Inclusive Education Policy: Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs for Including Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Irish Mainstream Primary Schools

Margaret O'Donnell

Doctorate of Education (EdD)

2009

Inclusive Education Policy: Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs for Including Pupils with

Special Educational Needs in Irish Mainstream Primary Schools

by

Margaret O' Donnell

NT BA MEd DipFroeb DipSoc DipSpecEd

A dissertation submitted as part of the requirements for the Degree of

Doctorate of Education (EdD)

St. Patrick's College

Dublin City University

Supervised by:

Professor Mark Morgan

Head of Education Department

St Patrick's College

Dr Jean Ware

Reader in Education (Special Educational Needs)

School of Education and Lifelong Learning

Bangor University

August 2009

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for examination on the programme of study leading to the award of the Degree of Doctorate of Education (EdD) is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: *Margaret O'Donnell*
(Candidate)

ID No: 54106133

Date: *August 21st 2009*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents

James and Kathleen Mc Ginn

who nurtured and supported my love for learning.

ABSTRACT

Implementing inclusive education policy is a complex issue intrinsically woven into the complex fabric of teaching and learning. This research asks the question: how efficacious do teachers feel in translating inclusive principles into practice? Research supports the view that teacher efficacy – teachers' perceptions of their own teaching competence – is one of the most important variables related to positive teaching behaviours and student achievement. Using the lens of social cognitive theory, this study examines teacher efficacy and explores: (a) the relationship between personal teacher efficacy (PTE), and general teacher efficacy (GTE), from the scales devised by Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), and (SEN) teacher efficacy from a self-designed scale; (b) the extent to which mainstream teachers' believe that they have the knowledge, skills and competencies, following pre-service, to successfully include pupils with special educational needs; and (c) the influence of other contextual variables on SEN teacher efficacy.

The study employed a quantitative approach to investigate the views of mainstream primary teachers in Ireland (N=244), who had qualified between the years 1998-2007 inclusively. Findings reveal a complex picture in relation to teacher efficacy with regard to pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. Teacher efficacy in relation to special educational needs – SEN efficacy – is unique and different from personal teacher efficacy (PTE) and (GTE) indicating that there are specific and additional knowledge, skills and competencies required to work in inclusive settings. While teacher preparation has a significant impact on efficacy, other contextual factors, such as intrinsic and extrinsic school factors, all serve to impact on teacher efficacy. These findings have implications for teacher educators, school principals, school support services and policy advisors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INDEX OF TABLES

INDEX OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Context and Rationale

This study builds on and contributes to the research in teacher efficacy. Although studies in teacher efficacy have examined the relationship between teacher efficacy and various teaching outcomes, few have examined the efficacy beliefs of mainstream teachers in relation to teaching pupils with special educational needs. At a time when inclusion figures prominently in instructional agendas, this is a significant omission. This research provides a detailed analysis of the relationship between mainstream teachers' efficacy beliefs to instruct and manage pupils with special educational needs and their perception of success in so doing.

The focus on teacher efficacy is set in the context of inclusive educational policy which has profound implications for teachers in mainstream settings as they face increased pressure to perform to a wider set of roles than in previous generations (Avramidas, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Knight, 2000). In implementing inclusive policy, class teachers are perceived as the main professionals responsible for the education of all pupils (Croll & Moses, 2000; Lewis & Norwich, 2005). They are now expected to: rise to the challenge of an increasingly diverse classroom, possess relevant professional knowledge, skills and competencies to assess, plan and deliver differentiated approaches and methodologies; adjust their teaching strategies to accommodate varying learning styles (Kortman, 2001); and to be psychologically and practically prepared to take on the dynamic role of inclusive educator (Mullen, 2001).

In order to implement inclusive education policy teachers require the knowledge, skills, competencies and, above all, the confidence to teach *all* pupils. Recent research has indicated that many teachers do not feel well prepared for inclusive classes and lack confidence in their own ability to teach children with special needs in inclusive settings (Dwyfor, Davies & Garner, 1997; Garner, 1996; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Winter, 2006). In their review of the literature on inclusion, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) note a number of studies providing evidence that "the school's ethos and the teachers' beliefs have a considerable impact on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion which, in turn, are translated into practice" (p. 140). They identify a range of studies, which indicate that resistance to inclusion was reduced when practitioners had acquired special education qualifications in pre-service or in-service programmes. They contend that without a coherent plan for teacher education, which addresses the educational needs of pupils with SEN, attempts to include these pupils in the mainstream would be difficult. Many teachers who support the philosophy of inclusion also identify critical problems with its implementation (Winzer, 1999). The most frequently cited reason for resistance is the lack of skills necessary to teach pupils with SEN (Minke, Bear, Deemer & Griffin, 1996). Researchers have found that inclusion is inadequately addressed and often neglected in teacher education (Barton, 2003; Booth, Nes & Stromstad, 2003; Garner, 2001; Jones, 2002; Thomas & Loxley, 2001).

With teachers being viewed as the primary agents in the implementation of inclusive educational policy (Cant, 1994; Haskell, 2000; Whiting & Young, 1995), their beliefs about their own competency in relation to carrying out the specific tasks must be borne in mind (Raymond, 1997), as it is likely that these perceptions may

2

influence their behaviour towards and their acceptance of students with special educational needs (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Dupoux, Wolman & Estrada, 2005). Further, it can be concluded that teacher beliefs in relation to their own competency may have some bearing on the success of inclusive educational policy (Van Reusen, Shoho & Barker, 2001). In this regard, it becomes important to examine teachers' efficacy beliefs – teachers' perceptions as to their situation-specific competency in meeting the demands of inclusive pedagogy.

Although numerous studies have identified the inherent difficulties that teachers are experiencing in implementing inclusive educational policies (Rault, Molina, & Gash, 2001), little analytic attention has been paid to how perceived teacher efficacy and school contextual support factors impact on inclusive policy implementation. Using Bandura's social cognitive framework this study aims to examine teacher efficacy and to explore the extent to which mainstream teachers believe they have the knowledge, skills and competencies to meet the teaching and learning needs of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in inclusive settings.

The Impact of the Teaching Context

This study differs from other research studies in teacher efficacy in that it moves beyond an examination of teacher efficacy as subject-matter specific to one which examines the reciprocal relationship between school context and teacher efficacy as exemplified in personal, demographic and school contextual variables. It owes a debt to the pioneering research on teacher efficacy carried out by Bandura (1986, 1977), Pajares (1992, 1996) and Brownell and Pajares (1999). In other respects it has benefited from the analysis of the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of teacher

efficacy presented by Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, Woolfolk and Hoy (1998) and in particular from their presentation of an integrated model of teacher efficacy, which is the model adopted in this study. In this model, while there is an acceptance that the major influences which contribute to efficacy beliefs are based in four sources of information namely: (1) mastery experience; (2) physiological arousal; (3) vicarious experiences; and (4) verbal persuasion – there is also an acceptance that teacher efficacy is context specific, in that teachers judge personal capacities such as skills, knowledge or competencies against personal weaknesses or liabilities in the particular teaching context.

Areas of Inquiry and Research Question

The Impact of Inclusion on Mainstream Class Teachers

Inclusive education is the entitlement of all children and young people to access quality education, irrespective of their differences, dispositions or disabilities in an environment embracing educational values of equity, diversity and social justice (Moran, 2007). While in some countries, inclusive education is thought of as an approach to serving pupils with disabilities within mainstream settings (Mittler, 2000), internationally, however, it is increasingly seen more broadly as a reform that responds to the diversity of all learners (UNESCO, 1994). Successive governments worldwide have demonstrated their commitment, in principle, to inclusion, with the unreserved use of the language of social justice deeply embedded in the many legislative policy documents enacted (Moran, 2007). In the wake of this endorsement of inclusive education, and in light of an ever increasingly diverse pupil population presenting in our schools, it becomes pertinent to examine the extent to which

4

teachers believe they possess the knowledge, skills and competencies to implement the many legislative policies in practice.

While inclusion at one level involves transforming school capacity to respond effectively to diversity by creating inclusive cultures (Booth, Ainscow & Black-Hawkins, 2000), it does not tell us how to deal with the reality of the classroom nor does it advise on what additional competencies teachers would need at classroom level. For inclusion to be effective at classroom level, it is not enough to focus merely on whole school reforms; instead it is necessary to examine how curriculum and pedagogy interact to ensure that pupils receive an education that is appropriate to their needs as well as an education in an inclusive setting (Frederickson & Cline, 2002). Nind, Rix, Sheehy & Simmons, (2005) claim that "difficulties in learning are not noticed in a vacuum but arise because pupils fail to meet the requirements of a given curriculum" (p. 3). It is thus at the level of curriculum that pupils with special educational needs will suffer exclusion or inclusion reflected in the ability of teachers to mediate policy through activities both in and out of the classroom Clough (as cited in Nind et al. 2005). As mediating and differentiating the curriculum depends on teachers' knowledge, skills and competencies, an examination of teacher efficacy in relation to SEN competencies is warranted.

How Teachers Understand and Implement Policy Directives

The creation of inclusive schools is a complex endeavour demanding significant changes in teachers' attitudes and beliefs in relation to the ideology of inclusive education. Teachers' sense-making is not simply decoding the policy message; it is an active process of interpretation that draws on the individual's knowledge, beliefs,

and attitudes. What a policy comes to mean will be woven intrinsically into the complex fabric of teaching and learning from the perspectives of the individual implementing agent, the social context and the organisational context (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). A key dimension of the implementation process is whether, and in what ways, implementing agents come to understand their practice, potentially changing their beliefs and attitudes in the process (Spillane et al. 2002). Therefore, in meeting the demands of inclusive pedagogy, it is important to consider teachers' efficacy beliefs; that is a person's judgement of how well or how poorly he or she will cope with a situation, given the skills they possess and the circumstances they face (Bandura, 1986, 1993, 1997).

Focus of the Study

Furthering inclusive educational practices has significant implications not just for teachers currently in the system but for future teachers and by implication their teacher educators who are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that teachers are adequately prepared for the role of inclusive educator.

The focus of this study, while recognising the wider inclusion context, is on examining teacher efficacy in relation to teachers' perceived knowledge, skills and competencies in working with pupils with special educational needs. The primary reason for this focus is that while many writers indulge in high-flown rhetoric extolling the rights-based philosophy that asserts the entitlement of pupils with special educational needs to the same educational opportunities as their peers, little focus is placed in the literature on how inclusive policy is refracted at teacher level

or how, or to what extent, teachers believe they are adequately prepared at pre-service and supported at school level to translate these principles into practice.

How are Special Educational Needs Understood in this Study?

The term *special educational needs* is problematic, as it encompasses a broad range of educational difficulties ranging from pupils who experience mild general learning disabilities requiring minimum intervention to those who experience severe or multiple disabilities requiring a more multi-disciplinary approach. Throughout this study, while there is no intention to attribute negative labelling to pupils, the meaning associated with the term *special educational needs* will be in keeping with that outlined in the legislative documents, namely the Special Education Review Committee Report (SERC) (Ireland, 1993), the Education Act (DES, 1998) and the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (EPSEN) (2004). The SERC Report, which was to become the cornerstone for all subsequent legislation, defined those with special educational needs as:

> all those whose disabilities and/or circumstances prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education which is normally provided for pupils of the same age, or for whom the education which can generally be provided in the ordinary classrooms is not sufficiently challenging (p. 18).

While the Report went on to outline a categorical approach to educational provision, it strongly recommended "as much integration as is appropriate and feasible with as little segregation as is necessary" (p. 22). In all of these legislative documents there is an acceptance that pupils with special educational needs will require additional support over and above what is normally provided for pupils who have no special educational need, evidenced by the role, remit and responsibilities outlined for the

7

respective parties - Boards of Management, principals, and teachers - in providing this support.

In adopting an inclusive position, as outlined in the legislation, we have to consider whether teaching pupils with special educational needs constitutes *"additional teaching* of the same kind as for pupils without special educational needs or is it teaching which is *different in kind*?" (Corbett & Norwich, 2005, p. 15). The position adopted here is influenced by the pedagogical models of provision outlined by (Brennan, 1985; Corbett & Norwich, 2005). In these models there is an acceptance that, while pupils with special educational needs have much in common with other pupils, some require a distinct or specific pedagogical approach to match their unique individual needs. In this regard the importance of teacher preparation and subsequent teacher efficacy beliefs takes on major significance.

Research Problem

There are three main problems evident in current research on teacher efficacy. Firstly, to date there exists no research, in the Irish context, of teacher efficacy in relation to meeting the needs of students with special educational needs currently placed in mainstream schools. Secondly, the measures of efficacy used to date – *personal teacher efficacy* (PTE), which refers to the evaluations teachers make of their ability to affect students' learning and – *general teacher efficacy* (GTE) which refers to the extent to which teachers believe the environment can be controlled, lack specificity in relation to SEN knowledge, skills and competencies, hence the need to develop a new SEN scale. Thirdly, there exists little or no evidence as to the impact

on teacher efficacy of other variables identified in the literature, namely demographic, personal and school-based factors outlined below.

Drawing on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and previous findings from studies of teacher efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Brownnell & Pajares, 1999) this study will examine the following questions:

(1) Is SEN efficacy different from Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE) and General Teacher Efficacy (GTE)?

(2) Are teachers adequately prepared at pre-service for working with pupils with special educational needs (SEN)?

(3) How do other independent variables such as intrinsic and extrinsic contextual factors – namely: teacher attitudes; support from the school principal; collegiality; in-service training; awareness of external supports; and job anxieties – impact on teacher efficacy beliefs?

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 outlines the background context, rationale and focus of the study. In recognition of the impact of inclusive educational policies, and the subsequent changing role for teachers as they strive to cope with an ever increasing range of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream settings, it highlights the importance of this first-time study of teacher efficacy in the Irish context. It outlines the areas of inquiry and the research questions. It presents the overall structure and details the content to be addressed in each chapter.

Chapter 2 examines the background context for the development of inclusive education. It outlines how policy change both nationally and internationally served to support a move to developing a more inclusive school, capable of meeting the diversity of needs of *all* pupils and not just those identified as having special educational needs. It debates the inherent dilemmas, contradictions and multiple meanings attached to the concept of inclusive education. It presents an analysis of the development of inclusive educational policies in the Irish context, highlighting the impact of these on the role and responsibilities of mainstream teachers as they strive to implement the policy directives in practice.

While doubts regarding the quantity and quality of pre-service preparation of teachers, in respect of special education, are widespread, Chapter 3 explores how the concept of teacher education has changed over time to reflect a current view of the teacher as an active agent whose practice is mediated through acquired knowledge and beliefs. It explores the inherent contradictions evidenced in the research, which highlight on the one hand, the impact of pre-service education on teacher attitudes and, subsequently, on their beliefs in their own competency, and on the other hand, a distinct lack of preparedness as reported by newly qualified teachers. It examines different models of teacher education at pre-service and it outlines the approach to teacher education in the Irish context. It discusses what additional skills and competencies teachers need to work in inclusive environments and it outlines the significance of teacher beliefs as important determinants and predictors of teaching practices.

In keeping with the notion of the teacher as an active self-organising, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating agent, Chapter 4 examines how the construct of teacher efficacy has been conceptualised in different ways to reflect its development over time. It examines the evidence for the impact of teacher efficacy beliefs in relation to furthering the inclusion of students with special educational needs as presented in the research. It discusses how teacher efficacy has been measured over time and it outlines other critical factors which impact on teacher efficacy. In conclusion, it argues that the evidence supports the view that a pre-service teacher education programme that provides students with the content knowledge, at the appropriate level, for the instruction of pupils with special educational needs, as well as the training to present that knowledge effectively so that all learners are positively impacted, will result in higher efficacy levels among all teachers.

Chapter 5 provides a description of the research approach, the underlying theoretical perspective, methodology and design. It details the research instrument used and outlines how the sample was selected and secured. It describes the procedures used to establish validity and reliability, the sampling procedure used and the piloting and data collection approaches, both electronic and paper based. It outlines a description of the data analysis plan and details how the data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). It confirms the adherence to appropriate ethical procedures throughout this research.

Using an explanatory data analysis approach (EDA) to fully appreciate and understand the full complexity and variability contained in the data, Chapter 6 presents the key findings from the study. It explores the level of teacher efficacy in

relation to personal teacher efficacy (PTE) general teacher efficacy (GTE) and SEN teacher efficacy, and examines the relations of these to other variables, namely: demographic differences; teacher attitude, perceived support from the school principal; parents, teacher colleagues; the perceived value of pre-service and in-service preparation, job satisfaction, and awareness of external supports.

Chapter 7 discusses the degree to which the findings agree with or differ from previous research in the field. It discusses the limitations of the study and finally, it presents conclusions and recommendations for further research.

At a personal and professional level, three areas of experience gleaned from working in different educational contexts have directed my interest to this research question. Firstly, my teaching career, which spanned both mainstream and special school settings, gave me first hand experience of the challenges and demands of implementing inclusive educational policy in practice. Secondly, as a policy advisor working with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), with responsibility for advising and co-ordinating the development of national guidelines in support of teachers of pupils with general learning disabilities in mainstream schools, I gained many insights into the challenges experienced by teachers in working with pupils with special educational needs at classroom level. Thirdly, as a lecturer in special education with responsibility for co-ordinating the online professional development of mainstream teachers, in the area of special needs education, I have experienced first-hand the need expressed by teachers for further education and development of skills in this area. Lastly, it is hoped that an examination of teacher efficacy will enhance our knowledge about teachers'

perceptions of their knowledge, skills and competencies in support of pupils with special educational needs in inclusive settings. In addition, it is hoped that the outcomes from this study will inform, support, and influence the preparation of teachers at pre-service level in the future.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the context, rationale and the particular focus of this study. It has discussed, in broad terms, how inclusive educational policy has impacted on the role and responsibilities of mainstream class teachers. It has defined the parameters of the study as an examination of teacher efficacy in relation to the knowledge, skills and competencies required to effectively support the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes, while at the same time recognising the reciprocal impact of factors inherent in varying teaching contexts. It outlines the structure and layout of the thesis and explains how the personal experiences of the researcher have led to this particular research focus.

CHAPTER 2: INCLUSION EDUCATION POLICY – IMPLICATIONS FOR MAINSTREAM TEACHERS

This chapter sets the context for this study by firstly examining the background which influenced the inclusive education movement. Secondly, it discusses the shift in ideology from integration to inclusion and points to the implications for mainstream class teachers. Thirdly, it highlights how Irish inclusive education policy has changed its focus from an emphasis on the specialist teacher, to that of seeing the mainstream class teacher as the key person responsible for the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs. Finally, it will examine evidence from recent reports and analysis in the Irish context, in support of teacher confidence to fulfil the policy requirements.

Background Context

The motives behind integration, just as those behind segregation, are a product of complex social, economic and political considerations which may relate more to the needs of the wider society, the whole education system and the professionals working within the system rather than simply to the needs of individual children (Barton & Tomlinson, 1984, p. 37).

From their incarceration in the 19th century to their inclusion in the 20th century many changes have taken place, both attitudinally and legislatively, in respect of pupils with special educational needs. Different social movements, underpinned by different philosophies over time, provided the framework within which educational theories, policies and practices grew and developed. Thomas and Vaughan (2004) advise that inclusion represents the confluence of several streams of thought, social and political as well as educational.

The Social –Political Perspective

From both a national and international perspective, the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs has been a theme running through special educational provision in developed countries over the last fifty years. Policy change in relation to special educational provision reflects a story of increasing acceptance and understanding, a story of the removal of barriers and a recognition of the right of all pupils with disabilities to participate in a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. It is a story which has its genesis in the civil rights movement in the US in the 1950s, which questioned the equity of a parallel system of provision in general (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004) and more specifically against the background evidence of the presence of a disproportionately high representation of pupils from racial minorities and socially disadvantaged groups (Dunn, 1968; Mercer, 1973; Tomlinson, 1982; Patton, 1998).

The demand for inclusion and an end to segregated policies and practices came as a response to the economic, political, social and cultural conditions and humanistic values that emerged in most western societies in the 1970s (Freire and César, 2003). It also reflected new societal perspectives regarding pupils with diverse needs and consequently pupils with special educational needs (Browder et al. 2004). A number of prominent writers in the field contend that an inclusive learning environment is the one that reflects the heterogeneity of society, through the acceptance of all pupils regardless of their perceived physical, educational, or psychological challenges, accommodates their needs and creates opportunities so that all pupils develop to their full potential (Armstrong, Armstrong & Barton, 2000; Bradley & Switlick, 1997;

Stainback & Stainback, 1990; Stainback, Stainback & Jackson, 1992; Walter-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin & Williams, 2000).

Historically, while social-ethical and legal-legislative movements underpin the integration of pupils with special educational needs, inclusion has become one of the most contentious issues in the field of education in the last two decades (Banerji & Daileu, 1995; Barton, 1997). Some writers, such as Kirkaldy (1990) and Oliver (1996), argue that inclusion should be regarded as a 'right' for all children with special education needs. Others warn that widespread adoption of inclusive models will lead to deterioration in the education provided for many children with special education needs and that a regular classroom may not constitute the best learning environment for some children (Kauffmann & Hallahan, 1995; Rasch, Smelter & Yudewitz, 1994).

There are inherent difficulties and contradictions in reconstructing *integration* as *inclusion* and seeing it as *a right* by which no group can be denied access to mainstream school. It raises serious questions: Do teachers believe they are capable, of including the full range of student diversity in practice? What sort of change is necessary if schools are to become more inclusive? What theoretical limits are there to inclusion? and At what point do moves towards a more inclusive education system connect to other systems, for example teacher pre-service preparation?

Corbett (1997) warns against being "side-tracked into an ideological battlefield" (p. 63), where the drive towards mainstream inclusion for all overshadows the importance of meeting the diverse individual needs of all pupils and providing

"access to a curriculum that is dynamic, coherent, meaningful and allows them to prepare themselves for the challenges of adulthood" (Carpenter, Ashdown & Bovair, 1997, p. 1). Whether teachers believe they can meet the diverse learning needs of the pupils in an inclusive setting is the primary focus of this study.

Policy Shift from Integration to Inclusion

The shift from the policy of integration to one of inclusion can be traced to the adoption of the Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994). Inclusion *as a right*, as outlined by UNECO (1994), is broadly *social* in scope, focusing on creating a more tolerant society through changing discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, and developing a more inclusive society through the provision of education *for all* in mainstream schools. Inclusive education as outlined in the framework challenges all exclusionary policies and practices in education. It is based on a growing international consensus of the right of all pupils to a common education in their locality regardless of their background, attainment or disability. The development of an inclusive school thus conceived constitutes a moral imperative, which all professionals are ethically obliged to obey.

Many commentators have attempted to distinguish between *integration* and *inclusion* (Corbett & Slee, 2000; Armstrong et al. 2000). Current understandings of the concepts highlight a significant discrepancy of emphasis. MacKay and McLarty (2003) argue that the terms integration and inclusion "often defy definition or description" (p. 822). While integration was judged in terms of its feasibility, effectiveness, and efficiency, it followed that segregated provision for some groups was the preferred option (Clarke, Dyson, Millward, & Skidmore, 1997). Integration

17

is generally construed as a pragmatic, politically neutral form of service delivery, whereas inclusion has a strong ideological charge: as something to strive towards. Inclusion goes hand-in-hand with notions of support for all, of celebrating diversity and it embraces the whole school population. Rather than being a marginal theme on how some learners can be integrated in the mainstream education, inclusive education responds to the diversity of learners through increasing their participation in learning, cultures and communities (Booth, 1996; Booth and Ainscow, 1998; Mittler, 2005; Lynch, 2005; Kittay, 2005). Inclusive education, therefore, aims to enable both teachers and learners to feel comfortable with diversity and to see it as a challenge and enrichment in the learning environment (Ainscow, 1991). The distinction between integration for *some* and inclusion for *all* are important in the context of this study as it impacts significantly on the role and responsibility of the class teacher.

Multiple Meanings

The literature is full of voices which argue that these terms, integration and inclusion, are one and the same thing, while others make distinctions. Pijl, Meijer, Cor and Hegarty (1997) argue that, in the wider notions of integration, there is a coming "close to the concept of inclusion" (p. 2). To settle the debate Vilsie (2003) states that the important question to consider is whether these two notions have "different cores or central foci" (p. 19). As they have different foci they should not be mixed. In defence of his position he outlines the origins of the integration movement in the 1960s and 1970s as having three core foci. Firstly, the right to schooling and education for pupils with disability, who heretofore were segregated by category, excluded or deemed not educable. Secondly, the right of pupils with

disability, to be educated in their local schools, in what was described as a normal environment as opposed to the separate special school system and thirdly, the total reorganisation of the special schools system as a whole. Integration policies mainly took it for granted that policy reforms at a system level would have an effect on teaching and learning at classroom level. In this regard Vislie (1995) suggests that two theoretical models emerged, one focused on reforming special education through promoting integration and the other focused on making general education more comprehensive and diverse. Likewise, Booth, et al. (2003) describe two contrasting approaches to inclusion, *assimilationist* and *transformative*, while Cochran-Smith (2004) uses the terms *transmissive* and *constructivist*. While transformative or constructivist approaches highlight the development of new cultures, policies and practices that are responsive to the diverse needs of all learners, in contrast, assimilationist or transmissive models assume that learners, irrespective of their needs or differences should integrate into a mono-cultural-educational system with fixed approaches to teaching and learning (Moran, 2007).

Vislie (2003) states that following The Salamanca Statement (UNESO, 1994) "the linguistic shift is a fact: inclusion has obtained status as a global descriptor" (p. 18). However, this acceptance of a common terminology was not matched by a common understanding or a fixed and stable use of the terminology in policies or in the literature, resulting in many and varied opinions being expressed about the meaning of these two notions, integration and inclusion, since the late 1900s. The discourse of inclusion as articulated in governmental policies worldwide is frequently ambitious, visionary and somewhat vague. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2002) rightly warn that "inclusion is a bewildering concept which can have a variety of interpretations

19

and applications" (p. 158). For example *inclusion* can be used to mean many things, including: the placement of pupils with SEN in mainstream schools; the participation of all pupils in the curriculum and social life of mainstream schools; the participation of all pupils in learning which leads to the highest possible level of achievement; and the participation of young people in the full range of social experiences and opportunities once they have left school (DfEE, 1998). *Inclusion* is much more than the type of school that pupils attend; it is about the quality of their experience – how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Farrell, 2001; DfES, 2004). *Inclusive education* is a human right, it is good education and it makes good social sense (CSIE, 2002). *Inclusion* is about equal opportunities for all pupils, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, attainment and background (Booth et al. 2000; OFSTED, 2001). In conclusion, it can be stated that the term inclusion has in recent times become something of a cliché evacuated of meaning (Thomas & Loxley, 2007; Benjamin, 2002).

Dilemmas and Contradictions

Despite the rhetoric of inclusive policy, other writers (Fulcher, 1989; Barton, 1997; Slee, 1998; Norwich, 2000) point to the powerful forces within and beyond the education system, which result in competing ideologies of policies and practices, informed by market ideology. Rouse and Florian (1998) and Thomas and Loxley, (2001) point to the irreconcilable tensions that exist between inclusive schooling and standards-based agendas and policies. Ware (1995) reports very different outcomes to attempts at promoting inclusion in different schools, with some teachers transforming their practice, while others resist – all of which highlights that the

promotion of inclusion in schools requires changes of a greater breath and depth than are commonly supposed. Coupled with this there is evidence that, while pupils are included, their learning activities are often undifferentiated, with resultant implications for the suitability and quality of their learning experiences, and that often there exists a trade-off between common learning experiences and appropriate teaching, between cognitive and social gain (Zigmond & Baker, 1995; Hornby, 1999; Geber, 1995).

There is new evidence to suggest that the focus is shifting from *where* pupils with special educational needs are placed to the *how* of their teaching and learning. A recent report, Ofsted (2006), examined the factors that promote good outcomes across a range of different provisions for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and concluded that the most important factor in determining the best outcomes for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) is not the type, but the quality of the provision, regardless of the location (Ofsted, 2006).

Knight (2000) cautions to regard inclusive education not as an end itself – as something we progress towards - but rather as a precondition of a democratic society. Dyson (1995) and Norwich (1994) explore the concept of 'dilemmas' as a means of understanding the field. They describe the dilemma in education as one of how to recognise differences as relevant to individuals by offering different provision, but without reinforcing inequalities of provision. Accordingly, the dilemma consists of how to treat all learners the same and as equal, while at the same time, treat them as different. Responding to these differences by putting pupils in

special groups, and by offering variations on the common curriculum, can result in a lack of recognition of what all learners have in common.

In conclusion, it can be stated that, despite the inherent debates and contradictions, there is increasing evidence that the inclusive movement, which began in the 1970s and gained momentum in the 1980s and early 1990s, has dramatically changed the nature of special educational provision. It has also had a major impact on the role of the mainstream class teacher, who is now required to cater for the needs of an increasingly diverse group of students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Mc Coy, 1995; INTO, 2000). While inclusive educational policies reflect a heightened awareness of addressing the diverse learning needs of all pupils in pursuit of a more equitable and just society, the implementation of any of these policies is dependant on how teachers perceive their own preparedness in relation to the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to further these ideals in practice. How teachers are prepared at pre-service is therefore critical to this debate.

Irish Inclusive Policy Change

Using a policy framework outlined by Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992), this chapter provides a systematic analysis of the development of inclusive educational policy in the Irish context. The primary purpose of this analysis is to chronicle the shift in thinking from the belief that pupils' special educational needs were best met by a specialist and separate approach, to one which confirms a view that teachers carry the main responsibility for identifying and responding to pupils' learning difficulties. This shift in thinking has significant implications for teachers who, as gatekeepers, mediate the policy through their participation in the realisation of the curriculum. It

22

explores the question of whether class teachers think they are adequately skilled for their role. In addition, it examines evidence from recent reports and analysis, in the Irish context, in support of teachers' confidence to fulfil the policy requirements.

Context of Influence

The context of influence recognises the necessity of providing an historical and wider contextual analysis for interpreting policy-making trends and particular 'moments' in the education policy process (Ball, 1990; Whitty, 2002). It also highlights the importance of identifying the underlying ideological basis for political decision-making in order to understand the values underpinning particular policies (Taylor, Fazal, Lingard, & Henry, 1997).

