

**Inclusion 10: The Experiences of Peer Teachers and Functionally Integrated Students in a
Secondary Female Inclusive Physical Education Program**

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Abstract

As a physical education teacher, I have observed first hand the outcomes of a classroom that did not support the inclusion of all students and the challenges that teachers face while addressing diverse abilities within their classes. In response to this deficit, I created and implemented a physical education curriculum for high school students called *Inclusion 10* that focused on the inclusion of functionally integrated students and their mainstream peer teachers during their class. This study defined functionally integrated students as those who have a significant intellectual and/or multiple disabilities. Mainstream students are defined as all students whose need can be met through the Regular Education Program (Saskatchewan Learning, 2006). After the study began, the mainstream students took on the role of peer teachers and were referred to as such.

The results of this study were highly positive and reflected the development of positive student relationships as well as the physical, personal, and affective outcomes for all students. Teachers and educational assistants also experienced significant outcomes from their participation within the study.

Inclusion 10 is an adapted program based on the Saskatchewan *Wellness 10 Curriculum* that fosters positive relationships and a healthy physical environment for both mainstream and functionally integrated students. Student voice was an integral piece of this new program. Peer teachers worked closely with the researcher to develop the curriculum activities for *Inclusion 10*. Providing spaces for students' voices promoted ownership in learning and respected the needs and interests of the students' experiences. The research conducted discusses the academic, social, and physical benefits of this program that promote inclusion, integration, and peer teaching amongst secondary mainstream female peer teachers and functionally integrated

students. *Inclusion 10* plays a fundamental role in the development of individuals with and without disabilities (Block & Klavina, 2008) and enhances pedagogical strategies for teachers and curriculum developers.

The qualitative case study explored the interactive experiences of 22 peer teachers, 10 female functionally integrated students, eight male functionally integrated students, one classroom teacher, and nine educational assistants participating in a physical education class that supported inclusion and peer teaching. This one month long study (one-two week teaching/learning session and subsequent interviews) investigated the experiences of all participants involved in the *Inclusion 10* program taught by the classroom teacher. Data was gathered through field notes, taped interviews, student journals, photographs, and observations. The semi-structured interviews included eight peer teachers, three functionally integrated students, one teacher, and one educational assistant.

The interviews provided a wealth of information that demonstrated positive outcomes such as, a non-competitive atmosphere, caring through peer teaching, positive classroom culture and improved self-esteem. The impact of *Inclusion 10* went beyond the classroom. Peer teachers developed the motivation to participate in physical education, improved self-esteem, enhanced leadership skills, knowledge about their functionally integrated peers, and empathy and caring towards others. The functionally integrated students experienced an inclusive learning opportunity that enhanced their self-esteem, quality of learning, relationships, and positive behaviors that went beyond the gymnasium. Four common themes emerged from the data: 1) Motivation and Social Implications, 2) Understanding and Appreciation for Others Within and Beyond the Classroom, 3) Developing Leaders Through Inclusive Physical Education and Peer Teaching, and 4) Building Life Skills for the Future. Ultimately, the study showed that *Inclusion*

10 had a very positive effect on all of the students, the educational assistants, and classroom teacher. *Inclusion 10* is a highly adaptable program for teachers and students that promoted inclusion for all students. The physical, affective, and cognitive outcomes of this program demonstrated the impact of adaptive teaching and learning for all stakeholders.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my amazing husband and son for providing endless opportunity, inspiration, guidance and support. Your selflessness throughout the last three years is admired and appreciated. Without your love and encouragement, I would have not taken on this challenge. Thank-you!

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Chapter 1: Introduction

My Story

Throughout grade school, I always enjoyed physical education (PE) and the skills and knowledge I learned and gained from the class. Physical education was an opportunity for me to interact with my peers while learning new activities and sports. As well it was a place for me to release stress, have fun and learn in an unstructured environment. It was an environment where I excelled and enjoyed both competitive and cooperative activities. Looking towards a career in Education and wanting to educate youth on the importance of being physically active and living an active lifestyle, it was a natural fit for me to become a physical educator. I had no idea about the challenges or possibilities that I would experience as a teacher, but I was full of hope and excitement.

While I was in university, I remained active in many recreational activities as well as coaching various sports. I gained an understanding and awareness for all students by volunteering with multiple organizations to help children with various mental and physical disabilities remain involved in physical activity and sport. This experience opened my eyes to helping and providing children with various disabilities the opportunity to be involved in physical activity and modified sport. I gained a new appreciation for children with various mental and physical disabilities as my eyes were opened to the many challenges that they faced on a daily basis. Upon reflection I realized that my school based physical education classes only contained mainstream students, because functionally integrated students were segregated at the

time. This resulted in limited to no exposure or understanding of students beyond the mainstream. It was here that my graduate school journey really began.

Upon graduation from the Bachelors of Education program in 2005, I taught secondary physical education, grades nine to twelve, in an urban setting. This is where I was first introduced to the challenge of inclusion. I found myself a teacher of students with various exceptionalities, which provided an added challenge for me as a new teacher. I was charged with planning a quality physical education program for my students following the provincial curriculum guidelines, which mandated inclusive education. My class included two or three functionally integrated students amongst the mainstream students. My previous volunteer experience provided me some ideas of how to adapt the activities; however I felt both lost and a sense of urgency to address the learning needs of all of my students.

At times I was frustrated with how my class was organized due to the large number of students. From my observations of the classroom, I felt that the functionally integrated students were not engaged in the activities or included amongst their peers. I found it challenging to provide meaningful feedback and individualize instruction, because of the large class sizes and minimal assistance. Like most physical education teachers I have spoken to, I was not properly trained on how to achieve a successful and inclusive program. I felt unprepared and unsupported in this capacity, yet as their teacher I felt drawn to find a way to make the class as successful as possible. The mainstream students appeared uncomfortable and unwilling to include their functionally integrated peers. From my observations, I learned that many of the mainstream students had not learned how to interact with their functionally integrated peers. I realized that this was something that I must foster through planning an inclusive curriculum, which could build successful relationships and positive interactions through peer teaching.

In response to this challenge, I created a “buddy” system within my physical education classes. I randomly paired functionally integrated students with mainstream students for the duration of two-weeks. At the end of every two-week unit, I made new pairs so that everyone had the opportunity to work with each other. As the teacher, I would introduce the concept of the lesson and teach the skills that were required. Once I had completed introducing the skills and concepts, the mainstream students mentored and coached the functionally integrated students. I observed that the “buddy” system seemed to assist the functionally integrated students feel slightly more included and involved (Personal observation, May, 2007). Mainstream students that rarely enjoyed participating in PE were much more active during the class. This experience appeared to provide more of my students with “a sense of belonging” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 6) and the ability to be active and interact with their peers. I continued to use this “buddy” system for the duration of the year and continued to build inclusive curriculum around this concept.

Although I observed positive outcomes within this “buddy” system, the functionally integrated students still appeared to be isolated for the most part. I felt that the peer mainstream students would benefit from having more opportunities to interact more often with the functionally integrated students. My daily observations within the “buddy” system suggested that the peer teachers were discovering a new sense of responsibility as they took on their new role as a peer teacher. The mainstream students appeared to show more respect and greater appreciation of others within the class, with this added responsibility. I began to envision a class where more functionally integrated students could be included in a physical education class. I discussed this idea with the principal and the learning assistance teacher and they became excited about the possibility of all twenty functionally integrated students participating in a combined

physical education class the following year. After discussing my ideas with other colleagues, I felt minimal support for this new program. Colleagues were cautious about the program and I felt that when teachers walked by they were judging this new learning environment, which I had created. The class may have appeared unstructured, crowded with students and equipment and chaotic to some; however, what may have looked like pure chaos from the outside was the beginning of something very special. This was the birth of *Inclusion 10*, which was implemented in the fall of 2007.

Inclusion 10

Inclusion 10 began as a two-week unit within the *Wellness 10* curriculum and was formulated from my personal experiences as an educator and supported and structured through research. The Saskatchewan *Wellness 10* curriculum “is an elective course that features the integration of health education and physical education” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 24). With the support of the adaptive dimension, it was designed to accommodate and include all students. The adaptive dimension is an integral part of the *Wellness 10* curriculum. It “encourages teachers to adapt their instruction, the learning environment, and curriculum materials to help students achieve curriculum objectives” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 23).

Inclusion 10 was developed to achieve a more inclusive physical education environment, where each student felt a sense of belonging and support was valued as a part of the learning community within my classroom.

The goals of *Inclusion 10* were to:

Develop positive attitudes toward physical activity, promote a lifestyle oriented to overall well-being, develop concept-based skills [and to] make knowledgeable decisions that

improve ones physical, mental, and social well-being and of peers, families, and communities (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p.3).

The objectives of the class were to build positive social relationships between mainstream peer teachers and functionally integrated students through peer teaching activities and provide an inclusive learning environment for all students in PE. It was hoped that through these objectives skills in leadership, understanding, patience and responsibility would be developed amongst my students.

Teaching inside the *Wellness 10 Curriculum* framework to forty students, I co-designed cooperative adaptive lessons with the mainstream students that combined the ideology of the “buddy” system and peer teaching, where the peer teachers were responsible for teaching their functionally integrated partner the skills presented in class. The peer teachers assisted their partner through instruction and demonstration in breaking down the psychomotor skills and providing feedback and positive support throughout the class.

There were several positive indicators of success during the *Inclusion 10* classes that I observed during this initial implementation. Peer teachers successfully took on many new responsibilities and applied what they had learned in class into their own mini lessons. They became peer mentors for the functionally integrated students and helped to teach them new concepts and skills that were being learned in class. The peer teachers were providing an important opportunity for others that went beyond themselves, contributed to the needs of others within their school community, and helped functionally integrated students learn new skills and activities (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004).

Inclusion 10 offered all of the requirements of *Wellness 10*, but in a non-competitive environment. The students that participated all worked together to accomplish the skills and

behaviors that I had hoped to see occur. The class was arranged so that the students did not compare themselves to others. It has been found that when “students consistently compare themselves to others unfavorably, their self concept is negatively affected” (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2003, p. 231). *Inclusion 10* created a successful environment for all students regardless of their skill level or ability. It has been found that to increase social acceptance, inclusive programs must incorporate components that enhance “social skills and interpersonal problem solving” (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2003, p. 235).

I continued on with this program for the next two years. One of my goals was to shape *Inclusion 10* into a curriculum that could be implemented by other teachers to foster greater inclusion in PE and this became the basis of my research within this study.

The following literature provides a philosophical overview of physical education within Saskatchewan high schools, the focus on inclusive physical education, its benefits and anticipated outcomes. The teacher’s role, the learning environment, and the challenges of inclusion are briefly discussed.

Physical Education Curriculum

There are many social, physical, lifestyle, affective, and cognitive benefits associated with participating in physical education. PE is a class where individuals from various social and economic backgrounds and can share a sense of belonging. It encourages “the development of valued capabilities and competencies and develop[s] social networks, community cohesion and civic pride” (Bailey, 2006, p. 399). PE develops students physically by teaching them foundational movement skills that educate students to live a physically active lifestyle. Bailey (2006) stated “Basic movement skills, like those developed in [physical education] form the foundation of almost all later sporting and physical activities” (p. 398). Evidence shows that

“those who have developed a strong foundation in fundamental movement skills are more likely to be active, both during childhood and later in life” (Bailey, 2006, p. 398).

PE develops students affectively by providing regular activity, which “can have a positive effect upon the psychological well-being of children and young people... [including] reduced stress, anxiety, and depression” (Bailey, 2006, p.398). Cognitive development and enhanced academic performance in students has been related to physical education by “increasing the flow of blood to the brain, enhancing mood, increasing mental alertness and improving self-esteem” (Bailey, 2006, p.399).

The aims and goals of K-12 Physical Education in Saskatchewan promote the concepts of active living, skillful movement, and building relationships through safe and respectful learning environments (Sask Learning, 2009). Further components of a quality physical education program support student centered learning, responsibility, cooperation, diversity, a focus on lifetime personal wellness, and inclusion of all students (Pangrazi & Gibbons, 2009).

In Saskatchewan “the K-12 aim of physical education curricula is to support students in becoming physically educated individuals who have the understandings and skills to engage in movement activity, and the confidence and disposition to live a healthy, active lifestyle” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p.4). Physical education at any level should provide all students with the opportunity to engage in activities and movements that will sustain lifelong activity, enhance their quality of movement, and build positive social, environmental, and cultural relationships.

PE was one of the first subject areas students with functionally integrated students attended within the general educational setting (Sherrill, 1998) and to this day seems to be the most beneficial setting to achieve inclusion within the school. Inclusion is “the education of all

children with disabilities (mild to severe) in regular education even if special resources are needed to make it effective” (Volger, Koranda & Romance, 2000, p. 162). It is an “attitude, a value and belief system” (Rizzo & Webbert, 2007, p. 32) where interdependence and independence are valued. The inclusion of functionally integrated students “specifically, in physical education ...has been effective in facilitating motor engagement, motor performance, and self-concept of children” (Volger et al., 2000, p.161). As one educational assistant said, “they get more out of being physically active and interacting with kids and listening to music than sitting in a classroom” (Carol, interview, December 1st, 2010).

Wellness 10

Wellness 10 is an elective class that is offered to secondary students in grade ten. It focuses on developing balance between an individual’s physical, social, psychological and spiritual dimensions. Students learn that under or overemphasizing any one of these dimensions can negatively affect the other dimensions of their wellness. The curriculum is designed to help students put their own lives into perspective and create balance to improve the quality of their lives. *Wellness 10* “is designed to enhance student’s knowledge and understanding of these factors and to improve their ability to manage them in order to move toward, or remain near” optimal wellness (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p.7). It is based on two premises, from which stimulated the creation of *Inclusion 10*. As individuals “we cannot attain or maintain optimal wellness without taking care of ourselves...[and] without reaching out to others and investing in meaningful causes beyond ourselves” (p. 10). By creating an inclusive classroom that educates peer teachers how to build positive relationships with functionally integrated students while remaining physically active can move them “beyond caring for [themselves] to caring for other people and causes in the local and global spheres of wellness” (p.10).

The teacher has an important role, when designing a class that can accommodate the needs of all the students within *Wellness 10*. For a classroom to be effectively inclusive “requires a carefully planned and collaborative professional commitment” (Saskatchewan Education, 2001, p. 13). In the curriculum, teachers are provided with an adaptive dimension section that provides teachers with adaptations and guidelines for accommodating all students. Although this is a helpful resource, many teachers are still challenged by lack of education, equipment, support and appropriate class sizes. Effective inclusion requires support for the teacher, smaller class sizes, collaboration with adapted physical education specialists, increased instructional time, and appropriate equipment and resources. Many schools lack this support and financial assistance and often “regular physical educators and students are forced to improvise solutions” (Rizzo & Lavay, 2000, p. 34).

My experiences as a physical educator, teaching both functionally integrated and mainstream students in the same class, challenged me to find the best ways to create an inclusive learning environment for all of my students. The learning assistance teachers use Saskatchewan Education’s *Special Education Unit: Creating Opportunities for Students with Intellectual or Multiple Disabilities* (2001) as a resource. The Ministry of Education in Saskatchewan provides intensive learning needs for students within our school systems. Intensive Learning is an umbrella term that includes all areas of functionally integrated students. Under the intensive needs umbrella the learning assistance teachers often refer to their students as having an intellectual and/or multiple disabilities.

An inclusive setting involves more than just the classroom teacher, it takes the effort of the entire school community to help support each other “to learn, grow, and become more socially accepting of one another” (Volger et al., 2000, p. 161). Many teachers have negative feelings

towards inclusion because “of inadequate training and from lacking the experience and knowledge to successfully include students with disabilities” (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007, p. 117). Teachers often do not know how to accommodate functionally integrated students. This lack of knowledge creates a classroom setting that has limited interactions between mainstream students and functionally integrated students (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007). I found that within my own classroom, the functionally integrated students would leave the game or drill and go off to the side with the educational assistant, because they feared the equipment, lacked self-confidence in the skill, and felt intimidated by their peers (personal observation, October 4, 2011).

As I began to observe the interactions occurring between the functionally integrated students and the mainstream students, I learned that none of them really knew how to engage in meaningful conversation with one another. I realized that if I wanted positive interactions to occur, I would have to teach and role model this concept. The lack of interaction was not because of ignorance, but because they did not have a sense of understanding for one another. I started to research ways to promote positive interactions and inclusion in physical education. Peer teaching was a method that emerged as a real possible solution to this problem and became of deep interest to me. As I began my research, I became more familiar with this teaching strategy and discovered all of the benefits and positive outcomes that researchers and teachers were having at the elementary and middle years level with peer teaching. However, little research on peer teachers mentoring functionally integrated students existed at the secondary level. I did not realize how many life skills students could learn through peer teaching such as, a hidden curriculum that could possibly remove the barriers and biases that existed between the peer teachers and functionally integrated students. As I began to incorporate the peer-teaching

model into my classroom, I realized that many of the frustrations I had before with integration and the classroom environment were beginning to subside. I had been overlooking my students as one of the most powerful resources to help meet my desire for integration and to assist with the many escalating classroom demands. Meheady (2001) stated:

Children can serve as powerful instructional resources for one another, and the systematic use of peer-teaching methods provides a viable instructional option for meeting many of the daily educational challenges that teachers confront. (p. 7)

Involving peer teachers in peer mediated instruction and cooperative learning has been proven to be “academically productive and naturally supportive” (Saskatchewan Education, 2001, p. 40).

Peer teachers have the ability to be constructive role models that help teach functionally integrated students important social and communication skills. Saskatchewan Education believes that peer teachers “are informed members of planning and problem-solving teams as they know the *natural way that kids do things*” (p. 40).

