?), and for evidence of personal bias (am I seeing what I hoped to see and nothing else? Am I being judgmental and evaluative?) Finally, a participant observer does all of this because it is instrumental to the research goals, which is to say that the observer is present somewhere for particular reasons (1992:42-43).
During the study, the researcher's range of involvement during the observation phase was adjusted to each situation encountered and the degree of engagement solicited by the participants. At times, the explanation by the principals of who I was and what I was doing would lead participants to ask additional questions such as did I have similar kinds of experiences in my own district? How had I responded to a similar encounter? When the questioning process occurred, the researcher's interaction with participants was increased and altered. As frequency of my encounters with participants increased, the easier it became to proceed forward from the last encounter as opposed to repeatedly explaining the purpose of the study and allowing time for warming up to the researcher.

The use of observational techniques allowed the researcher to be open, discovery oriented, and inductive in approach (Patton, 1990:203). A pictorial representation by John Creswell of the inductive method of research is shown in Figure 7.

The researcher combined single observations of one hour or more in combination with longer term multiple observations and interactions conducted over a period of six months. The five dimensions of variations in approaches to observations portrayed by Michael Quinn Patton (see Figure 8) provided the framework for observational activities.
The "insights" and "inspirations" and "feelings" (Patton, 1990:242) experienced by the researcher were incorporated into the note-taking process. Field notes were taken by the researcher to describe the setting and the people. The notes contained, as suggested by Patton, "everything the observer believes to be worth noting" (1990:239).
II. Portrayal of the Evaluator Role to Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overt</th>
<th>Covert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observations: Program staff and participants know that observations are being made and who the observer is.</td>
<td>Observations: Program staff and participants do not know that observations are being made or that there is an observer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

III. Portrayal of the Purpose of the Evaluation to Others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Explanation</th>
<th>Partial Explanation</th>
<th>Covert Explanation</th>
<th>False Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of real purpose to everyone</td>
<td></td>
<td>No explanation given to either staff or participants</td>
<td>deceiving staff and/or participants about evaluation purpose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Duration of the Evaluation Observations

| Single Observations, limited duration (e.g., one hour) | Long-term, multiple observations (e.g., months, years) |

V. Focus of the Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrow Focus:</th>
<th>Broad focus:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single element or component in the program observed</td>
<td>holistic view of the entire program and all of its elements is sought</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8  I. Role of the Evaluator-Observer

(Patton, 1990:217)
The field notes followed the prescribed elements of being dated, recording basic information as to where the observation took place, who was present, what the physical setting was like, what social interactions occurred, and what activities took place as well as being descriptive enough to allow the observer to return to that observation during analysis (Patton, 1990:239).

The field notes (Appendix C) developed by the researcher had both descriptive and reflective aspects. The descriptive aspect included portraits of subject, reconstruction of dialogue, description of physical setting, accounts of particular events, depiction of activities, and the observer's behavior (Bogdan, Biklen, 1982:85-86). The reflective aspect encompassed the researcher's personal view of the environment and people under study. Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen allow that here the more subjective side of the researcher's journey is recorded. The emphasis is on speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, prejudices. Also included is material in which the researcher lays out plans for future research as well as clarifies and corrects mistakes or misunderstandings in the field notes. The reflections may also contain comments on analyses, methods, conflicts, ethical dilemmas, and the observer's mental state at the time of observation (1982:86).

Field notes were important to the continuity of the research process.
The researcher was both overt and covert in the taking of notes. When notetaking was viewed by the researcher as having the potential to inhibit discussion, a few key words and phrases were jotted down for memory triggers. The memory triggers were accompanied by longer writing periods immediately following conversations. A tape recorder was utilized within the same guidelines. Other sources of data gathered included internal documents (i.e., memos) circulated within the organization, external communications (i.e., newsletters, newspaper articles) released to the public at large and student files.

The researcher expanded the data collection techniques to include tape recordings, interviews and a review of documents utilized by the principals. The interviews were utilized in conjunction with participant observation and provided the researcher with "descriptive data in the subjects' own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world" (Bogdan, Biklen, 1992:96). Questions based on understanding the cognitive and interpretive processes of people" (Patton, 1990:291) were developed by the researcher to guide each interview with full latitude given to the subjects to shape the content and topic. The questioning process informed the researcher what people think about the issue, their goals,
intentions, desires, and values (Patton, 1990:291). (See Appendix C for sample questions).

The interviews were designed for the purpose of obtaining information such as the "here-and-now constructions of persons, events, activities, organizations, feelings, claims, concerns, and other entities" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:268). A semi-structured interviewing technique assisted the researcher to elicit information that addressed the research questions. The continuum of interviewees' conversation ranged from the respondents being so engrossed in the topic they appeared to be unaware they were being interviewed to the opposite end of the continuum where respondents were not only completely informed they were being interviewed, but were also made aware of the interview's purpose and use (Lincoln and Guba, 1985:269).

Data collection methods were similar to the methods employed in a preliminary qualitative study (Wilson, 1994). This preliminary study provided early insight into the behaviors exhibited by principals as they conducted I.E.P. conferences. The present study adopted the methods of audiotaped recordings, interviews, field notes, and participant observations. Participants were prepared for return visits, as needed, beyond the point when field work was terminated. Such preparation allowed the researcher opportunities for checking and clarifying information.
acquired. Further, each activity of the data collection was preceded by as full a preparation of the participants as possible. The data collection phase was terminated in a manner similar to Judith Goetz and Margaret LeCompte's termination suggestions:

Data collection usually ends because time, energy, funds, and forbearance have been exhausted rather than because the sources of information have been depleted. After an ethnographer leaves the field or otherwise ceases collection of data, research activity focuses on analysis and interpretation (Goetz, LeCompte, 1984:164).

Once the interview, observation, and records review procedures were completed, the researcher proceeded to analyze the acquired data.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis techniques employed were based on Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen's definition, "the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you discovered to others" (1987:144). A parallel conceptual process suggested by Patton related closely to the researcher's interpretation of the gathered data. As suggested by Michael Quinn Patton, the researcher proceeded to "involve" attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns, and looking for relationships and linkages among
descriptive dimensions (1987:144). Prior to the study's start, the researcher utilized the broad coding categories suggested by Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen (1982) (i.e., setting/context, definition of the situation, perspectives, ways of thinking, process activities, events, strategies, relationships (social structure) to assist with the organization of collected data. Once the data collection process was well underway, more specific codes were developed and applied to the data (i.e., parent/principal interaction; staff/principal preparation for conference; individual perceptions/description of principal's role; meeting beginning; meeting ending). Transcripts from interviews and field notes were reviewed many times by the researcher as a means of searching for patterns and continuing themes. A coding technique applied to the data was similar to Mathew Miles and A. Michael Huberman's description--"an abbreviation or symbol applied to a segment of words, most often a sentence or paragraph of transcribed field notes--in order to classify the words (1984:56).

Mathew Miles and A. Michael Huberman believe that, Codes are categories. They usually derive from research questions, hypotheses, key concepts, or important themes. They are retrieval and organizing devices that allow the analyst to spot quickly, pull out, then cluster all the segments relating to the particular question, hypothesis, concept, or theme (1984:56).
The research questions suggested some initial category codes such as definition of the elementary principal's role, I.E.P. preparation, principal-staff-parent interaction and sequence of I.E.P. conference.

The researcher was cognizant throughout the study of the need to avoid establishing preset conclusions or expectations. Jim Thomas' cautionary words, "one must never say I'm going to show that university culture is racist" or "I'm going to prove that Alcoholics Anonymous is repressive" because the data may show the opposite" (1993:35), served as the motivational reason for avoiding pre-established expectations and conclusions, especially in the identification of codes, meanings, and themes. The researcher made every attempt to separate personal views from the critical thinking required to modify or change my beliefs and theories when the data required me to do so (Thomas, 1993:35). Throughout the study, the researcher remained open to new concepts emerging about the topic I had selected: the role of the elementary principal in the Individual Education Plan conference.

The researcher was even more aware of the many unanswered questions not addressed in research on the basic meaning of the principal's role as this role is developed and displayed in real life experiences. Analyzing each unique case (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984) assisted the
researcher in the identification of emerging themes and consistent behaviors exhibited by all three elementary principals studied. These identified sources of data gave the shape, form, and meaning for the research. Each source was available to clarify information and provide the answers needed to complete the research process. The research questions assisted in focusing the inquiry and determining where the researcher went to get answers and with whom the researcher talked and observed (Miles, Huberman, 1984). Mathew Miles and A. Michael Huberman provided the questions responded to by the researcher each time field contacts were reviewed:

- What people, events, or situations were involved?
- What were the main themes or issues in the contact?
- Which research questions did the contact bear most centrally on?
- What new hypothesis, speculations, or guesses about the field situations were suggested by the contact?
- Where should the field worker place most energy during the next contact, and what sorts of information should be sought? (1984:50).

After these questions were answered the researcher identified the follow-up activities and sources needed to allow the study strengths and weaknesses to emerge from the process rather than from the theories and expectations of the process researcher (Patton, 1990).
The researcher took careful notes, included reflective thoughts and observations, and analyzed the data. Information acquired was organized into readable formats. Emerging themes discovered from the data during the "explication" phase (Patton, 1990) were carefully analyzed with direct quotes from the study sources incorporated. The quotes evidenced the ways in which the participants viewed their feelings, thoughts, and experiences. Comparing these subjective views with actual behaviors minimized researcher bias, as well as provided greater detail about the consistent themes that were emerging.

Data analysis occurred "simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation, and narrative reporting writing", (Creswell, 1994:154). Codes and categories formed "the basis for the emerging story" (Creswell, 1994:154). Interview transcripts were read many times, with notes, ideas, and comments entered in the margins. Similar comments and ideas provided by the study participants were cut from the transcript pages and pasted on note cards for comparison, contrast, and interpretation. Colored pencils aided in locating common major and minor themes and significant quotes were identified for inclusion in the study.

The process of defamiliarization recommended by Jim Thomas (1993) was utilized as part of the reflective process
and allowed for the revision of what was seen and the
translation of what was seen into something new (Thomas,
1993:43). Jim Thomas states,

"We (ethnographers) take the collection of
observations, anecdotes, impressions, documents,
and other symbolic representations of the culture
we studied that seem depressingly mundane and
common, and we reframe them into something new." (Thomas, 1993:43).

Mathew Miles and A. Michael Huberman (1984) have devised a
representation of the interactive nature of the components
of data analysis (See Figure 9).

![Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model](Miles and Huberman, 1984:23)

The researcher incorporated ongoing feedback methods in
the study. Feedback took the form of either a follow-up
meeting with study participants or a telephone call (when
the participants were unable to schedule a face-to-face
conference). During these conversations, "descriptions and
analysis, verbally and informally, and participant reactions
were elicited (Patton, 1990:267) and provided a vehicle for
participants to clarify and share additional information. Such an incorporation was an essential component in Michael Patton's view in this area for, "the formal systematic analysis may take a great deal of time, and while one is still in the field it is possible to share at least some evidence of what the data look like and to learn from the reactions of those who are described in the data" (Patton, 1990:267). Reactions from the various sources were incorporated with the many other strategies of data collection, recorded observations, interviews, program documentation, and photographs--the multiple methods recommended by Patton (1990) for triangulation which is the integration of data reflecting multiple perspectives and cross validation.

The application of the strategy of triangulation of the data assisted the researcher in the identification and coding of categories found in the data. Sandra Matheson (1988:13) advises that "good research practice obligates the researcher to triangulate, that is, to use multiple methods, data sources, and researchers to enhance the validity of research findings." In this study, the type of data triangulation strategy employed by the researcher was the "inclusion of more than one individual as a source of data" (Matheson, 1988:14), observations that occurred at different times of the day and written responses to a questionnaire.
Two assumptions for triangulation of data sources are proposed by Sandra Matheson (1988:14),

"First is the assumption that the bias inherent in any particular data source, investigator, and particular method will be cancelled out when used in conjunction with other data sources, investigators and methods. The second and related assumption is that when triangulation is used as a research strategy the result will be a convergence upon the truth about some social phenomenon. Convergence is defined as the outcome when data from different sources or collected from different methods agree" (Matheson, 1988:15).

Data were triangulated to ensure that as "particular pieces of information came to light, steps were taken to validate each against one other source (for example a second interview) and/or a second method ((for example an observation in addition to an interview) (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982:283). Multiple interviews were scheduled along with comparison of observations and interview comments. Transcripts of interviews were given to interview participants as a means of verifying and validating their comments (member checks). These practices aided in the establishment of trustworthiness and validity of participant data. The controlling research rubrics applied to the study were organized into a reference table (See Figure 10).
1. Ethnographic Characteristics

Ethnographers establish social relationships with others in order to learn from them their ways of life. Through firsthand, long term, participant observation, using themselves as research instruments and using an eclectic approach to data collection and analysis, ethnographers view human events in the larger context in which they naturally occur. Through a dynamic interactive-reactive research process, ethnographers engage in continuous analysis to explore, refine, and define questions and adjust the study design and research techniques. As they learn something new about the culture under study, they try to understand how it connects with other aspects of the sociological system and how it can be interpreted in light of what is known about previously studied cultures.

2. Data Form and Content

The data from interviews consist of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge. The data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experiences. Document analysis in qualitative inquiry yields excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from organizational, clinical, or program records; memoranda and

Figure 10 Controlling Research Rubrics
correspondence, official publications and reports, personal diaries; and open-ended written responses to questionnaires and surveys.


Fieldwork is the central activity of qualitative inquiry. Going into the field means having direct and personal contact with people under study in their own environments. Qualitative approaches emphasize the importance of getting close to the people and situations being studied in order to personally understand the realities and minutiae of daily life, for example, life is a program. The evaluator gets close to the people under study through physical proximity for a period of time as well as through development of closeness in the social sense of shared experience and confidentiality.

4. Observations

4. Observations

A. Patton, 1990:202-203

The purpose of observational data is to describe the setting that was observed, the activities that took place in that setting, the people who participated in these activities, and the meanings of what was observed from the perspective of those observed. The descriptions must be factual, accurate, and thorough without being cluttered by irrelevant minutiae and trivia. The basic criterion to apply in judging a
recorded observation permits the reader to enter into and understand the situation described. The value of observational data in evaluation research is that evaluation users can come to understand program activities and impacts through detailed descriptive information about what has occurred in a program and how people in the program have reacted to what has occurred.

B. B. Patton, 1990:47

Actively participating in the life of the observed means, at a minimum, being willing to get close to the sources of data. This means fieldwork. Fieldwork involves getting one's hands dirty, participating where possible in actual program activities, and getting to know program staff and participants on a personal level. This is in sharp contrast to the professional comportment of many evaluators who purposely project an image of being cool, calm, external, and detached. Such detachment and lack of personal involvement is presumed to contribute to objectivity and to reduce bias. However qualitative evaluators question the necessity and utility of distance and detachment, assuming that without empathy and sympathetic introspection derived from personal encounters the observer cannot fully understand human behavior. Understanding comes from trying to put oneself in the other person's shoes, from trying to discern how others think, act, and feel.
rubrics

C. in what the researcher carefully systematically experiences and consciously records in detail the many aspects of the situation. Moreover, a participant observer must constantly analyze his or her observations for meaning (What is going on here?) and for evidence of personal bias (Am I seeing what I hoped to see and nothing else? Am I being judgmental and evaluative?) Finally, a participant observer does all of this because it is instrumental to the research goals, which is to say that the observer is present somewhere for particular reasons.

5. Reflection

A. Reflection and introspection are important parts of field research. The impressions and feelings of the observer become part of the data to be used in attempting to understand a program and its effects. The observer takes in information and forms impressions that go beyond what can be fully recorded in even the most detailed field notes.

B. Here the most subjective side of the researcher's journey is recorded. The emphasis is on speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, prejudices. Also included in material in which the researcher lays out plans for future
research as well as clarifies and corrects mistakes or misunderstandings in the field notes. The reflections may also contain comments on analyses, methods, conflicts, ethical dilemmas, and the observer's mental state at the time of observation.

6. Qualitative Research

A. Bogdan, Biklen, 1982:27-29

1. Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.

2. Qualitative research is descriptive.

3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products.

4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively...rather the abstractions are built and as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together.

5. Meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach are interested in the ways different people make sense out of their lives. In other words, qualitative researchers are concerned with what are called participant perspectives.
7. Fieldwork Guidelines

A. Patton, 1990:273-274

1. Be descriptive in taking field notes.

2. Gather a variety of information from different perspectives.

3. Cross-validate and triangulate by gathering different kinds of data—observations, interviews, program documentation, recordings, and photographs—using multiple methods.

4. Use quotations; represent program participants in their own terms. Capture participants' views of their experiences in their own words.

5. Select key informants wisely and use them carefully. Draw on the wisdom of their informed perspectives, but keep in mind that their perspectives are limited.

6. Be aware of and sensitive to the different stages of fieldwork.

   a. Build trust and rapport at the entry stage. Remember that the evaluator-observer is also being observed and evaluated.

   b. Stay alert and disciplined during the more routine, middle phase
Rubrics

of fieldwork.

c. Focus on pulling together a useful synthesis of a fieldwork draws to a close.

d. Be disciplined and conscientious in taking detailed field notes at all stages of fieldwork.

7. Be as involved as possible in experiencing the program as fully as possible while maintaining an analytical perspective grounded in the purpose of fieldwork.

8. Clearly separate description from interpretation and judgment.

9. Provide formative feedback as part of the verification process of fieldwork. Time that feedback carefully. Observe its impact.

10. Include in your field notes and evaluation report your own experiences, thoughts, and feelings. These are also field data.

8. Coding

A. "an abbreviation or symbol applied to a segment of words--most often a sentence or paragraph of transcribed field notes--in order to classify the words. Codes are categories. They usually derive from research questions, hypotheses, key concepts, or important themes."
They are retrieval and organizing devices that allow the analyst to spot quickly, pull out, then cluster all the segments relating to the particular question, hypothesis, concept, or theme. Clustering sets the stage for analysis."

9. Data Analysis

A.

the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important, and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others.

10. Triangulation

A.