A brief look at the history reminds us that, in the early 20th century, special education provision in many countries was focused on developing provision in special schools for those groups who had been excluded from education (Reynolds & Ainscow, 1994). This separatist and specialist provision, provided for pupils according to their categorised difficulties and disabilities, became the accepted norm in provision worldwide and reflected the medical model of disability – which viewed barriers to learning as belonging within the pupil and directly associated with their categorised disability or associated label assigned following assessment. It also reflected a view that pupils with special educational needs were incapable of benefiting from ordinary methods of instruction and so separate specialist instruction was seen as essential. The expansion of the role of the special school, therefore, was one of necessity, reflecting the perceived incapacity of mainstream schools to respond effectively, due to large classes, subject centred curriculum and little flexibility (Mc Gee, 1990). This

accepted view of the necessity of a separate approach led to the expansion of the field of special education to a stage where it became the accepted wisdom that separate provision was the most appropriate and effective form of provision for pupils with special educational needs. In addition, it protected the efficient running of a 'one size fits all' type of provision for the majority in mainstream settings (Pijl and Meijer, 1994). The Irish government formally endorsed this separatist view in *The Problem of the Mentally Handicapped* (1960) where it identified three degrees of mental handicap: mild, moderate and severe. The *Commission of Enquiry Report* (1965) further supported this view by validating the parallel system of education already in existence, thus leading to a significant expansion of the numbers of special schools from 70 in 1970, to 108 in 1980, and to 114 in 1993.

While Ireland was aware of the major inclusive policy changes sweeping across the USA, UK and Europe, as evidenced in *The White Paper on Education* (1980), *The Programme for Action* (1984-1987), and *The Guidelines on Remedial Education* (1987), change in practice was initiated at a slower pace than in most European counties. The *White Paper on Education* (1980) argued that the issue of integration was a very complex one which could not be fully addressed due to demographic and geographical factors, which inhibited progress in the provision of a high quality service for all pupils with special needs in integrated settings (European Commission, 1991). In general the Irish response has been described as "a very cautious, pragmatic one which tried to balance economic considerations with educational principles" (MacGiolla Phádraig, 2007, p. 289).

A Change in Policy Direction

While there was a cautious response in the 1980s, to implementing policy change in favour of including pupils with special education needs, subsequent legislation reflected a more progressive approach. The *Green Paper: Education For A Changing World* (Ireland, 1992) recommended that the inclusion of pupils with disabilities into mainstream schools be accelerated in all appropriate cases, on the basis of individual assessment, and provided that good quality education could be maintained. The *White Paper on Education* (1995) went further in highlighting the promotion of quality, equality, pluralism, partnership and accountability. It accepted the definition of special educational needs outlined by the *Report of the Special Education Review Committee* (SERC) (1993) as including:

> all those whose disabilities and/or circumstances prevent or hinder them from benefiting adequately from the education which is normally provided for pupils of the same age, or for whom the education which can generally be provided in the ordinary classroom is not sufficiently challenging (p. 18).

It recognised the individuality of each person's learning needs and competencies and their right to participate and benefit from education according to their needs and abilities. It stated that in order to provide the highest standard of education for all, other factors such as the quality of the curriculum and its assessment, and the quality of the teaching were all interdependent factors contributing to quality provision. Regarding assessment, it stated that, while careful assessment underpins all good educational practice, "each school will be responsible for presenting in its school plan its policy on student assessment which will provide for the identification of students with special needs and will describe the school's policy for helping them" (p. 25). At classroom level "classroom teachers carry the main responsibility for identifying and responding to learning difficulties" (p. 25). Assessment should be

25

diagnostic, formative and continuous and be used to inform and improve the quality of teaching and learning. It should be regarded as an integral part of the curriculum and of the teaching and learning process, combining formal and informal assessment approaches to address all areas of the curriculum and all aspects of learning to include the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes. "The skills and procedures for affirming successes and diagnosing difficulties are fundamental to the teacher's work and vital to the learning progress" (p. 59).

The Report of the *Special Education Review Committee* (SERC, 1993) was to become the guiding document for subsequent government policy. The recommendations were based on seven key principles, namely: (1) the recognition of the right of the child with special educational needs to an appropriate education; (2) the right of the parent to be actively involved in decision making regarding the child's education; (3) the right of the child to have his/her individual needs considered in regard to educational provision; (4) the need for a continuum of services; (5) the right of the child to be educated in their local community; (6) the presumption in favour of educating the pupil in mainstream classes; and (7) the right to access whatever additional support as may be necessary. The most important of these principles relating to inclusion is principle five which states, "except where individual circumstances make this impracticable, appropriate education for all children with special educational needs should be provided in ordinary schools" (Ireland, 1993, pp. 19-20). *Integration,* as defined in the Report, is replete with clauses of conditionality in that it recommends the participation of pupils with disabilities in school activities with other pupils, to the maximum extent, which is consistent with the broader overall interest of both the pupils with disabilities and the

26

other pupils in the class/group. Accordingly, this definition suggests that pupils with special educational needs are expected to fit into a system, which remains relatively unchanged (Meegan & MacPhail, 2006).

Research by O'Donnell (2000), which explores the academic, social and emotional experiences of pupils with disability following their transfer from a special school to a mainstream school, further supports this view. The findings reveal that, while pupils adjusted well to mainstream school and were integrated in the general school system, there was inadequate accommodation in certain aspects of the curriculum to facilitate their inclusion.

The Government White Paper on Education: *Charting our Education Future* (1995) accepted the inclusion of pupils with special needs as proposed policy and went further in recognising that equal access would need positive intervention to make it happen. *The Education Act* (1998), providing the first national legislative mandate in education was disappointing, in that it is based on a conceptual framework derived from medical and individualised models of disability which serve to create a basis for the marginalisation and oppression of disabled people (Hahn, 1985; Borsay, 1986; Abberley, 1987; Oliver, 1990; Barnes, 1996; Morris, 1991). Defining special educational needs as "the educational needs of those who have a disability and the educational needs of exceptionally able students" (Ireland, 1998, p. 8) locates the special educational needs within the child, thus excluding other external circumstances – social, emotional or material – that could adversely impact on the child's education. *Inclusion*, as defined by the Act, is restricted by contingency; "as far as is practicable" and "having regard to the resources available" (p. 10) are

27

negative phrases placing provision within the overall economic plan and not according to the implicit rights of the child. However, despite the narrowness of the definition, the Act guarantees the right of all pupils, including those with disabilities to access to and participation in the mainstream school, to be decided by parental choice and supported by the support services, to include transport, technical aids, adaptation of the physical environment and psychological services. In addition, it makes reference to promoting best practice in teaching methods and in supporting the ongoing skills development of teachers.

The Education Act (1998) details the role and responsibilities of the respective partners and sets as its objective to "give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children, including children who have a disability or other special educational needs" (p. 10). It goes further, to outline that it is not just access to education that is guaranteed but, in fact, that *"a recognised school shall provide education to students which is appropriate to their abilities and needs and ... it shall use its available resources to—(a) ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with a disability or other special educational needs, are identified and provided for"* (p. 10). The Education Act redefines, radically, the responsibilities of principals and teachers in relation to the identification of learning needs assessment of children: *"The principal and teachers shall—(b) regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents"* (p. 22). This requirement has significant implications for teachers and schools in that it requires that teachers have the knowledge to adequately assess pupils with special educational needs and, moreover, to assist the principal in developing and implementing a policy on assessment.

The Reality of Inclusive Practice

While the policy documents repeatedly highlight that it is the primary responsibility of the class teacher to ensure that the learning needs of pupils with SEN are appropriately met, we see a different story emerging. *The Report on Remedial Education in Irish Primary Schools* (Shiel, Morgan & Larney, 1998) found that, while the consultative model of remedial teaching had been advocated, remedial teachers spend 85% of their time working with individuals who had been withdrawn from class and half of the schools had failed to develop a school policy on remedial education. In addition, links between teachers, remedial teachers and parents were inadequately developed, resulting in poor communication between the respective parties as to the remedial intervention received by pupils in receipt of the service. In an attempt to promote more inclusive practices in schools *The Learning Support Guidelines* (Ireland, 2000) called for "policies, which emphasise the enhancement of classroom-based learning for all pupils" (Ireland, 2000, p. 9). Overall, it serves to realign responsibility for addressing the pupils' special educational needs to the class teacher and, as such, it represents a significant move towards an acceptance that the class teacher has primary responsibility for this role.

Again, *The Report of the Task Force on Dyslexia* (2001) advances both an "educational imperative and a legal requirement" (Ireland, 2001a, p. xv) expressed in the dictate that the "class teacher should assume major responsibility for the progress and development of each student in their class who has learning difficulties arising from dyslexia" (Ireland, 2001a, p. 114). The class teacher is also seen as responsible for engaging in the phased process of assessment recommended by the report

(Ireland, 2001a). In recognition of the fluid, variable and dynamic nature of the difficulties associated with dyslexia, the approach advocated in the report is an individualised, differentiated and collaborative approach.

Likewise in the *Task Force on Autism* (2001b) and in Circulars 24/03, 09/04 and 02/05 we see a similarity of approach to that expressed in the *Task Force on Dyslexia,* in the recommendations and the language used. It emphasis upholding the philosophy of inclusion by guaranteeing "rights equality and participation"; charging schools with actively promoting inclusion for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and directly working towards developing schools as "inclusive institutions" (Ireland, 2001a, p. 10). The circulars aim "to make possible the development of truly inclusive schools" (DES, 2005, p. 2) through calling for an end to an exclusive reliance on withdrawal for individual tuition, which is contrary to best practice in teaching and learning, and a change to a model where support is provided within the mainstream class (Circular SP.ED 24/03) (DES, 2003). This circular further provides schools with a flexibility to deploy resources in a manner that best meets the needs of the pupils in the school and proposes a staged approach to identification and support, starting with intervention and support initially from the class teacher, followed by support from the class teacher in collaboration with the learning support teacher and, finally, additional support from the learning support teacher. The directives of the circular stipulate the class teacher as the person initially responsible for identifying pupils' special educational needs, planning appropriate intervention strategies, and communicating and collaborating with the learning support teacher in support of these identified special educational needs.

The Education for Persons with Special Education Needs Act (2004), heralded major changes for special educational provision in Ireland and it serves to further solidify the right of all to an inclusive education. In addition, it further points to the role of the class teacher as the person responsible for ensuring not only access to, but also benefit from participation in inclusive education. One of the very fundamental changes brought about by the EPSEN Act, 2004, and by the legislative and constitutional framework into which it now sits, is the conferring of specific rights on persons with special educational needs to identified benefits and outcomes from participation in inclusive education (National Council for Special Education) (NCSE), (2006).

The purpose of this Act is:

> to provide that the education of people with special needs shall, wherever possible, take place in an inclusive environment with those who do not have such needs; to provide that people with special needs shall have the same right to avail of and benefit from an appropriate education as do their peers who do not have such needs (Ireland, 2004, S.1).

The strategies set out in the Act include provision for the assessment of pupils whom it is considered may have special needs, and the drawing up of an individual education plan for each pupil who is assessed as having such needs. In addition, it provides for greater involvement of parents in the drawing up of the pupils' individual education plan. Translated at teacher level, this requirement will demand that class teachers identify and assess pupil's learning needs and plan appropriate strategies and supports in light of the pupil's individual needs.

While there is a clear commitment to furthering inclusive policy outlined in the Act, there is strong evidence to suggest that the definition of special educational needs as

"a restriction in the capacity of a person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring … disability" (Ireland, 2004, p. 6) is a return to the deficit medical model perspective focused solely on the disability. In fact, it must be recognised that, while the idea of inclusive education has become an important issue in policy-making and planning in special education (Ireland 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996; Coolahan, 1994), psycho-medical definitions of disability continue to exert a powerful influence on policy-making and planning. Disability is defined in recent Irish legislation, such as the Education Act (Ireland, 1998a), Employment Equality Act (Ireland, 1998b) and Equal Status Act (Ireland, 2000a) and Education for Persons with Special Needs Act, (Ireland, 2004) as 'an individual human condition' thus locating the problem in the physiological and psychological characteristics of the individual (McDonnell, 2003). Notwithstanding the narrow interpretation of special educational needs, the Acts guarantee by law, for the first time, the right of pupils with special educational needs to be included in mainstream classes and to have the necessary supports, assessments and individual plans devised, implemented and reviewed in consultation with teachers, parents and the pupil himself/herself.

While, historically, Ireland may have been perceived as lagging behind European and international counterparts in terms of inclusive practices (Meegan & MacPhail, 2006), our educational policies now clearly show a formal commitment to furthering inclusive education. In addition, the recommendations outlined in the legislative documents highlight the view that mainstream class teachers are primarily responsible for meeting the learning needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs.

Context of Policy Text

Curriculum policy implementation occurs at two levels, the macro implementation level of the policy makers and the micro implementation of those who interpret and implement the policy. As implementation arises from the interaction of policy and setting, it is unrealistic to expect development of a simple or single theory of implementation that is 'context free' Maynard-Moody, Musheno, and Palumbo (as cited in Matland, 1995). Central planners can only indirectly influence micro level factors resulting often in a wide variation in how national curriculum policy is implemented at local level. Teachers do not interpret policy texts as naïve readers; rather, they come with histories, experiences, values and purposes of their own which result in parts of the policy text being rejected, selected out, or deliberately ignored (Bowe et al. 1992).

The Primary School Curriculum, (1999), advises that all pupils, including those with disabilities, have a right to effective participation in and access to the highest-quality education appropriate to their needs, right to effective participation in and access to the highest-quality education appropriate to their needs. The role of the class teacher is clearly enunciated: "it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the complexity of children's learning needs is served by a learning process that is rich and varied" (p. 21). While the policy text is clearly outlined, conflicts may arise in the implementation process when there exists an incompatibility of objectives among teachers, with some teachers regarding the policy of inclusion as directly relevant while others regard it as less relevant. Of crucial importance in the implementation process are the relationships within the school and the ethos and culture to which the school purports to be committed.

33

Schools as Social Systems

The social system of schools and communities has long been a topic of study. In understanding the problems of public policy in relation to changing schools Sarason, (1996) claims that schools are cultures, and changing a culture is a complicated business. It cannot be simply assumed that teachers will adapt to new curricula, or new pedagogical techniques in order to change *what* and *how* subjects are taught. There are ways in which, for a variety of motives, agencies, teachers, pupils and others work either to support or to reinterpret policies passed down from above. Goodson (1994) states that the curriculum is "constructed, negotiated and renegotiated at a variety of levels and in a variety of arenas" (p. 11). It is as Bernstein (1996) outlines, the relationship between the meso-level agencies and those at other levels, who work as constructors of pedagogic discourse, delocating and relocating discourse, by moving it from its original site to a pedagogic site. Similarly, a study by Hall (2005), examines teachers' perceptions of the use of Level Descriptions (LDs) as a means of assessing, recording and reporting attainments of seven year olds. This study highlighted great variance among teachers in how they allocate levels to their pupils' achievements. In addition, the study shows that, while policy makers often underestimate the complexity or scale of responsibility placed on teachers in implementing curriculum policy directives, teachers' sense-making is significantly strengthened when there is debate, dialogue and collaboration.

The concept of the school as a learning organisation is deeply embedded in the philosophy expounded throughout the curriculum documents. As these two factors, the role of the school principal and collegiality, have been shown to impact on

teacher efficacy it becomes important to analyse some of the relevant texts. The role of the principal is seen as pivotal in creating a shared vision for the curriculum and in providing dynamic and inspirational curriculum leadership:

> The principal plays a crucial role in energising and motivating the staff, in affirming and encouraging their efforts, in fostering a lively process of communication, and in establishing a continuing process of consultation (Primary School Curriculum, Introduction, p. 18).

The Primary School Curriculum, (1999) confirms the view of the school as a learning organisation:

> The school is a learning organisation involved in a continuing process of reflection, development and improvement. This occurs in the context of co-operation between the different partners in the school community in fulfilling a number of interconnecting and mutually supportive roles (p. 18).

While curriculum policy confirms the belief that it is the quality of teaching, more than anything else, that determines the success of the pupils' learning, we need as Levin (2001) argues, to consider not just the ways in which policies are driven by a particular logic or ideology, but also how policies are shaped by other important factors – in this case teacher efficacy.

Context of Implementation

In Ireland, curriculum policy to include, meeting the diversity of pupils' learning needs, is mandated in that the rules governing the syllabus content to be covered, the specific content objectives for each subject area and the teaching approaches and methodologies recommended to best achieve the learning outcomes are centrally controlled, outlined and monitored. The objective of mandating curriculum provision following review is embedded in the belief that the new revised curriculum will meet new demands, improve learning outcomes, and prepare pupils for the challenges and

opportunities of the future. In accepting the curriculum as mandated, teachers must gain ownership of the curriculum, develop an in-depth knowledge of the appropriate teaching approaches and methodologies and become familiar with the content objectives for each subject area so as to provide a broader range of learning experiences for their pupils. The expected effect of mandating curriculum policy is that teachers will comply with behaviours consistent with the rules prescribed.

While educational policies in different periods show how differential emphasis on goals such as equality and inclusion, accountability and standards, influence policy direction at a macro level, it is safe to say that the goal of all educational policy is to influence education practice at a micro level. However, contrary to the desires of governments, policies are not self-executing. Simply because legislators express explicit intentions in policy does not guarantee that those aims will be preserved through the implementation process. Frequently, implementers misconstrue or disagree with the conceived purpose and undermine legislative intent. Educational researchers have continuously highlighted the implementation problem in their work (Elmore & McLaughlin, 1981; Hall & McGinty, 1997; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002).

Understanding how policy is implemented and how policy change affects teacher's practice in the overall attempt to improve teaching and learning outcomes for students has long been a source of study. Many writers in the field have highlighted the importance of recognising the triad of influences, teacher efficacy, school culture and collegiality. Claxton (1996) suggests that the likelihood of teachers becoming involved in the learning process, in this case adapting to inclusive policy, is

36

influenced by their own learning experiences, their perception of the need for learning, existing demands on their time, and the rewards for a school culture that values and supports collegiality. Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (1990) emphasise the organisational supports that are necessary to make professional development work. These supports include: school culture that values and supports collegiality and experimentation and is continually committed to supporting teachers' efforts to change their practice; and an emphasis on change to effect improved student learning through changes in curricular, instructional and classroom-management practices.

Capacity Building

McDonnell and Elmore (1987) highlight the importance of capacity building in support of system change. They describe capacity building as yet another policy instrument, which "has distant and ambiguous effects due to basic contradictions between mobilizing material, intellectual, and human resources, with the intention of enhancing the skills and competencies of individuals to facilitate long-term returns" (p. 139). Significant capacity building, in the form of additional support personnel, followed the announcement of automatic entitlement for pupils diagnosed with special educational needs to access support services in mainstream schools (DES, 1998). The number of resource teachers rose from 104 to over 2,600 which, when combined with learning support teachers, comes to 5,000. In addition, the number of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) increased from 299 to over 6,000 (DES, 2005b, 2005c). However, in keeping with the language of the legislative documents, namely the: Education Act (Ireland, 1998a), Employment Equality Act (Ireland, 1998b), Equal Status Act (Ireland, 2000a) and Education for Persons with Special Needs Act, (Ireland, 2004), this support has its roots in a psycho-medical model of disability

(McDonnell, 1992, 2003) which assigns roles to privileged professionals as 'experts' and creates a belief in 'expertism' Troyna and Vincent (as cited in Christensen and Rizvi, 1996).

Despite the legislative requirements outlining the responsibility of mainstream class teachers in meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs, this predominant model of capacity building, which focuses exclusively on the specialist teacher, has created a model of inclusion which is limited (Travers, 2007). The support team, thus conceived, predominately operates a withdrawal model of support in contrast to recommended in-class support highlighted by (Shiel et al. 1998; IATSE, 2000; McCarthy, 2001). Models of support are in general not supportive of collaborative practice, in that there is no formal time set aside for planning and any collaboration is voluntary, sporadic and *ad hoc* (Keady, 2003; Travers, 2007). As further evidence and in support of the specialist model of provision, the number of places on the Diploma in Special Education increased from 120 to 245 between the years 2005 and 2007. However, despite the clear outline of responsibilities placed on the class teacher, no additional professional development was offered. This is a strange anomaly which reflects a belief that class teachers are already adequately prepared at pre-service or, conversely, that the learning support teacher is the key person with prime responsibility for addressing pupils' needs.

How are Mainstream Teachers Coping with Inclusive Policy Directives?
Findings from an evaluation study that focused on the quality and effectiveness of curriculum implementation in English, Visual Arts, and Mathematics (NCCA/DES, 2005) reveal that aspects of assessment, differentiation and school planning are

inadequately addressed in relation to pupils with SEN. While assessment of students'

special educational needs is critical, the study found that 60% of schools lacked a

written school assessment policy and there was evidence of a limited range of

assessment approaches being used by teachers. The results of assessments were not

sufficiently used to inform teaching and learning in the classroom and, in many

instances, there were no formal whole school procedures for recording pupils'

continuing progress. In relation to differentiation the report highlighted an over-

dependence on textbooks, little evidence of a sharing of ideas on differentiation

between the class teacher and the resource teacher, and overall limited differentiation

to meet the needs of pupils with varying abilities in Mathematics and in English.

School planning, where effectively conducted, significantly influenced classroom

planning, but 63% of schools plans were devised because they were obligatory rather

than as an effective tool to assist teaching and learning (NCCA/DES, 2005).

The opinions of learning support teachers, as outlined in *The Success in Reading

Report* (2005), also highlight that "less than half feel that teachers adequately

differentiate their instruction for pupils in receipt of learning support" (p. 18). Ring

and Travers (2005) also conclude from their study that, in general, teachers

expressed a lack of confidence to differentiate the learning goals and outcomes to

meet individual needs, and overall these teachers believe that a specialist esoteric

pedagogy is required to meet the needs of pupils with special education needs.

Reports from newly qualified teachers on their initial teacher education reinforce this

view, by stating that their prescribed course did not equip them to differentiate their

teaching approaches and methodologies, did not prepare them for working in

disadvantaged areas, and did not provide them with knowledge to work with pupils who had special educational needs (DES, 2005).

There is further evidence from inspectorate reports, evaluating the convergence of the principles outlined in the *Draft Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities* (NCCA, 2002), and current practice in schools. The report states that while some schools had made progressive strides in collaboratively planning for inclusion, there remain many areas needing attention. Some commented: "I believe strongly that there is a need to plan for the inclusion of special needs pupils" or again; "I recommend that inclusion practices be reviewed periodically to see that it is meaningful inclusion" (NCCA, 2002, p. 12). Others reported concern about over-reliance on withdrawal from the classroom by the resource teacher, and recommended a balance between this model of withdrawal and that of supporting the student in his/her own classroom. While schools are increasingly aware of the need for students to access a broad and balanced curriculum, many schools are experiencing difficulty in its delivery. Again, over-reliance on the system of withdrawal emerged as a factor in restricting students' access to a broad and balanced curriculum "Too much withdrawal appears to negatively impact on pupils receiving a broad and balanced curriculum" (NCCA, 2002, p. 13).

Other support services, namely the Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP), School Development Planning Initiative (SDPI), and the Special Education Support Service (SESS), were put in place to offer professional development support at whole school and at individual teacher level. While all of these supports were

welcome initiatives, they have the potential to create yet another layer of engagement with practitioners, who may or may not have the capacity to respond to multiple layers of change and innovation. There is evidence from an evaluation of the PCSP that the lack of time for planning and work overload, are regarded as the major obstacles in furthering curriculum reform (Murchen, Loxley, Johnson, Quinn, & Fitzgerald, 2005). There is also a risk of creating a dependency culture amongst teachers through the practices of the support models in place.

A recent report the by National Council for Special Education (NCSE) (2006) provides an analysis of "the main gaps and deficits between the 'to be' scenario envisioned in the EPSEN Act and the current 'as is' SEN regime" (p. 17). The key gaps and deficits identified relate to the following areas: (1) early identification of needs; (2) inadequate early intervention procedures; (3) intervention and pre-school provision; (5) lack of access to the curriculum at first and second levels; (4) low attainment of certificated outcomes; (6) lack of progress to further education with high attrition rates; (7) lack of uniformity in the move towards a more inclusive model in some schools; (8) unequal participation between first and second level and two-tiered provision between mainstream and special schools; (9) inadequate emphasis on structured outcomes; (10) poor progress records for children with SEN; (11) under-resourcing of schools in terms of capacity to deliver inclusive education; and (12) inadequate institutional and systemic supports for schools in relation to furthering inclusive education provision.

Inclusion: Implications for Teachers

Inclusive education has profound implications for teachers in mainstream settings as they face increased pressure to perform to a wider set of roles than in previous generations (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Knight, 1999; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; McCoy, 1995; INTO, 2000). Teachers in inclusive schools are now expected to rise to the challenge of an increasingly diverse classroom (Peterson & Beloin, 1992), adjust their teaching strategies to accommodate varying learning styles (Kortman, 2001) and to be psychologically and practically prepared to take on the dynamic role of inclusive educator (Mullen, 2001).

With teachers being viewed as the primary agents in the implementation of inclusive educational policy (Cant, 1994; Haskell, 2000; Whiting & Young, 1995), their beliefs regarding inclusion must be borne in mind, as it is likely that these beliefs may influence their behaviour towards and their acceptance of students with disabilities (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003). Furthermore, teachers' beliefs may have a significant bearing on the success of inclusive educational practices (Van Reuse, Shoto & Barker, 2001).

It can be concluded that implementing inclusive policy is a complex issue intrinsically woven into the complex fabric of teaching and learning, the social context and the organisational context. Mandating policy is insufficient in itself to effect a change in practice if the teacher, as an individual implementing agent, feels ill-prepared to meet the diverse needs of students with general learning disabilities in mainstream schools. While all of these legislative initiatives are commendable, progress in achieving the vision and goals outlined are less clear.

Summary

This chapter set the context for this study by examining the historical background to inclusive education. It examined the concept of inclusive education, firstly by detailing the shift in ideology from integration to inclusion and secondly, by exploring the multiple meanings, dilemmas and contradictions inherent in the ideology of inclusive education. In addition, it highlighted the pivotal role that teachers play in the policy implementation.

It provided a systematic analysis of inclusive policy development in the Irish context. It chronicled the shift in thinking from the focus on special and separate provision to one of inclusion, where the responsibilities of the class teacher in meeting the needs of pupils with SEN are given prominence. Finally, it examined evidence from recent reports and analysis in support of teachers' confidence to fulfil the policy requirements. Following on from an understanding of the responsibilities of class teachers as outlined in the policy documents, the next chapter will address the question – are teachers adequately prepared for inclusive education?

CHAPTER 3: TEACHER PREPARATION

Initial Teacher Education: Are Teachers Adequately Prepared for Inclusive Education?

Against a background of inclusive education policy, this chapter examines how schools, as a microcosm of society, are continuously called upon to be the catalyst for change and to right the ills of society at all levels. It examines the research in relation to teachers' perceptions as to the adequacy of their own pre-service preparation in respect of implementing inclusive policies. It highlights the importance of teacher preparation and discusses the contradiction that exists between the call for teachers to be endowed with *quality* teaching skills, versus the widespread doubt that queries whether teachers are adequately prepared for the task in hand. It outlines the shift in focus in teacher education in recognition of the active agency of the teacher. It examines current provision at initial teacher education level (ITE) in the Irish context and it discusses the degree of preparedness Irish teachers feel in comparison to their European colleagues. It explores the extent to which teachers need additional skills to work with pupils with SEN and, finally, it questions whether having a belief in your own competency, as reflected in teacher efficacy level, impacts on teaching and learning.

Reforming Society through Changing Schools

The key driver of change from an educational perspective is the rate and level of environmental change (Egan, 2004, p. 13).

The belief that society can be reconstructed through reforming educational institutions, policies and programmes has a long intellectual pedigree, reflected in the writings of Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori and Rousseau, who highlighted the interconnections between education, politics and social justice (Thomas & Loxley, 2001). These beliefs lasted through time and developed to the extent that it can be safely claimed that education is a microcosm of society and, as such, it reflects changes in economic, social and political arenas worldwide. Dependant on how societal changes are perceived at a macro level and whose voices are heard, the resultant impact in many instances is reflected in a demand for change in *what* is learned, *how* it is learned and *why* teachers should improve or change their practices in order to support this new vision for society. It is as Cuban (1990) suggests: "policymakers turn religiously to school-based solutions for national problems. If society has an itch, schools get scratched" (p. 9).

Reforming schools has long been a favourite way of improving not just schools but society (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). In the 1840s, Horace Mann took his audience to the edge of the precipice to see what horrors would befall them if they did not achieve reform through the schools. In the 1960s, Lyndon B. Johnson declared war on poverty, asserting that the answer to all national problems was down to a single word – education. Reforming society through changing what happens in schools has been a tapestry woven of many strands, one of which is political (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Repeatedly, schools have been targeted to correct social ills; alcohol or drug abuse, sex education, computer literacy, driver education are all areas once identified as social or economic problems. Evidence of using schools to instil a nationalistic spirit to reflect a new order is seen in the Irish context, with a change in emphasis on the teaching of Religion and the Irish Language, following the foundation of the State.

In current times, the demand on schools is to create a more equitable and just society by supporting access and participation to an inclusive education for all pupils. A report by the OECD (2005) points to the complexity of the teachers' role in this regard, "society now expects schools to deal with different languages and student backgrounds, to be sensitive to cultural and gender issues, to promote tolerance and social cohesion, to respond effectively to disadvantaged students..." (p. 7). The importance of the role of the teacher in advancing inclusive educational reform is amply supported in reports, research syntheses, professional initiatives and empirical studies which point to the relationship among teacher qualifications, teacher preparation, teacher performance and educational outcomes (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Coolahan, 2002; Hargreaves, 1994). In a time of profound and accelerated change, if schools are to fulfil the requirements of inclusive policies, teacher preparation programmes will, in turn, need to prepare them for their new and challenging role as inclusive educators.

Although it is widely accepted that teachers are among the most significant factors in pupils' learning and the linchpins in educational reforms of all kinds, teacher education has been widely criticised in many countries (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005). Following a review of the problems in teacher education identified by

different authors, Tyson (1994) pointed out that little had changed to alleviate these problems over the previous forty years. Robertson (1999) went further to claim that the standards for newly qualified teachers "are too simple, slight, procedural and compliant in design" (p. 6) to promote the development of inclusive education. It would appear that despite the rhetoric of inclusive legislation, researchers have found that inclusion is inadequately addressed and often neglected at pre-service level (Barton, 2003; Booth, Nes & Stromstad, 2003; Garner, 2001; Jones, 2002; Thomas & Loxley, 2001).

Inclusive Education: Do Mainstream Teachers Feel Adequately Prepared?

Issues related to the initial preparation of teachers to work effectively with pupils with SEN represents one of the most discussed, debated, researched and contentious issues within educational research today (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Kearns & Shevlin, 2006). Teacher education colleges and universities over the past three decades have reported on new approaches to identify competencies and develop training programmes for mainstream teachers, in preparation for inclusive educational settings (Reynolds, 1990; Sebba & Ainscow, 1996; York & Reynolds, 1996; Fisher, Higgins & Loveless, 2006). However, despite these major efforts to increase professional capacity in the area of inclusive education and special needs education in particular, mainstream teachers still report that they do not possess the necessary skills and competencies to implement inclusive policy (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Cook, 2001; Rose, 2001, Winzer, 1999; Cains & Browne, 1996; Lombardi & Hunka, 2001).