Inclusion 10 could eliminate many of the frustrations and fears that teachers face when it comes to the inclusion of functionally integrated students. This curriculum could educate teachers about varying disabilities, and give them the confidence “to identify and teach social skills needed by their students” (Wong, 1998, p. 456) to build a classroom of acceptance.

Inclusion 10 changes the teacher’s role as the “primary deliverer of instruction to facilitator and monitor of peer-teaching activities” (Maheady, et al., 2001, p. 4). As the peer teachers are providing assistance to their functionally integrated peers, the teacher and educational assistants are monitoring and giving ongoing feedback and support to the peer teachers. This arrangement will broaden the teacher and educational assistants’ role to allow them to “monitor [functionally

integrated] students and their peers, provide help as needed, and assist other students” participating in physical education (Carter et al., 2005, p. 16).

Inclusive Physical Education

Inclusive PE allows all students to participate and “recognizes the inherent value of each student, the right to take risks and make mistakes, the need for independence and self-determination, and the right to choice” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 14). Inclusion acknowledges each student’s “inherent value, dignity and worth” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 14). From experience, I have observed that the inclusion of all students in physical education is valuable for the health and wellness of all. Peer teachers “learn about the talents and abilities of their [functionally integrated] classmates...[and] appreciate that individual differences exist between people” (Ministry of Learning, 2009, p. 14). An inclusive atmosphere allows all students the opportunity to access real life experiences, provides them with the opportunities to problem solve, and exposes them to a larger curriculum. Students gain access to social and cooperative situations that develop language and communication skills with their peers (Saskatchewan Education, 2001). Inclusive education provides students “the opportunity to learn many new life skills through interaction, cooperation and assistance” (Saskatchewan Education, 2001, p.17).

A quality inclusive physical education program can help all students become physically literate. When students develop physical literacy they gain “the attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary to lead active, healthy lives now and in the future” (Mandigo, 2010, p. 8). Kellerman and Lieberman (2010), discovered that inclusive physical education “promoted a feeling of belonging, as well as, a chance to share in the benefits of a physical education program and to participate with classmates” (p. 34). Physical education can be an ideal place to achieve

integration and can provide all students with a positive experience where everyone is challenged, active, and successful. Nevertheless, the importance of inclusion can sometimes get lost as many teachers are confronted with implementing new curricula, increased classroom sizes and decreases in financial and staff support. These challenges that teachers face “become more formidable when teachers attempt to meet the needs of students with mild disabilities in less restrictive settings” (Maheady, Harper & Mallette, 2001, p. 4).

Implementing *Inclusion 10* into the Classroom

For this research project and to gain a deeper understanding of the benefits and challenges of implementing *Inclusion 10* into the school, I implemented a one month long study (one-two week teaching/learning session and subsequent interviews). The curriculum was introduced to a PE teacher who had never used the program and her all female mainstream *Wellness 10* class. The goal was to learn if similar outcomes would occur, with another educator teaching the class. I was concerned that the students in my classes were motivated by grades, and the real desire to help others was secondary to them. I wanted to be sure that if students knew they were not being evaluated, the same friendships and experiences would occur.

Implementing *Inclusion 10* into another teachers’ class allowed me to research the teacher’s experiences, as well as the mainstream and functionally integrated students within a peer-teaching, inclusive physical education program. These experiences would help direct *Inclusion 10* based on the needs and outcomes of both teachers and students.

For this study, the mainstream students were renamed and further referred to as peer teachers, which better fit the literature and their intended new role working within this inclusive physical education program.

At the school where the research was conducted, all physical education classes are

segregated into female and male classes. I chose an all female class, because it was the easiest section to coordinate with the functionally integrated students timetable. There were twenty-two peer teachers and eighteen functionally integrated students who participated in this study. These experiences would help direct *Inclusion 10* based on the needs and outcomes of one classroom teacher, nine educational assistants, the peer teachers and the functionally integrated students.

The classroom teacher was given ten lesson plans (Appendix G) that the peer teachers and I had co-created and then modified from various adapted physical education references. The students were encouraged to co-develop the lessons and course content based on their interests. Student choice is a major component of *Inclusion 10* and has been found to be vital for individualizing instruction. Rizzo, Walter and Toussaint (1994), stated “choice is self-motivating and empowering for students and provides teachers with important information about the teaching-learning process” (p. 25). Also, research from Gibbons (2009), shows that “affording the students the opportunity for input into course development contributed to greater meaning and sense of ownership for their learning” (p. 230). Providing students the opportunity to co-develop the course content creates “an important progression for students toward learning how to make adult decisions” (Gibbons, 2009, p. 230). The students chose activities that related to basketball, parachute, dance, yoga, and one student designed an obstacle course.

The current study explored *Inclusion 10* from the perspectives of peer teachers, functionally integrated students, one classroom teacher, and nine educational assistants to investigate and deepen our understanding of the experiences and skills learned within a peer-teaching, inclusive secondary physical education classroom.

Definitions

Physical Education

Physical Education is a curricular program that is offered to students from kindergarten to grade twelve. It is the “one place within Canadian society in which every child has equal and equitable opportunities to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to lead an active healthy lifestyle” (Mandigo, 2010, p. 1). Physical education aims to provide students with knowledge in the areas of “physical activity, health related fitness, physical competence, and cognitive understanding about physical activity” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010, p. 10). Students that are encouraged to participate in physical education will develop “motor skills, understand movement concepts, participate in regular physical activity, maintain healthy fitness levels, develop responsible personal and social behavior and value physical activity” (p. 10).

Physical Activity

Physical Activity is defined as “movement of the body that expends energy such as participation in physical education, including all dimensions of the program, community events and leisure activities” (Bates & Eccles, 2008, p. 4).

Wellness

Wellness can be defined as the “optimal state of health of individuals and groups” (Bates & Eccles, 2008, p.5). It is also the “quality of life we enjoy when the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of our lives are in balance” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p.3).

Mainstream Students

The students who are in the regular education program and are not part of the functionally integrated program (Saskatchewan Learning, 2006).

Peer Teachers

After the study begins, the mainstream students (not functionally integrated) become the peer teacher's.

Adaptive Dimension

The adaptive dimension is an integral part of the *Wellness 10* curriculum. It “encourages teachers to adapt their instruction, the learning environment, and curriculum materials to help students achieve curriculum objectives” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 23)

Functionally Integrated

The functionally integrated students that were involved in the study are all a part of the Functionally Integrated program within their school. It is designed for students that have significant multiple or intellectual disabilities. These students require individualized programs when their diverse needs cannot be met through the regular education program (Saskatchewan Learning, 2006).

Intellectual Disability

An intellectual or cognitive disability “refers to the level of cognitive functioning” (Saskatchewan Education, 2001, p. 22) that an individual demonstrates. A student’s “cognitive functioning is impeded to the point of causing a significant disability in receiving information from his or her environment, then effectively processing, problem solving and adapting to this information” (p. 22).

Multiple Disabilities

A student with a multiple disability “refers to a combination of two or more disabilities” (Saskatchewan Education, 2001, p. 22). A student with multiple disabilities will usually have an intellectual disability and then another such as, hearing, physical, emotional, social or visual.

Intensive Learning Needs

Intensive Learning is an umbrella term that includes all areas of functionally integrated students. Under the intensive needs umbrella the learning assistance teachers often refer to their students as having an intellectual and/or multiple disabilities.

Inclusion

An inclusive environment provides a sense of belonging to all individuals, supports diversity and encompasses all members equally. Inclusion is a “value system that supports membership and belonging in regular education settings for all students” (Saskatchewan Education, 2001, p. 12). It is an atmosphere that “acknowledges an often extreme variance of individual abilities, interests and needs within the general student body” (Saskatchewan Education, 2001, p. 12).

Wellness 10

The Saskatchewan *Wellness 10* curriculum “is an elective course that features the integration of health education and physical education” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 24). With the support of the adaptive dimension, it is designed to accommodate and include all students.

Inclusion 10

Inclusion 10 is an elective unit within *Wellness 10* and is designed for all students who have the desire to help others, maintain physical activity and learn within an inclusive setting. It centers on student led instruction and peer teaching.

Descriptors

For the purpose of this study, in chapter 4 and 5 only, abbreviations will be used to denote:

- Peer teachers (PT)
- Functionally integrated students (FI)
- Classroom teacher (CT)
- Educational Assistant (EA)

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Introduction

The review of literature is organized into three main sections and discusses the importance of all students engaging in a quality and inclusive physical education program regardless of their ability. The first section discusses the significance of all children participating in physical activity and the health benefits that physical education can provide. The second section outlines inclusive physical education and the research done so far on the benefits and challenges that have occurred for teachers, peer teachers, and functionally integrated students in an inclusive physical education setting. The third section outlines the research done on peer teaching as an instructional strategy below grade nine to achieve inclusion. Most research that has been done on inclusive physical education and peer teaching has been at the elementary and middle years level (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007). To date, no research has been done on a class such as *Inclusion 10* where secondary students voluntarily take an inclusive physical education class that focuses on building positive relationships through peer teaching.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

Educating students on the importance of physical activity and the numerous behaviors that lead to a healthy lifestyle is the cornerstone of leading an active life in adulthood. All students, regardless of their abilities should have equal opportunity to participate in physical activity and learn how activity plays an important role in their health through positive lifestyle choices. Research studies show that more than half of Canadian children and youth are not

active enough to achieve optimal growth and development. Physical education and physical activity provides numerous health benefits for all abilities and are crucial for healthy development. The health risks associated with inactivity are numerous; therefore, it is vital that children are educated early to reduce these health risks (Health Canada, 2011).

Physical education can provide all students with the knowledge and skills they need and what it takes to create a healthy lifestyle and build a lifetime commitment to physical activity. It aims to develop skills and positive attitudes towards physical activity, fitness, self-concept, building relationships with others, social behaviors and personal and group safety (Saskatchewan Learning, 1995). All children deserve equal opportunity to participate in and to be active in physical education with their peers. Meeting the needs of all students within the physical education setting can be challenging and “constraints related to equipment, class size, curriculum, and the various ability levels of individuals with and without disabilities can influence the success or failure of participants and instructors” (Meaner & Davis, 2007, p. 37). Combs, Elliot and Whipple (2010) suggest that the inclusion of functionally integrated students into general physical education class can create a tremendous challenge for teachers as they are trying to meet the extensive needs of these students without neglecting the physical education needs of the students that are not functionally integrated. To meet the physical needs of everyone within the class, teachers need to be trained on how to adapt the activities and create an inclusive environment for the success of all students. Without proper education and funding for programs, the success of an inclusive and quality physical education program will be affected.

Inclusive Physical Education

In Saskatchewan, educational law “guarantees a free and appropriate public education for all school aged children, regardless of ability. The vast majority of Saskatchewan children that

have intellectual and multiple disabilities are educated with their peers in regular classrooms” (Saskatchewan Learning, 1995). Inclusive physical education values diversity, and sees it as an opportunity for everyone to learn how to be physically active and develop a healthy lifestyle. The learning environment must be collaborative where teachers, students and staff work together as a community of learners, that share ideas, stories and support one another (Tripp et al., 2007). The goal is for students to “learn life skills and enjoy opportunities to grow up with their peers” (Tripp et al., 2007, p. 33). Inclusive physical education strives to adapt the class to meet the needs of all learners regardless of their ability, by providing experiences that allow all students to be successful and engaged. Varying the activities from competitive to non-competitive and from individual to team based can help the teacher to accommodate each and every individual. As Tripp et al., (2007) states “inclusion is not about a ‘disability’ it is about diversity” (p. 34).

In the last twenty years, more research has been done around the benefits of inclusive physical education and the perspectives of inclusion from teachers, researchers, administrators and children with and without disabilities. Both positive and negative experiences have emerged from inclusive physical education classes. Advocates believe that inclusion provides many social and academic benefits that are valuable to all students. However, some critics will argue that inclusion is rarely successful due to the lack of teacher knowledge, student communication difficulties and limited opportunity for students to socialize (Lieberman, James & Ludwa, 2004).

Inclusion and social acceptance in physical education is “directly related to attitudes and beliefs of students without disabilities toward peers with disabilities” (Obrusnikova, Block & Dillon, 2010, p. 128). Research on including functionally integrated students into a regular physical education setting has shown greater motor performance gains for FI students than if they were in a non-inclusive environment (Block & Zemen, 1996). Physical education and

“activity may provide an important vehicle for promoting positive peer relations” (Seymour et al., 2009, p. 202). The attitudes of peer teachers towards functionally integrated students “is more favorable when the learning environment is integrated instead of segregated” (Verderber, Rizzo & Sherrill, 2003, p. 27).

An inclusive physical education classroom allows students with and without disabilities to interact with each other. The content provides peer teachers to develop a more positive attitude and awareness of various functionally integrated students (Lieberman et al., 2004). For inclusion to be successful, students need to be held accountable for their contribution to the inclusive process. Programs have to be designed by the teacher, which are specific and clearly display the goals and objectives of the program. The students need to know what successful inclusion is and looks like, before they can be immersed in it (Tripp et al., 2007). The physical education setting must be arranged so that functionally integrated students are treated in an equitable manner. They must have opportunities to “be included and supported in decision-making tasks” (Lieberman et al., 2004, p. 39). Lieberman et al. (2004) stated that the “atmosphere should be cooperative rather than competitive, and the teacher must model positive behavior” (p. 39). To keep all students working productively and interested in the skills and concepts, the teacher must provide challenges to keep the students on task and provide opportunities to progress in their performance outcomes (Rizzo et al., 1994). Personal development in the areas of self-esteem, acceptance and understanding are gained when students interact and learn within an inclusive setting. Lieberman et al. (2004) found that “students without disabilities reported increases in the self-concept, tolerance, self-worth, and understanding of other people” (p. 39). Seymour et al. (2009) discovered that students felt

“positive self-perceptions of all students were enhanced through inclusive physical education” (p. 216).

For students without disabilities to truly appreciate and understand their peers with disabilities Lieberman et al. (2004), stated that a successful inclusive setting that has “contact that is frequent, long term, meaningful, appropriately planned and structures, cooperative, positive and interaction will elicit the greatest attitudinal change” (p. 39). Once positive contact is established amongst students with and without cognitive and multiple disabilities “an understanding and knowledge of diverse abilities will develop” (Lieberman et al., 2004, p. 39).

Research has shown that an overall positive attitude came from students without disabilities when it came to inclusion of functionally integrated peers in their physical education class (Obrusnikova, Valkova & Block, 2003). A literature review done by Salend and Garrick Duhaney (1999), found that students without disabilities claim that inclusive programs give them an understanding and appreciation for differences amongst their peers regarding appearance and behavior. Students have seen an increase in tolerance, acceptance and understanding of their peers from learning in an inclusive setting. Many students without disabilities possess positive views towards inclusion and have gained “a greater awareness and sensitivity to the needs of others” (Salend, & Garrick Duhaney, 1999, p. 120). Also, inclusion has provided “greater opportunities to have friendships with students with disabilities and an improved ability to deal with disability in their own lives” (Salend & Garrick Duhaney, 1999, p. 120).

Verderber, Rizzo, and Sherill (2003), interviewed students without disabilities and found that many believed “that their peers with severe disabilities should coexist with them in their general physical education classes” (p. 39). They also discovered that “girls had more favorable belief attitudes than boys did” (Verderber, et al., 2003, p. 41). An inclusive physical education

class must use games that are cooperative and adaptive in rules and equipment, which seems to be more appealing to girls than boys (Verderber et al., 2003). This could be a result of girl's play being more cooperative, whereas boy's play tends to be more competitive and rule focused. It has been found that when the games and activities are adapted appropriately to create an experience that is successful for all individuals, the students without disabilities are more accommodating to their peers with disabilities (Lieberman, et al., 2004). One concern that sometimes hinders inclusion is the difficulty that students have communicating to functionally integrated students (Salend & Garrick Duhaney, 1999). For the success of all students working and learning together, the classroom has to promote inclusion and support diversity. Students have to be taught how to positively interact with one another and encouraged to support each other. When students without disabilities are in inclusive classrooms where the appropriate teaching conditions exist, and the teacher enhances the needs of all students, inclusion will be successful and positive (Obrusnikova et al., 2003).

Seymour, Reid and Bloom (2009) described how some functionally integrated students felt unwelcomed and socially isolated in physical education classes, whereas other functionally integrated students reported positive and supportive experiences. Goodwin and Watkinson (2000) found that functionally integrated students had "good days" and "bad days" when they were involved in inclusive physical education. Students that were having "bad days" felt socially isolated, were questioned on their competence, and experienced restricted participation. When students had "good days" they felt a sense of belonging, shared the benefits of the class with their peers and experienced skillful participation.

Investigating inclusive physical education from the "perspectives of [functionally integrated] children is a relatively new phenomenon" (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010, p.

278). James, Kellman and Lieberman (2010) demonstrated that both positive and negative experiences have occurred from the perspectives of functionally integrated students. Some children “reported that they felt more ‘normal’ when their friends assisted them and made them feel part of the group [as well as, many] believed they were more challenged when playing with their peers who were not disabled” (p.34). However, some students had negative experiences where they felt ridiculed by other students in the class and were often teased. Some described how they “felt embarrassed because they were unable to perform skills the same as other students in class” (James et al., 2010, p. 34).

In most of the research, the negative experiences that functionally integrated students experienced were related to how the classroom was setup and how the teacher’s attitude towards inclusion was reflected in his or her teachings and to the students. Spencer-Cavaliere and Watkinson (2010) shared that some functionally integrated students felt there were limited opportunities for them to fully participate in activities, while other functionally integrated students displayed negative emotional responses due to feelings of being an outsider and excluded. James et al. (2010) found that some students felt their physical education teacher “provided more instructional information to students without disabilities, and the students with disabilities waited longer for opportunities to respond during game and skill practice” (p. 35).

