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Interaction within Individualized Education Program meetings: Conversation analysis of a collective case study

Christopher Charles Plum

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2008

ABSTRACT

Interaction Within Individualized Education Program
Meetings: Conversation Analysis of a Collective Case Study

by

Christopher Charles Plum

M.A., University of Colorado, 1997
B.A., Michigan State University, 1994

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
K-12 Educational Leadership

Walden University
November 2008

Abstract

Current research provides little insight into interaction during Individual Education Program (IEP) meetings. This lack of insight may impede decision-making regarding student placement. This collective case study addressed that problem by analyzing interactions of participants in IEP meetings. Rooted in a conversation analytic (CA) theoretical framework, research questions centered on ways IEP teams interacted, oriented to identities, and ascribed to potential power asymmetries, with analysis focused on talk preceding a child's educational placement. Six hours of IEP meeting footage from 13 meetings distributed across 3 Detroit area charter schools were transcribed in CA Jeffersonian notation and analyzed using CA methodology. A major finding of the study was the social order governing the IEP based on preemptive student placement decisions and the maintenance of the social order by meeting participants. This work potentially impacts the way in which IEP stakeholders view their productivity and strategies for improving IEP protocol. Findings offer guidance as to how to alter the conduct of IEP meetings in order to equalize power asymmetries. The study contributes to the body of CA research through the expansion of methodological tools available for educational research.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife Stacy Plum, and my two beautiful daughters, Ava Jane and Claire, to Richard and Gale Kramer, and to my two loving parents, Thomas and Marlene Plum, who are true life-long learners and the best teachers I have ever had.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Background

In an historic move, the passing of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) by the United States government in 1997 put in place guidelines indicating how federal dollars can be spent by states to service students who qualify for special education programming. Specific to the legislation is the notion that all states provide free and appropriate public education, or FAPE, to all students. Included in the legislation is language specific to the participation of stakeholders in identifying, evaluating, and classifying students with disabilities. Parents, professionals, and, in some instances, children are now legally equal contributing members of the team which ultimately decides a child's educational placement. The language outlining the participation of stakeholders in this process has been further strengthened through landmark cases such as *Board of Education of Hendrick Hudson District v. Rowley* (1982), as well as the passing of Public Law 108-446 (2004) the 2004 amendments to the IDEA legislation. The 2004

amendments mandate that the preceding individuals are present in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting to determine special education qualification of students.

Current research has suggested that, though many districts follow the law requiring that all required members are present at the IEP meeting, there is much variance regarding meeting protocol and language usage in IEP meetings across states (Dabkowski 2004; Martin, Marshall & Sale, 2004). Such variance is allowed and seemingly intended in the language of cases such as *Board of Education of Hendrick Hudson Central School District v. Rowley* (1982), which stated, "Thus, although the Act leaves to the States the primary responsibility for developing and executing educational programs for handicapped children, it imposes significant requirements to be followed in the discharge of that responsibility. Compliance is assured by provisions permitting the withholding of federal funds upon determination that a participating state or local agency has failed to satisfy the requirements of the Act, 1414(b)(2)(A), 1416, and by the provision for judicial review" (458 U.S. 176, 184).

Districts now have a legal obligation to include parents, general education teachers, special education providers, related service personnel, and district representatives in the IEP process. Incorporating all the specified partners in decisions about the student's educational programming involves a high level of participation and collaboration. It is imperative that there are methods in place to determine that all members are clear on the specific issues surrounding each case and to determine with certainty the best educational placement for every child. Though not explicit in the legal documentation, states, districts and schools have relied locally on methods, protocol, and delivery procedures for IEP meetings.

To date, the method of collaboration between school support services personnel and parents in IEP meetings, as exemplified in the state of Michigan, has been face-to-face collaboration and conversation in the small meeting setting. Typically, meeting agendas are set by special education providers in the school to discuss the psychological evaluation results of a child who has been tested by a licensed school psychologist. Parents, the

child's general education teacher, and a school administrative representative receive an invitation to attend the meeting. In the context of the meeting, collaboration and mutual understanding are created, or not created, at least in part through the language used by all parties in the meeting framed by whatever models and theories are subscribed to by the interlocutors therein.

Previous studies have included analyses of observed IEP discussions and perceptions of meeting participants (Arivett, Rust, Brissie, & Dansby, 2007), as well as consideration of the varying roles of participants (Rafoth & Foriska, 2006) and the amount of time each tends to expend sharing in meetings (Martin et al., 2006). The field is rich with studies concerning the reactions of participants particularly parents and students, to perceived lack of collaboration and teaming on the part of professionals (Dabkowski, 2004). Recent research on interaction in the IEP has appeared overwhelmingly geared toward participant survey, interview, and observation framed by a priori constructs regarding interaction and participation.

The previous studies notwithstanding, there exists a paucity of research that utilizes the applied conversation analysis (CA) model in the IEP setting, specifically with the depth that audio and video footage provide.

Conversation analysis is a method of capturing and analyzing interaction as it naturally occurs between interlocutors (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2006, p. 14). Generally, the methodology allows the researcher a view of structural discourse as it unfolds and is sequentially created in interaction. Conversation analysts have adopted the term "talk-in-interaction" (p. 14) to describe the sequential, tacit rules employed in everyday conversation. More specifically, CA has become a tool for looking at talk-in-interaction as it occurs in the institutional setting and highlights the process by which participants orient to different context-specific membership categories through their talk and action (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998). The advantage of the CA methodology over other data collection and analysis approaches in the qualitative tradition is its adherence to capturing conversation, in situ, and basing analysis on a strict transcription method which illuminates inflections and utterances historically overlooked in

typical observation and transcription (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2006, p. 74).

In dissertation research conducted by Peters (2003), CA was attempted as a method for examining the dialogue that occurred in IEP meetings in an urban school in New Mexico. Peters examined the IEP team from multiple perspectives, focusing on the theoretical underpinnings of meetings, performance, face-to-face interaction, and socio-cultural milieu while employing a conversation analysis methodology (p. 282). Peters concluded that the study of social interaction and the consideration of tension that exists between policy and the attempted practice are worthy pursuits toward improvement of the IEP meeting process (p. 290).

To be sure, Peters (2003) contributed an important systems perspective for participation in IEP meetings and the interaction among members. The author discovered that, in spite of the best efforts of teams seemingly in an optimal position to fulfill the expectations of IDEA regarding the collaborative partnership between stakeholders, the broken systems perpetuated through

mandated meeting tools and protocol continue a cycle which ultimately falls short of the promise of the law.

Peters stated:

Consequently, IEP teams invariably use ordinary tools in the conventional ways that are dictated by the entrenched, hierarchical, discipline-specific culture that predominates in schools and society. The predictable result, based on a consideration of socio-cultural influences and social interaction dynamics, is the reinforcement and replication of an existing power asymmetry between professionals and parents. (p. 291)

The current study does not intend to prove or disprove Peters's (2003) claims. However, what appeared missing in Peters's work was the depth and focus on the intricacies of applied conversation analysis (CA) in its historically intended form (see Psathas, 1995; Sacks, 1992; Ten Have, 2006) for the purposes of examining the actual conversation as it unfolds and reveals the sequentially ordered interaction of IEP participants. Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006) asserted:

CA emphasizes that analysis should be based entirely on closely transcribed examples of actual talk recorded in naturally occurring settings, extracts from which are made available as part of published research. In this way, the claims of the analyst are open to test by the reader or other researchers on the basis of the data. (p. 5)

Though Peters's (2003) work presented an impetus and rationale for the implementation of CA methodology in the IEP meeting, the following CA criteria were admittedly not met: (a) real-time data was not audio recorded for the required critical listening, re-listening, and analysis specific to the foundation of CA methodology; (b) video data were absent, which would provide key insight into non-verbal interaction and context; (c) member checks were not completed in a timely manner and did not involve participants viewing actual transcribed data as well as listen-backs to audio or video footage; and (d) the author's lengthy interactions with a professional member of the IEP team through extensive embedded observations and interviews were not necessary from a CA perspective and could have potentially biased the interaction as it occurred in the IEP with the researcher present (Ten Have, 1996, p. 251). Thus, the interaction patterns in IEP meetings using CA as an analytical tool have not yet been fully explored.

Statement of the Problem

There exists a problem in the area of individualized education program collaborative teaming in the field of education: It is unknown how IEP members co-create meaning through their interactions, establish turns for productive talk, and interactionally arrive at the outcomes of their IEP decisions. The field of educational research is rich with studies that focus on parental perceptions of their participation in the meetings and the alienation which appears to occur frequently in the IEP setting (Dabkowski 2004; Martin, Marshall, & Sale, 2004). Evidence suggests there are meetings where little disagreement occurs and the perceptions in post-IEP meeting are positive (Peters, 2003). However, the real-time data collection and analysis of what actually occurs in IEP meetings through interaction has been given little attention to date; certainly, the view through the CA lens has been limited. Peters's (2003) marriage of in-depth cultural study including observations, interviews, and artifacts with conversation analysis arrived at a crossroads where traditional CA methodology became compromised (p. 90).

With the increasing number of students placed into special education each year, particularly in the urban setting, it is becoming more evident that examinations of the meetings which determine placement for children deserve closer, more rigorous scrutiny. The collaboration, interaction, and dialogue between stakeholders at Individualized Education Program meetings warrant specific attention, as it is through this federal and state mandated process that educational decisions are made that significantly impact the lives of children. It is from this place of potential for positive social change through an examination of the conduct and work accomplished by participants in this critical setting that the current study departs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to capture and analyze the conversation among participants collaborating in IEP team meetings in urban schools in the greater Detroit area. The study investigated how participants in IEP meetings converse, co-create meaning, employ elements of interactional strategies to assert points, understand each other, identify with and orient to different

membership categories relevant to the meeting, as well as highlighting evidence of power asymmetries in the meetings. Of interest in the present study was the interaction occurring just prior to the decision to place a child into special education, disqualify a child, or alter a child's existing special education placement. Along with the interaction of the participants in the IEP meeting, the identity categories demonstrable through interaction, the orientation of the participants to visible asymmetries in the conversation was also analyzed.

The commitment of the current study remains to the qualitative tradition with a focus on conversation analysis as a means of capturing the interactional data. To push Peters's (2003) work a bit further, the current study attempted to objectively capture examples of how participants orient to the social milieu and structure, as well as the asymmetries potentially found therein. The study analyzed the data in the applied CA methodology and ultimately revealed the turn-taking behaviors, perspective displays, and repair structures employed by participants, in situ.

Research Questions

1. What conversational structures are evident in the delivery of information to participants on which decision of placement is based (e.g., Greeting/reciprocation, Summons/acknowledgement, Request/compliance, Assertion/agreement)?

2. How are turns allocated and questions asked and answered (e.g., Question/answer, Invitation-acceptance/declination, Assessment-agreement/disagreement)?

3. How do participants in the IEP make relevant their membership to categories: professional, parent, general education teacher, special education teacher, school psychologist or other qualified examiner, and so forth?

4. How do membership categories function in establishing interaction leading to the decision of placement (analysis will include associations to the above categories through evidence of feelings, beliefs, assertions, obligations, and so on, relevant to the context of the meeting and the act of placing the child)?

5. How do participants orient to the asymmetries inherent in the institutional setting of the IEP demonstrable through their talk (asymmetries commonly

associated with institutional setting involving parents and professionals was explored)?

Theoretical Framework

Arguably a methodology as well as a theory of interaction and meaning construction, conversation analysis is the driving theory framing this research. The work of Sacks (1992), Schegloff (2007), Ten Have (2006), Jefferson (1974), Wooffitt (2005), Psathas (1995), and Drew and Heritage (1992), provide the thrust of conversation analysis theory and practice applied to this context with some notable differences. Conversation analysis is in itself a theory as well as a practice. Theoretically, its founders challenged sociologists and psychologists to recognize that conversation in everyday situations was not, in any case, ever circumstantial, devoid of the co-creation of meaning, and ultimately unworthy of formal examination. Rather, attention should be given to every utterance, however incidental, in every turn and move between participants in an interactional exchange.

Conversation analysis originated as a study of recorded calls to a suicide prevention center in Los Angeles. Harvey Sacks (1992), credited with spearheading

the creation of the theory, discovered boxes of tapes in the prevention center and began to listen to them repeatedly. Patterns began to emerge in the opening sequences of the calls which lead to specific questions by Sacks regarding how questions could lead participants as well as how certain responses became predictable based on lines of questioning (Sacks, p. 6). Specifically, Sacks found that there were ways in which a suicide call responder could elicit information from a caller, such as the caller's name, without directly asking for the personal information (p. 6). Additionally, it became clear to Sacks that there were general conversation rules that appeared to be established that earlier may have been dismissed by researchers in sociology and linguistics as random chaotic conversational acts (Psathus, 1995; Sacks, 1995; Schegloff, 2007; Ten Have, 2006; Woffitt, 2005). Since its inception in the mid 1960's, conversation analysis has informed the fields of sociology, psychology, linguistics (Woffitt, 2005), communications (Maynard, 1989), and has more recently been applied to institutional settings such as second-language learning in schools (Weiyn He, 2004), and

doctor-patient dialogue in the clinical setting (Maynard & Heritage, 2005).

Psathas (1995) asserted, "Conversation analysis has been consistently oriented to the discovery, description, and analysis of methodological occurrences, of the formal procedures that are used by members in accomplishing everyday social actions" (p. 15). One of the major propositions of the theory advanced by CA is the notion that the participants in the social milieu advance action through their use of language; that language has distinct significant meaning, is not haphazard and is a continuous, reproducible construction of ideas and connections. It is important to note that this theory proposed by Sacks (1992) and furthered by Schegloff (2007) and articulated by Garfinkel (1996) became a direct challenge to the notion that interaction and language should be analyzed using an a priori set of presupposed criteria created and/or filtered through the perceptions of the researcher. Rather, CA relies on the researcher to remain a passive observer who respects every utterance between participants as data that has value and should be transcribed in detail. Gail Jefferson (1974), a colleague of Sacks (1992, 1974) and

Schegloff (2007, 1974), created a transcribing method which remains in practice today (Ten Have, 2006; Wooffitt, 2005) and was the preferred method to transcribe the real-time conversation between IEP participants in this study.

In the IEP, there is a general summarizing statement regarding how participants are to actually participate through the IEP process; that is, as a collaborative team. How do the parties in an IEP team meeting actually orient themselves through their actual interaction with one another? How do participants orient through their talk to the identities that they ascribe to or are categorized in through their talk? The challenge in this study was "the discovery, description, and analysis of that produced orderliness" (Ten Have, 2006, p. 41). It is argued here that only through a CA lens can the interaction and actual conversation be examined thoroughly and without presupposition. It is not the task of the researcher in this case to create a framework by which hypotheses regarding the nature of the IEP collaborative relationship will fit, rather, it is a study of the data that occurred naturally in the IEP setting in schools in the greater Detroit, MI, area. The CA theoretical lens allowed the

researcher and the participants the freedom to observe the milieu in action, in situ, and discover the richness that was revealed through disciplined accounting of the participants' words, actions, work, and negotiations. As Garfinkel (1996) suggested, CA will allow for, "working out 'what more' there is to the unquestionable corpus status of formal analytic investigations than formal analysis does, did, ever did, or can provide" (p. 6).

Nature of the Study

Yin (2003) asserted, "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). To date, education research has left the rich language data occurring in meetings and between IEP members largely unexplored. The qualitative paradigm, specifically the case study tradition, guided by the methodology of conversation analysis transcription, is arguably an alternate, appropriate approach for the collection and analysis of the language occurring in meetings between participants. Because 13 meetings were analyzed at 3 schools, the

collective case study design was employed (Creswell, 1998, 62). The context in which the meetings take place and the actual utterances, or lack thereof, of each participating member provide multiple variables and potential entry points into the examination of co-created meaning, orientation and decision making. This type of examination must occur after data has been collected and transcribed. A qualitative case study implementing the pre-specified methodology for CA transcription and the utilization of unobtrusive audio/video data recording allowed for appropriate examination of the phenomenon.

The sample for this study included the special education providers, school administrators, general education teachers, parents, and other support personnel as mandated by IDEA requirements for the IEP, from approximately 13 IEP team meetings distributed among K-8 charter schools in the Detroit area. All Individualized Education Program participants meeting through the spring of 2008 were invited to participate. All members of the Individualized Education Program teams voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Individualized Education Program teams were accepted as participants in the study

until saturation was reached. Though the desired number of 10 hours of digitally recorded IEP meeting dialogue was not met, the six hours obtained and analyzed proved sufficient.

The researcher's role in this study was one of passive observer. The researcher had no prior professional or personal relationship with the participants in the meetings or the staff and administration at the schools in which they function. The data were collected by a digital audio recording device and transcribed by the researcher utilizing the widely accepted, applied conversation analysis transcription techniques advanced by Gail Jefferson (Ten Have, 2006). Additionally, digital video footage of the Individualized Education Program meetings and conversation data were collected and analyzed to capture nonverbal communication and to create a physical map of the room and participants during the meetings utilizing the Transana digital data analysis software. Post-meeting interviews were offered to team meeting members so that they could observe data footage and comment on meaning constructed at certain segments. Allowing participants the ability to view the video footage alongside the CA transcriptions of team meeting data provided

for a convergence of data and strengthen the reliability and internal validity of the study (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Both the tradition followed in this study as well as the CA methodological approach to data collection and analysis will be described in detail in chapter 3 of this dissertation. The researcher had no prior professional, personal, or authoritative relationship with any of the participants in this study nor is the researcher an affiliate of the schools in which the study is conducted. No prior conversations or connections aside from the signing and acknowledgement of consent to participate was made with any of the participants in this study. During the study, any degree of connection or conversation was managed and minimized to the best of the researcher's ability.

Definitions of Key Terminology

The present study of language usage and interaction between participant members of IEP teams used many key terms relating to the IEP setting and Conversation Analysis specifically. Though it is recognized that critical to CA is the resignation of the researcher to avoid imposing analytical constructs preemptively on data, for the

purposes of maintaining analytical rigor what follows are key definitions and examples of what was revealed in the data. Key terms used in this study include but were not limited to the following:

Conversation Analysis: Theory and technique for studying interaction and dialogue pioneered by Harvey Sacks and further developed through the help of Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (Psathas, 1995; Ten Have, 2006; Wooffitt, 2005).

Utterances: Items at a speaker's disposal used to complete specific tasks in an interaction (Sacks, 1995, Schegloff, 2007).

Core CA utterances/interaction devices:

Greeting/reciprocation
 Summons/acknowledgement
 Request/compliance
 Assertion/agreement
 Question/answer
 Invitation- acceptance/declination
 Offer-acceptance/declination
 Assessment-agreement/disagreement
 Uptake
 Reformulation
 Openings
 Pre-requests
 Closings
 Active response tokens- yes, uhuh, mmmhmm, right (Hepburn, 2005, p. 266)
 Silence- pauses, non-uptake or allowing one to finish a story (Hepburn, 2005, p. 263)

Conversational accounts: a conversational rule which typically is solicited by a participant asking "Why?" (Sacks, 1992, p. 5).

Talk-in-interaction: Used synonymously in some materials with conversation, a term forwarded by Schegloff (2007) to avoid preconceived notions of conversation that may be too casual or seem inconsequential. Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) included in their definition, "Every turn at talk is part of some structure, plays some sort of expectation, and in its turn will set up something for the next speaker to be alive to" (p. 6).

Turn construction units: Organization of conversational turns between speakers. The slot in which appropriate responses and initiations occur in an interaction (Sacks 1992; Ten Have, 2006).

Turn-by-turn interaction: Locally monitored rule for determining interaction order, next speaker, current speaker selecting next speaker, and so forth (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, p. 708).

Adjacency pairs: Sequences of talk turn-taking units in a conversation between a speaker and a recipient (Schegloff, 2007).

Sequence organization: Participants position utterances depending on preceding utterances in methodic conversational moves (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2006, p. 19).

Repair sequences: attempts to gain clarification or to mend a misunderstanding during interaction (Wooffitt, 2005, p. 6).

Rules of conversational sequence: the unstated rules governing turn-taking in an interaction; first speaker initiates conversation, listener responds and so on (Sacks, 1992, p. 4).

Next-turn proof procedure: CA method which ensures that analysis is based on the actual information provided by the data rather than a notion of the analyst. This requires a view of prior and preceding sequences (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2006).

Inferential order of talk: "The kinds of cultural and interpretive resources participants rely on in order to understand one another in appropriate ways" (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2006, p. 38).

Reflected in research question three is the issue of membership categorization. To address this issue, the following constructs were considered:

Category Membership: Participants in interaction tend to make visible Membership Category Devices or MCD (Sacks, 1992). Considered preemptively are the following discourse identities: "Current speaker, listener, story teller, story recipient, questioner, answerer, repair initiator 'These discourse identities are the materials out of which larger, more recognizably social or institutional identities are built'" (Antaki & Widdicombe, p. 11).

Props in interaction: The current study considered the way that "props" in the interaction, that is, the IEP documentation forms are oriented to and how this aids in categorization formation, asymmetry, and so on.

Clips: Pieces of video and corresponding time-stamped transcription which were analytically significant to the purpose of this study.

Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were made:

1. Participants were familiar, in relation to their roles as professionals or parents, with IEP and special education delivery processes as well as IDEA legislation and amendments.

2. IDEA legislation did not change in any significant manner during this study impacting the procedures for collection and analysis of the data.

3. The schools in which the study took place mirrored functions of a traditional school setting where federal funds are received for implementation of special education programming; a typical school day was followed, organizational structure was followed, and so on.