Lack of Adequate Preparedness: An age-Old Problem

Teachers' lack of preparedness is an age-old problem with teachers expressing apprehension about their ability to teach pupils with special educational needs for many years. Forty years ago, Tansley and Guillford (as cited in Gittelman, 1985), highlighted the need for all teachers to be made aware of methods of helping children who cannot keep up with their age group. In the same year, the Plowden Report, (1967) sought a review of initial teacher education (ITE) provision. The Warnock Committee Report (1978) concluded that considerable advances were required in teaching training to ensure improvements in special education provision.

In more recent times it has been found that many newly qualified teachers are apprehensive about their ability to teach students with SEN, and have found their preparation for inclusion inadequate at best (Garner, 1996; Dwyfor Davies & Garner, 1997; Schumm & Vaughn, 1995; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). This was specifically highlighted as being problematic in the first two years of teaching (Cains & Brown, 1996). A pilot study in one teacher education programme revealed that over half (53%) of the participants (N=150), felt unprepared to teach students with SEN. Furthermore, sixty-five percent (65%) reported that the amount of SEN instructional time provided during their pre-service education was inadequate.

Many studies point to the fact that teachers today lack the preparation and experience in dealing with students with special educational needs in inclusive settings (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Winter, 2006). In a study by Kamens, Loprete and Slostad (2000), mainstream teachers reported that pre-service teacher education did not provide them with instruction for success in

mainstream classes, others claim they lacked confidence to work with students with SEN who were included (Sadler, 2005). Others still express overall apprehension about their ability to teach pupils with SEN (Dwyfor Davies et al. 1997; Garner, 1996; Schumm and Vaughn, 1995; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

Similarly, Liaw (2009) points to the fact that while courses and activities at pre-service tend to focus more on pedagogical knowledge they lack the hands-on experience which is necessary to develop a sense of efficacy for working with pupils with special educational needs. He suggests that teacher efficacy is best supported through: more school-university collaboration; discussion among student teachers when performing a task; and observation of experienced teachers in a real class setting. These factors will serve to simulate the special educational teaching context for pre-service teachers and consequently support the development of high levels of SEN teacher efficacy.

Research by Joblin and Moni, (2004), points to the lack of knowledge of teaching strategies, in relation to special education, identified by teachers as related to six areas: behavioural concerns; conflict resolution; social skills development; identification of needs; differentiation of curriculum and materials; differentiation of instructional strategies; legal requirements and individual educational planning (IEP); co-teaching and collaboration (Kamens, Loprete & Slostad, 2000) Research by Brown et al. (2008), examining the effects of embedding special education instruction into pre-service instruction found that embedding instruction in relation to assessment of pupils with SEN significantly increased teachers' knowledge of inclusive terminology and assessment adaptations and improved confidence levels in

meeting the needs of pupils with SEN by 60% over the control group. While this research points to the increase in teacher confidence when exposed to training techniques that address inclusion in the classroom, Destefano, Shriner and Lloyd, (2001) and Cochran-Smith (2004) claim that little has changed in the way student teachers are prepared and that there are dramatically different perceptions of teacher education for diversity, as well as major disparities about notions of equity, teacher learning and social change. Therefore, while the policy talks of inclusion, and suggests that initial teacher education is a critical factor in its implementation (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Peterson & Beloin, 1998), the reality is that although most teachers support the philosophy of inclusion, they identify critical problems with its implementation due to the lack of skills necessary to teach pupils with SEN.

European Perspective

From a European perspective, research by Rault, Molina and Gash (2001) examined teachers' perceptions in six countries: Spain, France, Italy, Brazil, Ireland and Portugal, in relation to the adequacy of their initial teacher education in preparing them to develop effective teaching and learning processes with students with special educational needs (SEN) who are included in mainstream schools. It also sought to trace those beginning teachers in their first year of professional practice and explore with them the difficulties experienced in relation to including pupils with SEN in their classes. In all countries surveyed, while beginning teachers believe that pupils with special educational needs have a legitimate place in mainstream schools, they claim that they are not adequately prepared to respond to the specific special educational needs of pupils, feel ill-prepared to identify and analyse the difficulties they meet, and often feel powerless when confronted with a situation for which they

50

have neither tools nor appropriate teaching methods. While the dominant feeling is a lack of specific competencies and of know-how on the part of young teachers, in all countries concerned, their responses clearly point to the conviction that it is their task and their responsibility to respond to their pupils' special needs. In terms of needs expressed by teachers for improved pre-service, better preparation to work with pupils of different ability levels, a better understating of the learning process and an approach that combines theory and practice are cited. It is interesting to note that teachers perceive the need to work in collaboration and to develop expanded professional partnership relationships. Clearly, pre-service education plays a central role in awareness raising and also in acquiring useful and necessary competencies for beginning teachers. There is a call for pre-service education to be centered more on the learner, whether a pupil or a teacher and on the dialectic approach which is both particular and universal. The dialectic between the heterogeneity of the whole class on the one hand and of special needs on the other, invites a rethinking of practices which while emphasising the importance of recognising each child's specific needs, can find ways of working with groups of children (Rault, Molina & Gash, 2001).

Rault (2006) suggests that in preparing teachers to work with pupils with SEN there is a need to recognise the individuality and personal multifaceted life experience of the individual teacher. These experiences will determine the way teachers will invest in the profession and to develop a 'professional personality'. They suggest that learning to master the complexity of the teachers' mission goes deeper than just acquiring skills; it strikes at the heart at building a democratic society by striving to provide access to and participation in education for pupils with special educational needs. "It is to convince them that they contribute, with those who work with them,

to building a democratic society, respectful of all its members" (7.2.3). There is clearly a challenge for pre-service education to respond to these calls from student teachers.

There is, as Mittler (1995) suggests, a need for "a radical reappraisal of the whole initial and post-experience training for all teachers" (p. 128). For Garner (2000), there "is a current romance with inclusion" (p. 111) reflected in the fact that, while inclusion has received policy prominence there is much evidence that points to the conceptual and practical unpreparedness of many newly qualified teachers (NQTS) who are increasingly expected to form the vanguard of inclusive initiatives in education. It echoes the advice of Avramidis and Norwich (2002), who claim that, without a coherent plan for pre-service teacher education which addresses the area of special educational needs, attempts to include these children in the mainstream would be difficulty. Pre-service teacher education, therefore, will play a critical role in equipping teachers with the knowledge, skills and competencies to meet these challenges (OECD, 2005).

In conclusion, it can be stated that the challenge for teacher education institutions at the beginning of the 21st century is to address the contours of change impacting on teacher education, resulting from inclusive policies, and to move beyond the structures and systems they have inherited by examining how change in teacher education can be reframed.

The Importance of Teacher Preparation: The Need for Reform

Given the present situation and without concerned attention to the pervasive shortcomings of ITE, the pursuit of inclusion is an irrelevance. (Garner, 2000. p. 115).

Internationally evidence consistently confirms that what happens in classrooms through quality teaching and through the quality of the learning experiences has a significant influence on student achievement (Alton-Lee, 2003). In the current policy drive to further inclusive education, there is intense focus on the importance of teachers, and hence of teacher education, while at the same time doubts regarding the quantity and quality of preparation for special educational needs (SEN) in initial teacher education are commonplace (Kearns & Shevlin, 2008).

Teaching Quality Matters

Despite the divergence of opinion as to the best approach to teacher education, policy makers worldwide all seem to agree that quality teaching makes an important difference in students' learning, their achievement, and their life chances. Saunders and Horn (1998) make this point persuasively - that teachers are the single largest factor that adds value to students' learning. *The No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) (2001) cemented this conclusion into law with its guarantee that all schoolchildren must have 'highly qualified teachers'. There is much debate as to what constitutes quality teaching; for some, the highly qualified teacher is seen as a technician who aligns teaching with standards, and improves instructional strategies 'based on scientifically based research'; for others the highly qualified teacher is one who is

professionally skilled and will routinely select from a repertoire of teaching strategies that best suit the needs of learners in the local context while at the same time he/she forms productive relationships with parents and community members. The professional definition of the highly qualified teacher assumes that teaching is a complex and somewhat uncertain process, with knowledge constructed between the interactions of particular teachers, students, material texts, and prior experiences. This definition contrasts sharply with the technical definitions which presume that teaching is a linear process wherein knowledge is transmitted more or less directly from teacher to student by following a scientifically predetermined sequence of instruction.

Quality teaching is identified as a key influence on high quality outcomes for students with special educational needs. Alton-Lee (2003) defines quality teaching as pedagogical practices that facilitate access to information for heterogeneous groups of students so as to enable them to engage in classroom activities and tasks in ways that facilitate learning related to curriculum goals. He presents ten generic characteristics of quality teaching derived from a synthesis of research findings of evidence linked to student outcomes across a range of schooling years in New Zealand from 5-18 years. Central to the notion of quality teaching is the ability to addresses the complex learning needs of a diverse student population, with evidence showing that teaching which is responsive to student diversity can have positive impacts on low and high achievers at the same time. Diversity encompasses many characteristics including ethnicity, socio-economic background, home language, gender, special needs, disability and giftedness (Alton-Lee, 2003).

Likewise, in a report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future* (1996), which considered several hundred studies of teaching, schooling, and reform initiatives, concluded that educational reform could not be achieved solely by strategies such as school restructuring, the introduction of special programmes, or improved management structures. Rather, the Commission argued that educational reform must focus on the core functions of teaching and learning: preparing knowledgeable teachers to work in schools which support their own learning and that of their students (Darling-Hammond, 1999). In conclusion, the Commission outlined three fundamental issues to be addressed in support of educational reform. Firstly, what teachers *know* and *do* is one of the most important influences on what students learn; secondly, recruiting, preparing, and retaining good teachers is the central strategy for improving schools, and lastly, school reform cannot succeed unless it focuses on creating the conditions in which teachers can teach and teach well.

Thomas (1997) questions what "we value when we hear of the drive to keep pace with the demands of the knowledge society on the one hand and the value of meeting the needs of the individual pupil with special educational needs on the other" (p. 36). Are these two aspirations compatible? If student teachers are to experience a teacher education programme which prepares them to teach *all* pupils, how will this be facilitated on the part of teacher educators? What is the most suitable model of teacher education? For Thomas "the profession is capable of undertaking this task so that preparing student teachers for inclusive education becomes an inclusive element of learning to teach. Whether or not it is willing to develop the necessary effort and goodwill remains to be seen" (p. 36).

Teacher Preparation – Is It Too Vague, General or Insufficient?

At a macro level, international comparison between ITE programmes to prepare teachers to work with pupils with special educational needs varies significantly in scope and content. However, in the main, there is worldwide acceptance of the need to broaden the scope of current provision (Wishart & Manning, 1996; Carroll, Forlin & Jobling, 2003). In most countries, courses about special educational needs and inclusion are offered to student teachers but, in practice, great variation occurs in the time devoted to them, the depth of knowledge covered and the opportunities provided for teachers to reflect upon the issues (Golder, Norwich & Bayliss, 2005). Despite these variations, most countries emphasise their commitment to furthering inclusive educational policy and to correcting the deficit in skills and competencies continuously highlighted by the research.

At one end of the continuum there are calls for a change to a 'one size fits all model' or permeation model in which all SEN matters are embedded with other subject based parts of the ITE programmes. Some suggest that core competencies are required for all educators and that comprehensive trans-disciplinary preparation programs are needed to most effectively meet the needs of students with and without special educational needs (Jenkins, Pateman & Black, 2002; Sindelar, Pugach, Griffin & Seidl, 1995). Accordingly, they claim that such programmes would increase the flexibility and utilisation of resources and improve teacher education in general. While this is regarded as an ideal model by many (Blanton, Griffin, Winn & Pugach, 1997), large-scale implementation of unified programmes have associated disincentives such as additional costs, plus wide institutional variance in the extent

of focus on SEN related topics. A more prevalent initiative to improve ITE involves what may be called "enhancement" of existing programmes by adding new courses or practical placement experiences, or by revising the content and requirements for existing courses or experiences for general education programmes (Strawderman & Lindsey, 1995).

Many countries refer to the fact that class teachers receive some form of compulsory training in relation to pupils with special needs during the initial training. While this must be seen as a positive impact on teachers' responsibilities regarding pupils' individual needs, there is evidence from the data that such input is often too general, vague or insufficient, with limited practical experience and may not adequately equip teachers in their role as mainstream teachers. It can be argued that these difficulties arose for several reasons, one being that teacher education programmes in colleges and universities do not include coursework that prepares new teachers to work in inclusive settings (Pugach & Johnson, 2002; Reinhiller, 1996; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Thurlow, 2000). Another reason cited is that pre-service education is normally delivered by general educators and that the focus is on developing expertise in curriculum content areas only (Burnstein & Sears, 1998; Foley & Mundschenk, 1997). Others claim that having two types of teacher education focused either on working in mainstream schools or in special educational settings results in neither group being adequately prepared to work collaboratively, or to teach in a co-operative manner (Pugach & Johnson, 2002). In addition, researchers have identified inadequate or inappropriate practical-based experiences and lack of exposure to persons with special educational needs in many pre-service programmes (Golder, Norwich & Bayliss, 2005).

In recognition of the deficit in initial teacher education as outlined, some countries like Scotland, New Zealand and England outline competency standards to be achieved by all, which place a strong emphasis on responsibilities and stress the importance of procedural knowledge and compliance. In the UK, current ITE standards place a greater emphasis on special educational needs as part of ITE. Qualified teachers must demonstrate that they can show evidence for three standards directly related to special educational needs. These relate to: understanding their responsibilities under the SEN Code of Practice; knowing how to seek advice from specialists on less common types of SEN; differentiating their teaching to meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEN; and identifying and supporting pupils who experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (DfES, 2004).

How can teacher educators develop a comprehensive programme of preparation in light of the demands and the failure to date to make any significant difference in teachers' reported competencies to implement inclusive education policy in practice? Taking cognisance of the research evidence and the call for a better approach at initial teacher education level, it would appear that there is an urgent need for a radical rethinking of how we prepare teachers for inclusive education at pre-service level.

A Model of Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education

Ensuring that newly qualified teachers have a basic understanding of inclusive teaching is the best investment that can be made (Mittler, 2000, p. 137).

At a macro level, inclusive educational policy presents significant challenges for teacher preparation. Not only are teacher educators grappling with issues of greater demand on the knowledge base of teachers, they are now charged with preparing teachers for an increasingly diverse pupil population in inclusive settings. Which model is most suited to help prepare highly qualified teachers? Do we regard teachers as passive recipients, or as active agents, constructing their own meanings within a complex field of interacting influences?

The history of research on teacher education over the last half-century can be explained by identifying how 'the problem' of teacher education is constructed, studied, analysed, and interpreted (Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2000a; 2000b; Darling-Hammond and Youngs, 2002; Ballou & Podgursky, 2000; Wilson & Floden, 2002). From the 1980s to the early 2000s research on teacher education moved away from identifying what was considered the most effective instructional procedures for training prospective teachers to perform specific behaviours, towards understanding teachers' knowledge development. This change in focus represented a shift from regarding teacher education as a *training* problem to regarding it as a *learning* problem. In many research studies the concept and language of 'learning to teach' replaced the language of 'teacher training' (Feiman-Nemser, 1983). Coupled with this new focus on learning came research by Putman and Borko (2000) which synthesised research on prospective and experienced teachers' knowledge and beliefs, their subject knowledge and beliefs, and their pedagogical knowledge and beliefs. They pointed out that learning to teach is a complex process requiring multiple knowledge bases, skills and understanding. They also claimed that

prospective teachers' knowledge and beliefs as well as certain contextual aspects of schools and colleagues act as impediments to learning to teach.

Likewise, a review of research by Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon, (1998) examining teacher beliefs, pre-service programme interventions, and student teaching experiences, concluded that not only were beliefs difficult to change but that there existed a fundamental tension between teacher educators "desire to change prospective teacher beliefs and teachers' own desire to learn to 'do' teaching" (p. 88). Shulman (1986) contends that, when teaching is constructed as a learning problem, understanding teachers' knowledge and beliefs is considered an important research purpose in its own right.

Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) propose a four-domain model emphasising that change takes place within the wider field of social, economical and political contexts. The external domain, which is outside the teacher's personal world, is distinguished from the other three domains: domain of practice; domain of consequences; and personal domain. These three domains constitute the individual teacher's professional world of practice, encompassing the professional actions, the inferred consequences of those actions and the knowledge and beliefs that prompted and responded to those actions. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) postulate that change can occur in any of the domains and that change in one dimension is translated into change in another through the mediating processes of "*reflection* and *enaction*" (p. 4).

Likewise, Spillane, Reiser and Reimer (2002) use the cognitive framework to examine policy implementation. This presents the teacher as an active agent for whom sense-making is not simply decoding the policy message; it is an active process of interpretation that draws on the individual's knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. Using the cognitive framework, Spillane et al. (2002) examine sense-making from three perspectives: *the individual implementing agent, the social context* and *the organizational context* and tell us that "a key dimension of the implementation process is whether, and in what ways, implementing agents come to understand their practice, potentially changing their beliefs and attitudes in the process" (p. 387). This understanding requires cognitive processes of interpretation and it is through engaging in this process that the "complexities of human sense-making" (p. 341) are revealed. How implementation is influenced needs to be examined in light of the agents' mechanisms for understanding and connecting policy to practice; understanding policy is not a passive act. What a policy comes to mean will be woven intrinsically into the complex fabric of learning and teaching, and the extent to which the policy is implemented will depend on the individual's prior knowledge and beliefs.

In summary, it would appear that current thinking is one of support for the active agency of the teacher, in that learning to teach is incumbent on the interaction between teachers' knowledge and beliefs, context, and relationship with colleagues. This triad of influences serve in turn to act as supports or impediments to teacher education. This view is in keeping with Bandura's (1986) theory of reciprocal determinism which explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. The

61

outcome from these reciprocal actions gives rise to feelings of high or low levels of teacher efficacy.

Teacher Education: The Irish Context

While teacher education came under intense scrutiny in other countries, in Ireland teacher education in the main has not been subjected to the analyses and debate in evidence in other countries. However, like other countries, historically the pattern of developments in teacher education in the Republic of Ireland can be closely aligned to changes in the Irish political, economic, social and cultural landscape, which occurred following the foundation of the state in 1922 (Coolahan, 2004). While depressed economic conditions in the mid sixties to late eighties resulted in unstable progress, the early 1900s showed significant improvement. In 1991, the OECD review of Irish education recommended the development of the "3 Is", (namely, good quality initial teacher training, followed by a structured form of induction and a greatly expanded in - service teacher education programme). This was adopted as the new policy direction in all subsequent policy papers: (Ireland, 1992, 1995). Change and developments in teacher education were now firmly rooted, at both public and political level, in the knowledge that good quality education underpinned all economic, social and cultural developments of Irish society. In addition, there was an acceptance that having a quality teaching force competent to provide high quality education within a lifelong learning paradigm was a prerequisite for Ireland's progress within the evolving knowledge society (Ireland, 1992; 1995; 2004).

While teacher education had, at this period been afforded a high moral status and quality in teacher education was set as an Irish benchmark, there was a growing

awareness that the rate of societal change, in particular the increasing diversity of the pupil population in mainstream schools, was presenting serious challenges for the educational system, which in turn had implications for teacher preparation (Coolahan, 2003). A report that examined primary pre-service teacher education identifies the major challenges facing teachers in current times (Ireland, 2002). These include: the implementation of the revised Primary School Curriculum (1999); the quality of student learning; the integration of pupils with disabilities and special needs; socio-economic disadvantage; the need for specialisation in teaching; school development planning and whole school evaluation; the need to create greater awareness of the importance of early childhood education; reduction in class size; interaction with other professionals; and the necessary involvement of teachers with parents and communities.

The report further categorises the key skills and competencies that newly qualified teachers would require in meeting the challenges of this changing environment. These include: subject matter knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge and skills; skills in teaching particular curriculum areas; knowledge of learners and learning; knowledge of educational contexts and how to respond to them; communication skills; and the development of moral sensibilities, values, and attitudes appropriate to managing diversity coupled with an ability to reflect on practice. In general, the report highlights that making schools more inclusive and teachers more competent in addressing diversity calls for a reconceptualised and restructured pre-service teacher education, based on an understanding of the impact of the challenges facing newly qualified teachers.

While it is widely accepted that professional development for all teachers takes place across three broad teaching stages: initial teacher training, the induction stage; and career wide continuous professional development (Burke, 2004) – research suggests that the level of preparation that teachers receive at pre-service level influences their attitudes to pupils with special educational needs (Avradimis et al. 2000) and their beliefs in their own competency, which in turn may impact on the successful implementation of more inclusive systems (Carrington, 1999; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002).

In Ireland, teachers are regarded as responsible for the education of *all* pupils (Education Act, 1998; EPSEN Act, 2004). This means in effect that teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge skills and competencies to work successfully with an increasingly diverse pupil population and to simultaneously manage the complexity of their learning needs.

Structure of Provision

Five colleges provide full-time initial teacher education courses leading to recognized qualification for the purpose of employment as a primary school teacher. There is no requirement for students to acquire additional qualifications in special education prior to employment in a special school or to work with pupils with special educational needs in a mainstream school. All colleges either offer a pedagogical option in special education to students in third year plus an option for those students to take their teaching practice in a special school or they offer three units of education to third years in the area of special educational needs. In a review

of initial teacher education for special educational needs in Ireland, Kearns and Shevlin (2006) outline the three patterns of provision of special educational input across the colleges at pre-service level. These include: a single course or series of SEN/Inclusion units delivered by specialists; permeated or infused SEN made explicit in some instances, but implicit in others; and some combination of the two. The time dedicated to SEN was not consistent over the institutions examined but it would appear that the greatest amount of SEN time occurs where there is a series of input units over a four-year BEd programme. There is no stipulation as to the content of the SEN input for any of the ITE providers. It would appear that this varies according to the staff expertise available. Previous research noted that the ITE providers themselves would prefer a compulsory 'stand-alone' course in SEN for all pre-service teachers as difficulties associated with the quality and monitoring of permeated input have been evident (Kearns & Shevlin, 2006). However, research by Winter (2006), which examined teachers' perceptions of their preparedness for inclusive education, identified a combination of a stand-alone course plus permeation of SEN content in all courses provided.

Do Irish Mainstream Class Teachers Feel Adequately Prepared to Implement Inclusive Pedagogy?

The realisation of inclusive education is a complex process, as inclusion does not simply concern a placement but a philosophy, the implementation of which requires dynamic educational changes and a reconsideration of the roles of teachers, learners and the curriculum, as well as instructional and financial resources (Kelleghan, 2004). While Irish government policy supports the inclusion of pupils with a wide diversity of special educational needs into mainstream schools, it follows that all

65

teachers can expect to teach pupils with a wide range of special educational needs throughout their careers.

In the Irish context, while the last thirty years have seen a marked increase in the demand for greater emphasis on special educational needs at pre-service level, in reality teacher education in SEN has not kept pace with the re-orientation in thinking and developments outlined in the legislation (Ireland, 1998; Ireland, 2002; Ireland, 2004a; Ireland, 2004b), resulting in the acknowledgement that teachers receive inadequate preparation in matters relating to special educational needs. A report examining teacher preparation (Ireland, 2002), tells us that only 3 in 10 from larger colleges and 1 in 10 from smaller colleges felt well prepared to deal with pupils with special educational needs. This discrepancy may have serious consequences in respect of inclusive policies guaranteeing the rights of the pupils with special educational needs to have their needs met by teachers in mainstream schools.

More recent reports show that, while the vast majority of probationary primary teachers expressed a sense of personal and professional satisfaction about their teaching experience in the first year, there is evidence from teachers' and inspectors' reports to suggest that some aspects of teacher education require further attention, for example the ability to use a range of teaching approaches, multi-grade teaching, differentiation and the ability to manage the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs (DES, 2005; NCCA, 2005; PCSP, 2005). Taken together, these various reports and initiatives have implications for the development of teacher education policies in Ireland.

Moran (2007), examines the extent to which initial teacher education programmes contribute to the development of inclusive attitudes, values and practices, reported that the majority of school principals did not feel that initial teacher education prepared student teachers to teach in inclusive classrooms:

> ITE doesn't prepare student teachers to come in and teach children with special needs, or with moderate learning difficulties. There needs to be more in ITE …on strategies for ensuring that all children are learning, and also for them to be made aware of how children are learning (Moran, 2007, p. 128).

Research by Winter (2006), investigates Northern Ireland practitioners' perceptions of whether their initial teacher education (ITE) relative to SEN adequately prepared them to work in inclusive settings. Findings from the study confirm that teachers feel ill-prepared for working with pupils with SEN. They identify areas that need to be addressed at pre-service, namely: knowledge about student characteristics; behaviour management; assessment and evaluation; and SEN legislation.

Gash (2006) confirms that the main difficulties experienced by beginning teachers from a European perspective are also a feature of beginning teachers in the Irish context, "these difficulties include working with children in difficulty with the curriculum, with children who exhibit difficult behaviour and with children who are different from the average children in the class" (p. 286). Gash (2006) highlights the importance of recognising what can reasonably be provided in an improved pre-service education programme and what should be part of carefully tailored in-service induction courses. While one can agree with the concept of teaching as a lifelong learning process, in light of the claim by efficacy theorists that beliefs once formed at mastery level are difficult to change, developing adequate levels of teacher competencies at pre-service take on greater significance.

What Additional Skills do Mainstream Teachers Need?

Much discussion has taken place about the skills and competencies needed by all teachers to effectively teach a diverse student population in mainstream classrooms (Daniels & Vaughn, 1999; Lombardi & Hunka, 2001; Swan & Servis, 1999). Since the majority of students with SEN receive instruction in mainstream classes, it is essential that teachers have the knowledge and skills to provide appropriate instruction for *all* students. While Croll and Moses (2002) advise that the skills and knowledge of the class teacher are of paramount importance, Thomas and Loxley (2001) claim that mainstream class teachers are concerned about their abilities to deal with pupils who have special needs.

Others argue that there is very little that is unique or special about the teaching skills required for students with special educational needs; in fact, they claim that good teaching is good teaching for all (Croll & Moses, 2000; Westwood, 2003; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Thurlow, 1995). Clearly, it is desirable that mainstream teachers should perceive themselves as capable of teaching students with special educational needs and, subsequently, that they experience success in doing so. In this context it becomes important to examine what, if any, additional pedagogical skills are necessary to prepare teachers to value diversity, and to reach and teach all students.

In the absence of research evidence, Lewis and Norwich (2005) outline particular types of knowledge which are more relevant to assisting teachers to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. These are knowledge in relation to the nature of the special needs group; personal knowledge in order to be aware of value

positions that may help or hinder meeting the needs of all learners; knowledge in relation to learning theory and knowledge of curriculum; and general pedagogical strategies. They regard these four types of knowledge as integrated and linked to pedagogy in that, where knowledge of the nature of special education needs is strong, and acts as a filter for all the others knowledge types, the resultant teaching strategies will be very different to a situation where this knowledge is weak and less defined.

Lewis and Norwich (2005) outline a conceptual framework to guide the development of professional training in special education needs. Firstly, there is a need for training in the special needs field "to focus on the cultivation of craft knowledge, beginning with the commonality position and moving through degrees of intensification and deliberation" (p. 218). Secondly, there is a need to apply the knowledge of developmental psychology and learning theory to the context of special education needs in order to inform the processes of teaching and learning by opening up practical options for teachers. The social and cultural contexts in relation to students with special needs are significant; there is a need to have regard to these contexts in teaching and learning. The key aspect of professional education and training will go beyond merely acquiring a competency model based on practical knowledge and skill; it will include an understanding of the principles and concepts that underpin and help to develop these competencies. In outlining this framework Lewis and Norwich (2005) stress that teaching children with special needs has to be seen in terms of the many levels of interacting systems in which education takes place, the class group, the school, the local authority and central government policy and practices. Classroom pedagogy is also nested in teaching programmes that are

under the wider influence of curriculum policy and school culture. Practical pedagogies for those with special needs might look different from dominant mainstream pedagogies but these differences are at the level of concrete programmes, materials and settings; they do not relate to differences in the principles of curriculum design and pedagogical practice (Lewis & Norwich, 2005).

How does Teacher Efficacy Impact on Teaching and Learning?

The study of teachers' beliefs has the potential to provide significant and profound insight into many aspects of the teacher's professional world. Educators and researchers have long asserted that teachers' beliefs are important determinants and predictors of teaching practices (Dewey, 1929; Lortie, 1975; Pajares, 1992). While Kagan (1992) argues that beliefs may be "the clearest measure of a teacher's professional growth" and that understanding them is "instrumental in determining the quality of interaction one finds among teachers in a given school" (p. 85), others argue that beliefs will eventually prove themselves to be the most valuable psychological construct for teacher education (Rokeach, 1968; Pintrich, 1990). Pajares (1992) notes that attention to teachers' beliefs can inform educational practice in ways that prevailing research has not, and as such is an essential component in improving their professional preparation and teaching practices.

Teacher efficacy – defined as "a teachers' belief in his or her own capability to organise and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific task in a particular context" (Tschannen-Moran et al. p. 233), is a construct with a simple definition but having significant impact. It is understood as the teachers' judgement of their capability to make differences in students' learning, especially

70

those who are difficult or unmotivated (Bandura, 1977; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy will set more challenging for themselves and their students. They will make a greater effort to achieve these goals; assist difficult or unmotivated pupils; be less critical when faced with student failure and overall are more positive about pupils' ability to make progress. Given that pupils with special educational needs will present with additional challenges over and above what the teacher will normally experience, teacher efficacy in relation to working with pupils with SEN is clearly significant.

Other findings suggest that these self-perceptions influence a myriad of teachers' behaviours, including their classroom management and instructional strategies (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, from which the construct of teacher efficacy is drawn, suggests that individuals pursue activities and situations in which they feel competent and avoid those in which they doubt their capability to perform successfully (Bandura, 1993; Pajares, 1996). For example, teachers who believe that they can successfully instruct students who have learning disabilities or behavioural problems are more likely to include these students in their classroom than are teachers who doubt their ability to instruct or motivate these students (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Although researchers have investigated the relationship between teacher efficacy and various teaching outcomes, few have examined the efficacy beliefs of mainstream class teachers in relation to teaching students with special educational needs. At a time when *inclusion* figures prominently in instructional agendas, this is a significant omission.