Triangulation of data is crucially important in naturalistic studies. As the study unfolds and particular pieces of information come to light, steps should be taken to validate each against at least one other source (for example, a second interview) and/or a second method (for example, an observation in addition to an interview). No elite and
Emergent themes were an important factor in the study. The researcher maintained a design that remained "sufficiently open and flexible to permit exploration of whatever the phenomenon under study offers for inquiry," (Patton, 1990:196). Once the data sorting and analyses were completed, the researcher begun to summarize what had been found. The summary placed "in narrative form, the major events and issues discovered in the areas of investigation," (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984:192). The researcher recognized that the emerging themes were of great significance for principals. Finally, the researcher began the "time-consuming and laborious process of pulling apart field notes, matching, comparing, and contrasting, which constitute the heart of the analytic process", (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984:192). Then and only then was the researcher ready to shape all that lay before her.

A reflexive journal of the researcher's thoughts, responses, and questions to pursue was incorporated to allow for the Evonna Lincoln and S. Guba (1985) emphasis on the use of reflexive journals for credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the study. Speculation
allowed the researcher to assert the existence of relationships between constructs when occurrences are sufficiently often enough to be more than chance (Goetz, LeCompte, 1984:173). Determining the frequency of occurrences required searching for emergent themes.

**Treatment of Ethics**

The study participants were provided a written overview of the study and the purpose of the study was shared. Pseudonyms and codes used by the researcher provided anonymity for the study participants. Sharing information collected and written in a draft form enabled the participants to make any corrections and participants were reminded throughout the study's conduct that withdrawal of participation was permitted at any point.

A series of questions were posed to each of the interviewees as a means of beginning the dialogue; however, once the conversations were begun, interviewees were given ample opportunity to expand upon the concepts and discussion. The researcher employed interview concepts recommended by Robert Bogdan and Sari Biklen (1992:98) such as not giving up on an interviewee too early; the need to listen carefully; and avoiding "yes" or "no" questions as much as possible.

The researcher interviewed the I.E.P. participants and also requested the completion of a questionnaire
(triangulation). Any respondent who chose not to participate had his or her wishes respected. Participant observation activities included attendance at I.E.P. conferences. The I.E.P. team composition was as small as 3 (principal, parent, special education teacher) and extended to any number beyond that depending upon the nature of the conference. Each of the methods and techniques previously described were employed in the chosen settings.

**The Setting**

Three elementary schools in a northwest suburban school district near Columbus, Ohio were selected as the research sites. *The district has a total of 462 full time teachers with 39% of this number holding master's degrees or higher. The elementary classroom teacher/pupil ratio is 1:25. The per pupil cost for the district is $4,280 based on Ohio Department of Education (1991-92) figures. Academic support for qualifying students is provided by the learning disabled tutoring program and special education units for the disabled (Learning Disabled, Severe Behavior Handicapped, Developmentally Handicapped, Preschool Handicapped, Multiple Handicapped. Three school nurses, speech and hearing therapists, psychologists, and two adaptive physical education specialists work with students in all grades. If needed, physical and occupational therapy are also available.*
The three elementary schools chosen were similar in design—single story brick buildings with attractively landscaped exteriors. Although two of the three buildings had been expanded or renovated, all were more than fifteen years of age and none served less than 500 students. One of the buildings had been the scene for much controversy, not because of its educational program but because of the suspected seepage of industrial wastes from the surrounding businesses. The atmospheric odors and potential for an underground collection of waste materials created the possibility of the school closing with students redistributed to other buildings. Much dialogue on this issue continued throughout my presence there.

Five of the district's buildings met the selection criteria:

1. The existence of special education programs in the building.

2. A willingness on the part of principal and staff to participate in the study.

3. The requirement to have more than one I.E.P. meeting scheduled.

Of those five sites, only three principals agreed to participate in the study. By allowing the study to be conducted in the natural environment of the participants, rich information was provided. The variety of special education programs and diversity of experience of study participants contributed to a more accurate picture of the
principal's role. A minimum of 5 subjects from each building was utilized for a sample total of at least 25 participants. The cases are representative of the personal experiences of other elementary principals and enhance the researcher's knowledge about issues critical to the study. The subjects were selected through the utilization of a key informant, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services who identified the selected principals as the best subjects with whom to discuss the phenomena.

Participants

The educational history of **Mr. S. (Principal A) includes twenty-three years of experience as a principal and a Master's degree. There are two multihandicapped classrooms in the building and a total of 40 special education students. **Mrs. M. (Principal B) has four years of experience and a Master's degree (+12 hours) as well. The services of a Specific Learning Disabled tutor are provided in the building.

Mrs. H. (Principal C) holds a Master's degree plus 71 hours and has five years of experience as a principal. There are three Specific Learning Disabled Resource Rooms in the building serving approximately 40 children.

Additional participants who provided their perceptions of the principal's role included an Adaptive Physical Education Teacher, an Occupational Therapist, special
education teachers, parents, and the Director of Pupil Services.

A compilation of the subjects was developed with a telephone call being used as the initial source of contact. The telephone conversation covered the general information about the number of special education students, a description of the researcher's activities during the research project, an opportunity to ask any preliminary questions, the schedule for the I.E.P.'s with names of those attending, directions to the site and the scheduling of the first principal/researcher contact.

Some specific questions asked of the principals were:

1. How long have you worked for the school district? in this capacity?

2. How often do you conduct I.E.P. conferences?

A general overview of the study with sample questionnaires was provided to the Director of Pupil Personnel who had shared these items with the principals in order to gain their cooperation. Once the participants were chosen, a general overview of the research study and questionnaires was provided by the Director of Pupil Personnel. Participants were assured that all data would be freely available to them if they so desired. The sample was composed of principals, special education teachers, regular education teachers, parents, a special education administrator, and other auxiliary personnel attending the
I.E.P. conferences. As a means of establishing researcher credibility, my extensive involvement with special education (as a Supervisor and Executive Director) was shared with study participants.

The combination of approaches employed throughout the study enabled the researcher to develop findings (Chapter 4) significant and specific to the setting. Study findings answer the question what is the role of elementary principals as they conduct Individual Education Plan conferences? The implications of the study findings and recommendations for further research are addressed in Chapter 5.

**Summary**

In this study, purposeful or critical case sampling was employed in order to gain pertinent information that would respond to the question what is the role of the elementary principal in the conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences? Data were collected through the use of participant observation, field notes, multiple source involvement, interviewing, feedback, and document examination. These multiple methods were incorporated to "enhance the validity of research findings" (Matheson, 1988:13) and provided a rich source of findings for the researcher. A systematic analyses of the data resulted in the coding of meaningful categories and the highlighting of
emerging themes. These themes became the basis for the study findings described in greater detail in Chapter 4.
Chapter IV
Study Findings

The data collection process consisted of participant observation, interviews, audio recordings and written questionnaires. These methods were utilized to provide a detailed description and a full comprehension of the phenomena of the elementary principal's role in the conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences. Three elementary principals were observed as they conducted I.E.P. conferences and their view of their role was elicited along with other conference participants (parents, special education and regular education teachers, and related services personnel).

The actual experience of the three principals formed the basis for the research questions:

• What are the specific characteristics displayed by principals as they conduct Individual Education Plan conferences?

• How do conference participants describe the elementary principals' conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences?

• What impact does the training principals receive have on their conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences?
The different concepts imbedded in the questions were addressed through the multiple methods of data collection used by the researcher. By describing the participants' words and actions, the researcher was able to demonstrate how the elementary principal's role is determined by the nature of the conference.

As a means of understanding the patterns, the recurrences, the whys (Miles and Huberman, 1982:67), the researcher applied explanatory and inferential pattern codes to the collected data. The pattern codes identified for the researcher emergent themes, patterns, and explanations suggested by the study site and participants (Miles and Huberman, 1982:67). The pattern coding allowed for the grouping of over arching themes and constructs (Miles and Huberman, 1982:68) as shown in a later section of this chapter.

The researcher applied the pattern codes to transcribed interviews to determine their applicability and further tested the applicability of the discovered themes on the study informants vis a vis follow-up interviews. The pattern codes were qualified and the conditions under which they hold were specified (Miles and Huberman, 1982:69).

In this study the researcher's qualifying activities took the form of written memos that described the significance of any added code. As the researcher moved
forward in the data collection process, the themes were then tried on new informants through an if-then procedure (i.e., if the pattern is constant, then something will or will not happen). This procedure identified the conditions under which the patterns held or qualified (Miles and Huberman, 1982:69).

The participants chosen for the study reflected the researcher's specific interest in the role of elementary principals as they conduct I.E.P. conferences. Informants utilized in this study, through the sharing of their experiences, provided insight into the unique phenomenon called an I.E.P. conference. Rich information was provided allowing for a great deal to be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question (Patton, 1990:54). All of the information accumulated about each principal under study (interviews, observations, comments, documents, newspaper articles) was utilized to gain clarity and understanding of what a principal's role actually is when an I.E.P. conference occurs. The case study information is presented thematically in this chapter so that readers may better understand what it is like to be a principal in this one particular aspect of the job.

Michael Quinn Patton (1990:54) confirms the goal of a qualitative case study as a means of seeking "to describe that unit of the principal's role in depth and detail, in
context, and holistically." Each case study provides both aspects unique to the principal and the educational environment, and the aspects common across all of the environments. Common themes can be found that have significant implications for I.E.P. conference preparation and changes schools might wish to make.

None of the principals involved were certified in any area of special education. Study participants and locations have been given fictitious names in an effort to preserve anonymity. The summary of study findings will begin with an overview of the principals and their programs.

**Case Study I (Subject C)**

The principal (Subject C) is highly organized and has maintained positive interactional skills with both building staff and parents. Evidence of the principal's organizational abilities was obtained through the interview comments of the occupational therapist, the physical therapist, and the principal as they described the time lines for developing schedules, room assignments, meeting district deadlines, and establishing the routine activities of the building. The principal emphasized the need for such orderliness in order to maintain a positive building climate supportive of the needs of students with disabilities. The positive nature of the principal's interactional skills was described by parents, special education teachers, and
related services staff. Observations of the principal in the settings of I.E.P. conferences and general building activities supported the interactional comments and compliments made by conference participants about the principal. The principal involved in the first case is a white female (Subject C, Figure 11) with 17 years in the field of education. Of these, 5 years have been spent as an elementary principal in the school district.

One important environmental factor has impacted the principal's leadership role. Principal C has been required to assume further responsibility in addressing and resolving the environmental problem of air pollution and strong odors impacting the health and safety of staff and students at the school. The unresolved problem has resulted in the voluntary transfer of more than 140 students to other locations in the district. The principal has remained steadfast and tenacious in her battle to protect staff and students from long-term ill effects of the pollution problem. The problem has continued to be a significant distraction from the ongoing conduct of school duties and responsibilities for the principal. As concerns about the environmental conditions have occurred, the principal has often acted as the district's representative during any press conferences held.
The principal admits that her knowledge about the special education process was limited and new to her when she first assumed her leadership responsibilities. Her source of guidance and information during her early years was the school psychologist assigned to the building. The school psychologist was the more experienced person. When a new school psychologist was assigned to the building, the principal provided the same level of assistance to the psychologist as she had received earlier. The principal, whose husband is also an educator, resides in the district and is a visible face at many of the district's athletics activities because of her children.

The principal displays a high level of responsibility for the success of children in her building. She is a move-about, hands-on-administrator who maintains close contact and interaction with parents. This principal was observed to have a balanced role in these I.E.P. conferences. The principal's comments and suggestions were inserted between the special education teacher update and final recommendations.

Provided below are excerpted I.E.P. conference transcripts. The comments characterize Subject C's role in the I.E.P. conference. (Principal entered room midway through I.E.P. conference).
Subject C: "Good morning Mrs. T., I'm sorry I am late. I had to finish a final report so that my secretary could get it typed on time."

Mrs. T.: "Oh, that's quite alright. Mrs. A. (the SLD teacher) was just letting me know how Z. was doing this year. It certainly sounds a lot better than the last time."

Subject C: "I know, Z. has really been having a much better year this year. I'm so proud of him and I know you must be, too. You have met Mrs. Wilson (the researcher) already and you don't mind her sitting in with us today, do you?"

Mrs. T.: "Oh no, no, not at all. It's fine with me."

Subject C: "Well, like I said, I am very sorry for being late and I certainly don't want to interrupt things now. Maybe, Mrs. A. can continue right where she left off."

Mrs. A.: "Of course. I was just sharing with everyone how much progress Z. had made this year. If you look at his final test scores, he has improved in every area. In reading he shows a six month gain, math, a .8, and about the same in every other area. This seems to have been his best year yet. What do you think Mrs. T.?"

Mrs. T.: "You're right. This does seem to be his best year. Z. seems to be much happier about coming to school every day and he doesn't complain about even doing his homework. Before when he would bring work home, he would complain every minute. And even when I helped him, he would take all night. Now, he gets right to it and I hardly have to say one word to him (ha, ha). It's been wonderful for me and him. What did you do Mrs. A.?"

Mrs. A. (SLD teacher): "It really hasn't been me as much as it has been Z. He seems to have really matured this year. He's been taking on more responsibility. He's been on the crossing guard squad this year as well and he's been so proud of that. You should see him with the younger children. Making sure they get across the street okay. No, no, it's been all Z. I keep telling him how proud I am of him and I hope you do too."

Mrs. T. (parent): "Oh, I do, I do. He's not like the same person he was last year. My husband tries to remember to keep complimenting Z. as well."

Subject C: "I think you're both not giving yourselves enough credit. Z. is doing well but I know how much Mrs. A. (teacher) has been doing to help Z. be more responsible at
school. Z. had so much trouble keeping organized and when Mrs. A. focused on that with Z., like with those step-by-step cards, it made all the difference for him. And the way you work with him at home all the time on the same things. I think it has all made a difference for Z., don't you? He seems to have more confidence this year. An "I know I can do this" kind of attitude."

Mrs. T. (parent): "You're right. He is more confident this year. He doesn't compare himself as much to his brother. We've really worked hard with him and he tries so hard. I'm really happy for him."

Subject C: "We all are. I just didn't want you two to not take credit for all the help you've both given Z. as well." (Laughter from everyone).

Subject C: "Now, Mrs. A. (teacher) is there anything else you wanted to share with Mrs. T.?

Mrs. A. (teacher): "Yes, there are quite a few more things to discuss. I wanted to go over some of the goals I think Z. should be working on for next year and see if they (the goals) are all right with Mrs. T."

Subject C: "Well, go right ahead."

(Note: Researcher involvement using Figure 8 observation variations was as an onlooker, observing as an outsider. The observation was overt with all participants knowing the purpose of the observation and who I was. The duration of the observation was single and of limited duration and the focus was narrow--single element, principal's role, observed. The researcher's involvement was 1 on the scale of 1 to 5, with participation increasing in 25% increments. 1 = 100% observation.)

Case Study II (Subject B)

The lone male administrator in the study, this principal had the most years of administrative experience--
twenty-three. This principal relied more heavily on the special education teacher to conduct the meetings' activities. Of the three subjects studied, this principal expressed the most concern for ensuring that district resources were dispensed in the appropriate way. He was respected by the other two principals and often provided answers and responses for the other two when issues arose about what should and should not be done based on district practice.

The principal was highly cooperative and open throughout the course of the study. He provided important information to the researcher. The special education students in his building were more complex in their needs than students at the other two buildings. For example, one specific case in this building was described by the principal as the most difficult the district had ever experienced. A number of the I.E.P. conferences lasted for hours and parents were resistant to many of the school options offered. Not only was this principal more experienced in years of administrative experience, he was also more experienced in dealing with difficult special education issues that had a higher potential for legal confrontation.

For this principal, I.E.P. conferences reflected a major role for the special education teacher, especially in
the areas of provision of information and movement of
discussion from one person's input to the next. The
principal's involvement took the form of consultation on
issues of resources, such as a change of bus schedule and
equipment. Subject B more openly expressed the need to be
pre-informed if there were situations or issues that might
result in a negative meeting outcome. The comments of this
principal during observed I.E.P. conferences were more
confined to the general interaction of the student in the
building, i.e., mainstreaming period, lunch period.
Dialogue from an observed I.E.P. is provided below to typify
role of principal:

(Parents were shown to the conference room by the school
secretary. School staff members present included the
principal, former special education teacher from previous
year, adapted physical education teacher, regular education
teacher, multihandicapped teacher for current placement, and
the physical therapist).

Subject B: "Good morning, Mr. and Mrs. H. Thank you for
joining us today. I think you know everyone here and I know
you have already spoken to Mrs. Wilson (researcher). She
has explained to you why she is with us today and I
understand you haven given your consent to the whole
project. Am I right?"

Mr. & Mrs. H. (in unison, with nods of affirmation, yes,
yes, we have."

Subject B: "Good, then we will just proceed to talk about
the kind of year T. has had this year. And, what kind of
plans we're going to make for him for next year. Are we
Mrs. W. (MH teacher):  "Certainly. T.'s time with me so far, has been pretty good. He's a happy youngster and he really tries hard to do the things we ask of him. I know on some days when he seems not to be feeling as well, it's really hard for him. And, I'll sometimes have to encourage him more on those days. Or give him more rewards but I know he is still trying. I work really hard with him on trying to say his words very slowly and carefully so that people can understand him. I have noticed that he is far more likely to string his words together in the afternoon more than in the morning. Part of that may be that he is more tired in the afternoon and it is harder to concentrate on being careful with your words."

Mr. H. (parent):  "I have noticed at home that his words are much more harder to understand when his sinuses are clogged. Have you noticed whether or not T.'s speech is worse then?"

Mrs. W. (MH teacher):  "You know, I hadn't thought about then, That may well be. I'll start watching closely to see if the speech problems are worse then and I'll let you know. Other than the change in his speech, T. is making the exact progress we wanted for him. Miss D. (speech therapist), may have more to add about T.'s speech and language service, Miss D.?"

Miss D. (speech and language therapist):  "Why yes. Yes, I do. T. and I have been working much more on the shaping of his lips when he forms words and the articulation patterns of his speech. I've been paying lesser attention to the times when he's having problems and if I feel that changing his speech time to the afternoon can help that, then I can make some switch-around in my schedule to accommodate that. I am paying attention to it all right now. I have some flexibility in my schedule to make a change if need be. As Mrs. W. (MH teacher) said earlier, T. really tries hard to please me. I think he especially likes the stickers. Especially, the ones with smells. You should see the way his face lights up when he gets one."

