Surviving Inclusion:
A Critical Discourse Analysis of a Middle School Co-Teaching Relationship

Jennifer L. Ashton

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Professor David Hursh

Margaret Warner Graduate School of
Education and Human Development

University of Rochester
Rochester, NY

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The author was born in Jamaica, New York on October 12, 1971. She attended the State University of New York College at Geneseo from 1989-1993, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1993. She attended the State University of New York College at Geneseo from 1993-1995, and graduated with a Master of Science degree in 1995. She came to the University of Rochester in the Fall of 2001 and began doctoral studies in Warner Graduate School of Education in Teaching and Curriculum. She pursued her doctoral research in inclusion under the direction of Professor David Hursh. She received a Scandling Fellowship in 2001 and 2006. She was a graduate assistant in the 2001-2002 academic year and she was a graduate assistant and instructor from 2006-2008. She was a Visiting Assistant Professor in the 2008-2009 academic year.
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Abstract

Since the passage of PL 94-142, also known as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, in 1975, special and general educators have been urged to work together to improve the education of children with disabilities through increased access to the general education curriculum. Over the years, the evolution of a collaborative approach to educating students with disabilities has resulted in the increased implementation of co-teaching as a service delivery model and a significant change in the role of the special educator. Co-teaching in inclusive education has been a topic of interest in academic research for more than 10 years and much of the existing research has been limited to exploring programmatic conditions for success or failure in collaboration and co-teaching and developing models of exemplary co-teaching practice. Despite the prevalence of these models and the research evaluating their efficacy, implementation of effective co-teaching in inclusive classrooms, particularly secondary level remains largely elusive.

In this dissertation, I use critical theory and critical discourse analysis to theorize my research, as it allows for the examination of aspects of co-teaching that go unnoticed in traditional models and evaluations of co-teaching. In looking at co-teaching through this critical lens, I hope to begin a conversation about the importance of considering discursive aspects of teacher practice as a way to complement current models of practicing and evaluating co-teaching practice.

In conducting a study of this nature, I sought to explore the discursive aspects of co-teaching that were immanent in the co-teachers’ language and actions. Foucault’s critical
theories on discourse, power, dominance, and construction of the subject formed the theoretical basis for this study. Derived significantly from Foucault’s conceptual work, Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis provided a complementary methodology to structure the majority of the analysis. Specifically, in the first phase of this study I studied their interactions at the local level of the classroom, the institutional level of the school district, and the societal level of governmental policy and legislation. The next phase of analysis extended on the first by exploring the patterns of dominance in the power relations between the two teachers. Finally, this study examined seven critical theoretical concepts that were prominent in the data: discourse, the institution, identity, inequality, ideology, agency, and historicity. Taken together, the three phases of analysis in this dissertation represent an in-depth examination of the co-teachers’ professional relationship from a critical discursive perspective unlike any other study of co-teaching currently published.

The participants in this qualitative case study included a New York State certified special education teacher and a New York State certified secondary math teacher who were assigned as co-teachers for a class of students with and without special education needs. Data for this study came from field notes and a series of videotaped interviews and observations involving the co-teachers, which were subsequently transcribed and coded for analysis. Extensive qualitative coding was used to locate patterns and themes in the data.

The three phases of critical analysis presented in this study revealed that what superficially appeared to be a successful inclusive co-teaching relationship was in fact a marginalizing and exclusive arrangement for the teachers and students alike. However, this marginalization was not a conscious attempt to exclude Val or the students with IEPs from the educational benefits of Keith’s general education math class. Rather, Val and Keith both
resorted to traditional special education practices of segregation in an attempt to ensure their own survival as well as that of the students with IEPs in an educational environment that prioritized uniformity, high-stakes testing, and traditional conceptions of normalcy.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation explores a model of inclusive education instruction that has been in practice for over thirty years, the subject of significant educational research, and an elusive proposition to understand and effectively implement. As conversations about inclusion have garnered interest and attempts at implementing inclusive education have become more prevalent, it has become apparent that the concept of inclusion has been over-simplified and misused in various contexts (Ware, 2004). In general terms, inclusive education has come to be understood as any of a variety of situations in which students with disabilities are instructed in the general education curriculum by general education teachers in a general education setting with other students who do not have disabilities. Co-teaching, or the pairing of a general education and a special education teacher to work together in the same classroom, is a model of inclusive instruction that has become increasingly popular throughout schools as a way to meet the needs of students with disabilities in general education (or inclusive) classrooms (Friend, 2007; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Rice, 2007; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007; Trent, 1998). While many scholars present models of exemplary co-teaching practice (Dieker, 2001; Friend, 2007; Friend & Cook, 2000; Gately, 2005; Murawski & Dieker, 2004), others suggest that success in co-teaching has been elusive and contemporary research efforts have merely achieved superficial evaluations of highly prescribed practices (Scruggs, et al., 2007; Trent, 1998; Walther-Thomas, 1997). Over a decade has passed since Trent’s (1998) call
for a critical reevaluation of the discursive context of co-teaching and collaboration in inclusive education in order to move beyond the same barriers that have been consistently identified in the research literature since the early 1990’s. The call has not been heeded and co-teaching continues to be a hit or miss model of instruction with professionals struggling to figure out how to make this arrangement work in light of current accountability and legislative demands (Scruggs, et al., 2007).

The existing research on co-teaching does not take a critical theoretical perspective and primarily investigates the teachers’ adherence to a specific model of co-teaching and evaluates their perceptions and feelings about co-teaching. The purpose of the present study is to explore co-teaching using theoretical and methodological approaches that have not previously been used in the literature. In taking this novel approach to analyzing co-teaching, I intend to demonstrate the utility of a critically grounded discourse analysis and encourage future research in a similar fashion. In this dissertation, I studied the interactions between two middle school co-teachers in order to understand how the discursive orientations of the two teachers shaped their professional interactions. Rather than evaluating the implementation of a particular model of co-teaching practice, I examined the discursive nature of the interactions between the general educator and special educator as they negotiated the complexities of co-teaching.

Specifically, the present study is a discourse analysis of co-teaching that explores subconscious aspects of co-teaching that influence teacher practice and
present challenges to the inclusivity of the arrangement. A discourse analysis of co-teaching encourages the exploration of previously unacknowledged aspects of and potential barriers while advancing the principles of inclusive education. This study uses a critical theoretical perspective to problematize and analyze the micro and macro level discourse represented in this co-teaching arrangement. The relevance of seven critical theoretical themes: discourse, the institution, identity, inequality and ideology, agency, and historicity will be discussed in detail in the second chapter. However, in order to understand the discursive nature of co-teaching, it is first necessary to understand the genesis of co-teaching and the challenges facing co-teachers in contemporary schools.

In this chapter I first explore inclusive education as the discursive intersection of general and special education and situate it within legislative, pedagogic, and historic contexts. Next I examine co-teaching as a model of collaborative instruction and discuss recent research findings pertaining to models, benefits, and challenges of co-teaching. Finally, acknowledging a significant shift towards inclusive education, I explore the notion of reform and transformation in education and the need for critical alternative perspectives to shed light on historically ignored aspects of inclusive co-teaching.

The ‘co’ in inclusive co-teaching refers to the collaboration between a general educator and a special educator to meet needs of a diverse group of students. Collaboration in education is a practice that is often called for in teacher standards
and school mission statements as a mechanism for facilitating the professional
communication and cooperation that is essential for successful inclusive education.
However, attempts to collaborate are often complicated by variable and inconsistent
interpretations of the concept, as collaboration can be mandatory or voluntary,
supported or challenged, and scripted or creative. As a widely acknowledged vehicle
for encouraging cooperation between general and special educators to enhance
inclusive educational experiences for students with disabilities, collaboration has been
implicit in the language of special education legislation for more than thirty years.

**Special Education**

Since the passage of PL 94-142, also known as the Education of All
Handicapped Children Act, in 1975, special and general educators have been urged to
work together to improve the education of children with disabilities through increased
access to the general education curriculum. This effort is evident in a general shift
toward more inclusive models of education that involve increasing the amount of time
students with disabilities spend learning with their non-disabled peers in the general
education classroom (Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 2006; Wallace, Anderson, &
Barhtolomay, 2002; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). Schools have restructured their special
education service delivery models to ensure that special educators continue to support
students with disabilities in the general education environment, which has often
resulted in the establishment of collaborative teaching relationships between general
and special education teachers (Dettmer, Thurston, & Dyck, 2005; Wallace, et al.,
2002; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). The shared decision-making that typifies collaborative relationships has been presented as a vital element in achieving the goals of the inclusive education mission (Dettmer, et al., 2005; Wallace, et al., 2002; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003).

Over the years, the evolution of a collaborative approach to educating students with disabilities has resulted in the increased implementation of co-teaching as a service delivery model and a significant change in the role of the special educator (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002). Co-teaching is a model of education in which a general educator and a special educator are both physically present in the same classroom on a daily or regular basis, ideally collaborating and sharing responsibility for all of the students in a class. Co-teaching in inclusive education has been an active topic of interest in academic research for more than 10 years and much of the existing research has been limited to exploring programmatic conditions for success or failure in collaboration and co-teaching and developing models of exemplary co-teaching practice (Bouck, 2007; Cook & Downing, 2005; Dieker, 2001; Friend, 2007; Gately, 2005; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2007; Murawski & Dieker, 2004; Walther-Thomas, 1997; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). Despite the prevalence of these models and the research evaluating their efficacy, implementation of effective co-teaching in inclusive classrooms, particularly secondary level (Scruggs, et al., 2007) remains largely elusive. Therefore, in order to understand the challenges faced by co-teachers today, it is first necessary to situate co-teaching within the larger context of
the historic and legislative evolution of special education as a distinct discourse of education.

Contemporary co-teaching involves the collaboration of a general educator and a special educator who nominally work together to meet the needs of a diverse group of students with and without disabilities in a general education classroom. Historically, the American education system has consisted of dual systems of education that have resulted in the development of separate preservice education programs for special educators (those who are certified or licensed to teach students with disabilities) and general educators (those who are certified or licensed to teach non-disabled elementary or secondary students). This separation can be traced back to the awarding of the first certificate for ‘special class teaching’ in 1904 and the first formal organization of the Council for Exceptional Children, a federally recognized professional organization and accrediting agency that has long been the voice of professional discourse for special education, in 1923 (Heller, 1982). In these early years of special education, it was believed that children with disabilities required a highly specialized education that was best delivered in segregated classrooms and schools- an assumption that has continued to have a strong influence on the development of the field over the past 100 years.

Bolstered by the passage of PL 94-142, the education field is in the midst of a significant transformation in provision of educational services to students with disabilities that has steadily gained momentum over the past 30 years (Mastropieri &
Scruggs, 2007; Salend, 2008). The most resounding impact of PL 94-142 was the
guarantee of a free and appropriate public education to all children, including those
with disabilities, in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Mastropieri & Scruggs,
2007; Salend, 2008). Historically, students with disabilities were excluded from
education in neighborhood schools and classes with non-disabled children and it was
assumed that students with disabilities could not benefit from access to the general
education curriculum. According to PL 94-142, a multidisciplinary team of
educational professionals is responsible for creating and implementing a detailed
Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student with a disability. Through
the specification of individualized academic, social, and behavioral goals, the
development and implementation of the IEP is a legal document that is intended to
ensure a free and appropriate education for all children with special learning needs.

The LRE component of the law requires that students with disabilities have
access to the general education curriculum and receive their education in the general
education classroom ‘to the greatest extent possible.’ The legal definition of LRE is
intentionally vague, as the LRE for a child is determined according to his or her
individual educational needs. The flexibility in designating the LRE allows
committees of educators to consider many options in placing students in various
educational environments. These placements are situated along a continuum and
range from the least restrictive fully integrated general education classrooms to the
most restrictive segregated hospitals and institutions, with many different options and
provisions in between.
In 1990, PL 94-142 was reauthorized, substantially reworked, and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to reflect the progress of EAHCA and a more socially just emphasis on the individual rather than his or her disability (Salend, 2008). Subsequent revisions to IDEA in 1997 resulted in several new provisions to improve the education of students with disabilities. Some of the most significant changes made to the legislation include higher academic expectations for students with disabilities, including greater access to the general education curriculum, inclusion in state assessments, expansion of the IEP team to include relevant general and special education teachers and administrators, and examination of overrepresentation of minority populations in special education. In 2004, IDEA was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and revised to establish the presumption of education in a general education classroom and align more closely with the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 (Hyatt, 2007; Salend, 2008).

Although it was not specifically designated as special education legislation, NCLB had significant, and controversial, implications for students with disabilities in requiring that they be included in state wide high-stakes assessments and held accountable to the same academic standards as their non-disabled peers (Bouck, 2007; Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2007; Rice, 2007; Salend, 2008). In an attempt to facilitate compliance with this federal mandate, the 2004 amendments to IDEA called for changes in the IEP development process, special education identification and pre-referral processes, the disciplinary process for
students with disabilities, and conditions for teacher qualification (Mandlawitz, 2007; Salend, 2008). Specific details about the intersection of these two pieces of legislation follow later in this chapter; however, the end result is that an increased number of students with disabilities are required to participate in general education classes and federally mandated standardized assessments (Thousand, et al., 2006). The federal requirement to hold students with disabilities accountable to the same academic standards as their non-disabled peers has resulted in a surge in inclusive placements for students receiving special education services (Kohler-Evans, 2006; Rice, 2007). In light of the wide variety of interpretations and implementations of inclusion, it is difficult to adequately define or describe the ideologically charged practice. In the following section, I discuss the complexity of inclusion as a practice and an ideal and the consideration of inclusion as more than the simple co-existence of students with and without disabilities in a general education classroom.

**Inclusion**

Inclusion, at its most fundamental level, implies a comingling of students with and without disabilities in general education schools and classrooms and some degree of collaboration between general and special educators to facilitate classroom instruction. Although it is largely agreed that students with disabilities benefit, both socially and academically, from access to the general education curriculum (Hocutt, 1996; Hunt & Goetz, 1997) and many school districts claim to be providing inclusive education, there remains significant variation in how schools and teachers define and
describe inclusion. It is common for educators and administrators to erroneously use words such as mainstreaming, integration, and inclusion synonymously. Some argue that inclusion and mainstreaming represent two options along the continuum of special education placements and both are viable ways to educate students with disabilities in the LRE. In actuality, mainstreaming and integration refer to situations in which students with disabilities split their educational time between the general education classroom and a separate special education setting and are not considered by many to be truly inclusive. Inclusion implies that students with disabilities receive their entire education in the general education classroom in their neighborhood school, not in a self-contained classroom or in a special education school (Idol, 2006).

Current federal legislation requires that all students be educated in the LRE and the continuum allows for varied interpretations and implementations of the LRE for each student on an individual basis. However, disagreement about the very existence of the continuum of placements is the source of much of the inclusion debate.

The lack of specificity of the LRE concept has complicated the inclusion conversation and has consequently been a source of continued debate. Taylor (1988) states that at its inception, the LRE principle was integral in the creation of educational opportunities for students with disabilities in an era when segregation was common practice, but he also challenges its utility in contemporary time. In a contemporary context, Taylor argues that the term ‘least restrictive environment’ indicates a legitimization of restrictive environments at the hands of professionals who are making diagnostic and clinical, yet subjective, judgments about an
individual’s most appropriate educational placement. Some argue that the use of the term LRE and its far-reaching influences represents a significant ongoing challenge to the intentions of inclusive schooling and propose that special education’s reliance upon the medical model of disability stands in direct opposition to inclusive education.

Proponents of Disability Studies in Education (DSE), a critical alternative perspective on disability, believe that the integration of individuals with disabilities along the continuum of services actually perpetuates historical exclusive education practices. DSE is a perspective that problematizes the traditional alliance of special education with positivist medical models of disability that prioritize diagnosis and remediation over democratic education and social justice (Rice, 2006; Slee, 2001; Slee & Allan, 2001; Ware, 2001, 2004). It is argued that conditional and inconsistent integration of students with disabilities exacerbates inequities between general and special education systems, as well as the inequities between opportunities for students with and without disabilities (Dixon, 2005; Sapon-Shevin, 2003; Ware, 2004).

Advocates of Disability Studies in Education also find fault with the idea that much of contemporary inclusive education promotes tolerating human difference and assimilating defective students into the normal educational environment (Allan, 2006b; Slee, 2001). The DSE perspective argues that the tolerance of difference and the assimilation of individuals with disabilities into normal environments actually reproduce traditional negative views of disability and perpetuate exclusive practices.
in education. From a disabilities studies perspective, inclusion is viewed as an education based in principles of democracy and social justice that addresses the educational experiences of all students (Sapon-Shevin, 2003; Slee, 2001; Ware, 2000). In this light, inclusive education is not an endpoint or goal; rather it is a prerequisite of democratic and socially just education. Although there is clearly some disagreement among academics and researchers about the justification for inclusive education, most concede that the benefits of inclusive education can be significant for students with disabilities, as well as their non-disabled peers.

These philosophical debates and differences do not take away from the fact that, due in large part to federal legislation, inclusion is occurring, or at least being attempted in varying degrees, in all schools. EAHCA’s LRE and multidisciplinary decision-making team mandates in 1975, IDEA 97’s requirement for increased access to the general education curriculum, IDEIA 2004’s establishment of the general education classroom as the presumed placement, and the alignment of IDEIA 2004 with NCLB represent a steady trend in the transition from traditional segregated education towards an inclusive education for all children. The legal and social pressures to provide all students with access to the general education curriculum further complicates the persistent challenge of serving students with disabilities in the LRE. In this regard, professional collaboration between general and special educators has emerged as a promising, if not vital, component of inclusive education (Friend & Cook, 2000).
Collaboration

Collaboration typically refers to the type of relationship that exists between people as they work together toward a common goal (Cook & Downing, 2005). Friend (2000) observes that the use of the term collaboration is practically ubiquitous in the education field, as school-wide mission statements, committees, and inclusive classrooms typically refer to some type of collaborative effort among professionals. Research in areas such as professional development, professional learning communities, collaborative consultation, collaborative problem solving, and co-teaching demonstrates the power of positive professional collaboration in education (Brownwell, Adams, Sindelar, Waldron, & Vanhover, 2006; Trent, 1998; Walther-Thomas, 1997).

Recognizing the importance of collaboration in preservice teacher preparation programs, collaborative teaching has been addressed in the performance standards set forth by prominent national professional organizations and accrediting bodies. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTStandards, 2001) describe highly effective teachers as those who work collaboratively with other professionals to improve education policy, curriculum and staff development. Additionally, the Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) standards for special education teacher preparation (CEC, 2003) include a standard that states, “Special educators routinely and effectively collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive
ways” (p. 10). The expectation is that special educators will collaborate with other professionals to facilitate the education of students with disabilities across a wide range of settings and experiences.

Collaboration has become one of the most effective approaches for educators seeking to create and sustain innovative and effective programs for students with disabilities (Friend, 2002; Friend & Cook, 2000). Over the past thirty years, the education of students with disabilities has become an increasingly complex task involving the synthesis of new research and knowledge about teaching and learning with an ongoing effort to reform schools into more inclusive environments while complying with legal mandates (Friend, 2000). In this light, professional collaboration emerges as a foundation of inclusive education or education in the LRE (Davern, et al., 1997; Friend, 2000, 2002; Friend & Cook, 2000; Smith & Leonard, 2005).

Interest in collaboration between general and special educators is not a recent development in education, as Bauwens and Hourcade (1991) conducted seminal research in this area almost twenty years ago. They questioned special educators’ ability to meet the needs of a growing population of students with special needs using traditional pull-out and self-contained service delivery models. Bauwens and Hourcade presented cooperative teaching, or co-teaching, as an innovative educational approach in which general and special educators work collaboratively to teach students with and without disabilities together in the general education
classroom. The remainder of this chapter focuses on co-teaching as a collaborative practice in inclusive classrooms, with particular emphasis on secondary level classrooms as noted.

**Co-Teaching**

Co-teaching, as initially suggested by Bauwens and Hourcade (1991), has become common practice in many inclusive classrooms today. This section explains the dominant models of co-teaching set forth by Friend and Cook, long-time proponents of collaboration and co-teaching in inclusive settings (Cook & Downing, 2005; Cook & Friend, 1991; Friend, 2000, 2002, 2007; Friend & Cook, 2000). Almost twenty years after Bauwens and Hourcade’s work was introduced, the idea of general and special education teachers working together to meet the needs of all students continues to garner interest among researchers (Dieker, 2001; Murawski, 2005). Friend and Cook (2000) identify the six primary approaches to co-teaching as: one teaching, one observing; one teaching, one drifting, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching. These approaches range from minimally collaborative (one teaching, one observing and one teaching, one drifting) to intensely collaborative (team teaching). Of the six approaches, team teaching fosters the greatest degree of shared responsibility, requires high levels of trust and commitment, and is generally regarded as the standard for effective co-teaching practice. However, Friend and Cook maintain that effective co-teaching involves...
utilizing several of the approaches at different times depending on the specific needs of the students and teachers involved.

Many researchers have presented self-proclaimed exemplary models of co-teaching that typically involve some adaptation of one or more of Friend and Cook’s (2000) six approaches to co-teaching (Friend, 2007; Murawski & Dieker, 2004; Piechura-Couture, Tichenor, Touchton, Macisaac, & Heins, 2006; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Walsh & Jones, 2004). These models provide general guidance in developing co-teaching partnerships that can be broadly applied to both elementary and secondary level classrooms. However, citing the unique circumstances in secondary co-teaching such as complex curricular content, the higher number of teachers with which one special educator may have to work each day, and changing responsibilities from one school year to the next, some researchers have identified models specific to the secondary classroom (Dieker, 2001; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Keefe, Moore, & Duff, 2004; Rice, 2007). As this dissertation specifically addresses a secondary level co-teaching situation, literature pertaining to secondary level co-teaching will be discussed when possible. Despite calls for expanded efforts in studying secondary co-teaching, the literature in this area is still rather limited and research studies on secondary co-teaching are scarce (Scruggs, et al., 2007).

Dieker (2001) examined effective practices for working with students with disabilities in secondary co-taught settings to determine the characteristics of successful co-teaching teams. She found that creating positive learning climates,
providing opportunities for active learning, setting high expectations for students, designating co-planning time for teachers, and using creative methods of evaluation all increased the effectiveness of the co-teaching experience. Dieker’s conclusions stressed the importance of the co-teachers’ meeting prior to any actual teaching to identify roles, sharing expectations, and discussing individual student needs and their own philosophies in terms of meeting individual student needs.

Many researchers have concluded that open lines of communication and opportunities for common planning time are essential for effective co-teaching at elementary and secondary levels (Austin, 2001; Cook & Downing, 2005; Scruggs, et al., 2007; Wischnowski, Salmon, & Eaton, 2004). In order to foster the open communication and trust necessary for effective co-teaching, some findings stress the importance of pairing with others whose personalities complement one another (Keefe & Moore, 2004; Keefe, et al., 2004; Murawski, 2005). However, this is not always possible and there is no recommendation for how to determine whether two individuals have complementary personalities or will be a good match. Similarly, Mastropieri et al. (2005) found that co-teaching relationships built on trust and mutual respect increased the likelihood of academic success for students in co-taught secondary classrooms. Others suggest that ample and designated opportunities for communication are also essential to co-teaching success in secondary level classrooms (Bouck, 2007; DeSimone & Parmar, 2006; Dieker, 2001; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Trent, 1998).
Acknowledging other researchers’ findings pertaining to the importance of administrative support and opportunities for professional development in co-teaching success, Magiera and Zigmond (2005) sought to examine co-teaching in non-ideal, possibly more typical, school environments. Rather than exploring models or best practices in co-teaching, these researchers observed the routine practice of co-teachers in middle school classrooms with limited opportunities for co-planning and training. Without support to model exemplary co-teaching, Magiera and Zigmond found few occurrences of parity and minimal instructional benefit to students under these unsupportive circumstances. Considering the abundance of research touting the necessity of common planning time and training, the authors felt that this study could be indicative of the status quo in many schools where administrative support was non-existent.

Interestingly, some research suggests that students with disabilities in secondary co-taught classrooms may not actually receive an appropriate individualized special education (Scruggs, et al., 2007). In reviewing multiple qualitative studies on co-teaching, Scruggs and colleagues found that model practices typically effective for students with special needs such as strategy instruction, mnemonics, study skills training, organizational skills training, test-taking skills training, comprehension training, or self-advocacy were rarely observed or reported to occur in the study findings. This suggests that perhaps there are other factors to consider in planning for co-teaching that require more than simply following a co-teaching model.
Despite the abundance of co-teaching models in the literature, there remains a lack of consensus on the specific requirements for effective co-teaching, particularly in secondary level classes. Regardless, co-teaching has become an increasingly common practice in schools as more students with disabilities are included in general education classrooms. The following section will explain some of the factors that have led to this increase in co-teaching.

**Motivation to Co-Teach**

Proponents of a DSE perspective argue that co-teaching furthers progress towards the democratic and social justice goals of inclusion by avoiding the stigmatization of students with disabilities inherent in segregated traditional special education models (Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). It is argued that general and special educators can benefit from the opportunity to get to know all class members and think of all students as their own. Attempting to address this issue, Murawski (2005) recommends that teachers use constantly shifting heterogeneous grouping in co-taught classes so that no students feel stigmatized by being in the “dummy” group (p. 80). Murawski’s recommendations imply that while changing one’s pedagogical practice is sufficient for co-teaching success, using heterogeneous grouping and making declarations of shared responsibility might present superficial, oversimplified, or unrealistic paths to successful co-teaching. Although it would be easy to attribute the increase in co-teaching to an increased awareness of and sensitivity to inclusion
and social justice in education, there are other more pragmatic and less altruistic reasons for promoting co-teaching, particularly at the secondary level.

With the alignment of the IDEIA 2004 recommendations and NCLB 2001 requirements, as previously discussed, the already complicated task of educating students with disabilities at the secondary level becomes even more challenging. NCLB and IDEIA now require general and special education teachers of core academic subjects to meet state criteria as highly qualified in the academic area in which they teach (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Hyatt, 2007). NCLB defines a highly qualified teacher is one who has at least a bachelor’s degree, full state certification, and proven competency in the subject areas they teach (Darling-Hammond & Berry, 2006). Although having all teachers certified as highly qualified is a commendable goal, Darling-Hammond and Berry cite significant inconsistencies and weaknesses in this federal requirement that impede the legislation’s original intent. They question the validity of the criteria used to designate a professional as highly qualified. They observe that accomplished professionals who teach in multiple subject areas such as a secondary science teacher who teaches biology, chemistry, and physics- or possibly secondary level special educators who teach more than one content area to students with disabilities- may struggle to achieve highly qualified status in all areas. In situations where special education teachers are not deemed to be highly qualified in multiple subject areas, co-teaching emerges a potential solution.
**Questionable Intent**

Under current legislation, special educators who have traditionally provided content area instruction to students with disabilities in self-contained or segregated classes must now meet the NCLB requirements for highly qualified teachers in every subject they teach (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Hyatt, 2007; Zirkel, 2007). Although secondary special educators are trained in providing strategy instruction, remediation, accommodations, modifications, social skills instruction, and behavior intervention, very few are considered to be highly qualified according to NCLB and IDEIA requirements (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Kohler-Evans, 2006). According to the law, these special educators are no longer legally qualified to solo-teach multiple self-contained content area courses for special education students.

The legal distinction between having sole responsibility for a core academic course and providing consultative support for a general education teacher significantly complicates the secondary co-teaching initiative. The new IDEIA 2004 legislation does not specify highly qualified criteria for those special education teachers who provide consultative support to a highly qualified general education content area teacher (Hyatt, 2007; Rice, 2007; Zirkel, 2007). Zirkel (2007) reports that the legal definition of consultation in IDEIA 2004 includes adjustments to the learning environment, modifications of instructional methods, adaptation of curricula, behavior support and intervention, or the use of accommodations to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities. The challenges in achieving parity in a co-
teaching relationship might be magnified if the special education teacher is legally
designated to provide ‘consultative support’ to a highly qualified content area teacher.
The designation as ‘consultant’ implies a subordinate or less-involved role for the
special educator and establishes a power differential that could significantly hinder
the co-teaching relationship.