71

Summary

This chapter examined the impact of societal change on schools. It highlighted the inherent contradiction that exists between the rhetoric of inclusive policy, calling for quality teaching, and the lack of preparedness as reported by teachers. It examined teachers' perceptions of their own preparedness and it highlighted the importance of preparing teachers with *quality teaching skills*. It highlighted how teacher preparation has come to reflect recognition of the interconnectivity of the triad of influences, personal, social and environment. It explored current provision at pre-service level in the Irish context and it outlined the reported lack of preparedness by teachers in the Irish context. It questioned what additional skills, if any, are required to work with pupils with special educational needs and it queried the extent to which teacher efficacy impacts on teaching and learning. The following chapter will discuss the importance of teacher efficacy in relation to working with pupils with SEN in greater detail.

CHAPTER 4: TEACHER EFFICACY

In recent years, teacher efficacy has risen to prominence as an important area of educational research (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Pajares, 1996, Brownell & Pajares, 1999). This chapter considers the theoretical perspective of social cognitive theory described by Bandura (1986) which provides the theoretical basis for this study. It outlines the potential of teacher efficacy to provide significant and profound insights into many aspects of the teacher's professional world and, in particular, it examines its impact on inclusive education. It discusses issues related to the measurement of teacher efficacy and the difference between measures of teacher efficacy, self-concept and self-esteem. In support of inclusive education, it also discusses the importance and impact of preparing efficacious teachers at pre-service level. It examines the contribution that teacher efficacy has made to educational research with particular focus on the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs. Finally, it explores other contextual factors, which impact on teacher efficacy. The in-depth examination of teacher efficacy in this chapter will underpin and inform the primary research questions and deepen our understanding of how teacher efficacy beliefs, in relation to working with pupils with SEN, are sustained and developed.

Theoretical Perspective

Beliefs matter, teacher efficacy is a powerful belief, and teachers can make a difference for their students and themselves through teacher efficacy (Woolfolk Hoy, 2004, p. 36).

Bandura first introduced the construct of *teacher efficacy* three decades ago with the seminal publication *Teacher efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change* (1977). A decade later, he situated the construct within a social cognitive theory of human behaviour and by so doing he diverged from the prevalent behaviourist approach of the day which overemphasized the role that environmental factors play in the development of human behaviour and learning. According to social cognitive theory, human functioning should be regarded as the product of a dynamic interplay of personal, behavioural, and environmental influences. For Bandura (1986) "a theory that denies that thoughts can regulate actions does not lend itself readily to the explanation of complex human behaviour" (p. 15). For him self-reflection is the most unique human capability, as through it people evaluate and alter their own thinking and behaviour. Included in these self-evaluations are perceptions of teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1986).

Of all the thoughts that affect human functioning, and standing at the very core of social cognitive theory, are teacher efficacy beliefs, "people's judgments of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Teacher efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for human motivation, well-being and personal accomplishment in such a way that unless people believe that their actions can produce the outcomes they

74

desire, they will have little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of difficulties. Because people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true, how people behave can often be better predicted by the beliefs they hold about their capabilities than by what they are actually capable of accomplishing (Bandura, 1997).

From the theoretical perspective of social cognitive theory, people are viewed as self-organising, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating rather than as reactive organisms shaped by environmental forces or driven by concealed inner impulses. Bandura (1986) calls this three-way interaction of behaviour, cognitive factors, and environmental situations *reciprocal determinism*. Within this perspective, one's behaviour is constantly under reciprocal influence from cognitive and other personal factors such as motivation and environmental influences.

According to Bandura (1997), teacher efficacy beliefs touch virtually every aspect of people's lives - whether they think pessimistically or optimistically; how well they motivate themselves and persevere in the face of adversities; their vulnerability to stress and depression; and the life choices they make (Pajares, 1996). Teacher efficacy beliefs influence the choices people make in that individuals tend to select tasks and activities in which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which feel less competent. The effort expended on any given activity, the perseverance and resilience in overcoming obstacles is a function of high or low efficacy beliefs. Consequently, teacher efficacy beliefs can create a self-fulfilling prophecy in which one accomplishes what one believes one can accomplish (Pajares,

1996). Bandura's (1997) claims about teacher efficacy are strongly supported by empirical research.

The potential benefits of this theoretical perspective is that it enables us to go beyond a linear examination of teachers competencies and allows us to examine how teachers' knowledge is mediated through the triangular interaction of cognitive, personal and environmental factors. This in turn will provide us with a rich description of the factors which serve to support or to hinder the development of teacher SEN efficacy.

Teacher Efficacy: Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

Teacher efficacy plays a key role in teacher effectiveness and is more significant than self-concept or self-esteem in predicting achievement (Bong & Clarke, 1999). Zimmerman (1995) claims that this can be attributed to the specific emphasis in self-efficacy on one's prior performance attainments by resorting to mastery criteria, whereas self-concept makes a clearer reference to normative superiority or inferiority of one's ability. Perceived teacher efficacy is distinct from other conceptions of self, such as self-concept, self-worth, and self-esteem, in that it is specific to a particular task. Self-esteem is usually considered to be a trait, which reflects an individual's evaluation of self, related to feelings of self-worth, or self-liking "by contrast teacher efficacy beliefs refer to a judgment about task capability that is not inherently evaluative" (Gist & Mitchell, 1992, p. 185). On the one hand, a person may possess a low sense of efficacy for a particular activity, but suffer no diminishment of self-esteem because the person has not invested self-worth in doing that activity well. On the other hand, high achievers may display a great deal of skill, and yet evaluate

themselves negatively because they have set personal standards that are very difficult to meet. Bandura (1997) explains that persons may question their self-worth, despite being very competent, if important others do not value their accomplishments, if their skills cause harm to others, or if they are members of groups that are not valued by society. Bandura (1986) suggests that other self-referent constructs, such as self-concept, are related to outcomes mostly through their influence on teacher efficacy beliefs; that is, one's sense of teacher efficacy mediates the effects of self-concept on task success. As efficacy beliefs act as a self-referent perception of one's capabilities to execute specific behaviours, efficacy beliefs are better predictors of behaviour than self-concept and self-esteem (Pajares & Miller, 1994).

While teacher efficacy is distinct from other conceptions of self, recent research shows that self-esteem correlates positively with teacher efficacy (Woodruff & Cashman, 1993). More recently research by Huang, Liu and Shiomi (2007) examined the relationships between teacher efficacy, teacher self-esteem and orientations to seeking help. They found a significant correlation of 0.49 (medium by standard measures) between personal teaching efficacy and teacher self-esteem scores ($p < 0.01$), and a significant though small positive correlation of 0.14 ($p < 0.05$) was found between teacher self-esteem and orientations to seeking help scores. According to Bandura (1977), people with high self-esteem will take on any challenge, even a particularly difficult task, and when they experience success, it further raises their teacher efficacy. While perceived teacher efficacy is distinct from other motivational constructs, it is supported and influenced by other factors at a personal and social level within the school.

What Influences the Development of Teacher efficacy?

Teacher efficacy beliefs are not arbitrary; they rely on four sources of information which serve to appraise the person as to their sense of teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1982, 1986). The most influential source is the interpreted result of one's previous performance, or *mastery experience*. Memories of what happened in the past when carrying out an activity accumulate into a personal history (O'Donnell, Reeve & Smith, 2007). Typically, outcomes interpreted as successful raise teacher efficacy; those interpreted as failures lower it. One of the things that make teachers' efficacy judgments so powerful is the cyclical nature of the process. The perception that teaching has been successful (mastery) raises expectations that teaching will be proficient in the future. Conversely, the perception that one's teaching has been a failure lowers efficacy beliefs, contributing to the expectation that future performances will also be unsuccessful.

Interpretations of *emotions and physiological states*, such as anxiety, stress, arousal, and mood states, can add to the feeling of mastery or incompetence. Strong emotional reactions inform one as to the likelihood of positively or negatively achieving the anticipated outcome. For example, feelings of tension can be interpreted as anxiety and fear that failure is imminent. Experiences of negative thoughts and fears about one's capabilities can serve to lower teacher efficacy beliefs, whereas calmness communicates a message of confidence and assurance.

In addition to interpreting the results of ones actions, or judging emotional states, people form their teacher efficacy beliefs through the *vicarious experience* of observing others perform tasks. Vicarious experiences are those in which someone

else models a skill. The more closely the observer identifies with the model, the stronger the impact on efficacy (Bandura, 1977). The impact of modelling is relevant in the context of pre-service teacher education in relation to this research question, with regard to the extent to which students are given the opportunity to observe models of practice in relation to inclusive pedagogy at pre-service level.

Individuals also create and develop teacher efficacy beliefs as a result of *social or verbal persuasions* they receive from others. These persuasions relate to specific performance feedback from a supervisor, colleague, or students. Student evaluation of instructions can be a form of verbal persuasion, for better or worse, although social persuasion in itself may have limited value in directly increasing teacher efficacy. However, indirectly it can provide a boost in teacher efficacy, which in turn can provide the stimulus for the person to attempt new strategies, or to try harder to succeed (Bandura, 1982). The potency of persuasion depends on the credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise of the persuader (Bandura, 1986). Of the four general sources of efficacy building, *mastery experiences* are likely to be the most powerful in fostering teacher efficacy. In this regard, an inquiry into the extent to which teachers believe they can successfully meet the learning needs of pupils with SEN, is both timely and appropriate.

Based on Bandura's (1977) social cognitive theory, teacher efficacy has been defined as the belief that one can bring about the desired outcomes in students (Aston and Webb, 1986). According to these theorists, teacher efficacy comprises two dimensions: one pertaining to judgements about the likelihood that teaching can impact on students' achievements despite negative impact from environmental

factors – *General Teacher Efficacy* (GTE), and the other pertaining to beliefs about ones own ability to affect student learning – *Personal Teacher Efficacy* (PTE). Teachers' sense of efficacy is not a decontextualised trait but the result of interaction with the situational conditions. Teachers have different judgements of their sense of efficacy based on their ability to deal with different levels of challenge and impediment (Liaw, 2009). Success is not simply based on the possession of necessary skills for performance – it also requires the confidence to use these skills effectively (Bandura, 1977).

Against a background of evidence which suggests that teachers are ill-prepared for inclusive education, preparing teachers at pre-service who believe they can bring about a change in pupils learning, in particular pupils with SEN, is of fundamental importance in support of inclusive education.

The Potential of Teacher Efficacy Beliefs

The study of teachers' beliefs has the potential to provide significant and profound insight into many aspects of the teacher's professional world. Especially notable in studies of teachers' beliefs is the concept of *teacher efficacy*, that is, teachers' situation-specific judgement as to how well or how poorly they will cope with a situation, given the skills they possess and the circumstances they face (Bandura, 1986, 1993, 1997). Teachers with low teacher efficacy will doubt their capacity to cope with situations, feel overwhelmed and experience anxiety (Bandura, 1988), confusion (Wood & Bandura, 1989), negative thinking, bodily tension and adverse physiological arousal (Bandura, 1986). Teachers who possess high teacher efficacy in any given domain feel they have what is required to manage the existing situation

competently, in other words "they have what it takes to do well" (O'Donnell, Reeve & Smith, 2007, p. 144). High teacher efficacy is important in teachers as it helps to keep these debilitating thoughts and feeling checked so that the teacher can focus on the task in hand. Teacher efficacy beliefs forecast three educational outcomes: the particular activities and environments teachers approach versus avoid; how much effort and persistence they employ; and lastly, the quality of their thinking and feeling while they are engaging in the action (Bandura 1986a, 1997). In relation to effort and persistence, teacher efficacy beliefs influence how much effort a teacher will expend and also the length of time they will continue to exert that effort (Bandura, 1989).

Inclusion: The Impact of Teacher Efficacy

Implementing inclusive educational policies requires significant change in the teachers' day-to-day interaction with students with varying degrees of difficulties and disabilities. It requires that teachers enable all pupils to fully participate in and benefit from education (Ireland, 1998, 2004). This in turn implies that teachers: ensure that pupils with special educational needs participate in core curriculum activities which provide the context for meeting individualised educational needs; that they receive supplementary and special educational support; that adequate planning and collaboration with support teachers, parents, and other paraprofessionals takes place. In addition, inclusive education requires educational commitment to the pupil individual plan and a willingness to work with an interdisciplinary team. In a study by York-Barr, Schultz, Doyle, Kronberg and Crossett (1996), the findings indicate that individual commitment to inclusion was one of the strongest variables in the success of district-wide inclusive reform. This

commitment was reflected in teachers' positive beliefs about their pupils, their colleagues and their own ability to implement change in their schools. Teacher efficacy – teacher beliefs in their ability to bring about desired outcomes in pupil learning may thus emerge as the key variable in achieving the implementation of inclusive practices, particularly when these practices demand different professional practices to be employed (Soto & Goetz, 1998).

In inclusive settings, teachers are often confronted with difficulties, dilemmas and setbacks to some degree, so having high teacher efficacy is an important factor as low teacher efficacy leads to self-doubt, poor effort or abandonment of the task altogether. In contrast, high teacher efficacy acts as a motivational resource that teachers can fall back on, during difficult problems, to help maintain their effort and persistence. In relation to quality thinking and feeling, teachers who believe strongly in their efficacy remain clear-headed in their thinking during stressful or new learning situations, whereas those who doubt their abilities think erratically (Wood & Bandura, 1989). In addition, dwelling on personal deficiencies results in feelings of pessimism, doubt and depression (Bandura, 1983, 1986).

Research evidence indicates that teachers' efficacy beliefs colour and influence their teaching practices, how they believe content should be taught, and how they think students learn (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Pajares, 1992). Other findings suggest that teacher efficacy may influence a myriad of teachers' behaviours, including the type of classroom management and instructional strategies utilised. For example, teachers who believe that they can successfully instruct students who have learning disabilities or behavioural problems are more likely to include these students in their

classroom than are teachers who doubt their ability to instruct or motivate these students (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Kagan (1992) argues that efficacy beliefs may be the clearest measure of a teacher's professional growth and that understanding them is "instrumental in determining the quality of interaction one finds among teachers in a given school" (p. 85). Others argue that efficacy beliefs will eventually prove themselves to be the most valuable psychological construct for teacher education (Rokeach, 1968; Pintrich, 1990). Pajares (1992) advises that attention to teachers' beliefs can inform educational practice in ways that prevailing research has not, and as such is an essential component in improving their professional preparation and teaching practices.

While researchers have investigated the relationship between teacher efficacy and various teaching outcomes, few have examined the efficacy beliefs of mainstream class teachers in relation to teaching students with special educational needs. At a time when inclusion figures prominently in policy directives, this is a significant omission. Understanding the relationship between mainstream teachers' efficacy beliefs to instruct and manage students with special educational needs and their perceptions of success in so doing is important to inclusion efforts and consequently to the implementation of inclusive policy (Van Reusen, Shoho & Barker, 2001). In addition, using the interactive model of social cognitive theory allows us to gain a more comprehensive view of how teachers view their own competencies when set against the demands of the teaching task.

The Measurement of Teacher-Efficacy

The construct of teacher efficacy has been conceptualised in different ways, reflecting its development over time. Rand researchers defined efficacy as "the extent to which the teacher believes he or she has the capacity to affect student performance" (McLaughlin & Marsh, 1978, p. 84). In keeping with this definition, the Rand studies, based on Rotter's (1966) locus of control theory, were designed to measure the degree to which individuals accept personal responsibility for what happens to them (internal), as opposed to attributing this responsibility to forces or events outside their control (external control). In these studies, teachers' level of efficacy was determined by computing a total score for their responses to two 5-point Likert scale items: (a) "When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a students' motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment," and (b) "If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students."

In an attempt to improve on the validity and reliability of the Rand two-item scale, Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed a 30-item scale that yields two factors. The first factor represented the teacher's sense of general teaching efficacy (GTE), which reflected the belief that the teacher's ability to bring about desired outcomes is limited by factors external to the teacher such as home environment and family background. The second factor represented the teacher's sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE), or the belief that he or she has the skills and abilities to influence students' learning and behaviour. While there is general agreement and acceptance of the first factor – personal teacher efficacy (PTE) – the meaning of the second factor – general teacher efficacy (GTE) – has been called into question (Tschannen-

Moran, et al. 1998). Guskey and Passaro (1994), report that these two factors correspond not to a personal versus a general teaching efficacy orientation, but instead to an internal versus external distinction similar to locus-of-control measures of attribution. Bandura (1977) clarifies the difference between these two concepts; personal teacher efficacy (PTE) is the outcome of a cognitive process in which people construct beliefs about their capacity to perform, at a given level of competence, in a particular situation. Accordingly, beliefs about ones' ability to perform (personal teacher efficacy beliefs) are not the same as beliefs about whether one can bring about desired outcomes (general teacher efficacy beliefs). In fact, these factors bear little or no relationship to each other (Bandura, 1977).

Moreover, earlier teacher efficacy instruments typically ask teachers to express confidence judgments on matters as disparate as classroom management and the influence of family background on student learning and then compare the composite score of these judgments with outcomes such as student achievement indices or varied teaching practices. Bandura (1986) raised concerns regarding this approach to researching teacher efficacy beliefs. Specifically, he warned that, because teacher efficacy beliefs are contextual judgments of capability to perform a given task, the beliefs assessed should be in direct relationship with the critical variable with which such judgments will be compared, hence the need to develop SEN specific items. In support of Bandura's guideline, Pajares (1996, 1997) argued that teacher efficacy researchers have muddied the waters through the measurement of teachers' global judgments of capability to instruct any and all children across varied contexts and situations rather than assessing the beliefs that correspond to the specific task of interest.

85

Integrated Model of Teacher Efficacy

In response to the conceptual confusion surrounding teacher efficacy, Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) proposed an integrated model of teacher efficacy and it is this model that acts as a guide for this research study. They define teacher-efficacy as "teacher's belief in his or her capability to organise and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context" (p. 22). In this regard, they conceptualise teacher efficacy in terms of the confluence of judgments about personal *teaching competence* and the *teaching task*; both competency and contingency are considered in explaining resultant teacher efficacy. Consistent with social cognitive theory, while they accept the four sources of efficacy proposed by Bandura (1986, 1993, 1997), mastery experience, physiological arousal, vicarious experiences, and verbal persuasions, it is the interpretation of this information that is critical. Teachers do not feel equally efficacious in all teaching situations, in that cognitive processing determines how the sources of information will be weighed and how they will influence the analysis of the teaching task.

Teacher efficacy is context specific, with teacher efficacy levels varying between different subjects, particular groups of pupils and different contexts. In their model, the judgment a teacher makes about his or her capabilities and deficits is self-perception of *teaching competence*, while judgements concerning the supports, resources, and constraints in a particular teaching context relate to an analysis of the *teaching task*. Therefore, in making an efficacy judgment, consideration of the teaching task, its context and personal competence is required to shape teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998). In analyzing the teaching task and its

context factors such as the student's ability and motivation, perceived support from the school principal, collegiality, the availability of suitable resources and materials, access to technology, physical conditions, space, are some of the likely contextual factors that will impact on teacher efficacy. The relative importance of the contextual factors are weighted against personal capabilities such as knowledge, skills and competencies in any particular teaching context. Tschannen-Moran, et al. (1998) claim that it is the assessment of the interaction of these two components – *the teaching task* and *teacher competence* – that lead to judgments about teacher efficacy for the teaching task. By inviting a fuller examination of the specific teaching task and context, not just the constraints, facing teachers in general, their model provides a more finely tuned picture of teacher efficacy beliefs.
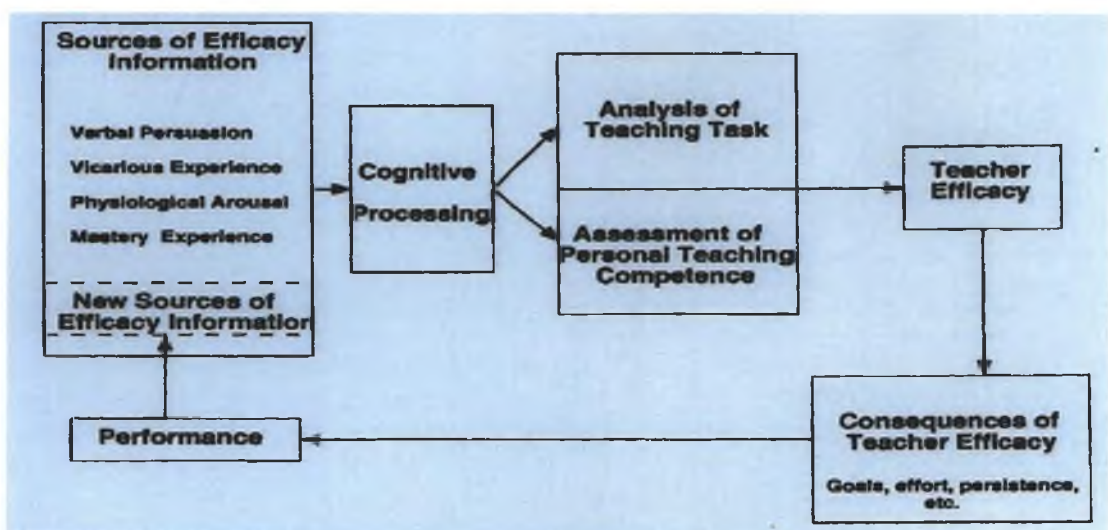
Note. From "Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure" by M. Tschannen-Moran, A. Hoy, A.E. Woolfolk and W.K. Hoy, 1998, *Review of Educational Research Journal* 68(2), p. 202-248.

Figure 1: The cyclical nature of teacher efficacy

General teaching efficacy (GTE) examines teachers' optimism regarding their abilities to cope with adverse circumstances such as unmotivated or unsupported

pupils. It assesses the potential of teachers in general to succeed despite various negative constraints. Low GTE can be interpreted as reflecting teachers' increasing difficulty with the teaching task against a background of overpowering negative background influences. Some studies show that pre-service teachers have a higher level of efficacy before and during their teacher preparation programme, but it drops significantly after they begin real teaching (Herbert, Lee & Williamson, 1998; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; Moseley, Reinke & Bookour, 2003) as compared to prospective teachers (Pigge & Marso, 1993). In addition, Woolfolk, Rossoff and Hoy (1990) found that teachers with low GTE were more controlling and distrustful of pupils and less supportive of pupil autonomy.

Other studies point to positive change in teacher efficacy following experience in the field. Morgan and O'Leary (2004) examined factors associated with teacher satisfaction among beginning teachers (N=468). Findings reveal that teacher efficacy was higher for those who had spent a year teaching than for those recently graduated. In addition, perceived efficacy was the most important determinant of job satisfaction. Research by Johnson and Birkeland (2003) which examined teachers in their first three years of teaching, claims that teacher efficacy and perceived support were the two factors associated with decisions to stay in teaching.

In recognition of the interactive and cyclical nature of teacher efficacy, while many measures of teacher efficacy have developed, there still exists no SEN-specific measurement scale, despite the theory that strongly suggests there should be one (Bandura, 1986). While this study uses the scale designed by Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), to measure PTE and GTE, it is believed that this scale is not at the level of

specificity required for accurate measurement of the knowledge skills and competencies required to work with pupils with SEN. Due to gap in the existing research measures, it is considered necessary to devise a more accurate scale to measure teachers' SEN efficacy, and, in turn, to compare the relationship between measures of SEN efficacy against the measure of PTE and GTE addressed by Hoy and Woolfolk (1993). The rationale for this comparison lies in the questions – Is there a difference between SEN efficacy and other measures of efficacy? Do teacher who have high PTE and GTE also have high SEN efficacy? Is SEN knowledge skills and competencies something additional and distinct from general teaching competencies acquired at pre-service level? Identifying whether SEN efficacy is different to other measures of efficacy, as well as identifying any additional skills that may be regarded by teachers as important will be of significance to teacher educators.

Inclusion: Preparing Efficacious Teachers

Understanding teachers' perceptions of their own teaching competencies will be of significance to teacher educators as they prepare teachers to meet the demands of inclusive policies and practices. It is suggested that studies of teacher efficacy beliefs are becoming one of the most valuable psychological constructs of teacher education in a field where, formally attitudes and values were the prevailing constructs (Pajares, 1992). If, as Brownell and Pajares (1999) claim, individuals pursue activities and situations in which they feel competent and avoid situations in which they doubt their capability to perform successfully, the importance of efficacy beliefs of newly qualified teachers in relation to furthering inclusive pedagogy are all the more pertinent. Additionally, an examination of the factors that support the

development of a strong sense of teacher efficacy among pre-service teachers is important in light of the research findings that claim that, once established, efficacy beliefs of experienced teachers seem resistant to change (Ross, 1994; Bandura, 1997).

Evidence suggests that initial teacher preparation has a different impact than input received after teachers are working in the field, as it is at this stage that students gather information about their own personal capabilities for teaching (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). A number of researchers have argued that any efforts to change teacher efficacy must consider teacher beliefs from the beginning (Simmons et al. 1999; Wideen et al. 1998). Hence, when prospective teachers start their teacher education course, they bring to it ideas, conceptions, and attitudes about the nature of special educational needs and how students learn (Pajares, 1992; Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Loucks-Horsley & Matsumoto, 1999).

In addition, the research on teacher efficacy development suggests that efficacy judgments are most malleable in the early stages of mastering a skill and become more set with experience, suggesting that early teaching experiences would serve as important shapers of efficacy judgments (Ross, 1994). It is suggested that if these early experiences are positive, then newly qualified teachers are better able to persist in the face of the inevitable disappointments and discouragements as they develop their teaching skills in the early years. On the other hand, unsuccessful early experiences in teaching can direct graduates away from the profession. Beginning teachers completing their first year of teaching who had a high sense of teacher efficacy found greater satisfaction in teaching, had a more positive reaction to

teaching, and experienced less stress. Efficacious beginning teachers were more confident about what they could accomplish, rated the quality of their preparation higher and the difficulty of teaching lower than those who were less efficacious. And efficacious novices indicated greater optimism that they would remain in the field of teaching (Burley, Hall, Villeme & Brockmeier, 1991; Hall, Burley, Villeme, & Brockmeier, 1992).

Bandura (1997) warns that, once formulated, efficacy beliefs are difficult to change and require "compelling feedback that forcefully disputes the pre-existing disbelief in one's capabilities" (p. 82). Bandura (1997) suggests that, when a person gains new skills, they lower their estimate of their existing competencies and "hold their efficacy beliefs in a provisional status, testing their newly acquired knowledge and skills before raising their judgment of what they are able to do" (p. 83). In light of the difficulties in changing teacher efficacy beliefs, once formulated, it would appear that supporting the development of positive teacher efficacy at pre-service level in relation to working with pupils with SEN is an important and worthwhile consideration.

Although content knowledge is a prerequisite to develop one's skills (Bandura, 1986) at pre-service level, the literature on teacher efficacy suggests that preparation programmes should not focus exclusively on theoretical knowledge. As Bandura (1986) suggests, one may have the knowledge necessary to solve a problem but not recognise that the knowledge is relevant or not be confident to apply the knowledge to solve the problem. In light of the significant impact of efficacy beliefs, it would seem important to provide opportunities at pre-service level, for teachers to develop

91

their self-efficacy in order that they will have the confidence to apply their knowledge when the appropriate situation arises. Research into the effects of different programme inputs and their impact on teachers' efficacy at pre-service have been investigated. In a study involving 93 participants, Gorrell and Capron (1994) investigated the effect of cognitive modelling on pre-service teachers' recall and application of teaching strategies. They found that cognitive modelling and teacher efficacy statements led to higher levels of recall and application of learned concepts than direct instruction. They concluded that teacher education programmes should provide student teachers with strategies and experiences that enhance their confidence (Gorrell & Capron, 1994).

Recent studies suggest that experience accounts for differences in teachers' willingness to implement inclusive practices in their classrooms (Minke, Bear, Deemer & Griffin, 1996; York-Barr, Schultz, Doyle, Kronberg & Crossett, 1996). These findings support the research by Kagan (1992), which showed that teachers' beliefs are more affected by actual practice than by theoretical knowledge. In another study, by Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman and Schattman (1993), the critical role of teachers' prior experience was shown to be a significant factor in teachers' willingness to include pupils with special educational needs in their classes. Goetz and Soho (1996) advise that pre-service experiences be carefully structured to expose teachers: to the best practices; best instructional environments; and to the best teachers; so as to prepare them to feel efficacious in implementing inclusive directives.

In addition, Bandura (1977) cited the importance of performance attainment as the most effective source of information that individuals use in adjusting their teacher efficacy beliefs. Thus, feedback on one's performance appears to be equally important in increasing pre-service teachers' efficacy. Goetz and Soho (1996) advise that promoting efficacy requires teacher education programmes to be action orientated, focusing on skill development and on enhancing confidence in one's ability to accomplish a goal.

Talking up Inclusion: Does Pre-Service Education Impact on Teacher Efficacy and Teacher Attitudes?

Considerable interest in the attitudes and beliefs of pre-service teachers has recently developed (Avramidis et al. 2000; Campbell et al. 2003; Garmon, 2005; Hodkinson, 2005; Jones, 2002). Several researchers have noted that the critical components for successful inclusion are teacher attitudes, both towards the principle of inclusion and towards teaching students with special educational needs (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Forlin et al. 1996; Cook, 2001; Avramidis et al. 2000; O'Brien, 2001; Minz, 2007). While Eichinger, Rizzo and Sirotnik (1991) identify teachers' attitudes as key factors in successful inclusion, Schulz, Carpenter and Turnbull (1991) go further to claim that "teachers' views of students are a strong force in determining the nature of the interaction between teachers and students and in turn students' achievements" (p. 413). It would seem important, therefore, that teachers have positive attitudes towards pupils with SEN from the beginning of their careers if they are to implement inclusive pedagogy (Scruggs et al. 1996; Cook, 2002). While Soodak, Podell and Lehman (1998) claim that being 'willing' to have pupils with SEN in their classes appears to be a key factor in the successful implementation of inclusive education,

Cook (2002) cautions that being 'willing' is not enough. If pre-service teachers do not possess the knowledge and skills to implement inclusion appropriately, the included students with disabilities in their future classes will certainly have diminished opportunities to attain desired outcomes, regardless of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive reforms (Cook, 2002).

Many studies point to fact that the lack of education in the field of inclusive or special education may lead to less positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream settings (Clayton, 1996; Menlove, Hudson & Suter, 2001), while increased education has been associated with more positive attitudes in this regard (Briggs, Johnson, Shepard & Sedbrook, 2002; Harvey, 1992; Powers, 2002). Subban and Sharma (2006) explored the perceptions of 122 primary school teachers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms in Victoria, Australia. Specifically, the study investigated the relationship between particular demographic factors and teachers' attitudes toward, and concerns about, inclusive education. Participants who reported having undertaken training in special education were found to hold more positive attitudes and to experience lowered levels of concern, about implementing inclusive education.