Mrs. H:  "I know. That's probably because he likes food so much."  (laughter)

Mrs. W. (MH teacher):  "Yes. Food is a great reinforcer for T. C. (physical therapist), did you want to share T.'s progress in physical therapy?"
C. (physical therapist): "Yes. I'll be happy to. As you know Mr. & Mrs. H., I am only providing consultation for T. and right now that seems real appropriate. I worked with T. quite a bit on his reflexes. We concentrate mostly on putting all the steps together to help him kick. He is doing well with the kicking and I am planning to add some additional reflex action. The same as what I did when we were working on throwing and catching the ball. Mrs. W. (MH teacher) uses the activities in her classroom and makes notes for me about T.'s progress, how well he is doing, what trouble spots he's run into. I check with Mrs. W. (MH teacher) each week and we decide what activities she can add to her classroom, to give T. more practice. It seems to be working well that way. And right now, we're going to continue on with the kicking pieces. This will help T. build more strength in his legs as well. Do you have any questions?"

Mr. H.: "No, no."

Mrs. H.: "I don't think so. He is doing better as you said. I do have one question though. But it's not about the therapy. It is about changing T.'s bus. We will be moving into our new house in another few weeks and I wanted to know about the bus. Who do we tell? And do you know about what time the bus will be picking T. up?" (Parent was looking at MH teacher as question was asked).

Mrs. W. (MH teacher): "That's a transportation question. Mr. S. (Subject B), handles all of the transportation stuff."

Subject B: "Yes, yes, I do. Right now I couldn't give you the exact answer because I'll have to contact transportation directly. If you give me your new address and the date you want the change to start, I can get all of the information for you and then get back with you. Why don't you make sure I have everything I need at the end of the meeting and I'll be sure to follow up right away."

Mrs. H. (parent): "Sure, we'll be glad to. One other question. Will T.'s bus ride be as long as it is now? He's on the bus for over an hour and that's a pretty long time for him. I thought he wasn't supposed to ride for more than an hour. Isn't that the law or something? I know in the school district where we were before he didn't ride as long."

Subject B: "Generally, we try to have children riding about an hour. Part of the problem now may be the fact that T. requires a lift bus and the children on that bus all seem to
live at opposite ends of the city. I will check with transportation about this though and let them know you are concerned. That way, if there's any way possible for them to watch the time more closely, then they can. Let me jot down this information and I'll add it to your other request. Then, when I talk to transportation, they'll have everything they need to know. Do you know T.'s bus route number?"

Time was spent obtaining the bus route number and the bus driver's name. The conference resumed with other participants providing brief summaries of their involvement with T. The conference ended on an amicable note with principal expected to follow up on parents' concerns. (Note: The researcher's role was as an overt onlooker during a single observation with the narrow focus on concentrating on the principal's interaction with parents and other I.E.P. participants. The participant observation continuum was tilted fully toward observation only.)

**Case Study III (Subject A)**

The principal in this case was an import from the state of Texas and received her administrative experience and training in that state. This administrative knowledge was transferred to the role she now played in the present district. Subject A focused heavily on the need to provide nurturing and support for the parents, in general, and special education parents in particular. She made it her business to be fully knowledgeable about the circumstances of the child's special education involvement--both in the classroom and outside. Pre-planning occurred between the principal and staff who would be participating in the I.E.P.
conference. It was during these meetings that specific roles would be assigned to meeting participants, i.e., good news/bad news bearer, validator for teacher recommendation.

Interestingly enough, this principal, with her very nurturing personality, was pregnant when the researcher first met her. During the months of the study, the principal went on leave, gave birth to a baby girl, and returned to her position. Evidence of the principal's cooperation with the study may be seen by her willingness to continue the interview process during her leave.

Transcript excerpts characterizing Subject A's role in the I.E.P. conference are provided below:

Subject A left the conference room to greet the parents and walked them to the conference room where various staff members had convened. The regular classroom teacher was contacted via the intercom to join SLD tutor and school psychologist. Subject A began:

"Since you have another son in LD, you could probably do this with your eyes closed."

Parent: (laughing) "You're right."

Subject A: "I don't think we have any surprises for you. Mrs. H. (SLD teacher) has already given you a lot of the information. We wanted you to be prepared for today. Especially, since J. no longer qualifies for services. Miss Y. (school psychologist) has all of the test information for you and can talk specifically about the test scores and why J. no longer qualifies and also provide you with some suggestions about ways to help J. not lose the progress he has already made. Y., why don't you proceed?"
School psychologist discussed the qualifying factors and conditions for continued placement pointing out areas and reasons why J. did not meet the criteria. When Y. had completed the technical part of her report, she went on to express an area of concern beyond the academic component.

Y. (school psychologist): "Mrs. M. the one concern that I do have is how much J. expressed worries about you. He talked about not always wanting to come to school because he was worried something might happen to you while he was away. Do you know what this is all about?"

Parent (Mrs. M.): "J. has always been concerned about me but it does seem to be quite a bit more since my divorce from his father. Why, he even tells me how worried he is I might have a car accident when I drive. I have been taking him to a counselor because I don't want him worrying all the time about me. I do want him to have his own life. But, no matter how much I tell him not to worry and that I'll be fine, he still worries. Nothing I said seemed to make any difference. I thought a counselor might help. Maybe J. is still adjusting to the divorce and was more used to his father worrying about me. Now that his father isn't with us, he seems to feel that I'm his responsibility and that he's got to do the worrying now. At least that's what the counselor says."

Y. (school psychologist): That may be right. How we have handled it at school is that when we see his anxiety level getting too high, we will allow him to call you to make sure you're all right. What we have been working on is reducing the number of times he calls you. But this is an area of concern."

Subject A: "Yes, it is. So much so that we were worried about how we can best help J.'s transition from the SLD program. We have come up with a number of ideas that we want to share with you. Mrs. H. (SLD tutor) and Mrs. K. (regular education teacher) can you talk about our ideas with Mrs. M.?

The rest of the meeting involved discussion of the specific strategies for scaling down and then eliminating J.'s involvement with SLD. It was agreed upon by I.E.P.
participants that the school psychologist would continue to provide intermittent check in services for J. as well as initiate contact with private counselor to ensure that school is providing adequate support for J. Academic performance would be monitored for a six-month period following termination. The conference ended with the principal summarizing:

"I'm glad you're pleased with everything we've suggested today. If you have any questions later, or want to add something, feel free to call either Mrs. H. or myself and we'll take care of it for you. And remember, we're here to help. We want J. to be successful."

With that, the principal accompanied the parent to the door.

An overview of the principals' experience and special education units assigned to the building is provided in Figure 11.

In this study, the question asked by Matthew Miles and A. Michael Huberman (1984), "How valid and reliable is this person (study participant) likely to be as an information-gathering instrument?" was applied to each of the participants. The principals under study were highly familiar with the I.E.P. process with all three indicating the number of Individualized Education Plan conferences they had conducted during their careers numbering into the hundreds. The participants most interested in the concept of identifying, defining, and understanding the principal's role were the principals themselves. They were eager to
have additional information via inservice on the legal issues surrounding Individual Education Plans and the special education personnel, classroom teachers, and related services staff. Related services staff were concerned with gaining greater support from principals for their recommendations to parents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years of Administrative Experience</th>
<th>Number of Years in District</th>
<th>Level of Attainment</th>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject A 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MA + 12 hours</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject B 23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>M.Ed.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject C 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>MA + 71</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 11**  
**Education/Experience of Subjects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Total Number of Special Education Units/Types</th>
<th>Special Education Students in Building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. M. A</td>
<td>1 SLD</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. S. B</td>
<td>2 MH</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. H. C</td>
<td>3 SLD</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 12**  
**Special Education Population Data**
Participant Interviews

The researcher interviewed a cross section of participants (internal--district administrator, principals, and special and regular education teachers, and external--parents). Such diversity provided a comprehensive view of the principal's role as seen by many sources. Much time was spent by the researcher eliciting responses, "drawing people out," (Miles and Huberman, 1984), and providing enough time for participants to bring all thoughts and comments to closure.

Interview With Special Education Administrator

The Director of Pupil Services, a bright, articulate, attractive, well-dressed woman, is viewed by the principals as the final authority on what is or is not to happen with students with disabilities. The principals rely upon her expertise to guide them through the special education decision-making process. She is their source in difficult situations. The Director attends and chairs all meetings where controversy is present. She is well respected by each of the principals and, based on the principals' comments, is viewed as knowledgeable, capable, and readily available when glitches, and unanticipated, costly, or unfamiliar (to principals) requests are received.

When interviewed, the Director spoke fluently and confidently as she described the principal's role as she
knew it to be. Comments interspersed throughout the interview reflected a thorough knowledge of each individual principal's style and his or her unique approaches to the conduct of the role. Queried as to what role she felt the elementary principal played in I.E.P. conferences, the Director moved forward in her chair, touched her fingertips together and without hesitation proceeded to state:

"I generally would view the principal's role as more managerial than content focused since the content of the I.E.P. is generally supplied by the related services people, the classroom teacher, the parents, and so on. So I don't really see in Hillsboro any way that the principals have had a lot of responsibility into the nitty-gritty portions of the I.E.P. Rather, the principal seems to stay focused on issues, particularly if there are any unique issues of a particular child in regards to placement in a specific kind of classroom--if it has to be on the first floor of the building. If we have an orthopedically handicapped child, then the principal is able to address those kinds of housing issues. Also, the principal will be responsible for scheduling special area classes. If the child has unique needs in physical education, he's usually the person who has control over those kinds of schedules and can make decisions about those issues when a related service person, or a special education coordinator, or a classroom teacher can't."

The emergent theme or pattern of the principal's role described by the Director (N) was the technical assistance aspect of the principal's involvement in the I.E.P. process. The Director (N) described functions such as scheduling, class placement, and decision making related to the child's interaction and integration into the life of the building. The Director (N) comments also pointed to the significance of the classroom teacher and related services role in the
transfer of information about the child to the parents and other meeting participants.

Pausing to reflect further, the Director (N) relaxed back into her seat and continued:

"I think that a principal's often seen as a public relations kind of person. A person who can assure the parents we are here to accommodate your child in whatever way we know how. And a person who can also certainly set the tone for the meeting to the extent that by saying something calming to a parent such as, 'We really want to provide the most effective program or the most appropriate, or the best quality program possible.'"

Emphasizing this next point with hand gestures rising and falling with each word, she (N) expanded:

"I think that kind of PR role is really very, very important. Some of our I.E.P. meetings, I will admit to you very readily, principals will not stay for the entire meeting. They will come introduce themselves, welcome the parent, and come back at the end to sign the papers and to summarize what he or she would view as his or her responsibility. So, I guess that's another reason why I say I don't see them as necessarily in an exceptionally key role. He has the potential for that; but, unfortunately, as you well know, when you have hundreds of I.E.P.'s to do in a two month period of time, they are just not in a position to be at every single one for the entire hour or hour and a half. Some of our M.H. I.E.P. meetings are two to two and one half hours long."

The Director's (N) comments re-emphasized the minimal role a principal may play in the I.E.P. conference while highlighting even further the significance of the teacher's role as an information holder and source.

The teacher's role of information source combined with the number and duration of I.E.P. meetings provided the context for the minimization of the principal's role.
Included in the Director's comments was a brief description of the I.E.P. structure when the principal does not remain in the meeting; the principal greets and welcomes the parents then leaves the meeting thus giving responsibility for the conduct of the meeting to the special education classroom teacher, and, finally, the principal returns to provide closing comments and signs the I.E.P. document.

In an effort to identify the interconnection between the Director and principals, the researcher inquired: "Are there specific things that you do to help prepare the principals to conduct I.E.P. conferences?" In response, the Director (N) stated:

"I can't say that we do it annually. At the beginning of my tenure here, we did have a couple of inservices on how to conduct I.E.P. meetings that were directed at both teachers and principals. However, it's probably at a point or place where we're pretty lax in regards to doing it. Hillsboro is so rapidly growing that we have changes in staff as well as administration yearly. So we probably have not done that nearly as often as we should have. What usually happens is a special education coordinator or I will go over and talk with every principal individually and give them some hints. But it is again an area that I would love to have. I'd love to see something--a manual designed so that we could share with principals, because I think that sometimes we do expect them to be gods and be omnipotent and know all that they're supposed to about regular education as well as special education. And that's really unrealistic. A manual or more inservice would be extremely helpful and it has not been done often enough."

The Director acknowledges in her comments that there is not a formal training or information providing session for principals. Later interviews with principals will show concurrence with these comments. The principals' comments
describe an informal process for obtaining information and knowledge used in their decision-making process.

Reflecting upon the specific part she had played in training the principals, the Director's (N) brow furrowed before she proceeded:

"Well, Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Hogan came into the district after I did. And so I think I probably have a little more to do with their shaping than I did Mr. Scott. Mr. Scott is a bit more traditional in his approach to everything than I would see Mrs. Morton or Mrs. Hogan being. Mr. Scott has been one that while not reluctant to be flexible or to consider change really needed a lot more experience with special education. He really needed to live with it before he became real comfortable with it. And as he has become more comfortable with it, by that I mean he's had more and more special education units in his building, he has developed a real sense of calm in a comfortable kind of control in I.E.P. meetings. He knows. So often principals will be, again, almost paranoiac in I.E.P. meetings because they're afraid if they say one thing wrong or use one word that's inappropriate, that they'll be sued or that somehow something will be written down on an I.E.P. that the district has to pay for that could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. He (Mr. Scott) has been in the district now long enough and with special education long enough that there's a real comfort level that he's developed about what can be said, what can be promised, what has to go through the Pupil Services Offices or the Special Education Office before a decision can be made."

The Director's (N) words continued to flow freely as she directed her comments toward the two remaining principals:

"Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Hogan, this will sound extremely discriminating, but, I think they bring to I.E.P. meetings a warmth that I probably associate more with their being female and mothers than anything else. But, I think they nurture parents in a way that Mr. Scott does not. They (Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Hogan) have a tendency to get into the empathy of what would it be like if my child were the one that we were discussing and they have a tendency to, perhaps, demonstrate more compassion in individual situations. That may be less a gender issue and more a personality issue. But I think that Mrs. Morton and Mrs.
Hogan have tremendous ability to feel what parents feel. They have a tendency, I believe to be very sure that the parents know, to ask the parents if they understand this? or do you agree? Do you want to change anything on this I.E.P.? Do you have additional info? And I think each of the three would ask those questions. But I just think that the way Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Hogan ask those questions, they're just posed in a much more nurturing kind of way."

Emerging from the Director's (N) comments are an expanded description of the principal's role of human relations, whereby, the emotional expression and needs of conference participants are attended to in the conference. Attending to the emotional climate and tone of the meeting allows the principal to prevent discordant notes that might interfere with a positive meeting outcome.

The Director's (N) solid grasp of each principal's actions and interactions with parents was well exhibited by her comments. The conversation and information shared never waivered or required prodding and probing for additional content. The Director (N) was always clear and straight forward in her answers. When comparing the actions of the three principals, the Director (N) summarized in this way:

"Mrs. Hogan and Mrs. Morton are very efficient, very detail-oriented, or detail specific kind of people, so I think that they also have a tendency to scrutinize I.E.P.'s when they're completed to be sure that everything is the way they need to be before they're sent over to the special education office. Mr. Scott is a little less detailed, attentive, but there's just no question in my mind that they're three of our most effective I.E.P. principals in regards to knowing what's expected in an I.E.P. meeting and following through with at least the basics."
This is once again an example of the principal's role of providing technical assistance at the minimum and ensuring that I.E.P. activities conform to the legal requirements.  

**Interview with Principals**

Principal interviews occurred individually and as a group. The group interview which allowed for interchange and exchange of ideas occurred in the conference room of one of the elementary buildings on a day in which neither students or staff were in attendance. Full evidence of the degree of support for collecting data given the researcher by the principals was the attendance of one of the elementary principals even though she was officially on maternity leave.

Each question posed was responded to with full disclosure of their thoughts and beliefs. It was not until each topic had been thoroughly addressed, concepts expanded, and further probing ceased did the discussion move forward to the next topic. Typical of the broad range of the discussion and the depth of the dialogue was the principal's response to the topic of their perception of the role they played in the conduct of I.E.P. conferences.

Mrs. Hogan: "Having three rooms for the resource rooms at the school, we probably have a greater percentage of our population of I.E.P.'s along with an LD tutor. And, as it is with any child, I think it's my responsibility to know where that child is academically and socially. And especially these children often have some self-esteem problems. Sometimes they're academic problems or they act out in behavior problems and sometimes not. The parents are
entrusting you with the well-being of their child and I think I've yet to sit through a parent conference where the parents did not have questions. Should I or should I not do this? Probably the one parent that I have that visits with her child is a lot more trusting but I think when they are placing that trust in us, it's our obligation to know how that child is doing and what progress they're making, where the weaknesses are."

Mrs. Hogan's comments once again give credence to the principal's technical assistance function. By acquiring full knowledge of the special education child in a manner consistent with the principal having general knowledge about every child in his or her building, the principal is able to make appropriate suggestions related to the child's classroom placement and general educational needs.

One example of such suggestions could be found in Mrs. Morton's description:

Mrs. Morton: "I'm Lily Morton (Principal of East) - I have an LD tutor in my building. We have no resource classes housed in our building or any other special education classes in our building and, therefore, my role is often a little bit different from maybe Donna's in that sometimes we may see that a child might better be served in a more restricted setting than an LD tutoring setting. And so I see myself as being a resource person for the parents and the teachers and any other staff involved. So I facilitate the I.E.P. meeting by being a resource person and if the LD tutoring situation may not be appropriate for that child, I see my role as being one to help convince parents that even though a certain program may not be housed in our building, that because it is more appropriate for their child to be in a different setting, they become convinced as a result of working together as a team in the I.E.P. meeting."

Mrs. Morton's comments summarized her view of the role she played in the provision of technical assistance.

Additionally, she highlighted another emergent theme or pattern of the principal as the source for maintaining the
conference's direction and focus through the facilitation of the conference.

In the following statements, Mr. Scott describes the existence of the two emergent themes of the principal's I.E.P. participation in a more passive, observatory role and as the conserver of limited district resources.

Mr. Scott: "I'm Bill Scott (Principal of __________). We have two MH units here and a LD tutor. And I guess I see my role as we go through these I.E.P. conferences, in our case the MH conferences; the I.E.P. conferences can go, very often, two or three hours and they're quite involved with lots of people as, I'm sure in Donna's case, there could be lots of people, but we usually have Adapted Physical Education people, OT, PT, Speech, maybe the Psychologist is involved and so there are lots of people. And I guess I see myself not so often with an active role but as sitting back and making sure that you're listening and knowing what's going on and being able to interject if something isn't clear because so very often, our parents, they've been involved for a number of years and they may not ask questions. Now some of them are very knowledgeable, they know what their rights are, and we don't have any problems with them not understanding, but we have a few that maybe would not say something. Or I have to make sure, too, that we're not taking responsibility for something the district, that we maybe, can't deliver. So you're looking...I think I see myself protecting the parents, the student, and also the district because very often I'm the only district person there. We don't have our Pupil Personnel Director there or the Supervisor. So you want to make sure that you're not putting yourself up for something that you can't deliver. You also want to make sure that the parents understand that they're not buying a 'pig in a poke', so to speak, that they understand fully what we're trying to do. Also we try--there's a lot of mainstreaming that we do for these children. We want to make sure that there's something that is practical and is going to be successful."