As previously discussed, IDEIA 2004 now mandates that special education
teachers be highly qualified according to NCLB standards. Co-teaching provides a
practical alternative to the overwhelming prospect of certifying every special
education teacher in every core content area. As such, co-teaching at the secondary
level could potentially be used as a way to manipulate the system in order to comply
with federal regulations (Bouck, 2007; Carpenter & Dyal, 2007). In a legal sense,
secondary special education co-teachers need not be highly qualified in a core
academic area as long as they collaborate with a highly qualified content area teacher.
Although it may satisfy legal requirements for highly qualified status, simply placing
two teachers in the same classroom at the same time does not ensure a quality
inclusive experience. Caution must be exercised when placing students with
disabilities in co-taught classes to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared and
educational decisions are being made in the best interests of the student and not the
convenience of school scheduling and compliance with staffing regulations
(Carpenter & Dyal, 2007). Although an increase in co-teaching arrangements results
in more students with disabilities in inclusive settings, this ethically questionable
surge of co-teaching arrangements is likely to be problematic.
Regardless of the specific motivation for including students with disabilities, special educators are still required to comply with federal legislation concerning the LRE. Citing their belief in the need to maintain the continuum of special education services, Cook and Downing (2005) identify co-teaching as one of the best service delivery models for inclusive education, but caution that it is not the only effective approach or even the best approach for all students with disabilities. Other researchers also cite limits to full inclusion and co-teaching and stress the importance of maintaining the special education continuum of services as a way to address variance in individual LRE requirements (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Dieker, 2001). According to Kohler-Evans (2006), efforts to comply with the IDEIA 2004 and NCLB mandates have resulted in a “mad scramble to place two teachers in the same room at the same time and call it co-teaching” (p. 260). The repercussions of disregarding the tenets of the LRE component of IDEIA 2004, and all preceding legislation since PL 94-142 in 1975 in order to force compliance with NCLB or other administrative directive could have devastating effects for teachers and students alike.

Potential for Conflict

The co-teaching relationship is clearly professional, but it is also interpersonal, which brings increased potential for conflict. Sapon-Shevin (1992) first described the restructuring of schools for inclusive education as a marriage between general and special educators that is expected to bring challenges, negotiations, and successes. Recent research has focused on the intensive daily
interactions between co-teaching individuals and there have been many more parallels in the literature drawn between co-teaching relationships and marriages (Cook & Downing, 2005; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Murawski, 2005; Sapon-Shevin, 1992). Similarly, some have also discussed the importance of allowing the co-teaching relationship to evolve and strengthen over time (Gately, 2005; Murawski, 2005). However, co-teachers are often assigned to work with each other with little advance notice and may not work together for more than one school year, making this evolution difficult, if not impossible, and for a variety of reasons the ‘marriage’ fails. These forced collaborative relationships result in some veteran general education teachers resenting having a special education teacher placed in their classroom with the expectation that they must both assume responsibility for teaching the course content.

The co-taught classroom is qualitatively different from traditional general and special education arrangement and both teachers typically take on new roles and responsibilities. As such, many co-teachers struggle to maintain or establish their professional identity in a co-teaching situation. Some studies focused on a deeper exploration of the complex intra and interpersonal aspects of co-teaching that present challenges to the teachers (Bouck, 2007; DeSimone & Parmar, 2006; Dieker, 2001; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Keefe, et al., 2004; Kohler-Evans, 2006; Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Trent, 1998). Kohler-Evans (2006) found that secondary special education co-teachers report feeling frustrated and “homeless”, losing their own classroom and working in the classroom of a content area teacher.
who already “knows what to teach and how to teach it” (p. 260). Similarly, Murawski (2005) reports that teachers were less likely to participate effectively in co-teaching if they felt coerced or forced into sacrificing their professional autonomy. This expression of resentment and frustration suggested that perhaps adhering to a specific model of co-teaching is not the key to co-teaching success, as some have argued. It is possible that the difficulty many co-teachers experience in achieving a co-equal status has more to do with threatened professional identity than following a model of best practice.

Professional identity struggles become even more salient when one considers the changes in physical environments and professional interactions that inevitably occur in co-teaching situations. Cook and Downing (2005) explain how significant changes in the special educator’s physical environment often precipitate negative emotional and personal feelings which could hinder professional performance. They observe, “(W)e are asking people to share rooms with several other adults…they want their own desk…plants…and…pictures of their loved ones on that desk” (p. 297). In terms of loss of professional identity, when special educators are in their own classroom with paraprofessionals who report to them, they are in charge; if the special educator is suddenly made to feel like an assistant, then effective co-teaching will remain elusive (Cook & Downing, 2005).

Differences between co-teachers are to be expected, as the teachers come to the relationship with different sets of beliefs and values as well as thoughts on how to
teach a lesson and manage classroom discipline (Kohler-Evans, 2006). Bouck (2007) suggests that secondary co-teachers support one another as they stretch perceptions of individual professional identities beyond the role typically designated by their professional title. She urges co-teachers to acknowledge the inevitable potential for conflict and strive to minimize personal and professional devaluing.

By fostering collaborative skill development and promoting constructive discussions between co-teaching partners, each individual’s unique perspective can contribute to the creation of effective co-teaching— for both students and teachers (Friend, 2000). Recognizing the value of establishing professional responsibility in the co-teaching dyad, the reviewed research often calls for improved preservice and in-service teacher training in the skills and demands of collaboration and co-teaching to support the clarification of teacher roles (Austin, 2001; Davern, et al., 1997; DeSimone & Parmar, 2006; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Kluth & Straut, 2003; Thousand, et al., 2006).

Parity

Often cited as a potential source of conflict, the delineation of roles and responsibilities between co-teachers is often the focus of research and debate (Davern, et al., 1997; DeSimone & Parmar, 2006; Dieker, 2001; Klingner & Vaughn, 2002; Mastropieri, et al., 2005; Trent, 1998; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). In their research on the changing roles of special educators, Klingner and Vaughn (2002) conclude that the role of a special education teacher in an inclusive classroom cannot be adequately
performed by a general educator in a co-teaching situation or by a paraprofessional working as an assistant. They argue that the special educator must be an expert in teaching students with disabilities and be informed about the general education curriculum, while the general education teacher should be an expert in the content area curriculum and be informed about teaching students with disabilities. Klingner and Vaughn (2002) suggest that the maintenance of separate areas of expertise could heighten awareness and appreciation of one another’s strengths as a way to facilitate effective collaboration.

Although it is one of the more significant obstacles to successful co-teaching, many suggest that parity in the relationship is essential and can be facilitated in an environment in which co-teachers feel supported. Echoing the tenets of Friend and Cook’s (2000) team teaching approach to co-teaching, Kohler-Evans (2006) maintains that general and special educators should work to achieve parity in their relationship by approaching all aspects of the class as a team. She recommends introducing parents to both teachers at school functions, and representing both teachers’ names on the report card, as well as the classroom door and in conversations about the classroom. Murawski (2005) recommends co-teachers demonstrate parity by switching roles often so that no one teacher takes the dominant role in large group instruction. Many argue that the outward appearance that the general educator is the one in charge of the co-taught classroom is a significant challenge to co-teaching, and this is particularly evident in secondary level classes.
Because of the traditional single teacher directed format of secondary level education, the issues related to role delineation and parity are even more significant at the secondary level. Some research on the roles of secondary special educators reports that special educators tend to take on the supportive role of classroom aide and rarely participate in actual co-teaching (Keefe & Moore, 2004; Magiera & Zigmond, 2005; Scruggs, et al., 2007; Smith & Leonard, 2005; Weiss & Lloyd, 2002). In secondary level classes, general education teachers typically act as curriculum experts and exercise the dominant role throughout the entire class period while special educators often assume the more limited role of activity manager or assistant (Austin, 2001; Dieker, 2001; Keefe & Moore, 2004; Keefe, et al., 2004; Mastropieri, et al., 2005; Scruggs, et al., 2007; Walsh & Jones, 2004). Mastropieri et al. observe that this type of arrangement is widely accepted by both teachers, as evidenced by positive attitudes and apparent satisfaction. The general education teachers in this study reported that their background knowledge in the content area justified their dominant position and the special education teachers reported some level of relief at not having to prepare as much in the co-taught classes. Although this mutually acceptable delineation of power between the co-teachers might make for an apparently content working relationship, it indicates that many co-teaching relationships fall short of the recommended co-equal status.

However, in their study of high school co-taught classes, Keefe and Moore (2004) observe some degree of dissent in the delineation of roles and responsibilities and report that the often limited role of the special educator leads to a degree of
uncertainty and ambiguity about the co-teaching relationship. As one general education teacher in their study commented, “I don’t even know why she’s here, quite frankly. She’s a nice person, the kids like her, but I don’t understand the point of having her in my classroom” (p. 83). A special educator reported, “I focus a lot on my kids, but no one in the classroom knows who I am really…every once in a while I might teach a lesson but for the most part I just help the teacher with whatever is going on” (p. 83). Keefe and Moore (2004) argue that in light of comments like these, it is not surprising many view the special educator as an assistant, nor is it surprising that there is often interpersonal conflict between the general and special educators in terms of roles and responsibilities.

As previously discussed, some suggest that the limited role of the special educator in the secondary co-taught classroom could be due in part to a lack of content knowledge on the part of the special education teacher (Keefe & Moore, 2004; Mastropieri, et al., 2005; Weiss & Lloyd, 2003). Dieker (2001) explains that collaboration is essential as special educators who co-teach at the secondary level cannot be expected to master all of the content areas in which they teach. Similarly, in DeSimone and Parmar’s (2006) research on middle school co-teaching, general educators commented on the importance of working collaboratively with special educators as experts on the level of the child without expecting them to be expert in the content. Mastropieri and colleagues (2005), however, did not find support for the notion that the two secondary level teachers would contribute equally as experts, one in content and the other in pedagogy. In their findings, it appeared that the level of
parity in the co-teaching relationship was largely determined by the special educator’s degree of familiarity or comfort with the content material.

In their qualitative study on issues and challenges for middle school math teachers in inclusion classrooms, DeSimone and Parmar (2006) report that although the general educator is responsible for many aspects of daily instruction and grading for students with disabilities, this involvement appears to be perfunctory. On the subject of grading, one teacher in that study stated, “Special education students are under the guidance of the other teacher that’s in here. I mean, I give them a grade just because they’re on my sheet…”; while another commented, “…even though I’m not responsible for their grades…I make them believe that I give them their grade and make them believe that …they have to meet the same standard as everybody else in the room” (p. 342). The language, or discourse, in these comments indicates a delineation of teacher roles and expectations of student achievement that does not appear to be either co-equal or democratic, but rather disingenuous.

In their metasynthesis, Scruggs and his colleagues (2007) describe the current state of secondary level co-teaching as falling short of the models described by scholars like Cook and Friend (2000) and others cited in this review. They report that the predominantly used co-teaching models involve some version of the ‘one teach, one assist’ model where one teacher assumes the dominant role of teacher and the other a subordinate role of assistant, rather than the highly collaborative ‘team teach’ approach. With few exceptions, these researchers found that the current state of co-
teaching in inclusive settings has not yet met the general inclusive ideal of 
collaboration between coequal partners that focuses on social justice, innovative 
pedagogy, and individualization. Although teaching partners may expect, or hope 
for, equality in terms of classroom responsibility, the teachers’ actual roles vary 
significantly in secondary level co-teaching situations (Trent, 1998). Trent 
recommends that teachers reduce their emphasis on achieving parity and increase 
their awareness of each teacher’s individual strengths, which at one time or another 
will result in one or the other taking the lead. Perhaps, if co-teachers embrace their 
differences and blur the lines drawn by their professional titles, then successful 
implementation of an exemplar co-teaching models might be possible.

Rationale for Present Study

Co-teaching represents a challenge to traditional conceptions of teaching and 
learning and provides a space for transformation and growth in inclusive education, 
but change in education is never smooth and linear. Michael Fullan (1993) maintains 
that simply changing the formal structures of teaching and learning “is not the same 
as changing norms, habits, skills, and beliefs” (p. 49). In terms of co-teaching, 
norms, habits, skills, and beliefs are elements of the discursive practices that construct 
general and special educators according to long held conceptions of proper training 
and pedagogy. Fullan states, “The way that teachers are trained, the way that schools 
are organized, the way that the educational hierarchy operates, and the way that 
education is treated by political decision-makers results in a system that is more likely
to retain the status quo than to change” (p. 3). Although Fullan’s observation is almost 15 years old, the basic sentiment still holds true for contemporary issues like co-teaching.

The contemporary relevance of Fullan’s (1993) insight is evident in Dieker and Murawski’s (2003) discussion of the deeper implications of co-teaching at the secondary level. They argue that the current constraints on collaboration between educators can be traced to the historic discursive separation of general and special education teachers at the university level. It is relevant to consider that many currently practicing teachers received their preservice education prior to NCLB and IDEA legislation and their understanding of inclusive education may be somewhat limited. The training that these veteran general and special educators received may not have emphasized the importance of educating students in the general education environment. During their preservice preparation, federal legislation had only begun to require these changes and the disability studies perspective was only in its infancy. Because of their own life histories and experiences with the public education system, many educators, administrators, and parents often espouse traditional views of special education and still struggle with the value of inclusive education.

The current body of research also reflects a lack of historic or discursive acknowledgement and presents co-teaching as a discrete skill or practice that can be mastered with adequate preparation and training. Despite this absence, the need for a deeper analysis is evident in the conclusions that many scholars have drawn in their
own work. Cook and Downing (2005) encourage co-teachers to be open to different ideas from other professionals and move beyond the constraints of their titles and labels. Keefe and Moore’s (2004) study indicates that the co-teachers speak about their primary allegiance to a particular group of students in ways that indicate that pedagogic practice that is more in line with discursive affiliation to general or special education than with their knowledge of exemplary co-teaching practice. In their study on co-teachers, Brownwell and colleagues (2006) suggest that future researchers should strive to better understand what individual teachers bring to the co-taught classroom and how those qualities foster the development of new practices. Specifically, they recommend conducting research that examines co-teaching at an in-depth level about how the nature of teachers’ individual knowledge and beliefs might affect collaboration. As such, it is necessary to explore the challenges to co-teaching as the result of challenges to traditionally constructed professional identities as formed within the separate discourses of general and special education.

The suggestion to look more closely at the co-teaching relationship is not a novel concept, as similar sentiments were made in the literature more than ten years ago. In his study of secondary co-teachers, Trent (1998) recommends that researchers move beyond this cosmetic and contrived implementation of educational reform, and proceed to careful study to identify what works and what can be sustained within the complicated context of schools…they must also realize the importance of understanding context. Analysis of this type of
data should reveal which patterns in thinking, communication, and actions facilitate and which impede the emergence of improved instructional practices in inclusive settings. On the other hand, if researchers fail to examine issues related to context, discourse, and sustainment, I contend that their efforts will only result in continued cosmetic reforms with no significant, widespread benefits for teachers or students. (Trent, 1998, p. 512)

More than ten years have passed since Trent made these contributions to co-teaching literature and based on the research reviewed in this chapter, there is little evidence of widespread improvement in co-teaching and no evidence of the type of critical research that he called for. Scholars such as Dieker and Murawski (2003), Brownwell (2006), and Trent (1998) challenge researchers to move beyond a superficial examination of current practice and criticize the underlying structures and contexts as well as the patterns of communication and thinking that influence co-teaching relationships.

This dissertation presents a discourse analysis of co-teaching to examine the identities, values, and meanings that influence the actions and language of co-teachers as they interact within the collaborative professional relationship. It has been argued, and this chapter has illustrated, that simply declaring that educational collaboration is to be practiced does not actually guarantee such a positive or democratic outcome (Forbes, 2006). Forbes states that effective collaboration requires each professional to critically reexamine their own discursive foundations and presupposed ‘truths’ by
reevaluating their perceptions of normalcy and looking beyond the individualizing and totalizing constructions of special educator and general educator. In this light, special educators and general educators are thought to be social constructions or reflections of the dominant viewpoints and values of their respective discourses. By foregrounding professional collaboration, co-teaching challenges the long-standing structure of the educational system and forces the two teachers to interact in ways that blur the lines of professional identification and traditional pedagogy.
Chapter 2

Discourse

Inclusive co-teaching has been an accepted practice for more than 30 years (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1991; Trent, 1998) and many models have been presented to provide educators with a recipe for success (Friend, 2007; Friend & Cook, 2000; Keefe, et al., 2004; Murawski & Dieker, 2004). In the previous chapter, I discussed how the same struggles and challenges have been cited in the co-teaching literature consistently over the course of those 30 years (Trent, 1998) and little progress has been made towards achieving the inclusive potential of this collaborative arrangement (Scruggs, et al., 2007). In this dissertation, I use critical theory and critical discourse analysis to theorize my research, as it allows for the examination of aspects of co-teaching that go unnoticed in traditional models and evaluations of co-teaching. In looking at co-teaching through this critical lens, I hope to begin a conversation about the importance of considering discursive aspects of teacher practice as a way to complement current models of practicing and evaluating co-teaching practice. In this chapter, I use the critical work of Foucault (Foucault, 1972, 1977, 1980, 1986, 1994a, 1994b, 2003a, 2003b, 2005) to theoretically situate my research and the critical discourse analytic work of Fairclough, Blommaert, Gee, Scollon and Scollon to explore the discursive nature of co-teaching in depth (Blommaert, 2005; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1992, 2003; Gee, 2004, 2007; Scollon & Scollon, 2004). First, I discuss Critical Discourse Analysis and the theoretical contributions of Fairclough, Blommaert, Gee, and Scollon and Scollon to the larger framework for my
dissertation. Next I will explain the significance of seven discursive themes that are prominent in Critical Discourse Analysis literature and discuss their relevance to inclusive education. Finally, I will justify my use of Critical Discourse Analysis as a methodology for this study from a theoretical perspective.

**Critical Discourse Analysis**

Fairclough (2003) presents Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretically based qualitative research methodology that brings together work inspired by social theorists like Foucault and work which focuses on the language of texts (Halliday, 1994). The purpose of CDA is to explore how traditional power structures maintain ready-made social situations, identities, and relationships by favoring and reproducing traditional social structures (Hanrahan, 2005). CDA is a transdisciplinary approach that enhances the analyst’s ability to determine implicit meanings in texts while relying on the principles of social theory and textual analysis for theoretical and methodological validity (Fairclough, 1992, 2003). Although Fairclough was central to the development of CDA as a valid methodology of qualitative research, he was not the only scholar to explore critically the discursive relationship between form and function in interactional social events. Other scholars have drawn from Foucault’s theoretical framework of power in their analyses of discourse (Blommaert, 2005; Gee, 2007; Scollon & Scollon, 2004). After a brief introduction to each of these scholars, their significant contributions to discourse analysis will be discussed throughout this chapter. In bringing aspects of the work of
these various scholars, I present a theoretical framework through which the co-
teaching arrangement can be critically and effectively analyzed.

Blommart (2005) presents discourse analysis as a means to explore the
relationship between text and context and describe the dialogic nature of meaning as
it is produced within the interaction of at least two individuals. He cautions that
much of social research relies on a priori assumptions about power relations and
discursive perspectives that create taken for granted categories and concepts that
remain unquestioned. This, Blommaert argues, results in the presence of over-
simplified models of social structures in which power relations are predefined and
often confirmed by contextual accounts created by the researcher. Blommaert (2005)
calls for a critical analysis of discourse that moves beyond a reaction to power to
analyze power’s effects on the people, groups, and societies within a system. He
acknowledges that power is a necessary part of every social system that allows the
system to function in specific ways, without which, the system would cease to
operate. Acknowledging the work of Scollon and Scollon (2004), Blommaert
suggests that contemporary discourse analysis should acknowledge the complex
systems of meaningful signs within a society and address them as contextualized
spaces.

Scollon and Scollon (2004) recognize that discourse analysis requires the
analyst to consider the historicity and meaning of communication and interaction
within a particular context. Discourse is multifaceted and takes place on a micro
level in a study of social interaction and a macro level in a study of social, political, and cultural relationships of power among groups of individuals within a society. They present nexus analysis as a way to unify the micro and macro levels of discourse analysis by attending to the broad social issues that are grounded in the social interactions, while exploring how mundane social interactions construct and are constructed by discursive structures. Scollon and Scollon acknowledge the role of discourse in producing and maintaining individual identities and power relations within a society in manner consistent with Gee’s (2007) work.

With an emphasis on a critical analysis of power and discourse, the commonalities between Gee’s (2007) and Fairclough’s (2003) analytic methods and the work of other discourse scholars are evident. Gee uses the term ‘critical discourse analysis’ to represent a broad methodological and theoretical category within which he situates Fairclough’s CDA as one of many critical approaches to discourse analysis. Much like the other scholars of discourse discussed thus far, Gee (2007) argues that through interaction, one produces, reproduces, sustains, and transforms a particular way of life, or Discourse. The fundamental similarities between Gee’s and Fairclough’s (2003) approaches are evident and many analysts have combined their theories, using the common abbreviation of CDA in their work (Rogers, 2004; Rowe, 2004; Young, 2004). In this light, the approach discussed in this review will be referred to as CDA.
Critical Discursive Themes

Because of the fundamental similarities among Foucault’s critical theories and the work of CDA scholars the two bodies of literature are brought together throughout the remainder of this chapter in a theoretically grounded thematic discussion. The themes, found in critical theory and discourse analysis, were all present in my data and explicit links will be discussed in detail later in the analysis chapter. These interrelated themes, commonly discussed in social theory and CDA, are: discourse, the institution, identity, inequality, ideology, agency, and historicity. Each theme will now be discussed through a Foucauldian lens with applications to CDA and connections to inclusive education made explicit where relevant.

Discourse

Foucault describes discourse as the uttered statements and social practices that shape, and are shaped by, a person’s position, social and personal identity, and relationships with other people and represent that individual’s perspective on the world (Foucault, 1977). Like Foucault, Blommaert takes a broad view of discourse, describing it as “language-in-action” (p. 2) and comprising “all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity…in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use” (p. 3). Fairclough (2003) expands Foucault’s definition of discourse to include “ways of representing aspects of the world- the processes, relations and structures of the material world, the ‘mental world’ of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world” (p. 124). Similarly, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) describe discourse as the semiotic elements of social practice
that include language (written and spoken), nonverbal communication, and visual images. Discourse is a multi-faceted concept comprised of both micro/individual/linguistic level and macro/social/structural level factors that mediate an individual’s interactions with the social world.

Acknowledging the micro and macro level constructions of discourse, James Gee (2007) differentiates between ‘Discourse’ with a ‘big D’ and ‘discourse’ with a ‘little d’ and argues that the differences between them are relevant to the analysis of discourse. When individuals use language to interact and enact activities and identities at the micro level, they are engaging in ‘little d’ discourse. In contrast, Gee refers to ‘big D’ Discourse as ways of integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, and using various symbols, and objects to represent a socially recognizable identity (Gee, 2007). Scollon and Scollon (2004) also use Gee’s concept of D/discourse in their work, but argue that the difference between the two levels of discourse is evident and do not use the D/d to differentiate. Although Foucault, Fairclough, Gee, and Scollon and Scollon differ slightly in their articulation of discourse, they all view discourse as a vital aspect of social action and instrumental in shaping the socio-cultural experiences of individuals.

Different Discourses represent different perspectives on the world and people who share these common views form social groups upon which their personal identities and relationships are built. Discourses represent not only current actions and interactions, but also novel possibilities and conceptualizations of the world that
give direction to change and transformation in our future world (Fairclough, 2003). Fairclough (2003) views social practice as an articulation of discourse-specific ways of using language, relating socially, and structuring physical space. Social events are largely shaped by networks of social practice that define acceptable ways of acting in specific discourses. As such, the symbiosis of social practice and discourse is evident as social practice emerges from discourse and discourse is comprised of social practice.

Scollon and Scollon (2004) use the term *nexus* to explain the intersection as a discursive social action (i.e. special education and general education) in which people from different discourses come together in social situations (i.e. a co-taught class or professional relationship) that are influenced by the interaction order and life experiences of the individual social actors as historical players. Discursive intersection is complicated because different discourses may use the same words but they may use them differently, and it is only through focusing upon semantic relations that one can identify these collocations and other discourse specific metaphors and nominalizations (Fairclough, 2003). Discursive formation occurs through the specific organization of knowledge and the formation of theories and themes that allow for the transmission of this knowledge through history as truth or fact (Foucault, 1972). In order to be recognized as a discourse, there must be an agreed upon set of social practices that get passed along over time and help in the recognition and identification of a discourse across place and time.
The Institution

Institutional sanctioning facilitates the long term survival of a discourse through the transmission of knowledge and the rationalization of truth. In this sense, knowledge, once organized into a discipline, is arranged, communicated, and redistributed hierarchically within that discipline and assumed to be scientific truth (Foucault, 2003b). The rules of discursive formation operate beneath the level of subject awareness as historical a priori and constitute what Foucault refers to as an episteme (Peters, 2007). Foucault (1972) describes the episteme as the “total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices that give rise to the epistemological figures, sciences, and possible formalized systems” (p. 191). In an essay on truth and power, Foucault (1994b) states that societies have mechanisms that allow for the distinction of truth, means for sanctioning the valued procedures of acquiring truth, and the ability to distinguish the status of those who determine what counts as truth. The episteme, then, establishes the limits, exclusion, and practical constraints of institutional power and control within a social structure (Olssen, 2006).

According to Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983), institutions affect what can be legitimately said and those who wish to be taken seriously must speak of those objects that have been collectively agreed upon by the scientific community to which they identify or belong. In explicit reference to the higher education system, Foucault identifies the primary role of the university as establishing a respected scientific community that emphasizes the selection and distribution of knowledge
while “respecting the barriers that exist between the different floors of the university apparatus” (Foucault, 2003b, p. 182). Discussing the nature of the construction of an individual within the education discourse explicitly, Foucault (1994a) writes,

Take…an educational institution: the disposal of its space, the meticulous regulations that govern its internal life, the different activities that are organized there, the diverse persons who live there or meet one another, each with his own function, his well-defined character…Activity to ensure learning and the acquisition of aptitudes or types of behavior works via a whole ensemble of regulated communications (lessons, questions and answers…coded signs of obedience, differential marks of the ‘value’ of each person and of the levels of knowledge) and by means of a whole series of power processes (enclosure, surveillance, reward and punishment, the pyramidal hierarchy).(p. 338).

Foucault (1972) calls for the critical examination of the institutional sites from which a discourse derives its legitimacy through the use of objects and instruments of classification and verification. Fairclough (2003) maintains that in order to justify and preserve the essential aspects of their institutional traditions over time, discursive systems must seek to cultivate perceptions of institutional legitimacy.

In discussing legitimacy and preservation, Blommaert (2005) credits centering institutions with the imposition and reproduction of discursive norms within a social group. Centering institutions produce the set of values or practices that serve as
identifying markers for members of a particular group and establish a hierarchy and core value system that encourages homogenization and uniformity among members. Similarly, Goffman (1961) discusses the total institution as a place where a large number of similarly situated people experience life together, in which every aspect of daily life is directed and controlled by a bureaucratic administration appealing to the goals of the institution. Although clearly not necessarily as comprehensive as a total institution, the centering institution serves a similar purpose for the constituent individuals- homogenization and uniformity. Hacking (2004) discusses the complementarities between the works of Foucault and Goffman explaining that while Foucault describes the rich history and the rationality of institutional control and the construction of the subject, Goffman explores the contemporary classification of individuals through widespread implementation of rational institutional control.