4. Participants were willingly involved in the study and IEP meetings and conversational data is naturally occurring in the setting of the school and meetings in particular.

Scope, Delimitations, and Limitations of the Study

The scope of this case study was bounded by the teams under study in the schools where they functioned. The population of this study consisted of parents, professionals, and other participants deemed necessary by the team, comprising IEP teams from charter schools in the greater Detroit, MI, area. The sample for this study was the participants of Individualized Education Program teams distributed among K-8 charter schools in Detroit, MI. Teams

were solicited for participation until 6 hours of digital footage was collected for this study; the point at which saturation was reached. All Individualized Education Program participants meeting through the spring of 2008 were invited to participate. All members of the Individualized Education Program teams voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Individualized Education Program teams were accepted as participants in the study until the desired number of teams was met and saturation was reached.

Due to the nature of this study and the specific focus of the interaction between participants, the strengths of utilizing a collective case study design far outweighed the limitations of this approach. Further, it would be difficult to argue for the employment of the conversation analysis methodology in a design that was at all removed from, or attempted to tightly control the life experiences of participants as they unfold in the context of the complex situation under study.

Merriam (1998) asserted:

The case study offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study

results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon. It offers insights and illuminates meaning that expands its readers' experiences. (p. 41)

Merriam (1998) also addressed the inherent limitations and weaknesses of the case study which must be acknowledged when selecting this particular design. The design tends to be time-consuming as many hours will be spent recording, analyzing, and member checking the captured conversational data. Case study historically tends to be costly and the researcher must make choices regarding the compilation and presentation of data which will take such limitations into account (p. 44). Of particular import to the current study is the limitation regarding the sensitivity of the researcher and the possibility that lack of analysis training could significantly color study results. Fully understanding this potential limitation and due to the specialized nature of the CA transcription and analysis methodology, the researcher continued to make significant inroads with scholars in the CA community who were willing and able to provide support and guidance through the collection, analysis, and presentation process. A timely member-check procedure was also employed at the conclusion of capturing and transcribing interaction data to be sure

that agreement is reached on the ethical and accurate reporting of the transcriptions. Specific care was taken to limit the disruptions caused by the introduction of the digital recording devices into the IEP meeting setting. These processes, it was hoped, addressed the issues of reliability and validity historically associated with case study design (Merriam, 1998, p. 42).

Significance of the Study

Generally speaking, the aim of the present study was to address a gap in the field of education research regarding the collaboration of professionals and parents in IEP meetings. Though there exists detailed research on participant's feelings and perceptions regarding the IEP meeting, there is a paucity of work with a specific focus on the nature of actual interaction and the construction of meaning and decision making among participants in the IEP meeting utilizing the participants own words in situation. The current study added not only to the field of educational research to this regard, but also to the growing body of work utilizing conversation analysis and Jeffersonian transcription as a methodology; specifically

in communications, sociolinguistics, sociology, psychology, and ethnomethodology.

Though this research did not challenge any part of the current IDEA legislation or serve as an indictment of any school's special education delivery processes, it is critical that legislators, administrators, and special education providers begin to look at the interactions among collaborators in the process of educational placement with more scrutiny. The present study allowed for such granularity by focusing on the conversation and interaction of members from IEP teams and perhaps questions the ability to generalize across institutions as to the best standard methodology for conducting meetings regarding special education placement. Future conversations regarding policy and procedures ultimately impacting the course of children's lives need be well-informed and supported by myriad perspectives and research. The rigorous analyses of interactions in IEP meetings using the CA methodology is significant, relevant, and yields implications for social change by adding yet another world-view and dimension to policy discussions surrounding improving the lives of

students who for whatever reason struggle in the traditional school setting.

Specifically, the present study allowed for the members of IEP teams to glimpse into their conversations with one another and to learn from listening to their own utterances the many ways in which they participate in in-turn conversation, specifically exchanges leading to the eventual educational placement of a child. Perhaps by participating in such an exercise, parents, and professionals will gain insight into their workings as a group and motivations as individuals, as it relates to the appropriate placement of students with special needs. Certainly, there are many ways that collecting and analyzing the data could become meaningful to participants. Because of the emergent nature of the CA data collection process, this potential is not yet known.

The current study did not have as its central focus an attempt to prove or disprove claims made in the field regarding the effectiveness of the IEP meeting. Rather, it provided an attentive and respectful implementation of the applied CA methodology allowing participants, policy makers, and contributors to the fields of education and

sociology to observe the conversation and interaction in the IEP setting through a painstakingly transcribed, rigorous CA lens. Many conclusions drawn from the data regarding the effectiveness of the IEP meeting model as well as the implications for further research applying the CA methodology will likely be the reader's own. However, this study serves (a) parent who is concerned with ensuring that meaning and understanding regarding a child's placement is constructed; (b) professional who reflects on their practice and wishes to adjust IEP meeting language to ensure that teams are collaborative and effective; (c) spirit and intent of IDEA law which mandates the collaborative teaming of the professional, parent, district, and student so that informed, appropriate decisions are made regarding the placement of children into special education and student support services; and (d) potentially stimulate and inspire a retooling or recreation of current protocol, models and design of IEP delivery best practices.

Summary

Though the original Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act legislation, its subsequent amendments and precedence setting cases, indicates the boundaries for IEP placement meetings and the collaboration of participants, the degree to which the actual conversations occur at the meetings, how participants co-create meaning through their sequentially ordered interactions, establish turns for productive talk, specifically leading to the decision of educational placement, is not known. Using the process of conversation analysis (CA), this qualitative collective case study employed a precise focus on the real-time conversations that take place in IEP meetings and to provide a detailed analysis of audio and video recordings of the conversation data occurring in the IEP meeting between participants in situ.

The first chapter framed the problem addressed in this study and connected the problem with a rationale for the use of conversation analysis as a research methodology, as well as clearly articulated the purpose for conducting this research. It was asserted that the current study did not intend to be prescriptive or generalize findings to other

IEP settings in other schools. Using CA framed in a qualitative case study, this research attempted to capture conversational data utilizing digital and audio recording devices and then analyze the data in the accepted Jeffersonian transcription methodology.

The nature of the study was explored in this first chapter along with CA related definitions which are critical to understanding language in subsequent chapters of the study. Also discussed in this introductory chapter were assumptions regarding the nature of this study specifically surrounding the knowledge base of participants on IEP meeting mandates, and assumptions typically associated with the employment of case study research in the qualitative tradition (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). Further, this chapter intended to define the scope, delimitations and limitations of a qualitative case study of this nature and to specifically address limitations regarding the utilization of CA data collection methodology. The significance of this research was discussed at the conclusion of this chapter and implications for further research and positive social change were explored.

In chapter 2 of this study, foundational CA literature will be reviewed along with current seminal works in the field utilizing CA methodology in the institutional setting. The IDEA law will be examined as it pertains to the implementation of the IEP. Current literature centering on the perceptions of IEP members will be synthesized and the gap that exists in the field relating to the IEP will be established.

Chapter 3 of this research will examine both qualitative case study as the study design and CA as the methodology for data collection and analysis. Rationale will be provided for the stated paradigm and research method. The researcher's role will be defined, and the participants more clearly identified. Data collection tools and procedures will be outlined and reliability and validity established along with a clear plan for data analysis. A section on potential threats to the study will be included along with the feasibility of the study. Potential ethical issues associated with conducting this research along with procedures for the fair and appropriate treatment of participants will be examined.

Chapter 4 will provide the results of the study based on rigorous analysis of transcribed data in the CA tradition. Conventional CA interactional devices listed in this opening chapter will be reviewed and a new list based on what the data reveals will be presented if applicable. Discussion, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for further research will encompass the fifth and final chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

"There are, in the conversation itself, a lot of events that are to the altogether naïve eye, quite remarkable" (Sacks, 1992, p. 144).

Introduction

The body of the literature review in the current study is organized into four subsections. The first addresses the foundational literature related to the conceptual construct of conversation analysis (CA) focusing on the lecture series by Harvey Sacks (1992), papers by Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1974), as well as resource books written by Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006), Psathas (1995), and Ten Have (2006). The second subsection provides a brief overview of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), specifically the section of the statute that mandates state and local implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Subsection three synthesizes current research of the effectiveness of the IEP process and the perceptions of IEP team members, while subsection four focuses on current clinical research utilizing the CA methodology. In this latter section a case is made for the utilization of CA in

the IEP setting, a procedure that has not been widely practiced or documented in the IEP context. The concluding section of this review provides a summary of the major theoretical or conceptual themes presented in the body, a highlight of important prior studies of IEPs and the application of CA research. The gap in the current IEP research corpus will be highlighted and the justification for the present study reviewed.

Foundational and Resource Literature

Foundational and Resource Literature: Conversation Analysis

In the 1960s a young professor of sociology named Harvey Sacks (1992) began to think beyond the boundaries of his field. In a movement away from the theoretical abstractions in which many of his colleagues remained entrenched, Sacks dove into intense study of everyday language; focusing with precision on each utterance and action no matter how seemingly insignificant through a traditional linguistic or dialogic lens. His work began in a suicide prevention center where he discovered boxes of old recorded phone conversations between center professionals and individuals who were seeking emergency

counseling. Sifting through the corpus of recorded data and conducting multiple listens to the conversations between the participants, Sacks began to notice emerging patterns in the captured exchanges. It appeared that there were undocumented albeit consistent, conversational tools that the participants utilized in the phone calls. For instance Sacks provided the following three examples in his introductory lectures:

- (1) A: Hello
B: Hello
- (2) A: This is Mr. Smith may I help you
B.: Yes, this is Mr. Brown
- (3) A: This is Mr. Smith may I help you
B: I can't hear you.
A: This is Mr. Smith
B: Smith. (Sacks, 1992, p. 3)

By conducting an in depth analysis of the above sequences, Sacks (1992) was able to show the methods employed by the suicide prevention operators attempting to illicit names from callers. What he determined was that if the caller did not provide a name in the opening sequences of the conversation the operator would have great difficulty ever gaining identification from the caller; apparently a primary motive of the operator at the

beginning of the conversations. Critical here was the notion that conversation occurs in a system of provided slots whereby utterances are organized and turns are taken in a mutual unfolding of give and take. Further, the participants utilize the slots and the organization of sequence exchanges as a method to complete an action or task through their talk (p. 144). A theory for looking at talk as a method for accomplishing tasks rather than inconsequential, random occurrences had begun to emerge as did a method for making talk explicit and its work demonstrable.

Regarding example (1) above, Sacks (1992) determined that if ever the operator deployed "Hello" in an opening slot, the caller would never reveal his or her name in response. Rather, the response would repeatedly be "Hello" (p. 6). He found based on the data that the most predictable method for gaining a caller's name without directly asking for it was for the operator to provide his or her own name in the opening sequence as in example (2). At the root of Sacks's discoveries is the notion that the conversation occurring in slots and sequences are to be looked at as "social objects" (p. 10) deployed to complete

certain tasks. Through this very early work Sacks began to build confidence in the idea that conversation, no matter how apparently ordinary and mundane, was rich with organization, meaning, intent, and identifiable action. The stage became set for looking at conversation through a lens of action identification and categorization as data unfolds in the social milieu. The philosophy of CA built its foundation on the principle that conversation and interaction cannot be looked at with an a priori set of notions and categories due to the mutual creation and unfolding action that conversation takes in situ, in a particular context. Further, the categories that participants ascribe to or affiliate with also become a focus and critical factor of the work they complete through their talk.

Sacks's (1974, 1992) colleagues Schegloff (1974, 2007) and Jefferson (1974) helped to provide sound academic documentation of these early ideas. In a paper that the three scholars co-authored nearly 10 years after Sacks' lectures in California, a systematic approach to understanding and analyzing the organization of recorded data was made available to the field. In this work the turn

taking system observed in talk by conversation analysts was provided with a crystalline documentation and a collection of rules employed by participants in their respective situations. The scholars made the case in their paper that conversation is not only organized in a turn taking, sequential manner, but is also "locally managed, party-administered, interactionally controlled, and sensitive to recipient design" (p. 696). This appeared as a departure from the field of linguistics led by Chomsky (1957) and others, which at the time seemed less concerned with action as it unfolded in situ, and more with preordained, a priori rules governing sentence syntax and structure in speak and the written word. The view tended toward utterances as singular occurrences seemingly unrelated to the conversation occurring prior to and immediately following an utterance.

The field of sociolinguistics had been primed by Sacks's (1992) initial discoveries and lectures but until this seminal work by the three scholars, a structural set of rules and methodology for following the CA approach was not precisely documented. Researchers now had an extensive set of rules as well as a philosophical understanding of

the factors present in conversation across a continuum of conversation formality (p. 730). Not only were normed rules established for the co-creation of meaning between participants in conversation, but rules governing appropriate practice for conversation analysts were substantiated as well. The importance of a regard for conversation as it is happening as the rich data for which the analyst seeks, as well as the reliance of audio recording devices for capturing the data, would prove to be significant foundational milestones of this early effort. Jefferson's (1974) contribution to this foundational article solidified methods for transcribing conversation and her comprehensive appendices regarding symbols that detail inflection, sequence organization, intonation, and pitch as the standard for CA data analysis to the present day.

Though Sacks died shortly after the publication of the above-mentioned article, his colleagues continued to push, refine, and defend the practice and philosophical underpinnings of CA which expanded its popularity and stretched its application across fields of interest. Schegloff (2007) published a miniseries on CA which further

outlined what he described as a “primer in conversation analysis” (p. xi) and Jefferson continued a rich focus on utterances which further turned what may have been considered insignificant occurrences into objects of great analytic respect (Jefferson, 1985). Both pieces were used to inform the analysis of the conversation data collected in this study. Several researchers in the field of linguistics, sociology, and anthropology have begun to apply CA to speech exchanges in various contexts providing more depth and research on the work co-created in interactions. In the time since the piece written by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), several resource books have attempted to capture and present CA in an application context for researchers interested in understanding and employing this qualitative methodology in varying fields.

CA resource books by Psathas (1995), Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006), and Ten Have (2006), were considered in this study for clarifying the foundational and theoretical construct of CA while also providing direction for the application of the methodology. They were chosen based on repeated citing of the respective works in current peer-reviewed research as well as their relatively current

publication dates. Though all three of the books were originally published nearly 10 years ago, Hutchby and Wooffitt and Ten Have's editions have been reprinted every year through 2006 providing this research with the most current CA practical guidance materials.

A synthesis of the three books yields common elements regarding the theoretical underpinnings as well as methodology. Interestingly, slightly different language is used across text regarding the interactions between participants in conversation. Though similar in theory regarding the emphasis CA places on the product of participants in situ the authors diverge with regard to categorizing the outcome of the interaction. This divergence appears to mirror slightly the shift in the field of CA research from its early roots in ordinary or mundane conversational focus, to methods suited for interaction in the institutional setting. The theoretical construct of CA outlined in Psathas (1995) focused on the "orderliness" (p. 8) of the participants' in-turn interaction. The author highlighted the order arrived at in turn-by-turn interaction as phenomena worthy of attention by the CA researcher claiming, "It remained for the analyst

to discover that order, not impose an order on phenomena based on a preconceptualized category system" (p. 8).

Though Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006) appeared to concur with Psathas's (1995) interpretation when they concluded, "CA can be accurately described as a research program, whose aim is to describe the methodic bases of orderly conversation in talk-in interaction" (p. 36), Hutchby and Wooffitt focused much more on the identification of the meaning constructed between participants as the crux of an applied methodology. Specifically, the authors used the word "machinery" (p. 35) to describe the resources utilized by participants as they organize their interaction. Similarly, Ten Have (2006) focused on "action" (p. 37) when describing the phenomena that occur between participants engaged in conversation. In work published just a year prior to the re-print of his co-authored book with Hutchby (2006) and Wooffitt (2005) concluded:

It is important to focus on the idea that there are slots in interaction where specific kinds of actions are appropriate, or expected. This is because it allows us to grasp the idea that verbal interaction has a structure, an architecture which can be formally described by reference to the relationship between the actions our utterances perform. (p. 6)

The move from CA as being concerned with simply the orderliness of conversation and the action that is created between participants to the importance of context and asymmetries brought to bear on that action in the institutional setting becomes key to understanding the evolution of CA into a methodology currently applicable across fields of study, specifically in the applied institutional context. Ten Have described this evolution as a move from "pure to applied CA" (p. 161). The author asserted, "The expression 'applied CA' can also be used to denote the implicit or even explicit use of CA-inspired studies to support efforts to make social life 'better' in some way, to provide data-based analytic suggestions for, or critiques of, the ways in which social life can be organized" (p. 162). This view seemingly echoed in Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006) becomes important in recognizing the shift in CA from the original work of Sacks which appeared concerned largely with legitimizing the practice of analyzing mundane conversation for its own sake, to a blossoming practice across disciplines which can be applied with the purpose of not only understanding conversational phenomenon, but expanding the understanding to positively

impact practice and social change. Beach (1990) concluded, "Conversational structures, however revealing, are not end products in and of themselves but instruments to be utilized in a more encompassing ethnographic enterprise" (p. 358).

Understanding the divergence that CA took in the early nineties is critical for framing the context of this current study. It will be with the corpus of CA text and research studies that are concerned with applied CA, or CA in the institutional setting, that this current work will be aligned. The shift as characterized by Ten Have (2006) and Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006) can be found in work conducted by Drew and Heritage (1992), and Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) and others who looked specifically at the meaning created by participants in talk-in-turn interaction as did the earlier CA work. However, these authors were concerned also with the important role that the institutional context and identity play in the ways that participants orient their conversation. In the following sub-section, the institutional context for the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) will be framed.

This context is best understood beginning with an analysis of the law that mandates its function.

Foundational Literature: IDEA

On November 29, 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-92) was passed to provide rights to children and families of children with disabilities protection from discrimination in schools based on ability. The act intended to mandate and support state involvement in monitoring the education of all children with disabilities. According to federal archived information on schools, "in 1970 educated only one in five children with disabilities, and many states had laws excluding certain students, including children who were deaf, blind, emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded, from its schools" (USDE Archive). The law was amended and renamed and in 1997 IDEA had as its primary intent, FAPE or a free and appropriate public education for all children and a push for students to receive the same education as students in general education to the greatest extent possible in the least restrictive environment.

On December 3, 2004, IDEA legislation was reauthorized by Congress and amendments signed into law by President George W. Bush (Public Law 108-446-Dec. 3, 2004). This reauthorization sought to hold states to a higher level of accountability regarding not simply the inclusion of students with special needs into the population of schools but also that students achieve at continuously improving academic levels in concert with the Federal No Child Left Behind legislation. A specific focus of the 2004 amendments was the additional requirements placed on schools to successfully implement the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process for students. Technically, the IEP as defined in the law is, "a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised" (p. 2707). The law outlines the procedures for the following: applicable and appropriate assessment measures for a child with a suspected disability, indicating the child's current level of academic performance, the academic goals for the child based on the assessment results, and determining educational placement of the child (p. 2708).

The focus of the current study involved the implementation of that section of Public Law 108-446- Dec.

3, 2004, which mandates the convening and collaboration of the "IEP team" (p. 2709) to discuss a child's disability, assessment results and ultimately determine the appropriate educational placement of a child. The IEP Team is defined in Public Law 108-446 (2004) as

a group of individuals composed of- (i) the parents of a child with a disability; (ii) not less than 1 regular education teacher of such child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment); (iii) not less than 1 special education teacher, or where appropriate, not less than 1 special education provider of such child; (iv) a representative of the local educational agency...(v) an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results...(vi) at the discretion of the parent or the agency, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child...(vii) whenever appropriate, the child with the disability (p. 2710).

Public Law 108-446- Dec. 3, 2004 further outlines the development of the IEP for a student through the consideration of the child's strengths, the parent's concerns regarding the education of the child, and careful review of the child's evaluation results. Though not explicitly stated in the statute, it can be assumed that in verbiage in the law such as "a member of the IEP Team, shall to the extent appropriate, participate in the development of the IEP of the child" (p. 2712),

"participate" refers to active collaboration among team members in a meeting or other communication exchange system. Other language in the law appearing to infer the verbal interaction and discussion among team members are the words, "consider," "review," and "determine," (p. 2713). Guidance provided to states and stakeholders by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (2006) on the legislation and the IEP appears more specific regarding the interaction of team members by explicitly stating that required team members meet and discuss evaluation results, parent concerns, student strengths, etc (§ 4).

The U.S. Department of Education published a document co-authored by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education and the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs entitled, Dialogue Guide: Facilitator's Handbook, which has as its central aim, "the IDEA Partnership provides opportunities for stakeholders to move beyond information and build shared meaning; to go beyond dissemination to joint understanding and action" (2005, p. 1). The guidance stresses the importance of reflective, collaborative, generative, dialogue which draws members

together rather than divisive debate or surface level majority rule discussion (p. 6).

The focus of the current study was not to measure the appropriateness or effectiveness of the conversation taking place in the IEP setting set against the framework of the dialogic guidance provided or the word of the law. Rather, the study employed the CA methodology in the institutional context of the IEP setting. This research, it is hoped, will fill a current gap in the research literature regarding the actual conversation occurring in the IEP and an analysis of the meaningful constructions as they unfold in real time between participants. To date, the body of current research on the IEP largely centers on the perceptions of participants as to the effectiveness of the IEP after the meetings have concluded and decisions regarding a child's placement are made.