While displaying a more subtle, passive stance, Mr. Scott clearly describes the active portion of his role--utilizing the listening and observation period to reach conclusions.
and develop comments that assist with a positive meeting end.

As the verbal exchanges continued between the principals, points expressed by one principal would be carried forward by the next. Nods of agreement interspersed meaningful points and served as encouragement to further affirm each other's thoughts and views.

Of equal importance to the principals was the preparation that occurred before each I.E.P. conference. The more complex the I.E.P. issues or the more difficulties were anticipated by the staff, the more prior preparation occurred. When describing the necessity and importance of such preparation, each principal had specific thoughts to convey:

Mrs. Hogan: "I think that sometimes the work that we've done before a conference, if we anticipate that the parents aren't going to readily accept what we're going to offer, we have conversations. We often will meet, the regular ed teacher, the psychologist, the special ed person that's going to be involved, myself, and the Director of Special Ed will meet ahead of time and sort of plan some strategy. I often start out and end by letting the parent know, you have the ultimate decision here. We're just going to relay our observations, testing results, the decision's yours, so that they don't feel that something's being done to them. And rarely do we have that. But if you put yourself in that parent's role, they're going to change something about my child's life. And so I think the planning that we do ahead of time makes my role easier and when we go in it's more of a team approach. Sometimes we don't need to do that especially if it's the parents who are saying, "Please help." You give them whatever we can. Then you don't have to be that concerned about it. Again, I haven't really found myself in a position where I've got some opposing sides or opposing views. We try to work that out ahead of time."
The I.E.P. preparation stage focuses on two components of the principal's role. The first component of the role is that of pre-defining the meeting's agenda and discussion points as a means of minimizing disagreement or parental resistance to staff recommendations. It is during this pre-conference stage that decisions are jointly made as to what specific role the principal will take and what needs the principal will fill for both staff and parents.

As described by Mrs. Morton, the second component of the principal's role is to move the meeting discussion and information exchange forward to a successful end with closure satisfactory to all parties involved.

Mrs. Morton: "I feel that in the district, there is not a role for us to play where we are in a negative or opposing position. We are all here to serve children and find the best situation for them, and that is the way you present it to parents. Again, we do a lot of the same things that Donna does in her building. If we foresee that there's going to be difficulty, then we do a lot of planning ahead of time--a lot of strategy planning, a lot. That maybe I am the one who presents the hard issue instead of the teacher presenting that hard issue or the psychologist because I'm not going to be the one who's in that classroom every day with that student and have to deal with that parent every single day. But for the most part, we plan as a team and I see the child as being the center of that team effort. And each person has a role in offering information so that we can come to the best conclusion educationally, both academically and socially for those children. So, and sometimes, I say to all, that we have to do a back door kind of approach. Maybe the way we do it is give information such that the parent thinks it's their idea. We try very hard not to tell people this is how it has to be and take a dictatorial kind of thing. Because in my experience, period, that does not work. I think the district expects us to be sure that we don't offer something that we can't deliver as Mr. Scott touched on a few minutes ago where
something is not legally possible. And we need to be knowledgeable of what's available."

Mrs. Morton's comments reflect the theme of the principal as the source for providing parents with messages that are less well received. It is clear in Mrs. Morton's comments that this is a well-meaning role on the part of the principal and is designed to preserve a positive interaction between the classroom teacher and the parent. By preserving the teacher-parent relationship, intentional support for the teacher is exhibited by the principal.

During the interviews conducted, Mr. Scott would, on more than one occasion, refer to the action of pre-planning and coordinating the I.E.P. activities and interactions. The concern was expressed by Mr. Scott in other sections of his interviews for the need to be responsible in the dissemination of district resources.

Mr. Scott: "I agree with both Lily and Donna; the planning is most important, and we will always try to anticipate what the problems are going to be. And if we need to have what we call a professional get together in advance to go over that so we have our 'ducks in order' then we do that. And we do that a lot because we want to make sure that we are not being faced with something that we don't have answers for. That would really be horrible, and so we want to not stack the deck, so to speak, but we want to make sure we are able to give answers that may come up and be able to anticipate any other problems. Many of our parents, the MH parents, are very knowledgeable about their rights, and they will push to get all of the advantages that they can for their child which no one faults. But you also, as I said earlier, you've got to be able to say, 'Well, yes we can do that or no, we can't do that.' And if you obligate yourself to something that isn't practical or is a simple little thing but maybe it's going to be a great expense. You know, somebody says, 'Well, I'd like an aide for my child. Well is it possible?' And if we know that that's going to come
up, then we need to be able to say, 'Well, you know we'd be happy to have an aide for your child but we can't.' Or we have to go through some other kind of procedure to see that that happens. So you are sitting there, I think, listening to everything. At least that is as I see my role because so often these parents are very knowledgeable about the procedures. They know what's going on. And so you're listening to make sure that you're not obligating yourself for something that you can't fulfill."

Mr. Scott provides further insight into the center stage role played by special education teachers; for example,

Mr. Scott: "Also, I didn't say this, well usually our MH teachers are very, very knowledgeable and experienced with I.E.P. conferences and have been through them many, many times. And they usually will send home a written copy of the I.E.P., a copy of it in advance. Or they will call on the phone and sometimes spend an hour or two going over each I.E.P. goal so that the parents know in advance. Now that facilitates the conference itself. That doesn't very often shorten it, but they know coming in some things or all of the things that are going to be on there. Now if there are many major changes they can come--and many will come, with some of their own things written down and say, "Well we talked about this over the phone, I've had a chance to think about it, and I would like to offer such and such". And that is fine. And then we'll rule as we should in an I.E.P. conference. Everybody has a say--it's a team meeting, and we shouldn't be the only ones who have a say or that it's a set agenda or set I.E.P. It should have give and take and they should be able to say, 'Well, I don't agree with that' and then everybody talks about that and says, 'Well, you know you're right or we need to add so and so.' Or the A.P.E. teacher really needs to be a consultant to the Phys. Ed. teacher because the child is doing very well. And the child really doesn't need to have A.P.E. unless something shows up later on. So, I guess I see all of this as our roles. If Nora, our Director and Linda, our Supervisor, are not there, then we are the district's representative as well as the building representative. And the parents also look to us—if you've been sitting around the table with them for four or five years and they know you by first name, they're going to trust you. And you'd better not betray that trust. You'd better be able to say, 'Well, yes, we can do that or no, we can't or what you're expecting is not something we can deliver.'"
Mr. Scott's comments include references to the principal's ability to establish a positive interaction and relationship with parents that allow for correct interpretation of the parent's expectations, emotions, and moods. Such interpretation by the principal allows for management of meeting format and interaction. Thus, the principal can, as would a train conductor, keep the meeting on track and reach the final destination of mutual agreement on the child's educational program.

The principals' comments were shared with much thoughtfulness and concentration. Not only did their facial expressions via a furrowed brow, a squint of the eye, or pensive look give evidence of their attention to their replies, but the thoughtful pauses, the opening and closing of hands, the shifting and changes in seat position were also indicative of the reflective nature of their comments. The openness of phrases and statements appeared to be a genuine effort to share their experiences as a means of not only contributing to the researcher's project but providing an informational base for other principals as well.

**Interview with Special Education Teachers**

There were two groups of special education teachers interviewed--related services teachers and program teachers (Multihandicapped and Specific Learning Disabled). The
teachers were interviewed either individually or in a group setting.

Interestingly enough, there was much similarity between the way the teachers viewed the principal's role and the way the principals saw themselves. Critical comments surfaced only in the area of level of support the special education teacher was provided at key times. Special education staff members were, as a rule, complimentary and supportive of the principals' involvement in the I.E.P. process.

The comments of one Specific Learning Disabled Tutor were most poignant:

"Donna is always available to help pre-plan and discuss placement services. She attends most annual reviews and placement meetings and helps to provide information and assurances to the families of every child."

Consistent with previously identified themes, the SLD tutor described the principal's provision of technical assistance during I.E.P. conferences.

Contrasted to this highly positive perception of the principal's involvement in the I.E.P. conference was the concern that surfaced from the Multihandicapped Teacher, who expressed:

"It would be nice if the principal could be more active in suggesting and opening possibilities for mainstreaming and inclusion of students. When the principal is involved, the regular education teacher is more willing to try new things and give more opportunities."

Apparent in the multihandicapped teacher's comments was the view of the principal playing a minimal role in the I.E.P.
conference. The teacher accepted full responsibility for the flow of the meeting from beginning to end.

The special education teachers all concurred with the occupational therapist who stated that "no two principals act the same. They mostly do a lot of listening and then kind of pull it together at the end or when questions arise." The latter statement reflected the behavior most common to all three principals.

The occupational therapist carefully measured her thoughts when she further tried to clarify her perception of the principal's role:

"Well, mostly, I think he/she is just kind of a facilitator, kind of making sure, gathering together all the resources that might possibly be involved in helping through the problems."

The occupational therapist's view of the principal's role was more directed toward the facilitation, management of the meeting's activities and conference participants' actions. The emergence of this theme in the occupational therapist's interview was consistent with the description of this role found in the comments of other study participants (i.e., Pupil Services Director, parents, and principals themselves).

The researcher synthesized the many comments of the special education teachers in an effort to identify ongoing themes and consistencies that could provide insight and shaping for the principal's role. Parent interviews and
questionnaires increased the comprehension of the principal's role as I.E.P. conductor.

**Interview with Parents**

The parents, as the external recipients of the principal and staff's actions, ranged in their view of the principal's role from moderately supportive to highly enthusiastic. Parental input was sought through the avenues of questionnaires and interviews. Longevity of interaction and relationship appeared to have a definite impact on the parent's perceptions.

One parent, although giving credit to the principal for appearing to be highly knowledgeable about her child's needs and adjustment to the building, indicated that prior to the researcher's day of observation, the principal had never before attended her child's I.E.P. conference.

Another parent was fully complimentary when describing the principal's involvement with her son's I.E.P. According to this parent:

"You know that she has her thumb in there somewhere. You know that somewhere Mrs. Hogan has been there. Whether or not she's right behind you or sitting next to you or across from you. Either way you know that somewhere Mrs. Hogan has been there."

Throughout the interview with this parent, there was laughter, pleasure in the principal's level of involvement and a generally positive persuasion towards the principal.
The description of the principal's role provided by this parent fell directly into the category of managing the meeting activities until a successful end is reached. Included in this management role is the pre-conference planning that occurs evidenced by the parent's belief that the principal was paving the way for the child's success.

A parent whose child attends one of the other schools was more guarded in her assessment of the principal's role. She stated;

"Mr. Scott seemed very familiar with the process and the therapists' roles in the process. I would not expect Mr. Scott to be aware of all of Bob's needs. It was apparent that he was informed of his progress. Most probably from discussions with Bob's MH Teacher and that he was very familiar with Bob as a student in his school."

This parent further expanded her view of the principal's role by determining that the principal was an involved principal interested in understanding the needs of the children and parents involved in the special education program in his building. The generalized expectation of this parent that the principal display an understanding of the child's needs within the context building environment fits well into the technical assistance, general knowledge holder role.

**Emergent Themes**

Coding used by the researcher in this study was both illustrative (i.e., using specific quotes from study participants) and inferential in nature (i.e., identifying
emergent patterns or themes). It was through the researcher's use of explanatory and inferential codes that the "emergent leitmotiv or pattern" (Miles and Huberman, 1984) of eight categories of behaviors became meaningful and decipherable.

As the comments of participants and the actual observations were compared, contrasted, sorted, analyzed, coded, and defined, eight themes or categories emerged (Goetz, LeCompte, 1980). The eight categories of principal's roles were labeled as follows: Administrative Technician, Greek Messenger, Guardian of Resources, Emotional/Social Interpreter, Navigator/Pilot, Stage Manager, Teacher Supporter/Protector, and Observer/Bystander. Based on the actual behaviors displayed by the principals and interview data, definitions were attached to each role and are listed below:

I. Administrative Technician - Locator of needed resources and provider of technical assistance on issues related to the needs of the child.

II. Greek Messenger - Unveiler of news and information that might be viewed as negative by the recipient.

III. Guardian of Resources - Determiner and protector of the district resources to be dispensed for requested and required services.

IV. Emotional/Social Interpreter - Clarifier of mood, climate, emotions of conference participants in order to keep conference on track. Uses this interpretation to provide focus for maintaining cooperative interaction between conference participants.
V. Navigator/Pilot - Maintainer of meeting direction and focus. Steers meeting to a successful end.

VI. Stage Manager - Agenda setter while maintaining course of meeting. Provides cues for meeting participants and manages the actions of center stage meeting participants (staff, parents).

VII. Teacher Supporter/Protector - Provides a verbal support confirmation and validation for teacher information, statements, and recommendations.

VIII. Observer/Bystander - Silent viewer of conference activities. Utilizes process of listening and observation to draw conclusions in order to assist with meeting's outcomes.

Confirmation of the above-mentioned roles were provided by interview comments and interpretive analyses provided by the researcher, study participants, and I.E.P. observations. Statements excerpted from interviews and literature will be attached to the categories in the subsequent pages as further validation that the categories accurately describe the real world experiences of the principals.

**Emotional/Social Interpreter**

The role of Social/Emotional Interpreter consists of utilizing the perceptiveness and intuitive skills for the feelings and concerns of the parties involved in the conference to maintain a cooperative interaction. Without attending to this area, the conference can go astray. Negative impressions and feelings can develop which can interfere with the interpretation of any facts presented. Albert Shuster and Don Stewart (1973) give credence to the existence of Emotional/Social Interpreter role when they...
suggest that the principal's leadership role is one of creating the necessary changes in attitudes, feelings, and relationships.

Comments from study participants which confirmed the Emotional Social/Interpreter role were provided by Subject C (Mrs. Hogan);

"I believe that as principal I should be actively involved in the I.E.P. process. It is often a time of uncertainty for the student and the family. We want to provide them with enough information and personal consideration so that the parents and students feel free to discuss their concerns and questions at any time during the year. Much of my role is about assurances. Their child is not being labeled. On the contrary, we assure parents that our goal is to meet the needs of their students on an individual basis."

Another view of the Emotional/Social Interpreter role was provided by the special education teacher.

Spec. Ed. Teacher (Mary Adams-Butler): "Donna is always available to help pre-plan and discuss placement and services. She attends most annual reviews and placement meetings and helps to provide information and assurances to the families of every child."

The principals had specific strategies that they employed to insure positive interaction between conference participants. These efforts were directed as well toward maintaining a balanced exchange of information and responses to concerns or questions between the conference participants. Mrs. Hogan (Subject C) provided detail on this area of the Social/Emotional Interpreter role by commenting,

Subject C (Mrs. Hogan): "The more informal the small talk we have at the beginning, because there is still just one or
two parents there and everyone else and that can be intimidating. So I think I would have to say my experience of watching how parents react and observing the psychologist who did a nice job of listening to the parents and allowing them to start out. Their very first statements always tell us what their concerns are about the child. And that wasn't a teacher or someone else saying here are the scores, here's what we see in the classroom, and I've learned a lot from that. I've learned to start the conversations with parents with that question in mind."

Within the Social/Interpreter role, an empathic identification with the plight and concerns of the parents can be found. The need for this empathetic understanding was referenced by Mr. Scott (Subject B) in his descriptive statements,

Subject B (Mr. Scott): "Right, I think the team approach in dealing with the parent....If those two aren't in place, the rest of it is just throwing the cards out and let's see how they land. And I know if you put yourself in the parent's position, what would I want to hear? What would I want to see? And how would I feel during and after this conference? And then you prepare it so that those needs are met on the part of the parents to the best of your ability."

Mrs. Morton (Subject A) believed that experience greatly impacted the level of skills the principal exhibited in the framing of I.E.P. comments as the Social/Emotional Interpreter role was displayed. According to Mrs. Morton (Subject A),

Subject A (Mrs. Morton): "And I think experience helps as much as anything. I mean you know what you can say and you know what you cannot say and you know how to say it and probably how to say it--it's almost, maybe not more important but as important as what you say to them."

Validation for the existence of the Social/Emotional Interpreter role could be found in the comments of the Adapted Physical Education teacher (A. Simpson),
A.P.E. Teacher (A. Simpson): "Mrs. Hogan helps with some of the students that I might have. How to best deal with parent issues. Like how sensitive to be, what these parents have gone through. She seems to prepare me more, I think, for things in the past—parent issues or something, how to go about dealing with some of the parents and the best way to. They have a tendency to get into the empathy of what would it be like if my child were the one we were discussing. And, they therefore have a tendency to perhaps, demonstrate more compassion in individual situations."

The lone male principal defined one of his behaviors within the social/emotional interpreter context further in his statements:

"And I guess I see myself not so often with an active role but as sitting back and making sure that you're listening and knowing what's going on and being able to interject if something isn't clear. Because so very often our parents, they've been involved for a number of years and they may not ask questions. Now some of them are very knowledgeable. They know what their rights are, and we don't have any problems with them not understanding. But we have a few that maybe, would not say something."

A summary of the principal's role, as seen from the parent's perspective, provided additional confirmation of the role. According to the parent,

"She (Subject C) just brings kind of like a comforting thing too, where you just feel like, come with me, you're my friend, we've got to go talk about that. She reassures people. She says now, a lot of mothers, right off the bat, get upset at the fact that they don't want to hear anybody say, "Hey your son has a learning disability." And a lot of mothers, you know, worry. And she's made me feel good in the fact that she builds the mothers up too. She says that a lot of times she can tell that I've read to Zeb and the other youngsters. And that makes you feel good because I do read to Zab a lot. It's nice to know that somebody else notices."
The principal's role as stage manager may best be likened to that of a play's director. The director must take all of the members of the cast, move them through the lines and motions required for a well-received play as well as interpret and give feedback to the cast's actions.

The importance of the I.E.P. and the relationships shared between staff and parents, the provision of resources for the child and the ever-present possibility of a due process filing highlights the role of stage manager. Acknowledgment of this role occurred from more than one parent with phrases such as,

"You know that she (the principal) has her thumb in there somewhere. Whether or not she's right behind you or sitting next to you or across from you. Either way you know that she's been there."