Keogh (1997) describes Foucault’s concept of ‘governmentality’ as ways in which institutions exercise control by establishing procedures that target the general population for regulation. According to Doherty (2007), this governmentality is as much about what subjects do to themselves as what is done to them. He argues that power is exercised through the construction of social systems and the issuance of predetermined requirements on how subjects are expected to behave in particular situations. The act of governing individual bodies is demonstrated in the variety of techniques of power that are utilized by an institution in an attempt to influence behavior within a particular site (the workplace, the profession, the family) (Doherty, 2007).
**Subjectification/Identity**

In a Foucauldian sense, subjectification, or the social construction of an individual, is constituted through individualizing practices that occur at both the discursive and institutional level that are deeply ingrained in the dominant culture. A subject’s identity is a socially constructed set of beliefs or practices that an individual assumes in order to be recognized as a member of a particular discursive group, or totality. Foucault argues that our engagement with the world is always mediated by discourse. Discourse, in turn, is constituted by relations that are established between institutions that normalize and classify in order to define and justify their differences (Foucault, 1972).

According to Foucault (1994a), the formation of the subject occurs within the triangle of truth, power, and the self. The subject is formed in the interaction between freedom and individuality of the self and the historically specific procedures and instruments which guide the possible actions of the self (Dean, 1994).

Acknowledging the reproductive power of discursive knowledge and the constitution of the self as subject, Foucault discusses how subjects enter into ‘games of truth’ when they engage in the production of truth in reference to a specific quasi-scientific discourse (Besley & Peters, 2007).

Identity formation, thus, becomes reliant upon the technologies of power that act on an individual as dictated by the rules and regulations of the human science discourses. For Foucault (1994a), the term ‘power relation’ implies the existence of
discursive relationships between individuals. The exercise of power, however, requires more than a simple partnered relationship, as power exists only when it acts on another body. Power relations result in the construction of a professional subject who regulates the human science discourses through reproduction of dominant cultural practices and so-called ‘truths’ (Besley & Peters, 2007). Hacking (2004) explains the effects of categorizing people based on seemingly rational knowledge and the laws or regularities assumed to be true about these individuals. Classified individuals, who are subject to these regulations, either consciously or subconsciously change their behavior to emulate their classifications. In the event that an individual no longer fits an established set of classificatory criteria, he or she may modify the set of norms pertaining to classification to accommodate perceived changes in regularities.

Subjectification, or the construction of self, occurs through the exercise of routine disciplinary practices and techniques of power which are specified and validated within various forms of normalizing and scientific discourses (Dean, 1994). Individualization and totalization are two techniques of power common in educational settings that operate as related processes within a particular discourse linking an individual to a community (Simons & Masschelein, 2005). Gore (1995) describes individualization as a technique that gives individual character to a person according to normalized conceptions of membership within a community or totality and totalization, gives readily recognizable collective character to a group of individuals by naming themselves as part of collectives. According to Olssen (2006), totalizing
forms of power are aimed at increasing the power of the state at macro levels by individualizing the subjects of state power to create a specific type of individual.

Fairclough (2003) explores identity by examining the dialectical processes through which people identify themselves and are identified by others as being representative of a particular discourse. Much of the work of identity formation is accomplished by the attributions of others, as it is the recognition by others that establishes and defines an individual’s identity. Identity formation represents an institutional social gathering or an *othering* of oneself (or another) as inspired by the homogenizing centering institution (Blommaert, 2005). Identity, then, is closely associated with discourse and one is predisposed to participate in social events and discursively inculcated from very early in life. Pierre Bourdieu uses the concept of habitus to describe the ways in which classifications become incorporated into the language and social practice of individuals (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus represents the deeply historical cultural and social structures that influence the dispositions of individuals through primary socialization within a group. Bourdieu’s concept of habitus recognizes that each individual is a historic and social construction, and identity is a lifelong product.

According to Blommaert (2005), one’s identity is dependent upon context and purpose and is constructed in institutional practices that produce or perform identity. Individuals are constructs of the social world. However, the relationship is dialectical as Gee (2007) argues that social worlds are also constructed by the interactions of
people within various Discourses. Gee discusses the identity as being situated within a particular Discourse as individuals use language and semiotic tools to perform various social roles. Individuals typically have multiple identities that are dependent upon the context of the social action, and these identities may either be in alignment or conflict with other parts of their identity at any given time. In unfamiliar contexts, the perception of incompetency shapes an individual’s participation in that discursive context, as historical participation designates appropriate perceptions, beliefs and practices that are valued within a Discourse. Identities often reference a particular place or space and this spatial location is crucial to the long-term sustainability of an identity over time.

According to Blommaert (2005), individuals often define themselves, or are defined by others, according to a particular Discursive place. People speak from a particular place, or perspective, which reveals much about their identities and shapes others’ understanding of what they say and perceptions of who they are. Physical space can significantly influence an individual’s language, position, and overall identity within a group and subtle shifts in perspective allow different identities to emerge. Blommaert indicates that different identities may emerge depending on the particular topic of discussion as people recognize multiple identities in various environments. Speakers are mobile across spaces, which are filled with rules, expectations, and customs, and each space has its own hierarchical structure to orient the speakers. The norms and expectations of these spaces are determined by the centering institutions which establish the orders of indexicality that guide the
construction of discursive identity (Blommaert, 2005). The hierarchical nature of normalizing human interaction in different contexts and places allows for differentiated interpretations of language. Inequality among participants is inherent in these structures as what is considered to be prestigious in one community, may be stigmatizing in others.

Inequality

The value or meaning of a particular statement is a quality that is typically attributed by others according to the orders of indexicality within a discourse. Orders of indexicality, according to Blommaert (2005), are systemically reproduced, widely recognized, norms or rules of language that are associated with stratified prestige, standards, and expectations. Indexicality allows for hierarchical organization of individuals by establishing binaries of prestige and stigma and rationality and emotion that set the boundaries for inclusion and exclusion within a community. Movement across orders of indexicality or changes in these orders can result in miscommunication and misunderstanding. According to Blommaert (2005), the function of a speaker is largely determined by his or her value in relation to the orders of indexicality as established by the centering institutions. Speakers have access to socially constructed repertoires that enable them to perform specific functions in a particular space. Conversely, due to inadequate discursive competence, those same speakers may also lack sufficient repertoires to fully participate in other spaces. As a result, centering institutions construct speakers who have a perceived value, in various contexts, that limits or enhances access to particular spaces. Function and
value are impossible to separate as differences in language use are often translated into inequalities between speakers (Blommaert, 2005).

The conditional prestige or value given to various forms of language within a discourse allows for the unequal distribution of power and sets the foundation for unequal access and opportunity. Blommaert (2005) argues that a critical discourse analysis should explore power relations by focusing on how language and power contribute to inequality. He discusses the significance of ‘orders of indexicality,’ which refer to “systemically reproduced… ‘norms’ or ‘rules’ of language…in which some kinds…are ranked higher than others” (pp. 73-74). Inequality is created whenever there is a difference between an individual’s capacity to perform a function and the expected function. People enter into social events with specific resources and capabilities that have a particular value in terms of the orders of indexicality. Blommaert (2005) asserts that it is not useful to try to determine whose perspective is true or false; rather, it is more useful to determine whose perspective we adopt and grant authority to when we accept a version of history as fact. The designation of authority is arbitrary and based on a rationalized conception of discursive truth.

Individuals speak from various positions that reflect structural differences and inequalities within the world system. Ideology refers to the common sense or normal perceptions that one has of the world as a system, the activities that sustain power structures, and the patterns of power that reinforce these normalized perceptions (Fairclough, 2003). For Fairclough (2003), all social human interaction depends on
the presence of a set of shared meanings which are taken as a given so that participants have the capacity to exercise social power, domination, and hegemony. These shared meanings about what is true, possible, or necessary are ideological and point to the importance of hegemony in sustaining dominant power relations within a discourse.

**Ideology**

Ideological representations of power and domination can be enacted and inculcated in the behaviors, identities, and texts of individuals, both as subjects and objects of power (Fairclough, 2003). Although Foucault’s research is primarily in relation to institutions such as prisons, hospitals, and mental institutions, he points to schools explicitly in his work. Foucault (2003b) refers to an ideology of education that is created and maintained through the implementation of instruments that organize knowledge through observation, recording, investigation, and verification. He speaks of the pedagogical relationship between the subject (student) and the transmitter of truth (teacher) where the goal is to “endow any subject…with aptitudes, capabilities, knowledges…that he did not possess before and that he should possess at the end…” (Foucault, 2005). Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999) use the term ‘ideology’ to describe the construction of an individual in a manner that sustains the relations of domination within a society. Discursive critique involves examining the intersection of language, discourse, and speech with social structure and making the
relationship between social structure and discourse patterns visible in terms of power relations and ideology (Blommaert, 2005).

Gee (2007) states that Discourses are inherently ideological social practices, mental entities, and material realities that exist to get people and things recognized in certain ways and not others. Furthermore, this differential access to specific identities, activities, social goods, and status is the root cause of inequality in our society. The marginalization of individuals due to the influence of power relations is a direct contributor to inequality in our society. Gee (2007) uses the term ‘Discourse model’ to explain the taken for granted explanatory frameworks that people unconsciously use to make sense of the world. These stereotypic models are simplifications of reality that allow an individual to interact in the world without having to think consciously about the complicated realities of life. Discourse models represent what one takes to be typical or normal without question. Furthermore, Gee (2007) argues that they mediate between micro-level human interaction and macro-level institutional Discourse. An individual can have more than one discourse model depending on the social activities or practices that he or she is engaged in. Specifically, discourse models mediate between the cultural practices that construct an individual to operate within and reproduce the larger cultural practices that define a Discourse.

Blommaert (2005) maintains that in communicating, people tend to speak from a particular position in the world system and are constrained by the contents of
their repertoires, which limit the choices that can be made in the production of
discursive language. As such, the unequal distribution of these repertoires according
to sociocultural background results in social inequality and historical determination.
Much of human interaction in communication is not a simple matter of pure freedom
or choice; rather, it is constrained by social norms that are determined by patterns of
ideological inequality.

**Agency**

Foucault views agency as a form of political power that situates the individual
as interdependent within social and institutional discursive structures (Olssen, 2006).
Foucault asserts that political rationality constructs the individual in regard to law,
right, obligation, participation, citizenry, and liberty, as well as the totality in regard
to order, security, welfare, the population, and submission (Dean, 1994). This
rationality represents a struggle to balance increasing political individualization with
the simultaneous political totalization in which humans are encouraged to be both
self-governing and members of a governed population. Liberation from these
controls, Foucault argues, can only come from attacking the very roots of political
rationality.

Dean (1994) suggests that freedom from discursive determination is elusive,
as individuals are only encouraged to exercise choice within the constraints of their
position of subjects within a totality. Similarly, in discussing habitus, Bourdieu
(1992) argues that an individual’s social practice is merely a reproduction of
internalized actions, beliefs, and perceptions specific to a particular group. Although habitus is strongly predisposing, conditions for transformation or agentive change can occur when new structures, such as inclusion, enter into the social situations that are radically different from the traditional originating structures (Swartz, 1997).

Blommaert (2005) explains that the delicate balance between individual creativity and determination constructs communicative events and provides the connection between agency and structure or micro-events and macro-relational patterns in society. Agency is not completely absent in social interaction, but it is situated within a structure of constraints that limit the choices an individual is able to make in a given circumstance. When different discourses intersect, the ensuing power struggles between the discursive systems represent a struggle to sustain a position of power or to transform the relationship between the discourses to create a new system (Fairclough, 2003). Rowe (2005) argues that when one is able to understand discursive complexities, he or she has the authority to direct their own life and circumstances, rather than simply accept a predisposition as inevitable.

The relationship between inequality, ideology, and agency are evident as Blommaert (2005) argues that a speaker must have access to the forms that are valued within a particular context to function effectively within a Discourse. Whenever people do not possess the necessary resources to perform an expected function, they lose voice and risk being attributed less valuable functions. For Blommaert, an analysis of voice is essential in a critical analysis of power and inequality. Voice
refers to the ways in which people use discursive knowledge to make themselves understood within specific contexts. Though predisposed to historically reproduced discursive values, beliefs, and identities, an individual is not predestined to follow blindly along the predictable path that long standing discourses have laid. Fairclough (2003) argues that the discursive possibility is very complex and cannot be understood as a simple effect of social structure. The relationship between possibility and actuality is mediated by social practices, which are the ways that certain structural possibilities are selected and others are excluded or maintained throughout history.

**Historicity/ Layered Simultaneity**

According to Foucault (1972), a discourse is characterized by the history of positivity that defines a field’s formal identities and thematic continuities. This historical a priori regulates and organizes the functions and existence of discourses and establishes the boundaries of possibility and transformation. Foucault identifies the archive as the system of discursivity that establishes the possibilities and impossibilities of what can be said through the construction of influential governing systems. The archive preserves the historicity of a discourse by providing a structure of organization for the identities and relationships that are constructed and reconstructed according to specific discursive regulations in the struggle for power/knowledge. When an individual speaks, he or she speaks from a particular regime of language, which is limited in creativity and individual awareness. These
limitations of awareness are an effect of being a product of a specific archive and speaking from within a particular set of rules and expectations.

It is within the archive, or the historical system of discursive formation and transformation, that the orders of indexicality operate (Foucault, 1972). New archives are created as modifications in existing orders of indexicality are made, thus establishing a historically situated process of transformation. The determination of the archive encourages both hegemony and transformation as creativity fosters the development of new borders and levels of consciousness to supplement the existing archive (Blommaert, 2005). Every discourse is a discourse on history in which what seems to be one coherent act is really an amalgamation of diverse historical interactions that is masked in the logic of normalcy (Blommaert, 2005).

Discourse occurs in real-time, but it illusively appears to be simultaneously encapsulated in several layers of historicity, some of which are within the grasp of the participants while others remain invisible but continue to significantly influence behavior and thought (Blommaert, 2005).

Synchronization in discourse is a tactic of power. The denial of the layered nature of simultaneity in discourse, or the reduction of overdetermination to just one single meaning results in images of continuity, logical outcomes, and textual coherence. It is a denial of the complexity of the particular position from which one speaks, and of the differences between that position and that of others. Instead we get a flat comparison within one time frame, the present,
our experiential present, denying the rather fundamental differences between such time-scales and the various positions people assume on such scales (p. 136).

Scollon and Scollon (2004) describe the concept of layered simultaneity in terms of a nexus of practice, or when social practices take place in predictable and regular manners in a particular setting. This nexus represents a conjoining of the life histories or trajectories of an individual, an institution, and a physical space. The Scollons use a nexus analysis to examine the precise moment of interest, the discursive histories that intersect there, as well as the possibilities that are availed by the participants’ actions. For Blommaert (2005), a critical discourse analysis requires a broad concept of context in which the analysis begins “long before discourse emerges as a linguistically articulated object” (p. 234) and continues “long after the act of production” (p. 234). The historicity of engagement in any human interaction is both complex and worthy of extensive consideration in order to understand the discursive potential of that action.

According to Latour (1996), in any human interaction, the person currently being addressed is a product of a history that goes far beyond the boundaries of the current relationship. The history of the individual spans both space and time and resembles a complex matrix of interactions among various people, places, and dates. This notion of historicity is also similar to Bourdieus concept of habitus, which recognizes that an individuals behavior and beliefs are so deeply rooted in a lifetime
of personal experiences that the choices made appear to be independent and natural. Therefore we need to look beyond the current situation to examine how present discourses relate to past discourses and anticipate future discourses of possibility (Scollon & Scollon, 2004).

**Thematic Applications to Inclusion and Special Education**

The discourses of special education and general education are grounded in long histories that have established the two discourses as distinct entities with little to no intersection. The general education discourse has been around for over 200 years and has remained largely unchanged for much of that time. Emerging only about 100 years ago, special education, a logical extension of the eugenics movement that sought to protect the ‘normal’ populace from interacting with deviants, is a much more recent addition to the education scene (Mitchell & Snyder, 2006). Individuals who want to become teachers have traditionally been required to choose one of the many general education options, the special education options as a professional specialty, or a dual certification in a content area as well as special education. However, the inclusion discourse, emerging over the past 30 years, represents the newest and most controversial addition to the United States education system.

As discussed in the previous chapter, inclusion is an ill-defined and often misunderstood concept that nominally represents the intersection of the general and special education discourses. Recently, institutes of higher education across the United States have begun to offer interdiscursive derivations of earlier dual
certification programs that are intended to promote inclusive education practices among teachers. However, these programs typically still recognize the traditional special education and general education discourses as distinct entities and provide two distinct teacher certifications. As such, these quasi-inclusive programs complicate efforts to further the social justice ideals of inclusive education.

Teacher education programs provide courses and use textbooks that facilitate the socialization of preservice teachers into their roles as special educators, whose responsibilities include recognizing deviance, judging normality, conducting examinations, and providing appropriate instruction to decrease difference (Brantlinger, 2006a). Gore (1995) argues that the rationality of the individualization and totalization of individuals in teacher education is evident in the production specific types of teachers who affiliate with specific groups of like-minded professionals.

Peters (2007) discusses how educational professionals enter into various institutional contexts- research associations, conferences, journals, and training regimes where they construct themselves as professionals and perpetuate quasi-scientific discourse. The traditional special education discourse creates new teachers who, based on assumed objective or scientific knowledge, believe that they are acting in the best interests of students when, in reality, they are simply acting as fully licensed “designators of disability” (Allan, 2003c, p. 177).
The Discourse model of inclusion is a derivative transformation of the traditional special education Discourse model. Were it not for the historic exclusionary practices of special education that are so deeply ingrained in the American education system, there would be no need to discuss inclusion today. As such, despite conversations about inclusive education and attempts to integrate students with disabilities into general education classes, Allan (2003b) charges that much of what goes on in schools in the name of inclusion is, in fact, rather destructive and exclusionary. Specifically, she identifies the continued dominance of knowledge and practice perpetuated by the rigid special education grand narrative as a primary barrier to inclusion. In preservice teacher education, much of what is considered to be truth or preferred practice is conveyed through the use of textbooks in required courses. The information included in these courses and textbooks is infused with ideology and presents specific discursive perspectives on disability and education which are expected to be assumed by the preservice teachers (Brantlinger, 2006a).

Teachers are constructions of their life experiences and their goals and beliefs have been strongly influenced by the sixteen or more years that they, themselves, have spent in the traditional school system.

Discursive systems often become unconscious and unquestioned aspects of life that fortify the cultural grand narratives within our society. The grand narrative of special education has developed over the course of the past 100 years, and is now being challenged by advocates of disability studies in education and proponents of inclusive education. As such, a critical analysis of the special education grand
narrative requires an exploration of the memorable historical events that continue to influence current practice.

If inclusive education is going to achieve the ideals of social justice upon which it was conceived, then the discursive power of the centering institutions must be shifted to construct educators as agents of change and transformation. Allan (2006a) calls for a rethinking of teacher education and research to reinvent teachers as reflexive actors who question their own practice and seek to identify barriers to inclusion recreated within it. She charges the field of education to think reflexively about teacher education programs and to view inclusion as a moral imperative.

Dean (1994) suggests using critical historical studies to critique modernist discourses and grand narratives by examining the behavior of individuals as they operate within structures or disciplines. Furthermore, he argues that analyses of this type will illustrate that human actions are merely reproduced tendencies endemic in governed populations. Critical historical studies provide a method of analysis through which one can “question those ready-made syntheses, those groupings that we normally accept before any examination” (Foucault, 1972, p. 22) and expose the techniques of power that sustain these constructions (Dean, 1994). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a research methodology that encourages the analyst to consider the historic and ideological aspects of human interaction that predispose an individual to act in a seemingly predictable manner.
CDA as Methodology

As a tool for social scientific research, CDA provides valuable insight into the meanings and ideological effects of texts. Through analysis of linguistic aspects of text as well as the social structures that underlie the text, CDA provides a structure for examining the influence of social structures on the construction of knowledge, beliefs, individual identity, and interpersonal relationships (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 2007; Rogers, 2004). Fairclough identifies the value in examining interpretations of texts and the situation of these texts within a larger social structure. These tasks cannot be accomplished using CDA alone and are best addressed using a complementary method of qualitative analysis in conjunction with CDA (Fairclough, 2003). Blommaert (2005) challenges that traditional CDA tends to “forget” the historical context of discursive data and overlook the “ethnographic origin and situatedness of data” (p. 64). Similarly implying the need to examine the larger context of language, Gee (2007) argues that “actual discourse analyses…usually develop in detail only a small part of the full picture…(A)ny discourse analysis needs…to give some consideration…to the whole picture” (p. 110). This type of discursive analysis, Gee suggests, requires the analyst to ask questions and think about any relevant details pertaining to the use of language in social practice within a larger social system. For Gee, language involves textual, interpersonal, and ideational functions and the parallels to Fairclough’s work in this area are evident (Rogers, 2004).
Fairclough (2003) uses Foucault’s (1972) term ‘orders of discourse’ to describe the complex relationship between social practices, social identities, and texts. In this sense, orders of discourse are fluid systems that are largely dependent upon social interactions that are comprised of genres, discourses, and styles. Genres allow one to distinguish between different “ways of acting” within a discourse. Discourses refer to “ways of representing” the different perspectives on the world that are associated with the different relations that people have to the world. Style refers to “ways of being” that are associated with identity affiliations and are evident in the interactions and language that mark social interactions.

Using Fairclough’s CDA, the three orders of discursive interaction, genre, style, and discourse must be analyzed in relation to the larger context in which they occur. Fairclough describes these three contexts as local, institutional, and societal. The local context refers to the immediate environment of the interaction, i.e. the secondary co-taught classroom. The institutional context refers to the social and political institutions that frame the local context, i.e. the secondary schools within which the co-teaching takes place. The societal context implies the larger government, policy, and mandates that influence the local and institutional contexts, i.e. the federal legislation that drives general and special education practice. For Fairclough (2003), text analysis involves the description, interpretation, and explanation of spoken and written texts as they interact within a larger ethnographic context. In many qualitative analyses, the researcher is required to make decisions about which aspects of a social event or text to analyze and what types of questions to
ask. Fairclough (2003) argues that every text has social, political, cognitive, moral, and material consequences, which motivate the analyst to ask particular moral and political questions. Because of CDA’s emphasis on exploring the role of language in the reproduction of ideologically sustained power relations, it is clear that CDA has many potential applications to research on secondary co-teaching in inclusive settings.

Complementing the use of CDA in qualitative research, Bishop and Glynn (1999) present an analytic framework that allows for the examination of power differentials in educational settings. Bishop and Glynn acknowledge the significance of the historicity of dominant discourse in maintaining traditional models of education. They argue that the imposition of a model of change (i.e. the implementation of inclusive co-taught classes) is doomed to fail if the objective is anything other than assimilation or the perpetuation of traditional structures of dominance. Bishop and Glynn argue that explaining difference among students in terms of deficiencies in culture, intellect, or behavior supports traditional patterns of curricular and pedagogic dominance of teachers (akin to the deficit model of disability). These perceptions of need, perpetuated by teacher belief and action set up power relations that simply serve to protect the dominant discourse and power relationships among teachers and students.

Inclusive education, as discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, has typically been presented as a collaborative effort between general and special
educators to meet the needs of a diverse group of students within the general education classroom. However, a review of the research on inclusive co-teaching has revealed that despite the prevalence of several models of exemplary co-teaching, the field largely continues to struggle to achieve desirable outcomes in co-teaching. The inclusive education movement represents an attempt at transforming the public education experience for teachers and students and calls for a significant change in the traditional construction of the general education classroom.

Calls for the reformation of the contemporary education system have been made by many scholars and are typically followed by discussions of the inherent challenges in attempting to change the long-established educational status quo (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Fullan, 1993; Skrtic, 1995; Slee, 2001; Trent, 1998; Ware, 2003). The ideas presented in this chapter suggest that institutions reproduce existing patterns of inequality and dominance by constructing individuals from a particular ideological perspective who blindly follow the path laid out for them and obscure agency through discursive indoctrination. Bishop and Glynn (1999) present a framework that questions the logic of discursive dominance and power relations in education by arguing that teachers retain positions of dominance by retaining power over issues of initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation, and accountability. The specific use of this analytic framework will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter. Utilizing CDA and Bishop and Glynn’s framework as analytic tools within a larger qualitative methodology allows for a critical examination of the
relationship between discourse and social practice in order to understand the relationship between talk, interaction, and power.
Chapter 3

Method

Co-teaching has been promoted as a common model for collaboration in inclusive education for almost twenty years (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1991; Cook & Friend, 1991; Sapon-Shevin, 1992). Despite numerous calls for critical analysis of discourse and context in inclusive co-teaching (Brownwell, et al., 2006; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Trent, 1998), the practice continues to be plagued with challenges and has largely failed to reform traditional education models or promote the ideals of inclusive education (Scruggs, et al., 2007). By applying Foucault’s theoretical framework and principles of Critical Discourse Analysis to this study of secondary co-teaching, I examined previously unexplored of inclusive collaboration suggested by many scholars over the past ten years. In this dissertation, I examined the relationship between the co-teachers in an 8th grade inclusive classroom to understand discursive and contextual aspects of their practice.

Throughout this study, I struggled with choosing appropriate terminology to describe this population of students in the class. The teachers themselves used various descriptors for this class including the special education class, the inclusion class, special education students, and inclusion students. Disability Studies in Education promotes a person first approach to describing individuals that does not foreground disability or marginalization, but it appears that this is not the case in many schools. As such, I have used the term ‘students with IEPs’ to differentiate the students in the co-taught class when necessary. This phrase does not explicitly connote exclusion or
disability; it simply identifies the students as those who are under legal obligation to receive special education services according to individualized education programs (IEPs). The differentiation in the co-teachers’ language illustrates the presence of a discourse of disability and exclusion that will be explored throughout this analysis.

I conducted a qualitative case study that examines the language and actions of the teachers within the interdiscursive context of co-teaching. Using a case study in qualitative research allows for in-depth exploration of a single unit of study, in this instance a co-teaching relationship, to understand the complexity and uniqueness of that particular case (Stake, 1995). The case study format is the most appropriate methodology for this study because of the complexity of co-teaching, the uniqueness of every co-teaching team, and the generation of transcripts and texts from social interactions necessary for discourse analysis. This analysis does not address the co-teachers’ adherence to any particular model of instruction; rather, it seeks to explore the everyday interactions of a pair of secondary co-teachers to illuminate some of the complexities of the relationship in a natural setting. With no other examples of discourse analysis in the co-teaching research to study, it seems logical and imperative to begin this type of study with the open-ended and thorough analytic structure that a qualitative case study calls for.

Although a case study is a useful methodology for providing detailed descriptions and analyses of social interaction, the small sample size limits the overall generalizability of the findings beyond the co-teachers in this study. However, the
The purpose of qualitative research is to provide thoughtful insight into a particular context so that one can gain a greater understanding of that situation, in the hopes that it will help decipher other interactions in similar settings. As such, the findings from this study cannot be generalized to be applicable to all co-teaching situations, but rather they can be useful in exploring aspects of co-teaching that have been overlooked in more broadly based studies. Moreover, it is my intent in this study to present a logical and empirically sound analysis that justifies the continued use of discourse analysis in inclusive education and co-teaching research.

**Setting**

The co-teachers are part of an 8th grade team at Mathers Middle School in a large suburban school district in Western New York. According to the New York State School Report Card, the school district serves approximately 13,000 students and Mathers Middle School has about 1,000 students. Additionally, almost 40% of the school population receives free or reduced lunch and the student population is reported to be approximately 80% Caucasian. In this district, more than 50% of all students receiving special education support spend 20% or less of the school day outside of a regular classroom – an indication that more than one-half of students with disabilities are being educated in nominally inclusive settings. Also according to the NYS School Report Card, the Mathers Middle School 8th grade is in good standing for performance on all accountability measures for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) except for the English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.
Mathers Middle School has structured their special education service delivery to provide a continuum of services for students identified as having disabilities. Those services range from the most restrictive self-contained class entirely comprised of students with disabilities to the least restrictive consultant services model for students who are enrolled solely in general education classes, requiring occasional monitoring by a special education teacher. The co-taught class described in this study falls between these two points on the continuum. The class consists of 12 students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 12 students who do not receive special education services. The decision to include the 12 students with IEPs in the co-taught class was made by a multidisciplinary team of education professionals who determined that the co-teaching model would be the least restrictive and most appropriate educational environment for them. The co-teaching model used in Mathers Middle School was structured to have one special education teacher for the entire 8th grade, Val. Val was assigned to follow the same group of approximately twelve students through their core academic classes (math, science, social studies, and English) and work as a co-teacher with each of the general education content specialists throughout each day.