Likewise, Avramidis and Norwich (2002) cite a number of studies which point to evidence that "the school's ethos and the teachers' beliefs have a considerable impact on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, which in turn, are translated into practice" (p. 140). They identify a range of studies which indicate that resistance to inclusion was reduced when teachers had acquired special education qualifications in pre-service or in-service programmes. In light of the recent research which indicates

94

that many teachers do not feel well prepared for inclusive classes and lack confidence in their own ability to teach children with special needs in inclusive settings (Dwyfor, Davies & Garner, 1997; Garner, 1996; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Winter, 2006), Lindsay (2007) advises that key factors in support of positive attitudes to inclusion are resources, both physical and human, and support from the head teacher.

Previous research has investigated the attitudes of teachers, at both pre-service and in-service level, towards pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and concepts such as inclusion and integration. In a meta-analysis of twenty-eight survey reports conducted from 1958 through 1995, Scruggs and Mastropieri's (1996) findings reveal that, although two-thirds of the approximately 10,000 serving teachers surveyed agreed with the concept of integrating children with SEN, significant numbers of teachers felt unable or unwilling to meet the needs of children with more significant disabilities. Likewise, Farrell (2001) and Lindsay (2007), claim that the nature of children's special educational needs or disabilities is a critical factor, with teachers generally more positively disposed towards the inclusion of pupils with physical or sensory disabilities and less so for pupils with emotional and behavioural problems. Perceived lack of expertise, resources or additional adult support were key factors contributing to negative dispositions. Scruggs and Mastropieri's (1996) findings are mirrored in research by Avramadis, Bayliss and Burden (2000), which found that, although respondents held positive attitudes towards the general concept of inclusion, perceived competence was reduced in respect of children with more severe needs, especially those classed as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition, students who require differentiated or individualised plans

95

were regarded less favourably, with the majority of mainstream teachers believing that they lack the skill, knowledge and competence to effectively include these students (Avramadis et al. 2000).

In a UK study of attitudes among secondary pre-service teachers to SEN and inclusion, Pearson (2005) found evidence that the majority based their attitudes to these issues on a conceptual framework closely aligned to a medical model. The medical model highlights an in-pupil deficit approach with an acceptance that the pupil difficulties are resultant from the condition or label applied to them. She notes that this may be of concern since other studies (Jordan, Lindsay & Stanovich, 1997; Stanovich & Jordan, 2002) have indicated that teachers operating a medical model are less likely to implement effective teaching practice. Mintz (2007) extends Pearson's (2005) study by examining attitudes of pre-service primary teachers to the terms 'inclusion' and 'special educational needs' and found that a majority regarded special educational needs as being located in two concurrent loci, that of the child and the surrounding systems. This contrast with Pearson's study presents a picture of fluidity in terms of attitudes, where a mixture of inclusionary ideals may co-exist with ideas and practice linked to the medical model. In fact, the data indicates that there is no simple delineation between teachers holding attitudes based on a medical model as opposed to a social or inclusionary model. It would seem important for providers of initial teacher education to consider how best they can foster the continued development of ideas on inclusion and special educational needs, building on the existing disposition towards inclusionary values. Certainly, as Pearson (2005) notes, large impersonal lectures do not present an ideal way of dealing with these issues. Similarly, Garmon (2005), in reviewing research on pre-service teacher

attitudes, suggests that attending to predispositions is key in developing positive attitudes at pre-service level.

It appears that pre-service education programmes that provide students with the content knowledge needed for instruction at the appropriate level, as well as the skills to present that knowledge effectively, will result in increased teacher efficacy, coupled with positive attitudes to inclusion among all teachers. These findings have particular significance in relation to the pre-service preparation of teachers for working with students with special educational needs in mainstream settings.

In conclusion, while studies on teacher attitudes have provided important information on teachers' receptiveness to working with pupils with special educational needs, because these attitudinal scales contain no SEN efficacy component, they lack a full description of teachers' beliefs in their own competencies. This study addresses this deficit by highlighting the active agency of the teacher as measures of *teacher competence* are continually weighted against the demands of the *teaching task* though what Bandura describes as reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1986). In order to deepen our knowledge of teacher efficacy we need to examine the research studies which point to the impact of teacher efficacy on teaching and learning.

Inclusion: Educational Research Examining Teacher Efficacy

Educators and researchers have long asserted that teachers' beliefs are important determinants and predictors of teaching practices (Dewey, 1929; Lortie, 1975; Pajares, 1992; Brownell & Pajares, 1999). Educational research in relation to teacher

efficacy has focused on three major areas, namely: student achievement; classroom teaching characteristics; and the relationship between teaching teacher efficacy and other personal attributes such as willingness to collaborate and to be innovative (Soto & Goetz, 1998). Research studies pertaining to each of these three areas together with the methodological characteristics, sample size and characteristic, instrumentation and significant correlates with teachers' sense of efficacy in each of the studies are outlined in (Table 1).

Teacher Efficacy and Perceptions of Student Abilities

Numerous positive outcomes have been associated with teachers' having a high level of teacher efficacy. Among these are student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Moore & Esselman, 1992), student motivation (Midgley, Feldlaufer & Eccles, 1989), increased self-esteem and more positive attitudes towards school (Ross, 1992; 1994). While many of these studies have related to students with no additional special educational needs (SEN), they have implications for this study since they provide insights into the relationship between teacher expectation and subsequent student achievement (Randenbush et al. 1992; Gersten, Walker & Darch, 1988).

Recent studies suggest that teachers' beliefs regarding their own abilities and responsibilities to perform certain tasks cause differential perceptions of their students' abilities to perform and to achieve. Teachers who believe they can influence their students' performance have a better perception of their students' ability and therefore have higher expectations with regard to their students' achievements (Guskey, 1988; Randenbush, Rowan & Cheong, 1992). In addition they accept responsibility for student successes and failures (Jordan, Kircaali-Iftar &

98

Diamond, 1993; Kagan, 1992). Teacher efficacy has also been associated with teachers' acceptance of pupils with SEN. Podell and Soodak (1998) found that teachers with a high teacher efficacy felt that students with special educational needs were appropriately placed in mainstream classes.

Teachers who have poor perceptions of their students' ability to learn may in turn have a low sense of their own ability to achieve progress in their students' learning and may lay the blame for poor progress on the students' lack of motivation, disruptive behaviour or their home background (Gersten, et al. 1988; Woolfolk, Roskoff & Hoy, 1990). Likewise, teachers with a lower sense of efficacy perceive themselves as being unable to influence student outcomes and, consequently, seek solutions to students' difficulties outside themselves (Podell & Soodak, 1998). In addition, teachers who locate students' problems beyond their control were also found to favour pull out models of support from specialist teachers (Jordan, et al. 1993).

Teacher Efficacy and Classroom Practices

Research evidence claims that teacher efficacy beliefs can influence classroom practices, teachers' enthusiasm and perseverance with low achievers. In addition, it appears to influence the teachers' behaviour regarding choices made, the tendency to use praise rather than criticism, effort expended, and perseverance under adverse conditions (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Woolfolk, Rosoff & Hoy, 1990). Gibson and Dembo (1984) found that teacher efficacy influenced the amount of time spent in small group situations, the extent to which teachers monitored student performance, and the amount of praise used to encourage performance. In contrast to teachers with

high efficacy, teachers with low efficacy tended to move on to another student when they received an incorrect response, were seen to give more criticism to incorrect responses by pupils, and were frustrated when class routine was broken.

Other findings point to an increased ability to implement classroom management strategies successfully (Woolfolk, Rosoff & Hoy, 1990), and to work longer with students who are struggling (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Also, teachers with a high sense of efficacy have a strong conviction that they can influence student learning, even the learning of those students who may be more challenging (Guskey & Passaro, 1994). These teachers are open to new ideas, are more willing to experiment with and try new teaching strategies in addressing their students' learning needs (Ghaith & Yaghi, 1997; Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988). Teachers with low efficacy feel that they have only minimal influence on student achievement. These teachers give up more easily when confronted with difficult situations, are less resourceful, and oftentimes feel that students cannot learn because of the extenuating circumstances (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Bandura, 1997). Since students with SEN may present with more challenging needs, it is important that teachers are flexible, innovative and willing to try new approaches and strategies. In addition, it is important that teachers believe in their own abilities to achieve positive outcomes for these pupils and show persistence and commitment in so doing. Table 1 details the research studies pertaining to the discussion outlined.

Table 1

Selected Studies on Teacher Efficacy

Study	Teacher category	Student category	Measures of teacher efficacy	Significant correlates of teacher self-efficacy
Ashton & Webb (1986)	48 mainstream teachers in post-primary school	Typical	Teacher efficacy scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984)	Commitment to teaching
Gibson & Dembo (1984)	8 mainstream teachers in junior primary school	Typical	Teacher efficacy scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984)	Time spent in small group instruction, monitoring pupil performance, praise and encouragement
Guskey (1988)	120 teachers in mainstream primary school	Typical	Author developed Likert –type scale	Receptiveness to new instructional practices
Brownell & Pajares (1999)	128 mainstream teachers in primary school	Typical	Working with diverse students: The general educators' perspective	Ability to instruct pupils with SEN. Perceptions of pre-service and collegial relations
Paneque & Barbella (2006)	202 Junior special education teachers	English language learners with disabilities	Author designed EXCEL Teacher Inventory	Positive correlation between proficiency in language and teacher efficacy
Randenbush, Rowan & Cheong (1992)	315 mainstream teachers in post-primary	Honours academic and non–academic stream	Author developed Likert-type scale	Streaming effects, level of control over instructional decisions and staff collaboration
Romi & Leyser (2006)	1155 preservice teachers	-	Author designed scales (opinions and efficacy)	
Podell & Soodak (1998)	110 mainstream teachers primary level	Learning and behavioural difficulties	Teacher efficacy scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984)	Teacher –based suggestions for intervention
Soto & Goetz (1997)	317 special education teachers	Using AAC* systems for students with severe disabilities	Survey questionnaire	Teacher confidence level aligned to perceptions of students ability to use AAC device
Woolfolk, Rosoff & Hoy (1990)	55 6th and 7th grade language teachers	Typical	Teacher efficacy scale (Gibson & Dembo, 1984	Humanistic attitudes to classroom control and high expectations for student achievement

* Alternative communication devices

While these studies help to highlight the significant correlations between measures

of teacher efficacy and other factors, since they fail to include a specific SEN

component they are too global a measurement for the purposes of examining teacher

SEN efficacy. In addition, while they outline levels of teacher efficacy, which correlate to positive teaching behaviours, they fail to provide a comprehensive look at the relative weighting of different factors on teacher efficacy. It is, therefore, difficult to draw conclusions from these studies as a whole due to the variety of instruments used and the variance in sample size. There is a need for a more comprehensive interactive model as exemplified, which addresses this deficit and provides an opportunity for a deeper analysis of the factors which impact on teacher SEN efficacy.

Teacher Efficacy and School Contextual Factors

While social cognitive theory highlights the importance of acquiring mastery at pre-service, in recognition of the interactive nature of factors related to the teaching task and the teaching context, it becomes necessary to look beyond pre-service to examine the impact of the contextual factors on teacher efficacy (Brownell & Pajares, 1999). While this study addresses the deficit in relation to the absence of an SEN specific efficacy scale, it adds another layer of specificity in that it examines the impact of contextual factors on teachers' SEN efficacy. Table 2 outlines a range of studies which detail the impact of different contextual factors on teacher efficacy. These factors will be discussed in light of their impact on teacher efficacy.

Table 2

Description of Studies Showing Significant Correlates of Teacher Self-Efficacy

Study	Significant correlates of teacher self- efficacy
Brownell & Pajares (1999) Hoy & Spero (2005) Huang et al (2007) Milner & Hoy (2003) Moore & Esselman (1992) Hoy & Woolfolk (1993)	Contextual factors at school level
Ashton &Webb (1986) Rosenholtz (1989 Yee (1990) Portner (2003) Costigan (2004) Bisland (2008)	Collegiality
Webb & Ashton (1987) Chester & Beaudin (1996) Esselman (1992)	Negative factors which impact on efficacy
Lobosco &Newman (1992) Larvee (1982) Stephens & Braun (1980) Stoler (1992) Bender & Ikechukwu (1989)	Pre-service
Ross (1994) Hall (1991) Lyddon (1990) Forsberg (1984)	In-service
Brownell & Pajares (1999)	Awareness of supports
Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2002)	Parents
Bandura (1997) Maddux, 1995) Brouwers & Tomic (2000) Metz (1978) Chwalisz & Russell (1992)	Job anxieties

Contextual Factors at School Level

In light of Bandura's social cognitive theory which proposes that behavioural, cognitive, personal and environment factors interact to influence each other through the process of reciprocal determinism, research studies examining the role that

103

context plays in the development and maintenance of teachers' sense of efficacy are numerous (Hipp & Bredeson, 1995; Rosenholtz, 1989; Ashton & Webb, 1986).

The powerful effect of teacher efficacy in schooling has become an important area of study in educational psychology. Researchers have investigated how to improve teacher efficacy, and how to focus on the factors that will achieve this improvement. Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) have pointed out that "we would do well to examine how efficacy is developed, when it is most malleable, and what factors may lead to its improvement" (p. 234). Factors which impact on and support teacher efficacy have been identified as: support from the school principal, collegiality, teacher attitudes, pre-service, and in-service.

Schools as organisations serve as a powerful social influence on teachers as they shape the orientations of personnel through a variety of mechanisms designed to make teachers' personal beliefs and values conform to the norms of the organization. Different stages of socialisation have been suggested – Lortie (1975) claims that early teacher socialisation occurs when, as students themselves, they engaged in an apprenticeship of observation of their own teachers. This socialisation pattern continues in the pre-service years in an environment that stresses ideal images and practices (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990). However, on entering into the world of teaching as newly qualified teachers a reality shock is likely, when they are confronted with a set of organisational norms and values that are usually at variance with those espoused during pre-service training years (Corcoran, 1981; Veenman, 1984; Weinstein, 1989).

Many researchers (Woolfolk Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2000; Huang et al. 2007; Milner & Hoy, 2003) found a positive correlation between teacher efficacy and social support. The results of a study by Huang et al, (2005) indicate that all social support is profitable to improvement of teacher efficacy. This suggests that offering support to teachers can increase teacher efficacy. Likewise, Milner and Hoy (2003) examined qualitative case studies in relation to teachers' sense of efficacy, social support, and respect. Observational studies of two teachers over a period of one year were conducted. They concluded that respect from students and parents played a key role in protecting the efficacy of these experienced teachers, especially during difficult times. Hoy and Spero (2005) found that the changes in teacher efficacy during the first year of teaching were related to the level of support received. Likewise, Huang et al. (2005) found that social support can predict teacher efficacy to a significant level. In conclusion, it appears that social supports at school level can serve to enhance and maintain teacher efficacy levels.

In a study of school factors, Moore and Esselman (1992) found greater personal teacher efficacy (PTE) and general teacher efficacy (GTE) levels among teachers who experienced a positive school atmosphere, coupled with strong encouragement for furthering personal academic achievement among the staff. In a similar study, Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) examining school contextual effects, found that teachers' sense of efficacy is related to a number of school-level variables, such as climate of the school, behaviour of the principal, sense of school community, and decision-making structures. In a related study, Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) examined the relationships between general and personal teaching efficacy and aspects of a healthy school organisation. The findings reveal that two aspects of organisational life

105

predicted personal teaching efficacy – principal influence and academic emphasis. Schools promoted personal teaching efficacy when teachers perceived that their colleagues set high but achievable goals, create an orderly and serious environment, and respect academic excellence. Hoy & Woolfolk, (1993) emphasise the reciprocity between levels of teacher efficacy and school organizational factors, "we suspect that the relationship between efficacy and organization is reciprocal; climate affects a sense of efficacy, and efficacy affects perceptions of climate" (p. 365).

In another study, four school factors were found to be significantly associated with teacher efficacy: receiving positive feedback on teacher performance, collaboration with other teachers; parental involvement in the school; and collective coordination of student behaviour policies (Rosenholtz, 1989). Moreover, sense of community in a school was the single greatest predictor of teachers' level of efficacy as highlighted by (Lee, Dedick & Smith, 1991).

Collegiality

The importance of collegiality has been highlighted by researchers who claim that collegiality results in increased opportunities to share expertise and receive advice, leaving teachers feeling more confident in dealing with uncertainties that arise (Ashton & Webb, 1986: Rosenholtz, 1989). Consequently, in schools where collaborative relationships are fostered and encouraged, newly qualified teachers should perceive themselves more capable of teaching students with special educational needs.

Studies of teacher retention rates show that collaboration and support from colleagues is a strong predictor of teachers remaining in the profession (Yee, 1990; Portner, 2003). Similarly, Costigan (2004) found that teachers often leave teaching because of a lack of support from administrators and colleagues within their school systems. The context of schooling and the level of perceived support is a significant factor in supporting teacher efficacy. Micheline et al. (2007) in a study which investigates a sample (N=68) of Queens College Teaching Fellows' perceptions about their teaching experience, report that teachers' perception of the schools' socioeconomic status, administrative support, perceived peer support and general teaching efficacy all correlate with their intention to stay in their current teaching placement.

In most social contexts, attitudes and behaviours are acquired either through direct instruction or modelling provided by the school principal and other classroom teachers. In this way, schools provide support in the adoption of the code of conduct valued in the institution, also referred to as the culture of the school. Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) have argued that it may be necessary for new teachers to adopt a 'bureaucratic orientation' in order to facilitate their successful inclusion within a school. In this context, a bureaucratic orientation refers to the adoption of the attitudes and behaviours that are valued in a particular school and is correlated with feelings of teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000). Related research suggests that these factors relate to: the perceived support of the principal; collegiality; pre-service; in-service; and teacher attitude. Teachers who report that they receive the necessary support from principals and from colleagues feel confident in their ability to teach students in schools designated as low socio-

economic schools (Yee, 1990). Principals who used their leadership to provide resources for teachers and to buffer them from disruptive factors, but allowed teachers flexibility over classroom affairs, created a context that allowed efficacy to develop. Schools where student disorder was kept to a minimum were schools in which teachers felt a greater sense of efficacy (Lee, et al. 1991).

Negative Factors which Impact on Efficacy

In exploring environmental factors that might tend to diminish teachers' sense of efficacy, Ashton and Webb (1986) interviewed teachers and found a number of factors that contributed to lower teacher efficacy. These included excessive role demands, poor morale, inadequate salaries, low status, and lack of recognition. In addition, professional isolation, uncertainty, and alienation tended to weaken teachers' efficacy beliefs. Teachers' participation in the decisions that affect their work lives also bears on teachers' sense of efficacy. Among teachers in an urban school district, the more freedom teachers had in decision-making affecting their own classrooms, the higher their level of general teacher efficacy (GTE). Moore and Esselman (1992) highlight how teachers who felt they had a greater influence in school-based decision making and perceived fewer impediments to teaching had a stronger sense of personal teacher efficacy (PTE).

In examining the efficacy beliefs of both beginning and experienced teachers commencing work in an urban context, Chester and Beaudin (1996) found that experienced teachers generally saw a decrease in their sense of efficacy in their first year of teaching in an urban district. However, certain school practices, such as

greater opportunities for collaboration with other adults and more frequent opportunities for teacher observation, contributed to increased teacher efficacy.

A study by Shachar and Shmuelevitz (1997) examined teachers' sense of efficacy (N=121) following a year-long in-service training programme on co-operative learning methods. Results indicated that teachers who implemented co-operative learning most frequently also expressed a higher level of efficacy in promoting the learning of pupils with special needs than did other teachers. Teachers who reported a higher level of collaboration with colleagues also expressed a higher level of general teaching efficacy and of efficacy in enhancing students' social relations, than did teachers who reported a low level of collaboration with colleagues. Frequency of implementing co-operative learning and collaboration with colleagues explained the largest portion of the variance in teachers' sense of efficacy, while teachers' background variables accounted for only negligible amounts of variance in teachers' sense of efficacy.

It can be concluded that, while teacher efficacy is context-specific and related to teaching at a personal level, school factors such as collegiality; support from the school principal, democratic decision-making processes, a sense of fairness, and support for continuous professional development all serve to enhance teachers' feelings of efficacy.

Pre-Service and In-Service Preparation

While there is recognition that pre-service teacher education is but one phase in a life long learning process of teacher education, there is continuous debate about the

inadequacy of the model at pre-service level in providing teachers with the knowledge, skills and competencies to work with pupils with SEN (Cains & Brown, 1998; Roberston, 1999). At what juncture is it best to provide teachers with these skills and competencies – at pre-service or in-service level? Research in this area indicates that mainstream teachers who have received pre-service to work with pupils who have learning disabilities, exhibit greater job satisfaction in working with these pupils than those who have not received it (Lobosco & Newman, 1992). More recently, Brown, et al. (2008), in a study which examined the effects of embedding special education instruction into pre-service general education assessment course, reported that embedded instruction significantly increased teachers' knowledge of inclusion terminology and assessment adaptations (p<.01), and overall improved teachers' confidence in meeting the needs of pupils with learning disabilities. In addition, the number of special education courses that pre-service teachers receive, together with the quality of in-service experiences they have increases the extent to which they positively perceive the task of educating pupils with general learning disabilities in mainstream classes (Larivee, 1982; Stephens & Braun, 1980; Stoler, 1992). Specifically, teachers who take more special education courses at pre-service are more likely to indicate that they are more efficacious than their peers who take fewer courses in special education (Bender & Ikechukwu, 1989).

Many factors have been identified as influencing a person's ability to change their ways of working after pre-service preparation, including the quality of the in-service and the subsequent supports provided in the follow-up period (Forsberg, 1984). In addressing issues of in-service teacher education, the level of change which takes place, as a consequence, is of significance. Lyddon (1990) outlined a distinction

between two forms of change: first – and second order change. *First order change* is described as 'change without changing'. It represents a change in the way tasks are organised without changing the outcomes. *Second order change* is defined as 'change of change' and represents a change in the way of working so that the outcomes change. The aim of all in-service training is to achieve second-order change.

Ross (1994) reports on efforts to stimulate teacher efficacy by providing a teacher in-service programme to increase knowledge and skill in co-operative learning techniques. In this study teacher efficacy was measured three times over an eight-month period. Results indicated that, while no changes occurred in personal teacher efficacy following in-service, changes only occurred in general teacher efficacy (GTE) when teachers used new knowledge gleaned from the in-service course. Exposure to in-service in itself did not contribute to changes in personal teacher efficacy (PTE).

Awareness of Supports

Many writers highlight the importance of capacity building in support of system change (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987). The inclusion in mainstream classes of pupils with general learning disabilities represents a significant change in education policy in the Irish context and consequently it demands that teachers are adequately supported throughout.

Following the publication of the SERC Report (1993), the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), in fulfilment of its remit to advise the Minister

for Education and Science on the curriculum and syllabus requirements of students with a disability or other special educational needs (Education Act, 1998) published a Discussion Paper (1999) outlining the background and urgency in relation to providing teachers with some guidance. The report claims that teachers of pupils with special educational needs have generally very limited pre-service professional preparation in this area and thereafter have only restricted access to existing in-service courses in special education:

> Limitations placed on the professional training of teachers of students with special educational needs may have an effect on their ability to develop and implement curricula appropriate to the needs and abilities of their students. Class and subject teachers in mainstream schools also need increased access, both at pre-service and in-service level, to professional training (Special Educational Needs: Curriculum Issues, Discussion Paper, 1999, p. 12).

Following on the publication of the Discussion Paper (1999), the *Draft Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities* (NCCA, 2003) were issued and subsequently redrafted. The overall aim of the guidelines is to support all those involved in the education of pupils with general learning disabilities by outlining examples of how content, exemplars and teaching strategies can be differentiated in order to allow pupils access to a broad, balanced, relevant, differentiated and continuous curriculum. The guidelines contain: a description of the students' learning needs; support for school and classroom planning; advice on assessment; advice on appropriate teaching methodologies; advice on the use of ICT; and advice on integrating skills learned across the curriculum. The guidelines offer all schools a framework within which they can review and develop curriculum provision in a way that is relevant to the needs of these students and consistent with the general principles of education for all students. It was of interest in this study to

examine if teachers' awareness and use of the guidelines impacted on their levels of SEN efficacy in comparison to those who were unaware of the guideline materials.

Parents

The important role of the parent as a contributor to the whole education process is well documented in literature and legislation (Education Act, 1998; Education for Persons with Special Needs (EPSEN) Act, 2004). The unique contribution that a parent can make is greatly influenced by the relationships they have with the class teachers. When a pupil has special educational needs the links between the teacher and parent take on a greater significance in order to support them in their role as primary educators. While the importance of the role of the parent in their child's education is widely recognised, the impact of parents' participation on teacher efficacy is less familiar. However, in recent studies it is suggested that teachers' efficacy beliefs are bolstered by the reciprocity of support from parents, which serves to reaffirm them in their role as effective teachers.

In a recent study, Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2002) examined the extent to which teachers' assessment of key resources and supports in their teaching contexts contributes to their efficacy judgments. Specifically, in-service teachers (N=255) were sampled to explore the relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and the availability of teaching materials, interpersonal support from administrators and colleagues, as well as the level of parental and community support. They claim that since teaching can be regarded as an isolating profession, with a dearth of meaningful feedback from those in authority, teachers do not look to these as primary sources to inform their efficacy judgments but instead look to the

parents. These findings reveal that the availability of resources, as well as support from parents, were the two elements of support that were related to teachers' sense of efficacy. These findings lend support to the Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) model of teachers' sense of efficacy, and begin to define more closely the contextual sources of information that teachers consider in making efficacy judgments.

Job Anxieties

People differ in their beliefs about their competence and success in different domains of their life (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997, 2001). Social cognitive theory provides us with a useful framework to examine the impact of contextual factors on teacher efficacy. The power of this theory is that it integrates in one conceptual framework the origins or sources of efficacy beliefs, their structure and function, the processes through which they produce diverse effects, and the possibilities for change (Bandura, 1997). The integrated model of teacher efficacy used in this study reflects the cyclical nature of teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998). Within this model, teachers' efficacy judgments are the result of the interaction between a personal appraisal of the relative importance of factors that make teaching difficult on the one hand and an assessment of self-perceptions of personal teaching capabilities on the other.

Teacher efficacy beliefs vary along three dimensions: magnitude, which refers to the level a person believes him/herself capable of performing; generality, which refers to the extent to which changes in teacher efficacy beliefs extend to other behaviours and situations; and strength, which refers to the resoluteness of people's convictions that they can perform the behaviour in question (Bandura, 1997). The cyclical nature

114

of teacher efficacy implies that lower levels of efficacy lead to lower levels of effort and persistence, which lead to a deterioration in performance, which in turn lead to even lower levels of efficacy. People who doubt their abilities in a particular domain of activity are quick to consider such activities as threats, which they prefer to avoid (Bandura, 1997).

There is considerable research evidence on the impact of teacher efficacy on performance and well-being at work (Bandura, 1999, 2001). Brouwers and Tomic (2000), in their study on teachers' teacher efficacy as related to classroom management, found evidence to support such a cyclical model in that high levels of student disruptive behaviour were related to a low level of teachers' teacher efficacy in classroom management, resulting in a higher level of teacher burnout, which in turn leads to a higher level of student disruptive behaviour, further reducing the level of teachers' teacher efficacy. Teachers who distrust their ability to maintain classroom order cannot avoid this key factor of the job. Day in, day out, they must continue to instruct students in order to reach educational goals. Teachers who lack confidence in their classroom management abilities are confronted by their incompetence every day, while at the same time understanding how important that competence is if they are to perform well and achieve the educational goals. Furthermore, they are likely to know that their colleagues routinely succeed in obtaining a comfortable classroom environment Metz (as cited in Brouwers & Tomic, 2000).

An increasing number of researchers draw on teacher efficacy theory in their research on burnout. In a related study, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) examined the

direction and time-frame of relationships between perceived teacher efficacy in classroom management and the three dimensions of burnout among 243 secondary school teachers. It was concluded that perceived teacher efficacy had a longitudinal effect on depersonalisation and a synchronous effect on personal accomplishment. However, the direction was reversed for the relationship between perceived teacher efficacy and emotional exhaustion; the time frame was synchronous. It was concluded that perceived teacher efficacy in classroom management must be taken into consideration when devising interventions both to prevent and to treat burnout among secondary school teachers. Several studies demonstrate that doubts about teacher efficacy can in themselves trigger the burn-out process. Chwalisz, Altmaier and Russell (1992) found that teachers who score low in teacher efficacy reported a higher degree of burnout than their counterparts who score high in teacher efficacy.

While research examining the impact of different contextual variables provide further information on how teacher efficacy is sustained and developed, these studies lack a comprehensive analysis of the relative weighting and impact of different factors on teacher efficacy.

Summary

This chapter outlined the theoretical perspective of social cognitive theory as described by (Bandura, 1986) which provides the theoretical basis for this study. It explained how, according to the theory, different sources of information contribute to the development of a person's sense of efficacy. It outlined the potential impact of different levels of teacher efficacy on teaching and learning, in particular in relation to addressing the learning of pupils with SEN.

It discussed problems associated with earlier measures of teacher efficacy and it outlined the integrated model of teacher efficacy employed by this study. It explored the difference between measures of teacher efficacy, self-concept and self-esteem and highlighted the importance of preparing efficacious teachers at pre-service in support of inclusive education. It presented a review of relevant research in teacher efficacy that relates to the context of special education and it examined other contextual factors which impact on teacher efficacy namely: teacher attitude, support from the school principal, collegiality, awareness of supports, in-service, and job satisfaction. Lastly, it described the focus of the study as outlined in the research questions.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

Drawing on social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and previous findings from studies of teacher efficacy (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Brownnell & Pajares, 1999), this study aims to examine teachers' SEN efficacy. Specifically, it explores the extent to which mainstream teachers believe they possess the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for the effective teaching and learning of students with special educational needs. In addition, it examines the impact on teacher efficacy of other variables identified in the literature, namely: perceived support of the principal; collegiality; pre-service and in-service preparation; and students' socio-economic status.

This chapter provides a description of the research design and methodology used to conduct this study. Firstly, a general description of the research approach, methodology and design is provided. Secondly, a description of the research instrument used in the study is presented. Thirdly, the sample and sampling technique used in the study is defined. Fourthly, the data collection approach is discussed. Finally, a description of the data analysis plan is provided.

Research Approach and Methodology

Deciding how to measure teacher efficacy presents thorny issues (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998). Bandura (1997) recommends including various levels of task demands, allowing respondents to indicate the strength of their efficacy beliefs in light of a variety of impediments or obstacles and providing a broad range of response options. But perhaps the greatest challenge has to do with finding the appropriate level of specificity for measurement (Hoy & Woolfolk, 2000). Two measurement scales of

teacher efficacy were used in this study, adopted from Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) which examined efficacy at two levels, *general teacher efficacy* (GTE) which refers to the extent to which teachers believe the environment can be controlled and *personal teacher efficacy* (PTE), which refers to the evaluations teachers make of their ability to affect students' learning. While these two scales are used to measure teacher efficacy in the broader sense, in measuring teacher efficacy in relation to SEN knowledge, skills, and competencies, a self-designed scale was used. The design of this scale was deemed necessary in order to examine the relationship between SEN teacher efficacy and other measures of efficacy, namely: personal teacher efficacy (PTE) and general teacher efficacy (GTE) as measured by the Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) scale.