Another parent saw the Stage Manager role as,

"Mr. Scott seemed very familiar with the therapists' roles in the process. I would not expect Mr. Scott to be aware of all of Bob's needs. It was apparent that he was informed of his progress most probably from discussions with Bob's multihandicapped teachers."

The occupational therapist when interviewed, characterized the Stage Manager role as;

"Well mostly I think just kind of a facilitator and kind of making sure, gathering together all the resources that might possibly be involved in helping through the problems."

Although the theme of Stage Manager had not been applied to this role, the principals themselves described their actions as,
Subject B (Mr. Scott): "The planning is most important, and we will always try to anticipate what the problems are going to be. And if we need to have what we call a professional get together in advance to go over things so we have our ducks in order, then we do that. And we do that a lot because we want to make sure that we are not being faced with something that we don't have answers for."

Mr. Scott (Subject B) when describing an example of a recent encounter with parents of a child in his building further expanded elements within the Stage Manager role in the following description:

"The district has a reputation of being pretty astute when it comes to working with parents and special needs children so that helps us, I think. Although still, they are not going to buy a pig in a poke; they sometimes feel, "Well, I've got to fight for everything that I get." We try to tell them and show them that we're all trying to do the same thing, that if we work in a positive way, we'll get that without the adversarial part of the relationship.

Mr. Scott acknowledged the differing level of parental responses to his stage management role when he continued,

"Sometimes it is just, but we all know that there are some that are going to push to the very limit. We've got one coming up soon that we're very aware of that one thing is said but in practice they do other things. And we have to be very, very careful about what we say. It's sort of divide and conquer."

The need for caution on the part of the principal surfaced in Mr. Scott's comments as well. His cautionary words as to how staff members might be pitted against each other in a parent's efforts to obtain a desired result surfaced in statements such as,

"And if the parent wants something they may go to one of the team members and say, "Well you know, I'd really like to have such and such." If that person doesn't say, or says yes then a rift starts to develop. If they say, 'We need to discuss that at a team meeting so that everyone has a say in
it and hears all of the information" then, we're in good shape. But, they, (the parents) did that to me and I said, 'Well, let's try it.' Well that was exactly the wrong thing to say. So, now we're having to say, "Well, we better hadn't try that until we talk more about it. This looks like a change in the I.E.P."

Mrs. Hogan (Subject C) provided insight into the preparation needed by the principal in order to "direct" the I.E.P. conference participants to achieve a flawless performance. According to Mrs. Hogan (Subject C),

Subject C (Mrs. Hogan): "I think that sometimes the work that we've done before a conference, if we anticipate that the parents aren't going to readily accept what we're going to offer. We have conversations. We often will meet, the regular ed. teacher, the psychologist, the spec. ed. person that's going to be involved, myself and the Director of Special Ed. will meet ahead of time and sort of plan some strategy."

Just as a real play has cues and prompts to encourage the actors' flow of words and movement, so, too, did Mrs. Hogan's comments give evidence of the principal's use of parent cues and prompts. She stated,

"I often start out and end by letting the parent know--you have the ultimate decision here. We're just going to relay our observations, testing results. The decision's yours so that they don't feel that something's being done to them. And rarely do we have that."

A return to the need for empathy surfaced as well in Mrs. Hogan's (Subject C) statements,

"But if you put yourself in that parent's role, they're going to change something about my child's life."

Mrs. Hogan (Subject C) returned once again to the necessity for pre-planning many aspects of the I.E.P. conference, (similar to a play's dress rehearsal) when she added,
"And so I think the planning that we do ahead of time makes my role easier and when we go in, it's more of a team approach. Sometimes we don't need to do that, especially if it's parents who are saying, 'Please help.' You give them whatever you can. Then you don't have to be that concerned about it again. I haven't really found myself in a position where I've got some opposing sides or opposing views. We try to work that out ahead of time."

Subject A (Mrs. Morton) likened the meeting to focusing on who was going to say what, and how things would flow, and giving parents the opportunity to say what they expected to come out of the situation. She expanded her comments with;

"I think facilitator is probably the most important one because that enables you to play all those other roles."

This principal viewed her role most as the facilitator and clarifier of specific points and concerns during the I.E.P. process.

Themes that emerged in the study were reflected in the current writings of Reynold Bean and Harris Clemen (1978). Reynold Bean and Harris Clemen (1978) promote Stage Manager behaviors by recommending that principals positively frame descriptions of the child, listen closely to parents, and encourage and support them while providing specific recommendations. Fenton, Yoshida et al., (1979), Dickson et al., (1980), and Bean and Clemen (1978) reference aspects of the Stage Manager role by describing maintenance activities performed by the principal to keep the group on task, resolving conflicts, delegating team tasks, and assigning the responsibility for implementing the child's program.
Guardian of Resources

The role of Guardian of Resources brings to light the fact that the principal is an extension of the school district. Each principal was fully aware of the implications his or her actions presented for the district's budget. The male principal emphasized this role to a greater degree than did the female principals.

When a transportation issue arose in one of the I.E.P.'s that had budgetary significance, the principal was the sole responder to this concern. The principal assumed responsibility for follow-up actions related to the transportation issue.

Subject B (Mr. Scott) described his fiscal responsibility by commenting:

"I also should represent the administration and show an interest in each child's I.E.P."

He further stated;

"Or I have to make sure, too, that we're not taking responsibility for something the district, that we maybe, can't deliver. I think I see myself protecting the parents, the student, and also the district because very often I'm the only district person there. So you want to make sure that you're not putting yourself up for something that you can't deliver."

The Special Education Administrator pointed to elements of this role significant for principals with her statement:

"But they've (principals) also realized that their own necks are on the line now more than ever and as a result, they have made an effort to become informed so that they don't jeopardize the school district's liability or even their own liability."
Parent comments did not reflect this aspect of the principal's role. The reason may be more attributed to the positive relationship with parents, smooth flow of the meeting discussion, and prior planning of school staff. Special education support staff paid attention to this role as evidenced by the Occupational Therapist's comments such as,

"We have to be sure that the resources are there so if we anticipate something like this happening, we try to talk to the principal ahead of time and say we think this child really needs this. Is this going to be feasible? I know they share a computer between the 3rd grades. Can we make sure this child has it at least every other day or something like that? So a lot of times we try to bring potential problems to the principal ahead of time so that we don't get into the middle of a meeting and promise something that we can't deliver. That's when we get in trouble."

**Administrative Technician**

Viewed as the locator of resources and provider of technical assistance, the principal as administrative technician performed this role aspect in a more subtle way. The technical function of this role included the ability of the principal to contact the appropriate district personnel to insure that what was committed to in the I.E.P. meeting actually happened. For instance, if a change in transportation needed to occur, the principal, by nature of his position, would assume the responsibility. In one I.E.P. conference, the parents expressed concern about the length of time their son was riding the bus and how previous requests to transportation had not produced results. The
principal (Mr. Scott) then became the person who provided the technical assistance needed to address the parents' concern.

When providing insight into this role, the Special Education Administrator summarized the function in this manner:

"Rather than seem to stay focused on issues. Particularly if there are unique issues of a particular child in regards to placement in a specific kind of classroom. If it has to be on the first floor of the building. If we have an orthopedically handicapped child, then the principal is able to address those kinds of housing issues.

Also the principal will be responsible for scheduling special area classes if the child has unique needs in physical education. He's usually the person who has control over those kinds of schedules and can make decisions about those issues when a related service person, or a special education coordinator, or a classroom teacher can't."

Related services personnel when referencing the technical component of the principal's role described circumstances in which they had made requests of the principal out of sequence of the principal's usual activities or schedule.

"For instance", states the Adaptive Physical Education Teacher, "in April, they're (principals) not ready to say who that child's classroom teacher's going to be next year. But, it's real helpful for us as related services to go in and look at the classroom for next year and prepare the teacher. And do some training ahead of time. So a lot of times we do ask for things that are out of the ordinary."

Both related services personnel and special education teachers believed strongly that the principals responded positively to these extraordinary requests. The special
education teacher captures best the overall technical expertise brought to the conference by the principal in words such as,

"Principals can help to give an overview of the school district and help to answer questions."

The Adaptive Physical Education Teacher viewed the principal as the "go to person." Meant by the phrase "go to person", was the ability to have the principal obtain a required resource or assist in having a need met. The A.P.E. teacher summed her perception of this function as,

"A lot of times immediately in that school if there are things that we need--either for space, getting the schedule set up (I'm speaking more beginning of the year type of issues), I feel that they're (principals) the one to go to to try to get the resources, like Jane (the O.T.) said. Like, say if the computers are something that we need, they're the ones to go to to help get the type of equipment that we might need for the children in our areas."

The principals reflected the Administrative Technician role in comments such as,

"So I (Subject A - Mrs. Morton) facilitate the I.E.P. meeting by being a resource person. And if the L.D. tutoring situation may not be appropriate for that child, I see my role as being one to convince parents that even though a certain program may not be housed in our building, that because it is more appropriate for their child to be in a different setting, they become convinced as a result of working together as a team in the I.E.P. meeting."

Subject B (Mr. Scott) addressed the Administrative Technician role in more than one instance when he described his actions. One example of his perception of the Administrative Technician role may be seen in the following comments:
"I believe it is also my role to get answers to questions that come up in the I.E.P. process that can't be answered by those present."

The interaction with other principals as part of the Administrative Technician role was referred to by Subject B (Mr. Scott) in the following comment:

"I have all the MH children here for the elementaries and so our people are pretty good at not building up false expectations that we're going to try to meet or say that we can. So we're all pretty good about communicating and saying, 'Hey, I've got a child here that's a potential LD resource room child' and if there are any special circumstances trying to deal with that or letting them (other principals) know that, they need to deal with it."

Additional substantiation for this role was found in the writing of authors Michaelis (1980), O'Reilly et al., (1985), Sires et al., (1993), Meyer et al., (1982), Dickson et al., (1987), Fenton et al., (1977), and McCabe et al., (1982) in their descriptions of the planning activities performed by principals and the due process obligations placed upon principals.

**Greek Messenger**

The role of Greek Messenger may best be described as assuming responsibility for providing information that may not be well received by the parents. This role occurs when the principal's intent is to preserve the relationship between the parent and other staff members to deflect any anger, hostility, or resistance to a decision or information to the principal himself or herself. The determination of
this role generally took place in the pre-conference planning stage.

The principals were the only ones to describe the particular role of Greek Messenger. Interviews conducted identified the specific purpose for this role as being the need to preserve a positive relationship between the parents and the staff with which they frequently come in contact (i.e., special education teacher, related services teacher). The principals displayed a sincere willingness to deflect the "heat" and any negative feelings onto themselves.

Subject A (Mrs. Morton) provided the rationale for why principals are the likely ones to assume this role. She observed:

"Maybe I am the one who presents the hard issue instead of the teacher presenting that hard issue or the psychologist because I'm not going to be the one who's in that classroom every day with that student and have to deal with that parent every single day."

Subject C (Mrs. Hogan) added her perception by stating:

"Sometimes somebody has to play the bad guy. I mean, in a sense, we really have the least amount of time with that person, that student. It's better that we deliver something that's not the most positive news. So that if they're going to be angry at someone, let them direct their anger at us. That saves the relationship with the teacher, the tutor, the psychologist, the regular classroom teacher."

During the interview, this principal (Mrs. Hogan) expressed the thought that she wasn't sure "what the name of that role is."
**Navigator/Pilot**

Steering meeting participants through the potentially hazardous waters of I.E.P. conferences creates a challenge for the principals. This area is most likely to be the one in which the principal convenes an internal meeting of all staff in order to be well prepared for the presence of parents in the I.E.P. conference. In this role, principals attempt to anticipate parent issues, concerns, or unusual requests. The Adapted Physical Education teacher shared her thoughts on the challenging nature of this function:

"But yet I felt sometimes when there's a kind of sticky case going on, it was comforting to know you kind of worked through those bugs before you got into the I.E.P. So, I think when the principal took the time to set up those pre-meetings and the staff could get together and everybody was on the same wave length so there wasn't anything that came out. Or maybe, whether we're going to take the kid out of the classroom. Or, specifically for me, if I'm going to take the kid out of that class time or if I'm going to see the kid in a regular physical education class, you can kind of work through this with a minimum amount of committee meetings."

The Navigator/Pilot role applies more frequently to circumstances in which staff are aware of parental dissatisfaction with some aspect of the child's special education services. Incorporated into the awareness of the potential for discord and disagreement is the prior preparation of school staff via internal discussion and conferencing before the scheduled I.E.P. meetings. All three principals expressed great concern for their ability to perform well this role.
Subject B (Mr. Scott), when describing the Navigator/Pilot role concerns, received verbal affirmation from his two colleagues when he commented:

"There's nothing worse than to not know that there's a major change because it makes us look ill-prepared and not with it. And very often, in some of these, if they're difficult, we all need to know what's going on, so that we can have more or less not a divided front. That we're representing something that we're all in favor of. And if the classroom teacher doesn't like something or wants something different, then they need to let us know so that we have that. That you don't walk into a conference divided and not in agreement as far as I'm concerned. Because you can't expect the parents to make the choice if you haven't made it."

Subject B (Mr. Scott) emphatically stated when describing his role as Navigator/Pilot the critical need for preparedness by stating,

"So that being prepared and knowing what's going to happen is best for the team."

The special education teacher noted that the Navigator/Pilot role required close working relationships with the principal. The pre-planning required in this role from the special education teacher's perception allowed her and the principal (Subject A-Mrs. Morton) to form recommendations for the meeting. Despite pre-preparation activities and efforts to "be on the same page," there are instances when, according to the Adapted Physical Education Teacher,

"Some issues come out during the I.E.P. meeting that you couldn't be prepared for. Questions the parents might have concerning a goal or something and you try to resolve those issues."
Teacher Supporter

More frequently pointed to by special education teachers and related services staff, the role of encouragement provider and validator for school staff clearly exists. Within the context of the Teacher Supporter role, the element of trust can be found. Principals desired to trust that staff was providing them with full information and alerting them to any danger or trouble signs. Teachers, in turn, desired to trust the principals so that once the teachers had maintained their end of the "unspoken" bargain, the principals would, in turn, fully support their recommendations and decisions. Inherent for both groups was the need not to be left high and dry during their encounters and interactions with parents. Inherent as well in this role is the principal's function as teacher advocate.

Special education teachers who recognized this role spoke to the fact that the principal helped in difficult situations by affirming the staff's recommendations especially in situations where there were differences of opinions on school decisions. The Adapted Physical Education Teacher expressed her belief that the principals were all very visible all the time and, "they're supportive with us (school staff)."

Proof of the principal's supportive actions could be found in the A.P.E. teacher's description of her personal experience with a difficult case this year. She described
the incident and the principal's supportive actions in the following manner:

"Mr. Scott played a big part in supporting my decision. He was saying, "You saw what was best for the child, but we've got to meet in the middle here and help make the parents feel like they're making some of the decisions...So Mr. Scott helped in seeing the parent's perspective, seeing my perspective."

Subject B (Mr. Scott) clearly believed that he was responsible to "help and support the staff members if it is a difficult situation with parents." Special education teachers were consistent in their belief that the "principal's always there to support our decisions."

Observer/Bystander

The Observer/Bystander role is the one in which the principal plays a minimally participatory role in the conference. The principal sits quietly listening and observing and interjecting comments only as needed or required. Although the role may be physically non-participatory, the principal interpreted the actions observed and information shared to draw conclusions and provide suggestions and comments helpful to the meeting. During the display of this role, other staff members, such as the classroom teacher or related services personnel, assume a more active role.

Descriptions by principals themselves, parents, and special education staff highlighted times when the
principal's role was non-participatory and more that of an observer or bystander.

The Adapted Physical Education teacher spoke to the fact that,

"the principals have their own comfort level at each of the meetings. Some of the principals actually get involved with the I.E.P. process being that they might actually do the last page maybe, even the signatures and stuff like that."

The Occupational Therapist compared the three principals in the following manner:

"Subject A's (Lily Morton) usually the most involved of the three--Say it's a three-year evaluation, the principal might not always be in there while the psychologist is giving the information, because usually it's bus duty time or something like that. But it seems like she's usually in there a little bit more throughout the whole I.E.P. Where Mr. Scott (Subject B) will come and pop in."

Subject B (Mr. Scott) commented:

"Our teachers really, they are the ones in charge. We're just sitting there as interested bystanders, so to speak. At least that's the way I feel."

One of the parents responded that the principal of her building had not previously attended any of her child's I.E.P. conferences. Subject B (Mr. Scott) stated:

"And I guess I see myself not so often with an active role but as sitting back and making sure that you're listening and knowing what's going on and being able to interject if something isn't clear."

The role of Observer/Bystander is performed most frequently when no difficulties or disagreements occur during the I.E.P. conference. Exhibition of the behaviors accompanying this role surfaced during conferences where
accord, agreement, and positive interaction occurred. This Observer/Bystander role was far more likely to occur with parents who had longer histories and involvement with school staff.

The I.E.P. conference observations, combined with participant interviews conducted by the researcher, confirmed the eight categories discussed previously. The observations also brought into the forefront the existence of an expanded and active role for the special education teacher. As this new and unanticipated revelation unfolded, the researcher developed a means to further elaborate this perspective. (See Chapter 5). An example of the emergence of the special educator's role could be found in the comments from the Special Education Administrator when she commented,

"As I've already mentioned to you, in those situations where we anticipate difficulty, almost always there's someone from central office. And so even at that time the principal doesn't play as significant of a role as he or she might. Because then, they still look at the special education coordinator or Pupil Services Director as the expert. Because then they (principals) still look at the special education coordinator or Pupil Services Director as the expert."

Subject C (Mrs. Hogan) provided this insight:

"But once there are students, then we assume that person (the teacher), and they often spend the most time with them. And so that's why it just is natural that they (teachers) would be the leader. And as Bob (Subject B-Mr. Scott) says, I think we are observers or bystanders in that situation."
The teacher's role received limited attention from the researcher with the focus returning heavily to the principals and their roles in I.E.P. conferences.