Current Research on the IEP

The impact, perceived effectiveness, usefulness, and structural processes of the IEP team meeting have appeared to be a particular focus in the field of education research since the process became mandated by federal law in the mid

1990s. Specifically, research in the last 5 years has appeared to focus primarily on the mandated participants in the meetings, their roles, responsibilities, and perceptions. The significance and perception of the special education teacher has been well documented (Arivett, Rust, Brissie, & Dansby, 2007) as has the role of the administrator also been considered as having significant bearing on the positive or negative outcomes of the IEP meeting (Rafoth & Foriska, 2006). However, perhaps due in part to the specific language in the law outlining the parental procedural safeguards and protections throughout the IEP process, parent participation appears to continue to dominate much of the current research in the field surrounding the effectiveness of the IEP.

Keyes and Owens Johnson (2003) articulated this distinction through a case study methodology citing the reauthorization of IDEA (1997) as a basis for a shift in delivery paradigm (p. 145). Their case study involved a process for creating guidance, the person-centered planning (PCP) encouraging, "greater involvement from students with disabilities and their parents or guardians and more effective transition plans that accurately reflect

students' preferences" (p. 146). The authors presented two case studies where the IEP was implemented through a framework that put the needs of the child as articulated by the child and parents, goals of the child, and talents first in IEP planning.

According to the authors, rather than simply checking boxes on the IEP form, the person-centered approach allowed for a framing that was inclusive of all members and involved questioning that inspired discussion and realization (Keyes & Owens Johnson, p. 150, 2003).

Problematic in this two-case study was that the analysis appeared to involve the recollection of the researcher as to the effectiveness of the programs and assumptions regarding the reactions of participants (Keyes & Owens Johnson, p. 150, 2003). The piece although inspiring, lacked scientific rigor while inadvertently providing justification for a research approach such as CA which would remove the historical bias of the researcher and provide analysis of actual conversation as it occurs in context. In the analysis the authors concluded, "Through this discussion, the critical role members of his support network would play and the ways in which they would be

willing to offer care, support, and guidance made Paul sit up and take notice. Paul was learning one of the most fundamental lessons to developing effective plans" (Keyes & Owens Johnson, p. 150, 2003). The evidence as to what Paul, a student, was learning, what was happening in discussion and what led up to his sitting up and taking notice was missing in the piece. The missing element in this work typified what appears as a gap in most studies of IEP implementation. This is the type of element CA would potentially account for.

In research conducted by Dabkowski (2004), the author stressed the importance of culture as a determining factor in IEP effectiveness. The author concluded, "Though all IEP teams come together for the purpose of developing the IEP, team culture usually dictates that process by which the meeting takes place" (p. 34). The influence or presence of culture in the IEP is demonstrable by the sharing that takes place in the meetings, the speech exchanges, "How influential their perspective is in making decisions, the recommendations people make" and "expressed beliefs about instructional strategies and their effectiveness" (p. 34). The issue of where and when in the meetings participants

are asked their opinions was raised and it was concluded that the environment, word choice, and the facilitator largely influence the culture of the meeting; in turn affecting the participation of others (p. 34). Physical space was cited as revealing much to participants as to the focus and organization of the meeting as well as impacting the comfort level of those involved in the IEP (p. 35).

Dabkowski (2004) highlighted findings suggesting that for several reasons, parents had not felt a true part of the IEP process even though participation was a federal mandate per IDEA 1997 (p. 36). Revealing the tension existing between the insistence of participation and the inconsistency in implementation, the author stressed, "opportunities for parent participation in making decisions can vary considerably. Such participation may vary not only from one school district to another, but also from school to school" (p. 35). The implications of the research suggested that in order to truly be collaborative in the IEP process, teams must focus not only on the compliance issues surrounding the meeting, but also the actual effectiveness of meeting processes (p. 37). The following recommendation underscores this point, "Teams can set up

parent workshops or individualized pre-meeting planning sessions to inform parents as to who will be in attendance, how people will share information, when and how the team will give parents opportunities for input" (p. 38).

"Stress, powerlessness, and alienation" (Ditrano & Silverstein, 2006, p. 359) are the reported findings of an action research study focusing on IEP perceptions in participants. In the study, the authors present specific action initiatives for parents to become empowered participants in the IEP process. The authors concluded, "Family-school collaboration is an approach that virtually everyone supports but few know how to implement successfully" (Ditrano & Silverstein, 2006, p. 359). Their study supported the notion that through a deliberate three-phase research, education, and action process, parents become aware of their rights and responsibilities in the IEP and truly help shape the outcomes of the meetings. Further, the authors concluded that although the state of the IEP remained largely unchanged in terms of the often adversarial relationship between participants, the parents in the study overwhelmingly felt accomplished and empowered as a result of the implementation of the participatory

action research or PAR (Ditrano & Silverstein, 2006, p. 359). The lasting message in the piece is largely one suggesting that the system is broken due to participants feeling unsupported and uneducated in the IEP process. It can be argued here that a real-time analysis of the conversations in the IEP meeting could potentially shed light on miscommunications and/or conversational misdirection occurring in the meetings which lead to misunderstanding and disempowerment. Again, this type of outcome would likely require a methodology which investigates the tacit, organized exchanges between participants through analysis of their interaction.

In a 3 year study of participant perceptions at the IEP meeting, Marshall Martin, & Sale (2004) identified a gap in the research at the time. It appeared that much work had been done since the inception of IDEA (1997) to identify the amount of time various IEP team members participated in the IEP and provided some speculation on why members spoke as often as they did. To be sure, Martin et al. found it troubling that earlier studies presented striking findings that teachers and parents spoke most often in the IEP meeting however, there was an absence of

perceptual data which would provide insight into why these particular stakeholders spoke so often in the meetings, or an account of what was actually said. The study attempted to replicate some of the earlier research although with the inclusion of additional variables, adding the student participation to the IEP as well as survey data to capture the perceptions of participants (p. 290).

Findings from the study suggested that involving the student in the meeting process boosted the participation of other stakeholders, namely the parent, and provided participants with a sharper perception as to why the meeting was important and meaningful. Due to survey results which indicated that members tended to not feel that meetings were worthwhile and did not tend to feel "good" (Marshall, Martin, & Sale, 2004, p. 295) with regard to IEP meeting outcomes, the authors provided implications mirroring Dabkowski's (2004) suggestions for increased emphasis on pre-IEP training for all participants including the child (p. 295). This training it was argued would ultimately allow participants to, "learn their new roles and become acclimated to the IEP process" (p. 295). Further, the authors concluded, "Personal and value-added

benefits will most likely be enhanced when students and general educators learn to actively participate in the IEP meetings," (p. 295) and that participants all perceive that they have gained acceptance on the meeting team.

In a follow-up study 2 years later, Christensen, Gardner, Greene, Lovett, Martin, Van Dycke, & Woods (2006) investigated further the impact on the collaboration of members in the IEP team meeting when a student was involved in the planning process. Their findings echoed the earlier work which placed the role of the student as a pivotal piece of IEP success (p. 188). Participants reported feeling more comfortable and the meeting tended to focus on the child under study. However, the authors concluded, "Despite the benefits of student and general educator presence, the meeting participants remained unclear about their role in the process" (p. 188). Though both studies in this series by the authors over a number of years appear concise, scientific and well designed, the gap that remained glaring was a focus on the disconnect between perceptions of meeting importance regarding meaning and overall comfort level in IEP meetings. In other words, the authors continued to arrive at findings suggesting that the

addition of the child in the meeting increased the number of minutes each participant spoke in the meetings giving the appearance that collaboration was happening. Yet, survey data revealed participants still left the meetings unclear as to what actually was discussed and arrived at in the IEP meeting (p. 196).

Christensen, Gardner, Greene, Lovett, Martin, Van Dycke, & Woods (2006) reported that "almost 40% of the special education teachers and family members believed that students participated a lot during the IEP meeting direct observations of the meetings indicated that students talked only 3% of the time" (p. 196). The authors called for future research that addresses some way the reason that this over reporting and perception exists. The current study addresses the assertion made by Martin et al. (2006) and focuses on potentially illuminating the reason for this discrepancy by transcribing and analyzing the conversation that is happening in the IEP meeting, further investigating their findings that, "presence at IEP meetings does not equal participation" (p. 199). It is argued here that there currently exists a paucity of research that focuses on the actual conversation between members in the IEP team

utilizing a conversation analytic approach and transcribing methodology, and that such an approach is warranted.

One piece, a dissertation written by Peters (2003), attempted to consider not only the perceptual data of IEP participants as had the authors discussed above, but also to look deeply at the social cultural forces impacting the interaction and power dynamics in the meetings themselves. The author stated, "power asymmetry co-constructed by IEP team members during IEP meetings is the logical, predictable consequence of the implementation of the existing IEP policy and that social interactions play a more significant role in the local implementation of the IEP process than had been previously considered" (p. vii). As Peters accurately assessed, there exists an insufficient amount of work in the field of educational research centering on the interaction between participants in the IEP setting. Though replete with studies which focus on the perceptions of participants and length of time each participant speaks in meetings, the look that CA provides, a keen deliberate analysis of conversation formation and its implications in context, is seriously lacking (p. 3).

Peters's (2003) case study of four IEP teams made multiple claims and utilized several data types ranging from interview, observation and conversation analysis data. It is argued here that the author's commitment to multiple methodologies provides the current research with an entry point which focuses exclusively on the conversation analytic approach. In the limitations section of her work, Peters concluded that her reliance on observation of the IEP team meetings coupled with the relationships she had formed with members of the team could have ultimately colored her analysis. Reflecting on the resource materials provided by Ten Have (2006), and Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006) it is repeatedly stated that unequivocally, "CA is the study of recorded, naturally occurring talk-in-interaction" (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2006, p. 14). Peters, to the author's credit, admitted that both of these fundamental CA conditions were not met in her study of IEP conversation (Peters, 2003, p. 90).

Current Applied CA Research

As indicated throughout this study, there exists in the field of education research, a paucity of work regarding the analysis of conversation in the IEP meeting setting. So too are there gaps in the research regarding the utilization of the CA methodology in the larger context of the school setting. Interestingly, the work identified utilizing the CA methodology in the school and classroom centers largely on English language learners' interactions with their instructors (Weiyun HE, 2004). Thus, for the purposes of the current study attention was turned to the clinical setting where there was evidence of the CA methodology in practice; specifically in the interview and institutional exchanges between doctor and patient and provider and client. The parallels drawn between the interactions in these settings and those in the dynamic of the IEP context are touched on below.

Seemingly closest to the IEP setting, was CA work conducted by Friedland and Penn (2003) on mediated interviews between clients and their speech pathologists. In the piece, the authors determined utilizing CA that there were identifiable facilitators and inhibitors in the

language used in mediated interviews. In order to locate and identify this language the authors asserted that the "detailed microscopic" (p. 95) analysis that CA provides proved to be the appropriate methodology. Further, in an effort to propose and support proper mediated interviewing technique, the authors concluded that CA provided insight into describing and framing a successful, mediated interview between client and provider (p. 96).

This work informed the present study in myriad ways. On the surface, there can be a clear connection drawn between the IEP meeting as a quasi patient-client setting, and the interview context investigated in Friedland and Penn (2003). Additionally, the methodology utilized in the design of the authors' study parallels that undertaken in this current work. The authors utilized a system of member checks to provide comparison data to that which emerged out of interview recordings. Like the current study, the authors suggested that, "the aim here was to combine these themes to validate their reality against the dynamic as unfolded by the CA and to check their emergence in the actual data" (p. 98). Further they reasoned, "This aspect highlights a critical advantage put forward by the

proponents of CA and that is that the evidence lies in the data itself and does not rely necessarily on the imposition of a subjective framework analysis by the researcher, a pitfall in so many other areas of qualitative research" (p. 98).

Unlike the current study, Friedland and Penn (2003) reported that they were unable to capture video recorded data during the interviews under study (p. 110). The practice of video taping has, according to Ten Have (2006) and others strengthened the CA methodology to some degree by adding a nonverbal dimension to the data which unfolds during interaction (p. 8). Keeping in mind the reflections of Friedland and Penn as well as the recommendations of Ten Have in the CA literature, the current study utilized video footage as a compliment to the audio recorded data in the IEP setting. It was hoped that by utilizing the available digital technology in analysis, that further insight into the interactions between IEP members and implications for improving meetings could be gained.

In two years following the work by Friedland and Penn (2003), three more contributions to the field of institutional CA were made. Maynard (2005), who had been

working for years with CA as a methodology in doctor-patient interactions, conducted a CA study of the medical interview as naturally occurring conversation. Maynard's experience with CA allowed the type of study which focused specifically on the meaning co-constructed between members in situ, as well as strict adherence to the CA recording and coding systems (p. 428). Curiously informative for the present study, Maynard's work shed light on the framing of interaction by the individual, in this case the physician, based on the diagnosis yet to be delivered to the patient. Implications of Maynard's research provided useful context for this IEP study in that he concluded, "doctors can learn how their practices for soliciting concerns and problems have consequences for patients' perceptions of doctors' competence and credibility" (p. 431). It was found in the study that this perception built through the conversation in the medical interview had implications reaching into not only patient satisfaction, but also the likelihood that treatment regimens would be followed by the patient in the future (p. 431).

Strong (2005) found that CA provided empirical focus for looking at the counselor patient interaction. Useful to

the present study was the author's focus on the issue of repair sequences (p. 529). Findings suggested that individuals attempted to understand each other even in the wake of apparent misunderstandings which seemed to occur often in the counselor/patient conversation (p. 529). Key to the findings in this work was the notion that through a cycle of misunderstanding and repair, the relationship between participants in conversation actually strengthened (p. 530). This work provided a backdrop for the implications arrived at in the current research and further gave credence to the use of CA as a tool for investigating talk in the institutional setting, as imprecise and misunderstood as it might be.

The Piece by Strong (2005) had as a foundational element, the assumption that the participants in the interactions studied had understanding as a mutual primary goal even when misunderstanding was prevalent (p. 530). In a CA study of patients with disabilities and their interactions with care givers in the residential setting, Antaki, Finaly, and Jingree (2006) determined that power and identity was an ever-present factor coloring, facilitating or impeding understanding between participants

in interaction. In their work, the authors observed through CA transcribed data the lack of sensitivity that care staff had for patient responses during interaction, highlighting the asymmetry that historically exists between professionals and patients. The authors coded such instances where staff ignored or clearly misunderstood patient responses as, "non-uptake" (p. 216). A further implication in the research was the, "tension between staff encouraging residents to make their own choices and shepherding them towards choices which the staff, for various reasons, might prefer" (p. 220). These implications informed the current research of IEP meeting interactions and provided a critical perspective with regard to approaching the data and analyzing for significant patterns of interaction.

Further work by Antaki (1994) and Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) proved invaluable for the current study. Focusing on how participants in interaction in the institutional setting orient to specific identity categories, Antaki and Widdicombe's collection of pieces by several authors across disciplines underscores the import of identity as it is oriented to and used as a resource to

complete tasks through talk (p. 10). The work highlights category ascription by participants in situ, how category is affiliated to by participants themselves or by others. Of critical import to this study was the work by Hester (1998) in Antaki and Widdicombe (1998), where categories ascribed to students as 'deviant' by professionals in schools came to bear on decisions on disciplining and managing student behavior (p. 135). Additionally, the power asymmetries made explicit through the talk of the professionals in the school setting resonated with asymmetries found in schools historically as outlined in the IEP literature above. The current study reflects deeply on the issue of membership category in the IEP setting for both the participants in the meeting as well as ascriptions to the children for whom the IEP is being conducted.

In Zimmerman (1998) in Antaki and Widdicombe (1998), the author wrestled with the notion of interaction as it shapes the social context. Two notions of interaction and identity are revealed that helped crystallize the direction of the current study with regard to a construct for identity and interaction. The author asserted that there are two identity domains to which participants in the

institutional interaction will orient. First, there is the notion of interaction in the proximal domain (p. 88) in which interactants orient to the identity relevant to sequential interaction in its own right (e.g. questioner/answerer, repairer, story teller, etc.) (p. 88). It is in this orientation that the basic building blocks of interaction can be analyzed. It is important to understand how participants orient to this sequential context to grasp a larger picture of the context in which interlocutors participate.

In the distal domain, the participants in interaction orient to their context and to the factors, agendas, etc. impacting that context. Zimmerman (1998) referred to this orientation as the:

Oriented to- 'extra-situational' agendas and concerns accomplished through such endogenously developing sequences of interaction. Discourse identities bring into play relevant components of conversational machinery, while situated identities deliver pertinent agendas, skills, and relevant knowledge, allowing participants to accomplish various projects in an orderly and reproducible way (p. 88).

Chapter 3 of this dissertation will address the above mentioned domains as they relate to participants in the IEP context. The precise focus that CA provides will allow the

researcher to gain access to the orienting occurring in the IEP setting in a way that simply cannot be accessed through historic scientific approaches. "In the interaction we can see how such membership categorizations continue or change, how they are confirmed and validated, or not accepted, and how they may relate to activities, competencies, motives, obligations, rights and the rest" (Psathas, 1995, p. 154).

Finally, adding a level of granularity to the analysis of data in the current study, the work of Antaki (1994) regarding explanation as it is unveiled through conversation proved extremely useful. The context of the IEP as we have seen from research in the field is predicated on assumed participation and cooperation that, based on reactive research literature, either occurs in the meeting or does not. Regardless, the current study acknowledges that IEP meeting participants are mandated to participate in the design of an appropriate educational placement for children based on explanations from evaluative data and stakeholders who interface with the child at home and school. Antaki's contribution to the CA literature provides a construct for looking more deeply at first and second pair parts in IEP interaction and to

become evaluative of participants' work of providing and filling "explanation slots" in their interaction in the meetings (p. 74). The author's work proved fruitful in helping formulate an analytic construct for the IEP data preceding a placement decision in the meetings. The CA categorizations of explanation devices and responses (e.g. noticings, my-side-tellings, puzzle-pass-solution-comment, and problem settings) are useful for looking at the specific stretches of talk leading up to and immediately following the decisions reached in the IEP meeting.

Summary and Conclusions

This section had as a primary focus, a review of the literature which provides a foundational backdrop for the conversation analysis methodology. It was argued that, critical to understanding the CA approach would involve a review of the lectures by Sacks (1992), as well as pioneering papers written by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974). The agreed upon methodology for the transcription of data in an interaction was attributed to Jefferson (1974), and subsequent work by Jefferson and

Schegloff were referred to and will be investigated in earnest in the methodology section of this dissertation.

In addition to the foundational literature which provided the historical and theoretical context for this CA study, CA reference materials were also included in this literature review. The work of Ten Have (2006), Psathas (1995), and Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006) were reviewed and their major intersections synthesized. A brief discussion of the language used in each regarding the co-construction of meaning was provided.

To frame context for the current study of the IEP program, a review of the IDEA legislation was outlined. A discussion of the Individualized Education Program as a specific mandated element in the law was provided and its definition explored. Current research in the field regarding the IEP and its perceived effectiveness was provided as was the assertion that the present gap in the IEP research cannot be filled without a detailed examination of the conversation occurring in the IEP meeting between participants. It was argued that the current study addresses this need.

Finally, current research across fields utilizing the CA methodology was reviewed. Based on the nature of the current study, research specifically focusing on the utilization of the CA methodology in the institutional setting was explored and implications drawn from each. It was argued that due to the current paucity of research utilizing CA in the educational context, both CA in the clinical setting and the counselor/patient interaction setting provide useful insight into approaching the context of talk-in-turn interaction, explanation, categorical ascription and power asymmetry in the IEP setting. In the section that follows, the specific methodological approach to this CA case study will be outlined in depth.

CHAPTER 3:
RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

The purpose of this collective case study was to capture and investigate the talk-in-interaction of participants collaborating in Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meetings in urban Detroit K-8 charter schools. The study investigated how participants in Individualized Education Program meetings, converse, co-create meaning, employ elements of interactional strategies to assert points, understand each other, identify with and orient to different membership categories relevant to the meeting, as well as highlighting evidence of power asymmetries in the meetings. Of interest in the present study was the interaction occurring just prior to the decision to place a child into special education, disqualify a child, or alter a child's existing special education placement. Along with the interaction of the participants in the IEP meeting, the identity categories demonstrable through interaction, the orientation of the participants to visible asymmetries in the conversation was also considered in analysis.

The study, involving analysis of approximately 6 hours of audio and video recorded footage, attempted to utilize conversation analysis (CA) as a unique method of providing insight into the actual interaction occurring among participants in IEP meetings. The current chapter outlines the design of the research undertaken; highlighting the paradigm and tradition employed as well as rationale for the rejection of designs historically utilized in IEP research studies. A restatement of the research questions is also provided to frame the methodological approach to the study.

The second major section of this chapter centers on the methodology employed in this research. A description of the participants in the study is provided and the researcher's role revealed. The data collection procedures are identified as are the steps taken to accurately capture and analyze data. The data analysis and interpretation plan is presented in this section, which highlights the utilization of conversation analysis as it was employed in this study. Threats to quality utilizing CA are examined, and the feasibility of this research assessed and ethical issues addressed.

Study Design

The current research is best described as a qualitative, ethnomethodological collective case study of IEP teams in schools in the greater Detroit, MI, area.

According to Creswell (1998):

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. (p. 15)

The current study was oriented in a post-positivist paradigm (Hatch, 2002, p. 22) as it attempted to view participants in a naturally occurring social system, where interactions were not in any way contrived for the sake of scientific research. It was the aim of this study to gain as accurate a picture as possible of participant conversation in the IEP setting, through rigorous utilization of the conversation analytic (CA) approach. The researcher's intent was to analyze conversation as it could only unfold in the natural setting while participants interact and create meaning surrounding the informed educational placement of a child. Creswell (1998) provided

that qualitative research has words as its primary focus, versus quantitative research, which relies heavily on the analysis of numbers. The current study had as its exclusive concern the actual words used by real people in their exchanges with one another in the context of the IEP meeting. Any impulse by the researcher to infuse meaning and/or embellish the words chosen by participants in situ in the IEP meetings under study was restricted and resisted.