In designing the study, measurement issues in relation to teacher efficacy beliefs highlighted by Bandura (1986) were taken into account. Specifically, he warned that, researchers should assess the beliefs that correspond to the critical task of interest rather than assess generalised beliefs and then force a connection between the generalised belief assessed and more specific practices or outcomes with which the beliefs are subsequently compared. Consistent with this advice, Pajares (1996, 1997) and Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) advise that perceptions of success in teaching students with special educational needs in mainstreamed classrooms should theoretically be related to judgments of confidence to teach such students. In this study, the instrument that assessed teacher efficacy was designed with an eye to these guidelines and cautions.

This research study examines mainstream teachers' efficacy beliefs and it explores (a) the extent to which teachers believe they have the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to successfully include pupils with SEN in mainstream classes and (b) the relationship between all measures of efficacy, personal teacher efficacy (PTE), general teacher efficacy (GTE) and SEN teacher efficacy. In addition, it examines the influence of other independent variables on all measures of teacher efficacy.

Research Questions

This study aims to provide a more detailed description of the extent to which teachers believe that they possess the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to address the teaching and learning needs of pupils with SEN. The interaction between inclusive policy and practice at the level of teacher efficacy is addressed through the following questions:

- Is SEN efficacy different from Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE) and General Teacher Efficacy (GTE)?

- Do teachers believe that they were adequately prepared at pre-service with the knowledge, skills and competencies to work with pupils with SEN?

- How do other independent variables such as intrinsic and extrinsic contextual factor namely, teacher attitudes, support from the school principal, collegiality, in-service, awareness of external supports and job anxieties, impact on teacher efficacy beliefs?

Instrumentation

The extent to which mainstream teachers believe that they are competent to educate pupils with special educational needs; the extent to which they feel that their pre-service teacher education adequately prepared them for the task in hand; and the level of support they receive in their respective schools are all specific variables identified by social cognitive theory as impacting on and mediating teacher efficacy levels. As teacher efficacy beliefs have been demonstrated to have a strong influence on teachers' practice, it can be claimed that implementing inclusive policy requires that teachers believe firstly, that all students can learn despite negative environmental influences in their lives and secondly, that they as teachers have the ability to teach any student. Raising the bar so that all teachers possess adequate knowledge, skills and competencies to educate pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes necessitates an examination of the current situation in relation to mainstream teachers' efficacy beliefs.

In seeking answers to these questions, a mixed mode questionnaire survey was administered to a purposive sample of mainstream primary teachers (N=244) who had qualified between the years 1998-2007 inclusively. The questionnaire survey was deemed suitable, as it would provide a purposeful, objective and structured quantitative description of the impact of the variables on teacher efficacy (Appendix 3). The rationale for its use was not so much the number of people or events involved but the breadth of coverage. "The notion of a survey involves the idea of span of vision which is wide and inclusive" (Denscombe, 2003, p. 27). This breadth of coverage increases the likelihood of wider representation and subsequently the

121

generalisability of the findings from this sample, so that inferences can be made about teacher efficacy of primary teachers in general (Babbie, 1990). One limitation of the survey approach is that it prohibits the researchers' ability to check the accuracy of the responses. It became the preferred type of data collection because of the economy of its design in terms of cost, the anonymity of sending and returning by post and the rapid turnaround in data collection.

The use of a mixed mode survey – paper base and electronic survey methods – provides an opportunity to compensate for the weakness of each method, in that respondents who find paper-based surveys unattractive may be better motivated to use a more interactive electronic format, thus increasing the survey response rate (Dillman, 2000). A number of additional factors influenced the choice of mixed mode survey approach, namely, the acceptance that as we now live in a highly technological society, an electronic format may be more attractive and more user friendly to the younger cohort of teachers represented in this study. In addition, it offered more guidance and control in that each section required completion before moving on to the next section. Failure to complete any section resulted in a reminder flashed on screen that all questions needed to be responded to before proceeding to the next section. Lastly, the electronic format permitted the use of colour and shading – both absent from the paper-based format. On completion, respondents received a personal 'thank you' note which appeared after clicking the submit button which served to personalise the experience for the respondent.

The software package *Surveymonkey* was used to facilitate the use of the on-line questionnaire and served as a data analysis tool to record both the distribution and

collation of results. The design feature on *Surveymonkey* facilitated the development of the questionnaire, while at the same time tailoring questions to elicit specific responses. *Surveymonkey* analyses the data and it allows the researcher to filter and download results. Responses can be flagged as mandatory, answer choices can be randomised, and fonts, letter sizes and background colours can be customized. Responses can be directed to particular or designated accounts. Summary results can be imported into spreadsheet software and detailed results can be saved for further analysis. While familiarity with the *Surveymonkey* interface was challenging initially, the software package facilitated the automatic sending, collecting and collating of data from the questionnaires (Appendix 3).

Questionnaire

Following the advice of Dillman (2000) that "trust is encouraged through attention to detail that makes the questionnaire look and feel important" (p. 81), care was taken to ensure that the questionnaire was easy to manipulate and easy to complete. A unimode format using a five-point Likert-type response was used in both paper-based and electronic formats. Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement to various statements ranging from *strongly agree* (5) to *strongly disagree* (1). The score for each person was the mean of all the items measuring agreement where scales were used. An 'undecided' option was offered in relation to each statement in order to avoid a manufactured opinion being recorded (Robson, 1993). Certain statements were inserted in both positive and negative format to extend the validity of the scale and also to prevent a response set developing. An introductory letter outlined the rationale and purpose of the research, the appropriate mode of response for each section, the estimated time and date for completion and an expression of

thanks for engagement (Appendix 3). A navigational path provided information on the purpose of each section with details regarding instructions for completion presented at the beginning of each new questionnaire section.

In keeping with the advice that "if only closed items are used, the questionnaire may lack coverage or authenticity" (Cohen & Morrison, 2000, p. 129) and so as not to force items on the teacher, where open-ended response is appropriate to elicit opinion or fact, the additional information section used open-ended, order response category questions such as "In relation to working with pupils with special educational needs, what are the three greatest challenges you face"? This allowed respondents "greater freedom to answer the question because they answer in a way that suits their interpretation" (May, 2001, p. 102). The researcher noted that in all of the returned questionnaires, much use was made of the opportunity for additional comment, which added validity to the findings and the qualitative process.

Table 3

Questionnaire Sections

Section 1	Background information
Section 2	Working at classroom level
Section 3	Teacher beliefs
Section 4	Teacher attitude, support within the school, parents, job anxieties
Section 5	Teacher preparation at pre-service and in-service
Section 6	Additional information

The questionnaire was divided into six sections, as shown in table 3 and outlined in (Appendix 3). Section 1 measured socio-demographic characteristics of both teachers and pupils. It explored the number of pupils with special educational needs in the class, and socio-demographic teacher characteristics related to age, gender,

number of years teaching, and level of qualifications. Other items focused on aspects of the respondents' present school position including: grade being taught; type of school (Catholic, Protestant, Gaelscoil, Educate Together); population served in the school (boys only, girls only, boys and girls mixed, junior, senior, all levels); class size; number of pupils with special educational needs; the number of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs); the extent of support received from the Resource/Learning Support Teacher; where this support takes place (in-class/ withdrawal); and whether or not the school was designated as having disadvantaged status. Section 2 (16 items) examined SEN efficacy beliefs in relation to working with pupils with special educational needs. Section 3 examined PTE and GTE and used the short form efficacy scale (9 items) designed by Hoy and Woolfolk (1993). Section 4 (20 items) examined teacher views on inclusion, the extent of support received from others, and their expressed satisfaction with teaching. Section 5 (7 items) examines teachers' views in relation to pre-service and in-service professional development, their preferred model of pre-service preparation, their awareness of the legislative requirements and of the support services. Response options for all scales ranged on a five point scale from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* or *not sure at all* to *absolutely sure*. Finally, Section 6 sought additional information through the use of open-ended order response questions on the challenges and needs of teachers in addressing the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs.

Pilot Study

Robson (2002) describes a pilot study as an opportunity to, "revise the design, sharpen up the theoretical framework, develop the research questions, and rethink the sampling strategy" (p. 97). Likewise, Yin (2009) suggests that the pilot study

enables the researcher to refine data collection in relation to content and procedures, thus assisting the development of relevant lines of questioning. The questionnaire was piloted on fifteen mainstream primary teachers prior to administration. Questions in the pilot related to length of time for completion, clarity of instructions and layout, format of questions, ease of understanding and any additional information which would enhance the validity and reliability of the questionnaire (Robson, 2002). Following piloting, it was suggested that Question 2 *When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students* and Question 9. *If I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students* addressed similar questions so question 2 from the Hoy and Woolfolk, (1993) scale was omitted.

Table 4 shows the number of items in each scale and its internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha). The scales, taken from the work of Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), have been previously validated, and were measured again here to check on their utility within the Irish context. The new measures of SEN efficacy and other scales for attitude, parental support, collegiality, principal support, and job anxieties were also measured.

In the scale adopted from Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), alpha coefficients of reliability were .77 for (PTE) and .72 for (GTE). The alpha coefficients of reliability in this study were .58 for (PTE) and .75 (GTE). Nunnally (1978) explains that, while 0.7 is deemed to be an acceptable reliability coefficient, lower thresholds are sometimes used in the literature. Cortina (1993) advises that while measures of coefficient alpha are considered important in test construction, "those who make decisions about the adequacy of a scale on the basis of nothing more than the level of alpha are missing

the point of empirically estimating reliability" (p. 101). He goes on to advise that the level of reliability that is considered adequate depends on the decision that is made with the scale. "The finer the distinction that needs to be made, the better the reliability must be... judgment of adequacy needs to reflect context" (p. 101). The difference in the alpha coefficient in the scale used in this study can be explained by the reduction in the number of items from 5 to 4 following piloting. It also can be explained by the lack of unidimensionality within the items presented in the scale (Appendix 3, Q 5-8) "Coefficient alpha is not a panacea ... it is useful for estimating reliability when item–specific variance in a unidimensional test is of interest" (Cortina, p. 101). While it was of interest to look at findings, in relation to the Irish context, from this pre-validated scale developed by Woolfolk and Hoy (1993), findings should be interpreted with caution. The same caution should apply for other scales with relatively low Alpha scores, specifically parental support and principal support.

The SEN teacher efficacy scale in the questionnaire (Appendix 3, Section 2) examined competencies such as teachers' ability to assess, plan, differentiate and employ a range of methodologies in support of pupils' special educational needs. Other sections of the questionnaire (Appendix 3, Sections 4, 5 and 6) examined perceived teacher attitudes toward inclusion, teacher beliefs regarding parental support, collegiality, principal support, job satisfaction, teacher preparation at pre-service and in-service level and teacher awareness of external supports in the form of school support services, national teacher guidelines, and pupils' rights as outlined in the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (2004). With the exception of the

scales for parental support and principal support already mentioned, alpha levels exceeded or were close to the 0.7 thresholds.

Table 4

Internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of scales used

	Scale	No. Items	Alpha
Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE)	PTE personal teacher efficacy scale (Section 3: Q5, 6,7,8)	4	.58
General teacher efficacy (GTE)	GTE general teacher efficacy scale (Section 3: Q1, 2,3,4,9)	5	.75
SEN teacher efficacy (SENE)	SEN teacher efficacy scale (Section 2: Q1-16)	16	.89
Attitudes	Attitudes towards inclusion of SEN pupils (Section 4: Q1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)	6	.61
Parents support	Parental support for inclusion (Section 4: Q15, 16)	2	.55
Collegiality	Collegiality (Section 4: Q10, 12, 13)	3	.72
Principal support	Principal support for inclusion (Section 4: Q9, 11, 17)	3	.61
Job anxieties	Job anxieties scale, (Section 4: Q18, 19)	2	.68

Piloting

In terms of questionnaire design, content and construct validity are important issues. In relation to content, it is necessary to demonstrate that it comprehensively covers all the factors that impact on teacher efficacy. For this reason, the construction of the questionnaire was informed by multiple sources of knowledge namely: (1) an examination of the factors which help or hinder the development of teacher efficacy was explored; (2) an examination of Irish legislative policies; reports and circulars to determine the role, remit and responsibility of the mainstream class teacher, with respect of pupils with special educational needs, (3) an analysis of the special education input to teachers at pre-service level was examined; and, (4) discussions

128

with professionals within the Special Education Department about the adequacy of the content to address the research question as outlined was conducted. Further examination of the language used in the questionnaire was carried out to ensure that questions measured relevant issues, and that respondents would interpret the questions as intended (Czaja & Blair, 1996) with a view to establishing reliability and validity.

In accordance with recommended methodology (Robson, 2002), a pilot study was carried out. The questionnaire, in both formats, paper base and electronic, was presented to a number of key personnel to assess the quality of face validity, content validity and construct validity (Appendix A). The participants were mainstream class teachers who were not part of the proposed target group. Some amendments were deemed necessary, namely substituting *somewhat sure* for *moderately sure* on the response scale, adding a further three questions (Q 1, 2, 7) to address teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of pupils with special education needs in mainstream schools, and deleting Question 2: *When I really try, I can get through to most difficult students* which was seen to address a similar issue to that of Question 9: *When I really try hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated pupil*. Overall, the respondents stated that the questions were clear and unambiguous, the layout clear and attractive, it was a useful questionnaire, and was completed within a short period of time. Several of the respondents expressed support for the research and queried where they could access the research outcomes on completion.

Sample

The population for this study was a purposive sample of primary school teachers numbering 244 who qualified between the years 1998-2007 inclusively. The sample was restricted to teachers who qualified in this period to reflect the new policy requirements regarding the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. The characteristics of gender, length of teaching service and school context was represented in the sample so as to ensure that it reflected the true proportion of individuals with these characteristics in the population (Fowler, 2002). The population for this study was chosen through different methods. An initial short article, explaining the focus of the research and inviting participants, was published in a teacher magazine which is circulated monthly to a large population of primary school teachers. This article generated a small sample of 14 volunteer respondents. Further publication of the research intention at an educational conference which addressed 'approaches to teaching' (INTO, 2007), resulted in a further 120 volunteer respondents. As the target population required was greater than the combination of these two volunteer groups, permission was sought from principals of 6 large urban schools, where it was considered a strong possibility that newly qualified teachers would be well represented, to forward questionnaires to the number of teachers who qualified in the years 1998-2007 inclusively. The total questionnaire sample was 350 with a return of 244, representing a return rate of 70%. The sample size (244) was an adequate representation of the teacher population and was broadly representative of school type, population and location.

Despite the option offered to complete the questionnaire electronically, only 55 responded using this approach. While the electronic approach was regarded as more

attractive and user-friendly approach, particularly for younger teachers, the low uptake in using this medium may be explained by the lack of access and availability of broadband for the respondents.

Data Analysis

The data from this study was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and each piece of raw data was coded for referencing purposes (Denscome, 2003). Frequency of responses to questions were examined using tables generated by SPSS and in some cases, graph functions were used to illustrate findings in a different format. SPSS text analysis was used to code responses from the open-ended questions and suggest patterns frequencies and categories. The analysis of the data in this study is influenced by the "exploratory data analysis" (EDA) approach outlined by Turkey, (1977) and Velleman and Hoaglin, (1981). Using this approach, there will be an attempt to go beyond summary statistics and to display the data in as many different ways and formats as possible, so as to get a true feel for what is going on and also to see the unexpected. Connolly (2007) suggests that it is through this approach that we will begin to appreciate and understand the full complexity and variability contained in the data.

Ethics

Concern for ethics in both the planning and execution of research will enhance the quality of the study. O'Leary (2004) defined ethical behaviour as conforming to standards of conduct of a given profession or group. In order to uphold, and if possible, extend this standard, the researcher stated clearly the various responsibilities that were undertaken throughout this research and endeavoured to

ensure that the rights and well-being of those involved were not negatively impacted upon.

Throughout the research process self-reflection, and self awareness in relation to ethical considerations was employed (Neuman, 2000). Rosnow & Rosenthal (1997), advocate an ethos, which treats research participants as "precious resources which should not be wasted on poorly designed, carelessly executed, badly analysed or misleadingly reported studies" (p. 130). With this in mind, procedures employed in this study at all times sought to adhere to the clear guidelines prepared by the ethics committee within St. Patrick's College. In order to ensure that the rights and well being of the participants were not negatively impacted on, participants were given a cover letter explaining the nature of the research and assuring the principle of confidentiality which applied to their disclosures. It also explained, and in the event of any possible risks, that they could withdraw from the process at any stage.

Summary

This chapter provided a general description of the research approach, methodology and design. It described the research instrument, sample and sampling technique. The data collection approach is discussed and a description of the data analysis plan is explained and outlined.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS

In this chapter the key findings from the data are presented in five sections. The first section describes the demographic details of the sample. The second section outlines the findings in relation to the measures of efficacy used in the experiment. The third section examines the relation between these measures of efficacy and demographic variables. The fourth section explores the relationship between measures of efficacy and pre-service teacher education. Finally, the last section outlines the relationship between measures of efficacy and other scales for contextual factors.

Demographic Details of sample

Factors associated with teacher efficacy were examined using a sample (N=244) of primary school teachers of which 90% were female and 10% were male. In the Irish context, this would be representative of the percentage of males who are currently in the teaching profession. The number of years experience has been shown to be a significant factor in a study by Morgan and O'Leary (2004), which found that the correlations between job satisfaction and teacher efficacy were higher for those who had spent a year teaching. Figure 2 shows that the modal response for this sample was between 4 and 6 years of teaching experience. The majority (72.2%) began teaching between the ages of 19-23, indicating that a teaching career was their first choice, while (22.6%) began teaching between the ages of 24-29 years of age, indicating that they possessed additional qualifications and experiences before beginning teaching. Of the total sample, (54.6%) qualified with a Bachelor in Education Degree while (34.2%) had a Post-Graduate Diploma qualification.
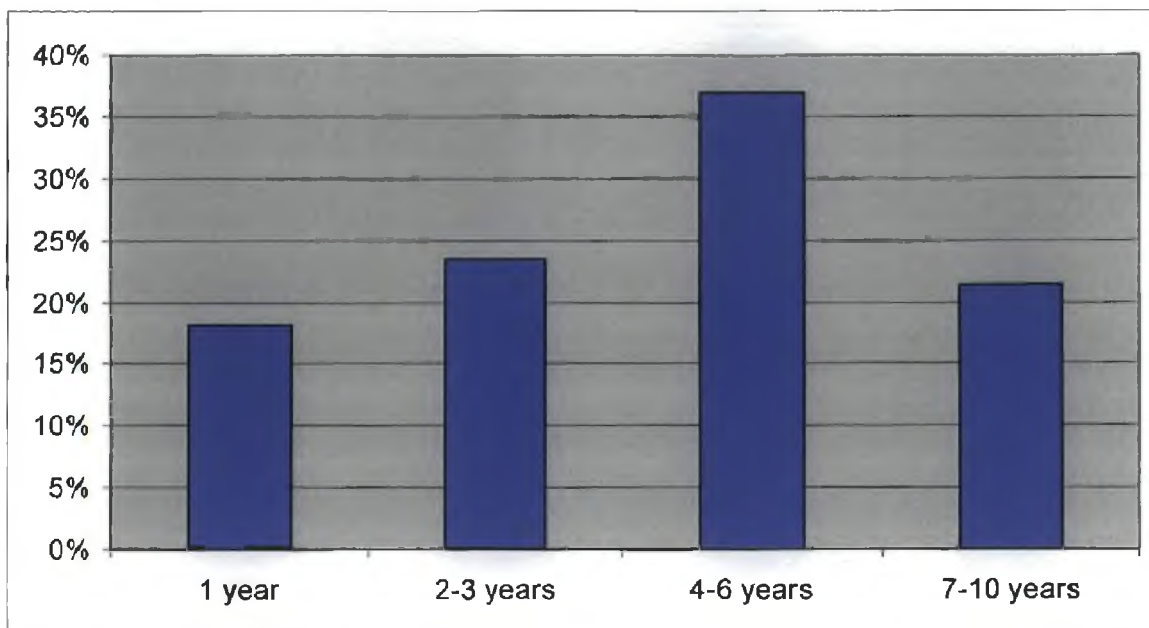
Figure 2:   Number of years teaching

Nearly half of the sample (44.4%) taught in mixed gender schools, with a majority of the schools being Catholic in denomination (92.1%). A majority of schools (54.5%) fell outside the category for designated disadvantage status. The average class size was 23.7, with a range of between 6 and 35 children per class, with no significant differences in the number of students per class in relation to the level taught (*e.g.,* between junior infants, senior infants (F [3,216] = 1.19, p = 0.3).
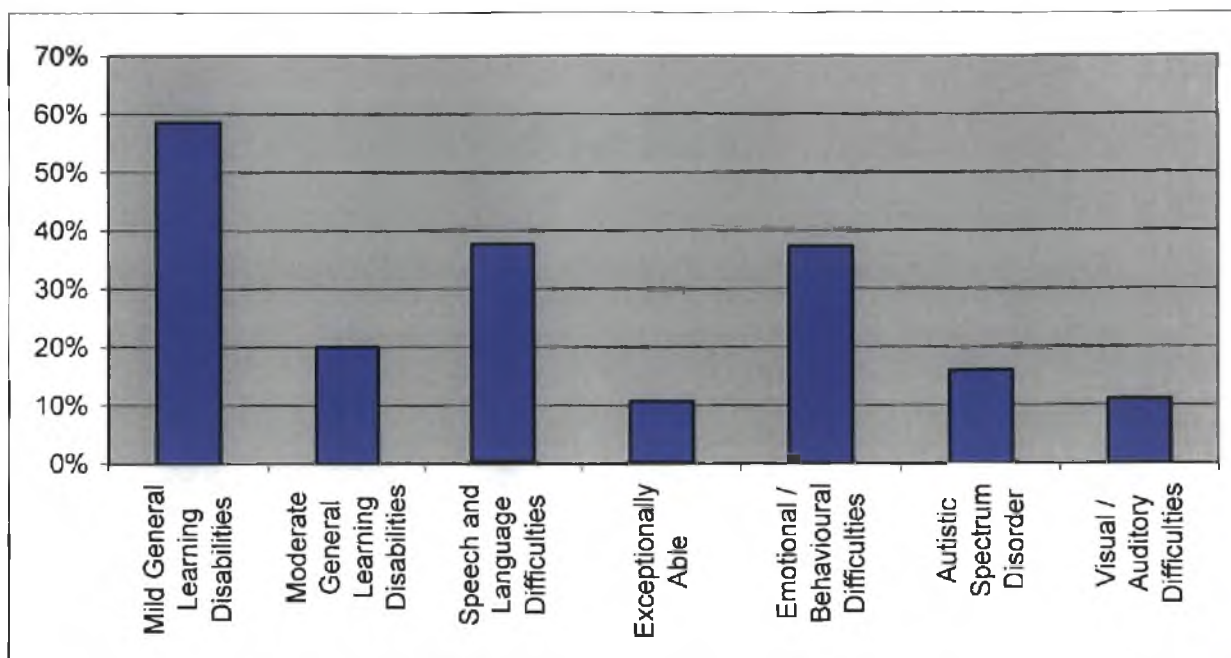
Figure 3: Number of pupils with different types of special educational needs

Figure 3 provides details of pupils with different types of special educational needs in the classes of the teachers who responded. In this study, pupils with mild general learning disabilities represent the largest cohort of pupils with special educational needs (58.6%) while pupils with speech and language difficulties (37.7%) and behavioural and emotional difficulties (37.3%) are almost equally represented. Given the high level of pupils with Mild General Learning Disabilities (58.7%), who would be categorised as high incidence, it was not surprising to find that while 41.1% of teachers had the support of a Special Needs Assistant, 58.9% of teachers had no additional support.

Where Support Takes Place

While a very small minority (5.7%) of pupils with SEN receive in-class support, withdrawal from class represents the type of support most frequently received

(64.8%) by the pupils. A combination of in-class support and withdrawal from class was the approach taken for 29.5% of the pupils. This is an important finding as while 91.8% of the sample disagreed with the statement that dealing with pupils with special educational needs was primarily the responsibility of the Learning Support/Resource teacher, 84.7% claimed that they were well supported by the Support Team (Learning Support/Resource teachers, this support occurred outside of, rather then within the class.

Measures of Efficacy used in the Experiment

Teachers' feelings of efficacy were measured using two independent scales: (1) a self-designed scale looking at teacher efficacy in relation to specific knowledge, skills and competencies required at the classroom level in respect of pupils with SEN; (2) Woolfolk and Hoy's (1993) scale for general teacher efficacy, which measured two aspects of teacher efficacy namely: general teacher efficacy (GTE) and personal teacher efficacy (PTE).

Measure of Efficacy in Relation to SEN

The devised measure for teacher efficacy in the classroom is composed of sixteen items (see Table 4 for internal consistency data). Figure 4 gives a clear indication of an emerging pattern in responses to these items – feelings that the teachers are 'somewhat sure' in relation to all these items which refer to knowledge, skills and competencies for working with pupils with SEN. The items in this scale were consolidated into a composite score. Table 5 shows that the mean score from this composite measure is in line with the trend emerging in Figure 4.
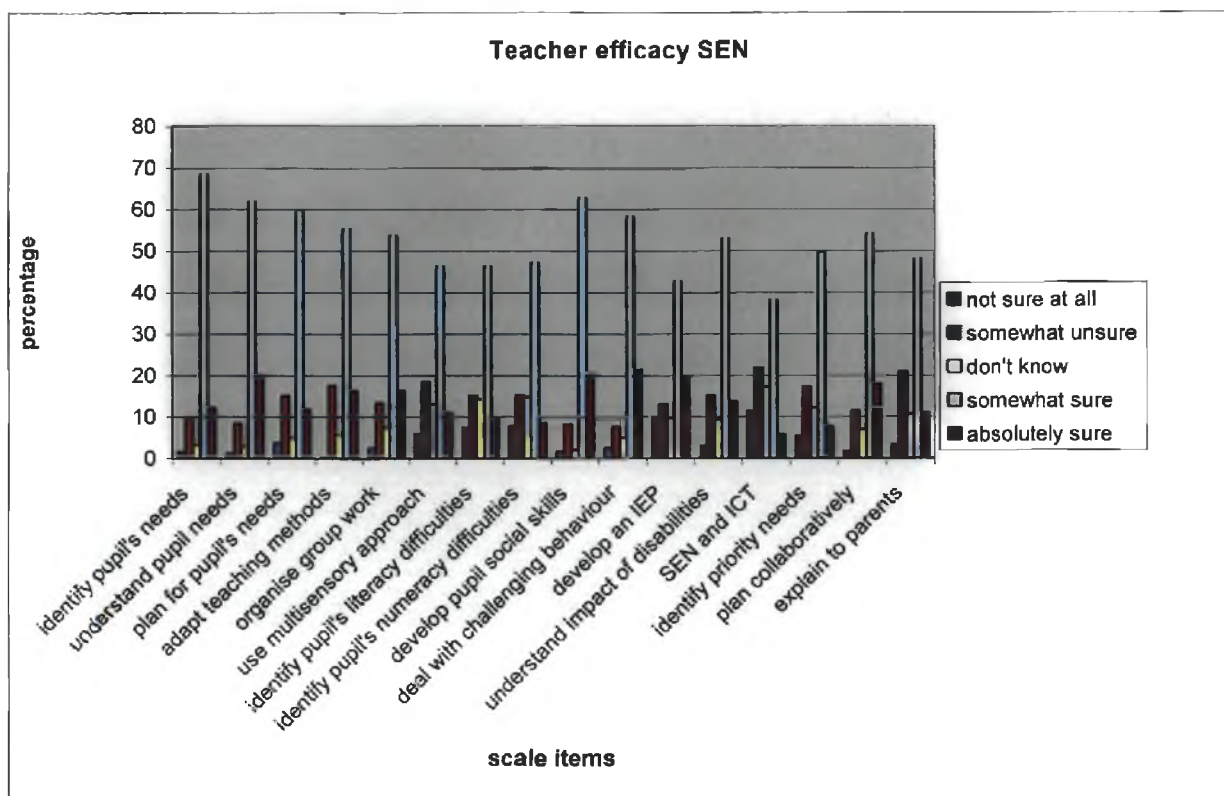
Figure 4: Results for items in the SEN teacher efficacy scale.

Table 5

SEN Teacher Efficacy Statistics

SEN efficacy scale statistics	
Mean Score	3.61
Standard Deviation	0.63
Range	1.75-4.94

General Teacher Efficacy (GTE)

Figure 5 shows the respondent's level of agreement with the items on the general efficacy scale. It is interesting to note a disagreement with three of the items, and an agreement with two of the items. The respondents particularly agree with the item "if parents would do more for their children, I could do more", but beyond that it does not seem to be the case that they view their abilities to teach a child to be particularly

constrained by the child's family environment. Table 6 shows the mean score for the composite scale based on these items.

General Teacher Efficacy

Figure 5: Results for items on the general teacher efficacy scale (GTE).