In summary, principal's perceptions of their roles while encompassing all eight of the discovered categories (Greek Messenger, Stage Manager, Administrative Technician, Teacher Supporter, Observer/Bystander, Social/Emotional Interpreter, Navigator/Pilot, an Guardian of Resources) were captured best in the one line, short phrase comments and descriptions used by the principals: "troubleshooter" (Subject B-Scott) "clarifier of specific points and concerns" (Subject A-Morton), "facilitator" (Subject A-Morton), "listener," "supporter" (Subject C-Hogan). Special education related services personnel referred to the role as similar for all three and fitting mostly into the realm of answering "any of the questions the parents might have concerning issues related to the school like, how will they get to the lunchroom?"

Acknowledgment of the multiple roles played by principals in their conduct of I.E.P. conferences clearly emerged during data analysis. Special education teachers' comments returned time and time again to the principal's role as one to answer questions, assist with pre-planning, and the discuss services. A parent explained the role, as

"You just know that she's not back behind you doing something else. That what she says is what she's doing."
One principal (Mrs. Morton, Subject A) aptly described her multiple roles in the I.E.P. conference as varying, "depending on the situation." Mrs. Hogan (Subject C) summarized the concept best in her statement, "I don't think there's a recipe for what our role is."

The eight roles emerging from the study were supported and confirmed by four sources: literature, conference behaviors, the principals themselves, and the researcher who has extensive experience with I.E.P. conferences. The behaviors emerged with labeling occurring as a final step to identifying principal's roles. The researcher's prior experience with I.E.P. conferences extends over a fifteen-year period and numbers into the thousands. During the experiential years, the researcher has observed every type of conference participant conceivable, including attorneys, parent advocates, and agency representatives. The researcher's extensive experiential background with special education issues and I.E.P. conferences provided the researcher with insight into what was observed and how certain repetitive functions might be grouped. Preliminary study activities focusing specifically on principals also helped to set the stage for the recognition and labeling of the principal's roles.

Member check activities incorporated in the study activities provided further validation of the existence and
utilization of the eight role behaviors. Each of the principals was provided with the study findings to review with responses requested from each. The principal's roles received corroboration from all three principals and other study participants (Pupil Personnel Director, occupational therapist and physical therapists). Mr. Scott stated his full agreement with the roles as described in the study. According to him, "I find everything correct and interesting." The Pupil Personnel Director responded that she especially liked the role delineations and commented that "the study was very well done." She expressed curiosity about knowing how often each one of the roles was successful, which roles escalate problems, which roles were most effective, and which roles did principals choose because one role was more comfortable than the other or because one role would get the principals to a successful result.

The occupational therapist and the physical therapist also expressed full agreement with the list of principals' roles. Such confirmation from study participants increased the validity level of the study findings.

Member check activities involved providing the participants with a copy of the study findings with a request to review the findings and provide the researcher with feedback, comments, responses, and critiques of the
finding. Conversations were held with the participants prior to the review of study findings, immediately following the review, and later with a follow-up phone call which occurred two weeks later to inquire whether or not other thoughts, comments, changes, or suggestions had occurred to the participants. Participants were consistent in their belief that the roles described in the findings were true representations of the roles performed by principals. Member check activities extended to include other study participants as well, i.e., the Pupil Services Director, the occupational therapist, and the physical therapist.

**Training Provided for Principals**

When asked to describe the kind of training and/or assistance they had received to assist them with their roles as I.E.P. conductors, the principals cited many types: inservice training focused on the topic of special education, written district guidelines and procedures, and assistance and information received from other principals and special education personnel. An example of the most frequent type of training and assistance was noted by Mrs. Hogan (Subject C) when she described the assistance she received from her school psychologist. According to Mrs. Hogan,

"I'm not sure how well prepared I was when I started; but again, I had an experienced psychologist who sort of conducted the meetings. And I probably learned a lot from her. And now with the new one (school psychologist), the
expectations are that I am the leader and I feel much more capable now than I did at the previous time."

The principal's (Mrs. Hogan) experience may be equally reflective of other similarly situated principals. In such cases, Mrs. Hogan offers these advisory words:

"I think if you haven't had any experience sitting in on I.E.P. conferences, that you would want that person to serve as an observer first. But I came from the classroom to the principal's role, and I typically always had the LD students who were either mainstreamed to me for tutoring or because they were dropped on me. So I've had a lot of experiences sitting in on the conferences. If someone is coming from a setting where they just sincerely don't have that experience, then they should observe how it works, how the team gets to the other end."

Mr. Scott felt that much of his training came in the way of on-the-job training. When he discovered himself in a situation that required increased expertise, he addressed it in the following manner:

"We had a situation where we were going to need a home tutor. Well I hadn't done that for a while, but we had just last year gotten a pretty detailed set of guidelines for that. So I pulled those out and then saw it spelled out there pretty specifically. Who did what and how the procedure is to follow. So, even though I hadn't done it, it was there and then I knew who to call and how to start it and what to do. So I think a lot of it is available and you just have to prepare yourself as we do for all of these. You've got to know what to do and then we've got resources available. As I mentioned, Nora (Pupil Services Director) and Linda (Sp. Ed. Supervisor). We call them up and say 'Hey I've got to do such and such.' And they're there."

Mrs. Morton (Subject A) described her training as stemming from the sixteen years she spent in Texas.

"Part of that time was used as a principal and associate principal, and one of my positions was to be in charge of special education in the building I was in. So, I think I've gained a lot of experience in those settings. And we were given inservices. And then when I became a principal I
had a strong person; she was an educational diagnostician, is what they called them there. And she was very strong and good with parents and very knowledgeable. And I learned a lot from the way she led things and how we worked together prior to sitting down at an I.E.P."

Mrs. Morton's move to Ohio and her employment with the Hillsboro school district prompted her to make contact with the district's Pupil Personnel Director. Mrs. Morton commented:

"So when I came here, one of the first things I did was meet with the Pupil Services Director, Nora, and see what her expectations were and how she saw I.E.P meetings flowing and working. So not that I attended any formal meetings, inservice, or workshop here, but I used that (the meeting) as my base of knowledge."

The Special Education Administrator viewed the district practices related to training principals to meet their I.E.P. role responsibilities as encompassing the following:

"At the beginning of my tenure here we'd have a couple of inservices on how to conduct I.E.P. meetings that were directed at both teachers and principals. However, it's probably at a point or place where we're pretty lax in regards to doing it. Hillsboro is so rapidly growing that we have changes in staff as well as administration yearly. So we probably have not done that nearly as often as we should have. What usually happens is a special education coordinator or I will go over and talk with every principal individually and give them some hints. But it is again an area that I would love to have. I'd love to see something, a manual designed so that we could share with principals; because, I think that sometimes we do expect them to be gods and be omnipotent and know all that they're supposed to about regular education as well as special education. And that's really unrealistic. So I thought it (further training) has not been done often enough."

In addition to the assistance provided by the Special Education administrator, the principals relied upon each
other as colleagues. This training experience (example was offered) by Mrs. Morton in her statement:

"I think, too, we as principals in Hillsboro rely on one another's experience that if something comes up in one of our buildings that maybe we haven't seen before or haven't had to deal with, then we'll call one another and say, "Have you been through this before? How would you approach it? And then that's how we figure out what to do."

When queried as to what training they believed was needed to better assist them in the I.E.P. meetings, the three principals all believed that regular updating on the changes, procedures, processes, and laws were needed. Mr. Scott (Subject B) placed the caveat on these updates as not needing to be long or frequent. He believed periodic updates were sufficient. Interestingly, the three principals rated themselves highly (above average and extremely knowledgeable) in the area of being knowledgeable about the I.E.P. process. Subject B (Mr. Scott) emphasized that he knows enough to do his job, "which includes knowing which questions to ask." Parents, special education teachers, related services personnel, and the special education administrator were all unanimous in their perception that all three principals were very knowledgeable about the I.E.P. process. Such high ratings may be indicative of the level of experience possessed by all three principals.
During the conduct of the study, eight roles emerged for principals as they conducted I.E.P. conferences. Significant to the roles was the degree of involvement of the special education teacher and the type of information needed to be shared with parents during the I.E.P. conference and the amount of internal pre-planning that occurred between the principals and school staff members. Conference participants, while not provided a specific label for the roles, well described the behaviors existing for the roles. Triangulation of data, data analysis, and finally member check activities supported the study findings that these roles do exist and are displayed by principals as they conduct I.E.P. conferences.

Principals, although desirous of a formal training process, were not always the recipients of such a process. Assistance with the principal's conduct of I.E.P. conferences occurred in a most informal manner, i.e., guidance and assistance from more knowledgeable conference participants, from other more experienced administrators, utilization of district guidelines and procedures, and actual on-the-job experiences. The eight themes emerging from the data analysis were compatible with role descriptions found in the literature. The combination of the research themes and literature descriptions were then
utilized to form recommendations for further research and study conclusions (Chapter 5).
CHAPTER V
Discussion and Implications

The question under study by the researcher was the role of the elementary principal in his or her conduct of the Individualized Education Plan conference. Research was conducted focusing on the specific characteristics displayed by the three principals as they conduct Individualized Education Plan conferences; how conference participants describe the principal's behavior; and, the impact of training principals receive on their conduct of Individualized Education Plan conferences. Principals were measured in terms of their actual experiences and in terms of their actual role descriptions taken from literature, multiple techniques of data collection, including observations, interviews, and questionnaires were utilized to provide a comprehensive view and a case approach of the principal's role. The emergent theme analysis of the individual cases provided support for the theory of the principal's role held by Anderson et al., (1993) and Fenton et al., (1977). Recommendations for changes in local school district practice will be provided in this chapter. The final portions of the chapter will discuss questions left
unanswered by the present study as well as suggestions for further research.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine and describe how three elementary principals enacted their roles in the Individual Education Plan conference. Examining the principals' behaviors as they occurred during the conferences allowed the researcher the opportunity to both comprehend and identify the specific roles displayed by the principals. Research questions guiding the study were:

1. What are the specific characteristics displayed by principals as they conduct Individual Education Plan conferences?

2. How do conference participants describe the elementary principals' conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences?

3. What impact does the training principals receive have on their conduct of Individual Education Plan conferences?

**Methodology**

Qualitative methods were utilized in this study as a means of ensuring rich, descriptive data. Data collection methods consisted of the use of participant observation, interviews, field notes, and document review. The researcher's involvement with the study's key informants enhanced both the knowledge of the principals and the comprehension of those roles. Numerous reviews of the interview transcripts and field notes as a means of identifying patterns and continuing themes.
The data from this study suggest that it is the nature of the special education teacher's I.E.P. conference participation that most impacts the role played by the principals. As the central possessor of knowledge related to the child's school performance, needs, and adjustment, greater deference is given to the teacher throughout the I.E.P. conference. The principal relies on the special education teacher to keep him or her fully informed, updated, and well prepared for the interactions with parents.

Data gathered throughout the study indicate that the role of the principal is a facilitative one in the conduct of I.E.P. conferences. However, there appears to be limited training provided for the principals as to the appropriate methods to use to conduct I.E.P. conferences.

**Discussion**

During the analysis of the three cases, numerous other factors were identified that impacted upon the principals' role. Although many of the factors were present in more than one case, situated elements and principal characteristics unique to each case interacted with those factors. The factors included: a) the complexity of the students' needs; b) parental expectations of the school as displayed through the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service provided; c) the principal's relationship with the parents; and, d) the principal's knowledge of the child.
Characteristics and factors identified which affected the conduct of the principal's role were the ability to problem solve during the I.E.P. conference when issues or concerns were expressed including the ability to commit district resources; the principal's preparedness prior to the I.E.P. conference, thus generally involving a preliminary update from the special education staff; and the contact with special education central office staff. These characteristics and factors could be found in all three cases. The study of the first principal provided the basis for understanding the similar and dissimilar characteristics found in the remaining two cases.

The second case study describes a principal in a setting which is more economically diverse than the other two settings. Along with the economic diversity in the setting, there exists a larger number of disabled students. The principal in this setting took pride in being fully prepared to respond to whatever may arise in the I.E.P. conference. In this building the role of "good" guy, "bad" guy is discussed beforehand with a planned determination of who assumes these roles when necessary.

The third case is that of a male elementary principal with the most years of experience, twenty-three. This principal has experienced a range of conferences from the simple to the most complex and lengthy. The principal expressed gratitude that his years with the district
afforded him the opportunity to know how best to obtain resources for the disabled population in his building. Case descriptions of principals provided in this study include type of special education classes, years of experience, and educational attainment (See Figure 11). Descriptions of conferences include information acquired from observations of actual conferences and principal descriptions of their behavior during I.E.P. conferences. Principals' descriptions and interpretations include information acquired from interviews and written questionnaires. These descriptions were key to understanding the view and expectations of the role each principal places upon himself or herself. This overall view guided the principal's performance in the conduct of I.E.P. conferences.

Special education staff descriptions and perceptions were shared during interviews as well as in written format. Such descriptions provided a basis of comparison as to whether or not the principal's actual behavior was viewed as consistently the same by conference participants and by the principal himself or herself. The descriptions of all conference participants provided clarity and insight into the principal's interactive role with other conference participants. Parents' descriptions and perceptions were included in order to incorporate the viewpoint of the consumers of both the services and interactions with the principals. The consumer's viewpoint was an appropriate
measure of the principal's adherence to mandated guidelines related to parent input and participation in the I.E.P. process. Subject C (Hogan) provided this insight into the role of the teacher during I.E.P. conferences,

"But once there are students, then we assume that person (the teacher), and they often spend the most time with them. And so that's why it just is natural that they (teachers) would be the leader. And as Bob (Subject B-Mr. Scott) says, I think we are observers or bystanders in that situation."

Principals, parents, teachers, and special education administrators were re-contacted and asked to specifically describe the special education teacher's role in the I.E.P. conference. Comments and reflective observations from the study participants gave further credence to the researcher's findings that the principal's role was primarily facilitative. One parent responded,

"My contacts have always been with the special education teacher and therapists."

The special education administrator indicated,

"For me, I still believe that there are a lot of principals who play a very, very limited role because they don't feel comfortable playing anything other than that. They (principals) work it out with a special education coordinator or a special education teacher to play the primary role."

The principals gave repeated deference to the enhanced role played by special education classroom teachers in the I.E.P. conference. One particular statement by Subject B (Mr. Scott) was verbally confirmed by Subject A (Mrs. Morton). Mr. Scott's statement was;
"In many of ours (I.E.P. conferences the MH teachers and the tutor, they run it (I.E.P. conferences). Because a major portion of it (I.E.P. conference), unless there's a major change; it's just an annual review with the writing of a new I.E.P. They (special education teachers) get all the test data they they've gathered throughout the year. They (special education teachers) then say, 'Well, these are the goals that have been met, these are the ones that haven't been met'; and they make suggestions for a new I.E.P. And usually they'll (special education teachers) prepare the beginnings of an I.E.P. for the new year. They'll go through that (the I.E.P. goals) and then ask everyone around, if there are related services, what their goals are. And each person would enhance it (I.E.P.). I mean they're pretty much doing it now."

Subject C (Mrs. Hogan) added to the discussion and further distinguished the special education teacher's role by stating,

"The only setting in which the special education teacher doesn't take the role of the leader would be the initial placement conference."

The special education teacher's role can best be summarized by the statement provided by Mr. Scott (Subject B):

"And even if I'm late, they've (special education teachers) started it (conference) and they're on their way. The two that you (researcher) sat in on, I did very little because it was underway. It just goes. And the only thing you're doing is sitting there making sure that everything is going well."

The special education teacher's role received prominence in the I.E.P. conference because of the following reasons: the special education teacher is the one with the most information and knowledge of the child; the special education teacher has to receive and utilize information about the child from all sources--parents, related services personnel, regular education teachers, etc.; the special education teacher is the keeper of most key documents about
the child (I.E.P.'s, test data, grades); the special education teacher must synthesize all obtained information and place the information in a written format which address the child's needs; the special education teacher is far more likely to be the one who has developed a positive relationship with the parent. Because of the relationship between the special education teacher and parent, the special education teacher can provide best the transfer of parent needs and concerns to other school personnel. And, finally, the special education teacher has the greatest amount of responsibility for implementing I.E.P. goals and objectives and for coordinating the roles, time, effectiveness, and feedback of services delivered by other contributing parties.

As the centralized source of the child's educational information and programming, the special education teacher has become the logical person to assume a leadership role. This leadership role is acknowledged overtly by the I.E.P. conference participants, yet remains unacknowledged and unaddressed in both federal and state mandates on the conduct of I.E.P. conferences (Fineman, 1987). The special education teacher's role has evolved into one that is practical and effective. The area of the teacher's role as I.E.P. conference leader deserves greater attention. By acknowledging and formalizing this role, principals can be relieved of one burdensome aspect of their responsibilities.
Principal's responsibility for attending special education student's I.E.P. conferences would then be more similar to reasons for meetings attended for regular education students--when difficulties arise and when resource information is needed.

The study findings did reveal that the principal's role was multiple in nature (Cheek and Lindsey, 1986). A review of these roles provided insight as to how the principal and the teacher's roles complement each other. The principal's multiple roles identified in this study were consistent with the Richard Dickson and David Moore (1980) study of thirteen principals. The principals in this study did identify the student's level of performance, an aspect of the Administrative Technician role. In keeping with Richard Dickson and David Moore's (1980) findings, the three Hillsboro principals did not monitor or evaluate I.E.P. implementation.

Each of the three principals in this study displayed collaborative interactions with all I.E.P. participants (parents, special education teachers, regular education teachers, and related services personnel). This finding was also consistent with the Dickson and Moore (1980) study. The ability to display leadership skills when the situation required such a display gives substance to the Ronald Anderson and Robert Decker (1993) conclusion that the
success of I.E.P. meetings is integrally tied to the principal's skills.

Based on this study, the requirement of P.L. 94-142 and P.L. 101-476 that the chairperson of the I.E.P. meeting be someone certified to supervise the special education program, exists less in reality than on paper. The researcher observed many instances where the special education teacher assumed the leadership role in conducting the meeting. The special education teacher was generally the first to begin sharing information and knowledge about the child, and only if the special education teacher directed questions or concerns to the principal did the principal become engaged in the conference. As the information holders, the special education teacher was better able to control the flow and direction of the meeting.

The structure and content of the I.E.P. conferences observed were in keeping with the type of activities, parental involvement, and I.E.P. structure recommended by Carole Michaelis (1980), and the Federal Register (1977). Although the three principals studied were open to ongoing updates and inservice programs, they fully expressed confidence in their ability to comprehend and interpret special education regulations, as recommended by Michaelis, 1980; Meyer et al., 1987; O'Reilly et al., 1985, and Sires et al., 1993. Ann Nevin (1979) listed eight essential
special education competencies required of general education administrators. The three principals studied viewed as highly critical to their role in I.E.P. conferences four of those competencies, such as assuring due process, interpreting federal and state laws, using appropriate leadership styles, and resolving conflicts among program personnel. In the competency area of conflict resolution, study participants described more instances of differences of opinion between school staff and parents than between staff members.