Participants

The participants in this study include Val, a special education teacher, and, Keith, a general education math teacher. In order to preserve anonymity, the teachers’ and school names are all pseudonyms. The participants were tenured
teachers with requisite certifications for their teaching responsibilities. Keith held a New York State secondary level math certification and Val, the special educator, had New York State teacher certification in special education (K-12) as well as an administrative certification. In this arrangement, both Keith and Val were assigned by the school administration to co-teach teach math class every time that it met. As with all co-taught classes at Mathers, both of their names were listed as teachers on the official class roster. It was not school policy to have co-teaching teams remain consistent from one year to the next, but Val and Keith had worked together as co-teachers for five of the last eight years and indicated that they appreciated the opportunity to work together for multiple school years. Neither Keith nor Val knew specifically why the administration did not encourage long-term teams more frequently or why they were allowed to co-teach for so many years. They speculated that it had something to do with their students’ success on state assessments and Val’s willingness to move to a new grade level and learn a new curriculum when Keith switched from teaching 7th to teaching 8th grade math.

The school district provided annual professional development opportunities for all co-teachers. Keith and Val both indicated that they had participated in the district level sessions. My conversations with a district professional development coordinator indicated that these sessions primarily involved an explanation and modeling of Friend’s 6 approaches to co-teaching and an emphasis on managing interpersonal relationships between co-teachers. However, citing their many years of experience working together, Val and Keith both indicated that they felt the district
training would be more appropriate for newly assigned teams. They commented that since they already knew each other’s teaching styles and got along very well, they really needed more guidance in managing the logistics of co-teaching such as streamlining their planning time.

In this study, the co-teachers shared what appeared to be very amicable personal and professional relationships with no observable signs of discord. They often ate lunch together in Val’s classroom where ample space, a microwave, and refrigerator provided a welcoming environment. They also saw each other at out of school activities with their families. An administrator at Mathers Middle School described the team as a ‘good’ team that worked well together and had helped with district and school level co-teaching professional development. Additionally, the school and district recognized Val and Keith for their students’ strong performances on district and statewide assessments. It is important to foreground the positive interpersonal foundations and professional successes of this team because critical examination of an ‘unsuccessful’ co-teaching dyad would make for a simplistic evaluation that simply provides a rationale for their struggles.

Much of the current co-teaching research focuses on interpersonal conflict and highlights the negative comments made by one or both co-teachers and struggles with teacher satisfaction and student performance are often attributed to this negativity. By choosing a ‘successful’ team, the most obvious criticisms about not getting along with each other, not achieving acceptable test scores and other finger-pointing
criticisms are not relevant here. Typically cited types of interpersonal conflicts are not readily apparent with this team, which allows the analysis to take place on a much deeper level. According to the opinion of the school district administrators and most standards used in current literature, this co-teaching team was successful; however, I question this designation in regard to teacher practice, perceptions of disability, and overall inclusivity. These three aspects of co-teaching are not addressed by current models but are explored in this contextually grounded discourse analysis.

**Data Collection**

With thoughtful interpretation and an accurate record of events in a qualitative case study, observations allow the researcher to gain a greater understanding of the case (Stake, 1995). In the present study, data were generated from videotaped individual and team interviews, videotaped observations of co-teaching in action, and videotaped planning meetings. The same class of students was observed during each visit. The teachers were videotaped for the duration of the class period and I took detailed field notes for the entire time, including notations of time, which facilitated references between the field notes, observation video, and transcripts. Each teacher wore a lapel microphone to ensure that their dialogue could be accurately transcribed. Each videotaped session was transcribed in its entirety to allow for a detailed analysis of the co-teachers’ interactions.

Observations took place during approximately nine class sessions throughout a single unit of study over the course of a one-month time period. Because of
extended block scheduling, the math class did not meet on a daily basis and I did not videotape when either one of the teachers was absent or if the classroom activity was not relevant to math (i.e. if there was an assembly). During the data collection the co-taught class was studying basic geometry and angle relations. Topics that were discussed in this unit were: classifications of polygons, triangles, and quadrilaterals, descriptions of various angles, and algebraic methods for determining angle size and measure.

Two formal planning meetings between the co-teachers and the 8th grade team were videotaped and transcribed, as were other informal planning sessions between the co-teachers, which often took place before or after class. There were four interviews that lasted approximately one hour each in length. The co-teachers were each interviewed one time together as a team, Keith was interviewed once alone, and Val participated in two interviews alone. Some of the initial interview questions were about the participant’s thoughts on co-teaching, their degree of personal and/or professional comfort in the current co-teaching arrangement, and their perceived role in the classroom dynamic (See Appendix A). Subsequent interview questions were largely influenced by my thoughts and questions inspired by past interviews, participant responses, and classroom observations. After Val’s first interview, we both felt that we needed more time to talk and she came to the second interview with a prepared list of topics that she thought might be interesting or relevant to my study.
Transcription and Coding

The observations and interviews were videotaped, transcribed, and coded using a constant comparative method of initial data analysis to identify recurrent or prominent themes or points of tension in the data. Each videotaped interaction (classroom observation, interview, or planning meeting) was transcribed in its entirety. Intonations, pauses, and non-verbal gestures were only indicated in the transcripts when it was relevant to the context of the interaction. Coding is a common method for categorizing data in qualitative research. It requires the rearrangement of data into categories that facilitate comparisons between ideas within a category and the development of data-based theoretical concepts (Maxwell, 2005). The data were then distinguished and grouped into three categories: ‘organizational,’ ‘substantive,’ and ‘theoretical.’

Organizational categories refer to broad pre-established groupings that can be anticipated prior to interviews and questions. Although these a priori categories can limit the potential for reflexive analysis, they served as a solid starting point for analysis by sorting the data into broadly-based groupings for further analysis. Examples of organizational categories from this study include: observations of the teachers’ behavior and interactions (i.e. from classroom observations) and belief statements made by the teachers (i.e. from interviews). In addition to the pre-established organizational categories, substantive categories were derived from the data and included more detailed analysis of the participants’ actions and descriptions.
of concepts and beliefs. Examples of substantive categories in this study included statements about self/professional identity, statements about the other teacher, expectations of roles and responsibilities of self and each other, descriptions of students with disabilities, ways of interacting with each other, ways of interacting with the students. Theoretical categories require the placement of data into a more abstract framework and generally reflect the researcher’s interpretations of the data. Examples of theoretical categories from this study included the discursive dimensions previously discussed in the theory chapter: discourse, the institution, identity, inequality, ideology, agency, and historicity. It is in the development and analysis of these theoretical categories that the utility of CDA is evident and contributions of Bishop and Glynn’s (1999) framework were realized.

Data Analysis

The analysis for this study took place in two phases. The first phase of analysis was a critical discourse analysis in which I examined the semantic and grammatical aspects of the transcribed dialogue, or text. The co-teachers’ interactions were shaped by the larger social structure that guided my understanding of the context of co-teaching and informs my interpretations and analysis (Fairclough, 2003). The linguistic and interdiscursive analysis inherent in this type of CDA facilitates a textually-based critical social analysis (Hanrahan, 2005). The second phase of the analysis involved the use of Bishop and Glynn’s (1999) framework for evaluating power relationships in educational settings. In developing the seven
theoretical categories, Bishop and Glynn’s (1999) framework provided a useful structure for the analysis of power relationships among the co-teachers.

**Phase I Analysis: Critical Discourse Analysis**

The first phase of analysis involved a critical discourse analysis of the relationship between language and social structure in co-teaching through a discussion of Fairclough’s (2003) genre or ‘ways of acting,’ discourse or ‘ways of representing,’ and style or ‘ways of identifying.’ In exploring genre, I looked for examples of how Keith’s and Val’s different use of language is reflected in their individual teaching styles and their interactions as co-teachers. The analysis of discourse includes examining the ways that the co-teachers talk about co-teaching, how authority was established and demonstrated, how the co-taught classroom environment was managed, and how the designated special education classroom was represented in the interactions. I analyzed style by examining how the individual teachers described and lived their professional identities and roles and how they interacted with and described the identities and roles of the other co-teachers.

**Phase II Analysis: Power Relations**

The second phase of analysis involved the application of Bishop and Glynn’s (1999) framework for analyzing power relations in educational settings. Without explicitly mentioning inclusive education, Bishop and Glynn (1999) argue that teachers must critically evaluate their own practice in order to provide educational contexts in which students’ strengths are foregrounded, thereby improving the
learning environment for all students. To facilitate this re-evaluation, they provide an analytic framework that calls for the exploration of power relations and dominant discourse in educational contexts. Bishop and Glynn (1999) question the following issues often associated with power relations: initiation, accountability, benefits, representation, and legitimation. These areas of concern guided the data analysis. Analysis of *initiation* requires the researcher to ask about whose interests or agenda is the environment established to promote. In analyzing the data, I ask:

- How are the co-teaching relationships established?
- Who initiates the lesson planning and sets the goals and objectives of the lesson?
- Who initiates classroom interactions between the co-teachers?
- Who defines what constitutes appropriate knowledges and pedagogies in the co-taught classroom?
- Who established the goals of the co-taught classroom?

In examining *benefits*, I ask about who benefits from the educational arrangement. In this regard, I determine:

- Do both teachers benefit from the co-teaching arrangement?
- How does this co-teaching arrangement benefit the teacher personally or professionally?

Questions of *representation* get at whose reality is depicted by the educational environment and how the voices of the participants are facilitated or muted. I ask
• How are the responsibilities of the class distributed?
• Whose educational/professional reality is recognized in the classroom?
• In what ways does the co-teaching facilitate teacher voice?
• How is this discourse of disability represented in the co-taught classroom?
• What preferences or prejudices are evident in the co-taught classroom?

Legitimation questions ask about whose realities and experiences are legitimate in the educational context. In my study, I ask

• How are the teachers’ professional identities represented?
• What authority does the institution have for its inception, structure, processes, and outputs?
• Who defines what is accurate or true in the management of the class?
• Whose realities or prior experiences are legitimate in the classroom?

Finally, accountability issues require that questions about how accountability is demonstrated and who teachers are accountable to must be addressed. In attending to this issue I ask

• To whom are the co-teachers accountable?
• How is accountability determined?
• What is each teacher really accountable for?
• How is accountability demonstrated?
Bishop and Glynn’s framework guide the discourse analysis of the observations, interview transcripts, and planning meetings. Although there was some overlap in the types of questions and answers that can be derived from this framework, this overlap enhanced the depth and detail of data analysis of power relations.

Phase III: Critical Theoretical Analysis

In the third phase of analysis I conducted a theoretical analysis of how the seven critical theoretical concepts introduced in the previous chapter—discourse, the institution, identity, inequality, ideology, agency, and historicity were realized in Keith and Val’s co-taught interactions. This theoretical analysis was informed using the insight gained from the analyses involving Fairclough’s (2003) orders and contexts of discourse (phase I) and Bishop and Glynn’s (1999) power analytic (phase II). This type of critical analysis empirically foregrounds previously unexplored aspects of inclusive co-teaching and provides a foundation for critical and thoughtful analysis of the perennial challenges of inclusive co-teaching.
Chapter 4

Analysis

Discourse analysis involves describing, explaining, and interpreting social interactions in order to gain a better understanding of the nature of the interactions and sources of potential struggle (Fairclough, 2003). In this chapter, I explore the critical discourse aspects of Keith and Val’s co-teaching relationship in three analytic phases. In the first phase, I followed Fairclough’s discourse analysis model by analyzing the interactions between Keith and Val in their co-teaching relationship. I explore Fairclough’s three orders of discourse—genre, discourse, and style, and discuss the co-teaching relationship within the local, institutional, and societal contexts (Fairclough, 2003). In the second phase, I use Bishop and Glynn’s (1999) framework for analyzing power relations in educational contexts to examine the patterns of discursive dominance that are immanent in Keith and Val’s co-teaching relationship. In the third phase, I synthesize findings from the first two phases with the seven discursive themes discussed previously in the theory chapter. Through a combination of broad level discourse analysis and detailed examination of their language in context, the three phases of this analysis complement each other and shed light on the complex discursive nature of Keith and Val’s co-teaching relationship.

Phase I: Critical Discourse Analysis

This analysis begins with an initial description of the co-teaching team to provide a basic understanding of the context of the relationship and a foundation upon which further analysis is made. The most substantial section of this analysis chapter
involves the use of Fairclough’s (2003) genre, discourse, and style, as previously described in the theory chapter, to interpret the co-teachers’ interactions from a perspective that encourages critical reflection on common everyday practices.

Finally, in drawing conclusions about the interrelationship of the three orders of discourse, I interpret my findings and discuss Val and Keith’s co-teaching arrangement in the context of Fairclough’s local, institutional, and societal domains (as described in the second chapter).

**Describing the Co-Teaching Context**

The 8th grade team at Mathers Middle school consists of Val, the special education teacher and Keith, the math teacher, as well as a science teacher, a social studies teacher, and an English teacher who were not included in this analysis. Val was a full-time member of the 8th grade team and her primary responsibility as a special education teacher was to co-teach with each academic content area teacher and manage the IEPs of the 12 students in the co-taught classes. Keith and Val had been colleagues at Mathers and co-teaching together for 5 of the past 8 years. They both commented in their individual interviews about how they were comfortable with their co-teaching arrangement and how they knew what to expect of each other. At the beginning of the school year, Val met with the entire 8th grade team to talk about what they could expect each other to do in the classrooms and she encouraged the team to communicate about any concerns that they might have early on. The entire team, including Val, met once prior to the start of school to proactively discuss the students’ needs and then again about a month after school had started and after they
had time to get acquainted with the students. Val and Keith both stated that they felt these meetings were beneficial and helped make the co-teaching experience positive for the entire team.

In addition to the meetings to discuss the students with IEPs, the team met at a regularly scheduled time each week to discuss the progress of all students in the 8th grade and plan for ways to support all students in need. At the team meetings, topics of conversation included creating support plans for any students in need, progress in the curriculum, parental contact, and anything else related to the co-taught and traditional format classes. Although these meetings were not specifically about the students with IEPs, as a member of the 8th grade team, Val was a regular attendee and contributed to team discussions and decisions. The 8th grade team also spent a significant amount of time together during the school day outside of the co-taught classroom. Val’s classroom became a social hub for the 8th grade team, as the content teachers at various times throughout the day would often pop into Val’s room to chat, use the computer, or eat lunch.

**The co-taught classroom.** For one 60-minute block of time Keith and Val worked together in the same classroom to teach math to a group of 12 students with IEPs and 12 general education students. This classroom was where Keith taught all of his classes throughout the day and he was largely responsible for the wall decorations and arrangement of the desks. The walls of the classroom were sparsely decorated but there were some posters about math on display. Although she stated
that there were limitations on what the district would allow to have posted during assessments, Val created visuals for each unit of study and put them up in Keith’s room for all students to use. Val commented that she had identical copies of these visual aids posted in her room, as well as additional displays that provided support for basic multiplication facts and problem solving strategies that were not allowed in the co-taught math classroom. Val’s room was down the hall and around the corner from the co-taught classroom and housed her desk, computer, files, and other personal belongings. Val often took the 12 students with IEPs into her classroom during assessments to provide testing accommodations and answer their numerous questions in order to minimize the disruptions to the students without IEPs.

The co-taught classroom was generally referred to as Mr. K’s room. For example, when the phone rang during class time, Val was often the one who answered with the greeting, “Hello, this is Mr. K’s room, this is Mrs. V speaking.” Keith’s desk, although he rarely sat in it, was located in the back corner of the classroom and Val did not have a dedicated desk- she typically placed her belongings on one of the unoccupied tables in the back of the room. In the front of the classroom, there was a chalk board and a white board which Keith used on a daily basis. Keith also often used an overhead projector to display slides of notes or class assignments to demonstrate correct procedures. The white board was propped up in the front of the room and showed the ‘Do Now’ assignment at the start of class. After the ‘Do Now’ was complete and reviewed, the white board was removed and either the chalk board or overhead was used for the remainder of the class. Most of the
large-group instruction was done from the front of the classroom using one of the communication mediums previously described. While one co-teacher addressed the entire class, the other typically circulated around the room monitoring the students’ progress or stood to the side at the front of the room.

The students were seated in pairs at rectangular tables arranged in rows throughout the classroom. Typically, Keith made the seating arrangements, which had the 12 students with IEPs dispersed among the remaining 12 students, and Val would make any adjustments that she felt necessary. Although many of the table pairs consisted of one student with an IEP, this was not the rule and pairs of students could include two students with IEPs or two students without IEPs. Although some of the class work was individually oriented, many of the class activities required the students to work with their table-mates or a small group. Beyond small group and partner activities, social interaction among the students in the co-taught class was not overtly encouraged. When possible, Val and Keith like to mix up the table pairings to encourage different students to work together, but no other action was taken to encourage interaction among the students. Val commented during one of her interviews that it was not uncommon for friendships to develop between the students with and without IEPs. In an interview, Val spoke fondly of an instance in past years when a male student with an IEP developed a relationship with a female student who not only was not classified in special education, but was an exceptional student. Val shared that the female student would often come to her classroom during enrichment time and work with her friend and that the relationship was positive for both of the
students. Although this was one isolated instance, the relationships among the students in Keith and Val’s class seemed to be functional and their interactions did not reveal any overt marginalization or exclusion among the students.

There were no obvious social divisions between the students with and without IEPs in the co-taught class and relationships among the students appeared to be typical of any middle school class. I made a point of observing a few classes before I asked Val to identify the students with IEPs and although I had surmised the classification of about half of the students through observations, the identities of the other 6 were not readily apparent. Val pointed out that of the 12 students with IEPs, not all of them had disabilities in math and their challenges arose from reading tests and taking notes. Keith indicated that typically, his co-taught class was not his most challenging and his lowest performing students were not always classified in special education. Although I did not observe and activities directed at encouraging social interactions among the students, all of the students, regardless of their special education classification, were encouraged to participate in class activities and Keith and Val called on them equally in class to answer questions. The students, both with and without IEPs, appeared to like Keith and Val and seemed to be comfortable asking and answering questions in the course of the class period.

**The special education teacher.** As the special education teacher assigned to the 8th grade team at Mathers Middle School, Val co-taught in every core academic class. Although Val occasionally did some large group instruction, her primary
actions during class time consisted of circulating around the room and monitoring the progress of the students with IEPs in the co-taught class. While Keith was directing the class Val typically stood off to the side in the front of the classroom, sat at the back table, or circulated around the room during class time. Val stated that because of the demands on her to manage the daily school lives of the 12 students on her caseload, she occasionally arrived late or was called out of the class in order to handle a particular situation. Whenever there was a problem with one of the students on her caseload, the main office staff would seek out Val to come and assist with the situation. She made sure that the team knew about the possibility of her absence or late arrival by discussing it in one of their first team meetings. Val explained these situations as part of her job as a special education teacher. In addition to working a full day as a co-teacher, Val commented that she was still required to manage the IEPs for all 12 of her students as well as monitor their progress in their other classes.

Although Val spoke very highly of the co-teaching arrangement, she also indicated that she sometimes felt overwhelmed with the wide range of responsibilities that she held and the sense that she was often pulled in many different directions at one time. When asked to share the details of a typical day, Val explained that her school day always started the night before when she left herself a voicemail reminding her of the day’s responsibilities, which she listened to upon arriving in her classroom first thing in the morning. Val then stated that she checked in with the attendance officer to monitor her students’ attendance, made time to plan with the co-teachers, worked with individual students, called parents, and maintained compliance
with the students’ IEPs. Val was quick to point out that although her title was co-teacher, her professional responsibilities extended far beyond the time that she spent in a classroom.

**The math teacher.** Keith was the math teacher assigned to the 8th grade team at Mathers Middle School and he was responsible for teaching math to every student in the 8th grade. Keith and Val appeared to be very comfortable with each other both professionally and interpersonally. They saw each other outside of school at their children’s’ activities and often spoke about how they would continue to discuss work activities during these times. Keith generally stood in the front of the class when he addressed the students and spoke with a loud and clear voice. Although Val did address the entire class at times, Keith was the more prominent teacher in terms of large group instruction and curricular decision-making. In his interview, Keith indicated that he was happy to co-teach and preferred an inclusive class over an accelerated math class. He said that he felt that he got to know the students better in the inclusive classes because he did not have to be so concerned with moving through the accelerated curriculum.

While teaching, Keith asked questions of the general education students in equal proportion to the students with IEPs and worked with all students one on one as time allowed and student need required. However, when a student, particularly a student with an IEP, required behavioral redirection, Keith would often comment to the class that there were other students in the room that required his help and he could
not simply stop everything to address every behavior problem. In the event that a student with an IEP had trouble with a particular concept, Keith would work with that student for a short period of time during class. However, if it became apparent that the student required extensive assistance, Keith asked the student to see either Val or himself during a study hall or after school for extra help- although it was more likely to be with Val. Keith said that having Val as a co-teacher was extremely useful because she helped to answer the students’ numerous questions and was able to monitor the students’ progress and behavior while he focused on teaching the content.

Keith lamented that in his non-inclusive traditional format classes, he had to answer the students’ questions and monitor the students’ needs and progress by himself. The key difference between a co-taught class and a traditional math class is the presence of a full-time certified special education teacher and a significant number of students with IEPs. As explained in the methods chapter, there are twelve students with disabilities that travel as a group throughout the day with Val to the co-taught classes. The next part of this analysis examines Keith and Val’s perceptions of inclusion by exploring their ways of relating (genre), ways of representing (discourse), and ways of identifying (style) within their co-teaching context (Fairclough, 2003).

**Genre**

Genre refers to the ways of acting or relating in a particular social interaction (Fairclough, 2003). At the level of the interaction, there is a predictable structure to
the co-taught classroom in the ways that the co-teachers relate to each other and as well as ways of relating to students with IEPs.

**Ways of relating to each other.** After five years of working together, Keith and Val’s co-teaching relationship was pleasant and amicable and they were both very comfortable sharing a classroom and responsibility for the students. They had an understanding about how the classroom was to be managed and how to ensure the success of the students with IEPs and in many ways their teaching styles complemented each other. Watching Keith teach it was clear that he enjoyed teaching and talking with the students. In the classroom, Keith’s demeanor was strict, yet he was compassionate and understanding; he was serious, yet he presented his lessons with personal stories and lighthearted laughter. Keith managed the class with firmness and a sense of humor that allowed him to set clear expectations for the class while taking advantage of opportunities to laugh and talk with the students. Indicating a sense of shared responsibility for the students in the co-taught class, Keith was equally attentive to the students with IEPs and the general education students and stated that he felt responsible for making sure that all of the students learned the math curriculum.

Although Keith did the majority of large group instruction, when Val addressed the entire class it was not uncommon for Keith to interrupt Val to correct her or to give the students additional information that he deemed essential. Often after stepping in to address the class, Keith would apologize to Val either in front of
the class or in private and justify his actions by their necessity. Val, on the other hand, did not interrupt Keith when he was teaching and would often ask Keith’s permission to address the class with an announcement. Additionally, Val would often seek clarification or validation from Keith when answering a student question or explaining the solution to a problem. Rarely did Keith’s treatment of Val appear to be overly harsh. However, there was an instance when Val wanted to tell something to Keith and instead of interrupting him she wrote a note but before she could give it to him, Keith dismissed her stating that he was busy working with a student and he continued talking with the student. Later, Keith apologized to Val for putting her off, but simply explained that he was busy with a student (who happened to be a student with an IEP). Val accepted his apology, told Keith the intended message, and they went about business as usual.

Keith typically assumed the dominant role of primary instructor, while Val often took on the subordinate role of supportive coach. Keith tended to speak from a position of authority when addressing the class, predominantly using the pronoun “I” as the referent when giving instructions and rarely using an inclusive “we” to refer to both he and Val as a team. Additionally, when speaking to the students or giving them instructions, Keith referred to the students as “you,” again forgoing the inclusive “we” that could indicate his status as a member of the class. In addition to positional dominance, Keith’s pronoun use also revealed a distancing between him and Val, as well as the students. Although Keith’s expression of dominance and distancing is evident throughout the episode, it is particularly apparent in this dialogue:
Example 1.

Keith: Now I’m gonna sound nasty for a minute.

If you grade it incorrectly I will be taking points off yours.

However before you get crazy on me,

what I’m trying to avoid is someone who's grading their buddy's paper.

The buddy hardly has anything done correctly and

they're gonna give them a perfect score.

That’s what I’m trying to avoid.

So if you make a mistake here or there because it’s tough to tell.

I’m not gonna take off for that.

I’m only gonna take off if you don't bother to grade their paper correctly at all.

It’ll be obvious.

Although Val did not frequently address the entire class, when she did, Val typically communicated expectations for assignments using “we” and “us” to identify the co-teachers as a team with shared authority. The only times that Val used “me” or “I” was in reference to working with the students with IEPs, particularly referring to their meeting with her for extra help in her special education classroom. Val’s team-oriented perspective can be seen in these two segments.

Example 2.

Val: Ladies and gentlemen today it is very important

that we focus, and um get to work

because we don't want you to have a lot of homework tonight.
Example 3.

Val: OK now we'll quick answer questions.

And then after the questions Mr.K will go through the rubric.

And the grading. And then after that we'll talk.

From Example 1 it appears that Keith viewed himself as the primary authority on class assignments, while in Examples 2 and 3 it is clear that Val’s positions herself as part of a team with Keith. It is also likely that Val simply did not feel like she had the credibility to position herself as the authority in managing the students and thus used ‘we’ and ‘us’ to include Keith and indicate her alliance with Keith.

Val’s demeanor with the students was more subdued than Keith’s, as she tended to work with the students on a one-on-one basis. She was typically seen circulating about the classroom consulting with students and whispering to them as she moved around. On the surface, it appeared that Val was discussing the math concepts and assignments, and often this was the case. However, from transcriptions of the observations, it is evident that she was often talking with the students about things unrelated to the math class. During this quiet consultation time, Val would talk with students about their other classes, assignments, and plans for staying after school in addition to monitoring their grasp of the math. Val was careful to keep her voice down out of respect for Keith and his responsibilities to the larger class, and they both indicated in their interviews that this was an essential key to the success of their co-teaching relationship.
Val’s deference to Keith in this regard can be superficially seen as a courtesy, but with deeper consideration it appears to be an example of the efforts Val makes to ensure the success of her co-teaching relationship and the success of her students. Keith recounted a story about another co-teacher who did not understand how distracting her talking during his instruction was, and Val commented on how she tries to make sure that her work with the students with IEPs does not interfere with the progress of the larger class. Val willingly cedes the more prominent position in the co-teaching team to Keith because she is primarily concerned with meeting the specific needs of the students with IEPs not only in the math class, but also throughout the entire day. In analyzing the relationship between the co-teachers, it became apparent that in addition to vast differences in their teaching styles, Keith and Val also had different ways of relating to the students with IEPs.

**Ways of relating to the students.** Although this analysis is primarily about the co-teachers’ interactions, in order to fully understand this relationship, it is also necessary to explore the co-teachers’ interactions and perceptions of the students with IEPs in the co-taught class. While teaching, Keith asked questions of all students equitably, sometimes calling on or checking in with the students with IEPs more often than the others. However, there were times when the demands of the students with IEPs, academic, behavioral, or organizational, took away from the attention that he needed to pay to the rest of the class and Keith’s frustration was evident. As shown in Example 4, during one class Val was talking privately to a student with an IEP and
had just praised him for getting the correct answer when the student impulsively raised his hand and banged it on the table for the third time that class.