The current study was bound by time, site, and participants, meeting the criteria for the case study tradition (Hatch, 2002, p. 30) and because more than one case was studied, the approach was considered "collective case study" (Creswell, 1998, p. 62). The specific number of ten hours was selected as a means for ensuring adequate audio and video data collection sufficient for robust analysis. Though only 6 hours were eventually captured, it was determined that saturation was reached and findings were substantiated. The study is ethnomethodological (Garfinkel, 1996) in nature in that it relies on rich data and description and the study of participants as they interact in their natural setting. The study attempted to

deeply analyze data and reflect on recurrent patterns using only the words of the participants.

The case study model was chosen to provide variety across teams and meeting protocols in two schools, adding rich, and varying dimensions to the corpus of collected audio and video data. Though initially considered, a quantitative research design was rejected for the current study as it would inadequately reflect the real time unfolding of conversational data in the IEP meeting. A research tradition was sought that would allow for capturing data as it was revealed and permit recurring analysis of recordings and transcripts. Due to heavy reliance on interview data and the careful selection of study participants, the phenomenological study design was rejected. Similarly, grounded theory was also a considered design but was rejected due to the strong reliance on interview data rather than strict observation which CA requires (Creswell, 1998, p. 56). It is argued here that the case study tradition was the best suited for this current work as it provides a framework for establishing logical boundaries, the researcher in observer role, and data collection in a naturally occurring context. This

study attempted to ask *how* meaning is constructed and potentially reveal *why* participants interact the way that they do through analysis of their conversation. In this way, these fundamental questions provided a rationale for utilizing the case study methodology (Yin, p. 6, 2003). The research questions for the current study follow:

Research Questions

1. What conversational structures are evident in the delivery of information to participants on which decision of placement is based (e.g., Greeting/reciprocation, Summons/acknowledgement, Request/compliance, Assertion/agreement)?

2. How are turns allocated and questions asked and answered (e.g., Question/answer, Invitation-acceptance/declination, Assessment-agreement/disagreement)?

3. How do participants in the IEP make relevant their membership to categories: professional, parent, general education teacher, special education teacher, school psychologist or other qualified examiner, and so forth?

4. How do membership categories function in establishing interaction leading to the decision of placement (analysis

will include associations to the above categories through evidence of feelings, beliefs, assertions, obligations, and so on, relevant to the context of the meeting and the act of placing the child)?

5. How do participants orient to the asymmetries inherent in the institutional setting of the IEP demonstrable through their talk (asymmetries commonly associated with institutional setting involving parents and professionals was explored)?

Each of the above questions will be addressed in chapter 4 using CA methodology supported by previous conversation analytic research and foundational CA transcription and documentation.

Methodology

Participants included in this study were the members of IEP teams from K-8 schools in the greater Detroit, MI, area. Teams selected for this study in the schools were required to have membership commensurate with the federal mandate outlined in Public Law 108-446 (2004). Teams considered needed to include the following: the parent(s) of a child with a disability, at least one regular

education teacher of that child, at least one special education teacher, a school administrator or representative, a school psychologist, and the child if age 14 or older. The sample for the current study involved 13 teams consisting of the parent(s) of a child suspected of a disability, not less than one special education teacher, general education teacher, administrator, and any other individual relevant to an appropriate educational placement of a child (Public Law 108-446, 2004, p. 2710). Teams were organized by the special education administration in the schools where they function in accordance with Public Law 108-446 (2004). Because some teams met less than one hour and some longer than one hour, capturing data from 13 IEP teams ensured that 6 hours of digital footage was available for analysis. Though 10 hours of footage was initially sought for analysis in the current study, saturation was obtained at 6. As noted and explained in the limitations identified in chapter 5, the initial goal of ten hours of data was not achieved and six hours of data were obtained. While collecting additional data in future studies is encouraged in the recommendations for further research in chapter 5, the six hours of data did provide a rich block

of information for analysis and approached saturation. Saturation occurs when no new information seems to be emerging from the data. Saturation is a matter of degree and researcher judgment, as there is always the potential for new information to emerge. Further, as allowed by Corbin and Strauss (2007), saturation may relate to practical issues, such as resources to conduct the research and/or availability of participants. In this study, saturation occurred not only because of the richness of the obtained six hours of data but also because of the lack of availability for participants for further data collection.

According to Yin (2003), the role of the researcher is critical to establishing sound case study research. Specifically, the researcher must be able to ask good questions, remain objective, practice good listening skills, remain flexible, and maintain a global perspective outside of simply the case being studied (p. 61). The goal of the researcher in the current study was to (a) operate in the IEP meetings as discretely as possible, (b) remain unbiased, establishing no personal contact with the participants beyond that necessary for informed consent, (c) transcribe the data in the traditional, recognized

Jeffersonian CA notation, and (d) conduct detailed, thorough analysis of transcribed data for report and presentation.

Regarding CA ethnomethodology and the role of the researcher, there exist additional responsibilities to those in perhaps a typical case study. Garfinkel (1996) stated, "Ethnomethodology (EM) is proposing and working out 'what more' there is to the unquestionable corpus status of formal analytic investigations than formal analysis does" (p. 6). The focus on what is demonstrable in the data collected of participants in situ is what governed the role of the researcher in this study. The researcher acted exclusively as objective observer, to the greatest extent possible, as to not interfere with participant interaction as it naturally occurred. Through data capturing mechanisms acceptable in the CA methodology (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2006, p. 73), it was the researcher's role and responsibility to operate the digital audio and video recording technology, to appropriately and ethically capture the conversational data in the IEP meeting, and to transcribe data in the acceptable Jeffersonian transcription method. Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006) reported, "Transcription is a necessary

initial step in making possible the analysis of recorded interaction in that CA requires the practice of transcription and production of a transcript represents a distinctive stage in the process of data analysis itself" (p. 73).

The role of researcher approaching analysis was critical to the patterns which eventually emerged. The researcher was required to repeatedly review the corpus of transcribed data, looking at and thinking deeply about the way that participants orient themselves to one another, the elements governing the meeting and the context in which the interaction is taking place. Through this analysis, patterns began to crystallize beyond simply those which naturally govern interaction. In the case of CA in the applied context, meaning analysis of interaction occurring in formal or institutional settings, patterns will begin to emerge in data which reveal orientation to and influence of the context of the setting. Drew and Heritage (1992) reported, "the CA perspective embodies a dynamic approach in which 'context' is treated as both the project and product of the participants' own actions and therefore as inherently locally produced and transformable at any

moment" (p. 19). It is the researcher's responsibility to be sensitive to the subtleties in the data, to record as accurately as possible and look at data with objectivity allowing patterns to emerge demonstrably in the transcriptions.

Data Collection Tools

According to Ten Have (2006) there are three possibilities regarding the collection of data in CA studies: copying broadcast of interactions, using existing recordings, or the creation of a researcher's own recordings (p. 60). The current research employed the final method in Ten Have's list utilizing a digital audio recording device. Additionally, the audio footage captured was complemented by video footage to collect any subtleties evident involving non-verbal communication. Both digital devices, audio and video, were employed simultaneously allowing for two collection approaches to the same interaction. Data from both devices were be downloaded into a personal computer utilizing USB technology. Audio data were transcribed by the researcher in Microsoft Word using Jeffersonian notation (1974). Once transcribed, the

transcriptions, audio and video footage were uploaded into Transana software which will allow for systematic analysis of data and coding of significant sequences, spaces of talk, and emerging and recurrent patterns. Lastly, data was organized into a conceptually clustered matrix indicating conversational devices employed by participants as they related to the research questions in the study. This, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), allows data to be presented in a systematic, centrally organized manner (p. 127).

Reliability and validity in the CA methodological approach is best approached by keeping the data and analysis procedures transparent to participants. The current research involved full disclosure of data to participants. Further, member checks were employed in post-IEP data collection sessions. All transcribed data will be retained for five years in a secured location with the researcher.

To strengthen validity, sections of transcripts were shared with other conversation analysts providing multiple perspectives and strengthening claims regarding analysis. Steffi Hemling and Alicia Walsh, graduate students of Wayne

A. Beach at San Diego State University in California agreed to participate in peer review of the data in this current study. Through their work implementing CA in the field of communications, particularly regarding the doctor patient relationship, their keen insight proved invaluable in the analysis phase of this research. Similarly, Dr. Gary David, from the Department of Sociology at Bentley College in Massachusetts has graciously agreed to participate in shared data analysis discussion. This type of collective analysis is reflected in the foundational CA research literature as a means of providing depth, rigor and impact of research findings. Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006) argued regarding researcher's sharing transcribed data, "An important aspect of this is that analyses produced by one researcher do not amount merely to idiosyncratic and untestable assertions about what is going on in a stretch of talk. Rather, the analysis is projected into a public area in which it can, if necessary, be challenged and even altered" (p. 92).

Regarding reliability, it is noted in Ten Have (2006) that participants can potentially react negatively to being recorded during data collection (p. 61). This, the author

revealed, can often be combated by selecting participants and settings with which the researcher is not personally involved. To best maintain the integrity and objectivity of the research in this study, the schools chosen for this study are not schools that the researcher is in any way affiliated beyond the proximity necessary to capture the dialogue occurring in the research setting.

Data Collection Procedures

Hatch (2002) explained that in the design phase for qualitative data collection procedures it is imperative that the researcher indicate what, how, when, why data will be collected (p. 52). Why this particular data is critical for the current study has been highlighted above. Each of the remaining elements outlined in Hatch will be addressed as follows. The data collection procedures for this research centered on recordings of interaction in the IEP meeting among participants. The procedures remained as transparent to participants as possible. All participants asked to participate in the study received information on the study, a consent form, and understood that their names and identifying information would remain confidential.

Questions for agreement (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were answered for participants such as time involved, data collection employed, voluntary nature of participation, design of study, confidentiality, anonymity, how results will be produced, member check procedures, and benefits to participating (p. 48). Participants were made fully aware of the digital audio recording device that was employed as well as the digital camera. Both tools are very small and the researcher made every effort for the tools to remain innocuous.

Every effort was made for the IEP meeting to happen as it would naturally without the recording devices or the researcher present. Few words were exchanged between the researcher and participants throughout the entire IEP process. The researcher made clear prior to the commencement of the IEP as well as in the disclosure and consent forms that the researcher would in no way interfere with the interaction between IEP members and would remain silent during the IEP session even if called upon to interact. In the event that interaction with the researcher occurred, and or any other unforeseen interruption, the data collected during interruptions was excluded from the

study. In the event that sessions were interrupted for significant amounts of time, those specific meetings were not included in the study. The target dates for the collection of data ranged between March and May of 2008.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Plan

Data analysis began during the transcription process, and it was the researcher who completed transcription of audio/video data. Though different authors have varying names for describing the notation system (transcription conventions in Ten Have, 2006, transcription symbols in Hutchby and Wooffitt, 2006, to name two) the notation system is recognized as being created by Gail Jefferson (1974). A brief list of the notation system used in the current research is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1

Jeffersonian Notation

(0.0)	Time gaps in tenths of a second in transaction
(.)	Pause in talk less than two-tenths of a second
=	Latch between utterances
[]	Overlapping talk
.hh	In breath by a speaker
Hhhh	Additional h symbols indicate lengthy in breath by speaker
Lau(h)gh	h in parentheses indicates breathy word; a laugh or cry
(())	Nonverbal activity
-	Cutoff of prior word or sound
:	Stretched sound
!	Animated tone
()	Unclear sound
(sound)	Word in parenthesis indicates a guess by the transcriber
.	Period indicates decreased tone not necessarily end of turn
,	Continuing intonation
?	Rising inflection not necessarily question
°	Utterances bracketed by degree signs indicate quieter tone than surrounding talk
<u>Word</u>	Underline or italics indicates stress in tone or intonation
><	Talk produced is quicker than rest of utterance
→	Significant piece of conversation selected for discussion
↓ ↑	Rising and falling intonation in an utterance
<u>a</u> :	Decrease in pitch in the middle of a word
a:	Rise in pitch within a word
*	Inhibited pronunciation of a following section of talk

Transcribed data was placed into Transana software which supports Jeffersonian transcription. The software allowed the researcher to assign video clips to transcriptions and aid in the coding process. Transana also

allows for note taking and memos that the researcher could refer to at a later date. The program supports the search and retrieval of data. It is believed that utilization of this software in the present study satisfied Hutchby and Wooffitt's (2006) 3-stage model for building analytic accounts including, "First identify a potential object of analytic interest- a conversational device or a sequence type; Second, produce a formal description of an empirical example, concentrating in particular on the sequential environment, in order to try and define what the device or sequence type is *doing*; Third, return to the data collection to refine the description until it becomes a generalized account" (p. 110).

A conceptually clustered matrix table organized by key words, was completed (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 182) which allowed the researcher to track and organize specific recognizable interactional devices, what task the device appears intending to do, a field for a specific piece of talk that illustrates the device in action, and researcher comments on stretches of talk. This organization fulfilled the charges set forth in Hutchby and Wooffitt (2006). Lastly, a general chronological research log was kept to

document, track, and organize data collection and analysis procedures, as well as reflections on member checks.

Analysis was driven by the CA conventions of talk-in-interaction as well as the devices coined by analysts in the field of institutional CA established through accepted, peer reviewed CA research. The current study maintained as its focus first an acknowledgement of evidence of the widely-accepted CA conventions regarding sequential organization outlined in Schegloff (2007) and others. Second, the data was analyzed for evidence concerning the means by which participants oriented to various categorizations inherent in the mandated structure of the IEP. It is known, based on the legislation outlined in IDEA that certain membership categories are mandated to be present at a legal IEP meeting; the current study looked for the ways in which participants were categorized by others or categorized themselves through their talk. Antaki and Widdicombe (1998) suggested, "The identification of an identity as being relevant to analysis is that which appears relevant to the participants in and through their interaction. In other words, identity must be visibly consequential in the interaction" (p. 5). The corpus of

research in the field regarding IEPs presents quite clearly the asymmetries inherent in the institutional context. Data in the current study was analyzed looking for the ways in which these asymmetries were evident and demonstrable through the talk of the participants.

The following list of constructs provided a foundation to begin rigorous analysis of transcribed data. It should be mentioned that the list was not exclusive and any and all changes or additions to the list based on what the data reveals were highlighted. The comparison of the actual data to the established list of conventions along with the stretches of talk which reflect the specific interests of the research remained the basis for analysis. Stretches of talk revealed participant orientation to both the proximal domain (e.g. roles in discourse) and how orientation to the distal domain (e.g. roles in the situational, institutional context of the IEP) became demonstrable through talk (Zimmerman in Antaki and Widdicombe, 1998, p. 87). Of particular import in the approach to the data was how and what the orientations of participants in the IEP brought to bear on the decision of student placement.

Core CA utterances/interaction devices (Proximal Domain):

Greeting/reciprocation
 Summons/acknowledgement
 Request/compliance
 Assertion/agreement
 Question/answer
 Invitation- acceptance/declination
 Offer-acceptance/declination
 Assessment-agreement/disagreement
 Uptake
 Reformulation
 Openings
 Pre-requests
 Closings
 Active response tokens- yes, uhuh, mmmhmm, right (Hepburn, 2005, p. 266)
 Silence- pauses, non-uptake or allowing one to finish a story (Hepburn, 2005, p. 263)

Categorical membership indicators (Distal Domain)

Evidence of feelings
 Associations
 Obligations
 Affiliations

Asymmetries made visible (Distal Domain)

Professional non-professional roles referenced
 Power asymmetries hinted at
 Blatantly displayed asymmetries
 Signs of acquiescence by non-professionals
 Signs of shepherding by professionals

Threats to Quality

Merriam (1998) stated, "All research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. Being able to trust research results is especially important to professionals in applied fields, such as education" (p. 198). The current study attempted at each step in its process to remain true to the charge presented by Merriam. By so doing, the study attempted to meet Merriam's steps for ensuring internal and external validity, and reliability. The study took steps to ensure that all research, treatment of participants, and data was handled in an ethical manner.

It is suggested in Merriam (1998) that internal validity can be ensured by triangulating data, employing member checks, providing for long-term observation, peer examination, participatory or collaborative modes of research, and accounting for researcher's bias (p. 205). The current study employed all of the above listed means in the following manner. Multiple methods were used to confirm findings emergent in the data. Emerging findings were shared with participants when possible to confirm the validity of the assertions of the researcher. Also, peer

examination was utilized as other members of the conversation analytic community were called on to review stretches of conversation to confirm the validity of the findings. The collection of analysts pouring over initial findings and assertions strengthened and deepened emergent findings and added value to the research.

From the point of conceptualization, this study has involved the participation of professionals in the field of special education programming, parents of students with disabilities and leading conversation analysts. The main interest in the study arose from discussions with professionals dissatisfied with the nebulous, moving target which is the successful IEP. The need and interest for the study has been confirmed by others in the field of conversation analysis based on discussions of the practice and what the current research in the field of education has yielded in the past five to seven years. There has been support from conversation analysts contacted regarding the current study and a commitment from practitioners to aid in whatever way possible to help the study become a strong contribution to the field. With the number of eyes on the project as well as the hands involved from participants to

practitioners, it is believed the research will produce internally valid results.

Merriam (1998) pointed to difficulties inherent in achieving external validity in qualitative case study research due to the lack of clear generalizations to other settings (p. 209). This is especially true in the case of CA studies which maintain as an expressed focus, the tacit, locally constructed, context specific nature of talk-in-interaction (Ten Have, 1999, Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998). It is recognized that external validity in the current study would ultimately be difficult to achieve. Thus, the research made no claim that findings can and should be generalized to other settings with different participants.

Reliability with respect to qualitative research has as its focus not the generalizability with outcomes in other studies and cases, but rather, a dependable and replicable set of outcomes based on the data within the study (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). In other words, the findings of the current study should hold true after repeated analysis of the data by multiple researchers. Again, it was hoped that extensive and multiple looks at data would provide solid, reliable conclusions on what the data

yields. The work of the conversation analyst relies heavily on the researcher's ability to apply objective, common sense knowledge to data sets in the study (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2006, p. 112). Multiple analysts looking at the same data only strengthened the current study in this regard.

Feasibility

The current study recognized the inherent biases that exist in cases where the researcher is conducting research in their own familiar context. Hatch (2002) argued that, "It is just too difficult to balance the sometimes-conflicting roles of researcher and educator when the enactment of both roles is required in the same setting. It is just too difficult for educators to pull back from their insider perspectives and see things with the eyes of the researcher" (p. 47). The context identified as suitable for the current study was indeed the IEP meeting setting, however, IEP meetings which occur in buildings personally unfamiliar to the researcher. The meetings in buildings chosen for study in the current research were those accessible to the researcher but not personally or

professionally related to, or impacted by, the researcher in any way.

Ethics

This study maintained as a primary concern the fair and ethical treatment of participants at every stage of the research. In the current study, the researcher filled the role of inactive observer. Because the researcher in no way reacted to, responded to, or interacted with participants, risk to participants during data collection was drastically minimized. Throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study, data remained transparent to all research participants to maintain confidence that contributed words were not misrepresented in any way. All university, professional, and federal regulations regarding safe research practice were adhered to and maintained throughout the course of the research. All Walden University Institutional Review Board guidelines and procedures were understood and followed as well as the rights of participants' educational records and placement respected by means of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (34 CFR § 99.31). Due to the

confidential and personal nature of the students' educational placement, anonymity was maintained throughout the data collection, analysis, and reporting process.

It was recognized that ethical dilemmas are present in the data collection phase of research, particularly pertaining to researcher in the observation role. Merriam (1998) suggested that the researcher's presence can in many ways shape the outcomes of the very events under study (p. 215). The researcher in the present study recognized the potential impact of researcher presence in the IEP meeting and established as clearly as possible at the time of consent that: 1) The researcher would in no way interact or interfere with the participants and proceedings in the IEP meeting; 2) The researcher's intent was to objectively capture the words and actions of participants in the meeting as they themselves intended them, 3) The research questions were visible to the participants and would be explained at anytime prior to or immediately following the IEP meeting.

Summary

The preceding chapter has had as its primary aim the grounding of the current research in the qualitative design and case study tradition. An argument was provided for the framing of this research in the qualitative design expressing the necessity of such an approach due to the tacit, personal, locally produced data that CA methodology requires. The case study tradition was presented for what appeared to be an obvious adherence to the guidelines presented in Merriam (1998), Hatch (2002), and Creswell (1998). The quantitative design was rejected, with rationale, as an appropriate research method given the nature and concerns of the current study.

The current chapter attempted to outline the methodological steps that were taken in the current study outlining the participants necessary to complete the research as well as the researcher's role throughout the data collection process. The digital audio and video tools were revealed that captured the interaction of the participants in the IEP meetings. The data collection and analysis procedures were presented along with a plan for organizing emergent themes and patterns as well as the

research log that contained the researcher's thoughts and reflections as the research proceeded.

Threats to quality were explored and responded to. The issues regarding internal and external validity were discussed with the particular concerns of the CA methodology expressed. The issue of reliability was addressed and the deficits of qualitative case studies in producing cross-context generalizations wrestled with. The chapter presented the notion of producing research that is reliable not necessarily across contexts, but rather, yields results that are replicable locally when looking at the same data set. The benefits of multiple analysts looking at the same data when determining significant analytic results was also considered as a strength in maintaining a quality, rigorous study.