The only clusters of multidisciplinary activities found in the study conducted by Fenton, Yoshida, Maxwell, and Kaufman (1977) applicable to the Hillsboro principals were the areas of maintenance activities (keeping group on task, encouraging others to participate, resolving conflicts of opinion); administrative activities (determining team membership, delegating team tasks to members, communicating team decisions to parent); and the additional area of providing scheduling opportunities that enabled staff to attend the I.E.P. meetings. Behaviors observed during I.E.P. conferences and comments made by study participants (including principals, special education teachers, related services personnel, and special education administrator) supported the existence of these activities for the Hillsboro principals. The pre-planning activities occurring among the internal staff and initiated by the principal
comply with the Albert Shuster and Wilson Wetzler (1958) recommendation to pre-plan for the conference and always keep in mind the purpose of the conference.

Jack Witkowsy and Joseph Cronin (1979:47-48) described ten role ranges. Seven of the ten, (ensuring due process procedures, communicating to parents their rights, assigning and defining roles of others, appointing team members within jurisdiction, making scheduling arrangements for school personnel, acting as chairperson and group facilitator, and coordinating team activities) were displayed by the three principals under study. When special education teachers performed the role of chairperson, they not only displayed the seven roles previously mentioned, but they added two more of the ten (assessing the child's learning environment and forwarding reports on the child). These areas while defined by Jack Witkowsky and Joseph Cronin were viewed by the researcher as activities within the eight role categories that emerged through the analysis of research data. The category most compatible with the Witkowsky and Cronin findings was that of Administrative Technician. The skill level required for principals to comprehend and interpret special education regulations (O'Reilly et al., 1985, Sires et al., 1993, Meyer, 1982, Michaelis, 1980) could also be considered as a component of the Administrative Technician role.
A study by Henry Mintzberg (1973) identified ten roles for managers divided into three groups—three interpersonal roles (figurehead, liaison, leader), three informational roles (monitor, disseminator, spokesman), and four decisional roles (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator) (Mintzberg, 1973:56-57). Managerial roles comparable to principal's roles were figurehead (interpersonal category), disturbance handler, resource allocator and negotiator (decisional category). Principal roles comparable to these managerial roles were administrative technician, guardian of resources, navigator/pilot, and the district designated function of I.E.P. chairperson. Definitions for the ten managerial roles may be found in Appendix S.

Jeremy Lietz's (1982) list of eight planning activities correlates equally well to the researcher's findings. When difficulties were anticipated beforehand, each of the planning activities was incorporated into the principal's planning process. When meetings were expected to run smoothly, assessment data were routine and no prior meetings occurred. Some of the eight planning activities were omitted by the observed principals such as evaluating the efficiency of the assessment team (Lietz 1982:12).

The caution to hold sacred the responsibility for the educational quality of each child's I.E.P. is provided by Robert O'Reilly, Mary Sayler (1985), and the consistent
mention of concern for the parents and children in their buildings during the study indicated adherence to this caution by the Hillsboro principals. Although Carole Michaelis (1980) separates the types of knowledge held by educators and parents about the children affected, principals in the study appeared to express genuine respect for the parents' level of knowledge and tended to incorporate the parents' requests into the child's program. The three principals continuously interspersed all conversations on the child's progress with positive comments and praise for the child—a specific recommendation of authors Reynold Bean and Harris Clemen (1978) and Jeremy Lietz (1982).

The Hillsboro district, while not having in place a formalized process for providing principals with instruction on their conduct of I.E.P. meetings, maintained an informal process of communication and distribution of "need to know" information. Jeremy Lietz (1982) provides specific suggestions for principals to help create a formal design for responding to the needs of students with disabilities. Such suggestions might well be utilized by the Hillsboro principals to create a formal training process.

The principals' confidence in the special education teachers' abilities to conduct the conferences appeared to be correlated to the experience of the teachers involved. All of the teachers participating in the study were
experienced and had been with the Hillsboro district no less than three years. The small size of the district and student populations in the buildings ensured regular contact between principals and special education staff.

Although the researcher had developed a priori the professional expectation that an enhanced leadership role in the I.E.P. process could and should occur for the elementary principal. What was discovered was the practical strategic surrendering of responsibilities to the more appropriate source--the special education teacher. The fictionalized viewpoint held by the researcher, and many others, is the one described in state law. In actuality the principal's role is more subdued, and far less the center-of-focus and control than anticipated.

Repeated discussions with interviewees about the role of the elementary principal and data analysis techniques consistently supported the categories of the principal's roles which emerged. The categories described thoroughly in Chapter IV were as follows:

I. Administrative Technician - obtains resources and performs a combination of diagnostic and prescriptive activities (Fenton et al., 1977).

II. Greek Messenger - bearer of bad news.

III. Guardian of Resources - protector of district's finances.

IV. Emotional/Social Interpreter - clarifier of mood, climate, emotions of conference participants in order to keep conference on track and meeting participants cooperative. Many of the activities within this role
category are similar to the evaluative activities (e.g., influence others to accept a specific program for the student) in the Fenton et al., study (1977).

V. Navigator/Pilot - keeper, steerer of meeting to successful end and other combined maintenance activities (e.g., keep the group on task, resolve conflicts, encourage others to participate) Fenton et al., 1977).

VI. Stage Manager - agenda getter; maintainer of meeting's course; cue provider for meeting's course; cue provider for meeting participants with staff and parents at center stage and a host of other administrative activities (Fenton et al., 1977).

VII. Teacher Supporter/Protector - provider of verbal confirmation, support, and validation of teacher information and statements.

VIII. Observer/Bystander - silent viewer of conference activities; utilizer of conclusions drawn via observation to assist with meeting's outcome.

The identification of each category provided an in depth view of the varying roles applied to the principal's actions. The matching of comments and categories produced both a greater comprehension of and sympathy for the careful balancing act a principal must play. The research provided a close look at the principal's actions, and a verbal forum for principals, special education staff, and parents to describe the principal's actions as these actions occurred on the stage of special education.

I.E.P. Conferences

The researcher discovered that principals had created multiple roles for themselves in I.E.P. conferences as individualized as each child and family. The roles created were more appropriate than the role required by words on
black and white pages--roles based on the unreasonable expectations of legislators and supervising administrators (Anderson and Decker, 1993). The reality of the principal's role is that he or she is not the central source of information and knowledge for the special education student. The knowledge held by the principal for a special education student is generic in the same manner as it is for all other students in the building. The one major difference in the role played for special education students is that the principal is held to a higher level of accountability for special education students than for regular education students. Participation in regularly scheduled I.E.P. conferences is a legal mandate. The principals in their wisdom have taken a role that has the potential to be burdensome and lacking in structure and training and adapted this role to meet the needs of each of the participating groups in the I.E.P conference--staff, parents, higher level district administrators and the invisible participants--state and federal monitors.

The principals have made the meetings meaningful and successful. The principals have used the knowledge base they have acquired, the spoken and unspoken expectations of the district they represent (Fenton et al., 1977) and varying degrees of intuition to produce conference outcomes that hold intact the relationship and interaction between
school staff and parents. Principals have become excellent jugglers of multiple balls, all labeled "principal's role."

The researcher found that as opposed to being criticized, unsupported, and burdened down with expectations, the principals should be recognized as unsung heroes who perform multiple roles while keeping their sanity intact and their commitment to children strong. Each and every title ever ascribed to the principal, finance manager, resource distributor, instructional leader, evaluator, community liaison holds true and becomes even more expanded when the responsibilities for special education students are added.

The principals involved were never observed saying, "no, I won't do this" or "no, it's not my job." Each principal attempted to perform the expected responsibilities to the best of their abilities while continuing to express concerns for the well-being of the students, the families, and the district's monetary ability to meet the demands and needs of students with disabilities in these difficult financial times.

The thematic audit by the researcher of the literature reviewed produced several areas of concurrence with study findings. The areas included: principals not generating annual goals or identifying the student's level of performance during the I.E.P. conferences, the outcomes of I.E.P. meetings--placement, compliance with federal and
state laws, fulfillment of a contractual obligation between parents and the school, and acknowledgment by principals of their responsibility that students who require special education receive it with principals not performing the tasks of monitoring or evaluating the implementation of I.E.P.'s by general and special educators (Dickson, et al., 1980). The Richard Dickson et al. study similarly concluded, along with the researcher, that principals did assess program outcomes. A divergence of findings from the Dickson et al. study occurred when the researcher was able to identify specific patterns and commonality of functions by the principal.

Comparison of the researcher's findings with Ronald Anderson and Robert Decker (1993) yielded similarity with the conclusion that the success of I.E.P. meetings is directly dependent upon the principal's leadership skills as well as the conclusion that there existed an endorsement by principals of collaborative efforts between general and special educators. Evidence of this endorsement was found by the researcher in the principal's coordination of staff schedules and the principal's provision of class coverage for the regular and special educators during I.E.P. conference time. Another supportive role principals played was the designation of regular education teachers who would be most likely to work cooperatively with the special
David E. Raske's (1979) list of tasks performed by principals in the I.E.P. process--referral, planning, placement, and review were the exact tasks identified by the three subjects. The three subjects considered their role to be more of a facilitative one directed toward moving the process along and adhering to mandated due process guidelines. William McInerney and Stuart Swenson (1988:88-89) suggested that the principal as the administrator on the multidisciplinary team "is familiar with the instructional alternatives available in a school and, more important, is in a position to advocate quality education services for all students."

**Reflections**

During the conduct of this study, the researcher's expectations shifted significantly. Surprisingly, the person whose views altered the most was the researcher. The researcher brought to the study the biased view that the principals were not adequately performing their roles as district chairperson/representative for the I.E.P. conference. The researcher was convinced that more could and should be done by the principal. The researcher hoped to find the missing key that would open the door to principal motivation and commitment to special education.
students and their families as well as provide principals with a structural pattern for paperwork completion.

The first expectation was that the principal should increase his or her special education involvement in the actual I.E.P. conference by chairing and directing all activities occurring during the conferences. By the study's completion, this expectation no longer existed. The researcher anticipated utilizing the study findings to determine the type of inservice and assistance principals could be provided to ensure that their actions complied with legal mandates and produced successful meeting outcomes.

The present university training/certification programs available for principals do not generally include special education emphasis. The Stephen Stile and Timothy Pettibone study (1980:531) found that of the 50 states and District of Columbia training/certification programs, only 20 (39%) included special education authorization as part of the general administrator's certificate.

Conclusions

Based on the actual experiences of the three participating elementary principals, data analysis suggest the following:

1. The principals were not the primary chairperson in I.E.P. conferences.

2. The principal's primary role in I.E.P. conferences is that of a meeting facilitator.
3. The special education teacher has the most information about the child; therefore, the special education teacher is the key person in the conference.

4. Inservice and training should be dually directed toward the principal and the special education teacher. A study by Ralph Cline (1981) concludes that principals displayed much less knowledge than experts regarding placement and principals with less than 10 years' experience were more knowledgeable than with more experience.

5. The principal's role may vary from meeting to meeting, depending on the student and his or her family.

6. The special education teacher serves as the chairperson in the majority of I.E.P. conferences. Recognition of this actuality should take place and inservice/training should be adjusted accordingly.

7. Principals were sufficiently aware of general information and overall performance of special education students although they were less knowledgeable about information specific to the students' needs and abilities.

**Study Implications**

The implications of the study findings have major significance on the areas of staff development (who should receive training about I.E.P. conferences and what should be included in any inservice program) and expectations set for principals and special education staff. Expectations should be changed to reflect reality. Legislation and mandates proscribing a specific and limited role of the principal as I.E.P. chairperson should be rewritten. The current roles displayed by principals and teachers in the I.E.P. conference are effective as these roles are actually performed in the real world of the principals studied. Information required by participating I.E.P. conference
members is less for principals—principals do not need specific knowledge about the child. A generalized knowledge of the child's performance, interactions, and successes in the building as a whole are quite sufficient to have a successful I.E.P. conference.

The amount of emphasis placed on the informal preparation stage occurring among school staff members prior to I.E.P. conferences should be recognized. The greater the degree of interaction among staff members prior to the I.E.P. conference, the more well defined was the role of each member, including the principal. This "prepping" stage defined into which of the eight categories the principal's role would fall. Roles displayed were flexible and individualized to each student and his or her family. Making principals cognizant of the specific categories of roles will improve principal's conduct of I.E.P. conferences. Each principal displayed differing personalities, yet, I.E.P. conference participation was limited in range and showed a lesser degree of difference in principal behavior.

**Unanswered Questions**

The limited number of elementary principals (3) involved in the study may have yielded site-specific findings. The criteria applied during the selection process represented the researcher's efforts to minimize this limitation. Further, the researcher did not explore the
impact of gender differences on the type of and frequency of the roles exhibited.

The interaction between the Hillsboro principals and the parents, parents and special educators, and principals and educational staff was respectful and positive. Additional research is needed to ascertain whether this phenomenon was specific to the study. The professional responses suggested by Carole Michaelis (1980) were repeated over and over again as each new parent and child became the focus of the I.E.P. conference.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The analysis of all that was seen and heard during the course of study suggests a need for further research in the following areas:

**Impact of Gender.**

1. The impact of gender differences on the role of the principal should be studied. Female principals tended to stress more their role as nurturers and caretakers for children and their families. The male participant in the study stressed more his responsibility for dispersing district resources in a careful fashion. Further research is needed to determine if these differences are gender-related.

**Special Education Teacher's Role.**

2. The expanded role played by the special education teacher should be studied. As the researcher analyzed study data, the significance of the special education teacher's role became clearly evident. A more in depth investigation is needed to study the special education teacher's role and the corresponding implications.
Relationship of I.E.P's to Other Conferences.

3. The comparison of principal's roles in placement conferences with I.E.P. conferences Ronald Anderson and Robert Decker (1993) suggest that the differences in roles for principals and teachers are related to the structure and focus of the two types of meetings (placement annual review) and to the prior establishment with parents of the need for special education services. An additional reason provided by Ronald Anderson and Robert Decker (1993:3) is the presence of fewer personnel thus reducing coordination problems. The researcher believes that the universality of the principal roles discovered will cause them to be displayed during other types of special education conferences as well. Further research is required to determine if this is so.

Impact of Parent Involvement.

4. The impact of parent involvement in the I.E.P. process should be studied. Each parent interacted uniquely different with staff participants in the I.E.P. Some parents were more trusting of school authorities and questioned less the information and recommendations shared by school staff, while others were more specific in their requests for program options and services for their children. Parent involvement in the I.E.P. process varied widely and should be further studied.

Legislative Requirements.

5. The correlation of legislative requirements and the principal's role should be studied. The legal mandates are clear in the expectation that the principal will be the chairperson coordinating the bulk of the I.E.P. activities. This was not the role seen by the researcher. Research could provide answers as to how legislation might be changed to better reflect reality.

Parent Openness.

6. Parents participating in the research exhibited the willingness to share openly all information necessary to provide the kind of educational program desired for their children. Further study should be conducted in this area as a means of determining the existence of themes and categories for parents and the development of their interactional patterns with school staff members.
Pre-Planning Conference.

7. The significance of the pre-planning conference should be studied. An informal process existed to allow for the occurrence of these meetings. Criteria appeared to be based on how difficult the parent request was to respond to, and the need to brainstorm before the I.E.P. conference to avoid potential problems. Further research is needed to clarify the structure for these meetings and the reasons that necessitate these meetings.

Frequency of Roles.

8. The frequency in occurrence of the roles and the hierarchy of importance of the categorical roles require further study. The researcher's curiosity was piqued on this topic; however, time limitations prevented any added exploration in this area.

Principal as Figurehead.

9. The symbolic nature of the principal's presence at the I.E.P. conference and the necessity for this function requires further study. A similar role for managers was identified in Henry Mintzberg's study (1973). The Mintzberg study concludes that performing a "figurehead" role (representing the organization in matters of formality, and signing certain documents when required by law) is a must for managers (Mintzberg, 1973:59). Further study is needed to determine if the same 'figurehead' function is necessary for principals in the conduct of I.E.P. conferences.

In closing, the data gathered and the interactions which occurred with parents and school staff members resulted in a significant alteration of the researcher's original expectations, perceptions, and recommendations relative to the role principals should play in I.E.P. conferences. The reality of the roles played, the effectiveness of the I.E.P. results, and the positive attitude and behaviors displayed by all study participants provided greater awareness by the researcher of the
responsibilities placed upon principals for I.E.P. conferences. These responsibilities contrast greatly to what is needed from the principals to make I.E.P. conferences successful. The researcher previously occupied a position with responsibility for all district special education activities. The researcher presently holds a position with even greater impact on the lives of district staff. The researcher's recommendations for staff development programs and for the types of support and assistance building principals and staff require, have been profoundly altered by the researcher's experience in the real world of principals.

It is hoped that the study findings will alter and impact the expectations of other educational professionals as well. If such is the case, then the benefits of the study will extend well beyond a simple reporting of facts.
November 14, 1994

Ms. Phyllis Wilson
Executive Director
Department of Special Education
Columbus Public Schools
2371 Neil Avenue
Columbus, OH 43202

Dear Phyllis:

I am writing to thank you for your letter dated October 25, 1994. I enjoyed having the opportunity to learn about the progress that the Columbus schools have made in the area of inclusion.

In response to your request for literature, enclosed are the following materials:


- "Curricular Resources for Implementing Adaptive Education" (Chapter 4) in Adaptive Education Strategies: Building on Diversity by Margaret C. Wang (Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing, 1992)


My best wishes for success in completing your dissertation. If I can offer any further assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]
Professor and Director

MCW/lpl
Enclosures
APPENDIX B
Dear N_________________,

Thank you so much for agreeing to assist me with my research project. As you know, the focus of my dissertation is "The Role of the Elementary Principal in the I.E.P. Conference."

Your providing me with the names of elementary principals in your district who fit the following criteria: 1) special education units in their building; 2) I.E.P. conferences soon to be scheduled; 3) willing to be involved in the project by allowing me to observe the conferences and interview conference participants will allow me to gather the necessary information for my research project. Although not requested by you as your district's representative, it is my intent to not use the actual names of the participants in the dissertation. The study is expected to require many months.