**Example 4.**

Val: Calm down honey.

Keith: (yelling at a student)

I’m sorry do you understand how big of a distraction that is?

I’m trying to go over this for everybody else in the class.

It's wonderful that you got it Jonny, but that’s a huge distraction.

You're sitting right up front you’re pounding on the table.

Everyone wants to know what’s Jonny doing pounding on the table instead of what's Mr.K doing up here.

Although Val was speaking with the student about his distracting behavior, Keith intervened and drew embarrassing attention to the student in front of the entire class. This is one way in which the students with IEPs were marginalized in the co-taught classroom. Keith indicated that he felt responsible for making sure that the content was delivered effectively and that he prepared the students for the state mandated assessments, and distractions like this one took precious time away from the entire class.

Keith determined what topics would be covered according to the content of the state test and the district benchmarking schedule, and he prioritized the course curriculum according to those standards. The school district used common curriculum
and benchmarking assessments to guarantee that all students learned the same material and all material that was expected to be on the state assessment would be covered in all classes. Although Keith said that he tried to supplement the minimum requirements for curriculum whenever possible to extend beyond the content of the state assessment, this was not often the case with the co-taught class.

Keith also determined if any topics other than those prescribed by the state could be included in classroom instruction for each of his classes. Keith described these two categories of topics as ‘need to know’ and ‘nice to know’ and the latter category was often omitted from the lesson plans for the co-taught class. This was one way in which it appeared that the students (both those with IEPs and those without) in the co-taught class were not being given access to the same curriculum as the traditional non co-taught classes. Teaching to the test is a common outcome of widespread high-stakes testing and the narrowing of the curriculum is not unique to this class, rather it is exacerbated. Keith decided on the content for each one of his classes and the decision to omit ‘nice to know’ content was not done solely in the co-taught class. However, Keith and Val discussed, on more than one occasion during the course of the data collection, the omission of certain topics and the simplification of requirements for all of the students in the co-taught class. It appeared that the differentiation of expectations for the co-taught class as a whole resulted in lower standards for acceptable performance in comparison to the non-inclusive math classes.
Keith linguistically marginalized the co-taught class from his other classes when he explained the expectations that he had for the class, referring to ‘this class’ and ‘your class’ to communicate the modified curricular expectations to the students. During the data collection there was one major assignment due and Keith repeatedly pointed out to the class that they had only nine requirements, while the other classes each had ten because the tenth requirement was deemed to be a ‘nice to know’ element of the assignment. This revealed Keith’s perceptions of the co-taught class to be qualitatively different from his other classes, as his use of ‘this class’ and ‘your class’ reflects a perception of this class as being different from his other classes. During his interview Keith differentiated the co-taught class from other classes when he commented that he was surprised that his other classes struggled with an assignment when he didn’t even expect the “special ed class” to struggle with it. That statement reflected Keith’s perception of the co-taught class as a special education class, not an inclusive class and his assumption that the co-taught class would not perform as well as his other classes. In Example 5, Keith discusses his primary responsibility in the co-taught classroom and how he handled the “special ed” kids.

Example 5.

Keith: My responsibility is to get all the kids to understand the material.

To get them to enjoy the material.

And the highest one is to get them to reach beyond what I have shown.

To reach beyond and look for themselves.

I think I know what (...) who all the special ed kids are,
but I’m not positive I do.

They are kids in the classroom.

It doesn't matter if they are special ed or not.

Now some of the kids in the class that I know are special ed,

I will be much more patient with.

Mary for example is someone that I think has a lot of ability, but she is lazy.

I might light into her because I feel that that can get her going.

Michele is working hard, the last thing I want to do is be sharp or give her tone because she doesn't need that at all.

She needs encouragement.

Although Keith indicated in his interview that he did not differentiate between the students with and without IEPs, his practice did not indicate that he changed very much of his pedagogy from his traditional math classes to meet the diverse needs of the students in the co-taught class. In Keith’s description, he stressed the independence and individual achievement of the students as an indicator of worth and commented that his perceptions of laziness, ability, and effort determine whether the student requires patience, encouragement, or discipline.

Although Keith linguistically identified the co-taught class as a ‘special ed class,’ both he and Val also indicated in their interviews that often the lowest performing student in the co-taught class was not one of the students with IEPs. Although the twelve students with IEPs in the co-taught classes were all assigned to
Val’s case load and they were with her in all of the content courses, they did not all have math disabilities, and occasionally were some of the strongest students in the class. Regardless of disability classification, there were students performing at various levels in the co-taught class and it was Keith and Val’s responsibility to make sure that they monitored each student’s progress and maintained strong communication between school and home.

When speaking about responsibility for parental contact, Keith stated that Val made any necessary phone calls to the parents of the students with IEPs. He indicated that this simply made more sense since Val was the one who was most closely involved in their educational progress and that he did not have the time to make as many calls as were required. Interestingly, Val did not use the same labels as Keith when addressing the students with IEPs or describe the students with IEPs as “mine.” However, when she wanted to convey a message to these students in the co-taught class, she would make a general announcement to anyone who was planning on staying after school with her or anyone who was in her enrichment class. Although those two groups were comprised, almost entirely, of the students with IEPs, Val did not claim ownership over them, nor did she exclude any of the general education students from her offerings.

Val’s support of the students was evident, not only in her prompting and cueing, but also in the lengths that she went to ensure her students’ success in the co-taught class. In Example 6, Val said that despite contractual limitations on time that
she could spend working with students, she would knowingly violate these limitations
because she felt that the students needed her.

Example 6.

Val: I use enrichment, lunch, afterschool.

But if it is a contract year I don't use my lunch.

And it is a contract year, but how can you not?

They need extra time how can you not give it to them?

Val’s teaching style was subdued in the typical day-to-day workings of the classroom,
but when the needs and success of the students with IEPs were involved, it was
evident that she was the one making the decisions. However, as the less visible of
the two teachers in the large class format, Val viewed her teaching responsibilities as
primarily supportive of not only the students, but Keith as well.

Val and Keith varied in their instructional contributions to the co-taught class
depending upon the circumstances at any given time and they enacted their teaching
styles and related to the students in different ways. While Val often asked for Keith’s
approval or permission before making certain decisions pertaining to the entire class,
Keith deferred to her on matters pertaining to the students with IEPs. Val’s
assumption of responsibility for the students with IEPs was facilitated by Keith’s
distancing of himself from the class and his categorization of the class as “special
ed.” As I continue to analyze the interactions between Keith and Val, I explore how
their discursive beliefs about inclusion and disability are immanent in their co-
teaching practice.
Discourse

Fairclough (2003) describes discourses as ways of representing processes, structures, beliefs, of the material and social world. The Discourses of inclusion and disability, the authority of the state department of education, the co-teachers’ authorities, and the relevance of physical space are relevant to consider in exploring the ways of representing co-teaching.

Ways of representing co-teaching. At the beginning of this study, I understood co-teaching to be the discursive intersection of general education and special education within classroom praxis. I anticipated seeing the two teachers bring their individual expertise to the co-teaching relationship and observing their negotiation of shared time, space, and students. Cursory analysis of the data confirmed this and indicated that the special education discursive activities were predominantly conducted by Val and typically involved collecting data on student progress, monitoring student comprehension and attention, and providing necessary accommodations and modifications as per the students’ IEPs. Similarly, the general education discursive activities were typically conducted by Keith and included large group instruction, monitoring of assignment completion and behavior for the entire class, and curricular planning. It appeared that the co-teaching arrangement in this classroom represented a discursive intersection and was consistent with the primary elements of the various exemplar models of co-teaching found in the co-teaching literature. Within this co-teaching context, I observed co-planning, varying models of
instruction, healthy professional and personal relationships, administrative support, and a common vision of success for all students—all of which are largely considered to be requisite for successful co-teaching. By these standards, this was a very successful co-teaching arrangement.

As my analysis progressed with additional qualitative coding and categorizing, it became apparent, however, that there was much more going on in this math classroom than I had originally thought and I came to understand that my initial analysis represented an incomplete understanding of co-teaching. During this math class, Val, the special education teacher, frequently engaged in activities that were not represented in models like Friend’s (2000) six approaches to co-teaching. As a self-described ‘backstage manager’ or ‘public relations manager,’ Val’s daily activities involved her speaking to the students with IEPs about setting up times for them to come see her before school, after school, or during lunch for extra help, talking about non-academic issues, and monitoring their assignments for any one of the four core academic subjects. These activities were prevalent throughout each class session, yet they were not represented in any of the models of co-teaching that I had reviewed. This section of the discourse analysis, therefore, explores the nature and significance of these previously unaccounted for interactions. While analyzing the activities that did not fit within the common models of co-teaching, I realized that these activities were not only consequential, but also essential to the success of the co-teaching arrangement— for the students and teachers alike.
Although Val had regular routines and responsibilities, her actions throughout the day were not always predictable or methodic. As she scrambled to monitor the progress of each student with an IEP in each of the four academic areas, Val’s interactions with the students with IEPs had an air of importance and urgency and she stayed in close contact with each of these students throughout the day. I determined that these social interactions represented Val’s attempts at ensuring that the students with IEPs kept up with the pace of instruction and maintained their successful status in the general education classroom. It seemed that the survival of the students with IEPs in the co-taught classes was largely dependent upon Val’s ability to monitor and support them.

The theme of survival in the inclusive co-taught class underlies the analysis of discursive power and authority in this study. In order to understand this prevalent and complex theme, it is first necessary to explore the origins of this need for survival. Val utilized a significant amount of her time and effort in her attempts to anticipate the students’ potential conflicts or failures and intercept them in whatever way she could. For example, during the course of this study, a student with an IEP was removed from the co-teaching program (and the school) after she was involved in an unprovoked physical altercation with another student (without an IEP). After considering this event and the student’s ongoing patterns of poor attendance and consequential struggles to keep up with assignments, a Committee on Special Education decided that she was simply not succeeding in this placement. Ironically, Mathers Middle School was not the student’s neighborhood school and she was now
to be returned to her home school and placed in a more restrictive class (likely a self-contained special education class). I found it strange that an unprovoked physical altercation sparked the removal of the student, which was then validated by the student’s poor attendance record and academic achievement. Regardless, this student had been excluded from her home school only to be excluded from her current school by a team of educational professionals who had determined that her educational needs were not being met at Mathers Middle School.

Val and the students were acutely aware that their membership in the co-taught program was tentative at best and any indication that a student was not ‘succeeding’ or ‘having their needs met’ could result in the relocation of the student to a ‘more appropriate’ placement. The urgency of this conditionality was evident in the lengths that Val went to in order to ensure that her students succeeded in the co-taught classes. It appeared that the need for survival in the co-taught class was a function of the location and definition of authority in the school and classroom environment and arose from a threat to the students’ continued membership in the co-taught class.

**Authority and power.** It has been previously discussed that one of Keith’s roles in the co-taught classroom was to make decisions about daily lessons and schedule assignments and assessments for the entire class, while Val’s primary responsibilities involved supporting the students with IEPs. However, I found that there was a powerful presence that appeared to have a significant impact on Keith and
Val’s interactions with the students and each other. Additional analysis indicated that there was a third authority in the class that was often referred to non-anaphorically by both Val and Keith as “they” and other times more directly as “the state.” During daily instruction, both Val and Keith talked about ways that “they” (the state) could try to trick the students on the state test and instructed the students in various ways to be prepared for whatever “they” might give on this year’s state test. These references situated the state New York State Education Department as the voice of ultimate authority in the classroom and made it clear that certain aspects of curriculum and assessment were beyond Keith and Val’s control.

**Authority of the state.** The looming influence of the New York State Department of Education, although physically absent in the classroom, was felt by teachers and students alike. Both Keith and Val referenced the significance of the state test in their conversations with the class. In Example 7, Keith explained how he could only help the students prepare to a certain point, because he had nothing to do with the creation of the test.

**Example 7.**

Keith: You’re gonna see some questions on the state test that are not written the exact same way I’ve written mine.

‘Cause I don't know how they are gonna write em.

So yeah, I could have given you something like that in your notes, but I didn't on purpose.

‘Cause you are gonna get something like...
something different on the state test.

I have no idea what.

But every year there's something different.

You have to be able to adjust.

Val also referenced the importance of the students’ performance on the state test and how they needed to persevere on the exam and write something, anything, down for every question in order to score some points. In Example 8, she explains how she and Keith figured out how to score points on the test even when you are not sure about how to answer the questions.

Example 8.

Val: Now the good thing is Mr. K and I realized a long time ago

if you open up that part two on the state test

and you're not sure you write down some of it and you get credit.

And we went through and did that and realized that

wow these kids could pass if they at least attempted it.

So always attempt it. If you show your work get one answer one.

Keith and Val’s regard for the state test was evident not only during classroom instruction and planning sessions, but in their interviews as well. In their interviews, Keith and Val spoke about the success that they have had as a team when it came to state testing and how they were recognized by their school district administration for their students’ good test scores and high rates of passing. They proudly talked about
how their class averages on the state tests were statistically indistinguishable from other general education math classes with no students with IEPs in them. By this measure, Val and Keith were extremely successful in assimilating the students with IEPs in this program into the general education environment, but at what cost? Val knew that her students’ performance on the state math test and district benchmark tests influenced their acceptance in the co-taught class, and she did everything within her power to make sure that these students succeeded and survived. Moreover, Val knew that her students’ success in the co-taught class reflected not only on her competence as an educator, but Keith’s as well. Perhaps this provides some insight into the rapid removal of the previously discussed student from the co-taught program. Did Val and Keith suspect that she would not pass the state test? Although the state had the power to dictate large issues pertaining to curriculum and assessment, it was the co-teachers’ responsibility to construct a classroom environment in which their students could all succeed in this highly consequential measure.

**Keith’s authority.** As the math expert, Keith fulfilled the traditional general educator’s role of prominence in terms of the daily large group instruction and gave priority to covering the required math curriculum. When addressing the entire class, Keith typically spoke loudly and clearly and often raised his voice to emphasize a point or get the students’ attention. Keith used humor and occasional sarcasm when the students were on-task with conversations and assignments and got stern and raised his voice with the students when they were not appropriately engaged. Keith’s
position of authority in the classroom was also evident in the language that he used when he spoke to Val and the students. Keith consistently referred to himself in the first person singular when addressing the students about expectations, assessments, projects, and homework and usually told the class about his expectations using “I” and “me” to convey his sole authority. Keith would go on at length about his specific expectations for assignments situating him as the only authority.

When Keith referred to Val during class time, it was typically a request for her to do something or a recommendation that the students see her for extra help during or after class. Demonstrating her respect of Keith’s authority in the math classroom, in Example 9 Val spoke about how she was careful not to get in Keith’s way or have any of the students with IEPs hold the entire class back.

Example 9.

Val: He said well why don’t you just go ahead and do it.

We have a lot of time, and he'll kinda tell me his time frame.

Because I don't want to overstep the time frame because

I know he's on the course of pre-March post-March for the state test.

So I'm conscious of that.

So I don't wanna take too much of that core time.

If it is something that just my kids are mostly struggling with

then I’ll push it to my enrichment.
He said no I've got...we've got time.

We have to do the benchmark but we have time today, um-

so why don't you take as much time as you need.

This theme appears quite often in the data and has been mentioned in previous sections of this analysis. Val works very hard to ensure that her students do not slow down the progress of the larger group and this is evident in the way that she prompts the students. Although Keith took on a more prominent and dominant role than Val in the classroom, the power relations between the co-teachers were not static, rather they were fluid and responsive to the needs of the students on a situational basis. In many ways the most visible authority in the co-taught classroom was Keith, but Val also possessed her own authority in that classroom.

_val's authority._ Val’s authority was not always visible from a whole-class perspective, but it was certainly in existence and necessary to ensure the success and survival of her students. Although many of the classroom routines were either decided by the content area teacher or were grade-wide policies, there was some collaborative classroom management planning among the co-teachers. Val indicated that there were times when she would step in and bend a rule in order to protect a student from being ostracized or embarrassed. For example, Keith had a policy that if a student did not have a pencil for class, he or she was required to take a small golf pencil from a cup at the front of the room and leave a personal item as collateral. Val indicated that, sometimes, the embarrassment of having to go through this admission
in front of the entire class, often to be reprimanded publicly by Keith, could be more detrimental to the student than any possible lesson about coming to class prepared. Rather than confront Keith about her dissatisfaction with this policy, Val asserted herself in a covert manner without creating a potentially contentious situation. In preparation for this type of situation, Val brought her own set of pencils to class so that she could provide students with a pencil without any fanfare and they could get immediately to work without risking public ridicule. Val believed that the students faced so many other challenges in the co-taught classes that starting off with a public berating for simply forgetting a pencil is unnecessarily harsh. After close analysis, it became evident that there were situations that threatened the survival of the students with IEPs and evoked a response from Val that revealed the complexity of the co-teachers’ power relationship.

The power relations between Keith and Val are illustrated in the following incident that involved a project the class had been working on for about a week. Prior to this exchange, Keith succinctly indicated to the class that there would be no extensions on the final due date for the project and any missing assignments would receive a failing grade. However, when Val realized that one of the general education students who had been absent for many of the previous days did not have the assignment, Val asked Keith if the student teacher could take the student down to the library to get the assignment started. Keith told her no, that it was simply too late to work on the assignment, Val accepted that response, and the student did not complete the project. Val did not question Keith’s direction to have the student miss the
Upon analyzing the transcript from the class on the day that the assignment was due, however, there were a series of interactions in Example 10 in which Val displayed a significantly different way of interacting with Keith.

**Example 10.**

**Keith:** (counts down to get students’ attention)

five…four…three…two…one.

I want to make sure everyone is totally clear.

So when I hear first thing tomorrow complaining, crying, screaming, shouting.

You will all know that that person should have understood.

When is this due?

**Class:** Tomorrow

**Keith:** Tomorrow when?

First thing in class.

So first thing in class will you get extra time tomorrow to work on this in class?

No. What will we be doing as soon as I collect it?

What will happen once I collect it?

**Val:** (speaking quietly to a student with an IEP)

So you know what to do tonight at home right honey for the label?

During enrichment ask Mr. K and then just ask a friend to help you finish.
OK there you go.

Keith: (speaking to the entire class)

You're gonna grade someone else’s.

That’s why it needs to get done.

(speaking as if he was a student)

But Mr. K I left it at so and so’s.

(speaking as himself)

So I’m sorry any excuse you come up with just won’t fly.

(speaking as if her was a student)

Mr. K I don't have it because of so and so.

(speaking as himself)

Well I don't think anyone wants to stay after on Friday to grade your paper.

So therefore if you don't have it Thursday, you’re not gonna get it graded.

It’s gonna be a zero.

So please bring it to class I just don’t want you to forget it it’s very important. You need nine things in this class.

Despite Keith’s comments the previous day about having their projects completed in the beginning of class, the next day he gave the students time to work on their assignments in the first few minutes of class. While the students were all working on their projects, Val circulated around the room, checking in with students
as needed. During this unstructured time Val realized that Dion, one of the students with IEPs in the class, had forgotten his assignment at home and she knew that Keith would not accept any late submissions for the project. This exchange is documented in Example 11.

Example 11.

Val: OK yes who's calling me? Dion.

Dion: I don’t have my assignment.

Val: Uhhhh. That’s not good because no one can grade your paper today. Are you sure it’s not in your homework folder?

Dion: It’s home because I-

Val: Dion you are gonna have a zero for today then and it will be-

Dion: I can hand it in tomorrow.

Val: But no one is going to be grading it tomorrow.

Dion: I can do it after school today.

Val: No ‘cause we have so much to do after school. No.

Dion: Then I will take the zero.


Why don't you redraw one right now.

Here you go.

Redraw one very fast, you can do it.

Dion: No I can’t.

Val: Yes, you can.
Knowing that Dion had completed the assignment and could not afford the failing grade, Val encouraged him to take a few minutes and quickly do the assignment again just to have something to hand in. At this time, Keith directed the students to pass their projects to the front of the room so he could redistribute them for other students to grade according to the rubric grading sheet that they were given the previous day. In Example 12, while Keith was telling everyone to pass up their work, Val was having a private conversation with Dion that contradicted Keith’s explicit directions.

Example 12.

Val:  Dion, take another minute. OK? Keep going.

Dion:  Can’t I just take the zero?

Val:  No, I’m not allowing it.

Dion:  Why?

Val:  Because.

Keith:  (to the whole class)

Pass up the label you want graded.

Val:  (to Dion)

Keep going. Keep going.

(to Mr. K)

Mr. K we're gonna have one more in a minute.

(Keith is collecting the assignments from the students)

Keith:  Do we got ‘em all?
Val:  (talking to Keith)

There's ...his...it’s a long story.

He’ll… you'll have it in like forty seconds.

Just save one for him, and vice versa.

Keith:  Gotcha. OK.

Despite Dion’s objections and willingness to take the failing grade, Val strongly encouraged him to complete the assignment. All the while, Keith was calling for the projects to be handed forward as Val was simultaneously telling the student to keep working. Eventually, Keith became aware that Val was working on the assignment with Dion. He continued to address the class and quietly accepted the late assignment. Without going into any detail or asking Keith’s permission, Val indicated that Dion would be handing in his assignment shortly and that she would explain more at a later time. However, that was not the end of the incident because a few seconds later in Example 13 Val realized that Dion did not have his rubric for the peer grading of the assignment.

Example 13.

Val:  (whispering to Dion)

You lost that too?  OK.

(Val goes to get a grading sheet for Dion from across the room)

Keith:  (notices that not everyone has a grading sheet)

How about this.

Everyone hold up their grading sheet.
OK Dion where's your grading sheet?

Val: (coming towards Dion with the paper in her hand)

I’ve got it right here.

(laughing) OK, we're good.

Just as Keith was about to speak with Dion about his missing sheet Val rushed over laughing and commenting that she had his paper, that Dion was now prepared and she signaled to Keith that he could now commence the grading portion of the activity.

The way that Val asserted her authority in handling Dion’s missing assignment indicated that she viewed Keith’s superior positioning in the handling of classroom affairs to be situationally negotiable. Val apparently believed that there were circumstances in which the students with IEPs should be held to different standards than the ones that Keith nominally set for the entire class. Moreover, this differentiation had to be made covertly, so that no attention would be drawn to the students. Keith also shared this belief, because at no point in the interaction involving Dion, did Keith challenge Val or question the actions that she took to ensure that he handed in his project on time. Although this flexibility reflected Val and Keith’s responsiveness to the individual needs of their students, it also revealed their perception of students with IEPs as being different from the other students in the class and the lengths that Val went to in order to ensure their survival in the co-taught class.
The power relations discussed thus far represent Val and Keith’s interactions that took place in the co-taught classroom. In that physical location, Keith assumed the dominant position while Val appeared to be content with a more supportive role. When discussing topics related to special education and inclusion, the physical location of the instruction is often at the heart of the debate— with the general education classroom being the desired location. Ideally, inclusion presupposes the use of shared space to educate students with and without IEPs and precludes physical exclusion for instructional purposes. However, in Keith and Val’s situation, the co-taught math class was not the only place where the students with IEPs received support.

**Authority, power, and physical space.** Although most of my observations were made in the nominally inclusive co-taught classroom, Val spent a portion of each school day in what she referred to as ‘her room’. Val’s room contained her desk and student files, 15 student desks, a small-group working table, a white board, three computers, a printer, a microwave, and a refrigerator. As previously explained, Val’s classroom was a social hub for all of the teachers in the 8th grade team. But, throughout the day Val also used her room to meet with the students with IEPs for scheduled and unscheduled consultations or meetings outside of the co-taught classroom. Although I was not able to videotape Val’s interactions with the students in Val’s classroom extensively, I did have the opportunity to videotape the interviews and take field notes while observing some instructional and testing time in Val’s classroom.
In order to lessen the distraction to the other students in the class, Val occasionally took the students with IEPs to her classroom during the co-taught classes to administer tests or to provide more intensive instruction. Many of the students with IEPs needed to have their tests read aloud to them and they often asked numerous questions during tests, which Val felt could be distracting to the other students. Additionally, there were times when Val felt that the students did not understand the material and it would be easier to have them all in her room so that she could talk freely without disturbing Keith or the other students. Val also commented that she provided multiplication charts and put up posters and other visuals to reinforce the concepts that Keith covered in the co-taught class. Because state testing regulations limit the type of information that can be posted in the classroom during assessments, she felt that this level of support was not appropriate in the co-taught classroom. Val commented in Example 14 from an interview about the use of her room as a place where they can take time to learn concepts without slowing down the progress of the entire class.

Example 14.

Val: I won't slow down the class but I will get the struggling learners.

So if it's something yeah that they are not getting as a whole, and you are not gonna pull twelve of them aside.

In that case I would say Keith, I will take it in my room and do twelve

if it is something I can keep going over or whatever.
But then on the other hand,

if there is something that they need to be in there for
then I will push into enrichment.

Because I figure then we'll redo it and redo it in enrichment until we get it right.

Because of the limited time that Val had to consult with the students with IEPs during the co-taught classes, she often worked with them at other times in her classroom during ‘enrichment class,’ which met approximately three times each week. Enrichment class was a part of everyone’s schedule and each student was assigned to report to one of the 8th grade teachers’ rooms to receive additional instruction and support in any academic area. The enrichment class rosters were decided based on student achievement. All of the students with IEPs, and a few other students who the team thought could benefit from more intensive support, were assigned to Val’s enrichment class. Keith’s group of enrichment students were the ‘lowest’ performing students who did not have IEPs and the other two teachers had the next two higher ‘levels’ of students. During enrichment time, Val was able to monitor the students’ progress on homework and class work assignments, provide remedial instruction, and administer tests for those students with extended testing time limits that were not completed during designated class time. Val indicated that although she would like to have been able to do more study skills and organizational instruction, enrichment time was largely used to get the students with IEPs caught up with their classes and avoid any additional penalties for late work.
In addition to the time in the Enrichment Class, the students with IEPs knew that Val’s room was almost always open and that she would be available to support them and provide extra assistance or guidance in her classroom throughout the day. The students with IEPs came to Val’s classroom so frequently, that when we were interviewing she had to put a sign up on her door telling the students to come back another time. During many of my visits to Val’s classroom, there were one or two students in her classroom working on the computer or other assignments, either independently or with Val’s assistance. It appeared that Val’s room was a place where she could speak above a whisper to the students with IEPs and where the students could ask questions freely and receive the support that they needed- and could not get in the co-taught classroom.

In structuring their co-teaching arrangement, Val and Keith created two instructional spaces that contributed to their apparent success. The co-taught classroom resembled a traditional ‘general education’ academic space where content was delivered and the students with and without IEPs co-existed. The second space was resembled a traditional ‘special education’ space where the students with IEPs could have their special education needs met in regard to accommodations and modifications in assessment and instruction.

The co-taught classroom appeared to be inclusive in that the students with IEPs were welcome as long as Keith could progress through the curriculum as he would in a non-co-taught class. It appeared that the decisions about what was worth
knowing for all of the students in this co-taught class had been made by the district, the state, and to a lesser extent, Keith. The types of decisions that Val made pertained to the survival of a classified group of students who had been identified as in need of a ‘special education.’ These students were invited to become members of the ‘normal’ community of learners, as long as they did not demand excessive attention or time and the class could progress along prescribed and uniform lines. The co-taught math class was only inclusive as long as the students with IEPs could keep up with the pace of Keith’s instruction. But when the needs of the students presented a threat to the ‘normal’ flow of the co-taught classroom, Val switched to a traditional special education mindset- segregation.

The use of Val’s classroom as a traditional segregated special education room provided a safe place for her to meet the needs of the students with IEPs in whatever manner required. The students with IEPs in the co-taught class knew that there were other places that they could be placed- either in a self-contained class, or separate school entirely if they were unable to keep up with the state curriculum and assessment schedule. All students, regardless of their special education classification, were uniformly expected to pass the state assessment. This standard of uniformity established a classroom community with conditional membership for anyone who did not fit this expected norm.