A discussion regarding feasibility in the current study was outlined and a rationale for the participants for the case study provided. Based on the guidance provided in Hatch (2002) regarding feasibility, it was indicated that though accessibility to the researcher's place of employment would provide some ease in conducting the initial phases of the research, there would be inherent

biases and other issues concerning this choice. It was therefore indicated that the current research would be conducted at various sites in greater Detroit, MI that are in no way affiliated with or professionally or personally connected to the researcher. According to Hatch, "Capturing what insiders take for granted is one of the objectives of qualitative work. If the researcher is also an insider, that which is taken for granted may never come to the surface" (p. 48).

Chapter 3 of this dissertation addressed the ethical issues inherent in conducting research involving human subjects. Specific to the case study tradition where the researcher acts as observer, issues abound whereby participant confidentiality could be breached and or participants could be directly or indirectly harmed by the research conducted. In response to these issues, it was indicated that in the current study research would not be conducted until proper university IRB approval was granted. Due to the nature of the research involving the confidential educational lives of children all FERPA guidelines would be strictly adhered to. The issue of the researcher in observer role was addressed by outlining the

steps which will be taken to inform participants as to the nature of the research as well as clearly establishing the researcher's part in the process. The researcher intends to keep all data as accessible to participants as possible as to assuage any fear that words are misconstrued or that the participants themselves might in any way be misrepresented.

CHAPTER 4:
RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter 4 begins with a restatement of the purpose of the current study, followed by the research questions. A discussion of the data collection and initial analytic procedures highlights the process by which data were captured, catalogued, and finally coded into collections suitable for analysis. A summary table of coding is presented indicating the number of clips that were assigned to each code as well as the duration of each clip included. The list of established conventions outlined in chapters 1 and 3 form the basis for comparison with the patterns and phenomena which emerged during analysis. Stretches of talk which provided evidence for findings are presented with explanation, and the research questions which drove the collection of data are each addressed with responses framed by emergent findings through analysis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to capture and analyze the conversation among participants collaborating

in IEP team meetings in urban schools in the greater Detroit area. The study investigated how participants in IEP meetings converse, co-create meaning, employ elements of interactional strategies to assert points, understand each other, identify with and orient to different membership categories relevant to the meeting, as well as highlighting evidence of power asymmetries in the meetings. Of interest in the present study was the interaction occurring just prior to the decision to place a child into special education, disqualify a child, or alter a child's existing special education placement. Along with the interaction of the participants in the IEP meeting, the identity categories demonstrable through interaction, the orientation of the participants to visible asymmetries in the conversation was also analyzed.

The commitment of the current study remains to the qualitative tradition with a focus on conversation analysis as a means of capturing the interactional data. To push Peters's (2003) work a bit further, the current study attempted to objectively capture examples of how participants orient to the social milieu and structure, as well as the asymmetries potentially found therein. The

study analyzed the data in the applied CA methodology and ultimately revealed the turn-taking behaviors, perspective displays, and repair structures employed by participants, in situ.

Research Questions

1. What conversational structures are evident in the delivery of information to participants on which decision of placement is based (e.g., Greeting/reciprocation, Summons/acknowledgement, Request/compliance, Assertion/agreement)?

2. How are turns allocated and questions asked and answered (e.g., Question/answer, Invitation-acceptance/declination, Assessment-agreement/disagreement)?

3. How do participants in the IEP make relevant their membership to categories: professional, parent, general education teacher, special education teacher, school psychologist or other qualified examiner, and so forth?

4. How do membership categories function in establishing interaction leading to the decision of placement (analysis will include associations to the above categories through evidence of feelings, beliefs, assertions, obligations, and

so on, relevant to the context of the meeting and the act of placing the child)?

5. How do participants orient to the asymmetries inherent in the institutional setting of the IEP demonstrable through their talk (asymmetries commonly associated with institutional setting involving parents and professionals was explored)?

Data Collection

The goal of the current study was to capture the conversation among participants in situation during IEP meetings as it naturally unfolds. Approximately 6 hours of data from 13 IEP meetings occurring at three urban schools in the greater Detroit area, was captured utilizing digital audio and video recording devices, and the researcher remained an objective, silent, passive participant in the data collection process. Data collection began after all consent and cooperation documentation was collected, and conversation began to unfold. Data collection ended at formal close of the IEP meeting, or at which time the participants indicated that they wanted to discontinue recording. Participants were asked if they wished to view

the data and participate in the member check process. In the current study, only the school psychologist, who was present at all of the meetings, agreed to participate in the member check process. Transcripts were reviewed and validated by the participant.

Data Analysis

The foundational work in conversation analysis by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, provided the tools for considering the turn-by-turn interaction of participants in IEP meetings. Conversation analysis requires a careful consideration of the sequences in talk as they unfold naturally in conversation. The work that is accomplished between participants in talk is the rich data sought by conversation analysis as it yields the information necessary to draw conclusions regarding what participants hope will be accomplished through their efforts. Later work in CA by Drew, Heritage, Hutchby and Wooffitt, Antaki and others considered the context in which conversation takes place as having specific bearing on the work accomplished. In the current study, it was the IEP meeting; the mandated, presumably collaborative gathering of professionals and

parents charged with the educational placement of a child, that was the context of analysis. All captured data was transcribed by the researcher in the Jeffersonian notation method; a preferred CA notation system, and audio, video, and transcriptions were uploaded into Transana 2.22 developed by Fassnacht and Woods (2008) at the University of Wisconsin.

Once in Transana, data were viewed multiple times by the researcher as they pertained to what Zimmerman (1998) referred to as the proximal and distal domains. Core CA utterances were observed and noted, categorical membership indicators were highlighted and instances of visible asymmetries inherent in the institutional context were coded and assigned to collections. The research questions presented in chapters 1 and 3 along with the focus of the decision of student placement provided the context for analysis of interactional and situational participant talk.

Reflective journaling took place throughout analysis to capture the researcher's thinking and rationale behind the selection of coding of phenomena as they emerged (see appendix for complete time-stamped notes). Over 150 conversation clips were captured and organized into coded

collections. A "clip," as it is used here, refers to pieces of video and corresponding time-stamped transcription which were analytically significant to the purpose of this study. Table 2 provides the codes to which clips were assigned and categorized as well as the number and duration of clips in each code collection. A key is included as reference to the participant titles in the IEP meetings.

Table 2

Code Collection Report Summary

Sp:	Special Education Teacher
T:	General Education Teacher
Psy:	School Psychologist
P:	Parent
Gp:	Grand Parent
Sw:	Social Worker
Ad:	Administrator

0:00:00.0 Time stamp indicating total length of clips in each coded collection (hours:minutes:seconds.tenths of seconds)

Category Title and Duration	Clips Per Category
Category membership indicator : "us" or "we" inclusionary 0:01:16.7	2
Category membership indicator : "we" exclusionary 0:02:32.1	4
Category membership indicator : P orienting as T role 0:01:23.0	2
Clarifying questions : Sp 0:00:42.3	2
Clarifying questions : clarifying question 0:05:11.7	12
Clarifying questions : parent question 0:03:43.3	7
Clarifying questions : psy 0:01:00.8	2
Clarifying questions : teacher 0:00:44.5	2
Power asymmetry visible : role reference psy 0:03:53.9	4
Shepherded Parent : "any concerns?" 0:00:20.9	1
Shepherded Parent : through story and empathy 0:03:11.9	1
advocating : Sw 0:00:15.7	1
advocating : family advocating 0:00:52.8	2
affirming diagnosis : not qualified 0:01:39.8	3
disagreement : Psy disagreement with team member 0:01:44.5	1
disagreement : disagreement with diagnosis 0:00:31.5	1
disagreement : disagreement with goals 0:00:44.6	1

evidence : Admin	1
0:00:32.1	
evidence : Parent	1
0:00:32.1	
evidence : observations	9
0:04:19.5	
evidence : teacher	1
0:00:24.5	
explaining results : Psy discouraging interaction	1
0:01:38.1	
explaining results : Psy explaining results	13
0:38:20.2	
explaining results : Sp explaining results	1
0:00:54.9	
for parent : parent	3
0:00:51.1	
humor : Ad humor	1
0:00:23.8	
humor : P humor	1
0:00:19.0	
humor : Sp humor	1
0:00:19.0	
humor : Sw humor	1
0:01:33.6	
humor : no uptake	1
0:00:45.2	
humor : Psy humor	22
0:11:07.0	
informed parent : behavior	3
0:01:45.3	
informed parent : informed medical academic	12
0:11:34.7	
openings : perspective display sequence	5
0:05:56.3	
openings : trajectory	5
0:05:56.3	
overtalk : Psy	1
0:00:33.1	
overtalk : Sw	1
0:00:12.8	
overtalk : T	1
0:00:21.7	
overtalk : overtalk	8
0:03:37.0	
psy venting : inadequate services	1
0:00:09.6	
questions to the team : Sp	2
0:00:27.2	
questions to the team : questioning team	4
0:01:33.9	
repair displays : repair	3
0:00:39.0	
strategies : humor	1

0:00:11.9	third person : third person	1
0:00:17.4	uniformed parent : uninformed parent	3
0:02:46.7	venting : P blaming	2
0:01:05.7	venting : P venting	1
0:00:40.3	venting : Psy venting	2
0:01:30.3	venting : blame	4
0:03:02.0	venting : sp venting	1
0:00:25.6	venting : teacher venting	13
0:11:53.6	vignette : Parent	2
0:02:37.0	vignette : Psy	2
0:01:19.7	vignette : Teacher	1
0:00:52.5	vignette : social worker	1
0:00:15.7		
Clips:	152	Total Time: 2:05:08.7

Keywords were assigned to each coded clip to aid in the search process for each clip once organized. The keyword summary report allowed for organization of keyword definitions and identifying and describing coding sets. Table 3 displays the keyword summary. Included are definitions to aid the researcher in connecting keywords for phenomena to reflective journal entries, useful when revisiting data throughout analysis. Under each bolded keyword group is a list of sub-keywords which added an additional level of analysis and organization of clips into categories.

Table 3

Keyword Collection Summary

Bold words indicate keyword collections followed by keywords in each collection

advocating

family advocating

Sw

affirming diagnosis

not qualified

Category membership indicator

"us" or "we" inclusionary

"we" exclusionary

use of we by a professional which affiliates the professionals at the table and

excludes the parent

P orienting as T role

Clarifying questions

clarifying question

parent question

Psy

Sp

teacher

disagreement

disagreement with diagnosis

any participant directly or indirectly suggesting that a diagnosis is inaccurate

disagreement with goals

Psy disagreement with team member

evidence

Admin

observations

tactics used in conversation when explaining or rationalizing a diagnosis or placement decision for a child

Parent

teacher

explaining results

Psy discouraging interaction

Psy explaining results

Sp explaining results

for parent

parent

humor

Ap humor

no uptake

P humor

Psy humor

Sp humor

Sw humor

informed parent

behavior
informed medical academic

openings

perspective display sequence
trajectory

overtalk

overtalk
when one individual is talking over another participant's turn-not hearing their response or interjection.

Psy

Sw

T

Power asymmetry visible

role reference psy

psy venting

inadequate services

questions to the team

questioning team

Sp

repair displays

repair
where a participant makes a comment or statement and corrects based on non-uptake or the realization that error has been made.

Shepherded Parent

"any concerns?"

This is demonstrably the last major formal question asked of parents when completing the IEP forms.

through story and empathy

strategies

humor

third person

third person

when a parent or professional refers to themselves in the third person on the team

uninformed parent

uninformed parent

venting

blame

P blaming

P venting

Psy venting

Sp venting

teacher venting

a teacher venting using exasperated language, exclamations, etc. showing emotion regarding the child

vignette

Parent

Psy

social worker

Teacher

Analysis of core CA utterances/interaction devices

(Proximal Domain)

For conversation analysts, the most basic unit for analyzing sequences in interaction is the adjacency pair. Schegloff (2007) defines the adjacency pair as having the following common features:

It is: (a) composed of two turns, (b) by different speakers, (c) adjacently placed; that is one after the other, (d) these two turns are relatively ordered; that is, they are differentiated into 'first pair parts' and 'second pair parts' (e) are pair type related; that is, not every second pair part can properly follow any first pair part. (p. 13)

Naturally occurring sequences of adjacency pairs listed in chapters 1 and 3 were expected to be found in IEP data collected in this study. In large part, this was indeed the case. Though greetings/reciprocations were present in the majority of the IEPs that took place throughout the study, often because they occurred prior to coming into the IEP meeting and beyond the field of the recording devices not many were captured. However, clearly evident in the data was the request/compliance, or assertion/agreement adjacency pair sometimes following an opening sequence surrounding questions of a parent new to the process. For example:

Psy: A couple of things moms and I am going to be very honest with you. We have got another IEP comin in at 3:30. So: ahm I ↑think what we're gonna DO ah I'm going to explain the results so it can be if- Ya know it will look all nice on camera=

Psy: =and then what I'll do u:m I can fill this OUT >tshu-tshu-tshu<and have it for you in the MORning?

SP: We have hav- we have a half an hour so. We could do as much as we ↑can

Psy: [You wanna just do that?]

This example of a stretch of talk provides evidence of an assertion by the school psychologist. The agreement occurs silently and without verbal uptake. Because the same school psychologist was present in each of the 13 meetings, a longitudinal glance at his interactive devices was possible. The above proximal example is an assertion that morphs into a request to the parent regarding having the forms available by morning. An example of assertion with uptake in the form of agreement at 1:42 in IEP 2, although agreement with softer volume indicating perhaps a lack of confidence or understanding:

Psy: And I think what we'll d:o ah:m (0.1) we'll start off with the social worker talking a little bit about his progress ahh (0.2) ahh a:nd uh what she's working on and then ah I'll (0.1) talk a little bit bout uh the PSYCH and we'll have the ↑teacher (0.2) talk a little bit about her ahh bout the general ed information okee ↑doke?

P: °ok°

Throughout the data analysis process, utterances and interactive devices shifted among participants. Questions were asked and answered, offers were made to parents and acceptance was generally garnered, uptake was recognized through nods and active response tokens such as *ihim*, *yes*, *yup*, and so forth. Assertions were made about student academic performance and behavior in the classroom, parents agreed, provided evidence of uptake or asked clarifying questions. In this way, participants moved back and forth through discourse identity showing recognizable signs that they understood the rules of relevance regarding turn taking and repair if and when meaning was noticeably not acknowledged by another participant. The IEP meetings opened had substantive conversation throughout, and

typically closed with "Thank you ma'am" or a closing over the course of a few turns such as IEP 5 at 19:41.2:

Psy: And then we'll then I'll have you sign the last page cause then we're gonna have the behavioral things addressed as well and we'll just have one one complete plan. Okay?

P: Sounds like a winner.

Psy: Thank you sir↑ thank you.

P: Is that it?

Psy: yup! that's it!

P: Heheo kay↑

Findings Related to Research Question 1

These discoveries in the data provided sound information addressing Research Question 1 in this study. Question 1 asked: What conversational structures are evident in the delivery of information to participants on which decision of placement is based? Examples of request/compliance, assertion/agreement were given as possible outcomes once data was collected. Though providing examples of what could possibly be found seemed to violate Garfinkel's (1996) early assertions regarding looking at

data without preconceptions, it seemed necessary to set an analytic backdrop by which what was found could be identified.

In response to Question 1 the data revealed an absence of first pair part-second pair part interaction immediately leading to the decision of placement. Though length of time that participants took the floor in the meeting was not an initial concern in data analysis, the time the psychologist held the floor became telling, particularly just prior to delivering diagnoses and placement. The amount of time the psychologist spent in explaining test results was substantial relative to other professionals sharing evidence and conclusions, roughly 13 clips at 38 minutes.

Interestingly, the school psychologist used humor often directly following the explanation of diagnostic testing results and placement. The data revealed that often the humor appeared to be taken up and shared by other participants at the meetings. Overall, this device appeared to be disarming in most of the episodes.

In summary, the conversational structures evident surrounding the placement decision of students in the meeting were one-sided assertions, most often by the school

psychologist. In episodes when there was uptake by parents or grandparents, the response was typically a positive response token, such as *ihim*, or *okay*. Again, it was the delivery of the response tokens that began to provide evidence that there was a discrepancy between the policy of the IEP as a truly collaborative venture, and the actual practice of the IEP as it unfolded. Research Question 2 provided more evidence of an emerging phenomenon that there was an assumed social order in the meetings.

Findings Related to Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, How are turns allocated and questions asked and answered? Again examples were provided of what the data would potentially reveal: Question/answer, Invitation- acceptance/declination, Assessment- agreement disagreement. The data revealed that often clarifying questions were asked in the meetings, sometimes by parents, often by other professionals regarding placement. The following example provides evidence of clarifying questions being asked by both parent and professionals in the same stretch of talk. This clip occurred at 37:56.4 into IEP 10:

Psy: that'd be: no↑ and its not departmentalized↑ um (2.0)

how many: (2.0) what'd you say again? thirty minutes?

er: what's your frequency?

Sw: (3.5)thirty minutes twice a week.

Psy: thirty minutes (2.0)

Sw: you think they need more?

Psy: no that's fine I'm just askin um (4.0)

P: What's that for?

Sw: Social work services the amount of time that he'll be
workin with me?

In the clip above, the psychologist is getting close to wrapping the meeting and is completing the IEP form documentation. He is filling in fields which require that the number of hours for a particular service are indicated. In this clip he is addressing the social worker with a clarifying question regarding the agreed upon hours that she will be seeing the student. The parent asks the clarifying question, "What's that for?", which the social worker assumes the second-pair part with her response. She likely feels able to assume the responder role in discourse due to her ascription to the category of informed

professional in the meeting. This categorical ascription leads to a deeper analysis addressed in research questions 3, 4, and 5.

Findings Related to Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: How do participants in the IEP make relevant their membership to categories: professional, parent, general education teacher, special education teacher, school psychologist, and so forth?

Because the focus of the current study was the interaction between members of the IEP team whose institutional function is to arrive at a child's placement, a look beyond simply the naturally occurring sequences in conversation was taken. The work conducted and the accomplishments of the members of the team through interaction was analyzed and a sequential map emerged leading to the placement decision of a child. Analysis of discourse identities which provide the foundation for the work conducted between the interacting members of the team cannot stand alone as a means to address the remaining research questions in this study. As Zimmerman (1998) and others have concluded, discourse identities shift

throughout conversation as interlocutors weave through the work accomplished (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998, pg. 94).

Zimmerman stated in Antaki and Widdicombe, "This play of discourse identities is tied to the situated identities of the parties, which in turn link these local activities to standing social arrangements and institutions through the socially distributed knowledge participants have about them" (p. 94). It was the situated, categorical membership indicators (distal domain) as well as the visible power asymmetries which became telling in the emergent data in this study; the manifestation of the IEP professionals' apparently hidden goals in the conversation occurring in the meeting.

Drew and Heritage (1992) recognized that discourse occurring in the institutional setting tend to take a predetermined shape based on the anticipated outcome of a meeting. "The activities conducted in many kinds of institutional interactions are often implemented through a task-related standard shape. In some instances that order may be prescribed, for instance, by a written schedule or formal agenda" (p. 43). Throughout data analysis in the current study, time-stamped notes and memos were kept

allowing the researcher to collect and organize thoughts and insights regarding phenomena occurring across episodes, in transcripts and clips. As analysis progressed decisions regarding the building of collections of clips were also noted as well as decisions to continually re-examine the corpus of data in search of recurring patterns. Evidence supporting an overall structural organization in the following stretch of talk between the school psychologist and parent at 6:20.0 into IEP 7 emerged:

Psy And and and so with the IQ now I'm gonna give you the achievement. These that your baby (1.0) he has the word knowledge he is able to verbalize an understanding of of of you know his lessons↑ and things of that↑ sort↑ -h but as far as h you know actually putting toGETHER (0.2) you know that's where he has a problem↓ you know as far as if I were to give him- h well↑ you=

P [now how come?]

Psy =know what? Some of it (1.0) maybe (0.1) with pret se dent (1.0) you know: sometimes I think some kids are very good at having an understanding of certain

things↑ but when you give them the test↑ or doing it↑
you know that's where his problem is. -h and some of
that maybe just pretend. I think sometimes we
ASSUME (1.0) that kids can strategize and and and and
(0.1) and have an understanding of how to re-solve a
problem and a lot of times that's not the case. (1.0)
and I'm gonna get to the point of how we (1.0) how we
RESOLVE it but I'm just lettin you know the deficits
and we gonna get↑f- you're a little bit EARLY ON THAT!
I gotta little script ((fingers draw box in the air))
you got it goin ahead a the game [HAHAHHA]

P ((nodding)) [right ehehe its just that its taken so
long you know cause for years I've 1.0) I mean I've
(2.0) VERBALLY (2.0) told his teachers (2.0)

Sp [hahahah!] ((Sp looks up at P)) [RIGHT cause its
getting down to the (1.0) bottom of it] [hahaha]

Psy [haahah] Really? SO WE'RE ON THE SAME PAGE HERE that's
WE'RE ON THE SAME PAGE

P ABSOLUTELY!

Psy [WE'RE ON THE SAME PAGE]

P And I want it FIXED

Psy We bout to (0.1) we gonna come with a game plan on how we bout to FIX it.

P Okay-

Psy But I got to stick to the script cuz if I gotta script caus I'm on on I'm getting h video taped and recorded so I gotta script! Alright. So we get back to the=

P [ok I understand]

Psy =script here.