Once again, many thanks for all that you have done to assist me in this major undertaking as well as your willingness to be interviewed. I will call you within the next few days to obtain the recommended names of principals.

If there is any additional information you need to share with anyone, please let me know. Talk to you soon.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Wilson
APPENDIX C
Dear Mr. & Mrs:

During your child's last I.E.P. conference, I had the opportunity to participate as a means of collecting information for my research study. My study topic is "The Role of the Elementary Principal in the I.E.P. Conference".

My study requires me to review your perception of the principal's role as well. To this end, I would like to conduct an interview with you in order to further explore my topic. The interview can take place at a time and place convenient to you. I have attached a copy of the types of questions you would be asked. The interview is not expected to last longer than 1-1 hours.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated and your involvement will provide beneficial information for school districts. Please contact me at 365-5206 to arrange a time to meet.

Yours truly,

Phyllis Wilson
Executive Director
Department of Special Education

PW:1t

Encl
Semi-Structured Questions
(For Principals)

1. Discuss with me your role in the I.E.P. conference, as you see it.

2. What key words would you use to best describe your role?

3. How do you prepare for I.E.P. meetings?

4. How well do you feel that the training, preparation, inservice, etc., you have received have prepared you to conduct I.E.P. conferences?

5. What additional training inservice, etc., do you feel you still need?

6. What kind of role should the special education teacher have--i.e., would you enhance the teacher's role as I.E.P. chairperson, make it less? have the role stay the same? etc.
APPENDIX E
Guided Questions

1. What should the principal's role be at an I.E.P. conference?

2. Have you had the opportunity to participate in I.E.P. meetings with Mr. _____________? Mrs. _____________? Mrs. _____________? What role did they play at the I.E.P. meetings? Were the roles the same for each? In what way?
Parent Interview

Name ________________________ Disability ________________________

Type of

School ____________________________

1. Would you provide me with some background information on how your child came to be involved with special education?

2. As you went through the process of having your child placed in special education, is there anything that comes to mind when you think of the role the principal has played in the I.E.P. conference?

3. Since ______________________________ is the most recent principal you have been involved with in I.E.P. conferences, can you describe the role the principal has played in those I.E.P. conferences?


5. The principal appears knowledgeable about my child's needs, I.E.P., etc.

Return to: Phyllis Wilson
2571 Neil Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43202
Principal ______________________________________________

School ___________________________________________________

1. Number of years of experience as a principal? _______

2. Highest degree earned? ________________________________

3. Number of I.E.P. conferences attended each year? _____

4. Describe the role you play in the I.E.P. process?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. Describe the role you believe you should play in the I.E.P. process.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

6. How knowledgeable do you believe you are about the I.E.P. process? ________________________________

7. What kind of training have you received on the I.E.P. process? ________________________________

8. What additional training in the I.E.P. process do you believe you need? __________________________
APPENDIX H
1. The principal usually attends my child's I.E.P. meetings.

2. The principal appears knowledgeable about my child's I.E.P.
Survey 1

Special Education Teacher ________________________________

School ________________________________

1. What role does your principal play in the I.E.P. process?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. What role do you believe your principal should play in the I.E.P. process?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. How knowledgeable is your principal about the I.E.P. process?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4. How many I.E.P.'s do you complete each year? _________

5. How many of your I.E.P.'s have your principal's involvement? ______________________

6. Number of years of experience as a special education teacher? ______________________

7. Highest degree earned? ________________________________
APPENDIX J
Special Education Consultant/Administrator __________________

Program ________________________________________________________

(Complete a form for each principal)

1. What role does ________________________________ play in the I.E.P. process?

2. How knowledgeable is ____________________________ about the I.E.P. process?

3. How many I.E.P. meetings have you participated in with ________________________________?
APPENDIX K
Mrs.

Your assistance during the first phase of my research study was most invaluable. As I continue to sort through the information gathered during my time spent with you, I recognize there is still more remaining to be accomplished.

Toward this end, I am requesting further cooperation from you in my final phase of research. The assistance needed from you is in the following area:

Participation in a small group discussion that will include the two other principals involved in the study. I would be willing to meet with you at the location of choice convenient to the three of you or I invite you to join me at my office on COTA day for a combination box lunch/discussion. I would anticipate requiring no more than 1-1 hours of your time.

I will contact you within the next few days in an effort to arrange a mutually convenient time for discussion on the topic (Role of the Elementary Principal in the I.E.P. Conference) to occur.

My sincere appreciation for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Wilson
Dear Special Education Teacher,

Your previous assistance in the collection of information for my dissertation on "The Role of the Elementary Principal in the I.E.P. Conference" was most useful.

I am now in the final phase of collecting information and would like your assistance in the following ways:

1. Participating in follow-up interview to respond to the question "What recommendations you have for enhancing the special education teacher's role in conducting the I.E.P. conference?"

If you would call my office at ________ to confirm the date and time most convenient for you with the number where you wish to be called, I will contact you to schedule the exact time and location.

2. Completing the attached survey form if you have not already done so.

Sincerely,

Phyllis Wilson

Encls
1. What recommendations do you have for enhancing the special education teacher's role in conducting the I.E.P. conference?
APPENDIX N
TO: Lois Arend, Principal
Alpine Elementary School

FROM: Phyllis Wilson

DATE: March 22, 1994

RE: I.E.P. Observations

I am trying to collect data on the I.E.P. process for my Ohio State project and need your assistance.

If you have any I.E.P. meetings scheduled in the next few weeks, please let me know (5206) as soon as possible. I would like to attend as an observer only. Any information I use will be shared fully with you. Many thanks for assisting me.
APPENDIX O
Emergent Theme Identification Process

Phase I - Multiple readings and underlining of transcript comments, observation comments and reflective note comments that described principal's behavior/actions at I.E.P. conference.

Example:

N: (Director of Pupil Personnel - In most cases in most of our elementary buildings I would have to say that the principal does share in the I.E.P. meeting. I generally would view the principal's role as more managerial than content focused because the content of the I.E.P. is generally supplied by the related services people, the classroom teacher, the parents and so on so I don't really see in any way that the principals have had a lot of responsibility for input into the nitty-gritty portions of the I.E.P. Rather the principal seems to stay focused on issues particularly if there are any unique issues of a particular child in regards to placement in a specific kind of classroom, if it has to be on the first floor of the building, if we have an orthopedically handicapped child, then the principal is able to address those kids of housing issues. Also the principal will be responsible for scheduling special area classes if the child has unique needs in phys. ed., he's usually the person who has control over those kinds of schedules and can make decisions about those issues when a related service person, or a special ed coordinator, or a classroom teacher can't. It seems very much in her, actually I don't know why I'm saying her except that's sort of a generic term because we have actually more female elementary principals than we do male. But I think that a principal's often seen as a public relations kind of person.

Phase II: Descriptive words, phrases and codes were assigned to the comments.

Example:

Nancy: (Director of Pupil Personnel - In most cases in most of our elementary buildings I would have to say that the principal does share in the I.E.P. meeting. (M.A.) I generally would view the principal's role as more managerial than content focused because the content..."
of the I.E.P. is generally supplied by the related services people, the classroom teacher, the parents and so on so I don't really see in any way that the principals have had a lot of responsibility for input into the nitty-gritty portions of the I.E.P. Rather the principal seems to stay (I.O.) focused on issues particularly if there are any unique issues of a particular child in regards to placement in a specific kind of classroom, if it has to be on the first floor of the building, if we have an orthopedically handicapped child, then the principal is able to address those kinds of housing issues. (T.C.) Also the principal will be responsible for scheduling special area classes if the child has unique needs in phys ed, he's usually the person who has control over those kinds of schedules and (D.M.) can make decisions about those issues when a related service person, or a special ed coordinator, or a classroom teacher can't. It seems very much in her, actually I don't know why I'm saying her except that's sort of a generic term because we have actually more female elementary principals than we do male. But I think that a principal's often seen as a public relations kind of person.

Phase III: Data re-read with descriptive comments separated and excised from transcripts, written responses.

Example:

Phyllis: I wanted to have N., Director of Pupil Services, share with us what she believed the principal's role at an I.E.P. conference is?

N.: I generally would view the principal's role as more managerial than content focused because the content of the I.E.P. is generally supplied by the related services people, the classroom teacher, the parents and so on so I don't really see any way that the principals have had a lot of responsibility for input into the nitty-gritty portions of the I.E.P.
N.: Rather the principal seems to stay focused on issues particularly if there are any unique issues of a particular child in regards to placement in a specific kind of classroom, if it has to be on the first floor of the building, if we have an orthopedically handicapped child, then the principal is able to address those kinds of busing issues.

N. added, but I think that a principal's often seen as a public relations kind of person.

Phase IV: Comments placed on 5 x 8 cards with notation made of study participant who provided the description.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position - Spec. Ed Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. is always available to help pre-plan and discuss placement and services. She attends most annual reviews and placement meetings and helps to provide information and assurances to the families of every child. She has been very helpful!

Phase V: Cards were then sorted into piles of like comments--those with similar descriptions, basic ideas, and similar themes. Eleven card piles were identified with each pile containing descriptions from all study participants. The researcher ended with eleven different piles.

Phase VI: The assistance of two designated readers was elicited with both readers given card piles, transcripts, and other notations for accuracy check. Instructions to readers were that they were to review all information to determine if they, too, saw the same thing as the researcher. Readers were further advised of their full latitude to discard any card groupings they believed to be invalid or inapplicable.
Phase VII: Sorted card stacks were returned to the researcher. Reader A had discarded two card packets and had concurred with the remaining nine. Reader A had also taken the liberty to subsume some of the cards within the nine piles. Reader A's actions were later viewed by the researcher as a generous sorter since much of what had been identified by the researcher was retained. Reader B was less generous and far more rigorous in the review and comparison process. Reader B returned only eight card piles, reorganizing all piles and omitting many others. Reader B advised that the reduction of piles was based on the determination that only eight similarities existed with no connection between the other three.

Phase VIII: Application of reader recommendations occurred with the researcher reshuffling card stacks, re-reading the original selections (including those from the original group of eleven piles), and discarding some of them.

Phase IX: Card pile resorting occurred with the rule of rigor applied that the researcher would only consider as valid, card piles with at least one other agreement with the researcher's stack. The researcher's preference was to have the maximum of three matches with card piles coded to reflect the three matches.

The ninth card pile submitted by Reader A did not match any of my card piles; therefore, Reader A was re-contacted for further discussion and clarification. Agreement was
reached between the researcher and Reader A that the ninth card pile was, in actuality, a variation of an already existing theme. This card pile, then, was subsumed into another packet.

X: Finalization of card piles occurred with the joint participation and assistance of Readers A and B. A final search for common roles, descriptions, and themes resulted in mutual agreement of the existence of the eight emergent themes.

This phase of the process confirmed and tested a hypothesis that had surfaced during the research process--the principal's role in the I.E.P. conference was not a significant one.

XI. Development of definitions and statements for principal behaviors and actions occurred. The researcher assumed the status of observer, reader, and listener and, thus was better able to develop definitions for what emerged in as simplistic a set of terms as possible.

XII. Refinement of the definitions and labeling of the roles occurred. Readers A and B were once again invited to review, in the presence of the researcher, the now labeled emergent themes in order to provide the researcher with feedback and verification. General traits were further verbalized, refined, and classified with cards re-read to ensure that they addressed the titles and emergent themes discovered.
(*Note: Both readers had experience in grant writing and program review, thus enhancing their ability to be concise and well aware of principal expectations at district level.*)
APPENDIX P
Differences Between I.E.P. Conferences and Placement Conferences

1. Chairing and recording of information at the annual I.E.P. meeting are not as structured as they are in the evaluation meeting, and are often performed by the special education teacher.

2. Participants will consider the potential need for re-evaluation and the collection of additional assessment data (at the I.E.P. conference).

3. Participants may need to determine if changes in special education placement, program determination, or major revision in programming are warranted.

4. The procedures focus primarily on establishing an I.E.P. for the coming school year if the pupil is to continue in a special education program.

(Anderson and Decker, 1993:4)

*The researcher found that although special education teachers performed chairperson activities, meetings were very structured in nature.
TESTING DOCUMENTATION FORM

Student ______________________  Grade ____  School Year _____  Date _____

Instructions:
Students with disabilities may take the Competency Tests. The following choices are made annually.

C B E TESTING (Competency Based Education)

NOT EXEMPT (Test Required)
The student will take the following Competency Tests:

☐ Writing  ☐ Reading  ☐ Math

EXEMPT (Test Scored Separately)
The student will take the following Competency Tests:

☐ Writing  ☐ Reading  ☐ Math

EXEMPT (No Test Administered)
The student will not take the following Competency Tests:

☐ Writing  ☐ Reading  ☐ Math

Check One:

☐ No Modifications

☐ Modifications:
   (Check below all that apply)
   Writing  Reading  Math

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extra Time</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Testing in 1-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing in Small Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipulatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Processor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Given at a Lower Grade Level</td>
<td>Level:</td>
<td>Level:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2/95
TESTING DOCUMENTATION FORM

Student __________________ Grade ______ School Year ______ Date ______

Instructions: Students with disabilities may take the proficiency tests. The following choices are made annually.

PROFICIENCY TESTING

Participation In: □ 8th Grade Proficiency □ 12th Grade Proficiency

EXEMPT (Test Required)
The student will take the following Proficiency Tests:

□ Writing □ Reading □ Math □ Citizenship □ Science

EXEMPT (Test Scored Separately)
The student will take the following Proficiency Tests:

□ Writing □ Reading □ Math □ Citizenship □ Science

EXEMPT (No Test Administered)
The student will not take the following Proficiency Tests:

□ Writing □ Reading □ Math □ Citizenship □ Science

Check One:
□ No Modifications
□ Modifications: (Check below all that apply)

Reader
□ Yes □ No

Testing
□ Yes □ No

Calculator
□ Yes □ No

Extra Credit
□ Yes □ No

Extra Time
□ Yes □ No

Keyboard Processor
□ Yes □ No

Other
□ Yes □ No

Other
□ Yes □ No

* All above choices are subject to change upon receipt of most recent test scores.
**INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN**

**Student's Name** ___________________________ **Ref ID No.** ____________

**Parent(s) / Guardian(s):** ___________________________ **Date of Birth:** ________

**Address:** ___________________________ **City:** ___________________________ **Zip:** ________ **Phone:** ___________________________

**District of Residence:** ___________________________ **School:** ___________________________ **Data of Initial Placement:** ________

**The Special Education program and services will be provided at beginning on date**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Least Restrictive Environment (Check only one)</th>
<th>Related Services (Check only one if applicable)</th>
<th>Support of the Participation Parent Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRESENT LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

Include other standard scores or specific achievements from the following areas as appropriate: cognitive, achievement, social/emotional and adaptive behavior. List details of assessment.

**Needs which necessitate placement in a separate educational facility are as follows**
APPENDIX S
Table 2. Summary of Ten Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Identifiable Activities from Study of Chief Executives (see Appendix C)</th>
<th>Recognition in the Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretor</td>
<td>Syntonic role, capable to perform a number of routine duties of a legal or moral nature</td>
<td>Ceremonial, state protocol, negotiations</td>
<td>Sometimes recognized, but usually only by highest organizational leaders in their roles in courts, courts, or councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prognostic</td>
<td>Responsible for the interpretation and implementation of strategies; responsible for staff training, and departmental duties</td>
<td>Virtually all management activities involving planning and direction of work; administrative activities; and the formulation of policies; and the implementation of strategic decisions.</td>
<td>Most widely recognized of all management roles as well as organizational leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison</td>
<td>Maintains self-developed network of outside contacts and informants who provide inputs and information</td>
<td>Acknowledgment of mail; external board work; other activities involving outsiders</td>
<td>Largely ignored, except for particular external contacts (e.g., foreign and domestic clients, universities, or U.S. Prisons, Wary and Homans on different roles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informer</td>
<td>Serves and receives wide variety of special information (much of it external) to develop through understanding of organization and environment; efforts to serve needs of internal and external information of the organization</td>
<td>Handling all mail and contact with customers, communicating personally with customers (e.g., personal phone calls, corporate office visits)</td>
<td>Recognized as the role of Sylarc, Maestani, Wray, and especially the Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disseminator</td>
<td>Transmits information received from others or from others within the organization to those information sources, those receiving instructions and integration of diverse values between of organizational influences</td>
<td>Forgetting and not organizing for informational purposes; verbal contacts involving information flow or meetings; (e.g., formal meetings, project communication events)</td>
<td>Unrecognized (except for Ronald Reagan's role of &quot;peak communication&quot;) who manages influence programmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spokesman</td>
<td>Transmits information to outside or on organization's behalf, public relations, media, etc.; serves as expert or organization's authority</td>
<td>Board meetings; handling mail and contact with customers involving transmission of information to outsiders</td>
<td>Generally acknowledged as managerial role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defender</td>
<td>Protects organization and its achievements for ongoing and future &quot;improvement programs&quot; by being about change, supervision design of certain projects as well</td>
<td>Strategy and review documents containing information on design of improvement projects; strategy and review documents containing documents and reports</td>
<td>Implicitly acknowledged, but usually not analyzed except for consultants (who were sometimes highly paid by the organization) and Sylarc, who performs this role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Serves organization and its achievements for opportunities and initiatives &quot;improvement programs&quot; by being about change, supervision design of certain projects as well</td>
<td>Strategy and review documents containing information on design of improvement projects; strategy and review documents containing documents and reports</td>
<td>Distributed in abstract way by many writers (e.g., management by exception) but salient carefully only by Sylarc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hustler</td>
<td>Responsible for active actions whose organization from profit, unexpected disturbances</td>
<td>Scheduling, requests for contributions, any activity involving budgeting and the programming of advertising work</td>
<td>Little explicit recognition as role, although implicitly recognized by the many who analyze organizational resource-valuation processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Alchemist</td>
<td>Responsible for the allocation of organizational resources of all kinds in effect the making or support of all significant organizational decisions</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Largely unrecognized (or recognized in the past) as significant role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiator</td>
<td>Responsible for representing the organization in these negotiations</td>
<td>Negligible</td>
<td>Largely unrecognized (or recognized by special negotiators)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Mintzberg, 1973:92-93)
APPENDIX T
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Participant Observation Scale**
References


Amord, Shirley (Chairperson). (1986). *Principal's guide for implementing and managing programs for seriously emotionally handicapped students*. Indiana: Division of Special Education, Indiana Department of Education.


Ohio Department of Education. *I.E.P. resource guide*. Columbus, Ohio. Ohio Department of Education.