To create a culture of inclusion, each functionally integrated student needs to have the acceptance of others, needs to be exerting effort, and needs their strengths to be recognized (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Each member must feel like a legitimate and contributing participant “having important, appropriate, and valued roles...[which, will provide them with] a sense of acceptance, belonging and value in activity settings ” (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010, p. 287). Inclusive physical education needs to provide all students with the

opportunity to “search for personal meaning, set goals, solve problems, and acquire responsibility” (Tripp et al., 2007, p. 33). The results from the research shows us that inclusive physical education can provide both positive and negative learning outcomes and opportunities for both the teacher and students (Lieberman et al., 2004).

Challenges for Teachers and Students in Inclusive Physical Education

Many factors can influence the success of an inclusive physical education class, but one of the most important factors that can either inhibit or promote inclusion is the attitude of the teacher and peer teachers towards the students that have disabilities (Verderber et al., 2003). The perspective of the physical education teacher towards the inclusion of functionally integrated students within their classes can influence the attitude of their students either in a positive or negative way. A primary contributor to a functionally integrated student having a negative experience in physical education occurred when the teacher did not implement adaptations to the activities and did not limit negative behaviors by other classmates (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Lienert, Sherrill, and Myers (2001) concluded that many teachers are not adequately trained to teach in an integrated setting and lack exposure to successful inclusive programs. Also, deficient resources and support staff coupled with large class sizes hinders a teacher’s abilities to meet the individual needs of all students. Collaboration and support amongst all certified professionals is vital for a successful program, but many teachers felt there was little opportunity for this, which resulted in them feeling “alone in their execution of responsibilities” (Lienert, Sherrill, & Myers, 2001, p. 14). A good relationship with the learning assistance teacher and other staff members will help the physical education teacher to properly understand the needs of each student and “develop strategies to weave student’s social and cognitive goals into the physical education setting” (Lieberman et al., 2004, p.41). Research is discovering that

there is a need for further education and financial support for teachers in the area of adaptation and inclusion.

Many teachers believe “they lack the preparation needed to design an appropriate inclusive environment” (Lieberman, James, & Ludwa, 2004, p.40). A lack of pre-service education can cause the teacher to overlook the individual needs of his or her students without even knowing it. To create an inclusive setting, teachers require educational assistance and in-service regarding fundamental strategies on adapting equipment, modifying rules, understanding functionally integrated students’ needs and adopting a variety of these instructional styles to meet the needs of diverse learners. Many teachers are unaware of strategies that can help create an inclusive environment, and some may not even know that it is their responsibility to incorporate these modifications into their physical education class (Lieberman et al., 2004). By providing teachers with proper training and support, they and their students “can experience the benefits of a classroom culture that values inclusion” (Lieberman et al., 2004, p. 41).

Block, Taliaferro, Harris, and Krause (2010) believe it is not that teachers lack the ability to successfully include functionally included students into their physical education class, but rather teachers lack self-confidence and self-efficacy. Block et al. (2010) defines “self-efficacy [as] the perception of one’s ability to successfully perform a particular behavior” (p. 43). When teachers’ doubt or lack confidence in their teaching performance and abilities they can lose the motivation to try and incorporate new techniques and strategies into their lessons and classroom. For many physical education teachers, their lack of confidence in their ability to adapt for functionally integrated students is detrimental to the success of all students. Nevertheless, when a teacher has a high level of self-efficacy they will have greater motivation to set higher goals for themselves, and put greater concentration and effort into achieving those goals (Block et al.,

2010). Although many teachers struggle with confidence in how to achieve inclusion due to limited course work, training and experiences, Block et al. (2010) believes that “physical educators who truly believe they can include [functionally integrated] children in their general physical education programs will find a way to be successful” (46).

It is unfortunate that many teachers work in an environment where they feel a lack of support and are without proper training, but the reality is that teachers need to be accountable for the learning outcomes of their students, and aware of the responsibilities that their profession holds. For physical education to be successful and inclusive, Lieberman et al., (2004) stated that the classroom teacher needs to understand and embrace “that physical education is a direct service and [that] the physical education teacher is the direct service provider” (p. 38). Therefore, the responsibility of educating all students and creating a classroom that supports inclusion is in the hands of the teacher. Positive inclusive environments are not easy to establish and require a great deal of effort on the part of the classroom teacher. By implementing and adapting various teaching strategies, the teacher can promote positive interactions amongst the class and “can enhance the quality of life of all students. In addition, they can teach all students important life lessons about understanding and accepting differences” (Lieberman et al., 2004, p. 41).

In order to create a classroom that supports inclusion, it has to be carefully organized because “a lack of planning can produce negative social, psychomotor, and emotional experiences for students with and without disabilities” (Lieberman et al, 2004, p.40). Lieberman et al, also found that when the class is not carefully planned out, students are less active and may be more inclined to engage in off-task behaviors. Another necessary component of inclusive physical education is for the students to learn how to work with one another to accomplish learning objectives. For this to be successful, the teacher needs to “teach them how to work

together and, in addition to focusing on individual student performance, to observe what is happening within groups” (Tripp et al., 2007, p. 34).

Many teachers do not realize the influence that their perception and attitude can have in creating a successful inclusive setting. Through *Inclusion 10* teachers would have a plan that would help them begin to understand inclusion better and through the positive results they would feel more confident to try new creative ideas for inclusion on their own. For physical education to be successfully inclusive “teachers must look beyond the common perception of disability and think about physical education as a diverse community of learners with various skills” (Tripp et al., 2007). Supporting and educating teachers on how to properly implement and promote inclusion, will help change “the culture toward individuals with disabilities in general education classes” (Verdeber et al., 2003, p 40).

Although there has been considerable research done on the responsibility of the teacher to promote inclusion, it is imperative that the students within the class take responsibility for their learning within an inclusive classroom and show appreciation and respect for their peers. A functionally integrated student needs to feel included by both the teacher and the students within the class. As seen from a child’s perspective, Spencer-Cavaliere and Watkinson (2010) found that “adult intervention does not lead to “true” inclusion and may at times even undermine it...forced participation on their own part, or the part of others, is not the same as feeling included” (p. 289). Even though some negative attitudes and behaviors have been reported, current research shows that inclusion can be a very positive experience for all students (Seymour et al., 2000). If a school and the students embrace inclusion, friendships between students with and without disabilities will occur while at school. For friendships to extend beyond school

hours was dependent “upon parental support and accessibility of homes” (Seymour et al., 2000, p. 216).

Peer Teaching

Most of the research that has been done to date on peer teaching in PE has been at the elementary and middle years level. Block and Obrusnikova (2007) “found clear support for using trained peer teachers to assist elementary aged students with relatively mild disabilities in general physical education” (p.105). The research that surrounds peer teaching as a useful, beneficial and economical teaching strategy in physical education is becoming increasingly more popular. Teachers need assistance when it comes to the challenges that exist with accommodating all of the diversity within an inclusive setting (Houston-Wilson, Lieberman, Horton, & Kasser, 1997). It has been found that inclusive physical education may be one of the best ways to facilitate natural interaction between students with and without disabilities (Klavina & Block, 2008). Peer teaching is a “model in which peers, whether same-age or cross-aged, provide support to a peer with a disability” (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007, p. 105). Many see it as a solution, where teachers can provide individualized instruction and feedback to large classes, while being cost efficient (Lieberman, James, & Ludwa, 2004).

Trained peer-teaching programs have been seen to increase socialization, physical activity, time on task, and improve fitness levels amongst students (Lieberman et al., 2004). Peer teaching can help educators encourage positive interactions between their students while ensuring that they maintain a meaningful and safe learning environment (Klavina & Block, 2008). Houston-Wilson et al. (1997) noted that “peer teacher programs effectively give additional one-to one instruction resulting in greater motor and fitness gains not only for those being tutored, but also for the tutor themselves” (p. 39). Verdeber et al. (2000) “found that

inclusive arrangements that used teacher assistants and peer teachers facilitated motor engagement, sport skill performance, and or attitude toward disability for both children with and without disability” (p.162).

Peer teaching allows all students of all ages and abilities the opportunity to interact and be physically active together. The incorporation of peer teaching into physical education can create a “more learner-friendly instructional” atmosphere (Maheady et al., 2001, p. 7). When the teacher becomes an active observer by continuously providing feedback and keeping students on task, peer teaching can be very beneficial and successful (Houston-Wilson et al., 1997). Peer teaching has provided:

more favorable pupil-teacher ratios within the classroom, increased student on-task time and response opportunities, provided additional opportunities for pupils to receive positive and corrective feedback, and enhanced pupils’ opportunities to receive individualized help and encouragement. (Maheady et al., 2001, p. 7)

The additional assistance of the peer teachers during class allows the teacher to spend more time “monitoring students, and [providing] prompt feedback” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2004, p.3).

Teachers are continuously challenged with having to provide quality feedback to all of their students. Individual feedback is often lost and directed to the entire class (Ayvazo & Ward, 2009). Peer teaching can help educators support their students and provide them with the assistance and adaptations they need. It is a strategy that provides individualized instruction and can assist students that need more attention (Mumford & Chandler, 2009). Houston-Wilson et al. (1997) described peer teaching as “an excellent tool for providing all students with opportunity to practice skills and receive immediate feedback” (p. 43). McDonnell, Mathot-Buckner, Thorson and Fister (2001) found that peer teaching creates “a structure that allows the

teacher to tailor instruction needs to individual students and provide a higher number of instructional trials in one-on-one or small group teaching formats” (p. 142).

Peer teaching has shown to increase the “levels of engagement and achievement for students both with and without disabilities” (Katz & Mirenda, p. 19, 2002). Inclusive physical education classrooms that incorporate the use of students without disabilities as peer teachers have been proven consistently to “be effective in teaching a wide range of academic, self-help, communication and social skills to students with disabilities” (Katz & Mirenda, p. 20, 2002). Klavina and Block’s (2008) results replicated earlier studies by Houston-Wilson et al. (1997) and Lieberman, Dunn, Mars, and McCubbin (2000), which found that peer teaching can contribute to “meaningful academic engagement and successful collaboration between students with and without disabilities in inclusive GPE” (General Physical Education) (Klavina & Block, 2008, p. 153).

An inclusive setting that incorporates the use of peer teachers provides functionally integrated students with a sense of belonging as well as an introduction to various physical activities. Peer teaching “enhances motor performance, cognitive comprehension, attitudes and physical education academic learning time of both tutees and tutors with differing abilities” (Barfield, Hannigan-Downs, & Lieberman, 1998, p. 211). The continuous repetition of skills can increase academic gains and skill performance for the peer teacher. Exposing students without disabilities to a positive and inclusive classroom where they peer teach will enhance their disability awareness and the various needs of others (Barfield et al. 1998). The students without disabilities will learn cooperative learning instructional strategies for “reducing inappropriate behaviors, accepting negative feedback, giving positive feedback, learning conversational skills, implementing interpersonal problem solving, and initiating contact/interaction with others”

(Wong, 1998, p. 461). Cooperative learning is a valuable instructional tool used to “integrate students with and without disabilities and to increase the social acceptance of children in a group” (Wong, 1998, p. 466).

Klavina and Block (2008) found that continual assistance from support staff hindered the interaction process between students with and without disabilities. The functionally integrated students felt socially isolated and lost their sense of independence due to the frequent assistance and close proximity of the teacher assistant. By incorporating the method of peer teachers into this classroom as support rather than teacher assistants, Klavina and Block found the level of interaction between students increased significantly. The support that was provided by the peer teachers “had a positive effect on activity engagement” (Klavina & Block, 2008, p. 154).

Lieberman et al. (2000) found there was an increase in students’ intervention level, from the positive influence that the peer teachers had on the students with disabilities.

Research demonstrated that “students with severe disabilities showed high levels of contact and consistency with the general curriculum when paraprofessionals monitored and provided feedback to students in peer-support arrangements” (Carter, Cushing, Clark, & Kennedy, 2005, p. 23). Students with and without disabilities have shown greater social and academic benefits by shifting the paraprofessionals role to facilitative rather than one-on-one (Carter et al., 2005). Carter et. al’s findings “confirm that peer support interventions are an effective response to the challenges of promoting secondary inclusion” (p. 23).

Katz and Mirenda (2002) showed that “engaged behavior was highest when peers acted as tutors of” functionally integrated students (p. 19). Block and Klavina (2008) said “utilizing peers as a natural support might facilitate interactions between students with and without disabilities while also providing individualized teaching instructions” (p.133). Moreover, peer

teaching can help support the goal of frequent and positive interactions (Block & Klavina, 2008). Klavina and Block (2008) and Goodwin and Watkinson (2000) discovered that peer teaching provided a positive experience for all students and contributed to feelings of belonging and companionship for the functionally integrated students. Social acceptance and interactions are two key aspects to creating a positive and inclusive setting. Peer teaching helps to encourage and teach positive interactions as well as increase students understanding of themselves and others. Teaching students how to interact with others in a positive way benefits everyone (Mumford & Chandler, 2009).

Summary

Physical education and physical activity have many health benefits for children of all ages and abilities. While there are several factors that can affect the participation of all individuals in a meaningful way, the teacher has great influence on creating a successful, supportive and inclusive learning environment (Lieberman et al., 2004). Through proper education and the use of a quality peer teacher program, the teacher can individualize instruction and increase students learning. The attitudes and perceptions of inclusion can become a positive experience for teachers and students if they are educated in an environment that supports inclusion and promotes diversity.

It is important that secondary teachers are supported in regards to inclusive education and that collaboration of all members occurs for inclusion to be successful. Teachers need a program that can help them develop an understanding of the possibilities for inclusion and peer teaching in physical education. Creating resources and providing teachers with much needed support and understanding in this area could improve confidence levels for teachers in the area of inclusive physical education. By teachers learning how to provide students with responsibility and choice

through peer teaching, students will stay challenged and motivated. Many times teachers have to improvise, creating solutions and adaptations to attempt inclusion and can often be left discouraged by their results (Block & Obrusnikova, 2007). A curriculum such as *Inclusion 10* could contribute positively to the inclusion of students within physical education classes by educating teachers on how to adapt their classrooms, physically educate all students, and introduce students to a different way of learning with peers.

Armed with the passion to make a difference in the lives of both mainstream and functionally integrated students within my physical education classes I embarked on this project to investigate the experiences of both functionally integrated students and peer teachers working together within an innovative physical education curriculum. The goal was to understand the interactive experiences of peer teachers, functionally integrated students, one classroom teacher and nine educational assistants learning *Inclusion 10* from another teacher other than myself. A further goal was to understand the experiences of one teacher and one teacher assistant new to *Inclusion 10* and to learn how peer teaching affected their learning environment, perceptions, and experiences within this inclusive class.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Starting the Research Process

The purpose of this study was to understand the interactive experiences of peer teachers, functionally integrated students, one classroom teacher and nine educational assistants in a peer teaching inclusive secondary physical education class. To further support my research, I interviewed eight peer teachers, three functionally integrated students, the participating teacher and one educational assistant. Upon receiving consent from the University of Saskatchewan Behavior Research Ethics Board, the school division and school principal, I was able to distribute consent forms to all of the parents and students (Appendix A, B, C, D & E). Every effort was made to ensure that each member knew that participation in the study was completely voluntary and that there was no reward or penalty for their involvement. All the students were informed that if at any time they wanted to withdraw from the study, they were allowed to without any consequences. They were also informed that all data collected would be kept confidential, anonymous, and stored in a secure location in the College of Education by my acting supervisor for a period of five years after completion of the study. Each student and teacher who was interviewed or had their journal used was given a pseudonym, to protect their privacy and ensure confidentiality. The classroom teacher was in charge of collecting all of the signed consent forms. Once I had received them, I set up a time to meet with the classroom teacher, educational assistants and students to discuss the two-week implementation of *Inclusion 10* within the *Wellness 10* program. There were twenty-two peer teachers and eighteen functionally integrated students involved in the study.

I met with the classroom teacher first, to discuss *Inclusion 10* and incorporating the curriculum into her classroom before initiating the ethics form to ensure her willingness to participate in the study. We talked about how her role would change from being the primary instructor to a facilitator and monitor within the classes over the two -week period. Also, we discussed the goals and objectives of *Inclusion 10*, and how I would be observing the peer relationships and inclusive classroom over the two weeks. I assured the teacher that I was not there to observe her teaching in any critical manner and my primary objective was to view the student interactions inside the *Inclusion 10* curriculum.

Then I led a group discussion with the functionally integrated students. We discussed the two-week program and then brainstormed activities that they would like to participate in. I took their ideas, and created cooperative lessons that could be adapted and easily implemented into a class size of forty. One of the goals of *Inclusion 10* is for the students to design the course content based on their interests. Kozub et al. (1999) found that “employing inclusive pedagogies that allow for student choice regarding competition levels and types of activities in General Physical Education (GPE) may better accommodate learners’ needs based on their level of skill and interest in competition” (p. 138). *Inclusion 10* was about cooperation, which changed the face of competition to a cooperative, fun competition. I wanted to see how the students responded to designing the course content, as they do not have this option in their regular classroom. Research shows positive outcomes, when students are allowed choice such as, “demonstrated improved task accuracy, task productivity and affect, as well as decreased disruptive behavior” (Katz & Mirenda, p. 19, 2002). The students were enthusiastic and were excited to incorporate activities such as, dance, low organized games, parachute and yoga. I also discussed the framework of the program and highlighted their role as a student participant within

the study. We discussed the importance of respect, patience and understanding as they took on the role as a facilitator ensuring that their partners were involved, feeling success and adapting the activities to meet the needs and abilities of their student partners. We also talked about the importance of respect and patience for one another, being a good role model and leader, following the teacher's instructions, and giving supportive and positive feedback to their partner,

The *Wellness 10* class was eager to start planning the course content (Appendix G) and used the remainder of the class to design an obstacle course and create their own dances to teach their partners. I could tell from their excitement and passion, that they thoroughly enjoyed sharing their ideas and having input into designing the class. The girls showed enthusiasm to start the program and meet their partner that I had randomly assigned, by using the attendance lists provided by both classroom teachers. Finally, I ended class by giving them their partners name and their own journal (Appendix F) to decorate. These journals would be used to record any feelings during their experiences in class, thoughts post-class, or any other comments they wished to make. Their journal was distributed to them during the last ten minutes of each class. When the bell rang and the students left, I felt very confident to begin my research. Their energy and motivation was something I had not witnessed before when it came to physical education. They appeared to be excited to be leaders and provide an opportunity to other students. I had three students come up to me and tell me that they thought *Inclusion 10* "was a great idea!" (Field notes, November 10, 2010). These students enjoyed their new role as peer teachers and participating in a PE class where they were able to help their partners achieve success and enjoy physical activity (Field notes, November 10, 2010).