P [Okay]

Psy Alright. SORRY but you didn't know. Alright ha aha ah ha!

After encountering the stretch of talk above where the psychologist is clearly thrown by the simple question, "Now how come?" the corpus of data was revisited to identify further evidence that there was indeed a hidden structure or institutional "script" that the psychologist and/or team followed often with a predetermined outcome. The following analytic note was recorded in the research journal:

In a clip in the explaining results collection, some evidence emerges of the Psy discouraging conversation during the explanation of results. What appears to be emerging while looking longitudinally at the data is that there tends to be more uptake and participation by parents at the top and conclusion of the IEP. This seems to be

encouraged. It appears that this type of structure is a hidden shepherding technique utilized by the Psy to ensure that the IEP concludes with an intended placement. At 6:20 in IEP 7, the P breaks the lengthy flow of the test results and explanation by asking simply, "now how come?" This seems to derail the Psy. He begins a formulation that has no uptake and no clear meaning then retracts and uses humor while explaining that the parent has gotten ahead of him and relegates her back to a listener uninformed parent role. It would appear that uptake is encouraged at some points in the IEP but not during the explanation of test results.

Though the clip was initially coded as an example of parent asking a clarifying question, and the psychologist utilizing humor as a device, there was clearly something else going on here. The above clip provided evidence of what Garfinkel (1968) referred to as a breach. In the social order of the IEP meeting, with assumed roles and policies, the parents question, "Now how come?", though acceptable in the policy governing the meeting, was a disruption in the practice of IEP meeting in this institutional setting. The insight above regarding a potential pre-determined overall structure in IEP meeting data shifted focus in analysis from identification of discourse identity ascription in the data toward the detection of a recognizable institutional structural organization of the IEP of which discourse identities,

situational identities and evidence of power asymmetry among participants sustains. This redirection rooted the research questions of the current study in an argument regarding an implication for positive social change regarding the IEP process which will be discussed further in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

Categorical Membership Indicators (Distal Domain)

This level of analysis was concerned specifically with participants' identification and ascription to different membership categories relative to the work accomplished in the context of the IEP. These categories were not predetermined and emerged in the data based on the interaction as it unfolded in the IEP conversation. Membership and identity ascriptions were identified in the data based on evidence of feelings, associations, obligations, and affiliations. In the IEP data analyzed, the psychologist or special education teacher often engaged the team in a manner which funneled or focused utterances toward the parent participant in a narrative, request for narrative by other team members, or report-like format. For instance in IEP 2, two utterances illustrate this point:

At 33:00.1 into IEP 2

SP: Ahh k Ms. J-. This is something that we give at the beginning of each IEP↑ these are the procedural safe↑guards↑- and THESE this is a list of the parent organizations. So you can just have that for your records.

At 1:41.0 into IEP 2

Psy: And I think what we'll d:o ah:m (0.1) we'll start off with the social worker talking a little bit about his progress ahh (0.2) ahh a:nd uh what shes working on and then ah I'll (0.1) talk a little bit bout uh the PSYCH and we'll have the ↑teacher (0.2) talk a little bit about her ahh bout the general ed information okee ↑doke?

P: °ok°

SW: OK um as you know J_____ comes to see me once a week for a half an hour (0.2) and ah he's been doin quite ↑good actually and I am quite pleased with his progress. At first (0.1) we had a lot of things to work on as you know when we first attached social work services to this IEP.

P: ((nodding))

The report-type opening by the professional immediately establishes an orientation to "authority" membership. In example 1, the special education teacher begins the meeting by sharing a procedure with the parent establishing the professional as information giver and parent as information receiver. This sets a tone for the IEP session as a meeting in which the parent has attended to receive the institution's information and decision regarding the placement of the student in question. In example two this point is illustrated through a foundational statement regarding the agenda for the meeting by the school psychologist. The agenda for the meeting is outlined as a report-to-parent exchange. The informality of the question, "okee doke?" reveals that the parent is not being asked if they are in agreement with the agenda but rather, are they ready to get started with a predetermined trajectory. In other words, the information deemed pertinent to share with the parent and ultimately the placement of the child has been preemptively established; the parent is simply attending to receive the information.

The parent's low-volume ok, and non-verbal acceptance with the nod indicate an ascription to information receiver role and to continue with the report on her child.

In summary, analysis of the corpus of data in the current study revealed multiple examples of ascription to categories and roles which sustained the institutional structure of the IEP across schools with the exception of one episode. Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998) stressed the importance of identification of deviant cases as a means by which more robust, generalizations can be made across episodes (p. 94). In IEP 1, the parent oriented to an informed-parent role unlike other instances in the corpus. It was revealed in IEP 1 that the parent was actually a special education teacher herself. Through turns, she identifies with an insider orientation through ascriptions by others such as this exchange at 3:31.1 in IEP 1:

ALL: he-he-he-huh

SP: Ok let's see down here (directing parent attention to signature form). You're informed- you know that you have the right to- rights-

P: [ihm him] its funny when your on THIS side.

SP: Right RIGHT (hmm him hmm hm).

It is evident that first the special education teacher ascribes this role to the parent by indicating, "You're informed- you know that you have the right to- rights-". The parent's comment regarding how it feels to be in the role of parent on the other "side" indicates that she is well aware of the potentially conflicting roles she has membership in and a clear understanding of the parent category membership, regardless of how informed, remains separate from the institution professionals at the meeting.

Continuing on in IEP 1, the professional running the meeting appeared to ascribe a team role to the entire group. For instance at 4:02.0 in IEP 1 the following sequence occurred:

SP: Ok hum any other concerns? The team? You guys would like to discuss at this time?

AP: Have we covered everything?

T: Covered everything?

AP: Great↓

SP: Ok well I would like to THANK everyone for
participating

P: Ok.

It should be noted that though the deviant case in IEP 1 was examined, the institutional structure of the IEP as reporting to the parent based on professional results gathered by the institution remained intact. The parent, though oriented to informed parent role, appeared to acknowledge this through the accomplishment of the IEP via a contribution of turns. Several other examples of the parent orienting to informed parent role were evident throughout the corpus of data although in differing ways. A detailed list of clips from the data regarding category ascription and information regarding their duration and location in the data is available in Table 2. Table 4 includes a list of categorical affiliation codes identified in the data, the keyword assigned to a clip, and the number of clips in each coded collection:

Table 4

Categories Made Relevant

0:00:00.0 Time stamp indicating total length of clips in each coded collection (hours:minutes:seconds.tenths of seconds)

Category Title and Duration	Clips Per Category
Category membership indicator : "us" or "we" inclusionary 0:01:16.7	2
Category membership indicator : "we" exclusionary 0:02:32.1	4
Category membership indicator : P orienting as T role 0:00:24.3	1
Power asymmetry visible : role reference psy 0:02:16.0	2
disagreement : Psy disagreement with team member 0:01:44.5	1
explaining results : Psy explaining results 0:01:44.5	1
informed parent : behavior 0:01:45.3	3
informed parent : informed medical academic 0:10:35.9	11
uninformed parent : uninformed parent 0:02:46.7	3
Clips: 29	Total Time: 0:21:24.2

Findings Related to Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked, How do membership categories function in establishing interaction leading to the decision of placement? There were several membership categories identified in data analysis. As mentioned above, several stretches of talk revealed parents ascribing to the roll of the informed parent at the IEP meeting. It became evident that the informed parent would generally ascribe to

a role of parent being knowledgeable about their child's academic or contributing medical challenges. An example is provided which emerged at 24:04.6 into IEP 6 of a parent ascribing to informed parent role:

Sp [Ihim↑] and I'm glad we caught it when we did I mean its not too late but you know.

Psy [YEAH I'm glad we did too!]

Sp I think the timing was good. We could have caught it earlier but (1.0) we still have we have two more years of middle school you know.

→P Eh and that was my main thing its like I don't want to go to high school °worryin about this°.

→PsyNo↑ no↑ we don't want you to either. (2.0) okay dad↑ what Im gonna do (1.0) I'm gonna be fillin out stuff and givin it to you and explain as I'm fillin it out okay?

P Ihim

The two indicated lines display a sequence where the parent asserts that he wanted problems his daughter is having in eighth grade addressed before she enters high school. The first part of the line, "That was my main

thing" indicates that he is informed about her troubles, knew that she was having difficulty and is looking to the school to have it resolved. The psychologist offers an affirming response acknowledging the parent's self-ascribed role, just prior to a segue into the forms phase of the IEP meeting where the parent is ascribed the uninformed parent role as the pertinent information will have to be explained to him.

Another example of the informed parent role ascription is visible at 16:12.9 in IEP 5:

P: You know what? And and and I'm sayin this(1.0) in truth I think he has a problem with women tellin what to DO.

Psy: Really.

P: Yup. I'm not jokin bout this because his MOM will tell him different things (0.1) and I would have to go behind her and (0.2) you know (1.0) somewhere chastise him to do what your mother said (1.0) now most of the teachers that D- has that are male teachers† I really don't hear from them too much. reports out of em-

Psy: And the females: YOU KNOW WHAT? That may be somethin that we can ahm:

→P: [you know I am very curious about that]

Psy: You know what? I wanna bring that to the social workers ahm attention and then we'll go we'll review that because I think she can go around and see if that's the kinda thing that it IS and maybe that's somethin that we can address h uhm with social work goals.

→P: Has D- ever been disrespectful in your class? ((to T2))

Psy: ((to Sp)) [he's sayin that he might have a problem with with FEMales]

T2: YES

In this stretch of talk, a visible building of confidence in the role of informed parent ascription is evident. The parent begins with a theory about his son's behavior around females. There is uptake by the school psychologist with the comment, "really." The uptake with flat intonation sends a message back to the parent to continue with the informed role which he does. The psychologist takes up the theory from the informed parent and presents a statement of action which further

strengthens the informed parent role. Near the end of the exchange, the parent is emboldened to redirect conversation to a male teacher at the meeting and seek further evidence for his theory regarding his son's behavior toward females. The IEP concludes with the placement which apparently had been predetermined by the team of professionals, however with included goals for a social worker who would begin to observe the child's behavior in classes with female teachers.

As the IEPs unfolded, it became evident that telling personal vignettes, or using outside examples by the adults on the team became a powerful tool in expressing concerns, justifying a placement, and making a case for placement of a child. The following clips provide examples of this tool in action by the professionals. In the first two examples, we see the professional utilizing the vignette tool. In example one at 16:05.9 in IEP 11 the school psychologist uses the tool to help the parent understand things from the child's perspective. It has just been revealed in the IEP discussion that the family is in the midst of a bitter divorce:

Psy: and you know what↑ ma↑ and that's really significant because kids they they don't have the the capability yet you know how we as adults↑ we have issues and we can block it out? an den still go to work↑ and you you know what I'm sayin?

P: Ihim↑

Psy: and deal with things↑

T: yeah

Psy: kids that aint happenin

→P: It would be really hard for them

Psy: [you know] becuase if if how can you concentrate if your thinkin about mom and dad and -h an and that's probably why its so inconsistent like the days where she's thinkin about it

In this example, the school psychologist was using the personal vignette tool to get the parent to look at the child's situation empathetically. In this particular case, the child did not qualify for special education services and the team was setting up supportive alternatives for the parent in the event that she did not agree that the child should not receive services. By building the case for it

being difficult for the student to deal with the family issues, and this as the potential cause for the child's inconsistent performance, the parent slowly came to the realization that the child has ability but external circumstances are to blame for her deficiencies.

The same IEP revealed a similar use of the personal vignette as a placement tool. However, a stalemate ensues when the professional's vignette is met with the parent's opposing view through a vignette. Though lengthy, the clip reveals some very deliberate work being completed between the parent and teacher as they negotiate a middle ground for retention of the child in her current grade:

P: She was (5.0) she started when she was five when
she started

T: okay

P: Cause she went to preschool at four-

T: okay it could be↑ it could be too that she just needs
another year to get some brain growth and skill growth
and get her feet under her to be you know to be more
successful in class (1.0) sometimes -h over the years
now I'll tell you over the years when I've had um

parents↑ -h have the child take the grade again I've only had one instance where it turned out to not be a good thing (1.0) I me- you know overall the majority and MY son repeated my son repeated a grade

P: See S- repeated the eighth as the years went as time went on I wish I hadn't I wished I would've just got her the help that she needed

T: [okay] right

P: And I wasn't thinkin like that at that time I really really wished I wouldn't have held S- back

T: what was the what was the drawback for S- was it the age? was she that made her older? or

P: The it (3.0) her repeated↑ but it was third grade

T: uhuh↓

P: She really (1.0) as time went on I just really wished I hadn't I wished I would have just got her help

T: in what what in what way what was the biggest (1.0) problem areas?

P: [like] °oh my god°

T: huh?

P: It is just so long ago hahaha

T: oh okay I was just wondering

P: hah that was third grade she's in the ninth or tenth
grade now -hh um

T: but uh did she do weh↑ did she do better the next year
though↓

P: Yeh I mean

T: She did she did better academically ↓

P: Little bit but I had gotten her help then

T: You got so she repeated and you got her help?

P: yeah and I wish I would have just got her help period
and not held her back and let her go to the
fourth grade and and got help.

T: so you don't think that it would have been enough the
you don't think that just-

P: just repeating↑

→T: Just one or the other wouldn't have been enough I mean
if you would have just got her help would she have
been as secure as she was when as she for repeating
the whole grade and coming in knowing fifty percent of
the grade when she walked in the door?□ that's the big
thing D- will know a good percentage of the fifth
grade stuff when she comes in and she can only build
up from there (1.0) you see what I'm sayin? that's

that's the that's the one thing you know on on the one hand one aspect of the decision (1.0) you know (1.0) ta me (3.0) well if you need↑ if you need a few days↑ to make a decision I can wait and turn her report card in later but I have ta- I'll have to know before the end of the week though -h so I can turn the report card in to Ms. H- -h but I can wait cause as you can see I didn't put any placement or anything on here yet on hers cause I knew we had to talk (2.0) so I'm not you know (1.0)

P: I definitely understand exactly what you're sayin I-I definitely do

T: and I know and I know its a hard decision (.5) but I think that (1.0) you know ah when I've seen kids take it the second time they come in with more confidence because they know that they know some of the stuff already and they only have to work on the half they don't have(2.0) already you know so

P: himimimmm

T: but that↑ you know I know its a hard decision especially at this age because the especially with the

girls because they're so (1.0) touchy about all the social things and all that (.) too but

P: So as far as that social stuff I don't care about

T: Okay

The above clip is very rich with intricately woven work that the two interlocutors engage in. There is a shift in category membership in informed to uninformed participant by both the teacher and the parent. The teacher stressed that she has had great success in the past with students who have repeated. She orients to the teacher as empathetic parent role when she explains that her own son has repeated and been successful. There is very much in tone and turn suggesting that the teacher is informed and knows what the best decision is for the parent. The parent returns with a vignette of her own. Orienting to the informed parent role, she explains that she has held another daughter back and has always regretted the decision. The strong language leads to the teacher shifting roles toward discussion which seems an attempt to justify her position on retaining children as much as it is concerned with supporting her placement decision for this

particular child. The teacher begins to recoil when she realizes that mom has shifted in orientation from informed to uniformed parent. The parent admits that she fails to recall certain details and thus her stance weakens. Sensing this opening, the teacher continues with what Bergmann in Drew and Heritage (1998) referred to as "fishing" (p. 140). She makes what seems like an assertion that simply helping the child academically without retaining her would not have been enough. A shift happens directly after this line where the teacher turns a line of questioning into an assertion about the placement of the student they are meeting about.

She continues with an extended stretch of talk which concludes with giving the parent a chance to make a decision in a "few days" though places a restriction on the amount of time the parent has to make the decision. Placing bounds on decision making such as the above example and the utilization of the informed professional role or taking advantage of the uniformed parent role highlight asymmetries commonly found in the institutional setting.

Findings Related to Research Question 5

The fifth research question in the current study asked: How do participants orient to the asymmetries inherent in the institutional setting of the IEP demonstrable through their talk? Analysis revealed several examples of institutional asymmetries inherent in the IEP setting. Mostly, a hierarchy emerged where the psychologist, the keeper of the diagnostic assessment data of the child and who appeared to run the majority of the meetings, set the agenda and kept the meeting moving toward an end with an anticipated placement decision. However, the psychologist oriented to a perspective-display sequence commonly found in settings where clinicians are delivering diagnostic news to their patients (Maynard in Drew and Heritage, 1998, p. 333). Maynard outlined a display series in three turns: Opinion-query, or perspective-display invitation; recipients reply or assessment; and clinicians report and assessment (p. 333). Differing slightly from the context in Maynard (1998) due to the fact that there are several participants in the IEP meeting rather than the traditional clinician-patient one-on-one meeting, the IEP meeting included the same sequences with professional reply

or assessment. In this way, the psychologist remained in a power position by steering the meeting, the professionals and parents were recipients but often it was the professionals who were queried first prior to revealing assessment results. The parent was able to reply or assess after the clinicians report and assessment. The data presented a cautious display sequence where the psychologist used conversational tools to set the sequence in motion or keep it on the intended institutionally bound trajectory.

In the display-sequence, as Maynard (1998) suggests often occurs in the clinical setting, the psychologist oriented to the meeting-leader, diagnostician role by asking "unmarked questions" (Maynard, 1998, p. 337) of the professionals in the meeting. Meaning, the data shows pre-sequences where the psychologist asks the teachers, special education teachers, social workers what they observe when the student is with them, without revealing any formal diagnostic news to the parent. Below are some examples of openings in the data. Prior to example one which occurs at 1:26.9 in IEP 6, the parent is made aware of the referral process very generally, and then the meeting begins. No

mention of the child's diagnosis or specific disability is revealed at this time.

Psy What happens is that uhm (1.0) ah a child↑ is identified by the teacher as (1.0) of uh of having maybe some some deficits or things of that sort. Then usually what happens is its brought to what we call child study team. Where you would have uh a psychologist↑ social worker↑ resource room teacher↑ and a administrator. (1.0) and then what they would do is they would look at the the work↑ the accommodations and the things of that sort. And then make a recommendation for tutoring↑ or where they would see me the psychologist to evaluate. And I think↑ and I don't know↑ if you guys did tutoring↑ or anything↑ and said that didn't work? Or-

T She had tutoring-

P Yeah she had some in house tutoring and things of that nature

Psy

[okay] so (1.0) after the tutoring if they see that there still theres no PROgress then they they call me in. (1.0) and then what happens is(1.0) you sign a

consent. Where you give me permission to evaluate you know your baby. And what happens when you sign a consent we have thirty days in order to get it complete. (1.0) and this is the thirty day timeline where I meet with you I: go over↑ the results and then you say yay or nay if you agree with em h as it relates to us providing services or not providing services. So this is where we are right now were where I discuss↑ the findings (0.1) the teacher discuss h uhm her findings and and her observations h and then from there (0.1) uhm if your baby is eligible then you would say what you wanted to do in order ta help her with her deficits.

P Ihim

Psy Em r-

P Okay

Psy [okay?]

P Alright↓

Psy Coo? (1.0) alright you ready? ((to Sp)) alright. (1.0) alright so: you can go first ((to T))

T Okay. Uhm: you know the past several months that I've been with M- -h she really hasn't made too much

progress as far as her writing↑ h and as far as her
reading comprehension↓(1.0) ahm she's a daydreamer↑

Another example of this type of opening is found at
1:41.0 into IEP 2:

Psy: And I think what we'll d:o ah:m (0.1) we'll start off
with the social worker talking a little bit about his
progress ahh (0.2) ahh a:nd uh what shes working onand
then ah I'll (0.1) talk a little bit bout uh the PSYCH
and we'll have the ↑teacher (0.2) talk a little bit
about her ahh bout the general ed information okee
↑doke?

P: °ok°

SW: OK um as you know J_____ comes to see me once a week
for a half an hour (0.2) and ah he's been doin quite
↑good actually and I am quite pleased with his
progress. At first (0.1) we had a lot of things to
work on as you know when we first attached social work
services to this IEP.

P: ((nodding))

00:4.5 into IEP 4

Psy Ok. So what we're gonna do is I'm gonna have the teachers uhm (2.0) mother↑ this is your first iep?

P yes

Psy Okay well you know what? Let's do this then. Lemme jst lemme rewind it back. (1.0) uh:m

T Cus I was unaware that he had a-

Psy No he doesn't so this is this is initial. So: uh:m (2.0) uhm (1.0) what happens is that that (0.1) ah (1.0) usually ah ah child might display certain deficits. And the teacher would bring it to what they ca:ll ah a child study team↑ meeting↑ and they would look at certain interventions and after so much time (0.1) h-the:y woul:d bring them to me. Whe:re I evaluate them to rule out their you know >quote unquote< disability↓.

P °all right°

Psy A:nd what happens is use you would sign a consent.

P Yep

Psy A:nd within that consent (0.1) we have to get everything done within thirty days.

P °Okay°

Psy A:nd so: that's the reason why we're meeting today in order to get that done. (1.0) and during that ti:me (0.1) uhm (1.0) I can discuss ah the findings from the ya know from the evaluation results↓.(1.0) a:nd if your child is eligible then we : uhm we work on uhm how can I sa:y progress uhm uhm (1.0) GOALS as it relates to strengthenin him in areas that that I designate fo:r ((phone ringing)) it hasn't rung ALL day and now its ringing. U:hm for the areas thheheh-at that the child has a deficit in. (1.0) so: what I'm gonna do I'm gonna go into it a-and I'll explain everything cuz it's a legal document and I'll explain everything so the first thing I don't know if you got this-

P hmm↑ °eh I yeah°

Psy This is the: different programs that are available

The previous examples make visible the presentation of the meeting agenda to the parent. Immediately, the parent orientation is to the receiver of information asymmetrical role prevalent in the institutional setting involving delivering diagnoses. True to Maynard's (1998) findings,

trajectory in the IEP diagnostic delivery sequence ensured that diagnosis would serve as confirmation of the observations, feelings and opinions of the participants. In the deviant cases where it didn't, the psychologist's orientation to the informed clinician cleanly kept the trajectory on course. In the following example, the parent makes a suggestion regarding a potential disability not diagnosed by the psychologist, and thus not accounted for in a predetermined placement decision. As the following sequence unfolds, the psychologist continues filling out the IEP form with the required diagnostic information, goals, and placement recommendation.