Although the ideals of inclusive education include emphasis on individual growth, development of democratic values and social justice within educational
settings, they did not appear to be valued in Keith and Val’s leadership of the co-taught math class. The ways in which Keith and Val related to each other and the students (genre) and the distribution of authority and power (discourse) revealed that Keith and Val identified along traditional general education/ special education lines. Their conceptions of normalcy and allegiance to traditional special education expectations indicated that Val and Keith’s professional identities were another aspect of the co-teaching relationship that needed to be explored. The following section explores the co-teachers’ professional identification as a significant obstacle to their providing an inclusive education for the students in the co-taught class.

**Style**

Fairclough describes style as the ways of identifying oneself and others, which is directly related to the ways of representing the world (discourse) and one’s ways of acting and relating in context (genre). Professional identity is particularly relevant when dealing with collaborative practices such as co-teaching. Val and Keith provided significant insight into their perceptions of themselves as well as the other in relation to their professional role or identity in the co-teaching relationship.

**Ways of identifying oneself and others.** In the co-teaching situation, Val and Keith had specific ways in which they identified themselves and each other that were evident in their language and actions. Themes pertaining to identity emerged when the co-teachers were asked to describe their roles and responsibilities in the co-taught classroom. The division of responsibility between the two teachers is one of
the most commonly discussed aspects of the relationship found in the co-teaching literature and is relevant to discuss in this study. In the present analysis, the apportioning of roles and responsibilities took place according to traditional perceptions of general and special educator responsibility. Val and Keith came from two very different backgrounds in terms of educational experience and professional preparation. Val was a lifelong special education teacher, while Keith was a former engineer turned secondary level math teacher; and within the co-taught classroom context, Val and Keith identified their roles along those traditional professional lines.

**The high school teacher vs. elementary teacher.** Keith self-identified along traditional general education secondary level content specialist lines. He stated that he was a high school math teacher and his role as a co-teacher was to provide all of his students with a solid mathematics preparation and an opportunity to develop an interest in mathematics in their lives. As Keith described himself in Example 15, he drew comparisons between his and Val’s styles.

**Example 15.**

Keith: I’m a high school teacher.

I think in terms of high school.

I show the kids it, they are responsible.

I’ll help them out and some.

But I’m not an elementary teacher who is soft and cuddly and-

(raises pitch) Oh you didn't get it the first five times I said it?

Let me tell you a sixth time.
You just need to keep hearing it.
No as you probably already seen, I’m like
look I said it a couple of times.
That's enough you should get it now.
Whereas Val tones me down. She's like here's what you do.

In Example 15, Keith’s self-perception as a one-dimensional disseminator of information was evident. He explains that he is not a ‘soft and cuddly’ elementary teacher who patiently takes time to work with struggling students. Although he did not expressly state that he was describing Val in this manner, the implication is clear. In a later excerpt, Keith explicitly described Val as an ‘elementary teacher’ and comments on her caring and patient disposition. The change in Keith’s voice to a higher exaggerated feminine pitch and his choice of words to describe those supportive teaching practices signified his lesser regard for those who do what he deems to be excessive repetition. When Keith identified Val by name at the end he characterized her as the one who tones him down and takes the time to talk with the struggling students. Keith regarded Val as a vital contributor to the success of the students with IEPs in the co-taught class, but her patience and willingness to repeat instructions were only a small part of her total contribution.

**Public relations manager and behind the scenes manager.** Val described herself as the public relations manager for the entire 8th grade team. This meant that Val was responsible for more than the time in each co-taught class; she was
responsible for making sure that the co-teaching system worked for everyone on the 8th grade team. Val described this in Examples 16, 17, and 18.

Example 16.

Val: Each person has different styles and pet peeves.
    And it depends on their content and style and you adjust with them.
    And Keith often says your job is not just dealing with kids.
    It is PR person with each person.
    Because you have to not only please the parents and the students,
    but please each other in the relationship.
    ‘Cause it is not going to work.

As the manager of public relations for the grade level team, Val described her role as making sure that everyone including teachers, parents, students, and administrators were satisfied with the inclusive co-teaching arrangement.

Example 17.

Val: I'm the PR person in that I am working with each teacher and talking to them.
    They will share things with me and then share them with the team.
    But I’ll have known.
    They have already told me because I see them.
    And when you spend an hour and things are going hunky dory you can chat.
In doing this, Val kept in close daily contact with students’ parents, the students themselves, their guidance counselors, teachers in non core academic classes, as well as the other co-teachers to ensure that all parties were satisfied with the arrangement. Val spoke more about herself and her role as the public relations manager teachers and students on the 8th grade team.

Example 18.

Val: I’m like- the assembly this day is bla bla bla.

Or the fire drill today.

And it’s like I make it around, whatever.

Even little minor things like that,

it’s like heads up our superintendent is walking in. (laughter)

I come out of the last class.

Even little things like that.

So not just the constant between the kids.

I think it’s my role- not their mother, but kinda.

I feel that way- their mother in the classes.

But between them I keep them up to date too because there's so much.

And I don't know if its middle school or just our district,

but there's a lot-

I mean besides teaching the conferences, the recordkeeping,

the academic intervention.

We can keep going on and on.
Just our last team meeting, fitting in all the ISTs.

All the behavior plans, these point systems for trips, parent conferences-

As a team we have to do that all ourselves.

We have to do so much behind the scenes besides lessons that it takes up a lot of time.

To the casual observer walking into the co-taught classroom, it might not appear that Val and Keith shared responsibilities in their class equally. But this was not truly representative of the parity in their relationship. Although Val tended to have a less prominent position during class instruction, she repeatedly commented on the extensive list of tasks she needed to accomplish that had nothing to do with delivering instruction in the co-taught classroom. In this regard, she described her primary role as being a ‘behind the scenes’ manager. She explained that in a staged play there were countless things that needed to be done to support the actual staged performance that many never saw or understood. As a self-described backstage manager for the co-taught classes, Val stated that she felt that it was her responsibility to make sure that she made every conceivable effort to support Keith and ensure the students with IEPs’ success. Keith recognized that Val was responsible for so much else besides the classroom instruction and appreciated all of the work that she did to keep the students with IEPs on track. It was as if Keith needed Val to be the backstage manager in order for him to be able to continue teaching in his traditional ‘high school’ manner.
Although Val was not the primary instructor or assessor for the large group, her backstage teaching style was evident in the way that she worked with the students. When Keith asked the students a question he simply waited a short time for an answer and moved on if the student was unable to provide an answer. However, when possible, Val would interject and provide prompts to encourage the students to give an answer by relating back to prior concepts or assignments. Sometimes Val would physically stand behind Keith while he was questioning a student and use gestures to prompt the student. Val tended to present alternatives to Keith’s explanations and solutions and would often praise students for coming close to the correct answer or for just trying. While Keith was simply looking for the single correct answer in a timely fashion using the precise method presented during class instruction.

As Val mentioned, she was not only a constant for the teachers, but for the students with IEPs as well. As a constant for the students, Val explained that she needed to know what was going on in the students’ lives at home, as well as in the classes that were not co-taught. Val described this part of her job as being like their mother throughout the day. She needed to make herself available to the students outside of the time she saw them in the co-taught classes in order to make sure that they were keeping up with their classes, up to date on assignments, and receiving the appropriate accommodations and modifications in their classes. Val explained that she typically made special arrangements to meet with her students in the mornings and after school and often went against union regulations to meet with her students.
during her lunch and prep times. Val explained that she understood the administrative bureaucracy, but in the end it would be the students who would suffer the most, so she bent the rules as necessary. When asked in an interview to discuss the how she managed to meet the special education needs of the students who were in the general education system with limited free time during the school day, Val expressed some frustration with the inherent inflexibility of the system. In Example 19 Val justified the lengths that she went to in order to provide appropriate services to her students.

**Example 19.**

Val: It is my choice to give up my lunch or my planning. But it’s like they have no other time. I have those two hours every three days. So we purposely built it in the schedule. But if you had to weigh it on a-

Well unfortunately,

the kids are being pushed into the general education system. The structure- but is the structure trying to make modifications now? Yes, certainly because of special ed teachers advocating, parents advocating. Because of law suits. Because of the- now we are like-

Special ed teachers do need extra contact time with their kids
other than during the content area.

Well of course, when do you think we are gonna do the extended time?
When are you gonna preteach?
When are you gonna reteach?

In Example 19, Val discussed the challenges she faced in trying to meet the needs of the students with IEPs. However, her comment about the “kids being pushed into the general education system” indicates some frustration with the structure of the current education system and the difficulty that special education teachers now have finding time in an already busy day to provide the necessary accommodations and modifications as outlined in the students IEPs.

The special ed teacher. Val was a certified special education teacher with significant experience in both self-contained and co-taught classes. Although this class was not officially considered to be a special education class by the school district, Keith referred to it as a “special ed class” and Val described herself as a “special ed teacher” on numerous occasions. Example 20 documents a day that Val was ill and had to leave work to see the doctor, but she returned to school, with a fever and significant pain, to finish the day. She explained that her illness was not contagious and if she did not return to school her students would suffer without her support during and after school. As a special education teacher, Val explained that she simply had to be there for her students- she saw no reasonable alternative.
Example 20.

Val: I know I should go home.

But I have the kids after school today,

and there is no one else to cover them and I feel bad.

I dropped off a prescription.

I know, but I can make it-

special ed teacher.

Val’s self-identification as a special educator indicates the depth of her self-

perception and identification as a traditional special education teacher. However,

despite Val’s proud affiliation as a special education teacher, in Example 21 I noticed

some frustration about her responsibilities and other peoples’ perceptions of her

professional role or identity.

Example 21.

Val: I feel like I’m being pulled every which way.

Sometimes I feel like you don't get the recognition.

Are you a math teacher? science teacher?

Oh you are special ed.

Luckily I know people who are like oh you are on roller skates.

And you are taking care of these kids all day.

And you have patience.

And I could never do that.

So that makes you feel better
Val implied that there was a negative perception among some colleagues about special education teachers, and was relieved that she had colleagues that understood the many responsibilities that she had.

Speaking about the district administrators’ perceptions of her roles and responsibilities, in Example 22 Val provided insight into some of the more technical aspects of her job and expressed a degree of frustration with their limited view of her reality.

**Example 22.**

Val: All day broken up fights.

Called home, dealt with parents.

These kids come with so many issues.

All these extracurricular things- trips, conferences, AIS letters.

Extra things besides getting these kids to be successful,

and ready, and appropriately behaved.

And you go to a meeting and the district is like-

just read those IEPs more carefully cause you missed this wording.

Because it said consultant teacher instead of integrated CT.

Granted I went through all the IEPs with a fine-toothed comb,

fixed them, sent parent letters.

And they are like well you missed one here.
OK. You just want to say I'll show you what I can miss-

But you feel like a little rat in a thing.

I’m busting my butt- and instead of you missed this, how about

Well great job dealing with all that,

plus making contact with all the parents-

To do that when I am cleaning up a mess

that was not my mess to begin with.

Val’s comments indicated her frustration, but also indicated the pride that she felt in the work that she does as well as her dedication to the students. These passages also supported my observation that much of the success of their co-teaching relationship was not dependent upon Keith and Val’s adherence to a particular model of co-teaching. It appeared throughout this analysis, that their success was directly related to Val’s ability to manage the daily lives of the twelve students with IEPs, collaboration with four general education teachers, as well as the traditional responsibilities of a special education teacher.

**The other.** While talking in a joint interview, in Examples 23 and 24 Keith and Val briefly explained their perceptions of each other as a teachers and the way that they complement each other. Val described Keith in a way that showed her deference for him and her identification as a special education teacher, while revealing the comfort that she felt after working with him for five years.
Example 23.

Val: Keith has his own agenda and is self directed.

I always still- I don't want to take too much of his time.

He is very logical sequential.

And special ed and my personality-

I'm like let's go in circles.

It has changed.

He always reassures me.

Keep adding, explaining.

Because if you keep giving it your way, they might learn it.

I've learned a great deal from him

Because I know where he is going and I can-

Not read his mind,

but I know that I will have to focus on this when

we are back in this room-

after school, or lunch.

Because I know what he is going to teach

because of the years and his style.

Example 24.

Keith: So she's got responsibilities that I don't have.

And as I’ve already said I gotta admit it’s not my strong point-
calling home and saying- (raises voice pitch)
JoJo they’re doing good,

but they need to work a little bit harder.

If I think they’re not, I’ll call home and just say

JoJo's just not cutting it.

JoJo’s gotta get in here and see me more often.

Val is just more politically correct.

Keith changes his voice toward the end of the above segment when he talks about not being the one to call the parents of a fictional student, JoJo, and gently telling them that JoJo just needs to “work a little harder.” The direct implication here is that Val is the one who calls home and gently discusses JoJo’s inadequate performance in school and Keith has no interest in this sort of interaction. Keith identifies Val as the nurturing emotional one, while he views himself as the one to provide the rational facts of the situation. Keith’s perceptions of himself and Val can also be explored along traditional gender lines.

Gender identity. Issues of gender have long been discussed in relation to education and emerged as relevant themes in the analysis of this study. Bourdieu identifies the highly feminized nature of social service occupations, such as teaching, and argues that gender stratification occurred on a par with social classes (Swartz, 1997). Bourdieu also notes that males are more likely to study science and technology than females because of social conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Barnes and Mercer (2003) discuss the ideology of care that has been integral to our cultural approach to disability and note the overwhelming contribution of women in the
provision of personal services to individuals with disabilities. A cursory examination of the data in this dissertation reveals adherence to traditional gender roles—Keith is the logical math teacher and Val is the emotional special education teacher.

In the context of this dissertation, Keith and Val both consistently identified Val’s contributions as feminine and his as masculine. Ochs (1993) argues that women are associated with images of mothering and practices of care-giving and that ideological conceptions of femininity have significantly influenced the behavior of women in the workplace. In Example 18, Val used gender identified statements to describe her work as mothering and acknowledged that she took on more of the care taking responsibilities in working with the students in the co-taught class. Asserting his masculinity, in Example 15 Keith explained that he was not an “elementary teacher who is soft and cuddly.” Although he did not explicitly claim that Val was the soft and cuddly elementary teacher, Keith consistently identified her as the “politically correct” and sensitive partner in their co-teaching relationship. According to Ochs (1993), higher pitch has distinct social meaning and indexes femininity in discourse. In Examples 15 and 24, Keith raised the pitch of his voice as he described instances when Val invoked a more compassionate or sensitive demeanor with the students than him and described Val’s contributions as softer, and more patient. Duranti (1997) explains that hesitancy is a stance that tends to index femininity and imply subordination, and Val’s uncertainty reveals specifically her hesitancy in the co-taught classroom. In this light, Val’s apparent need to seek clarification or approval from Keith before advising the students on academic issues can also be
viewed as gendered. In this co-teaching arrangement, Val’s and Keith’s identities and interactions are clearly gendered. However, the examples described here merely provide a cursory acknowledgment of the relevance of gender ideology in co-teaching research and reveal the potential for a more thorough analysis of gender identity in co-teaching.

Thus far, in this analysis I have discussed Val and Keith’s co-teaching relationship in terms of Fairclough’s (2003) orders of discourse-genre (ways of relating), discourse (ways of representing), and style (ways of identifying). Although their functioning as co-teachers was deemed exemplary by the school district administration, when examined from a critical discursive perspective, their interactions as professionals revealed a more complex representation of the relationship. In addition to the orders of discourse, Fairclough encourages an analysis that explores these discursive aspects within the local, institutional, and societal contexts of interaction. In this final section, I explore the relationships among Fairclough’s orders of discourse within the three contexts of discursive interaction.

**Contexts of Discursive Interaction**

Rogers (2003) discusses these contextual domains in reference to special education discourse and the relevance of her work to this analysis is significant. The local domain represents the physical location of the co-teaching in the school. The institutional context represents the norms, policies, and regulations of the school system within which the co-teaching classes operate. The societal domain represents
the legislative policies that govern special education and dictate the state-wide high-stakes standardized testing as well as the values, beliefs, and grand narratives that construct and maintain special education as a legitimate and distinct field.

**Local context: The classroom.** In analyzing the local context of co-teaching, Keith and Val function well as two friendly colleagues with little overt disagreement or conflict. The school administrators and district administration are pleased with the test scores of the students with and without IEPs in the co-taught class and Keith and Val have been asked to assist with school and district level professional development in the area of co-teaching. They have both indicated that they have enjoyed the years they have worked together and derive professional satisfaction from working in an inclusive environment. Typical co-teaching struggles with parity, allocation of roles and responsibilities, and professional identification do not appear to significantly influence Keith and Val’s co-teaching relationship. Their self-proclaimed marriage is functional. However, when the orders of discourse are considered, this pleasant arrangement appears to be a carefully orchestrated façade, and neither Keith nor Val is likely aware of their contributive role. Although this co-teaching arrangement was presented as an inclusive endeavor, it became apparent that although there were students with and without IEPs in the classroom and Keith and Val were collaboratively instructing, this arrangement fell somewhat short of the ideals of inclusion.
Institutional context: The school system. A discussion of the institutional context of co-teaching requires an analysis of the policies and norms of Mathers Middle School and the larger school district regarding inclusion and co-teaching. In exploring this domain, it becomes apparent that the inclusivity of this co-teaching arrangement must be questioned and challenged. The thematic prominence of survival and protection of the students with IEPs in the co-taught class was the most significant indication that the degree of inclusion was nominal. While Val commented that in addition to meeting the academic needs of the students with IEPs and challenging them to meet higher standards of performance, she also felt the need to protect them from undue stress and anxiety in the co-taught classes.

In an inclusive class, ideally, one would expect that the students would be appreciated and valued as individuals and not under constant surveillance for the slightest indication of inadequacy. However, in this arrangement, the students were aware that their place in the co-taught class was secure only as long as the team of teachers felt that they belonged there. The teachers were acutely aware that they needed to make sure that their students’ state test scores were sufficiently high and that the students with IEPs were not overly distracting to the other students in the co-taught class. If there was any significant deviation from these expectations, a student was subject to being removed from the co-taught program and possibly moved to another school building entirely, as previously discussed in this study.
However, Val was limited in what she could do with the students in the co-taught classroom. Keith and Val both commented on how important it was to not only minimize the distractions of the students with IEPs, but also the distractions of having a second teacher in the room at all times. As a result, Val was careful to speak in a whisper whenever consulting with students in the co-taught classroom, she sought approval and confirmation from Keith before making any significant large group decisions, and she removed the twelve students with IEPs from the classroom for testing and small group reteaching.

Val worked very hard to prevent situations in which the students with IEPs would be singled out by Keith in front of the class and unduly berated or criticized. Unfortunately, this was not always possible and Keith would occasionally call out a student and discipline him or her for being a distraction or taking too much time with a response. Keith’s rationale for these instances was that his primary obligation was to deliver the content to the students and to ensure that the class was on schedule with the district curriculum plan for assessment. Keith made it clear in his interviews and classroom interactions that he did not believe that it was his responsibility to make sure that everyone understood all of the material, but to make sure that he presented all of the material to the students. Clearly he wanted all of the students to do well and understand the content, but if this did not happen in a timely fashion after brief instruction, the responsibility for mastery was no longer his- it was Val’s. From this perspective, the students with IEPs were not considered full members of the class; rather, they were visitors who were welcome to stay and participate as long as they
were not a distraction. Inevitably, there were times when the students with IEPs were not able to keep up with the pace of instruction or completion of assignments and Val struggled to support the students sufficiently in these areas.

As Val noted in her interview, with the inclusion of the students with IEPs in the general education system came a significant decrease in the amount of time that was available for her to meet with them throughout the day. It was not possible to make significant contact with all of the students on a daily basis during the co-taught classes in order to ensure the students’ survival. The demands of the general education system were so rigid that she simply did not have the time to provide sufficient support for the students with IEPs. Consequently, Val used her own classroom as a space, outside of the co-taught classroom, where she could individualize the curriculum and instruction for the students. Val’s classroom was not only a place where the students went three times a week for a scheduled enrichment class, but it was also a safe haven where they could ask their numerous questions, make mistakes, catch up on assignments, reorganize their materials, and speak openly at a normal volume.

The utilization of Val’s classroom as an alternative space for instruction and support simultaneously created a space for exclusion. Although Val’s classroom was a social hub for the teachers in the 8th grade team, it was also a place where the students with IEPs could receive the help and support that they needed to succeed. The very existence of a place where the students could retreat to throughout the day
for whatever reason indicated the acceptance of physical exclusion and marginalization as a way to work with the students with IEPs. The exclusion in this situation does not reflect an overtly oppressive action taken upon Val and the students, but rather a seemingly rational response to the challenges of inclusive education. It is an indication that the long-standing grand narrative of special education, of students having disabilities so significant that a special environment is necessary to meet those needs, is still being reproduced in this so called inclusive classroom.

**Societal context: Perception and governance of disability.** The persistent legitimacy of the traditional special education paradigm, as seen in this present study, is directly related to federal legislation, such as NCLB and IDEA. The underlying source of Val’s need to help the students survive the co-taught classes and Keith’s need to keep the class moving at an acceptable pace with minimal distraction appeared to be the looming threat of the mandatory state test. It became evident early in this analysis that the state department of education and the annual assessment had a significant impact on the selection of curriculum and pace of instruction in the co-taught class. It is widely acknowledged that the students’ state test scores reflected not only upon the students, but also the co-teachers as well. The pressure placed on Keith and Val by the state and the looming state test limited the flexibility and professional judgment that the co-teachers could exercise in making decisions for the class, and decisions about what to prioritize and how much time to spend on a particular topic were influenced by those outside forces. Unfortunately, a teacher’s
surrendering of authority and deference to the state test is not an uncommon practice in contemporary classrooms, inclusive or otherwise. Although the state was not an actual physical presence in the classroom, it did cast a pall over the potential for creativity and authority in Val and Keith’s practice as co-teachers.

The traditional special education discourse of disability is best explored in the context of the societal domain of discourse. Although the co-taught model of instruction at Mathers Middle School was presented as an inclusive arrangement, Keith consistently referenced the class and students as ‘special ed.’ His use of the term ‘special ed’ to describe the class revealed that despite the classification as a general education class, Keith still regarded this class as a special education class. This perception was substantiated by Keith’s actions as a math teacher and his low tolerance for distraction in his classroom and in the way that he described himself as an educator. Although Val did not refer to the class as ‘special ed,’ the use of her classroom as a segregated space indicated she also subscribed to a more traditional exclusionary view of special education. Although both Keith and Val felt that it was worthwhile to provide the 12 students with IEPs access to the general education curriculum, neither one would go so far as to say that all students should have this access. When asked to describe their thoughts on full inclusion, both Keith and Val indicated that there were students who for either academic or behavioral reasons should not be educated in inclusive classes and spoke of the merits of self-contained special education classes. It appeared that the values and beliefs of the co-teachers had a direct influence on the inclusivity of this co-teaching arrangement and
perpetuated the traditional special education discourse of disability. However, there were other societal factors that influenced Val’s perception of her special education responsibilities that also challenged the inclusivity of this arrangement.

Despite the designation as a general education class, one half of the co-taught class was comprised of students with IEPs. Throughout this study, the only overt frustration that Val expressed was in her interview when talking about pressure from the school district administration to ‘read the IEPs more carefully.’ Although this might appear to be more closely related to the institutional context discussion, it is important to acknowledge that the district placed this pressure on Val because, regardless of the degree of inclusivity of a particular placement, explicit implementation of the IEP is a strict requirement of the federal IDEA legislation.

It is a federal requirement that all students who receive special education services have an IEP written for them and followed closely by a certified special education teacher. Failure to comply with this requirement could result in legal action being taken against the school district, as well as the special educator. When the state wants to know how the needs of students with disabilities are being met in a particular school, the first place they look is the official documentation in the IEPs. Val responded to this criticism with a short tirade about all of the things that she did to make sure that the students’ IEPs are accurate and appropriately documented on top of all of the other things that she does to get the students through the day. Val expressed frustration that the special education administrators appeared to be only
concerned with minutiae in the paperwork and not the myriad of other things that she did to support the students with IEPs. Val took great pride in her work as a co-teacher and she felt that the most important aspects of her performance were being overlooked. The strong emphasis on IEP compliance, for legally understandable reasons, limited the amount of time and freedom Val had to work with the students in her co-taught class and created a set of tasks that promoted traditional special education practices.

The first phase of this analysis examined Fairclough’s (2003) orders of discourse (genre, discourse, and style) within the local, institutional, and societal contexts of inclusive co-teaching. Although Keith and Val both expressed some frustration with some of the logistical aspects of their co-teaching arrangement, they were both generally satisfied with the arrangement and never questioned the inclusivity as the depth of their struggle for inclusion was likely invisible to both of them. They were both professionals whose identities as teachers had been lifelong constructions beginning with their own experiences in the education system as students and spanning their lives as teachers through pre-service and in-service professional development. Because of federal legislation and state mandated high-stakes testing, opportunities for Keith and Val to consider more inclusive pedagogy were limited. The purpose of this analysis was not to fault either Val or Keith for the lack of inclusivity in their co-teaching arrangement, but rather to shed light on aspects of co-teaching that have not been adequately addressed in the existing body of co-teaching research. The second phase of analysis offers insight into the power
relations and dominance of the traditional special education grand narrative that plagued Keith and Val’s efforts at inclusive education.

**Phase II: Power Analysis**

The second phase of this analysis was an exploration of power relations in the co-teaching environment. Bishop and Glynn (1999) present an analytic framework for exploring dominant discourses and power relations in educational contexts that is relevant to the focus of this study. In their framework, Bishop and Glynn provide a structure for questioning issues of initiation, accountability, benefits, representation and legitimation. The questions posed in this analysis were asked of the data, and answers were provided through interpretation of the observations of and interviews with the co-teachers. Each one of these five dimensions of power was examined within the context of Keith and Val’s co-teaching arrangement.

**Initiation**

**How are the co-teaching relationships established?** Prior to being assigned as co-teachers by the Mathers Middle School administration, Keith and Val had no significant previous professional or personal relationship. For Val, the decision to switch from teaching a self-contained special education class to an inclusive co-taught class was a combination of her desire to have new professional experiences and the personnel needs of Mathers Middle School. Keith, on the other hand, did not recall ever asking to have an inclusive co-taught class or actively pursuing this type of teaching situation. Because the inclusive co-teaching arrangement was so common at
Mathers, Keith assumed that he would have at least one inclusive class every year or two.

Although their initial paring was facilitated by the school administration, Val and Keith’s continued assignment as co-teachers was, according to Val, a combination of their requests and administrative action. In her interview, Val indicated that not every pair of co-teachers was re-assigned as a team for multiple years, as she and Keith were. After Keith moved from 7th grade to 8th grade a few years ago, the pair continued to work together and Val surmised that perhaps it was partly related to her flexibility and willingness to move to 8th grade and learn a new curriculum that allowed them to stay together. Additionally, it was previously discussed that Keith and Val had a very strong record of student performance on the state tests and their success was likely an additional factor in the longevity of their relationship. Regardless, the arrangement was initially made by school level administrators to put Keith and Val together, as was the decision to keep the team together over the years and Keith and Val are merely expected to abide by these decisions.

**Who defines what constitutes appropriate knowledges and pedagogies in the co-taught classroom?** The co-teachers were not the primary decision-makers in issues pertaining to curriculum. Decisions pertaining to the definition of the curriculum and the determination of what constituted appropriate knowledge for 8th grade math were made by the New York State Department of Education. Because of
pressure from the federal government to regulate and standardize the curriculum and assessments for all students, New York State established a set curriculum for every grade level that outlined the essential topics that students needed to learn in order to succeed on the mandatory state math test. As discussed previously in this analysis chapter, the utilization of a state mandated standardized curriculum resulted in Keith’s and Val’s dereference to the state in their language and interaction in the co-taught classroom. The school district implemented a specifically defined math curriculum that included a detailed schedule outlining the specific topics that needed to be covered and a schedule for district-wide benchmarking assessments to monitor the progress of all students in the district according to these guidelines. These decisions about what to include in the math curriculum and the order in which they were to be introduced were made at a more local level than the state, but they were still not under Keith or Val’s control.