There was never any peer teacher training implemented, we just had group discussions regarding the class expectations and objectives. The students helped create the class

expectations and objectives by sharing their opinions and ideas. Together the peer teachers and I talked about positive ways to greet their partners when they arrived in the gym and the importance of staying close to their partners when participating in activities and listening to instructions. We discussed how they needed to be good role models by following the teacher's directions closely and showing good listening skills, so that their partners could learn from them. Also discussed was the importance of positive feedback and encouragement during the activity. I informed them that they would be providing a service to others, because many of the functionally integrated students do not have the opportunity to be in a physical education class. *Inclusion 10* would provide functionally integrated students the opportunity to be active with their peers and enjoy an atmosphere that promoted inclusion.

Our open conversations gave the students an opportunity to voice any concerns and ask lots of questions, rather than being told what to do. It also gave me the opportunity to learn about their interests, motives, and desires for wanting to be involved in the study. Many of the other studies done so far have had trained peer teachers, but younger students were involved. I wanted to see how the students would take on their new role and responsibility and the interactions that would occur without adult intervention and influence. *Inclusion 10* strives to make students more independent and develop their leadership skills. I allowed the peer teachers to be leaders and independently peer teach their partners. They chose the ways in which they provided instruction, feedback, and encouragement through trial and error. Dana, a mainstream student, felt she was prepared enough and believed that any mainstream student could take the class for credit as long as they knew to give clear instructions (Dana (MS), interview, December 2, 2010). Dana and her mainstream peers discovered that by making the instructions clear and concise, as well as using repetition helped their partners succeed at following directions and

executing the skill successfully (Field notes, December 3, 2010). Most of the students taught themselves how to work with their partners, and I learned from the interviews that the girls found that to be very rewarding.

I met with the functionally integrated students and the educational assistants, the day after meeting with the peer teachers. Together, we brainstormed activities that the students wanted to participate in. They chose basketball, dodge ball, parachute, yoga and dance, which were almost the same activities that the other students decided on. Next, we discussed the two-week program and the expectations of the students and staff. We talked about classroom behaviors, such as being polite and respectful to their partners, trying all activities at least once, and listening to the teacher and partner during the lesson and instructions. I didn't have a format that I followed, I just spoke to the students about what it meant to be a good student and what behaviors they should display. I informed the educational assistants to circulate the gymnasium during class and be available to assist and answer questions, provide feedback and support, and intervene only when they felt they needed to. As trained teacher assistants and having previous experience with their students, I felt confident that they would intervene only at the appropriate times based on their judgment and the situation. All of the students were really excited to participate in the activities with their peers. The educational assistants were very supportive of the initiative and were interested to see how the peer teachers would do as mentors. This type of learning strategy had never been implemented into the school. I felt very supported in my research by the staff and students, yet nervous and excited to see how *Inclusion 10* would unfold.

Research Design

The study occurred daily for two weeks in November. There was only one day that a substitute teacher was present, because the classroom teacher was away. The class progressed as

normal and there were no disruptions to the study. The substitute teacher followed the lesson plan and the peer teachers were very self sufficient at following the rules for the yoga circuit and completing the lesson successfully. Informed consent forms were distributed to all of the students (Appendix A, B, C, D & E). Parents/guardians and the students themselves were requested to sign the consent forms indicating willingness to participate and have their pictures taken, before the class could begin.

The *Inclusion 10* curriculum was implemented daily for nine consecutive school days, and each class was fifty minutes in length. The tenth and final day was used for me to interview and discuss the program with all of the students involved in the study. I was able to interview four students during that class, while the other students filled out a final journal entry (Appendix H). The other interviews were completed a few days later during class time. The classroom teacher allowed the students to leave class to complete the interview for my research. To capture the experiences of the students and teachers in *Inclusion 10*, it was important to learn their perspectives and hear their stories of experience. As a result, a qualitative research design was utilized “to understand and make sense of phenomena from the participants’ perspective” (Merriam, 2002, p. 6).

A qualitative case study was implemented to understand and interpret all participants’ perspectives while participating in *Inclusion 10* (Merriam, 1988). A case study is an “intensive description and analysis of a phenomenon or social unit” (Merriam, 2002, p. 8). It explored *Inclusion 10* as an innovative program that has the potential to be implemented into secondary schools. Exploring *Inclusion 10* as an innovative program provided insight into the possibilities of expanding and sharing the program with schools in the future. Gaining important data through the experiences of the participants provided guiding information about the program. My

goal was to learn about these experiences and make sense of the individual's experiences and perceptions within an inclusive physical education class (Mayan, 2009).

The qualitative case study approach is a “suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of practice and extending the knowledge base of various aspects of education” (Merriam, 1998, p. 3). In schools, we face a critical problem with ensuring that teachers are creating a learning environment where all students feel accepted and included while remaining physically active and engaged meaningfully within the lessons. *Inclusion 10* extends the knowledge and theories that have already been discussed around inclusion by learning about the experiences of secondary students, rather than elementary or middle years, in an inclusive peer teaching environment.

Participants and Settings

My inquiry was conducted in a grade ten high school, female physical education class. The school was an urban Catholic high school and predominantly middle class. This school has a very strong learning assistance program for students with various disabilities, and has always promoted and supported inclusion. There were forty students, nine educational assistants and one classroom teacher involved in the study. There were twenty-two female peer teachers and ten female and eight male functionally integrated students. The peer teachers were all in grade ten, and the functionally integrated students ranged from grade nine to twelve.

At this particular school, all of the secondary physical education classes are segregated by gender. The most convenient time for me to get the gymnasium space, a physical education class, and all of the functionally integrated students was during period four from one pm to two pm. The functionally integrated students have reading and English class as a group during period four

every day. The only available physical education class during this time frame was an all female *Wellness 10* class.

The all female *Wellness 10* class had no previous experience with functionally integrated students participating in physical education with them. Their physical education class was every day for the entire semester and their fitness and skill levels ranged from low to advanced levels. The physical education teacher was a female and had been teaching physical education for seven years. She had some experience with integrating one to two functionally integrated students into her class, but only with the assistance of an EA. Some of the educational assistants had experience in the gym where as others were more familiar with the classroom setting. This was a new learning and teaching experience for everyone involved.

Data Collection

The Researcher

In qualitative case study inquiry, “the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 2002, p. 179). My experience teaching physical education to students of all ages and abilities sparked my interest in designing *Inclusion 10*. As a teacher at the school where the research was conducted, I have a strong background working with both mainstream and functionally integrated students within physical education. I used my professional experiences as an instrument for data collection and analysis and to derive my research questions. As the researcher, I designed the consent forms and course layout, created the journal questions, observed and wrote field notes and conducted the interviews. I wanted to incorporate a variety of data sources, to obtain validity through triangulation. Triangulation collects data from multiple sources to provide the researcher with a variety of data to support the research (Merriam, 2002).

Journals

To help me understand which activities were successful (all students actively engaged and participating in the activity) or not, and to learn about the peer relationships at a deeper level, I provided personal journals for the students to reflect in (Appendix F). The students were asked to be as honest and as descriptive as possible. I felt that the journals would help me in “ understanding inclusion as a subjective experience of the child,...[and] may provide guidance for the kinds of activities and settings that best support true inclusion in physical activity” (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010, p. 278). I developed the journal questions and created the books, which were subsequently decorated by the students. Each day at the end of class, the students were given ten minutes to reflect on their experiences with the class. If the functionally integrated students needed help with writing their responses, the educational assistants were available to provide assistance and guide them in the reflection process. The learning assistance program used the journaling process as part of the language arts program and replaced my journals with their original ones for the two weeks. Each day, I would collect the journals and read through them. I used the journals and my field notes to derive the interview questions and create themes for my data.

Participant Observation, Field Notes, and Photographs

To immerse myself into the research setting and capture the experience of *Inclusion 10*, I would observe the classroom each day, by either sitting to the side or walking around while taking field notes and photographs. This method helped me to gain a better understanding of how the students were or were not engaging in the activities, the interactions occurring, and to observe any challenges or progressions the peer teachers were making with their partners. The teacher and educational assistants were also being observed. I wanted to see how they adjusted

to their new role as a monitor and supporter rather than as the primary instructor and manager. Any interventions, struggles, comments and feedback from the teacher and teacher assistants were noted in my own personal journal. I recorded my own perceptions, feelings and observations during and after each class (Mayan, 2009). After each interview, I wrote my own personal reflection to document my own thoughts and any recurring themes that emerged.

I received permission to take photographs of the students and teachers engaged in the *Inclusion 10* lesson. The purpose of the photographs was to allow the students to see themselves in a positive, interactive way during their *Inclusion 10* class. I used the photographs that I had taken to help me capture the lesson and the relationships between the students. The camera was used almost every day to record gestures, facial expressions and classroom organization. Pictures allowed me to go back and further reflect on the lesson and the students. Through the photographs, I was able to grasp what was going on in many different pairs at once and see how the entire group was responding to the class. I could verify all of the students' experiences within the class and I could see facial expressions and interactions amongst the peer teachers and functionally integrated students. The photographs also showed the instructional methods and teaching cues that the peer teachers were using with their partner.

Interviews

The interviews took place after concluding the two-week program. Purposeful sampling was used when reviewing all forty journals, to decide who would provide the best information for me about *Inclusion 10* (Mayan, 2009). As I looked through the journals, I developed potential interview questions to help me further understand the student's and staff's perspectives and to go deeper into their responses. Their stories were important to understanding their feelings and insights about an inclusive peer-teaching environment. Interviewing the

participants allowed me to put their behaviors into context and understand their actions (Irving, 2006). I chose eight peer teachers, three functionally integrated students, the classroom teacher and one educational assistant to interview. The interviews were digitally recorded and took approximately twenty to thirty minutes. Each interview was done individually and we sat in a small office in the gymnasium that was quite enough for us to have our conversations. The interview process took four days, to complete. I used three noon hours, and five hours of class time, which was approved by the teacher to compute the interviews.

Data Analysis

All of the interviews were transcribed, by a hired professional, which resulted in forty pages of data. The peer teachers, teacher and teacher assistant were given their transcriptions to read over and return with their signed transcript release form, allowing them to be released and used for research purposes. The transcripts from the functionally integrated students were sent home to be reviewed and signed by their parents. Everyone was asked to look through all of the photographs that were taken and given the opportunity to omit any photographs they did not approve of the researcher using.

Content analysis was used to identify and code the data into categories. The interviews were examined and used by the researcher, and notes and comments were made directly onto the transcriptions. To become familiar with the research and organize it, I began identifying persistent words, phrases and comments expressed by the students and teachers were saying. I also added my own comments and impressions of what I was learning from the data. Once the data had been coded, I moved the text into categories on my computer that reflected the advantages, disadvantages and key learning outcomes of *Inclusion 10* (Patton, 2002).

Cross-case analysis was utilized to analyze the interviews. The interview questions and answers varied, because each interview was designed for the individual, based on his or her journal reflections. The responses from different people were grouped together according to their perspectives of *Inclusion 10*, what they learned during the experience, and their responses to similar questions (Patton, 1990). As I read through each category, themes began to emerge that integrated the categories together and unified the data (Mayan, 2009). From the data, four common themes emerged: 1) Motivation and Social Implications 2) Understanding and Appreciation for Others Within and Beyond the Classroom, 3) Developing Leaders Through Inclusive Physical Education and Peer Teaching and 4) Building Life Skills for the Future. An in depth look into these themes will be further discussed in chapter four.

Validity

To ensure validity, multiple sources of data were used to triangulate the data and support my research and conclusions (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 2002). I used a combination of interviews, observations and document analysis to strengthen the internal validity. The second strategy I included was member checks which involved “taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking if they were plausible” (Merriam, 2002, p. 31). This was done throughout the study as well as at the end. During the two weeks, I would talk to the students and teachers about their experiences to ensure that my perception of the class was the same as theirs.

I created interview questions directly from the journal responses, and was able to clarify my interpretation of the participants responses during the interviews. The participants were asked to review their journals, photographs and transcripts to ensure that the results were plausible and then they signed a consent form acknowledging that the data were valid (Appendix

A, C & E). Long-term observation of the classroom was used to increase the validity (Merriam, 1988). I was in the classroom before *Inclusion 10* was implemented and during the ten days the class was offered. I continued to interview and collect data until I felt that no new information was surfacing. In my last interview, the “data and emerging findings” (Merriam, 2002, p. 26) felt saturated, I was hearing similar comments as in previous interviews.

Chapter 4: Student and Teacher Research Outcomes

Prior to this research process, my own teaching experiences and observations were the only validation I had that led me to believe *Inclusion 10* could be a success. Through my research, I discovered that *Inclusion 10* was successful when I observed that the learning environment had a greater sense of inclusion. Throughout the process of conducting this study, I observed all students developing psychomotor skills, feeling as if they were a part of a social network, and not being marginalized due to a lack of skills, teacher education, or peer response. Research has been conducted on both inclusive physical education and peer teaching, but no research was found relating to secondary school physical education and inclusiveness within a program such as *Inclusion 10*.

Inclusion 10 started solely as an adapted physical education class to promote integration and increase the activity levels of functionally integrated students through mainstream peer teachers. It soon became a learning environment that provided opportunities for all students regardless of their abilities. As I observed and engaged myself in the program, I learned that *Inclusion 10* could provide so much more than what I could see from a teacher's perspective. It was a class that validated what James et al. (2010) found; it promoted a sense of student belonging, participation with others, positive relationships, and the opportunity to share the benefits of physical activity with each other.

Inclusion 10 expanded upon previous research by investigating the experiences and perspectives of all study participants. The research outcomes from this study provided an interesting window into the experiences of students, both mainstream and functionally integrated

students, the teacher, and the educational assistant's. Four main themes emerged from the positive outcomes, which were 1) Motivation and Social Implications 2) Understanding and Appreciation for Others Within and Beyond the Classroom, 3) Developing Leaders Through Inclusive Physical Education and Peer Teaching and 4) Building Life Skills for the Future. These positive outcomes will be elaborated on within this chapter.

Positive Outcomes

Motivation and Social Improvements

Inclusion 10, as a research project, was much more than just another physical education class! The students, teacher, and educational assistants described it as a “good experience, overall eye opener, fulfilling, something new, and just plain great” (Kelly (PT), interview, November 30, 2010). The gymnasium shifted from a place of competitive sport and fitness to an inclusive atmosphere that encouraged secondary students to assume new responsibilities, develop leadership skills, and learn and socialize with peers of all abilities. Sarah, a peer teacher (PT), “found it a good experience. [I] had fun meeting and working with new people” (Interview, November 30, 2010).

When the peer teachers and functionally integrated students entered the gymnasium they appeared motivated and focused (Field Notes, November 17, 2010). They took pride in building deeper friendships, learning new skills, and developing life tools that would help prepare them for the future. Sarah (PT) felt that she and her partner “both got to be kids again” (Interview, December 1, 2010). For students at the secondary level, the day can seem repetitive and constrained. Socialization can be lost in the hectic schedule of getting from one class to another and sitting in desks in organized classrooms. Sarah talked about how *Inclusion 10* reminded her of recess in elementary school, and how she missed that social aspect. She felt that *Inclusion 10*

provided an opportunity similar to recess where the students were interacting and got to “run around and play” (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Sarah, enjoyed *Inclusion 10* more than her regular class because she got “the talking nerves out of [her], got to play, have a good time and let her worries go” (Interview, December 1, 2010). By engaging students within a classroom that promoted socialization and the opportunity for independent and cooperative based learning, brought “recess” back to high school. *Inclusion 10*, helped students like Sarah who desired freedom and socialization into school “look forward to the day” (Interview, December 1, 2010).

As a physical education teacher for five years, I know that it can be difficult to motivate secondary students to fully participate in physical education. Many dislike changing into their gym clothes and being evaluated on their physical abilities by their peers and teacher. Generally, Samantha (PT) was not enthusiastic about class, but when asked how she felt coming to *Inclusion 10* every day, she replied “I was excited to see what we were going to do next” (Interview, December 2, 2010). Amy, the classroom teacher (CT), was impressed with how many of them took the “initiative to get started” (Interview, November 30, 2010). She was surprised by how the students no longer relied on her to start class and showed self-motivation.

The peer teachers took responsibility for their role and would greet their partner and start conversations at the beginning of class. The students were never late getting from the change room to class, and waited patiently at the entrance for their partners to enter the gym (Field notes, November 29, 2010). Amy (CT), found that the students with the least motivation to be physically active before showed the most initiative to be active and participate in this class (Interview, November 30, 2010).