Table 6

General Teacher Efficacy Statistics (GTE)

General teacher efficacy statistics	
Mean Score	2.97
Standard Deviation	0.71
Range	1-4.6

Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE)

Figure 6 shows teacher's responses to the items on the personal teacher efficacy (PTE) scale. In this case they mostly agree and state their abilities with regard to dealing with issues arising when dealing with pupils. Table 7 shows the statistics for

the composite scale based on these items. It is interesting to note when comparing tables 5, 6 and 7 that the highest mean levels of efficacy scales were for personal teacher efficacy (PTE) followed by SEN teacher efficacy, followed by general teacher efficacy (GTE). While further analysis could be done to confirm the independence of these different forms of efficacy, due to space limitations and the complexity and length of the data to be described in the results, this analysis is not included here.
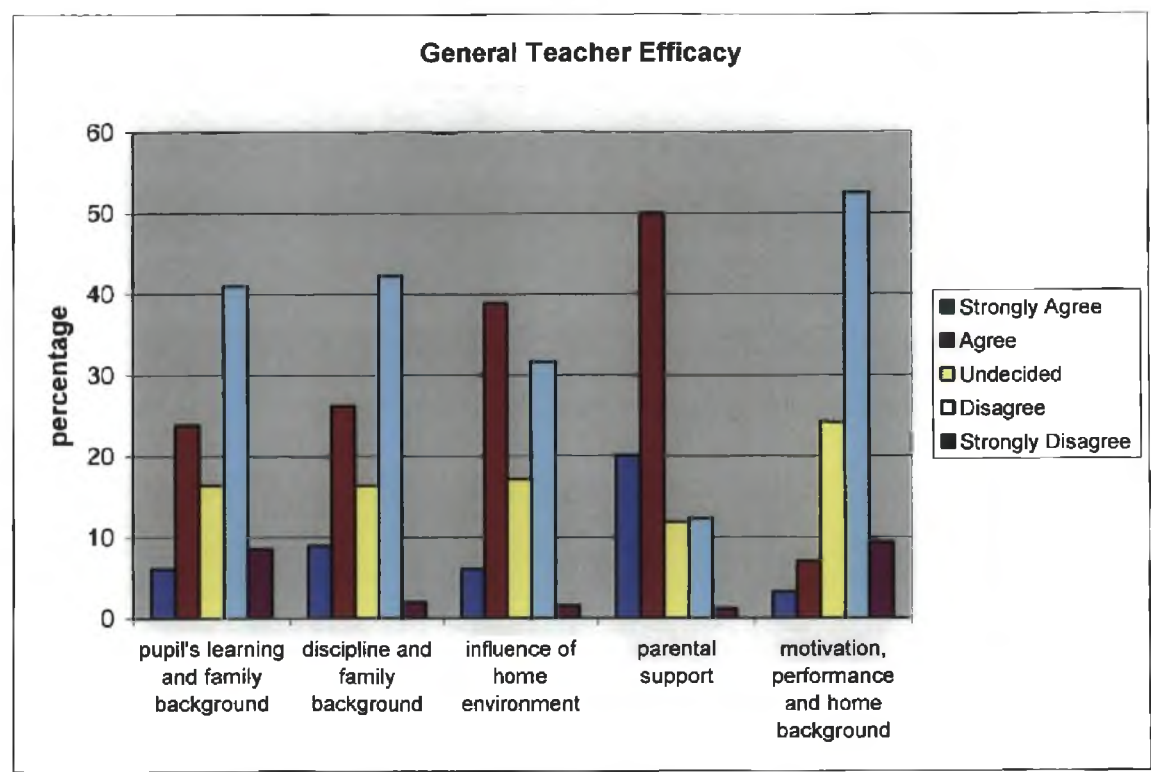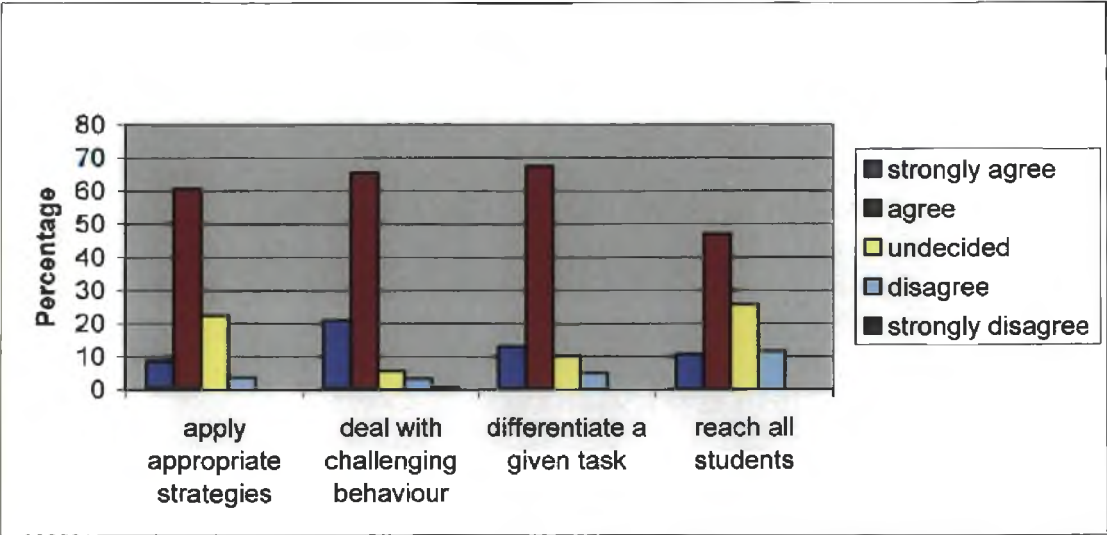

Figure 6: Results for the items on the personal teacher efficacy scale.

Table 7

Personal Teacher Efficacy Statistics

Personal teacher efficacy statistics	
Mean Score	3.84
Standard Deviation	0.48
Range	2.5-5

139

The first question to be addressed is the correlations between the 3 measures of efficacy described above. While no significant correlation exists between the measures of Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE) and General Teacher Efficacy (GTE) from the scales determined by Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), they both significantly correlate with a third scale, that of SEN teacher efficacy (see Table 8). It is important to note the strength of the correlations here – only a small, though significant correlation exists between the general efficacy scale and the SEN teacher efficacy scale, as evidenced by the small coefficient of determination (the proportion of variability in a data set that is accounted for by the statistical model). The strength of the correlation between SEN teacher efficacy and personal teacher efficacy is stronger, and would be termed a medium strength of correlation based on Cohen's guidelines, again as evidenced by the coefficient of determination. It is also of interest to note from paired sample T-tests that there were significant differences between the mean measures of all 3 efficacy scales: t [202] = 5.49, p < .001, for SEN efficacy and personal teacher efficacy, t [202] = -10.14, p < .001 for SEN efficacy and general teacher efficacy, and t [222] = -15.57, p < .001, with personal teacher efficacy (PTE) being the highest, followed by SEN efficacy, then by general teacher efficacy (GTE).

Table 8

Correlations between Measures of Efficacy

	Pearson Correlation	P-Value	Coefficient of determination
Personal efficacy – general efficacy	.09	0.14	-
Personal efficacy – SEN efficacy	.41	< .001	16.81%
General efficacy – SEN efficacy	.158	.02	2.5%

Relationships between Efficacy Measures and Demographic Variables

Looking at the effect of various demographic variables the most important finding emerging relates to the highest level of qualification (F [3,201] = 3.52, p = .016), with teachers having higher qualifications, having higher self-ratings in terms of SEN efficacy.
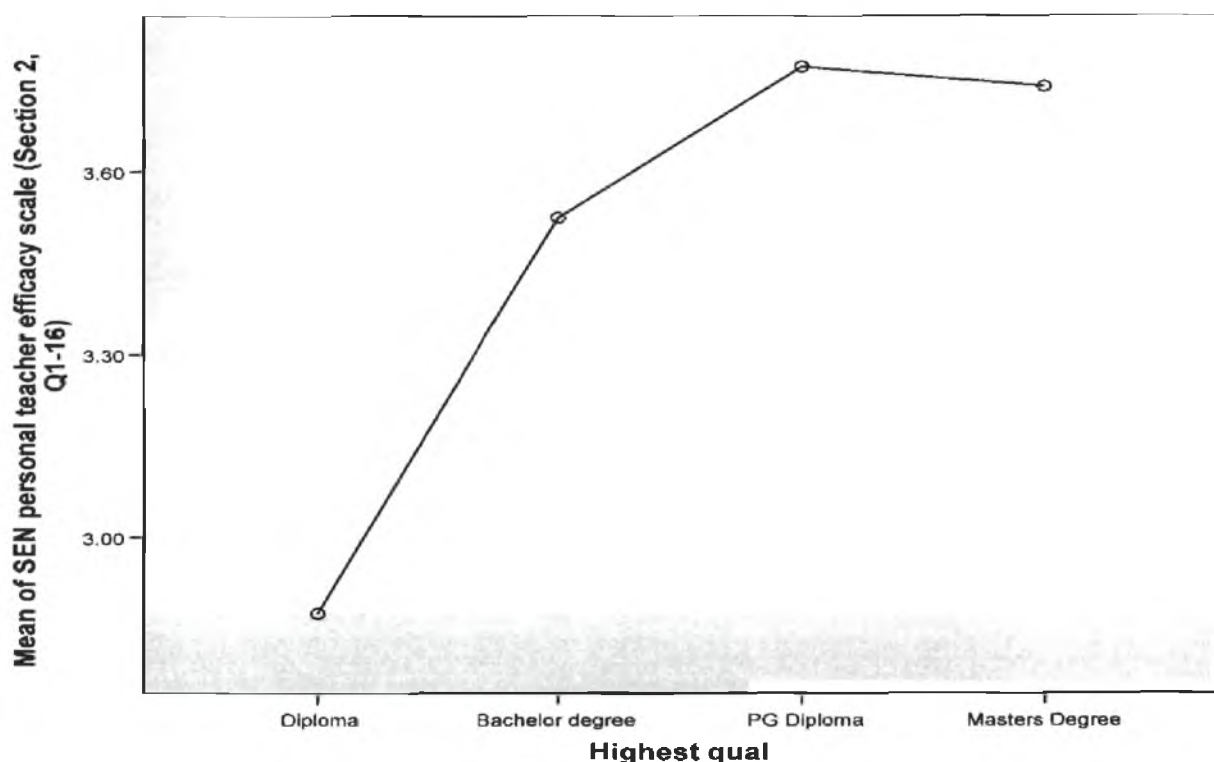
Figure 7: Mean score on the SEN efficacy scale in relation to highest qualification gained.

Following this, the relations between the efficacy scales and various demographic variables are examined in Table 9 below which shows no significant differences between any of the efficacy scales for variables relating to the school, including the denomination of the school (*e.g.,* Catholic, Protestant) the school population (*e.g.,* boys only, mixed gender), and whether the school is designated a disadvantaged

status. Similarly, there are no significant differences for any variables related to the teacher, such as the number of years the teacher has taught, which class they are teaching, and whether or not they have an SNA assisting them in the classroom.

Table 9

Relation between Scales of Efficacy and Demographic Variables of School Denomination, School Population, Designation of Disadvantage, Number of Years Teaching, Level of Teaching, and whether there is an SNA in the Class

Variable	Relation with SEN efficacy	Relation with Personal Teacher efficacy	Relation with General Teacher efficacy
School denomination	$F [3,201] = 0.2$, $p = .89$	$F [3, 221] = 0.56$, $p = .64$	$F [3, 221] = 0.65$, $p = .58$
School Population	$F [5,201] = 0.98$, $p = .43$	$F [5, 222] = 0.38$, $p = .85$	$F [5, 222] = 0.4$, $p = .84$
Designation of Disadvantage	$F [1,197] = 0.14$, $p = .7$	$F [1, 216] = .01$, $p = .92$	$F [1, 217] = 0.33$, $p = .56$
Number of Years Teaching	$F [3,200] = 0.16$, $p = .92$	$F [3, 221] = 0.44$, $p = .72$	$F [3, 221] = 0.65$, $p = .58$
Level of class being taught by the teacher	$F [3, 198] = 0.64$, $p = .58$	$F [3, 218] = 0.38$, $p = .76$	$F [3, 218] = 0.75$, $p = .52$
Whether there is an SNA in the class	$F [1,200] = 0.92$, $p = .33$	$F [1,222] = 2.67$, $p = .1$	$F [1, 222] = 0.17$, $p = .67$

Table 10 shows no significant correlations between class size and scores on the 3 efficacy scales. This indicates that class size has no strong impact on efficacy on these scales.

Table 10

Correlations between Efficacy Scales and Class Size

Type of efficacy scale	Correlation with class size
SEN efficacy	Pearson Correlation = -.006, p = .94
Personal Teacher Efficacy	Pearson Correlation = .086, p = .214
General Teacher Efficacy	Pearson Correlation = -.006, p = .93

Table 11 shows the relations between the efficacy scales and whether or not the various categories of SEN related in the table are present in the teachers' class. The only significant finding is for personal efficacy in relation to Moderate GLD. Interestingly, teachers whose classes included pupils with Moderate GLD had a higher mean efficacy score (3.97) than those who did not (3.8). This finding however is very much an exception, with no other significant results arising.

Table 11

Relationship between Efficacy Scales and the Assessed SEN Categories included in the Teacher's Class

Category of SEN	SEN Efficacy	Personal Teacher Efficacy	General Teacher Efficacy
Mild GLD	$F [1, 205] = 0.436$, $p = .51$	$F [1,227] = 2.43$, $p = .12$	$F [1,227] = 1.09$, $p = .3$
Moderate GLD	$F [1,205] = .04$, $p = .84$	$F [1,227] = 4.7$, $p = .03$	$F [1, 227] = 0.002$, $p = .96$
Speech and language	$F [1, 205] = 0.07$, $p = .78$	$F [1, 227] = 1.6$, $p = .2$	$F [1, 227] = 0.26$, $p = .607$
Exceptional Ability	$F [1, 205] = 0.11$, $p = .73$	$F [1, 227] = 0.32$, $p = .57$	$F [1, 227] = 1.34$, $p = .25$
EBD	$F [1, 205] = 0.11$, $p = 0.74$	$F [1, 227] = 0.63$, $p = .43$	$F [1,227] = 0.83$, $p = .36$
ASD	$F [1, 205] = 2.08$, $p = .15$	$F [1, 227] = 1.5$, $p = .22$	$F [1, 227] = 1.12$, $p = .29$
Visual/Auditory Difficulties	$F [1, 205] = 0.204$, $p = .65$	$F [1, 227] = 2.1$, $p = .15$	$F [1, 227] = 0.09$, $p = .76$

The Relationship between Measures of Efficacy and Pre-Service Education

Pre-Service Education

A number of items relating to teachers' pre-service education were included in the questionnaire. These items examined teachers' perceptions of the extent to which they believed they had received adequate pre-service preparation to work with pupils with SEN in inclusive settings. It examined the range of knowledge received in relation to pupils with varying degrees of difficulties and disabilities. This section is supported by qualitative data from the open-ended questions, which explored the challenges and the necessary supports required (Appendix-Questionnaire, Section 6). Finally, it explored teachers' views as to the most appropriate model of preparation at pre-service.

Figure 8 shows the results for the items on whether the teachers received knowledge relating to specific disabilities at pre-service. It indicates that teachers' felt that they had learned about most of these conditions at pre-service, with the notable exception of Down Syndrome.
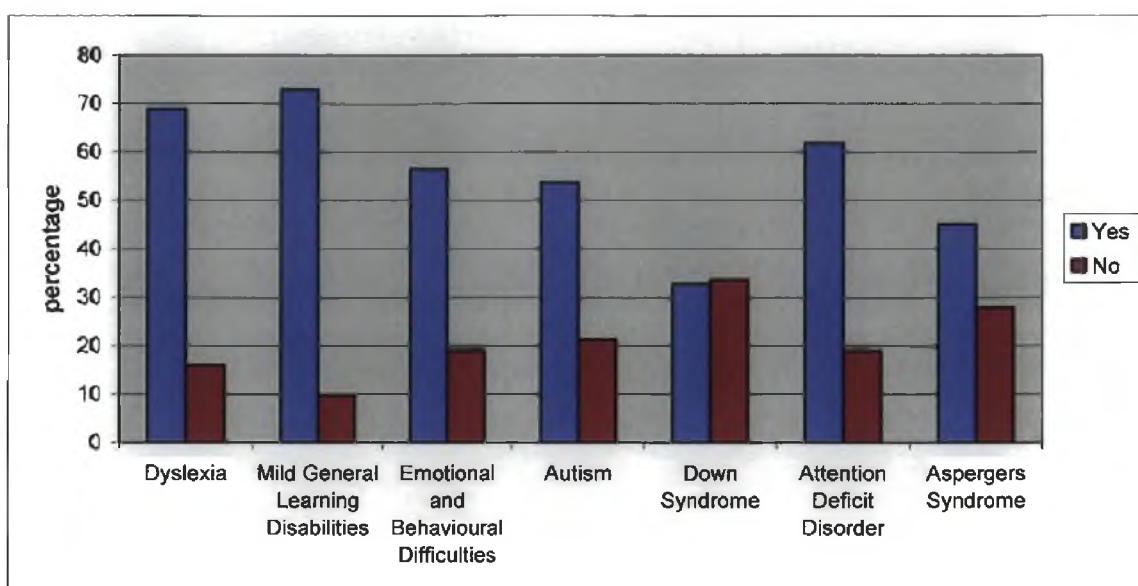
Figure 8: Categories of SEN that were addressed at pre-service level.

Table 12 shows that there were significant differences in terms of SEN efficacy depending on whether or not they were made aware of these categories of SEN, with people who were aware of these types of special need showing higher levels of SEN efficacy.

Table 12

SEN Teacher Efficacy

Category of SEN	F-value	df	p-value
Dyslexia	4.42	1, 188	.037
Mild GLD	6.75	1, 183	.01
EBD	2.12	1, 169	.146
Autism	8.25	1, 167	.005
Down Syndrome	3.74	1, 147	.05
ADD	5.37	1, 180	.022
Aspergers Syndrome	6.2	1, 163	.014

Table 13 shows teachers' perceptions of their ability to teach children with SEN following pre-service. It is clear that a majority of teachers felt that that pre-service did not adequately prepare them with the knowledge, skills and competencies to meet the needs of these children. Figure 9 shows mean scores on the SEN efficacy scale in relation to the adequacy of the preparation to teach pupils with SEN. These means show a significant difference in relation to teachers' perceived ability to teach children with SEN following pre-service (F [4, 204] = 6.75, P <. 001). There is also a significant difference in personal teacher efficacy (PTE), (F [4, 225] = 2.45, p = .047), though not for general teacher efficacy (GTE), (F [4, 224] = 1.344, p = .25).

Table 13

Teachers' Perceptions of their Ability to Teach Pupils with SEN Following Pre-Service

	Pre-service adequately prepared me to deal with pupils with SEN
Strongly Agree	2.9%
Agree	16%
Undecided	14.3%
Disagree	36.5%
Strongly Disagree	25%
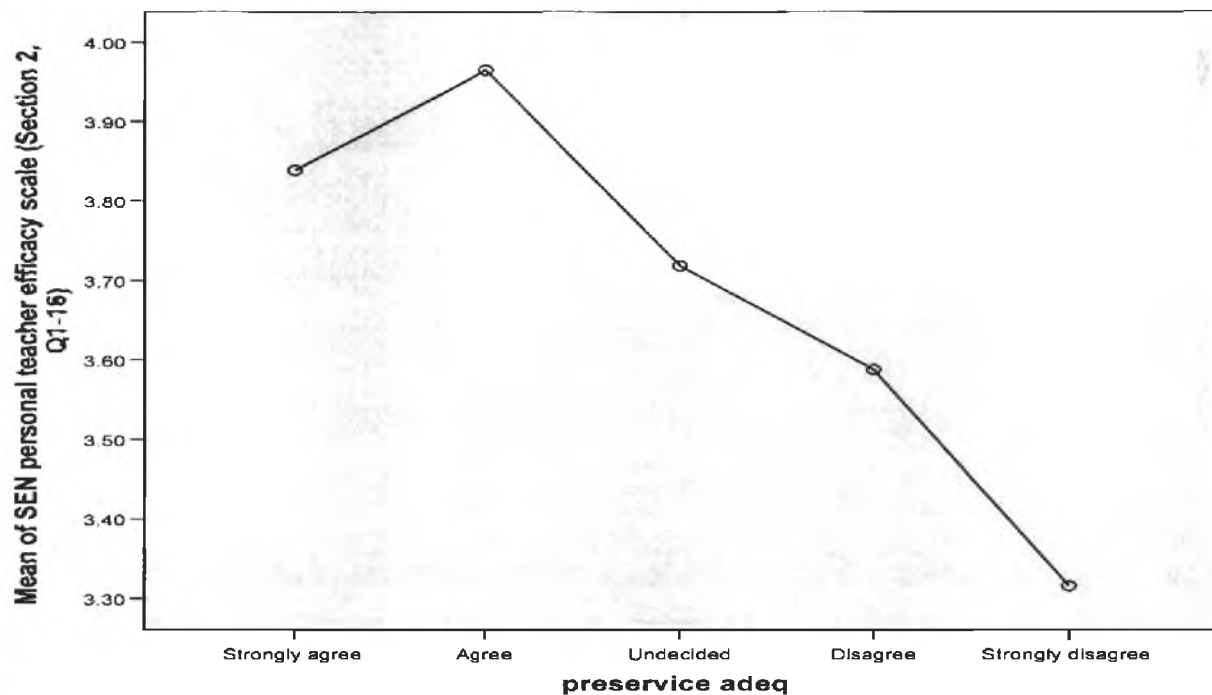
Figure 9: Is pre-service adequate?

This is further confirmed by (Figures 10 and 11) which show that the teachers tended to disagree with statements such as that they had all the necessary knowledge to work with children with SEN, and had the resources in place to include them in the class. There are significant differences for these two measures in relation to SEN efficacy: $F [4, 201] = 6.26$, $p < .001$, for the item on knowledge skills and competencies, and $F [4, 201] = 4.54$, $p = .02$ for the item on adequate resources; in each case strongly agreeing with the items is related to a significantly higher mean level of SEN efficacy.

147
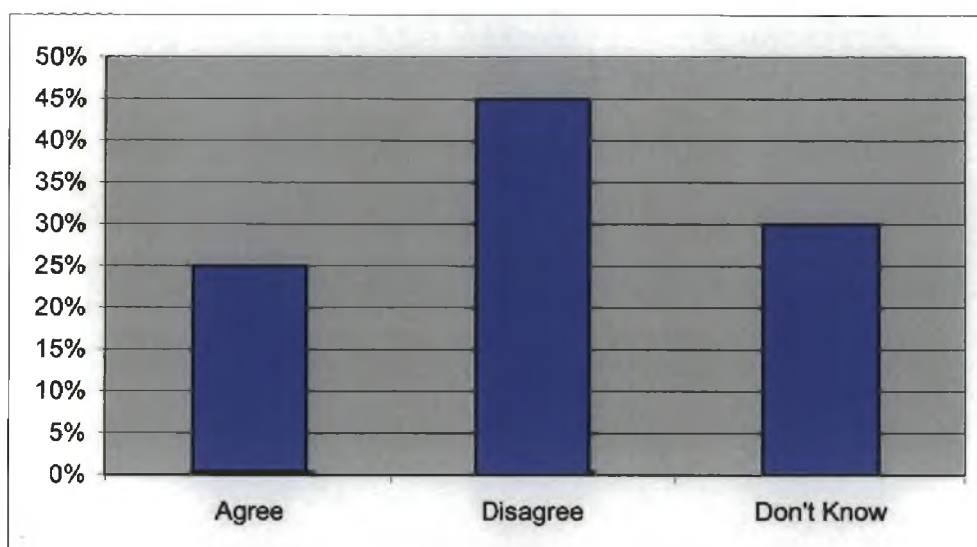
Figure 10: Mainstream teachers have the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to work with pupils with SEN.
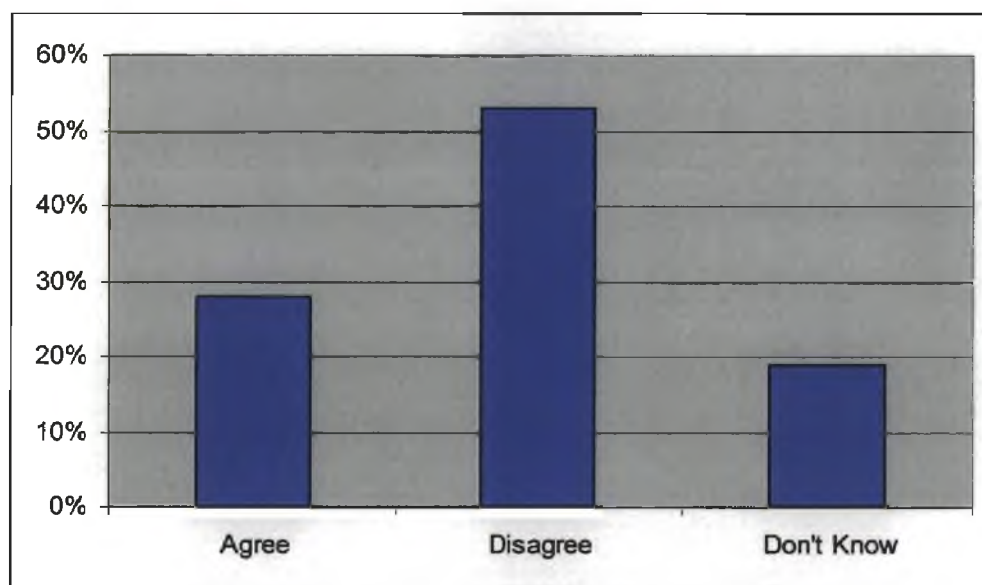
Figure 11: I have adequate resources to support the teaching and learning of pupils with SEN.

The qualitative data from the open-ended questions provide further details on the major challenges facing teachers (Tables 14 and 15). The majority of teachers claimed that a lack of knowledge and a lack of ability to differentiate to meet pupils' needs are regarded as the biggest challenges. Following close on the expressed inability to differentiate was the need for more time to plan and collaborate with

others. It is interesting to note that class size and behavioural management did not

figure significantly as a major challenge. Many of the sentiments expressed related

to pre-service:

> *I feel that with SEN being so frequent now I should have received some practical experiences in college – a teaching practice with a learning support teacher for example.*

Others expressed the need for more knowledge:

> *Teachers need to be given more support and knowledge in order to integrate the student appropriately. Teachers need training in areas such as dyslexic, ADHD, Aspergers and Autism. ICT can help address more learning styles and needs more emphasis in order to support all students.*

While the majority expressed the need for more support, others found working with

Special Needs Assistants difficult:

> *I have a 3rd class with 2 SEN children and also have two SNAs. I find it very hard work, I think that two SNAs assigned to one class is too much. I understand that the children are entitled to them; however, the disruption is very difficult to deal with especially when there are 29 others in the class.*

Previous experience of working with pupils with SEN, in college and in practice,

appeared to be important for some:

> *I had previously worked as a Learning Support teacher for two years and found this experience invaluable. It has really impacted on my teaching strategies in the mainstream class. I have also had an interest in special needs teaching so I choose to do a teaching practice with a special class while at college.*

The anxiety and stress created for newly qualified teachers (NQTs) was frequently

highlighted:

> *When I was a NQT dealing with pupils with SEN, it was one of the most stressful issues for me but gradually I have learned on the job.*

> *When I think about what I should be doing, I often worry if I am doing the right thing or if I am meeting the pupils needs – it is so complex. As well as*

that parents know so much these days about special needs, sometimes they know more than the teacher!

For some the experience of working with pupils with SEN was overall a positive one:

In general working with pupils with SEN is a positive experience and so rewarding if one knows what to do and how to address the needs.

In general, working with children with special educational needs has been a positive experience. However, sometimes they would benefit and achieve more in a special school setting where their needs would be better served by resources.

Table 14

Inclusion: Challenges to Teacher

Challenge 1		Challenge 2		Challenge 3	
Differentiation	38	Differentiation	47	Differentiation	39
Time	45	Knowledge	36	Knowledge	39
Knowledge	46	Time	18	Parents/home factors	16
Resources	15	Behaviour management	17	Time	16
Parents and home factors	11	Parents and home factors	16	Resources	10
Class size	9	Collaboration	10	Behaviour management	5
Behaviour management	7	Resources	9	Collaboration	5
Collaboration	6	Class size	5	Class size	2

Again, in response to the question: *To help you address the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs, what three things would you consider the most important?* Findings indicate again that teachers' lack of knowledge in relation to pupils' special educational needs, more resources and more in-service and more collaboration were the most frequently identified areas of need (Table 15).

Table 15

Inclusion: Addressing the Learning Needs of Pupils with SEN

Q. 2. To help you address the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs in your class, what three things would you consider the most important?

Responses 1		Responses 2		Responses 3	
More knowledge	44	More knowledge	45	More knowledge	35
More resources	39	More resources	35	More resources	37
More in-service	34	More in-service	14	More in-service	14
More collaboration	10	More collaboration	31	More collaboration	20
More information on assessment	10	-	-	-	-
Better communication with parents	9	-	-	-	-
Better school planning	8	-	-	-	-
More time	7		4	More time	8

With regard to which model of pre-service provision is best suited to providing teachers with adequate, skills, knowledge and competencies, Table 16 shows that the preferred model is to have aspects of SEN as a part of each course, as well as a stand-alone course pertaining to pupils with SEN.

Table 16

Teacher's Preferred Models for Learning about SEN

Model	Percentage
SEN is addressed in all course	17.6%
SEN is addressed as a stand-alone course	11.5%
SEN is addressed in all courses in addition to a stand-alone course	64.3%

The Relationship Between Measures of Efficacy and other Contextual Factors

The next section looks at the relation between measures of efficacy and other variables including measures of teachers' attitudes to inclusion; support from the school principal; collegiality; parental support; in-service; awareness of external supports; and job anxieties. All of these were assessed by a series of items which were converted into scales.

Attitudes to Inclusion

Figure 12 shows the items in the attitudes to inclusion scale. There is strong agreement that pupils with special educational needs have the right to be included in mainstream, that they are well supported in their school, and that inclusion makes other pupils more caring and understanding towards children with SEN. On the other hand, however, it is noted that not all teachers are capable of supporting special needs, other pupils may suffer educationally due to the inclusive approach, and that perhaps not all categories of SEN are suitable for inclusion in the mainstream. Table 17 shows the statistics for the composite scale and Table 18 shows the correlations between this scale and the efficacy scales. Again, there is a medium correlation between the attitude scale and SEN efficacy, with only a small correlation for the personal and general efficacy scales. The correlations are in this case negative as positive answers to items for attitude to inclusion provide low scores *(e.g.,* a score of 1 on a scale of 1 to 5), whereas high efficacy scores are provided by high numbers on a scale of 1 to 5.
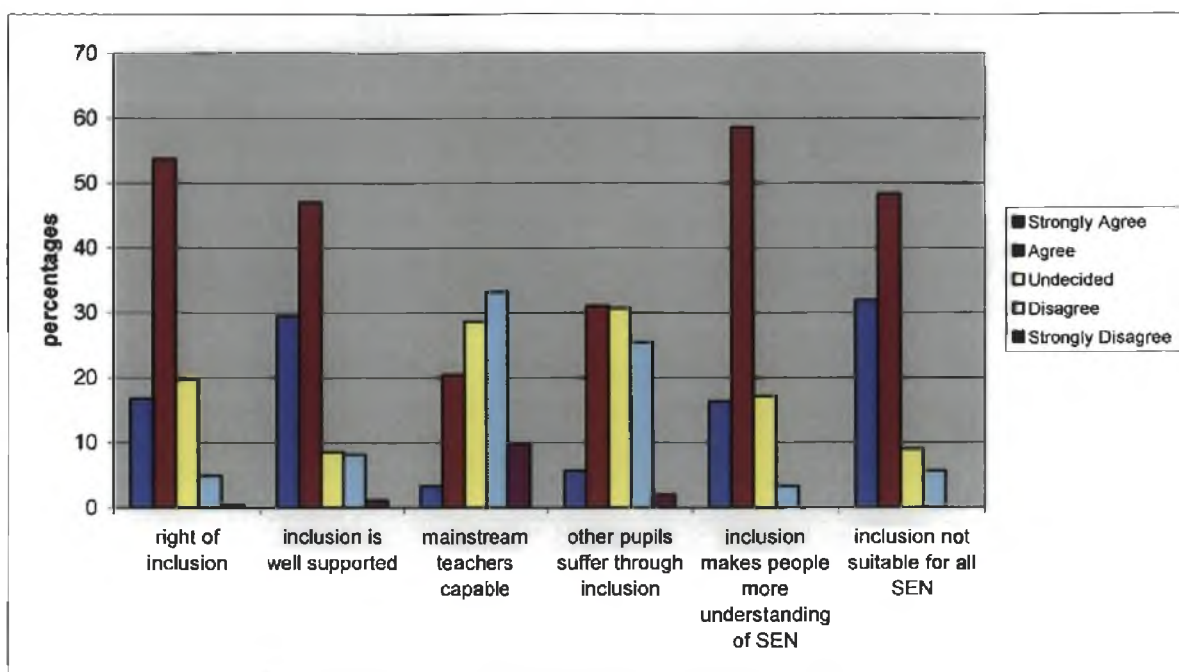
Figure 12: Items on the attitudes towards inclusion scale.