**Who initiates the lesson planning and sets the goals and objectives of the lesson?** Although the state and district determined the exact curriculum that needs to be covered and the overall pacing of the topics over the course of the school year, Keith was able to make decisions on a day-to-day basis that impacted the flow and pacing for each lesson. Keith was most likely to initiate the lesson planning and set the goals and objectives for each lesson. In his interview, Keith indicated that although he followed along with the district schedule for curriculum and benchmarking, he preferred to modify that schedule and push through unit topics at a
somewhat faster pace than recommended in order to provide additional time to review and prepare for the unit and benchmarking assessments.

In order to maintain his desired pace with the district benchmarking schedule, Keith prioritized certain curricular topics as ‘need to know’ or ‘nice to know’ based on whether or not a topic would be included on the state assessment. Keith would make these decisions and then inform Val of the topics that would not be covered during regular instructional time and it was up to Val and Keith to make time for these omitted topics during their enrichment class time if they felt it necessary. After 16 years of teaching, Keith had a strong understanding of the state and district curricular and assessment schedules and made sure that he prepared the students for the final assessments by including and omitting certain topics from each unit of instruction that would not be on the final state assessment. Although she was familiar with the 8th grade math curriculum, Val did not make any significant curricular decisions pertaining to the selection of content or pacing of instruction in the co-taught classroom. In regard to decision making in this co-taught classroom, Keith tended to initiate the lesson planning goals and pacing while Val appeared to be comfortable following along with Keith’s plans and reacting to his requests.

**Who initiates classroom interactions between the co-teachers?** Keith’s role as primary decision maker for most of the day-to-day curricular and assessment planning did not seem to hamper his relationship with Val, as the interactions between the co-teachers in the math classroom were pleasant and professional. Keith
was clearly the dominant presence in all matters related to lesson planning, and assessment and most interactions between Keith and Val pertaining to the math curriculum were initiated by Keith. If Keith had a request for Val he either stopped teaching and addressed her directly in front of the class or approached Val and spoke with her quietly while the students were working. Although more limited in frequency, Val typically initiated interactions with Keith during the math class to clarify one of his directions or expectations for the students or to request that he slow down briefly until all of the students were caught up. Mindful of the potential for distraction inherent with having two adults in the same classroom, Val rarely made a request of Keith during the co-taught class time.

Benefits

**Do both teachers benefit from the co-teaching arrangement?** Keith and Val stated that they felt they benefitted from working with each other as co-teachers. In his interview, Keith claimed that although the students with IEPs tended to ask more questions than the other students in the class, in all of his classes, co-taught or traditional, the students often had more questions than he had time to answer. Keith spoke about the benefit of having another teacher in the room to help answer the numerous student questions and allow him to keep on schedule with the curriculum. The mere presence of another adult who was familiar with the content and math curriculum was a benefit to Keith.
Keith also indicated that he felt that his overall teaching style was complemented by Val’s. He was explicit in describing his teaching style as a traditional high school math teacher whose primary responsibility was to present the curriculum to the students, prepare them for the state assessment, and challenge them to become critical thinkers. However, Keith also indicated that he knew that he could often be too harsh with the students and commented that Val’s presence in the classroom tended to temper that tendency. He praised Val for her creativity and thoughtfulness in anticipating possible areas of struggle for the students and proactively planning instructional support to avoid downfalls. Keith indicated that he appreciated and often referenced the visual materials that Val made for the co-taught class in his other classes because he saw the potential benefit for all students. In this regard, Keith learned more about teaching to a diverse population of students by watching Val interact and support the students with IEPs.

Keith also benefitted from this co-teaching arrangement in ways that he did not explicitly indicate. On a daily basis Keith appeared to appreciate Val’s contribution to the management of attendance, homework, or warm-up classroom activity. In a traditional non-co-taught class, the content teacher was solely responsible for monitoring homework and attendance, but in this class it was part of their daily routine to split the task. Additionally, Val occasionally conducted large group instruction for reviewing homework, introducing new vocabulary, or discussing the warm-up activity in the beginning of class. Her contribution, although
it constituted a small portion of each class, gave Keith the freedom to circulate around the room and talk with students on an individual basis about the assignments.

Val also indicated that being in a co-teaching team allowed her to become more familiar with the curriculum and content for each class and she appreciated the variety of experiences that she has had since leaving her self-contained position. Not only had Val been exposed to various grade levels and subject matter through co-teaching, but she also had the opportunity to learn from the teaching practices of many other professionals. Co-teaching brought Val a new sense of professional satisfaction. Because she followed her students to four different co-taught content classes, Val stated that she felt more connected to other teachers and activities in the school community than before. In comparison to the general education content teachers, like Keith, Val said that she had a better sense of what was going on throughout the 8th grade team and the whole school and that she knew more colleagues throughout the building. Val appeared to benefit from the professional satisfaction and challenge of collaborating with many different teachers throughout the day.

**Accountability**

**To whom are the co-teachers accountable?** As previously discussed both Keith and Val were held accountable to the school district administrators and ultimately the state education department. The district and state looked at the students’ scores on the state-wide assessments as an indicator of successful teaching
and learning. Both Keith and Val attributed their relatively long relationship as co-teachers to their students’ strong performances on the state tests. However, as a certified and contracted general educator, Keith had responsibilities to the math department and administration, and as a certified and contracted special educator, Val had responsibilities to the special education department and administration. In the area of math content and in the area of special education, Keith and Val were accountable to the school and district administration separately. Val did not regularly attend the math department meetings, and Keith did not participate in Val’s special education meetings unless he was specifically invited. Because the co-taught class was considered to be a general education class, Keith’s accountability to the state and district for curriculum and assessment in the co-taught class was apparent and comparable to that of other non-co-taught general education math classes.

As a special education teacher, Val had significant responsibilities outside of the co-taught classroom. According to the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), discussed in the first chapter, Val was accountable for the implementation of the students’ IEPs and anything related to the construction, implementation, or modification of the IEP. She readily acknowledged this accountability in her interviews and listed the implementation of the students IEPs as one of her primary responsibilities. Val was also under pressure from the district administrators to make sure that all of the paperwork documenting IEP requirements for each student was accurate. These special education responsibilities were Val’s alone and her accountability in this matter was to students with IEPs and
their parents, as well as the building and district level special education administration. Although Keith and Val shared responsibility for teaching the 8th grade math curriculum and meeting the needs of the diverse class of students, they were each accountable to their respective academic departments for the specific responsibilities of their jobs.

**Representation**

**Whose professional reality is recognized in the classroom?** Above all, the co-taught classroom was officially considered to be a general education math class. Keith and Val worked very hard to make sure that the co-taught class kept pace with Keith’s other traditional 8th grade general education math classes. Val commented that she did not want the students with IEPs to hold back the progress of the entire class and would provide a significant amount of academic support and do most of her intensive reteaching in a separate environment. This was a math class and although there were officially two teachers on the roster it was Keith’s classroom and the two teachers referred to each other’s classrooms as ‘Val’s room’ and ‘Keith’s room.’ If the phone rang during class time while Keith was teaching, Val would typically answer the phone and say ‘Hello, this is Mr. K’s room, this is Mrs. V speaking.’ With the co-taught class being recognized and identified as Keith’s math classroom, it was clear that Keith’s professional reality was realized here. Val’s professional reality was largely realized in her separate classroom where she could put up all of
the visuals that she desired, speak at a normal volume, and support the students with IEPs without seeking Keith’s approval first.

**How is disability represented in the classroom?** Disability was not openly discussed or acknowledged in the classroom. In this structure where all students were expected to meet the same standards and learn the same curriculum at the same pace, uniformity was the rule and difference was the exception. There were twelve students in the co-taught classroom that, for one reason or another, had been classified as special education students and had IEPs that provided explicit detail about necessary supports and services. A multidisciplinary team of educational professionals determined that the co-taught classroom was the most appropriate and least restrictive educational setting for these students. The inclusive co-taught classroom was intended to provide the students with IEPs access to the general education curriculum and instruction with their non-disabled peers, while maintaining a degree of support from Val in the classroom.

Because of the dominance of the general education discourse Val was not able to adequately meet the needs of the students with IEPs in the co-taught classroom. When their needs became too great or too distracting, Val felt compelled to remove the students from the inclusive environment and retreat to a segregated special education room in order to adequately support the students. Unfortunately, there were times when Val could not intercede in time and a student’s needs or disability became too much of a distraction for Keith. In those instances he would stop the
class, publicly express his frustration with the student, and ultimately apologize, citing the needs of the other (non-disabled) students in the class as justification for his outburst.

In their interviews, Val and Keith both indicated that although there were cliques or small groups of friends in the class, there did not appear to be a strong division between the students with and without IEPs. Although Keith expressed occasional frustration with the students with IEPs, rather than explicitly identifying the students as disabled he described them as a distraction. In an attempt to minimize the distractions, Val took the 12 students with IEPs to her classroom for every major assessment. It was apparent that this sub-group of students was treated differently by both Val and Keith. In a class where there was such pressure to have all students perform at a designated level and progress through the curriculum in a uniform and predictable manner, disability was viewed as a distraction that needed to be mitigated.

Legitimation

How are the teachers’ professional identities represented?

Although disability and difference were not readily accepted or tolerated in the co-taught classroom, there was evidence of the traditional discourse of disability and special education in both Keith and Val’s language and actions as educational professional. In this context, the traditional discourse of disability and special education refers to the widely held conception that disability, or any deviance from an established norm, requires a specialized intervention implemented by a highly trained
individual in a segregated environment. This grand narrative is the foundation of the traditional special education model and it is perpetuated in many preservice teacher education programs. The traditional special education model provided a professional identity for Val, who presumably wanted to become a teacher to help children who struggle to learn. Keith first worked as an engineer and chose to earn a teacher certification to teach math to children who were largely ready to learn math in a straightforward and traditional manner. His inaccurate self-identification as a high school teacher and description of his primary responsibility as presenting the material indicated that Keith aligned perfectly with the traditional concept of a secondary content specialist. With segregated special education schools, self-contained classes, and resource rooms, the traditional special education model of marginalization and exclusion is what both Keith and Val grew up with as youthful students themselves. Special education preservice teacher education programs were places for people who wanted to teach “those kids,” not for people who wanted to teach math. Keith was a math teacher and Val was a special education teacher. They were both products of the very same system in which they worked and their professional identities were constructed over the course of their lives.

**Phase III: Critical Theoretical Analysis**

In constructing their co-teaching arrangement, Keith and Val acted in what they believed were the best interests of their students. Their beliefs about what was best emerged from a lifetime of interactions that promoted the traditional special
education grand narrative of separation and segregation and consequently favored the
traditional general education system. In the first phase, I explored the types and
contexts of their interactions as co-teachers and began to examine the inclusivity of
their arrangement. In the second phase, I concluded that Keith and Val’s inability to
build an inclusive environment was not entirely within their consciousness and that
transformation to inclusive education remained elusive in their classroom. In this
final section I explore the discursive depths of these limitations through a theoretical
analysis and discussion of how the seven critical theoretical concepts introduced in
the theory chapter- discourse, the institution, identity, inequality, ideology, agency,
and historicity impede the growth of inclusivity in Keith and Val’s classroom.

Discourse

Foucault’s (1977) conception of discourse as the collection of spoken
language and social practices that influence an individual’s position, identity,
relationships, and world view is relevant in the analysis of Keith and Val’s co-
teaching arrangement. The first phase of this analysis used Fairclough’s (2003)
framework for discourse analysis, to explain the discourse, or ‘ways of representing,’
in Val and Keith’s co-teaching relationship. The analysis of the discourse of the co-
teaching arrangement included a discussion of how Val’s primary goal appeared to be
the survival of the students with IEPs in order to maintain their conditional
membership in the co-taught class. The authority and power in the co-taught
classroom centered primarily on the prominence and dominance of the general
education discourse and pressure from the district to have all students pass the
standardized state math test. Representing the traditional general education
mathematics discourse, Keith was the most visible authority figure in the co-taught
classroom, as he took responsibility for selection of specific topics, grading, and daily
lesson planning. Val, on the other hand, took on a less prominent role in the
classroom and represented the traditional special education discourse as she followed
a hectic schedule and struggled to meet the needs of the students with IEPs.
However, Keith and Val’s language during class instruction and interviews indicated
that the state education department held the ultimate position of authority in the
classroom for issues related to curriculum and assessment.

Although the state directed the long-range planning for instruction and
assessment, Val and Keith negotiated the discursive intersection of co-teaching in a
manner that reproduced the dominance of the general education discursive structure
and appeared to do little to further the ideals of inclusive education. Keith was clear
about his interest in keeping the class on schedule with state and district assessments
and his disinterest in making any significant changes in pedagogy to accommodate
the diverse group of learners in the co-taught class. Val performed all of the
functions of a traditional special educator with care not to interrupt Keith’s instruction
or slow down the progress of the larger group, often resorting to physical exclusion to
accommodate the students.
Neither Keith nor Val questioned their reliance upon exclusive practices to meet the needs of the students with IEPs in order to maintain an appropriate pace of instruction for state and district assessment guidelines. It is likely that they were not aware of the extent to which the students with IEPs were marginalized and excluded in the co-taught class. Gee (2007) describes ‘big D’ Discourse as ways of integrating language, actions, interaction, ways of believing to represent a social identity. Using Gee’s conception of Discourse as a framework, an analysis of Val and Keith’s relationship reveals that their success as co-teachers stems from a shared belief that students with special education IEPs have needs that cannot always be met in the general education classroom. This grand narrative represents a long-standing cultural perception that human difference is perceived as deviance from the norm, and deviance in education required ‘special’ teachers and ‘special’ spaces to meet the ‘special’ needs of those ‘special’ students. Keith and Val expressed their support for this ideal in their interviews and in their explicit acknowledgement that the students with IEPs in the co-taught program were selected based on the teachers’ perceptions of their ability to keep up with the demanding pace of instruction and assessment in the general education classes. Val and Keith’s perceptions of disability, inclusion, and special education were lifetimes in the making and were largely influence by their own preservice teacher education programs and the formal transmission of knowledge through teacher accrediting institutions.
The Institution

Foucault (1972; 1994b; 2003b) discusses how societies have mechanisms for organizing and transmitting knowledge into various discourses and determining truth. As selectors and distributors of knowledge, institutions ensure that discourses persist over time by controlling the education of individuals through regulated communication and hierarchical classification among individuals. Blommaert (2005) describes ‘centering institutions’ as the primary agent in the production of discursive practices that encourage homogenization and uniformity and implement a rationalized form of institutional control. In an effort to encourage transformation, Foucault calls for critical examination of the institutionally sanctioned rationality that perpetuates problematic grand narratives in our society, such as the traditional special education discourse.

The traditional special education discourse designates human difference as deviance and stipulates that deviant individuals require a specially administered education by a special trained individual, often in a separate environment. This grand narrative is perpetuated by institutes of higher education through the indoctrination of individuals who wish to work with individuals with disabilities into the special education profession. Certified special education teachers are reproduced through the implementation of a series of professional requirements which instruct future teachers in various means for diagnosing deviance and determining the most appropriate education for students with special education classifications (Ashton, in press).
Those individuals wishing to teach a specific content area or subject emerge from these institutions with general education certifications that have provided a subject-based pedagogical foundation, but not adequately prepared them for the challenges of teaching that subject to a diverse population of students. Although some institutions are attempting to bridge the schism between general and special education programs with more inclusive programs, the certifications and course requirements in New York State are still separate.

Keith and Val both referenced their institutional preparation for teaching and cited traditional general and special education discursive practices in their preservice training. Keith represented the math department at Mathers Middle School and he indicated that there were things that he simply was not capable of doing to meet the needs of his students. Keith commented that repetition of instructions, provision of visual aids, making frequent phone calls home, and the demonstration of unconditional patience and compassion were not things that he felt adequately prepared to do on a regular basis in his classroom. When discussing these types of actions, Keith often explicitly designated them as Val’s responsibility or area of strength, while simultaneously describing those types of actions as soft, cuddly, and reminiscent of elementary school teachers. Keith’s dismissal and denigration of what he perceived to be special education responsibilities indicated the superior hierarchical positioning of the general education discourse in relation to special education. Val, too, subscribed to a traditional special education view of her responsibilities in the co-taught classroom. She readily did all of the things that Keith
designated as special education and shied away from making any substantial
decisions related to the math curriculum. Keith and Val’s perceptions of their roles as
educators were shaped by the institutions and disciplinary programs in which they
were trained. By designating the appropriate traits and distinct responsibilities of
general and special educators, the preservice teacher preparation institutions played a
significant role in shaping the co-teachers’ professional identities.

Identity

By establishing and perpetuating discursively based conceptions of truth and
normalcy, institutions are vehicles for the production of identity. Identity formation
is the product of discursive power relations that provide techniques for establishing
hierarchical order through the classification and distribution of individuals within a
particular discourse (Foucault, 1994a). In this sense, individuals are categorized
according to a rationalized body of knowledge that establishes the classificatory
regulations that designate that individual as a member of that group.

Individualization and totalization are two techniques of power that are
commonly used in educational settings to provide a person with an individual identity
(individualization), as well as membership within a group (totalization) (Gore, 1995).
Blommaert (2001) links identity formation directly with institutional practice by
arguing that identity is achieved in the recognition of others as a member of a
homogeneous group and institutions provide ample space for the cultivation and
reproduction of professional identities over time. Moreover, individuals define
themselves and others according to discursive perspectives and these identities are fluid across various physical spaces with different discursive structures.

Keith and Val had distinct professional identities. Keith was a self-proclaimed engineer turned high school math teacher and Val described herself as a special education teacher. Their identities were products of the regulating structure of the centering institutions that designated them as credentialed professionals within their respective fields. The special education discourse has provided Val with a body of knowledge about human difference that is assumed to be true and a set of expected competencies based upon that knowledge which, in combination, creates the space for her professional identity to be assumed by herself and recognized by others. The recognition of Val’s professional identity as a special educator creates a space for Keith’s identity as a no nonsense math teacher.

The rationality of the special educator allows for the creation of a space that encompasses all matters pertaining to educating individuals with disabilities and relinquishes other educational professionals from these responsibilities. This was evident in Keith’s perception of certain tasks as being Val’s responsibility or pertinent to the special education students only. In this sense, as a math teacher, Keith was free to concern himself solely with teaching the subject to the students as his preservice preparation, teaching credentials, and job title indicated. Both Keith and Val viewed their contributions to the co-taught class to be in line with traditional conceptions of
general and special educators. The co-taught math class was first and foremost a math class, and Keith took on the role of primary authority.

In the co-taught classroom, the norms and expectations aligned with the general education discourse and, consequently, Keith’s identity as the math teacher took on a more prominent role. However, in Val’s classroom, the dominance of the special education discourse was evident as no co-teaching took place there and the interactions there resembled a traditional segregated special education class. There was a definite hierarchy in the co-taught classroom that indexed Keith as the person of authority and a discursive orientation that placed a greater value on traditional general education expectations and norms. However, the traditional special education expectations and norms in Val’s classroom allow for a shift in that hierarchical structure that recognized Val as the primary authority. In any hierarchical relationship, inequality persists as there are those in positions of power and those who take on more submissive roles.

Inequality

Inequality among individuals exists because in any hierarchically organized physical environment, one group or individual is indexed in a position of prestige above others. According to Blommaert (2005), the orders of indexicality are determined by centering institutions in order to establish boundaries of rationality, normalcy, and stigma within a community. Centering institutions enable the creation of socially constructed repertoires that enable an individual to perform a specific
function in a particular space and the competencies valued in one space are often stigmatized in another. This creates individuals who possess certain characteristics that have variable value depending upon the expectations of a physical space and variance in value is often translated into inequality between individuals or groups. Blommaert (2005) challenges the discourse analyst to question grand narratives by exploring the orders of indexicality that grant authority to a particular perspective.

**Ideology**

Ideological representations of normalcy, such as the special education grand narrative, are the source of inspiration for centering institutions and the establishment of the orders of indexicality. According to Fairclough (2003), dominant power structures are reinforced and sustained by normalized perceptions of truth and necessity that are shared by large groups of people and reproduced by the centering institutions to ensure hegemony. The ideological nature of discursive practice, according to Gee (2007), allows for differential access to specific identities, activities, and status and is the source of inequality in our society. In this sense, ideology becomes common sense and is perpetuated by centering institutions who provide identities for people to assume and who subsequently unconsciously reproduce traditional structures of power and domination.

Despite the inclusion of students with IEPs in the general education math class, neither one of the co-teachers appeared to question the special education grand narrative of marginalization and exclusion. Val and Keith both voiced their support
for the inclusion of the 12 students with IEPs in the class and the students; however, it was apparent that they both subscribed to a traditional deficit perspective on disability that has been deeply seated into their professional identities over the course of their lives. Based on their traditional conceptions of disability and special education, both Keith and Val acknowledged that the co-taught classroom was not an appropriate placement for all students with IEPs and professed their belief that some students had needs so great that they were best served in a segregated educational setting. Their unquestioning approval of the conditionality of the students’ membership in the co-taught class presented perhaps the most significant barrier to fulfilling the social justice and democratic ideals of inclusion as argued by disability studies in education proponents. With the seemingly deterministic and ideological nature of the development of their professional identities and a consequent acceptance of the special education grand narrative, Keith and Val’s ability to incite change and transformation in inclusive education is non-existent.

**Agency**

Individualization and totalization, as explained previously, are two techniques of power that work together to construct the individual as a competent and knowledgeable participant in order to secure the longevity of the totality, or group to which he belongs (Dean, 1994). The control asserted by this rational process renders the possibility of transformation elusive, as an individual’s freedom is constrained by his position within a discursive totality. Agency, or an individual’s
ability to effect transformation, is situated within a structure of discursive constraints (Blommaert, 2005). With potential for renewed power struggles for dominance, Fairclough (2003) identified discursive intersections as opportunities for potential transformation and the creation of new discourses.

Although successful in terms of producing desirable test scores, Keith and Val had not been particularly successful in promoting the ideals of inclusive education. By accepting the dominance of the traditional general education perspective, Keith and Val simply created another option on the traditional special education continuum of placements. Although the students with IEPs had full access to the general education curriculum in classes with general education students, Val’s use of her classroom as a separate location for the provision of instruction and support indicated that their co-taught classroom was simply another special education placement, not an inclusive classroom. Keith and Val’s success as a team was the result of their shared perspectives on disability and special education, which were directly linked to their own experiences with the education system throughout the course of their lives.

**Historicity/Layered Simultaneity**

A common theme throughout this analysis has been the role of the co-teachers’ personal histories and life experiences in shaping their world views and professional identities. Just as identities are historic constructions, so too are discourses. Foucault (1972) cites the historical a priori that regulates and organizes entire discourses and is preserved over time by structures of organizations, such as the
institution, that construct and reconstruct subjective identities according to specific
discursive regulations. The archive, according to Foucault, refers to the organizing
system for establishing the orders of indexicality and the limitations of possibility
within a discourse. Blommaert (2005) argues that while contemporary discourse
illusively appears to occur in real-time, interactive events are actually amalgams of
historicity, the depths of which are often beyond the conscious grasp of the
participants. Blommaert uses the term ‘layered simultaneity’ to describe this complex
discursive concept and cites its denial as the source of reductionist research that limits
observations of human interaction to synchronic analysis.

Although this analysis has illustrated many of the ways in which Val and
Keith’s co-taught classroom was not inclusive, it is important to note that my
criticisms were not of Val and Keith as individual teachers; rather, they were
criticisms of the structures that constructed the co-teachers as professionals and
influenced their thoughts and actions. In considering the three phases of this
analysis, the depth of the inclusive challenges became apparent. The first phase
revealed that the co-teaching arrangement between Keith and Val succeeded because
they both worked very hard to make the students with IEPs indiscernible from the
other students. The end result was that Val resorted to manipulating situations to
prevent the students from being publicly identified as deviant and scrambling to find
time to meet with the students before, during, and after school hours outside of the
co-taught class in order to meet their individual educational needs. Val became the
‘constant,’ the ‘backstage manager,’ and the ‘personal relations manager’ for the
students with disabilities, Keith, and the entire 8th grade team. Val used her role as a special educator, her physical space in the special education classroom, and all of her free time to manage the special educational needs of the twelve students to ensure the success of the co-teaching arrangement for the entire 8th grade team.

The second phase of the analysis illustrated how the special education discourse of disability was reproduced in this co-teaching arrangement and the traditional general education system remained dominant. The dominance of the traditional general education system was not disputed by either Keith or Val, and Val willingly facilitated the marginalization of the students with IEPs. With her subdued behavior in the co-taught classroom and the extensive use of her separate classroom for special education purposes, Val unknowingly sustained the dominant discourse. While Keith and Val’s co-teaching arrangement had the outward appearances of an inclusive arrangement, it was actually an unobtrusive and functional model of integrated education infused with significant aspects of a segregated special education model. Because of the discursive constraints placed on both Keith and Val, the promise of inclusion was never realized.

In the third phase of this analysis, I explored the critical theoretical relevance of discourse, the institution, identity, inequality, ideology, agency, and historicity in the construction of Val and Keith’s co-teaching relationship. Although Keith and Val failed to achieve the democratic and social justice ideals of inclusive education, they have proven that students who would have historically been educated in self-
contained special education settings can successfully access the general education curriculum and ‘survive’ in the general education system. The obstacles to inclusion cannot adequately be determined through a synchronic analysis of a particular teaching style that has been deemed to be inclusive and the future of inclusion cannot rest solely in the heads and hands of practicing teachers. Institutes of higher education must take an active stance in the inclusive education movement and transform current discourses of general and special education to produce critical teachers who question the special education grand narrative that has plagued our education system for over 100 years.
Chapter 5

Discussion

In this dissertation, I sought to demonstrate the utility of using a critically grounded approach to discourse analysis from both methodological and theoretical perspectives. In the first chapter, I discussed the foundations and emergence of co-teaching as a common model for inclusive education in contemporary schools. The review of literature indicated that despite over twenty years of use, co-teaching continues to be a problematic practice. Studies of co-teaching have been typically limited to querying implementation of particular models or teacher perceptions of the practice. Using synchronic and simplistic methodology, previous research efforts have failed to produce new insight into the well-documented struggles faced by co-teachers. The existing research in inclusive co-teaching simplistically encourages co-teachers to adhere to specific co-teaching models through professionalism and shared responsibility (Scruggs, et al., 2007) and has done little to advance the democratic and socially just ideals of inclusive education. Through the careful use of critical discourse analysis, this study has answered the long unheeded calls of scholars who saw the need for critical and reflective analysis of co-teaching (Trent, 1998). Moreover, this analysis has brought to the foreground several critical issues that are germane to co-teaching, yet have not been previously discussed in the co-teaching literature.

Perhaps the most significant indication that the democratic and social justice ideals of inclusion were not being addressed was the disproportionate representation
of students with IEPs in the co-taught classroom. One of the most fundamental aspects of inclusive education is that individuals with disabilities should have the opportunity to receive their education in the same environment that they would if they did not have an IEP (Dixon, 2005). As disability is a natural and expected occurrence in a diverse human population, a naturally proportionate representation of individuals with disabilities or IEPs in a classroom would be considered inclusive. According to the New York State School Report Card, approximately 11% of the Mathers Middle School 8th grade population was considered to be disabled or had an IEP. In a class of 24 students, that means that on average two to three students with IEPs should be in any given inclusive class- not 12. One-half of the students in Keith and Val’s math class were classified as special education students and had IEPs that needed to be implemented. The proportion of students with IEPs to those without in Val and Keith’s math class far exceeded the expected proportion according to the school demographics. It is arguable that the disproportionality of students with IEPs significantly impacted the inclusivity of this co-teaching arrangement and laid the foundation for the struggles to create an inclusive education environment described in this analysis.