A Non-Competitive Atmosphere

Inclusion 10 made every effort to build a classroom that was non-competitive and create a positive sense of self-concept in all students. A non-competitive environment is the foundation for *Inclusion 10* to be successful, because students can focus on improving and developing skills before participating in the large group activities. *Inclusion 10* provided a non-competitive environment, which allowed the students to focus on caring for one another rather than comparing themselves to each other. *Inclusion 10* changed the peer teachers PE class from competitive to non-competitive, and focused on social acceptance and building relationships and more students began to show a different side of themselves. There was a shift in self-esteem in both the peer teachers and functionally integrated students from participating in a non-competitive physical education class (Carol (EA), Interview, December 1, 2010).

The incorporation of competitive activities within physical education “is based upon widely held assumptions about the value of competition. It is assumed that we live in a competitive society and that students must be educated to function in a competitive world” (Grineski & Brown, 1992, p. 17). Success within competition receives recognition, privileges, and higher grades, which may increase a person’s self-worth, thus increasing their motivation to continue participating in competitive activities. Although many assume that competition “develops character, promotes sportsmanship, enhances moral development, increases motivation and readies students for the “real world”...most activities require cooperation and not competition” (Grineski & Brown, 1992, p. 17). Usually, the students that do not succeed in competitive situations end up with low confidence, diminished self-worth and lose their motivation to continue to learn in physical education.

Competitive activities and sports do not encourage opportunities for all students to participate or practice the required motor skills. Physical education should provide all students the opportunity to practice skills and activities that the students can be successful at. When competitive games begin to dominate PE many students may be negatively affected and begin to dislike competition, refrain from further participation, become less active and experience less motor skill development or success at the activities. Campbell (1974) wrote “Kids in our society may always engage in some competition, but it is not the teacher’s job to promote it, for it has nothing to do with education” (p. 145).

Bernstein, Phillips and Silverman (2011) discovered that low skilled students enjoyed cooperation and working with other students rather than participating in PE where the focus was on competition. Most of the peer teachers that were involved in *Inclusion 10* were moderately to low skilled in physical education. These students enjoyed working cooperatively amongst their peers, and participating in a class where the focus of the experience was on having “fun” (Field Notes, November 19, 2010). A non-competitive physical education class allows students the opportunity to develop and improve their skills so that they feel comfortable participating in the activities. In Bernstein’s et al. (2011) study, they found that students who “had not developed the skill to enter game play, did not have the opportunity to pass to other students and were often seen as standing around” (p.75). As I look back now on my own teaching experiences, I can remember becoming frustrated with students who were just standing around and not getting involved with the class and I never considered that the competitive games may have been to blame.

Throughout the two-week study of *Inclusion 10*, I never observed students standing around or becoming off task. The students always seemed to be actively participating in all of

the activities. I observed that each student was encouraged to participate, and were given opportunities to learn the skills before applying them to game like situations by the classroom teacher (Field Notes, November 16, 2010). When both peer teachers and functionally integrated students were provided with the opportunity to develop the skills and practice them, they were all able to feel a sense of inclusion and success. *Inclusion 10* provides a PE class that is focused on student learning, peer teaching and a non-competitive environment. This class allowed all students the time to practice and develop a variety of PE skills. Bernstein's et al. (2011) study proved that a "lack of time to practice appropriately was an element show[n] for not attaining a skill. Time and appropriate practice is crucial for student success" (p. 79).

Everyone worked together to accomplish the goals of working towards success, gaining new skills and developing positive behaviors and attitudes towards physical education and each other. The class was arranged so that the students did not compare themselves to others. It has been found that when "students consistently compare themselves to others unfavorably, their self concept is negatively affected" (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2003, p.231). The class focused on everyone being successful, regardless of students' skill level or ability. To increase social acceptance of all the participants, *Inclusion 10* included "components aimed at enhancing social skills and interpersonal problem solving, improving physical appearance, and increasing self-control" (Elbaum & Vaughn, 2003, p. 235). Many students reported an improvement in their self-esteem and confidence and enjoyed participating in physical education more.

Kelly, a (PT), enjoyed participating in a physical education class where students who did not see themselves as "athletes" were treated equally and were no longer judged on their athletic ability. Her self-esteem improved as she became confident in her abilities. She could show other strengths because she was no longer being evaluated or judged by her skill level. Kelly

found physical education to be more enjoyable when she was “not being compared to other students” (Interview, December 2, 2010). She felt that skills she took pride in such as patience and helpfulness were acknowledged and appreciated because she could see the results with her partner. Her lack of confidence in her athletic ability diminished, as she focused on what she considered to be more important responsibilities and priorities (Interview, December 2, 2010).

Allison (PT) felt that the non-competitive environment allowed her to express herself and have her own opinions. In class, she felt that she could not always be herself because she feared being judged by her peers. Allison enjoyed participating in a class that was not focused on skill, but concentrated on “trying your best and getting active...but in a fun way” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Samantha (PT) found that being involved in a non-competitive physical education class was more beneficial than her regular physical education class. She knows that many of her peers do not feel comfortable in a competitive environment. Samantha enjoyed “working together and have[ing] fun together” (Interview, December 2, 2010).

For many of the peer teachers, *Inclusion 10* was not physically challenging, but it was mentally stimulating. Samantha (PT) stated “we all had to work a bit harder mentally and emotionally” (Interview, December 2, 2010). Even though *Inclusion 10* was not as physically challenging as their *Wellness 10* class, the students still felt that they gained physical activity skills and knowledge. The students had the opportunity to further develop their physical skills, increase their flexibility and personal strength and work on their sport related skills. For *Inclusion 10* to become more physically difficult, different games and activities would have to be implemented and the class size would have to be smaller to see students’ physical endurance could be enhanced.

Since both the PT and FI students designed the course content, I did not know until the activities were implemented which ones would have the greatest physical, mental, emotional, and social impact for the students. It was also difficult to get a fair evaluation of the activities as many are not suitable for a class size of forty. With the class size being so large, and not enough equipment for everyone all of the time, it was difficult to get everyone active to their full potential. For a class this large, I found that stations and small group activities were the most successful. When the students were engaged in tasks such as yoga stations and creating their own dances, and could work at their own pace without equipment, they were much more productive (Field Notes, November 16, 2010). Amy (CT) felt that when the activities were “student directed they were more engaged” (Interview, November 30, 2010).

Sarah (PT), like many of the other peer teachers, did not find the class physically difficult. She realized that by working with her partner on basic skills such as shooting a basketball, over time she would see improvements in her partner’s motor skills and her “shots would be better and more accurate” (Interview, December 1, 2010). Even though she felt that the class was not physically challenging, she saw how hard her partner was working. Sarah stated “he was red in the cheeks and he was having a good time...even though I was not physically challenged...seeing my partner have fun was all that mattered” (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Caring Through Peer Teaching

Inclusion 10 provided an environment where students cared for one another’s well being and development through peer teaching. It went beyond the requirements of textbook pedagogy, by helping the students within the class learn to care, as well as demonstrate care through sharing common interests and developing friendships. The peer teaching experience allowed students who rarely see each other a chance to develop friendships, learn from one another and appreciate

diversity and inclusive education. Most students enjoy PE more when the activities are presented in a positive learning environment, which is “fostered in a caring environment” (Berstein et al., 2011, p. 79). When both peer teachers and functionally integrated students participate in a positive PE class that promotes a focus on task rather than measured outcome, all students have an increased chance of feeling successful.

There is so much that students can gain both academically and socially by learning how to care for one another. Noddings (2003) stated that caring “demonstrates respect for the full range of human talents, [and that] high school students desperately need to engage in the study and practice of caring...for full personal development” (p. 61). As *Inclusion 10* progressed, the level of care that each student showed for one another increased. Peer teachers demonstrated a greater level of sensitivity and competence through their roles as peer teachers. As the peer teachers became comfortable in their role as peer teachers they developed an appreciation for the functionally integrated students that they didn’t have before. Both the peer teachers and functionally integrated students felt comfortable using the term “friend” over peer when referring to their partner.

From *Inclusion 10*, Allison (PT) learned that “its ok to be yourself...they like you for who you are” (Interview, November 30, 2010). This supports the research done by Sherill et al. (1994), that discovered that “children who have been peer teachers praise and encourage each other more, express more empathy, provide and ask for more feedback, and show evidence of more meaningful, interactive contact time than classmates in control groups” (p. 30). The peer teachers began to care for the partners as their relationships evolved into friendships. *Inclusion 10* helped the peer teachers develop deep concern for their functionally integrated friends. When I asked Allison (PT) how she felt now that the class was over, she replied “ I’m kind of

sad actually, like the first day we came back to class after the two weeks were over, I was like, Oh, I kind of want my partner back” (Interview, November 30, 2010). On the final day of *Inclusion 10*, Anna (PT), received a big hug from her FI partner. I asked her how this made her feel, and she responded “I felt happy because I made a new friend! I felt like I actually accomplished making a friendship with my partner, and now he actually trusts that I want to be his friend and that its not forced by a teacher” (Interview, November 30, 2010).

The functionally integrated students gained friendships and social inclusion from learning in an environment that focused on caring for one another’s needs. For once, Jaime (FI) was happy when she got to class. She physically struggled in a regular PE class, because she could not run due to an injury with her legs. Jaime could never participate in any activities that involved running, but during *Inclusion 10* she had lots of opportunities to be involved in the lesson without running. Her partner would help adapt the lesson so that she could achieve success. When Jaime could not run, she and her partner would walk together and accomplish the task whenever they were able to. There was no pressure and no competition, which made it easy for Jaime to learn new skills. The fact that Jaime’s peer teacher cared enough to consider Jaime’s feelings and celebrated what she could do, gave Jaime the confidence to try new skills and participate in PE (Interview, November 25, 2010).

Megan (FI) described how her partner and the *Inclusion 10* experience made her feel important. She felt appreciated because she was spending time with other people and was encouraged to actively participate in all the activities. When I asked her about her previous experiences in PE, she stated that she gets “the feeling that she is not really there” and most times feels “ignored” (Interview, December 3, 2010). Carol’s (EA) interview validated how much the FI students really cared for their peer teachers. The FI students “really bonded with

their partners, and they were sad, they were truly sad, that it was over” (Interview, December 1, 2010). She was amazed how some of the FI students that rarely show emotion, began to show their feelings for their partners. Carol could not believe how upset one FI student got when his partner was not at school one day and how he had developed such a strong bond with her.

Cameron (FI) wrote in his journal “ I miss her, I miss her, I hope she is coming back!” (Journal entry, November 14, 2010). Carol found that care, respect, and appreciation were reciprocal amongst both the PT and FI students, and from the experience all the students involved gained confidence and self-worth.

Inclusion 10 focused on appreciating each student’s abilities and talents through caring for one another. Many teachers often wish that there was more time to incorporate care into their classroom, but “feel constrained by the requirements of a highly competitive world” (Noddings, 2003, p.61). *Inclusion 10* allowed the teacher to incorporate care into her classroom and teach all students how to care for each other in a positive, respectful, and meaningful way.

The classroom was designed to “provide continuity and support for relationships of care and trust” (Noddings, 2003, p. 60). Both peer teachers and functionally integrated students were provided with the opportunity to participate, to voice their opinions, and to feel included in each activity. Each lesson was designed so that the students were all working together to accomplish the same goals. The students developed an appreciation for others and learned life skills that will better prepare them to work individually and as a team. Krista (PT) “learned to be more patient and to accept the differences between people, [and became] more compassionate” (Interview, November 30, 2010). *Inclusion 10* was a positive and innovative experience for all of the participants. The feedback, interviews, conversations and journal entries all lead me to believe

that implementing *Inclusion 10* into secondary schools would be an extremely beneficial program that would address inclusion issues within physical education classes.

Best Class Ever!

The functionally integrated students all appeared to enjoy the class. I observed the students readily involved, smiling, sweating, laughing and interacting with their partners and each other (Field notes, November 19, 2010). Carol (EA) saw it as a “really good experience for our kids” (Interview, December 1, 2010). Carol has worked at the school for seven years and has had many experiences integrating functionally integrated students into both co-ed and gender specific PE classes. She saw *Inclusion 10* as a beneficial experience for both the peer teachers and functionally integrated students. It is important that peer teachers, as well as teachers, gain an understanding about various disabilities to better situate themselves to interact more effectively with students who experience the disabilities. *Inclusion 10* provided opportunities for peer teachers to interact with their peers and learn about various disabilities. This helped to diminish any “fears” or uncertainties that they may have had before.

Carol could not believe how many of her students said “this was the best class, we had so much fun” (Interview, December 1, 2010). She noticed how the functionally integrated students were inspired to try all of the skills and participate. The encouragement and attention they received from their partner was motivating to them. Any time the functionally integrated students were engaged and integrated with their peers, they felt good about themselves. She could see how they were intrigued by the encouragement “if my partner’s doing it, I can do it” (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Most functionally integrated students found the experience made them feel “awesome”. They were given the opportunity “to interact with other people” (Kelly (PT), Interview,

December 3, 2010). Megan (FI) enjoyed the class because she got to “spend time with other people and have fun” (Interview, December 3, 2010). Jaime (FI) enjoyed meeting new people, and participating in the activities. She was always happy when she got to class and left class feeling energized. Jaime referred to her peer teacher as “a very good partner, she makes me feel good” (Interview, November 16, 2010). When Jaime was asked if she missed being in the class she responded “I miss my partner and being involved in the class, it was a lot of fun...I felt very important” (Interview, December 3, 2010). She talked about how her peers enjoyed the class and how “everybody had a good time” (Interview, December 3, 2010).

Jaime always looked at the experience as positive and always showed the importance of trying her best. In her journal she wrote statements such as “some of the moves, I can’t do, but some I can...I can’t run so I just did my best and walked fast!” (Journal entry, November 25, 2010). This commitment of improving herself and looking at physical activity with a positive perspective was an important experience for Jaime and one that all students should be encouraged to experience. *Inclusion 10* can help build functionally integrated student’s confidence as well as enhance his or her physical abilities.

The functionally integrated students demonstrated their attachment to their partner through their journal responses. Working with their partner made them happy and influenced how they felt about themselves. They enjoyed the experience, interactions, and developing friendships. The functionally integrated students looked up to their peer-teachers and appreciated the help and attention they were receiving. Jacob (FI) wrote in his journal that his partner “makes him like school” (Journal entry, November 18, 2010). Jacob found his partner to be friendly and made him happy. It felt good, when his partner helped him “understand what to do” (Interview, November 23, 2010). Derek (FI) “enjoyed working with [his] partner...it made

[him] feel good” (Journal entry, November 15th, 2010). Many enjoyed the rewards of self-responsibility and the fact that their knowledge, ideas, and contributions were valued in class. Jaime (FI) wrote “I got to make my own dance!” (Journal entry, November 18, 2010).

It was rewarding to see the functionally integrated students feel included in class. They were always provided with opportunities to be involved and participate in the lesson. Functionally integrated students were asked questions, their responses and ideas were respected and they were included in all of the activities. These opportunities stayed as memories with the students when they were done class and writing in their journals. Jen (FI) wrote in her journal “my partner passed me the ball”, which was not what she always experienced in PE classes outside of *Inclusion 10* (Journal entry, November 18, 2010). These moments impacted the students and made them feel appreciated and respected by their peers. For the functionally integrated students, the interactions they had were uplifting. They felt important, included, and they enjoyed all of the benefits of being physically active with their peers. Jen (FI) wrote “she made me happy, she is so nice to me” (Journal entry, November 15, 2010).

Classroom Culture and Improved Self-Esteem

Through the interviews, I learned how the peer teachers’ perception of their classmates changed and how their relationships with one another improved. Anna (PT) discovered that “people seemed to be happier and almost more friendly and they were more aware of their actions towards each other and towards their friends” (Interview, November 30, 2010). As Anna observed her peers, she noticed that the peer teachers were more attentive to their behaviors and actions. She found that “they watched what they were saying and they watched their actions to be good role models” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Anna struggled with low confidence in physical education. *Inclusion 10* gave her more confidence in her abilities because she found

that the FI students looked up to her, respected her and idolized her. In Anna's interview she stated "when people look up to you, you know that you are doing something right for once and that makes you feel good!" (Interview, November 30, 2010).

In my experience teaching female physical education, I have seen first hand the cliques that form and the bullying that exists within physical education. Allison (FI) noticed that "everyone was kind of closer... in normal gym class there is small cliques but in this everyone was like talking to each other and having a good time with everybody instead of with just who you usually hang out with" (Interview, November 30, 2010). Physical education can be difficult for a students' self-esteem for a variety of reasons. Students have to change in front of other girls and their bodies and athletic abilities are visible to others and are often judged and criticized. Athleticism is a comparative factor in physical education, which is not always a healthy motivator for experience. When individuals are not comfortable with their bodies or with their abilities, their self-confidence can diminish. Allison (FI) felt that in her general physical education class both she and her peers were more "self-conscious cause [they] might not be as good at stuff as everybody else", but during *Inclusion 10* it was different, and she experienced confidence in her abilities and skills because she was not comparing herself to others (Interview, November 30, 2010).

By interacting with the functionally integrated students, Allison felt her athletic abilities were judged less and she could be herself, she was able to "let loose... not caring what people think" (Interview, November 30, 2010). *Inclusion 10* was an opportunity for students to be themselves and have fun. The focus amongst her peers changed from judging others, to making others feel good. "Everyone was being themselves and the other [PT] accepted you, for you"

(Interview, December 1, 2010). When asked if being in an inclusive classroom influenced her peers' views Allison replied

Yeah, I think so, because even now, in the next unit, even though [the functionally integrated students] aren't here anymore, everyone still talks more than they used to, I think it brought everyone closer...its just nicer, like, everyone talks and its good.

(Interview, December 1, 2010)

The functionally integrated students helped change the atmosphere of the classroom. I am not sure that this cultural change could have happened without the *Inclusion 10* experience. Carol (EA) believes that the FI students helped develop patience and understanding in both educators and other students, by providing new experiences in the areas of communication, patience and understanding (Interview, December 1, 2010). Implementing the *Inclusion 10* experience into a regular PE classroom helped all the peer teachers to appreciate the diversity of others.