19:43.8 in IEP 6

P (2.0)and that's fine um two things are the um (1.0)

Ms. C- said that that struck me-

Psy ((To Sp)) give me another fifth sheet.

P And um-

Psy [or white out] go ahead dad.

P That that I might discuss with her doctors my oldest son has um Ad hd.

Psy ihm↑

P Um and is um you know and those were some of the things that made me have him looked at he didn't have none of the problems that she havin readin and writing none a dat um when whenever he got busy he was fine. h you know and so the day dreaming and not organizing you know-↓

Sp You mean a lack of focus?

Psy WELL but then AGAIN though if she↑ if she↑ had that she wouldn't have scored so high on the on one of the scales. Sp [on which scale?]

Psy I don't to be quite honest with you dad? I really don't think with your baby (1.0) I don't think its lack of focus I really think that i-i-its it's a it's a common thing h if you have a certain deficit (0.1) you do other things to avoid that. You know what I mean?

P Yeah

Psy So if you have a weakness in reading (0.1) you gonna chehehe

→P [avoid somethin]

Psy Or act OUT. Y-your baby (0.1) trust me.

A confirmation by the parent that the psychologist's reformulation is on point is revealed in the line indicated by an arrow above. This indicator that the parent will be led by the psychologists trajectory is found in a phenomenon presented by Maynard (1998), "If the parents formulate some problematic condition that is perceivedly close to the clinical position, then the confirmation will be accompanied only by a reformulation and technical elaboration of the parent's version" (p. 336). In the case of the exchange above in IEP 6, the parent is reformulating a prior statement by a teacher regarding the child's distractibility. The psychologist reformulates the parent's observation into one which supports confirmation of the diagnosis he has presented. Ultimately, it is the diagnosis sequence across the entire IEP corpus which drives the decision regarding placement, regardless of those at the team receiving the news.

Summary and Conclusion

Thorough analysis of the data looking at a collection of 150 clips of conversation in 6 hours of IEP footage, it

became evident that agenda setting, meeting maintenance, maintaining the social order of the IEP, and ultimate decision making is ascribed to the role of the school psychologist. Though this decision was likely orchestrated by administration prior to the meeting, the psychologist was the gatekeeper. It was largely the school psychologist who ascribed roles leading to decision making, engineered discussion, and made assertions regarding placement of a child. When parents or professionals did self-ascribe roles utilizing observation, blame, knowledge of medical illness history, these ascriptions and their influence in the fabric of the conversation appeared in the data to serve more the purpose of negotiation with the psychologist's findings, than as a collaboration regarding the placement of a child. The diagnostic assessment data, retained by the psychologist set against the institutional agenda of the IEP shepherded the meetings and the talk that ensued toward a predetermined end. This discovery is further discussed in chapter 5. Implications for further research are explored, limitations to the current research examined, and a case for positive social change regarding IEP implementation is made.

CHAPTER 5:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The current study had as its central aim, to explore the intricately woven conversation between members of Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams utilizing the conversation analysis (CA) methodology. To date several studies have been conducted which explore the IEP meeting, examine participant reactions to decisions made in the meetings, and analyze the amount of talking time shared by members of IEP teams. The current study attempted to further work initiated by Peters (2003), which utilized CA in IEP meetings in an urban school in New Mexico. Though Peters utilized CA as a point of departure for her study, circumstances limited its successful implementation; namely, fundamental CA protocol was not followed. The current study followed CA protocol closely and utilized the analysis methodology suggested by Ten Have, Antaki, Hutchby and Wooffitt, and others as foundation for research questions, analysis, and ultimately as a context framing the findings.

Summary of Findings

Five research questions created a conversation analytic lens through which the IEP meeting could be studied. Data were approached from two domains: One focusing on the line-by-line turns taken in conversation between participants in the IEP setting, and the other concerned with categorical membership and evidence of power asymmetry in the IEP as an institutionalized setting. Thorough analysis of transcribed data revealed evidence of locally produced, turn-by-turn interaction between members of the IEP meetings, evidence of categorical membership ascriptions, and a hierarchical order regarding power relationships between members in the meetings. Deeper analysis revealed empirical insight into how the IEP meetings were socially organized and maintained through the conversational tools utilized by participants in the meetings, and how conversation and categorical affiliations demonstrable through talk came to bear on the conversation and social structure of the meetings. The data provided evidence of that which was not seen in the IEP prior to examining the data through the CA lens. This social order or social structure as it is referred by Schegloff in Drew

and Heritage(1992) "includes as well a concern with the structured social relations which comprise organizations and occupational practice and the institutional sectors with which they are regularly identified" (p. 103).

Interpretation of Findings

As the data were analyzed in the current study relative the research questions, more and more was revealed regarding the social order of the IEP meeting and methods by which that order was maintained by participant collaboration. Ultimately, collaboration as it was identified through the data became more focused on maintaining the social order of the meeting, than legitimately sharing information which would lead to the placement of the child. As the data revealed, members participated by asking questions and making assertions, however, when it became clear that placement decisions were predetermined, deviations from that decision became negotiations rather than a culmination of data from participants on which a decision for placement was made. The tools utilized by the psychologist were revealed as methods for acquiring agreement with the diagnosis. The

Research questions asked in the current study are presented below followed by an interpretation of findings from each.

Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: What conversational structures are evident in the delivery of information to participants on which decision of placement is based (e.g. Greeting/reciprocation, Summons/acknowledgement, Request/compliance, Assertion/agreement)? Findings related to Research Question 1 were set against conversational structures typically found in mundane conversational settings. Although breaking with traditional CA ethnomethodological approaches to analyzing naturally occurring talk, it was determined that it would be important to preemptively provide conversational structures that could be expected in the IEP setting. Predictably, such was the case.

Though the conversational circumstances may have been unusual in that IEP interlocutors were not engaged in mundane conversation in a non-institutional context, mundane conversation did occur in the meetings. The data revealed turn taking and conversational structures flowing

between members. Questions were asked and answered, and in several cases, conversation would weave in and out of the formal context of the IEP setting during the meetings. The data did reveal however, that the school psychologist drove the conversation leading to the placement decision of the student. However, as was also revealed in the data, the social order of the IEP was not merely imposed by the school psychologist, but rather was a jointly constructed order supported by the utterances of all participants.

Assertions were made regarding placement based largely on diagnostic assessment results. The psychologist would routinely explain the diagnostic results after other school personnel had provided observational, vignette, and often venting discussion regarding a student. After this discussion, whether there was uptake, compliance, agreement or disagreement revealed through the interaction by the parent, the psychologist would levy a placement decision based on the findings of his diagnostic tests. Subsequent turns by participants enabled the meeting to move forward on a course that appeared predetermined. Based on the reaction by the parent to the preceding discussion, reflections, and observations of the other professionals,

the psychologist would use devices such as humor, if necessary, to placate or comfort parents while outlining a child's disability based on assessment results.

In summary, the findings suggest that mundane conversation and typical conversational turn-taking did occur in the IEP meetings studied. However, the conversational structures evident in analysis revealed a social order in the IEP governed by the school psychologist. Further evidence of the IEP social order was exposed through analysis relating to Research Question 2 in this study.

Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asks: How are turns allocated and questions asked and answered (e.g. Question/answer, Invitation-acceptance/declination, Assessment-agreement/disagreement)? This question focused primarily on the governance of the meeting driven by questioning. Findings revealed that turns were allocated by the school psychologist. Predictably, questions were asked by different participant members at varying times; sometimes seeking clarification regarding diagnoses by professionals

but most often in the form of invitations by the school psychologist to other professionals to share their observations. On the surface, it appeared as though questioning unfolded naturally across meetings; both formally regarding placement and service hours spent with students as well as informally as in this stretch of talk between the school psychologist and a parent at 0:00:04 into IEP 7:

Psy: OH I heard that's really good. Cause the reason I go to TorONto is so its here↑ now?

P: It starts here.

Psy: I wonder how long is it going to be here for I wanna take my wife there I heard its really good too

P: Its a couple weeks I think its going to be a couple weeks.

Psy: Really? Ok. Well (1.0) I'm ready to get started whenever you are. Um: and we can take it from there. (2.0) ahm (2.0) you ready man? (3.0) oh okay. Um let's go over here.

P Okay.

Psy Um I don't know let me ask you a question. (2.0) what↑
did you're your fif- husband convey to you? We sat
down and talked about a hour so what↑

P Well he said with the testing they didn't determine
that he was (2.0) ah had a learning↑ disability.

Psy Okay. All right. And that's pretty much about all?

This stretch of talk reveals the type of informal questioning that arose periodically throughout the data but also reveals tools utilized by the psychologist to maintain the social order of the IEP meeting. The personal questions at the top of the IEP had a disarming affect on the parent. As is revealed in subsequent lines, the IEP had formally begun at another time with the participant's husband. The psychologist utilizes humor immediately following the above stretch of talk with self-deprecating comments regarding a typical husband's lack of attention to detail. This elicits laughter from the parent and other participants and the psychologist launches into the explanation of diagnostic test results indicating that the child did not qualify for special education.

The use of the above devices of personal informal questioning and humor are interpreted as tools used by the school psychologist to maintain the social order of the IEP and to limit disruptions when the explanation of results and the placement decision is made. This is done through probing to ascertain the parent's position, or possibly, comfort level prior to delivering diagnostic and placement news. The psychologist asked the series of questions apparently attempting to gauge the mother's position on the placement of the child against his previous meeting with the father. Similar types of maneuvers have been found in CA studies focused on the delivery of diagnostic news by physicians to patients (Maynard, 1991).

Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: How do participants in the IEP make relevant their membership to categories: professional, parent, general education teacher, special education teacher, school psychologist, and so forth? The findings in the current study suggest that there are multiple ascriptions, both imposed by participants on themselves and one another. Examples were given of parents

ascribing membership to informed and uninformed parent roles. Likewise, other professionals in the meetings moved from different categorical ascriptions as the conversation unfolded and the teams moved toward the decision of placement. The current study was concerned with those memberships which proved to become relevant in the context of the IEP.

It was through analysis relating to Research Question 3 that some of the more startling discoveries were made regarding the social order of the IEPs studied. An examination of the deviant case of the professional/parent in IEP 1, and the breach indicated at 6:20 into IEP 7 became extremely telling. Regarding the deviant case, the parent in this IEP was the only parent who revealed she was also a special education teacher and thus had experience in and perspectives from both categorical roles. The data revealed that regardless of her ascription to the professional role, the conversation between members of the IEP team moved about in very much the same way as in the 12 other IEPs in the study. Namely, it was clear that the decision of placement was made and that the IEP was largely a formality.

The episode involving the breach was perhaps the most compelling phenomena which emerged from the data. The psychologist has ascribed to the professional diagnostician role and was explaining the assessment results to a parent on which the placement decision was based. In the middle of the explanation the parent asked, "Now how come?". The transcription reveals that the question is asked as the psychologist is speaking. He is visibly thrown off and subsequent turns reveal that it is difficult for him to recover. He eventually explains while using humor as a device to deliver the message, that he has a script that he follows and that the parent is inhibiting him from following the script. This episode was interpreted as a breach in the social order of the IEP and sheds light on a deeper argument that will be necessary to confront the discrepancy between practice and policy in the IEP setting.

Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked: How do membership categories function in establishing interaction leading to the decision of placement? Again, it was a focus on relevant categorical ascription by members to themselves or

to one another that became important to data analysis relating to the question. Specifically, analysis focused on what categorical membership ascription brought to bear on the decision of placing a child in an educational setting. Analysis of the data in this study suggests that there are many categorical ascriptions at play as the conversation in the IEP meeting turns toward placement.

The telling phenomenon which emerged at this point in analysis occurred in IEP 11. In chapter four a stretch of talk is presented between the general education teacher and parent regarding placement of the child. The example of the two interlocutors intertwined in a struggle of assertions over possible retention was presented. Significant was again the evidence of the social order governing the IEP, and how categorical membership and ascription was made relevant to participants in the meeting. At the time that the professional and parent are engaged in the conversation regarding placement, the remaining members of the IEP team were completely disengaged. The meeting opened, discussion and observations ensued, the diagnostic assessment results were explained and the placement for general education was delivered. To the school psychologist and special education

staff, this apparently signaled the end of the meeting; subsequent categorical ascriptions appeared no longer relevant to the work accomplished in the meeting. The parent had signed that she agreed with the disconfirming results regarding special education qualification yet the actual placement of the child was not determined. This decision, subsequently left undetermined, was not on the table to be made in a participatory or collaborative way; the parent was on her own. This was interpreted as evidence rooted in the interaction of the participants, which strengthens an argument that there exists a gap between the policy of the IEP as mandated and the practice which occurs in meetings; even those where there appears to be collaboration and cooperation.

Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 5

Research Question 5 asked: How do participants orient to the asymmetries inherent in the institutional setting of the IEP demonstrable through their talk? As indicated in chapter 4 of this study, several examples of power asymmetries emerged from the data and were demonstrated through the turns taken by participants. However, analysis

shifted toward the maintenance of social order in the IEP setting once it was revealed; specifically, the power position held by the school psychologist.

The findings revealed that from the opening of the meetings the psychologist acted as gatekeeper of the diagnostic information. Diagnostic assessment information appeared to be withheld until all of the professional parties gave their observational data to the parent at the meeting. This finding reveals not only that power asymmetries existed as predicted, but that the asymmetry that was established in the meeting between the psychologist and all of the other members was a contributing factor to the maintenance of the social order of the IEP. This was also revealed in the IEPs where the parent failed to show up. The meeting centered on the completion of paperwork and discussion between professionals appeared informal and minimal. Again, the psychologist held the power of the information and the professionals largely cued off of him through the completion of goals and in the placement decision of the child.

Recommendations for Action

A central finding in the current study of 13 IEP meetings was the revealing of a social structural organization governing the meetings through the turns of talk between participants, their categorical memberships, and the power asymmetries which became visible in the meetings. Due to the fact that the concern of the study was with the phenomena which emerged specific to the meetings recorded, it becomes difficult to generalize findings to other IEP meetings in other settings. However, the current study joins conversation analytic studies of other institutional settings which reveal locally constructed and maintained social structures and order. Further, the findings of the current study specifically highlight the social order evident in the thirteen meetings studied and implicitly draw attention to a gap that exists between policy and practice.

Though a critical examination of current policy regarding the IEP may be necessary when addressing potential policy practice gaps, it has not been a concern of the current study. Of focus here is the practice governed by a social organization which is preserved and

sustained by the actors in the milieu through their conversation. An outside observer looking in to the conducted IEPs in the current study would see meetings taking place at scheduled times, participants, for the majority of the meetings, present and contributing. Members of the team shared observational and assessment data, decisions were made regarding placement, often participants departed the meeting cordially having signed all necessary forms and apparently in full agreement with the placement decision. Looking strictly at the procedural aspects of the meeting, the meetings were successful. The challenge henceforth is for schools and districts to look more deeply at what is not immediately seen when observing IEP meetings in their respective settings; to approach meetings without presumption nor anticipation of certain findings. Those whose aim might be to get to the root of assessing the true participatory nature of IEPs in their building must approach the meetings looking for, "the achieved phenomenon of order" (Garfinkel, 1996, p. 6)

It is recommended here that practitioners and professionals responsible for the conducting of IEP meetings in schools and districts begin to uncover the

social organization governing their meetings. The current study provides an argument for CA as a method for uncovering the social order of the IEP meeting and beginning the challenging work of addressing the policy practice gap that may exist in IEP meetings in schools. It is hoped that practitioners would take the findings from the current study and begin to ask the questions of their teams, "What are the conversational structures that are evident in our meetings?" and "How are questions asked and answered?" Further, conversation between administration and the school psychologist should not be discounted. Though the findings presented here identify the school psychologist as maintaining the power in the IEP meeting, the question must be asked, "Who or what is influencing the school psychologist's decisions prior to the meetings taking place?" It must be understood that participants in the IEP meetings have differing levels of accountability: the administrator to local, state and federal mandates; the psychologist to the administration; the teachers to the psychologist and administration, and so on. With this type of asymmetry influencing the social order of the IEP,

unfettered cooperation and collaboration regarding student placement will remain difficult to achieve.

The current study also makes a recommendation that IEP professionals examine how, when, and by whom the diagnostic information, which appeared to be the central piece of evidence on which placement was decided in the IEP meetings in this study, is unveiled. It is suggested here that teams receive training allowing them to explore delivering the diagnostic information in ways that would appear to disrupt the current social order of their meetings. One tactic is removing the school psychologist from the role of gatekeeper of the diagnostic information regarding a child's disability. Teams may explore the possibility of having a school psychologist who did not conduct the diagnostic testing and who cannot anticipate the ultimate decision regarding placement, participate in the IEP meeting. This will neutralize the power asymmetry associated with the gatekeeper role and will allow the team to uncover the diagnostic information together with the psychologist acting in the professional interpreter role.

In this scenario, the meeting could be conducted in much the same way as those under study here; the

professionals at the meeting could be asked for their observational data, the parents could report out on their concerns regarding the child's progress, and then together the team could look at the diagnostic results and collaboratively work through alignment and discrepancy issues. In this way, data are gathered and discussed while limiting the potential for the school psychologist to drive the meeting with hidden knowledge, influence by administration, or premature placement ideas based on assessment data and diagnosis.

Limitations

One central limitation of the current study was the number of hours of footage collected, transcribed, and analyzed. The proposed study had ten hours of digital audio and video footage as its initial target. However, due to the difficulty professionals face in scheduling IEPs to include all of the necessary participants required, there were instances where scheduled IEPs simply did not happen. Further, one of the schools initially slated to participate in the study withdrew in the spring 2008, leaving the researcher with few options available to gather the

requisite data. In spite of this limitation, it is argued here that saturation with the 6 hours of collected data was reached. Namely, the data proved adequate to reach the conclusions of the study and provided ample illustrations and evidence of the social order that was present in the IEPs under study. As mentioned earlier in this study, saturation is a matter of degree and researcher judgment, as there is always the potential for new information to emerge. Further, as allowed by Corbin and Strauss (2007), saturation may relate to practical issues, such as resources to conduct the research and/or availability of participants. In this study, saturation occurred not only because of the richness of the obtained six hours of data but also because of the lack of availability for participants for further data collection.

One less obvious limitation but important to note here is the notion that the interpretation that the researcher brings to the recorded data is in itself limiting the data. Central to understanding CA methodology is the idea that the transcriptions of the data are not the data but rather an interpretation of the data by the researcher. The talk that occurs between members of the team is the truest form

of the data; the recordings and subsequent transcriptions unavoidably color the data. In the current study the use of the member check was utilized to minimize discrepancy between the data and the interpretation of the researcher. Unfortunately, member check participation was minimal in the current study. Other than the school psychologist, there was little interest shown by participants who were asked to remain and view the footage and notes to review the data. In hindsight, contact information would have been collected prior to the meetings by the research so that member checks could have occurred at a later date.

Recommendations for Future Research

Identifying conversational devices, categorical ascriptions, and power asymmetries utilizing the CA methodology in 13 IEP meetings proved to shed light on the accomplishments of participants through their talk. However, it must be stressed that generalizing to other meetings, in other settings is difficult due to the specific outcomes only accomplishable by participants in one setting at one point in time. Rather, it is recommended that a similar methodological approach is utilized in other

specific settings to uncover the true participatory nature of IEP meetings; one school at a time. The findings presented in this study identify only that a social order is present, not necessarily how it was created or influenced prior to the meetings recorded. This will likely differ from school to school and should be explored on a case-by-case basis. It is also recommended here that, where possible, further studies increase both the number of teams and hours of footage collected for expanded analyses.

Federal guidance outlining the implementation of participatory and collaborative IEP meetings could potentially be redesigned to include tools for disrupting the social structure of the IEP in a school setting by the participants so that deeper, more meaningful collaboration is possible. Subsequent longitudinal studies of schools attempting to improve collaboration and participation working to disrupt and later redefine the social organization underpinning the IEP meeting would provide a basis for a more general discussion of making systemic improvements to the practice of the IEP. This type of work would be beneficial for policy makers struggling with

creating guidance to support collaboration and participation training surrounding IEP implementation.

Studies using the CA methodology in schools outside of the IEP setting would also benefit practitioners concerned with school reform and transforming practice. Using CA should be expanded in the school setting to include parent teacher meetings, administration meetings, and teacher evaluation conferences with administration. Any meeting with parallel policy aims of collaboration and participation could be looked at through the CA lens.

Implications for Social Change

As the rate of students referred to and qualifying for special education in public schools continues to climb each year, many districts and schools must begin to look very critically at the policy, processes, and procedures governing placement. To its credit, the IDEA legislation mandates the empowerment of participants in the collaborative process of a child's educational placement. However, as the findings of the current study suggest, empowerment through collaboration and participation in a meeting does not necessarily equate to empowerment

regarding the ultimate placement of a child. The findings in the current study must serve as a point of departure for a deep conversation regarding the policy of the IEP procedure and the actual practice which takes place in schools across the country.