Despite the fundamental limitation of disproportionate representation of students with IEPs in the co-taught class, the school district considered Val and Keith’s arrangement to be inclusive. Moreover, according to the standards of success set forth in many studies of co-teaching, Keith and Val would appear to be exemplary in their amicable sharing of responsibilities, demonstration of professional respect,
and production of positive student achievement. An additional indication of success came from my observations of the interactions among the students in the co-taught class - I did not observe any overt social exclusion or division between those with and without IEPs. The three phases of critical analysis presented in this study revealed that what superficially appeared to be a successful inclusive co-teaching relationship was in fact a marginalizing and exclusive arrangement for the teachers and students alike. Although this marginalization was not a conscious attempt to exclude Val or the students with IEPs from the educational benefits of Keith’s general education math class, it was initiated by the co-teachers. Val and Keith both resorted to traditional special education practices of segregation in an attempt to enable the survival of themselves and the students with IEPs in a disproportionate educational environment that prioritized uniformity, high-stakes testing, and traditional conceptions of normalcy.

Surviving Inclusion

Survival was the most prominent and unifying theme in my analysis of Keith and Val’s co-teaching relationship. From Keith and Val to the students with IEPs, everyone involved with this co-taught class was primarily concerned with their survival. Over the course of this analysis, I determined that Val and Keith’s interactions and behaviors, although not particularly inclusive, served the purpose of ensuring the survival of the students with IEPs as well as their own survival as professionals. Val’s statement that the students with IEPs were being thrust into the
general education classes with inadequate opportunities to receive necessary supports revealed the structural foundation for the survival theme. The students needed to survive the general education curriculum and mandatory state assessments in order to stay in the inclusive classes; failure to do so would result in the relocation of the student to a more restrictive placement. Val needed to balance the responsibilities of facilitating the students’ survival and managing the implementation of their IEPs to the satisfaction of the district administrators. Keith simply needed to allow Val to do whatever it took to get the students with IEPs to be successful so that he could keep up with the district curriculum pace and so that his average class scores were not brought down by the students with IEPs. The analysis of Val and Keith’s co-teaching interactions indicated that the survival of their arrangement hinged on much more than their adherence to a particular model of instruction or the amicability of their professional relationship.

The many layers of survival in Keith and Val’s co-teaching arrangement could be seen in Fairclough’s (2003) local, institutional, and societal contexts. The first phase of this analysis invoked the work of Fairclough (2003) to explore Keith and Val’s ways of relating to each other (genre), representing inclusion and co-teaching (discourse), and identifying themselves as education professionals (style). At any given time, their ways of relating to each other resembled any one of Friend’s (Friend & Cook, 2000) six approaches to co-teaching: one teaching, one observing; one teaching, one drifting, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching. Similar to other accounts of co-teaching found in the literature, team
teaching and alternative teaching were the approaches used least frequently in Val and Keith’s classroom. Although he stated that he wanted the students to see Val as a teacher and not “some lady that walks around and helps sometimes,” his actions in the classroom contradicted this. Whenever Keith presented information to the class, he positioned himself as the sole authority, rarely invoking Val’s authority with his choice of first person pronouns. On the other hand, when Val spoke to the class about expectations, she used the third person plural (we, us) as the authority. Although Val situated herself as a co-authority when addressing the class, her behavior in the classroom revealed a different positioning. Val deferred to Keith for all matters concerning the class as a whole, asking his permission or seeking clarification before answering a student’s question about expectations or requirements.

From a societal perspective, their need for survival was significantly influenced by NCLB in 2001 and IDEA’s subsequent alignment with the high-stakes testing requirements in 2004. These federal mandates set the tone for much of the activity that I observed in Keith and Val’s classroom. As previously discussed, the 2004 revisions to IDEA stipulated that students with disabilities were to be included in school wide standardized testing and the students with disabilities in Val and Keith’s co-taught class were expected to take the state math test in March. Unfortunately, when school funding and a teacher’s job security are dependent upon successful student performance on these tests, both students and teachers feel the impact of the state. It has been argued that standardized high-stakes state testing narrows curricular breadth and pressures teachers to design instruction around
potential test topics (Hursh, 2008). Additionally, Hursh comments on how the recent increase in state testing has shifted control away from teachers and students toward education officials and state and federal legislators. The influence in the co-taught class was so strong that the state and the state test had an observable presence in their classroom.

At the institutional level, Keith and Val’s survival was demonstrated in their deference to the district mandated curriculum and timeline. The pressure on Keith and Val to produce good test scores was evident in their interviews and in their classroom interactions with each other and the students. It is worthwhile to note that because of poor test results on the English state exam, there had been two new English teachers in the past three years. The current English teacher knew that she needed to produce a significant improvement in student scores if she wished to keep her position for another year. Keith and Val both commented in their interviews about the pride that they took in their students’ achievement on the state tests and indicated that on more than one occasion they had received accolades from the school district administrator for their students’ test scores. Both Keith and Val spoke about the state test and the test makers and indicated that the contents of the exam and the scoring rubrics were predetermined and out of their control as teachers. The rigidity of the state test and the importance of passing scores had a significant impact on the curricular decisions that Keith and Val made.
The influence of the state test was so great that the school district dictated the curriculum and the time line for unit completion and implemented a regimented benchmarking system of ongoing assessment to monitor the achievement of all students in the district throughout the school year. Keith indicated that he had to precisely follow the district time line and had little extra time to provide the enrichment that he felt would benefit the students’ grasp of the math curriculum. Keith’s organization of the course content into ‘need to know’ and ‘nice to know’ categories illustrated the effect that the state test had on the 8th grade math curriculum. Keith prioritized the ‘need to know’ topics, which were sure to be represented on the state test and covered in great detail. The ‘nice to know’ topics, on the other hand, were concepts that would enrich the students’ math experience but were not likely to be on the state test and thus could be eliminated from the curriculum at Keith’s discretion. Keith made the decision to include the ‘nice to know’ topics only when he felt that the students had a solid grasp of the ‘need to know’ topics and sufficient time remained in the district’s time line. Val commented that although she and Keith tried to cover the ‘nice to know’ topics in their enrichment classes, this was not often possible.

In the local context of the classroom, their interactions with each other and their students highlighted the survival theme on a daily basis. The enrichment classes, although intended to provide opportunities for the students to receive extra help or more challenging instruction in any one of the academic areas, were typically used to help students keep up with their class assignments. Val’s enrichment class
was supposed to be a time when she could work on organizational skills, study skills, and provide remedial assistance with reading and mathematics. In reality, it was the only dedicated time during the weekly schedule when Val could work with the students on their assignments and provide the necessary supports and accommodations that the students with IEPs required. Val kept a prioritized list of all outstanding assignments for the four content areas posted in the front of the classroom and the students spent their enrichment time trying to complete the assignments on time. This was always a challenge, and the list never seemed to get any shorter. The students were constantly working to keep up with the assignments in their co-taught classes, which left little time for the type of enrichment that Val envisioned.

The academic demands of keeping up with four co-taught classes were significant for the students with IEPs; Val resorted to using her classroom space at times other than the regularly scheduled enrichment class to help the students. When I spoke with Val, she had an air of desperation when she talked about how she met with students before, during, and after school to support the students in their classes. She commented that having the enrichment class meet only 2 out of every 3 days was not enough and if she did not make time to meet with the students, then they would not succeed.

Failure was an unacceptable outcome and Val went to great lengths to support the students with IEPs, because she felt that if she didn’t then no one else would. In
the event that they fell too far behind in their classes, the consequences were significant. Failure to maintain acceptable attendance and achievement in the co-taught classes could result in a student being removed from the co-taught program at Mathers Middle School. Because of the structure of the special education program at Mathers Middle School, the students with IEPs could be placed in any one of the programs available in the district. With co-teaching being one of the least restrictive placements, movement to a more restricted environment would not only be possible, but likely endorsed by the special education committee as being in the best interests of the students.

The interactions and contexts described in the first analytic phase illustrate how survival was enacted and lived, but survival is also a relevant theme to consider in the second phase of this analysis. In the second phase, the justification and genesis of the need for survival was revealed and explored. Using Bishop and Glynn’s (1999) analytic framework, I studied the power relations that operated in Keith and Val’s co-taught classroom. This framework allowed for the exploration of initiation, accountability, benefit, representation and legitimation of interactions in the co-taught classroom. From this analysis it appeared that the balance of power in Keith and Val’s classroom favored a traditional general education perspective. Because Val’s position in the co-taught classroom was substantially marginalized, inclusion was not realized. The state education department, district administrators, and to a lesser extent, Keith, initiated the co-teachers’ professional relationship, the development of curriculum, and the initiation of interactions in the classroom. Val
and Keith’s professional accountability, in this class, was also primarily in relation to the state education department and school and district administrators according to general education standards such as district benchmarking and state assessments. The reality represented in the co-taught classroom was almost entirely that of the general education discourse. Because of the tight constraints on curriculum and time, disability and difference were not recognized or valued in Keith’s and Val’s classrooms. In much the same way that disability was not represented in the co-taught classroom, it was not legitimized either. Despite the billing as a co-taught class, Keith’s identity as a general educator and director of daily math activity was clearly a more valued or legitimate presence in the classroom and the class was generally identified as his class.

The second phase of analysis suggests that although Keith and Val succeeded in creating a positive and pleasant professional relationship, their collaborative efforts to provide an inclusive education for twelve students with special education IEPs fell short of the democratic ideals of inclusive education as discussed in the first chapter. The amicable nature of their relationship combined with the apparent success of their students on standardized state assessments superficially indicated that Keith and Val had succeeded in establishing an inclusive environment where students with diverse educational needs could thrive. However, after using Bishop and Glynn’s (1999) framework for analyzing power relations in education setting, a somewhat different picture of the reality of their co-taught classroom emerged. With the inclusion of students with IEPs and the collaboration of general and special education
professionals, the co-taught classroom represented a physical space where the general education and special education discourses intersect. This discursive intersection is typically characterized in co-teaching literature as being the source of interpersonal conflict and struggles for professional identity. However, in this study, Val and Keith did not experience notable conflict, nor did either one appear to struggle significantly with their professional identity.

In addition to the power analysis revealing why Val and the students with IEPs were marginalized in the co-taught classroom, the second phase of this analysis illustrated the inevitability of that marginalization in Keith and Val’s particular arrangement. Disability was not recognized or valued. There was no time or room for individualization or differentiation of instruction. The majority of the decisions were made by Keith, the state, or the school administration according to traditional general education standards. Although Val and the students with IEPs were clearly marginalized and the power relations inhibited any potential inclusive efforts in this arrangement, it was never contested. Val and Keith did not recognize or question the marginalization or exclusion inherent in their practice. Not only did they accept the grand narrative of segregation in special education and dominance of the traditional general education model of instruction, but actively preserved this dominance in the face of a non-traditional structure such as co-teaching. The co-teaching arrangement was presented as an inclusive model in which students with and without IEPs would have access to the same curriculum. Ultimately, it was a highly complicated, labor intensive, and emotionally charged situation in which Val and Keith proved that they
could get the students with IEPs to pass the general education math class. One might argue that this illustrated the success of their model, but from the critical theoretical perspective of the third phase of analysis the outcome fell significantly short of success.

In the third phase of this analysis, I explored critical discursive aspects of Keith and Val’s co-teaching relationship. Using the theoretical concepts of discourse, the institution, identity, inequality, ideology, agency, and historicity I explored the limitations and depths of Val and Keith’s consciousness about the potential for inclusion in their co-teaching situation. Foucault (1977) describes discourse as the collection of uttered language and social practices that influence an individual’s perceptions of and interactions with the world. The discourse of their co-teaching situation was representative of the dominant general education discourse that relies upon the traditional special grand narrative for justification of the exclusive and marginalizing practices that sustain it. Although they succeeded in producing desirable student scores on the state math test, Val and Keith did so by unknowingly marginalizing and excluding the students with IEPs in order to minimize their impact on the flow of the lessons and keep the class on schedule. Their efforts to maintain the dominant general education values while physically ‘including’ students with IEPs produced a situation in which Val had to utilize significant time and space outside of the co-taught classroom to ensure the survival and success of the marginalized and excluded students with IEPs. Although Keith and Val both described their co-teaching arrangement as inclusive, their arrangement falls short of
the democratic and social justice ideals of an inclusive structure. Moreover, it was clear that their allegiance to traditional special education values was significantly influenced by their own experiences in the American public school system and the accrediting institutes of higher education.

The institution, according to Foucault (1972; 1994b; 2003b), is responsible for passing on the beliefs, practices, and traditions of dominant culture from one cohort to another thus ensuring the longevity and continued dominance of a particular discourse. Keith and Val’s reliance upon the traditional special education grand narrative to justify the marginalization and exclusion of the students with IEPs was encouraged and reinforced by their own experiences within the current education system. Their tacit acceptance of the necessity of segregated or self-contained settings for students with IEPs revealed the depth of their indoctrination and the rationality through which their practice was justified and their professional identities were formed.

Identity formation is the result of the classification and categorization of individuals according to the accepted hierarchy of discursive truth and knowledge (Foucault, 1994a). Val and Keith both possessed professional identities that were produced by institutions throughout their lives. These identities, which included discursively agreed upon expectations, practices, and beliefs, were ready-made and waiting for Keith and Val to assume. Keith was a math teacher and Val was a special education teacher. Despite their designation as co-teachers, they had distinct
responsibilities and qualifications that contributed to this arrangement. Although they amicably set these expectations and were both content with the co-teaching situation, Keith and Val’s relationship was rife with unacknowledged inequality.

Inequality results from the hierarchical organization of knowledge by the centering institutions, which favor the reproduction of the dominant discourse (Blommaert, 2005). The orders of indexicality (Blommaert, 2005) establish the boundaries of normalcy and designate the distribution of authority and value within a dominant discourse. Perpetuated by the special education grand narrative, the dominance of the traditional general education system is apparent in this study. In the hierarchy of the current system of education, traditional views of education and disability are upheld and valued over any attempts or thoughts about inclusive or socially just education. The power relations in this co-teaching situation favor the state and the pressure to have all students succeed in the general education system according to long standing standards of success. The differential access to status, identities, and activities of value is the source of inequality in our society and is fueled by the common sense ideological perceptions of normalcy.

The normalized standards of truth are reinforced and perpetuated by centering institutions by rendering the values hierarchy of dominant discourses as common sense (Fairclough, 2003). Dominant perceptions of normalcy are then possessed by large numbers of people who move on from the centering institutions to reproduce and perpetuate that dominance. The notion of unconscious continuation of dominant
structures has been discussed in relation to special education and inclusion by Allan (2003a). Additionally, Brantlinger (2006) challenges the special education grand narrative and cites preservice teacher education programs for infusing ideological perspective on disability and problematic ‘truths’ into courses and textbooks. In Keith and Val’s situation, the inequality between them in the co-taught classroom was obvious. However, their tacit approval of this inequality was somewhat less obvious. Both Val and Keith are products of their discourses and as such have emerged as knowledgeable subjects and carefully constructed agents of reproduction. Although inclusive education has emerged as a reform of traditional education models for all students and although many aspects of the co-teaching arrangement were non-traditional, Val and Keith did not appear to push the discursive boundaries of their professional roles very far.

Agency, the ability of an individual to incite change or transformation within a discourse, is constrained by ideological perceptions of normalcy and possibility (Blommaert, 2005). Neither Keith nor Val pushed for transformation in their co-teaching situation. According to the expectations and standards of the traditional general education discourse, they already saw their arrangement as functional, successful, and inclusive. Nominally representing the intersection of the general education and special education discourses, inclusion has the potential to be an inspiration for transformation in the education for all students. However, as has been discussed throughout this study, Keith and Val did not create an inclusive environment. In order to achieve the potential of inclusion Allan (2006) calls for a
reevaluation of teacher education and research to produce reflexive educators who recognize the limitations of their discursive foundations.

An analysis of the foundations of discursive interactions reveals that much of what we experience in a particular moment is representative of a layered history of truth, knowledge, inequality, ideology, and reproduction. This historic a priori is reinforced and reproduced by the centering institutions that carefully construct the identities of discursive subjects (Foucault, 1972). If nothing else, this study has illustrated that what I observed in Keith and Val’s class represented a rich discursive history that shaped the teachers’ identities, expectations, and interactions that has spanned the course of the past 200 years. Moreover, this study explored the ‘layered simultaneity’ (Blommaert, 2005) of the co-teachers’ interactions and did not reduce its complexity by assuming that the interactions could be adequately understood through a superficial analysis of their practice.

Through detailed analyses of discourse, power, and critical theoretical applications, this analysis has moved beyond the fundamental limitations of the synchronic analyses that comprise the co-teaching literature base and revealed the rich discursive historicity in Keith and Val’s interactions. Discourses and discursive subjects have rich historic tapestries that are enacted simultaneously at any given time. Teachers, both general and special educators, are carefully constructed subjects of their respective discourses and carry with them the historicity of their discourse as well as their own life long history. Val and Keith have each been teachers for 16
years, in addition to the 18 years that they spent in the education as students; they have almost 35 years of personal history tied up in their professional identities. With Val explicitly identifying herself as a special educator and Keith succinctly dividing the classroom responsibilities along traditional general education / special education lines, their allegiance to the special grand narrative was evident. They both spoke of the need for self-contained special education classes for students who could not make it in co-teaching situations and never questioned the legitimacy of the marginalizing and exclusive nature of special education. Although Keith and Val characterized their arrangement as inclusive, their lived experiences did not achieve the social justice and democratic ideals of inclusion. Simply placing students with and without IEPs and two teachers in the same class does not make a placement inclusive. Inclusion is not a place; it is a way of interacting with others, respecting difference, and encouraging all individuals to contribute and participate in a community regardless of their race, gender, class, or ability (Allan, 2003a; Brantlinger, 2006b; Dixon, 2005; Sapon-Shevin, 2003; Ware, 2004)

This study has shown that although the co-teachers’ believed that their arrangement was inclusive, it actually fell short of the DSE inclusive ideals as described earlier in this dissertation. This finding stands in direct contradiction with the co-teachers’ and the school district’s designation of their class as inclusive. Had this study used a more traditional analysis of Keith and Val’s practice, perhaps my findings would have been different. After all, with no outward signs of interpersonal conflict, Val and Keith appeared to work together very well and their students met the
expectations set forth by the state and school district administrators. It is only upon a critical reflection of their interactions that the marginalization and exclusion in their practice became apparent. Perhaps even more significant is the fact that neither Keith nor Val was aware of their exclusive and marginalizing practices or their reliance upon the traditional special education grand narrative to justify their actions.

Keith and Val did not have critical awareness of their own pedagogy. The state, Mathers Middle School, and the school district did not encourage the development of critical awareness. In the face of increasing mandates to include students with IEPs in general education classes and assessments and in the eyes of those in positions of power, Keith and Val succeeded in including the 12 students with IEPs in Keith’s math class. They survived. The students with IEPs typically kept up with the general education students, passed the class, and scored adequately on the state test. Keith and Val were lauded for their exemplary practice as co-teachers. In examining this situation from the dominant general education perspective, there was nothing to be critical about.

The complacency and implicit validation of Val and Keith’s co-teaching practice represents perhaps one of the most significant barriers to inclusive education today. They worked hard to make the physical inclusion of students with IEPs in a general education class work in a structure that valued the dominance of the traditional general education system. However, they have done so at the cost of the students’ quality of education and sense of belonging in the community. It appeared
that Val and Keith were not able to prioritize the development of an inclusive learning community because their quest for survival they never questioned the rationality and rigidity of the traditional system. Although their efforts were intended to be inclusive, they were ultimately a reproduction of special education exclusionary practices. Through a criticism of the dominant discourse in the American education system, this analysis was not intended to explain the experiences of any other co-teachers. Rather, the applicability lies in its provision of a detailed description of often overlooked discursive facets of a co-teaching relationship which can be studied in other co-teaching situations.

The apparent success of Keith and Val’s co-teaching relationship was not reliant upon whether they had parity, conflict, or sufficient co-planning time as suggested by previous studies. Their success was dependent upon their ability to make a non-traditional arrangement like co-teaching work for the students and teachers in a system that still clung to incompatible, yet rationalized traditional values and practices. It is evident that the success or failure of Val and Keith’s co-teaching did not hinge upon their adherence to a particular approach or practice. Rather, this study has revealed a set of critical discursive factors that must be considered in a context much broader than the individual classroom in order to explore the full potential of inclusive co-teaching. Through a deconstruction of Keith and Val’s professional relationship and interactions, this dissertation has begun to explore the concerns raised by other scholars and illustrate the importance of a critical analysis of current co-teaching practice.
**Limitations and Recommendations**

With the dearth of critical research on inclusive co-teaching, this dissertation begins to address the calls of some scholars for such work (Brownwell, et al., 2006; Dieker & Murawski, 2003; Trent, 1998). The issues raised in this analysis have been suggested in the theoretical work of some prominent scholars in DSE (Allan, 2003c, 2005, 2006b; Brantlinger, 1997, 2006b; Rice, 2006; Sapon-Shevin, 2003; Skrtic, 1995; Ware, 2000, 2003, 2004) but have yet to be seen in the co-teaching research literature. Although this dissertation has limited generalizability, due to the case study format and use of only one pair of co-teachers, the depth of this analysis is extensive in the detail and the broad discursive conclusions derived from this analysis can provide a model for future research. This analysis presented a broad-based interpretation of the discursive factors that influence Keith and Val’s co-teaching practice. The emphasis in this discourse analysis was on illustrating the strong grasp of the special education grand narrative on the co-teachers thoughts, beliefs, and actions as supposed pioneers in inclusive education. Although there was some microanalysis of the teachers language in this study, this analysis prioritized macroanalyses of power and discourse as suggested in Gee’s (2007) “big D” Discourse and Fairclough’s (2003) contextual analysis of discourse. Additionally, this study does not provide suggestions for improving the inclusivity of a co-teaching situation. As a preliminary example of the utility and relevance of CDA, this dissertation is intended as validation for new theoretical perspective and methodology in inclusive education research. It is important for future research in inclusive
education to build on this foundation and include the critical DSE perspective in its theoretical framework, or risk contributing to the sustainment of the special education grand narrative and traditional deficit views of disability and difference.

Although the limitations of this case study are clear, there are distinct implications for further research pertaining to gender, school organization, curriculum, teacher education, and professional development. It is relevant to note that the back grounding of issues pertaining to the gendered nature of Keith and Val’s co-teaching relationship is intentional in the present study. Detailed discussions about gender ideology and identity are beyond the scope of this present study, but are strongly warranted for analysis in another study. A proper gendered study of this and other co-teaching arrangements would require situating the study within the literature on gender ideology and gender identities in schooling (Apple, 1988; Duranti, 1997; Ochs, 1993; Tannen, 2001; Weiler, 1988). This analysis raises questions about how future studies might examine the dynamics of gender and gender roles in a co-teaching relationship. How are gender roles realized in the language and behavior of co-teachers and how do these discursive interactions influence their attempts at inclusive education? Considering that the present study examines the relationship between a male math teacher and a female special educator, what are the influences of gender roles in a situation with a female math teacher and a male special educator? How are gender issues different in an elementary (K-6) co-teaching relationship versus a secondary (7-12) level situation?
In terms of school organization, this analysis raises questions about the current structure of the United States education system and its ability to cultivate inclusive educational environments. Do school systems, districts, or individual schools have sufficient autonomy and flexibility to support inclusive education? How do different school districts or schools define inclusion and what are their expectations for co-teaching arrangements? Who makes the decision to pair teachers in co-teaching and what is the rationale behind the decision to prevent longevity in co-teaching relationships? Are factors about the teachers’ life histories or personal beliefs about inclusion taken into consideration when forming co-teaching pairings?

Research has shown that the current high stakes testing trend narrows curriculum and limits a teacher’s opportunities for freedom and creativity in implementing the curriculum. How does the current high stakes testing trend influence efforts at inclusive education? How does a prescribed curriculum influence teachers’ efforts at providing flexible and individualized inclusive education to all students? Can all students achieve the same standards (i.e. passing the NYS mandated assessments) in truly inclusive settings?

This study also raises questions in relation to teacher education. How are teacher education programs preparing special education student teachers for inclusive co-teaching situations? How are teacher education programs preparing content specialist student teachers for inclusive co-teaching situations? How does a
theoretical grounding in principles of DSE inform or affect a teacher’s practice once they are active in the field? Is dual certification in a content area and special education (for one or both co-teachers) beneficial or essential to co-teaching success?

My conversations with Val and Keith inspired my questions about professional development in co-teaching. What advanced support is available for co-teachers like Val and Keith who have been working together for multiple years? Who is responsible for finding and allocating time for planning time among co-teachers? What are the most efficient and effective ways to collaborate and communicate in a day that has limited to no opportunities for co-planning? Should teachers engaged in co-teaching relationships be granted extra prep time in lieu of teaching time?

Future research on co-teaching should strive to continue to improve inclusive education by problematizing rationalized conceptions of normalcy, discursive dominance, and disability. The possibilities of discourse analysis in empirical research are numerous and further research must be conducted in as many inclusive educational environments as possible. Other teaching situations that are thought to be inclusive and reflect socially just values in education should be critically analyzed. Entire schools or districts should be studied to determine the extent of exclusive or marginalizing practices. The federal legislations should be subjected to reconsideration based on the ideals of inclusion and social justice. It is clear that the implications of critical discursive analysis reach far beyond the daily interactions
between co-teachers in an inclusive classroom and will undoubtedly challenge the entire field of education to reconsider their perspectives on disability and difference.

The areas of education that have yet to be critically analyzed along inclusive lines are extensive and what is perhaps the most challenging aspect of conducting this type of research is figuring out what to do with the findings. The issues raised in this study are not ones with clear-cut resolutions. They are complex issues that call for a critical reevaluation of the foundations of our current education system. Although it is not impossible, the types of changes required to provide an inclusive education and improve the education for all students are not those that can be presented in a new model of exemplary practice to follow and evaluate. Changes must be made in the way that people view the world; in their perceptions of normalcy and social justice.

Inclusion discourse has only recently emerged over the last twenty years, while special education is over 100 years old and general education has been in place for close to 200 years (Pinar, 2004). Transformation from the dominant traditional general education system to an inclusive system in which all students, regardless of their perceived degree of normalcy, will require time and critical reflection on current pedagogy. If we hope to make any strides at improving the education for all students, we need to examine the discursive foundations of our current system, the construction of discursive professionals, and the ongoing legitimization of marginalizing and exclusive practices that maintain our current education system. This analysis has
presented one way in which a critical analysis of inclusive practices can be conducted.
References


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Appendix A

Initial Interview Protocol

1. What teacher certifications do you currently hold?
2. What is your current job title?
3. How many years have you been a teacher?
4. How many years have you been in this current position?
5. How many years have you participated in co-teaching?
6. How many years have you co-taught with your current co-teacher?
7. How were you selected for this co-teaching position?
8. Tell me about your key educational responsibilities. What do you do on a daily basis in the co-taught classroom?
9. What are the most important educational things that you do in the co-taught classroom?
10. What are the most important educational things that your co-teacher does in the classroom?
11. How do you reach an understanding about each others’ roles and responsibilities in the co-taught classroom?
12. Who initiates the lesson planning and sets the goals and objectives of the lesson?
13. Do you and your co-teacher plan together?
   a. If so, when? What is a typical planning session like?
   b. If not, do you think it would be beneficial? Why?
14. Who evaluates the students’ work to provide a grade?
15. How does the co-teaching relationship benefit you personally or professionally?
16. How does the co-taught classroom benefit the students with disabilities?
17. If given the choice, would you participate in a co-teaching relationship again?