Shauna (PT) also realized how the relationships amongst her peers changed over the course of two weeks. She noticed that her peers are usually "gossipy", but during the last two weeks, everyone "seemed a little nicer, a little more respectful than usual" (Interview, December 1, 2010). The students began to feel good, when they saw the results of their acts of kindness. They were more optimistic and respectful towards each other. Shauna felt that by working with her partner she was "inspired...to be a little more positive...[and to look at] every situation, no matter what the circumstances are [as not] necessarily a bad situation" (Interview, December 1, 2010). Shauna became more positive, because of her partner's optimism. She learned how much her partner appreciated their relationship. Her partner would laugh at "the simplest things" which "made [her] feel happy too" (Interview, December 1, 2010). Her self-esteem improved as

she realized that she was “doing a good job and getting along with her partner” (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Shauna (PT) began to appreciate herself as she developed pride in what she was doing and accomplishing. She noticed the power in giving “attention to little things” (Interview, December 1, 2010) and the impact that her subtle comments and compliments were having on her partner’s self-esteem. There were times when Shauna found that “instead of her looking up to me, I kind of looked up to her”. She learned to be “a little nicer and ...to appreciate the little things” (Interview, December 1, 2010). Shauna began to value what she had because she realized that “not everybody has those opportunities” (Interview, December 1, 2010). From this experience, she realized that “you can’t take stuff for granted...and just to be happy” (Interview, December 1, 2010).

In an interview with Carol (EA) she talked about the conversation that occurred between herself and the classroom teacher. They were discussing how their students were enjoying the class so far and how they felt about the class. Amy (CT) noticed a difference in her students’ personalities. She was surprised with how one student was engaged and participating where as before this class was usually very quiet and shy. Both Amy and Carol realized how beneficial a class such as *Inclusion 10* could be for students. Carol could see in the students a sense of pride developing from the opportunity of “teaching something to another human being” (Interview, December 1, 2010). A person gains a sense of empowerment when they help “somebody learn something or when they get that look like they finally get it” (Sarah (PT), personal communication, December 1, 2010).

Impact Beyond the Classroom

It is a rewarding experience to watch peer teachers work positively and cooperatively with functionally integrated students. I discovered that elements of friendship and caring were demonstrated towards peer teachers who previously may not have felt included in the class. Together, all of the students were building a community where everyone was included, felt successful and “where people care for each other’s well-being” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 10). This mutual respect and understanding created an environment where everyone felt a sense of belonging and responsibility. Kelly (PT), wrote in her journal:

I learned that the [functionally integrated students] are like everyone else. I found a lot of them really sweet, articulate, funny and smart. They deserve to be spoken to and treated with compassion, equality, patience and kindness (Journal entry, November 30, 2010).

Block and Orusnikova (2007) wrote a literature review on all of the research conducted in the last ten years surrounding inclusive physical education. Their research demonstrated that there are numerous positive outcomes from inclusive physical education including positive interactions and building relationships amongst all students. They felt that further “research is needed to understand the extent to which these interactions are transferred into other settings” (p. 119). Through the interviews and journal responses, I learned that the students involved in the study established strong relationships that went beyond the classroom. My research demonstrated that the relationships between all students can extend beyond the classroom and into other school settings. If the learning environment promotes inclusion and all of the participants support diversity, friendships can develop. *Inclusion 10* was a class that encouraged cooperative, respectful and caring relationships between the peer teachers and functionally integrated students. The students developed an appreciation for each other and genuinely cared for one

another. This was demonstrated in a variety of contexts such as in the hallways, the cafeteria and in other classroom settings (Field notes, November 25, 2010).

Katie (PT), wished that she “could have done the class for a bit longer. [She] really enjoyed [her] time spent with [her] partner” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Everyone was introduced to new people and developed new friendships. Anna (PT), “learned how to be one of their friends” (Interview, November 30, 2010) and developed a relationship with the students that made them excited to come to class everyday.

Through peer teaching in an inclusive environment, the peer teachers learned how to communicate and relate to their partners. They extended their knowledge on basic physical skills, and adapted and individualized the activities to meet the needs of their partner. Amy the classroom teacher saw some of her students “come out of their shells and develop relationships with other students” (Interview, November 30, 2010). In an interview with Samantha (PT), she discussed how this class opened her eyes not only to others, but also to herself. In the beginning she was scared and apprehensive of her abilities to peer teach, but as *Inclusion 10* progressed she began to appreciate herself and what she was doing for others. Her self-esteem improved as she became more confident in her physical abilities and role as a peer teacher. Samantha learned not to judge her peers and to appreciate others regardless of their limitations. She noticed that her classmates were “really friendly with [the functionally integrated students] now” (Interview, December 2, 2010). Since being introduced to the functionally integrated students, Samantha finds it “easier to have fun with them and talk to them in the halls” (Interview, December 2, 2010).

Allison (PT), felt that she was given the chance to help others learn new skills and concepts. She could be herself and not worry about being criticized on her athletic abilities.

When asked what she took away from the class she stated that she discovered “it’s ok to be yourself” (Interview, November 30, 2010). The functionally integrated students were there to have fun and “appreciated spending time with [them]” (Interview, November 30, 2010) rather than judging them. Allison thought that *Inclusion 10* helped the functionally integrated students feel as though “they are like everybody else, [and that] they can do whatever we can do” (Interview, November 30, 2010). She was surprised at how attached the students became to their partners and how every day they were smiling and “excited to come back” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Allison gained an understanding of what the functionally integrated students go through on a daily basis and began to appreciate the challenges they faced.

Candice (PT) felt that many functionally integrated students are ignored at school. *Inclusion 10* gave the students a chance to meet more people and provided them with the opportunity to feel special and a part of something. She was surprised by her peers’ ability to cooperatively and productively work with the functionally integrated students. Candice’s opinions of the girls in her class changed over the course of two weeks. It shocked her “how well they were working [with others, and] how compassionate they were towards some of the functionally integrated students” (Interview, December 2, 2010). It was “nice to see the softer side of them that [she] really did not know” (Interview, December 2, 2010). She saw girls from the “popular group... talking to [functionally integrated students] or eating lunch with them outside of class every once in awhile” (Interview, December 2, 2010). It was touching to see these girls “sitting down and taking a minute to talk to their partner” (Interview, December 2, 2010). From experiencing class with these girls prior to the study, she thought that *Inclusion 10* helped “mature a lot of the girls” and helped them as a class “grow and be more compassionate” (Interview, December 2, 2010).

Erin (PT) talked about how she and her partner became closer as the two weeks progressed. When she saw her partner in the hallway they always said “hi” to each other, and in their commercial cooking class, her partner liked to sit and visit with her. She realized how many people take students with various disabilities for granted and treat them differently because they are not seen as equal. Through *Inclusion 10*, her class learned that functionally integrated students are the “same as [them] and have feelings, so they should be treated the same” (Interview, December 1, 2010). Kelly (PT) learned how to work with functionally integrated students and now when she sees them in the hallways she knows “what to say and how to act” (Interview, December 2, 2010).

Shauna (PT) wrote in her journal that it felt good to have a strong relationship with her partner, and when asked to expand on her thoughts she stated, “still today, in the hallways she always runs up and she hugs me and we say hi to each other in the hallway and stuff...I don’t see that dying down any time soon” (Interview, December 1, 2010). Shauna felt like she was someone for her partner to look up to and knew that she made her partner feel good. As the class progressed, Shauna noticed that as they got to know each other better, they became friends. She was a role model and a positive influence for her partner. At the beginning she struggled with her partner’s listening skills and attentiveness, but as the week advanced her partner began to take her advice and would try the activities rather than refuse. Shauna learned that her energetic partner liked to be in competitive situations and Shauna used this strategy to keep her partner focused by creating little competitions between herself and her partner.

Shauna noticed how much more focused and engaged she was in *Inclusion 10*, compared to her regular gym class. She took her role as a peer-teacher seriously and wanted to be a good role model. Shauna made sure that she was listening to all of the directions and doing all of the

activities correctly, so that her partner would follow her actions. She began to pay attention to the little things and created little compliments that made her partner feel good. When her partner was laughing and happy, she felt good about herself and what she was doing. Shauna saw *Inclusion 10* as an opportunity to teach, but she realized how much she was learning from her partner and how their relationship developed from a teacher student standpoint, to a friendship (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Sarah (PT) discussed how her partner seemed a lot happier during the class and how the socialization provided him with a sense of belonging. Before her involvement in *Inclusion 10*, Sarah had not talked or interacted with functionally integrated students. She didn't know her partner, or had even been given the opportunity to get acquainted with him. *Inclusion 10* helped all of the students work together and made the interaction process easier by giving everyone more confidence and providing opportunities to correlate with different people. The fear of walking over to each other and having a conversation diminished.

Inclusion 10 impacted Sarah's partner, by helping him become more sociable and confident, with his peers. When Sarah, a mainstream student, sees her partner in the hallway, they say "hi" to each other, something that was never experienced before. She felt that acknowledging him in the hallways helped improve his self-esteem. This made her feel good, because when she saw him before he looked "scared"(Interview, December 1, 2010) walking in the hallways at school. Through this experience Sarah knew that her partner's confidence and self-esteem improved. He was asking more questions and showed interest in having more meaningful conversations. Sarah felt good about herself and what she was doing, when she saw the positive changes that were occurring in such a short amount of time. In the hallways Sara would see her partner with his head down trying to stay out of the other students' way, but in this

class he was “happy and he [had] his head held high” (Interview, December 1, 2010). She “hopes that he takes that with him the rest of his life so he’s not scared to do anything” (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Dana (PT) felt that she and her partner had a connection that turned into a friendship. When they see each other in the hallways they greet each other. She felt that before when she saw functionally integrated students, they were scared of her and her peers, but now “they know we are pretty much like them except in a different way...we can all be friends” (Interview, December 2, 2010). Dana felt that this opportunity and the interactions added enjoyment to the students’ lives and ordinary school day. She developed compassion for others, when she realized how much she has to be grateful for and how important it was for her and her peers to help the functionally integrated students have the same opportunities. Through *Inclusion 10* Dana learned how much she enjoyed working with functionally integrated students and realized how good it felt to help others. Dana found it “fun to watch everyone...[she] always saw smiles on all the kids’ faces...they were having a lot of fun” (Interview, December 2, 2010). The peer teachers were motivated to provide a positive experience for the functionally integrated students. Dana proved this when she stated “we wanted to make them feel like they have as much opportunity as we do,... [and make sure] they know that they can do what we can do” (Interview, December 2, 2010).

Kelly (PT) discussed how in the end everyone became more comfortable with each other and everyone made a new friend. Everyone “said really nice things and everyone...came together” (Interview, December 2, 2010). She realized the importance of encouraging and complimenting all of her peers. Kelly felt that she made an impact on her partner by helping her “come out of her shell...[and made her] more willing to try new things and more eager to

participate” (Interview, December 2, 2010). She helped improve her partner’s self-esteem and gave her the confidence to try new skills and be involved.

The educational assistant Carol, felt that the students built special relationships with one another. She stated “they really bonded with their partner and they were sad, they were truly sad that [the class] was over” (Interview, December 1, 2010). Carol noticed that the relationships extended into the hallways and cafeteria after class was over. She noticed the peer teachers were acknowledging and giving high fives to the functionally integrated students. For her students “to be validated by a peer in the hallway...speaks volumes...Just being recognized in the hallways of 1200 kids” made them feel like they belonged and were a bigger part of the school (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Carol talked about the relationship that one functionally integrated student had with his mainstream partner Janelle. Generally, this functionally integrated student did not show emotion in school, but when Carol was asked if she noticed anything different in any students she told the story of one student. This individual who usually keeps his feelings inside, “showed emotions, he was truly touched and truly cared about his partner, he cried the day that his partner was not there...he developed that bond with another student in school” (Interview, December 1, 2010). During Janelle’s (PT) interview, she was asked how *Inclusion 10* made her feel, and she responded “it made me happy. It just made me feel good knowing I made a new friend” (Interview, December 2, 2010). The students that were involved developed friendships with each other that may not have existed without this opportunity. Janelle became very close with her partner and helped him show emotions that he had rarely shown in school. Janelle felt that she “accomplished making friendships with him and he actually trusts [her] now...he doesn’t think I’m just some person that is there because I’m forced to be” (Interview, December 2,

2010). The peer teachers learned how gratifying it was to give to others and make others feel good. Janelle stated “when you make them feel happy ...you become happy” (Interview, December 2, 2010).

Enhanced Leadership Skills through Peer Teaching

Armstrong (2002) stated that education should put a “high priority on teaching young people to develop their thinking abilities [and] emphasizes the need for young people to develop outstanding problem solving skills” (p. 108). The outcomes from *Inclusion 10* compliment this belief. As the students were planning lessons, working together, brainstorming instructional approaches, and deciding the best activities and adaptations; they were enhancing their leadership skills. The students were introduced to a new responsibility, that better prepared them for handling different situations in the work force such as co-worker relationships, coping with changes, and adapting to stressful situations (Armstrong, 2002). Armstrong stressed that individuals with “these kind of skills [will] have the tools needed to think about and adapt to changing social conditions” (Armstrong, 2002, p. 108).

Inclusion 10 challenged the peer teachers to think and interact in a new way, which for some was out of their comfort level. Cheryl, a mainstream student, “never had classes with functionally integrated kids before, so it was a challenge for [me]. [I] had to use [my] better way of being” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Lindsay (PT) stated “I enjoyed it but I’m happy to be done. It was challenging trying to work with [my partner]. But I would do it again” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Even though she felt challenged by her partner, she was still interested in participating in the class again. Through the data collected, I learned that for *Inclusion 10* to be successful, partners must be rotated on a weekly basis, as some partners can be more difficult to

work with than others. This would allow for all students to have the opportunity to work with everyone in their class and learn about various disabilities (Field notes, November 25, 2010).

The peer teachers took responsibility for making sure their partners were successful. Sarah (PT) enjoyed the challenges she faced, she found them to be different than anything she had experienced before. To establish positive communication and interactions, she took on new responsibilities. She changed her communication skills and brainstormed strategies that would assist her partner. Sarah wanted her partner to have a good time and enjoy class, and knew that if she put her partner's needs before her own she could accomplish that. Participating in *Inclusion 10* encouraged her "to think more" (Interview, December 1, 2010) as she took on the responsibility of "make[ing] sure her partner was doing good with the skills and concepts" (Interview, December 1, 2010). Without being told, many students initiated the responsibility to help their partner learn and be successful. They took pride in the challenges they faced and their role as peer teachers. Katie (PT) "enjoyed [herself] and teach[ing] [her] partner new things and new activities" (Interview, November 30, 2010).

Inclusion 10 taught young students new skills and responsibilities that may prepare them for future careers, build references for themselves, and "help them to understand [that] the thinking abilities developed in one context have relevance for many others" (David Armstrong, 2002, p. 108). It exposed and introduced the peer teachers to professions such as teaching, social work, special education, and teacher assistants by providing them with the opportunity to teach and help others in the classroom (Raschke & Bronson, 1999). Many saw this experience as an opportunity to learn skills that would develop their teaching abilities. When Katie (PT) was asked how *Inclusion 10* was different from *Wellness 10* she stated "it was really different because I was not just learning...I was teaching and having fun at the same time" (Interview,

November 30, 2010). Janelle (PT) saw *Inclusion 10* as training for becoming a teacher. She has future plans of becoming an elementary teacher, and knows that she must develop skills to work with students of all levels, ages and abilities. Janelle experienced how to stay positive during difficult times and work with a large number of people with varying skill and intellectual levels (Interview, December 2, 2010). Sarah (PT) “got an awareness of what it is like to be a teacher” and now appreciates how much work goes into planning a class that everyone enjoys and will be successful in (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Inclusion 10 sustained an environment where all students were “reacting to difficulties and adversity in an optimistic manner, viewing difficult situations as challenges and opportunities for growth, adopting a positive attitude and accepting [their] limitation and making the best of a bad situation” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 6). Katie (PT) found *Inclusion 10* “gave [her] new insights and new friends. It made [her] feel good about [herself by] being there for them” (Interview, November 30, 2010).

Inclusion 10 allowed the teacher to provide problem-solving skills by engaging peer teachers in the teaching and planning process. They were exposed to “learning examples that are relevant to their own experiences” and with positive interactions and activities (Armstrong, 2003, p. 108). When students are engaged in activities that they are “laughing and being able to stimulate laughter in others, [they are] able to express emotions appropriately and comfortable[y]” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2004, p. 7). Carla (PT) wrote in her journal “I miss the class. It was fun being with my partner, I miss her as well” (Journal entry, November 30, 2010). Katie (PT) reflected “at first [they] did not know each other but going through the class we were a lot better and understanding of each other” (Journal entry, November 30, 2010).

Developing leadership skills in youth of all abilities can have many benefits and improve self-esteem, self-perception and self-confidence. Research has found that students may be more motivated to increase and extend their participation in physical activity when they have leadership opportunities. Lieberman, Arndt and Daggett (2007) found “students with and without disabilities need opportunities to lead, just as they need developmentally appropriate pedagogy and opportunities for physical and academic skill acquisition” (p. 46). A classroom that encourages the use of leadership activities creates opportunities to develop positive interactions and promotes inclusion. Teaching and developing leadership skills in students will strengthen an inclusive classroom. Lieberman et al. (2007) stated “a natural extension of inclusion should be to increase opportunities for leadership and the development of leadership skills” (p. 49).