The findings regarding the social organization of the IEP practice in schools provide sobering evidence that even in meetings which follow protocol and policy regarding participation and collaboration, there is social structure supported by power asymmetries which may, in many cases, have already determined the placement of a child. It is the hope that this study will spur participants, professionals, and administration to look deeply at practice and identify the social organization of meetings and other educational settings, and attempt to equalize the power asymmetries that may have a life-changing impact on learners in America.

Reflections of the Researcher

Reflecting on the research conducted in the current study, what immediately comes to mind is the multiple hours of painstaking transcription, the seemingly endless

logistical challenges, IEP meeting cancellations, unforeseen circumstances, and struggling to understand CA as a methodological language. However, it can be said with confidence that if given the opportunity, this researcher would not have changed a thing. This process revealed phenomena that simply would not have been noticed with a more traditional, formal, quantitative research methodology. The discovery of the systematic social organization in the IEP meetings under study and the accomplishments of participants through talk in the meetings would simply have gone unnoticed employing checklists, focusing on reflective perceptual data of the participants, time of talk, or any combination thereof. CA allowed for the researcher to see "what more" (Garfinkel, 1996) was naturally happening in the meetings than could have been garnered any other way.

The CA methodology proved to be not only an extremely insightful research and analysis tool, but also a complex intellectual challenge. Through a conscientious analysis and synthesis of the foundational literature, review of current CA studies, and having conducted one of my own, I still believe there is a tremendous amount to learn about

the power of conversation analysis. As the analysis unfolded and I began to notice the phenomena emerge, it became difficult to focus on only a few elements of what was found. Specifically, it appeared that an entire chapter could have been written on the use of humor as a tool in the meetings, as well as the method by which the meetings opened and closed. The richness in this methodology looks beyond simple observations and reflections and gets at the heart of what is actually being accomplished between participants in the milieu.

Conclusion

Regarding the consideration of CA as a chosen methodology, Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) asserted, "An investigator interested in the sociology of a turn-organized activity will want to determine, at least, the shape of the turn-taking device, and how it affects the distribution of turns for the activities on which it operates" (p. 696). The current study met its intended aim of revealing the turn-by-turn organization of 13 IEP meetings, the categorical ascriptions and the power asymmetries demonstrable through the naturally occurring

talk of the participants. Further, a focus on the social organization of the 13 IEPs studied has the potential for providing a scientific foundation upon which systems and policy discussion surrounding the educational placement of students in U.S. schools can and should depart.

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APPENDIX:

TIME-STAMPED ANALYTIC NOTES

explanation evidence

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Episode: IEP 10

Transcript: IEP 10

Note Taker:

Note Text:

7/27/2008 12:53:46 am

It occurred to me reviewing the data of the social worker explaining to a grandparent that vignettes are provided as proof or evidence of decisions made rather than testing data. How many of the professionals use this explaining technique rather than simply orienting to formal evaluation data? How many use both? does it appear effective? What is the result?

affirmations

Collection: Affirmations of diagnosis/placement

Note Taker:

Note Text:

7/27/2008 1:22:41 pm

It occurs to me that an interesting bit of video/data is the affirmation of a diagnosis. Parents aligning with the professional based on their own knowledge, observation, experience, etc. I will also look for the opposite orientation by the parents/professionals.

Notes on repair

Collection: repair

Note Taker:

Note Text:

7/27/2008 1:45:22 pm

It occurs to me that there are clear instances of repair sequences in the meetings after a blatant example jumps out of the data. I will go back into the data in a later cut to find further examples of repair and look in the context for uptake.

disonfirming statements by parents/professionals**Collection:** Questioning of diagnosis/placement**Note Taker:****Note Text:**

7/27/2008 2:09:48 pm

I found evidence of social worker disagreeing with an evaluation measure. The measure indicates that the child is in a range indicating depression. The Gp's unconfident uptake and the social worker's quick dismissal indicate that they are not in agreement with the disagreement. This appears to be an incident of two participants agreeing in their disagreement of evaluation results apparently based on their knowledge of and experience with the child.

evidence of overtalk**Series:** IEP transcripts dissertation**Episode:** IEP 10**Transcript:** IEP 10**Note Taker:****Note Text:**

7/28/2008 10:05:38 pm

I am struck by the amount of overtalk that takes place when the Sw has the floor. As obvious as it seems, I hadn't considered overtalk as a clip collection and key word until now. I will return to the earlier transcriptions and see if more evidence exists in the data.

clarifying question**Series:** IEP transcripts dissertation**Episode:** IEP 10**Transcript:** IEP 10**Note Taker:****Note Text:**

8/5/2008 8:14:29 pm

After spending more time with Antaki's explaining and arguing, I decided to note where questions for clarity take place. This is not the same as questioning placement. This is where the professionals orient to their professional roles and clarify for others in the group.

questions posed to team**Series:** IEP transcripts dissertation**Note Taker:**

Note Text:

8/5/2008 8:48:36 pm

There seems to be a good example in IEP ten of the Psy posing a question out to the entire team- however, the question is regarding the amount of hours that the student should be seen in the resource room. This is a technical question that the parents due to the non-uptake don't seem to be qualified to answer.

humor

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Episode: IEP 10

Transcript: IEP 10

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/5/2008 11:04:56 pm

one of the only uses of humor in IEP 10 by Psy comes at 52:09 however, there is little uptake and then he repairs.

Sp missing information

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/8/2008 5:44:07 pm

Interesting thing happens at 1:03 in IEP 10. A substantial discussion occurs regarding the student's interactions with peers versus adults. The idea that the child needs to be engaged in social activities with children rather than adults is discussed at length and all parties seem to be on board. Either the Sp reacts to comments to this regard at 1:03 which suggest she was unaware of the previous discussion.

vignettes- empathy

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/8/2008 6:12:27 pm

During analysis of IEP 11 I see evidence of a social worker providing the team with her personal experience as a student. In context, it appears that she is trying to display empathy, or present evidence that she understands the circumstances of the child and will advocate for that child. Uptake appears positive by the parent and team.

no parent present**Series:** IEP transcripts dissertation**Episode:** IEP 12**Transcript:** IEP 12**Note Taker:****Note Text:**

8/8/2008 11:29:55 pm

In IEP 12 the parent was a no show. Apparently the team had rescheduled the IEP with the parent several times. Because it is now the end of the year, they decide to proceed with the IEP without the parent which is legal after several attempts to convene have been made. The energy in the meeting is palpably looser and lighter.

Overtalk as a form of dismissing concerns or position**Collection:** Over talking**Note Taker:****Note Text:**

8/9/2008 12:10:35 am

In IEP 13 there is a blatant example of the Psy overtalking a vent by the T. The non-uptake that occurs is a clear indicator of a dismissal by the Psy of the T's concerns and position regarding the responsibility of the parent. There is evidence of uptake at first when the Psy makes sure he understands correctly, he laughs and begins the over talk and non-uptake of the T. It occurs to me that there might possibly be other instances of this in the data and it might be worth some passes.

justifying and affirming diagnosis**Collection:** Affirmations of diagnosis/placement**Note Taker:****Note Text:**

8/9/2008 10:02:33 am

Interesting bit emerged in one of the two IEPs without a parent present. The team vents about the student and then indicates some of the language from the venting into IEP language justifying placement of the child. First the team vents that the student chooses to not work in class and be social. Language is clearly emotional; then the language is tweaked by Sp and written in to the IEP for back up as to why the team has made the decision it did.

psy use of humor**Series:** IEP transcripts dissertation**Note Taker:****Note Text:**

8/12/2008 9:12:46 pm

Through a careful analysis of seven of the thirteen IEPs the use of humor continues to surface; notably as a tool for the Psy. It would appear that he uses humor often to open the meeting and it appears based on the uptake and responses by the majority of participants to be disarming and sets a relaxed tone. Body language seems to relax participants lean into the table; lots of smiles and laughter.

Explaining results prior to recommendation**Series:** IEP transcripts dissertation**Note Taker:****Note Text:**

8/12/2008 9:38:13 pm

In IEP 2 the data reveals an extensive explanation of the testing results for a student to the parent. She responds with many active response tokens "gotcha" "awright" etc. The Psy explains the scores gives the parent a frame of reference and bases the recommendation on this foundation. Parent appears all in favor of the recommendation. This ties into the piece of my analytic plan to explore the exchanges leading up to placement. I will go through the other IEPs to find the explanation and look at results.

informed parent role**Series:** IEP transcripts dissertation**Note Taker:****Note Text:**

8/14/2008 10:17:05 pm

At 12:21 in IEP 4 a category affiliation begins to emerge that I hadn't noticed in analysis of the first three iep's. It becomes clear in IEP 4 demonstrable in the collection clips that parents may self-categorize to that of "informed" parent in the IEP. In the captured clip we see parent as informed about her son's medical condition and subsequent academic challenges based on his medical condition. This leads to an almost serene, I know there is a problem disposition by mom. She orients to a role of

informer. The first teacher asks clarifying questions of the mom and provides uptake in lines 85-92 which appear to build confidence in moms categorical role as informed, proactive parent.

iep format

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/14/2008 10:28:18 pm

The agenda seems to stay the same across IEP in this study; intro, teacher, or specialist reports, Psy report, findings, goals, signatures, etc. It strikes me that the parent is never asked, for their report, they are always responding to reports given and relegated to uptake on reporting. At certain scripted segments they will be asked for their concerns. It emerges in the data that when this happens a parent is likely to simply spit the language back at the professionals that has been given in the IEP. I will continue to hunt for examples of this happening to see if it can be generalized. This could be a critical key to how IEPs might unknowingly be shepherding parents.

parent concerns

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/14/2008 11:11:59 pm

as noted in the previous note, IEP four provides a good example of how the agenda for the meeting shepherds the parent. In the "concerns" section of the IEP, the parent seems to simply use the same language as has been fed to her. For instance, the parent in IEP four states that "math and writing" are concerns when asked at 29:20. I wonder if the agenda were flipped so that the parents concerns were heard first, then we heard from teachers, then from the test results and then the parent is asked once again, based on all of the discussion and provided information the parent is asked if she wants to clarify concerns. This last part could occur just prior to signing.

blame

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/15/2008 8:58:10 pm

For the first time it occurs to me that there might be a pattern of blame in the data. What is the difference between attributing or thinking through potential causes for a student's disability or lack of performance, and blame? In IEP 5 there is a clip where the teacher insinuates that perhaps due to conversations that another teacher is having with the student

Psy using humor in iep 5

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/15/2008 10:18:58 pm

Interesting thing in the discussion about the Psy use of humor in the IEP- he makes comment about how the parent needs to tell the student that he's going to beat the student up. The P laughs and Psy laughs and passes the comment off as a joke. However, earlier conversation and based on the style of the Psy, the point that he appears to try to make is that based on the child's scores and the observations of the team, the student is not performing up to ability by choice not disability.

Parent diagnosis/suggestion Psy rejection

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/17/2008 8:25:59 am

Immediately after reviewing Hutchby and Woofitt (2006) regarding social control I noticed an exchange in the data that was very interesting. In IEP 6 the parent is orienting to the informed parent role based on a vignette of "older son" with adhd. The Psy rejects the suggestion while he is orienting to forms. It will be interesting to see how the Psy reacts to this clip in the member check; I think there might be something in analyzing the assertions of the informed parent orientation in the IEP.

Humor as social control

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/17/2008 8:56:32 am

Looking deeper into the humor used in iep 6, an interesting piece emerges where a suggestion by a parent is dismantled by the Psy. After he realizes he has potentially blocked some good participatory conversation by the P, he suggests that the Sp confirm his feelings with another teacher. This seems to bring the parent back. Then he appears to use humor to lighten the room and then immediately confirms that he is encouraged by the scores of the student and thus shepherds the meeting back on its current course- all the while he never stops filling out the IEP forms indicating the plan of action for the student.

Dad responding to shepherding by psy responding to "concerns?" question

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/17/2008 9:07:04 am

25:10 in IEP 6 is a second example I have found where the "I need to ask you if you have any concerns" question is asked of the parent near the end of the IEP and the Parent responds with confidence with the diagnosis that has been presented in the meeting; orienting to the informed parent role "Reading... that's what we're here for"

Amazingly, the concerns that surfaced earlier regarding ADHD, which the parent had clearly thought about do not come back. That would suggest that the Psy did an adequate job shepherding away from that possibility. The data revealed that he: 1. rejected the notion, 2. gave the Sp a directive to rule it out, 3. brought P back to the diagnosis and stressed control using categorization to Professional role, 4. Used humor to lighten mood, shift focus, etc. The answer to the concerns questions suggests that he was successful.

evidence of Psy discouraging questions during explaining results

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/17/2008 11:24:30 am

In a clip in the explaining results collection, some

evidence emerges of the Psy discouraging conversation during the explanation of results. What appears to be emerging while looking longitudinally at the data is that there tends to be more uptake and participation by parents at the top and conclusion of the IEP. This seems to be encouraged. It appears that this type of structure is a hidden shepherding technique utilized by the Psy to ensure that the iep concludes with an intended placement. At 6:20 in IEP 7, the P breaks the lengthy flow of the test results and explanation by asking simply, "now how come?" This seems to derail the Psy. He begins a formulation that has no uptake and then retracts and uses humor while explaining the parent has gotten ahead of him and relegates her back to a listener uninformed parent role. It would appear that uptake is encouraged at some points in the IEP but not during the explanation of test results.

Floating disrepair

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/17/2008 11:35:57 am

At 6:20 in IEP 7 there is a moment during the explanation of results where there is confusion and repair never happens. There appears to be a momentary misunderstanding here. Laughter by the Sp and the initial reaction by the Psy indicates that P is commenting on the length of time it is taking to get the determination from Psy. She repairs with comment regarding classroom performance. Sp sees this and disengages. By Psy's continued comments it is not sure that he caught it.

IEP 7 blatant example of discouraged interaction

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

Where several of the IEPs provide evidence of covert shepherding during explanation of results, IEP 7 provides confirming evidence. The Psy discourages questioning of findings, and blames the fact that he must follow a "script" on the fact that the IEP is being recorded.

Psy empowering Gp and P when services required are not available

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/17/2008 1:53:09 pm

Across the data, IEP 9 at 4:46 is really the only demonstrable place where the Psy places the parent fully in control of placement for the child. Though some gentle shepherding happens regarding trying to steer the family toward another school, the Psy ultimately places the decision with the family.

Shepherded responses to "any concerns?"

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/17/2008 2:32:58 pm

By IEP 8 there has been lots of evidence that the meeting shepherds parents to making a decision that aligns with the Psy report, and findings. In IEP 8 at approximately 22:56 when the IEP boils to "what are your concerns?" Mom responds with the answer "To better himself and (2.0) and what YOU explained" Psy finishes her thought with his assessment, "To improve his to improve his academics" and she agrees.

Disarming sequences

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/21/2008 9:17:11 pm

looking through the data, it becomes clear that the Psy uses sequences of humor, or orientation to disarm parents or venting teachers. First I looked simply at the humor or the venting. Then I began to examine the data to see what sort of work is done by the Psy to disarm the party venting.

I wondered if I could also identify the tools used to shepherd parents and teachers toward the work of the organization (e.g. determining a placement, discouraging a placement, etc.).

Membership category devices

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/21/2008 9:44:57 pm

After reviewing the data several times, it is not clear that a distinction is ever made in the IEP that the assembled group is a "team". It occurs to me that the categories are made clear by the Psy sometimes as each category gives observations and explanations, etc. Or through devices like the use of the word "we" such as "what we usually do when we test a kid is..." or "what we like to see is..." etc. It occurs to me that if the professionals help shepherd the assembled group toward more of a collective team membership categorization, more cohesion might be displayed.

"what's going on?"

Series: IEP transcripts dissertation

Note Taker:

Note Text:

8/21/2008 11:56:14 pm

The interactional work that appears to be going on for the parent is evidently much different than that of the professionals. It appears in the data that often the parent is concerned with "what's going on" with a child, orienting much more as a patient's parent to a doctor. Though the Psy reveals diagnostic data as do the other professionals (though in very different types of turns), it is evident that the work attempted to be accomplished by the professional is much more oriented toward placement of the child. Placement for the parent in the iep's appears mostly secondary to the diagnosis with a few exceptions. The exceptions seem to occur mostly when the parent orients to the "informed parent" role.

CURRICULUM VITAE

CHRISTOPHER PLUM

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EDUCATION:

- **Walden University**
Ph.D. Candidate- PhD.K-12 Educational Leadership Feb 2004-Present
- **Kalamazoo Principal Leadership Institute- Fellow 2003**
- **University of Colorado at Denver**
Masters Degree- Educational Psychology- August 1997
- **Michigan State University**
Bachelors Degree- Social Relations/James Madison College- June 1994
- **Certified School Teacher**
State of Michigan Professional License (K-5, all subjects/K-8, Self Contained)
State of Colorado Alternative Education License
University of Colorado at Denver/Stanley British Primary School 1995-1998
- **Certified Trainer – (TESA)Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement**

EXPERIENCE:

- ◎ **Plymouth Educational Center, Detroit, MI July 2007- present**
Secondary School Principal
Responsibilities include:
 - Project Manager on structuring of new high school program and facility
 - Chair high school development team
 - Developing curriculum aligned with Michigan Core Curriculum
 - NCA School Improvement Chair
 - Develop hiring process for new staff selection
 - Conduct the hiring process
 - Overseeing program and instruction implementation
 - Coordinating staff development
 - Substitute coverage
 - Facilitating all school wide testing

- ◎ **Plymouth Educational Center, Detroit, MI April 2001- present**
K-8 Assistant Principal
Responsibilities include:
 - Developing curriculum aligned with Michigan Core Curriculum
 - NCA School Improvement Chair
 - Overseeing program and instruction implementation
 - Coordinating staff development
 - Substitute coverage
 - Facilitating all school wide testing
 - Title I applications programs and fund allocation
 - School Support Services Team- Coordinator
 - Paraprofessional Team- Coordinator
 - School Improvement Team- Coordinator
 - Language Arts Committee- Coordinator

- Supervision of two House Directors and staff
- Overseeing school newspaper- The Panther Press
- Coordinate school wide writing initiatives
- Overseeing Student Future Teachers program
- Coordinating team leaders from each grade level K-8
- Co-author of: PEC School Mission, School Improvement Plan, Staff Handbook, Support Services Manual, and Latchkey Crisis Intervention Manual
- Completed training on the new State Monitoring System for Special Education
- Running the Peer Mediation Program
- Supervision of classrooms, hallways, and lunchroom
- Student discipline
- Coordinating remedial tutoring and after school programs (Latch-Key, PAL)

5-6 Language Arts Lead Teacher

August 1999-April 2001

Responsibilities included:

- Organization and planning, curriculum development, writing student reports, Creating a team wide policy and procedure for the students
- Acting as a sounding board for the 5th grade team
- Served on the following committees: School Improvement Committee, Technology Initiative (TAC team), School Mission Statement, Code of Conduct/ Student Handbook revision team.

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Center for Human Development, Berkley, MI

July 1998- August 1999

Teacher/Tutor

Responsibilities included:

- Planned and implemented curriculum for students with varied developmental disabilities- ages 4-10. Disabilities included: Aphasia, Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder, Autism, and Dyslexia
- Conducted one-on-one, 55-minute sessions with students

© **Steele Elementary School, Denver, CO**

3-5 Language Arts Lead Teacher

August 1997- June 1998

Responsibilities included:

- Organization and planning of curriculum development
- Implementation of activities
- Writing student reports and narratives
- Conducting parent/teacher conferences throughout the academic year

K-5 Music Teacher

August 1997-June 1998

Responsibilities included:

- Taught basic theory, music appreciation, and rhythm with a culminating performance for entire school at the end of the school year

© **Stanley British Primary School, Denver, CO**

Team Teacher

August 1996- June 1997

Responsibilities included:

- Worked full time in a room of 30 students with two half-time teaching partners
- Organization and planning, curriculum development, implementation of activities, writing student reports and narratives
- Worked in small teams of teachers to rewrite school curriculum for re-accreditation by the state of Colorado
- Facilitated staff discussions on update and revision of existing school curriculum and philosophy

Teaching Intern

August 1995- June 1996

Responsibilities included:

- Planned small whole group facilitation and instruction, all curriculum areas in 3-4-5 grade multi-aged classroom
- Worked in 3-4-5 multi-aged classroom to create and implement lessons in all curricular areas for small group and whole class

© **National Civilian Community Corps, Denver CO**
AmeriCorps Volunteer: Corps member/Team Leader

July 1994-August 1995

Responsibilities included:

- Completed more than 1200 hours of community service
- Team-taught art leadership courses for sixth graders
- Participated in grant writing to sustain and improve the program
- Led a team of 11 corps members on a red-carded fire fighting team
- Performed home health care for disabled citizens as a certified nurse's aid

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS/HONORS:

- ⊙ Recipient -Plymouth Educational Center Outstanding Service to Children Award 2006
- ⊙ Two-time Recipient -Plymouth Educational Center CAO Award for Outstanding Service 2006, 2008
- ⊙ Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Premium Member
- ⊙ TRIBES Trained for elementary and middle grades 2005
- ⊙ Power Writing Trained 2005
- ⊙ ATLAS School Reform Model Trained 2003
- ⊙ The John Dewey Society Member
- ⊙ National Association of Secondary School Principals Member
- ⊙ American Educational Research Association Member
- ⊙ Phi Delta Kappa Member
- ⊙ Phi Beta Delta International Scholar 1994