Amy, the classroom teacher, was apprehensive about the class at first. She did not “think that it was going to be very successful [after] the first two or three days” (Interview, November 30, 2010), and that the skills were too elementary for the peer teachers. After witnessing her students gain leaderships qualities, she sees the class as a beneficial program. She believes that most of her students developed “some leaderships skills that [she] did not know [were] present in them before the class” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Amy was shocked to see some of her students display these qualities around the students with functionally integrated students. In Block and Klavina’s (2008) study “the teacher reported observable social growth in...students and positive acceptance toward [functionally integrated] classmates” (p. 147).

The students that showed the most initiative and whose leadership qualities stood out the most to the classroom teacher were from students that “are not excited about physical activity” and do not enjoy the class (Amy (CT), Interview, November 30, 2010). She felt that these

students benefited enormously from this experience. Amy thinks that students who do not necessarily enjoy a competitive environment, but would like to enhance and develop their leadership skills would profit from these experiences. She recognized that the students were most engaged when they were the ones leading and instructing and the focus was student led, rather than teacher directed. The students benefited the most and displayed the best behavior, when they were leading class. Amy found that when the lessons were student directed, the class was much more successful (Interview, November 30, 2010).

Candice (PT) became proud of herself as she realized that she was a role model, and that all along she had the skills required to make her partner feel comfortable and gain confidence. The experience of being a leader and role model was something that Candice really enjoyed. She found it “touching to be able to teach them all new things ...and help them learn and grow in a different way” and taking on the role as a peer teacher was something that Candice thought “helps us grow as young people...[and further] mature” (Interview, December 3, 2010).

Allison (PT) enjoyed teaching her partner because she saw how much she influenced her in learning new skills and how she personally developed as a leader. She observed the progress she was making with her partner over the two weeks and learned about different disabilities (Interview, November 30, 2010). Sarah (PT) enjoyed being the teacher and using her leadership skills to assist her partner. It felt good to help her partner learn new skills and concepts. She felt that by helping him understand new skills, she was helping to positively influence functionally integrated students have a good school day (Interview, December 1, 2010). The students learned to put aside their self-centered focus and expanded their minds to “empathy, to real listening, [and] to taking another person’s perspective” (Lappe & DuBois, 1994, p. 285). By developing leadership skills in our students, inclusive classrooms will be strengthened and successful

learning environments for all students (Lieberman et al., 2007). Katie (PT) felt that she “learned so many new things and it...[was] a good experience. Girls our age would benefit because it teaches us that the [functionally integrated students] are the same as us” (Interview, November 30, 2010).

Knowledge and Empathy: Building Life Skills for the Future

Throughout the study, all of the students were asked in their journals and in the interviews if they thought that they developed any new skills. From their responses I learned that *Inclusion 10* provided the peer teachers with the ability to make connections with their peers, and they developed knowledge about how to work with functionally integrated students. They gained a sense of understanding for their functionally integrated peers. Samantha (PT) “could understand how these [students] are feeling” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Carla (PT) learned “a little bit more about people and their way of being” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Everyone developed sensitivity, empowerment, respect, and an appreciation for others (Rashke & Bronson, 1999). The students realized a fuller meaning of inclusion and gained an awareness of the varying levels of disabilities. They became more knowledgeable about the diversity within their school, community, and society.

Kelly (PT) discovered how important it is to “talk to kids [that are functionally integrated]” (Interview, November 30, 2010). From participating in *Inclusion 10*, she gained an appreciation for her functionally integrated peers by realizing that you should talk to these students like “you would talk to anyone else” (Interview, November 30, 2010). *Inclusion 10* promoted skills that enhanced teamwork, student accountability, socialization, collaboration and equality, which have been found to decrease bullying in schools (Rashke & Bronson, 1999). Samantha (PT) “learned how much [she] loved working with people with disabilities. [She]

thinks it also made [her] more compassionate” (Interview, November 30, 2010). The class aimed to achieve responsible and respectful membership within their schools and community through the interviews, I learned that this occurred.

Raschke and Bronson’s (1999) research supported the finding in this study that the functionally integrated students gained a sense of belonging, development of friendships in school and their community, and an increase in their self-respect. They were motivated in a developmentally stimulating classroom that encouraged all students to learn and grow at their own pace and with their peers (Raschke & Bronson 1999). Shaun, a functionally integrated student, wrote in his journal “I liked working with my partner, she was fun and nice...I am feeling better from my partner...I enjoyed myself in class” (Journal entry, November 15, 19, 22, 2010). The peer teachers gained the knowledge to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of their partner. *Inclusion 10* allowed the peer teachers to problem solve and create ways to break skills for a peer that is the same age, but just has different capabilities. They learned a life lesson on how to work with various abilities and personalities. Kelly (PT) “learned how to be patient with [the functionally integrated students] and how to take it slower when we need[ed] to” (Interview, November 30, 2010).

Carol, the educational assistant noticed how much the students learned about themselves from the experience. The students learned “the capability of their own character of what they can and cannot do” (Interview, December 1, 2010). Each peer teacher developed an understanding of how to work with different people, their classmates and numerous disabilities. Carol felt that for a teenager to learn how to modify lessons and skills and be exposed to peer teaching functionally integrated students “builds character in that person” (Interview, December 1, 2010). Armstrong (2003) agreed that by teaching students how to become adaptable and

accept challenges will help them in future careers. The students took the initiative to create questions to ask their partner as a strategy to get to know them. They wanted to be successful and wanted their partner to be comfortable and by the end they knew a lot about each other. Nicole (PT) wrote about her partner in her journal “ at the beginning of the class she was shy towards us. But at the end she seemed to trust us and be more open to us” (Journal entry, November 30, 2010). Krista (PT) had a similar experience with her partner and wrote “at the beginning she was a little bit nervous but then we got a really good relationship and we enjoyed every single moment” (Journal entry, November 30, 2010).

Communication skills were developed and enhanced through conversations that the students initiated and maintained during the two weeks. Anna (PT) said that after her partner became more comfortable and confident they talked more and had more conversations. She “really liked getting to know him” (Interview, December 1, 2010). Learning to communicate with functionally integrated students can be challenging for anyone. Kelly (PT) found that she and her partner made a lot of progress and now “are more comfortable to talk to each other” (Interview, November 30, 2010).

Without any training, many of the peer teachers took initiative to learn communication strategies that would best help them relate to their partner. Many used touch to help guide their understanding. When Sarah’s (PT) partner was having a difficult time getting into a yoga position and forgot the next step she “tapped” his leg to remind him which one to put in the air (Interview, December 1, 2010). For Kelly (PT), sometimes getting her partner’s attention was difficult. She learned that by “tapping her shoulder” and providing lots of positive feedback, her partner became more attentive and willing to listen. Her partner was always worried about not doing the activities correctly, but through positive communication she was able to build

confidence in her partner. When her partner felt she was doing a good job, she wanted to do the skill more and felt better about herself (Interview, December 2, 2010).

During the two weeks, there were times when students had to rotate partners or work with someone different because their partner was away. This experience taught them how to communicate differently to other personalities. They gained an understanding of different disabilities and how to work cooperatively with others. Sarah (PT) talked about how one student that she worked with was very “timid”, while another one was “easy going”. This shift in personalities was challenging for her and she realized how important it was to build trust with the student. When the functionally integrated students had trust in their partner they would listen much better. She learned how to engage both learners, but it took time and patience “to communicate with them and try to figure out what they were thinking” (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Patience and tolerance were other skills that the students were challenged to develop. The peer teachers gained these skills by learning to see the functionally integrated students from a new perspective. Katie (PT) learned “that they are just like us and...have the same feelings as us. [She] learned many things and it really opened [her] eyes” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Lappe and DuBois (1994) stated “seeing things from another’s perspective breaks down biased stereotypes, and so breeds tolerance and acceptance of differences” (p.285). Carla (PT) wrote in her journal, “this experience benefited me because I became more patient by working with functionally integrated students” (Journal entry, November 30, 2010). Kelly (PT) learned to be more patient “and that [the functionally integrated students] can do everything the same as us” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Samantha (PT) discovered the importance of being “a helpful person and to be a bit more patient” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Katelyn (PT) stated “there

[are] so many things in life that if you don't have patience you are just going to get frustrated and you just going to give up and your just going to want to do it anymore...so it was a great thing that she taught me just to have patience” (Interview, December 2, 2010).

At the beginning there were times when the peer teachers would find themselves frustrated and an educational assistant would have to intervene, but as the class progressed and they learned more about their partner and began to understand their learning patterns, their frustrations seemed to diminish. The peer teachers took responsibility in their role as peer teachers. They adapted the skills appropriately and broke them down from complex to simple tasks. Sarah's (PT) partner was not sure how to do most of the yoga poses but they “helped him out and made them simpler so he had fun doing them” (Interview, December 1, 2010). The peer teachers proved to be self-sufficient and independent by coming up with their own strategies that would best help their partner be successful. The peer teachers became observant and took responsibility for their partners learning. They would look at their facial and body expressions, and create modifications to help their partner be successful.

Each student learned how paying attention to each others needs can make a person feel important and understood the value of having good listening skills and being attentive. Anna (PT) stated “when I was talking he would listen close and he just made me feel important”. Anna said that her partner “was a good listener” (Interview, December 1, 2010). From this class and working with her partner she developed better listening skills and learned how “to be a better listener” because she knew from her partner how good that made her feel (Interview, December 1, 2010).

Anna gained knowledge of how to work “with people in a very kind and nice way” (Interview, November 30, 2010). She also developed patience and knowledge in how to work

with functionally integrated students. Anna noted that she learned “how to work together as a team, with other teammates” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Kelly (PT) learned how to motivate her very nervous partner through encouragement. After awhile, her partner “started to want to participate ” (Interview, December 2, 2010). Kelly felt that she learned more from leading the instruction because she was able to learn from her mistakes and teach herself how to handle difficult situations. She felt that the teaching experience was reciprocal because her partner taught her new skills and made her a better observer (Interview, December 2, 2010).

Chapter 5: Reflective Thoughts

Through my research, I have discovered that *Inclusion 10* has the potential to be a very successful inclusion program, and beneficial to a variety of stakeholders. My findings support Lappe and DuBois's (1994) research that stated that physical education "holds seemingly great potential to not only address character development from an idealistic perspective, but actively shape character" (79). The peer teachers changed their views in relation to all of their peers. *Inclusion 10* "forced a new perspective" (Kelly (PT), interview, November 30, 2010). Individual differences were shared and the students learned to respect and value a wide variety of abilities while further developing and recognizing their own strengths. The peer teachers learned that just because their peers are functionally integrated students does not "mean that they are any different than us" (Samantha (PT), interview, November 30, 2010). It was a classroom that appreciated diversity and reinforced a sense of companionship and membership.

When I set out to research *Inclusion 10* I was hoping that my curriculum would create a PE environment that provided support and care for functionally integrated students, as well as give each peer teacher the opportunity to develop leadership skills through peer teaching. This research exceeded those expectations and I learned that *Inclusion 10* provided so much more to all of the students and teachers involved. I hope that one day, *Inclusion 10* will be implemented into schools within Saskatchewan. *Inclusion 10* has the potential to positively change the lives of all students.

Seymour et al. (2009) stated that "friendship is a dimension of social interaction and a goal of inclusion...developing and maintaining close intimate friendships satisfies the universal

need for interpersonal relationships” (p. 201). *Inclusion 10* did more than just build peer relationships, it created an atmosphere that encouraged friendships between functionally integrated students and students that are not functionally integrated. When I started my research, I didn’t think that the students would develop such close friendships with one another. When I interviewed the peer teachers and the functionally integrated students, their words were genuine and compassionate about their peers. They enjoyed their company, they looked forward to the interactions, and they found someone new who they could smile at when they passed in the hallways.

While I can’t always ensure that these relationships in the hallways, other classes, and post *Inclusion 10* will remain constant, I do believe that lives have been changed. As teachers, we often do not see where our work takes our students into their futures. At best, we can hope that our work along the way influences our students and makes a greater societal impact. If, through this innovative program, some lives have been changed for the better a great mission has been accomplished.

The peer teachers created a sense of belonging for the functionally integrated students. They supported the accomplishments made by the functionally integrated students, facilitated participation to try new activities and participated in a PE class that was both inclusive and adaptive, and were willing partners who taught the functionally integrated students how to use new equipment and try new skills. The functionally integrated students felt included because they had important and valued roles within the class. Each functionally integrated student was provided with the opportunity to offer suggestions on activities that they wanted to participate in and were encouraged to actively participate in each activity.

Feeling like a legitimate participant is essential for an inclusive environment to be successful. Including all students in this study as part of the inclusion process provided me with ideas of how to best include all student's needs, desires, and abilities. When functionally integrated students are able to make a valuable contribution to a learning situation they gain a "sense of acceptance, belonging, and value in activity settings" (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010, p. 288).

Inclusion 10 was a good opportunity for everyone and the students and teachers took pride in opening up their class to others. Kelly (PT) enjoyed "working with people who she usually would not get to work with" (Interview, November 30, 2010). Kelly saw the experience as an opportunity for the functionally integrated students to interact with her and her peers.

Through reading the journals of both peer teachers, and functionally integrated students, I learned that everyone was proud of their accomplishments and what they learned from the experience. Samantha (PT) affirmed this in her journal when she wrote "with this class we could challenge ourselves" (Journal entry, November 24, 2010). Challenging peer teachers to think in a new way and to use their own abilities to help functionally integrated students encouraged them to develop patience, understanding, and leadership.

I found the support of the educational assistants to be essential for success in this class. Some peer teacher's did not feel as comfortable at the beginning and were self-conscious of their work. One peer teacher was unaware if she was "doing great work and being a good partner to [her] buddy" (Karen (PT), Interview, November 30, 2010). Continual encouragement, motivation, and feedback from the teacher and educational assistants was important for the peer teachers to be successful and enjoy peer teaching and inclusion (Field Notes, November 29, 2010).

The *Inclusion 10* curriculum was designed to guide teachers on how to create a classroom that is non-competitive and builds a community of learners. Curriculum documents are written for teachers to gain information and ideas regarding best teaching practices, content, and theoretical outcomes regarding issues such as inclusion. The *Inclusion 10* curriculum can provide teachers with a resource on how to provide an inclusive PE class that promotes leadership, caring and support. *Inclusion 10* will provide teachers with lesson plans, adaptations, classroom organization, and management tools that will support an inclusive environment.

To keep the class manageable, I would recommend that the class be no larger than twenty- four students, which would consist of twelve peer teachers and twelve functionally integrated students. There would also need to be three to four educational assistants present for the class. The educational assistants play an important role in the success of *Inclusion 10*. They have the education and experience from working with these students on a daily basis, in which, they can provide the peer teachers with the best feedback and support. With smaller class size, it would be much easier for me to find appropriate curriculum activities that promote activity, socialization, and inclusion.

Inclusion 10 is greatly focused on student choice and instruction. In the curriculum, I would provide multiple lessons and activities, but it is also part of the teacher's job to take my curriculum and adapt it to the needs of his or her class, as some students may want activities and lessons outside of the ones I have provided. Student led instruction was one of the most positive aspects that Amy (CT) said she found about the class. All of the activities that the peer teachers chose, were activities that they were familiar with and that they enjoyed, so many of them felt confident providing the instruction and adaptations. With them having previous knowledge about the activity, the peer teachers felt much more comfortable in their role as mentors. All she

had to do was provide the students with the activity, and it was left to the peer teachers to show their responsibility by completing the tasks and providing instruction. When I asked Amy, how she thought the students enjoyed the lessons, she replied “they wanted to be engaged and wanted to be involved.... they enjoyed leading and instructing ” (Interview, November 30, 2010). The peer teachers had not had the opportunity to mentor another student before, and for most of them it was an amazing opportunity. They learned new things about themselves and discovered parts of their personality that they hadn’t known existed, because they had not had to use that part of their character. By providing the students with journals to reflect in, the teacher and educational assistants can better understand the student’s perspectives and any changes that need to be made.

Amy felt confident that if the curriculum was put into schools, that teachers really needed to “give the students the activity, but then let them go and do it, because the independence that the students received helped them to enjoy the class more” (Interview, November 30, 2010). Providing peer teachers with a class that allowed them to teach other students developed their leadership skills and ability to work with others. When I asked Amy if she would enjoy teaching a class like this again, she replied:

I think it would take some getting used to...[*Inclusion 10*] is totally out of the norm and what we are used to. But if students are learning and developing those acceptance qualities, teachers will too. *Inclusion 10* would be a challenge, but it would also be beneficial and enhance my career. (Interview, November 30, 2010)

The present study provided insight into what contributes to a positive PE experience and what *Inclusion 10* can provide for the peer teachers and functionally integrated students, the teacher, and teacher assistants. The voices of students conceptualized within the theoretical framework, has reinforced the need to provide a class such as *Inclusion 10*, which can benefit all

who participate. By listening carefully to the peer teachers and functionally integrated students and the teachers, we can see that inclusive PE classes benefit everyone.

Future Wonders

This study focused on female grade ten students as peer teachers to both male and female functionally integrated students. As I look back on my research, I wonder what the potential outcome would be if the peer teachers were all male students? How would male peer teachers respond to the functionally integrated students and to their role as peer teachers? Future researchers may wish to explore *Inclusion 10* as a co-ed or all male peer physical education program to see if the outcomes are different. They may also want to look at *Inclusion 10* with a group of male or female students that excel in their athletic abilities to see if athletic ability changes the positive outcomes that *Inclusion 10* had to offer to students that are low to moderately skilled.

It would be interesting to see how a smaller class size of participants affects the program in terms of organization, classroom management and available equipment. Further investigation into a program of *Inclusion 10* in a variety of educational circumstances would expand the credentials of this research.

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Appendix A: Transcript Release Form

TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM

Study Title: The Experiences of Mainstream and Special Needs Students within a Peer-teaching, Inclusive Physical Education Program.

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my interviews within this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and /or delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I give permission for Elaina Guilmette to have this transcript and use it in the manner described in the consent form.

Participant

Date

Researcher

Date

I, _____, have reviewed my journal within this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and/or delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I give permission for Elaina Guilmette to have this transcript, use direct quotations from my transcripts after I have viewed them and use it in the manner described in the consent form.

Participant

Date

Researcher

Date

Appendix B: Parental Consent Form

CONSENT FORM (PARENTS)

Title: The Experiences of Mainstream and Special Needs Students within a Peer-teaching, Inclusive Physical Education Program

Dear Parents,

My name is Elaina Guilmette and I am a graduate student in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of Saskatchewan and a teacher at Holy Cross High School. I would like to ask for your daughter's assistance in a research study. The purpose of this study is to learn the experiences of students who are participating in an inclusive, peer-teaching, Physical Education program called *Inclusion 10*. This program fits within the regular physical education curriculum; however, it has been changed to be more inclusive of all students and provide more opportunities for mainstream and special needs students. This project is being supervised by Dr. Brenda Kalyn, a professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. Acknowledgement of the study has been on reviewed on ethical grounds by the Behavioral Research Ethics Board at the University of Saskatchewan. Please read this letter and feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

The focus of my research will investigate the experiences which are learned and developed in both peer teachers and students with special needs through peer-teaching in an inclusive Physical Education classroom. Through teaching and observing my own classrooms, where integration and inclusion of students with special needs is a high priority, I have created a unique program, *Inclusion 10* that is an adapted program which will be taught within *Wellness 10*; your child's regular physical education class. This class is designed to include and integrate students with special needs within a mainstream Physical Education setting.

I wish to learn first hand what the experiences of the student participant's are within the *Inclusion 10* portion. Both mainstream and special needs students are in the primary position to provide rich detailed descriptions of their experiences working together within this cooperative learning initiative. Also, there is an opportunity to learn about the "unseen" experiences of students, and to learn of the challenges the students face on a daily basis. The basic question comes from a place of wonder for me as the classroom teacher and a desire to learn, through research, the experiences of these young women and to enhance learning for both students and teachers.

This project will focus on one female *Wellness 10* class that integrates at least ten students with special needs. The class will run for two weeks, to gather enough data about the benefits and draw backs of providing *Inclusion 10* into secondary schools. If your child chooses to participate they will: 1) experience physical activities with special needs students; 2) keep a written journal of their experiences; and 3) may be asked a few interview questions about their physical education experiences within *Inclusion 10*. These interviews will be audio reordered

and at any time the participant may request the recording device be turned off. Direct quotations from your child's journal and pictures of their experience will be used for Educational purposes only and with your permission.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. Your child can withdraw from the study at anytime and does not have to answer any questions that your child does not feel comfortable answering. There will be no penalties for not participating or withdrawing from the study and the decision to participate or not to participate will not affect the grade that your child receives in *Wellness 10*. If your child does not participate they will attend an alternate school physical activity program during this time. Results and all of the information provided will be confidential and stored by Dr. Brenda Kalyn in a locked office at the University of Saskatchewan for a minimum of five years. After five years, it will be appropriately destroyed. The results will be presented at the University of Saskatchewan and possibly reported in academic journals and conference presentations. Please complete the attached form designating whether or not your child will participate in this study. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact Elaina Guilmette at eguilmette@gscs.sk.ca or 966-7566; Dr. Brenda Kalyn at brenda.kalyn@usask.ca or 966-7566; or the Research Ethics Office at ethics.office@usask.ca or 966-2084

This information will be shared in my thesis that I am writing for my M. Ed in Curriculum Studies and possibly published in educational journals and presented at educational conferences. If you give permission for your child to participate in this study, please sign and return the attached form.

By signing the attached document and agreeing for your child to be involved in this study, you are:

1. Acknowledging that you fully understand the research project
2. Acknowledging that you have obtained a copy of the consent form
3. Aware of how the data will be used
4. Understanding that your daughter will have the opportunity to review their transcript to ensure that it accurately reflects what she said in this interview.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elaina Guilmette, Researcher
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Saskatoon, SK
966-7566

Dr. Brenda Kalyn, Supervisor
College of Education
Curriculum Studies
966-7566

Appendix C: Parental Consent Form

Study Title: The Experiences of Mainstream and Special Needs Students within a Peer-teaching, Inclusive Physical Education Program

PARENTS/GUARDIANS PLEASE READ, SIGN AND RETURN YOUR CONSENT FORM TO THE SCHOOL

I consent to my child's participation in the study

Yes	No
-----	----

I consent to my child being interviewed with an audio recorder

Yes	No
-----	----

I consent to my child's photograph being used for Educational purposes only (after I view them).

Yes	No
-----	----

I consent to the use of quotes from my child's journal for Educational purposes only.

Yes	No
-----	----

Child's name: _____

I, _____ have read and understand the purpose of this study and my daughter's involvement in this study. I give permission to allow _____ to participate in the study conducted by Graduate Student Elaina Guilmette.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Elaina Guilmette
Principal Investigator
College of Curriculum Studies
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
eguilmette@gscs.sk.ca

Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

Title: The Experiences of Mainstream and Special Needs Students within a Peer-teaching, Inclusive Physical Education Program

Hello,

I want to invite you to be a part of an exciting and innovative research project at school called *Inclusion 10*. The purpose of this project is to involve you in the opportunity to experience peer-teaching in an inclusive Physical Education classroom. Peer teachers will be paired with students with special needs to conduct adapted Physical Education activities and skills. Through this research, I hope to gain an understanding of both your negative and positive experiences within *Inclusion 10*, which is an adapted *Wellness 10* program.

This program will not be part of your class work (in terms of evaluation) and is completely voluntary, which means that you do not have to participate in the study. If you choose to participate in the study you have the option to withdraw at any time without any consequences or penalties.

This project will involve you talking with me and other students within your *Wellness 10* class. The program will run for two weeks during your regular class time. If you choose not to participate you will have an alternative physical activity class. You may also be asked to participate in one or two group discussions about your experiences that will be audio recorded. These will occur during the noon hour. In total, all interview times will be about one-two hours over the next six to eight weeks.

Anything that you tell me in our one-on-one interviews that will be recorded; will be kept confidential, but I cannot guarantee that other members of the group will do so. Please respect the confidentiality of the other members of the group by not discussing the contents of the interview outside the group. Also, please beware that others may not respect your confidentiality. You may request to turn the recording device off at any time during the interview. If I write about you or if I use your quotes you will be given a pseudonym (fake name) to protect your identity and that of your school. You may be in some pictures so we need your permission to use these photographs.

By signing the attached document and you agree to be involved in this study and you are:

1. Acknowledging that you fully understand the research project
2. Acknowledging that you have obtained a copy of the consent form
3. Aware of how the data will be used
4. Understanding that you will have the opportunity to review your transcript to ensure that it accurately reflects what you said in any interviews.

Participant Printed Name

Participant Signature

Date

Thank you for your consideration,

Elaina Guilmette, Researcher
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966-7566

Dr. Brenda Kalyn, Supervisor
College of Education
Curriculum Studies
966-7566

Appendix E: Photo Release Form

PHOTO RELEASE FORM

Study Title: The Experiences of Mainstream and Special Needs Students within a Peer-teaching, Inclusive Physical Education Program.

I, _____, have reviewed all of the photographs within this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to remove any pictures. I give permission for Elaina Guilmette to have this transcript and use it in the manner described in the consent form.

Participant

Date

Researcher

Date

Appendix F: Daily Student Journal



Did you enjoy your physical education class today?

What did you enjoy and why?

Was there anything that you might change about today's class?

Did you find any challenges today/ or depending on their understanding: is there anything that didn't feel good about today's class?

Tell me about what went well (or the good things that happened) while working with your partner. How does that make you feel?

Was there anything negative (or not good) that happened while working with your partner?

Appendix G: Lesson Plans

*******Always give 10 minutes at the end of class to respond in journals*******

Overall Objectives for these lessons would be participation, inclusion, vocabulary building skills, communication skills, improving psychomotor,

Day 1 and 2: Parachute

Let the students introduce themselves to their partners

Get into groups of 6-3 pairs

Human Knot:

- 1. Get into a circle and grab the hands of the person across from you (arms crossed), making sure to grab 2 different peoples hands**
- 2. Work as a team, without anyone letting go of hands, try to untangle the group and make a circle.**

Getting Started, Warm-up

1. Drop the parachute from the bag and instruct everyone to take hold of an edge with both hands.
2. Once everyone is hanging on, move them around the perimeter until they are evenly spaced out. Holding the canopy with knuckles on top works best.
3. Get everyone to hold the parachute taut and still at waist level. Get everyone moving together by raising the parachute and allowing it to fall. Don't pull it down but allow it to fall naturally so that it billows tip. This is best done to a steady count. On the third lift try to get the canopy as high as possible so that it billows tip. The development of this is to take one or more steps in towards the middle still holding the parachute creating a mushroom shape. As the parachute collapses, move back out. Practice this basic co-ordination until everyone is happy.

Folding the parachute

At the end of the parachute games, the parachute has to be folded up again. One half of the group starts and folds the parachute in half by running through to the other side. This part of the parachute is taken over from the players waiting on the other side. Then it is the other player's turn until the whole parachute has been folded up. The respective "runners" are out of the game after each run.

Games:

Para-site

1. After lofting the chute several times everyone steps inside, bringing the fabric taut behind their body, either to shoulder height or to ground level with each person sitting on the edge of the chute, thus creating a sort of tent with everybody under the canopy.

Ocean waves

1. Players hold the parachute all around the edge securely. Small and big waves are made

Para-swap

1. Number the children around the circle, say one to six. Lift the chute and on the third go shout a number, these children then have to swap places under the canopy before it falls.
2. They need to be told to head for gaps, keep their eyes open and try to avoid bumping into one another. Make sure that those who remain around the edge allow the canopy to fall rather than pulling it down hard.

Changing the colors

1. If the parachute is divided into lots of colored triangles, a place change game can be organized by calling out the colors.
2. Each player holds the edge of the parachute at a certain color.
3. The parachute is pulled taut outwards.
4. The game leader calls out: red! All players who are holding the parachute on a red edge change places under the parachute.
5. Several colors can also be called out at once.

Fruit salad

1. Each player is given the name of a fruit (apple, cherry, pear or strawberry).
2. When the game leader calls out the name of a fruit, everyone with this fruit must swap places by running under the parachute.
3. When fruit salad is called out, everyone must swap places with the players on the other side

Para-ball

1. Using a gator ball- experiment with moving it. What happens when you shake the parachute, can you flip the ball off? Over people's head? Can you develop a wave technique that will cause the ball to move in a circle?
2. Using a small ball (tennis ball) can you drop the ball through the hole in the middle, can you stop the ball disappearing?

Rollerball

1. A ball is laid on the parachute and players try to get the ball to roll in a circle.

Goal

1. A ball is laid o the parachute and players try to “shoot” it off the opposing side.

Cat and mouse

1. Make waves.
2. A hunter (cat) on the parachute tries to catch a (mouse) who is under the parachute. Players must crawl.

Catch the player underneath

1. One player crawls under the parachute.
2. A second player is on top of the parachute and must try to catch the player underneath. Players holding the parachute make waves, flutter it and hold it so that the player under the parachute is made invisible.

Shoe Shuffle

1. Number around the circle 1 or 6.
2. All of one number remove a shoe and throw it under the canopy.
3. On a count of 3 the canopy is lifted, mushroomed up on the third lift and all those missing a shoe go into the middle, retrieve their shoe and get back to their place.

Day 3: Body Ball

Warm-up: Octopus

Materials: None

- Designate 2-4 players to be it
- “it” players stand in center and call out “octopus”
- Students on the base line must try to run to other base line without being tagged
- Once tagged, they join the “it” team

Activity:

1. Break students into groups of 12 approx
2. Have 2 of the students wear the specialized vests
3. The other 10 students arrange themselves in a circle with the 2 students with vests in the middle
4. Students standing outside of the circle try to hit the students inside, if they attach the ball to the vest, they switch roles.

Day 4: Dance

Warm-up: Buffalo Run

- With a partner
- Run opposite direction of them while the music is playing
- When the music stops, partners must find each other by continuing to run in the same direction
- The last pair to join has to do 5 of something (sit-ups, jumping jacks, push-ups etc)

Activity:

- Students can break off into their dance groups
- Practice routines for 15-20 min
- Perform routine for the class (last 10 minutes)

Day 5-Yoga

Warm-up: Dianne W. is leading this

Activity: Yoga Stations

1. Students break off into their pairs and go to one station. Music begins to play.
2. Students perform the yoga pose at each position for 1 min (or 2 min depending on how long it takes them)
3. After the time is up, students can rotate stations.

Day 6: Body Ball

Warm-up:

CORRIDOR-use the Omnikan ball

1. You make 2 lines facing each other and separated by the width of the ball.
2. The players must carry the ball from one end of the corridor to the other in different ways. **Standing up:** Face to face, back to back, side to side, ball touching the floor and then ball in the air
3. Students go from one end of the line to the other, set the ball down and run to the end of the line. The next pair completes the task

Body Ball Game #2

1. Arrange the class so that they are spread evenly around the gym
2. Select 8 players (4 pairs) to act as a target-wearing the Velcro vests
3. Distribute the balls to the people around the gym, not wearing the vests and inform them that when they are in possession of a ball they are unable to move

4. The goal of the game is for the vest-wearing people to evade the balls for as long as possible. The people with the balls are attempting to work cooperatively by passing the ball around and throwing it so that it will attach to the back of one of the target people
5. When someone catches a person with a vest, they switch roles.

Day 7: OMNIKIN Ball

Warm-up

The Train

1. Have the class lying on floor, shoulder to shoulder (on back), forming a railroad track.
2. Two volunteers (one on each side of the tracks) roll the ball along the bodies.
3. The object of the game is to continually have a “train track” (students) available for the “train” (ball).
4. In order for this to happen, students must get up and go to end of line as soon as ball has passed over his/her body.
5. The tracks may need to curve to stay within the confines of the gym – if the ball hits a wall, it crashes!

Game:

Roller Ball Tag:

1. 2 people are designated “IT”, and they must work together to roll the ball and tag another pair who are holding hands.
2. Players must roll the ball, it can’t be thrown or pushed, and partners must stay together.
3. “IT”s do not have to hold hands while rolling the ball. If tagged, that pair now becomes “IT”

Temple of Doom:

1. This game is based on the boulder that chases Indiana Jones.
2. Make 2 large circles, one inside the other, and circles face each other.
3. One group (pair) volunteers to be Indiana Jones, and he/she is inside the track with the ball.
4. The object of the game is for the group to roll the ball (which must stay on the floor) and tag Indiana.
5. If successful, choose another pair.

Day 8: Kinball

Warm-up:

Popcorn:

1. Form a seated circle with class, feet into circle, leaning on hands.
2. Class must keep Omnikin ball aloft as long as possible, keeping it within the circle.
3. You can count consecutive contacts, and try to beat that record.
4. If the ball is kicked out, the teacher (or designated student) simply throws it back in.
5. This game works well with several Omnikin balls, but one will work too!
6. If the skill level is not high, allow the ball to touch the floor, yet class must still work cooperatively to keep the ball within the circle.

OMNIKIN GAME RULES

- Arrange the class into groups of 5-6 people
- Give each team can establish their own team name and color of bib
- Start one team with the ball
- That team is in a circle formation
- Establish one server who bends down and pushes/hits the ball upward while the team is holding the ball
- The ball must travel upward
- Before the hit/serve that person must call a color of any of the other teams.
- That called team/group must catch the ball before it hits the floor.
- If caught that team scores a point, then repeats the process by calling a color (no two colors called consecutively)
- The groups should be scattered to save the ball from hitting the floor, which can be hit/served in any direction
- IF the ball is served out of bounds, hits the ceiling or a color is not called before the serve, then all teams score a point.
- Establish a 5 second time limit to serve the ball
- Change servers often
- Modify or change the rules according to the gym area, ceiling or each classes ability
- It is necessary for the group to work together for better overall movement of the game.

Day 9 and 10 Student Designed Obstacle Course

Warm-up: Tag and Drop

Materials: 4 Gator skin balls

- Spread the students out
- Choose 4 students to be it
- “it” players try to tag others with the ball
- When they catch someone they are no longer it, anyone can get the ball and become “it”
- The person who is tagged must do 2 jumping jacks before returning to the games

Bounce and Score

Materials: 2 volleyballs

- Divide students into 2 groups and have them spread across their goal line (attack line)
- Each group is standing across from each other at the attack line, with the center line b/w
- Students can move around to retrieve balls or to get closer to the half-court boundary (center line) to bounce the ball
- The objective as an offensive player is to throw the ball so that it crosses the opponent's goal line. However, the ball must bounce before crossing the line in order for the team to score
- The objective as a defensive player is to stop opponents balls from crossing the boundary line
- Students defending the goal line may use their feet, hand or body in an attempt to stop the ball from crossing their goal line
- When a goal is scored, the game can be restarted (more volleyballs can added if too simple)

Activity:

1. Students can set up their “student designed” obstacle course
2. Students can do the obstacle course

Appendix H: Final Journal Entry

Anonymous Mainstream Journal Notes:

Would you take a class like this if it was offered in your school?

How did you find the overall experience of the class and working with your partner?

How do you feel, now that class is over?

How did your relationship change or progress with your partner?

Did you learn any new skills or develop any new capabilities while taking this class?

How was this class similar or different from any of your other classes?

How does this class compare to your regular Wellness 10 class?

Did you benefit from this experience? How?

Who would benefit from taking Inclusion 10?

What did you learn in the last 2 weeks?

Would you recommend this class to your peers? Why?

Please explain if or how you were challenged:

Mentally

Physically

Emotionally

Spiritually