Table 17

Statistics for the Attitudes to Inclusion Scale

Attitudes to inclusion statistics	
Mean Score	2.79
Standard Deviation	.512
Range	1.5-4.17

Table 18

Correlations between Efficacy Measures and the Attitudes to Inclusion Scale

	Pearson correlation	p-value	Coefficient of determination
Attitudes to inclusion – SEN efficacy	-.382	< .001	14.6%
Attitudes to inclusion – Personal Efficacy	-.165	.013	2.72%
Attitudes to inclusion – General efficacy	-.137	.04	1.87%

153

Principal Support

Figure 13 contains the items for the principal support scale. It is apparent that teachers feel that they are supported by the principal and by the general support staff within the school. Most agree that they are well supported, the one possible exception being with regard to resources. Table 19 shows the statistics for the composite scale, and Table 20 shows the correlations between this scale and the efficacy scales. While there is a strong correlation between principal support and the SEN efficacy scale, the correlations for GTE and PTE, though significant, are small.
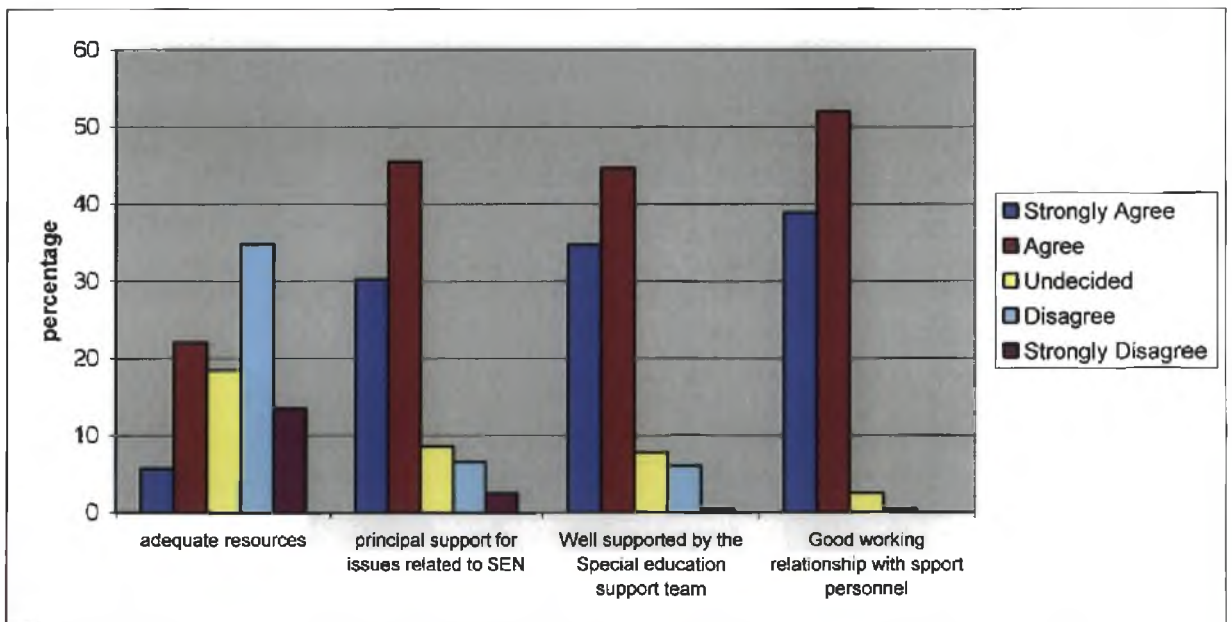
Figure 13: Items on the principal support for inclusion scale.

Table 19

Statistics for the Principal Support Scale

Principal Support scale	
Mean Score	2.21
Standard Deviation	.667
Range	1-5

Table 20

Correlations between Efficacy Measures and the Principal Support Scale

	Pearson correlation	p-value	Coefficient of determination
Principal Support – SEN efficacy	-.383	< .001	14.66%
Principal Support – Personal Efficacy	-.16	.018	2.56%
Principal Support – General efficacy	-.212	.002	4.5%

Collegiality

Figure 14 shows the items in the collegiality scale. There is a high level of agreement that there is collegial support for dealing with children with SEN – both in terms of support from other teachers as well as an espoused policy on how pupil's SEN will be identified and supported. Table 21 shows the statistics for the composite score and Table 22 shows the correlations between this measure and the scales for efficacy. The collegiality scale correlates significantly with all three measures of efficacy, with the strongest correlation being with SEN efficacy.
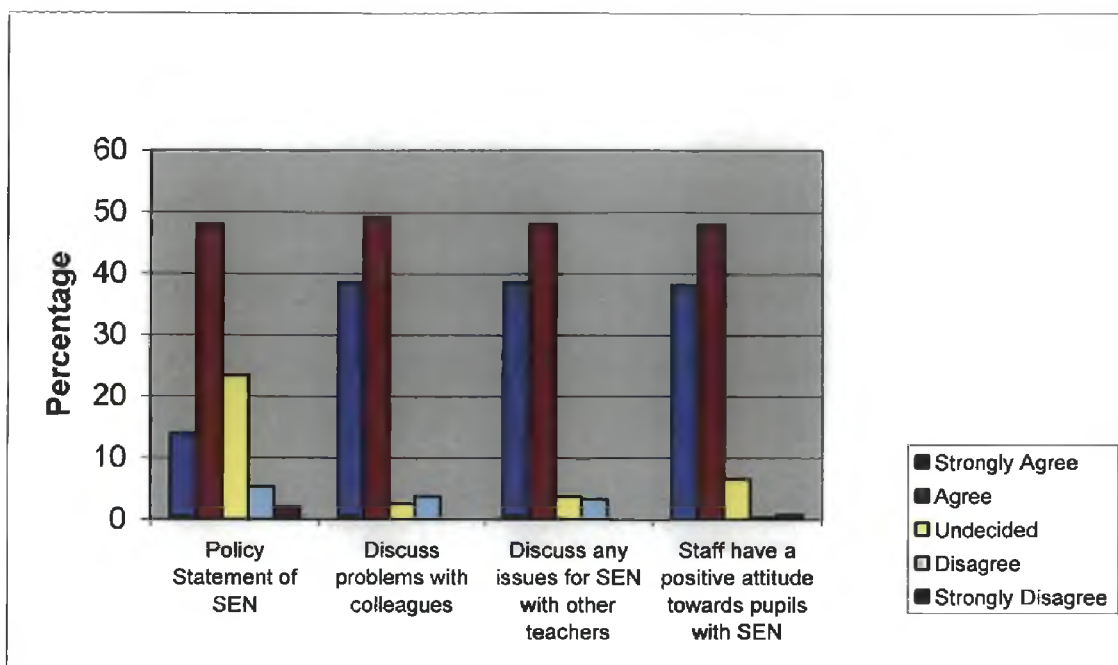
Figure 14: Items on the collegiality scale.

Table 21

Statistics for Collegiality Scale

Collegiality statistics	
Mean Score	1.69
Standard Deviation	.59
Range	1-4

Table 22

Correlations between Efficacy Measures and Collegiality

	Pearson correlation	p-value	Coefficient of determination
Collegiality – SEN efficacy	-0.325	< .001	10.56%
Collegiality – Personal Efficacy	-0.146	.03	2.13%
Collegiality – General efficacy	-0.186	.006	3.45%

Parental Support

Figure 15 shows the items for the parental support scale. It is clear that there is a strong perception among teachers that the parents of the children with SEN provide support, both for the children, and for the teacher's efforts in including their children and meeting their special educational needs. Table 23 shows the composite score this scale and table 24 shows the correlation between this scale and the efficacy scales. It is interesting to note stronger covariance for this scale with the measures of PTE and GTE in comparison with the scale on SEN teacher efficacy.
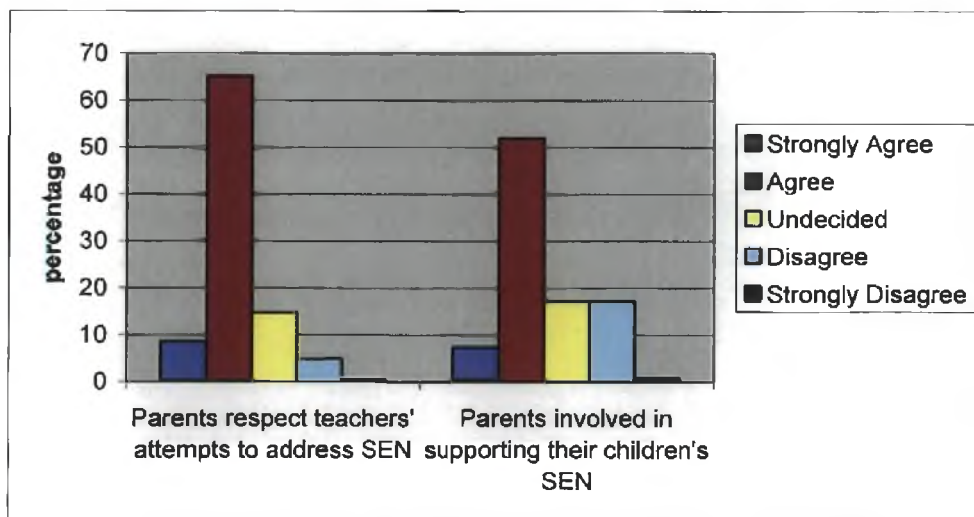
Figure 15: Items on the parental support for inclusion of pupils with SEN scale.

Table 23

Statistics for the Parental Support Scale

Parental Support statistics	
Mean Score	1.89
Standard Deviation	.487
Range	1-3.5

Table 24

Correlations between Efficacy Measures and the Parental Support Scale

	Pearson correlation	p-value	Coefficient of determination
Parental Support – SEN efficacy	-.207	.003	4.28%
Parental Support – Personal Efficacy	-.292	< .001	8.5%
Parental Support – General efficacy	-.273	< .001	7.45%

In-service

With regard to in-service, Table 25 shows that a majority of teachers felt that additional in-service is required for SEN. This agrees with Table 13 indicating that pre-service does not provide adequate instruction for teaching pupils with SEN.

Table 25

Teacher's Perceptions of Whether Additional In-Service is Required to Meet the Needs of Pupils with SEN

	Additional in-service required for teaching pupils with SEN
Strongly Agree	43.4%
Agree	41%
Undecided	5.7%
Disagree	3.7%
Strongly Disagree	0.8%

For in-service, there was a clear split in relation to whether or not they felt they had received further in-service in the school (Table 26), with roughly one third agreeing

they had, but over 40% stating that they had not. More generally, only 43% of teachers said that they had specifically attended SEN-related in-service training since their initial qualification as a teacher. Two ANOVAs show no significant differences in SEN efficacy ratings of the teachers in relation to whether they have received continued professional development in the school (F [4, 220] = 1.97, p = .099), or whether they had attended in-service courses in relation to SEN (F [1, 223] = 2.57, p = .11).

Table 26

Teachers' Perceptions of having Gained Further In-Service Education at Schools Level on Working with Pupils with SEN

I have received further professional development in school on SEN	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6.6
Agree	30.3
Undecided	13.9
Disagree	32
Strongly Disagree	10.2

Awareness

The last items in this section refer to awareness of supports with regard to SEN. Table 27 indicates a split, with some teachers using the guidelines and being aware of the support services and the EPSEN Act, but a large percentage on the other hand not being aware of or not using them.

Table 27

Awareness and Use of Guidelines, Legislation and Support Services

	Yes	No
I use the Guidelines for teachers of students with MGLD	37.7%	55.7%
I am aware of the support services that can help to support pupils with SEN	52.9%	41.8%
I am aware of the requirements of the EPSEN Act	50%	44.3%

With regard to the guidelines, there is a significant difference in score on the SEN teacher efficacy scale depending on whether or not they used these guidelines (F [1,204] = 34.3, p < .001), with teachers who use the guidelines having significantly higher SEN efficacy ratings (Figure 16). A similar finding emerges for personal efficacy (f [1,221] = 12.1, p = .001), but not for general teacher efficacy (F [1,220] = .736, p = .392).
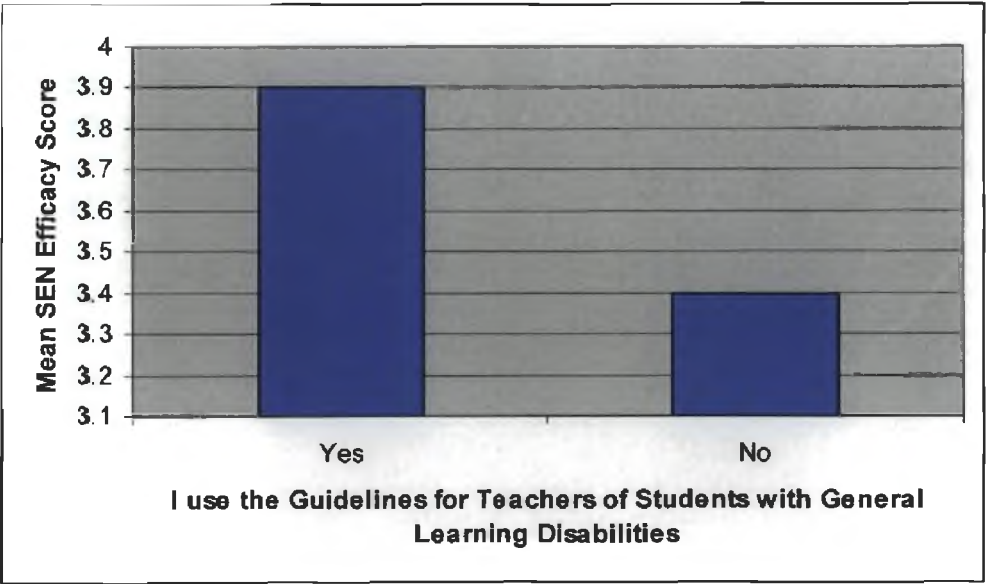
Figure 16: Use of national guidelines for teachers of students with general learning disabilities.

With regard to awareness of support services, again significant differences in SEN teacher efficacy ratings are reported for this item (F [1,204] = 24.39, p < .001, (see Figure 17), and for personal teacher efficacy (F [1,225] = 7.01, p = .009), but not for general teacher efficacy (F [1,223] = 2.24, p = .13).
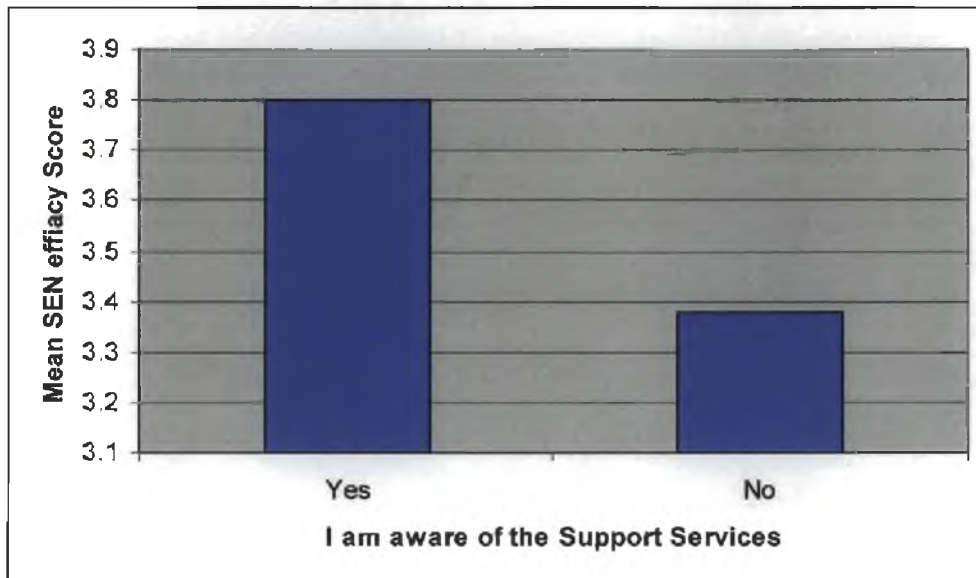
Figure 17: Awareness of support services.

Awareness of the EPSEN Act, (2004) brought about a significant difference in SEN teacher efficacy ratings (F [1,203] = 22.3, p < .001, (see Figure 18), and in this case for GTE (F [1,222] = 13.98, p < .001), but not for PTE (F [1,224] =0.46, p = .494).
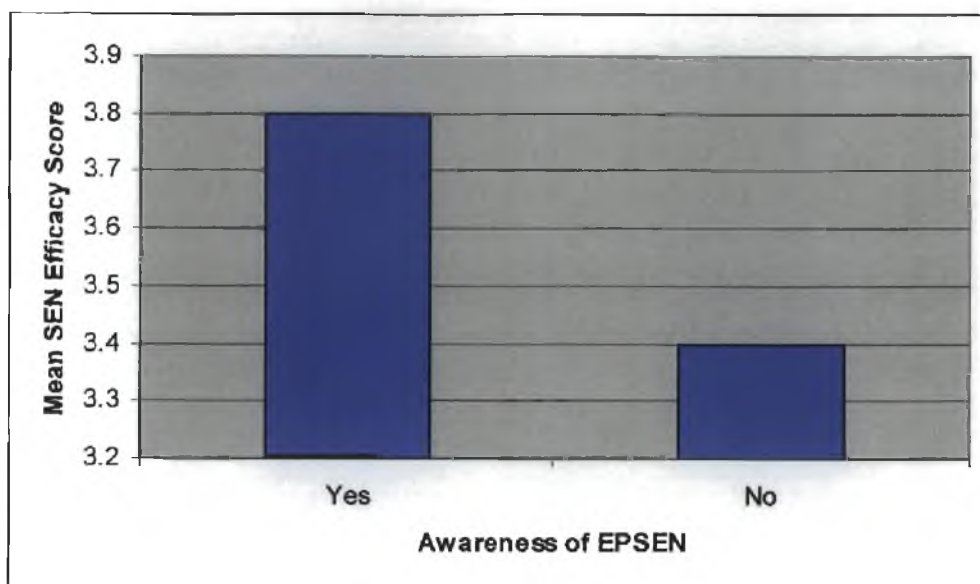
Figure 18: Awareness of the EPSEN (2004) Act.

Job Anxiety

Figure 19 shows the items in the job anxieties scale. It is clear that there is a trend in that there were large percentages of teachers either agreeing or disagreeing with these negative statements with regard to the extent to which they worry, or are frustrated by aspects of their teaching position. Table 28 shows the statistics for the composite scale and Table 29 shows the correlations between this scale and the efficacy scales. It is clear that while the correlations are significant, they are only weakly related. Table 30 outlines the coefficient of determination for SEN efficacy with the strongest coefficients being personal teacher efficacy, principal support and teacher attitudes.
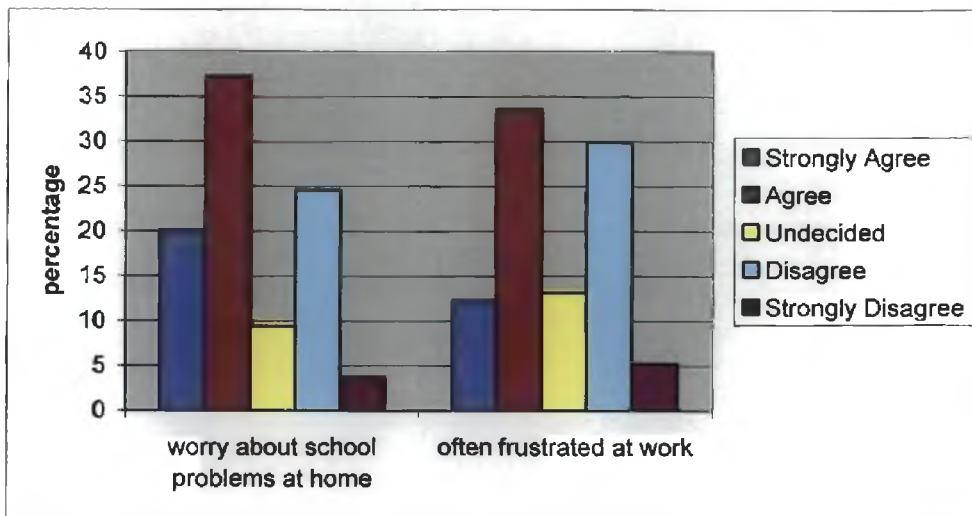
Figure 19: Items on the job anxiety scale.

Table 28

Statistics for the Personal Anxiety Scale

Personal Anxiety statistics	
Mean Score	2.66
Standard Deviation	1.03
Range	1-5

Table 29

Correlations between efficacy measures and the personal anxiety scale

	Pearson correlation	p-value	Coefficient of determination
Personal anxiety – SEN teacher efficacy	.204	.003	4.16%
Personal anxiety – personal teacher efficacy	.132	.047	1.7%
Personal anxiety – general teacher efficacy	.163	.014	2.65%

Table 30

Strongest Coefficients for SEN Efficacy

ITEM	Coefficient of determination
Personal Teacher efficacy	16.81%
Principal Support	14.66%
Attitudes to inclusion	14.6%
Use of guidelines	14.44%
In-service provided	12.75%
Perceptions of pre-service	10.95%
Awareness of support services	10.75%
Collegiality	10.56%
Awareness of EPSEN	9.9%
Parental Support	4.28%
Job Anxieties	4.16%
General Efficacy	2.5%

The findings show a curious relationship between the measures of teacher efficacy as measured using three scales. While the highest mean related to PTE, the findings show no significant relationship between measures of PTE and GTE as determined by the Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) scale. However, these two scales, PTE and GTE, show a significant correlation to a third self-compiled scale – a SEN efficacy scale. In addition, SEN efficacy appears to indicate a different kind of mastery when compared to PTE and GTE in that, rather than being a subset of PTE or GTE, it is uniquely linked to various contextual and training related variables and is in turn affected by them. Level of qualification and perceived adequacy of pre-service had a significant effect on respondents' SEN teacher efficacy, associated with high levels of job anxiety. School contextual factors, such as support from the school principal, parents, collegiality, awareness and use of supports, had significant effect on SEN teacher efficacy, while in-service received had no significant effect on SEN teacher

efficacy as indicated in Table 26. Table 30 provides a summary of coefficients of determination (*e.g.* the amount of variance explained) for all the variables found to be significantly correlated with SEN efficacy.

Summary

This chapter outlined the key findings from the data. It described the findings in relation to the measures of efficacy scales used namely: general teacher efficacy (GTE) and personal teacher efficacy (PTE) as outlined in the Woolfolk and Hoy (1993) scale and in the self-designed SEN efficacy scale. It explored the relationship firstly, between the measures of efficacy, and secondly between the measures of efficacy and other variables, namely: demographic factors; pre-service; teacher attitudes to inclusion; principal support; collegiality; parental support; in-service; awareness of supports; and job anxiety.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

Introduction

With teachers being viewed as the primary agents in the implementation of inclusive educational policy, their beliefs about their own competency to carry out the specific tasks must be borne in mind, as it is likely that these perceptions may influence their behaviour towards and their acceptance of students with special educational needs (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Dupoux, Wolman & Estrada, 2005). Furthermore, it can be concluded that teacher beliefs, in relation to their own competency, may have some bearing on the success of inclusive educational policy (Van Reusen, Shoho & Barker, 2001). Using the theoretical perspective of social cognitive theory, this study examines teachers' situation-specific perceptions of their knowledge, skills and competencies in relation to meeting the needs of students with special educational needs currently placed in mainstream schools.

In this chapter considerations of the findings are discussed and analysed in relation to supporting research and the ideas presented in the literature review. Conclusions highlight the contribution of the research and make recommendations for further research in relation to the development of teacher SEN efficacy. The discussion adopts the following sequence which mirrors the structure of the results section:

(1) The relationship between efficacy scales: How does SEN efficacy relate to other measures of efficacy?

(2) The relationship between demographics and SEN efficacy.

(3) Pre-service teacher education: is it adequate, both generally and in instilling SEN efficacy?

166

(4) Impact of contextual factors on teacher SEN efficacy.

(5) Implication of the findings for implementing inclusive educational policy.

The Relationship between Efficacy Scales: How does SEN Efficacy Relate to Other Measures of Efficacy?

What teachers believe about their work, their students, and themselves has long been the focus of educational research. Researchers have long suggested a strong relationship between teachers' beliefs and their planning, instructional decision-making and classroom practices (Jones, 1984; Aldridge & Clayton, 1987; Johnson, 1992). Belief in one's own abilities is the most important mediating variable in teacher effectiveness and consequent student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986). One of the most significant contributions to our understanding of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices has taken place in the area of teachers' teacher efficacy (Soto & Goetz, 1998). Having the knowledge and skills needed to perform a task is not enough, and it is no guarantee that the individual will actually perform the task. Effective action, Bandura (1986) argues, depends on the personal judgement that one can mobilize such knowledge and skills to perform the act successfully under varied circumstances. Thus, teacher efficacy serves to mediate between knowledge and action (Soto & Goetz, 1998).

Implementing inclusive policy requires that teachers be prepared to teach to a wider range of pupils needs than in previous generations. Their role and remit with regard to this widening role is clearly enunciated in all legislative documents and circulars. In recent years there is much debate as to the knowledge and skills required by teachers in order to implement inclusive policies in practice. Is this knowledge

167

different and additional to the teachers' general knowledge, skills and competencies acquired at pre-service? Is it specialist knowledge or is it dependant on having good general teaching skills?

In light of the fact that teacher efficacy beliefs are sensitive to contextual factors, in that they are both task and situation specific, Bandura (1986) advises that researchers assess teacher efficacy with regard to a particular task and a particular goal. With this in mind, it was necessary, through the specifically designed SEN efficacy scale, to explore: (1) (SEN) teacher efficacy; and (2) to ascertain if any difference existed between measures of personal teacher efficacy (PTE), general teacher efficacy (GTE) and special educational needs (SEN) teacher efficacy.

Is SEN Efficacy Different to Other Measures of Teacher Efficacy?

The findings from the study reveal that, while a small correlation exists between the measures of PTE and GTE from the scales determined by Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) relatively high levels of PTE are found. This suggests that the majority of teachers can apply appropriate strategies, deal with challenging behaviour, and apply differentiation skills in the *general* sense. However, a different story emerges when we consider the relationship between PTE and SEN efficacy. Comparison of scores on the PTE and SEN efficacy scales reveals a low level of correlation, indicating that SEN efficacy is a relatively discrete concept and cannot be thought of as a subset of PTE. This distinction between PTE and SEN efficacy suggests a difference between *general teaching competencies* and *SEN teaching competencies*. In addition, as the PTE and SEN efficacy scales are significantly but not strongly correlated, it appears that teacher efficacy is not solely dependant on a perception of mastery at pre-service

level as suggested by (Ross, 1994). This finding supports the model of efficacy judgement proposed by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) and outlined previously, which suggests that efficacy judgment is a result of personal competence weighed against a consideration of the teaching *task* and its *context*. What are the likely outcomes of this lower level of efficacy in SEN?

Inclusion: The Impact of Lower SEN Efficacy Beliefs

Teacher efficacy is context specific with teacher efficacy levels varying between different subjects, particular groups of pupils, and different contexts. In the model presented by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), the judgment a teacher makes about his or her capabilities and deficits is self-perception of *teaching competence*, while judgements concerning the supports, resources and constraints in a particular teaching context relate to an analysis of the *teaching task*. In light of the fact that the teaching context in this study was well supported and represented by a majority of pupils with mild general learning disabilities, judgements of *teaching competence* with regard to working with pupils with special needs are lower than judgements of PTE. This suggests that teachers who continuously feel that they are only *somewhat sure* may give up more easily when confronted with difficult situations (Coladarci, 1994), be less motivated (Pajares, 1996) and less willing to try new approaches (Guskey, 1998). In addition, teachers who believe strongly that they can make a difference in students' performance appear to accept responsibility for their students' successes and failures, whereas teachers who do not may attribute students' lack of progress to extenuating circumstances, as suggested by Ashton and Webb (1986) and Bandura (1997). Consequently, they locate the responsibility outside themselves and prefer a pull-out model of support (Guskey, 1998; Kagan, 1992) as evidenced by the

high level of withdrawal from class of students with special educational needs (64.8%). It is also seen in the expressed belief of the majority that *if parents could do more for their children, I could do more* (Q. 4: Section 3) and again in the expressed majority belief that *pupils' motivation and performance depends on his/her home background* (Q. 9: Section 3).

While there is a continuous need for effort and persistence in relation to pupils with special educational needs who may progress at a slower pace, the lower level of SEN efficacy may affect how much effort and persistence teachers employ and the quality of their thinking and feeling while they are engaging in carrying out the specific teaching tasks (Bandura 1986, 1997). It can also influence how much effort a teacher will expend and the length of time they will continue to exert that effort so as to influence student achievement (Bandura, 1989). In addition, teachers with low level SEN efficacy beliefs may doubt their capacity to cope with situations, feel overwhelmed and experience anxiety (Bandura, 1988), confusion (Wood & Bandura, 1989), negative thinking, bodily tension and adverse physiological arousal (Bandura, 1986). There is some evidence in the findings to support this assertion, in the significance of the correlation between the job anxieties and SEN efficacy.

Tschannen-Moran and Wolfolk Hoy (2001) reported that teacher efficacy beliefs were related to student outcomes, such as achievement, motivation, and the students' own sense of efficacy. In addition, teacher efficacy beliefs relate to their behaviour in the classroom, including the effort invested in teaching and the goals they set. While teachers with a higher degree of teacher efficacy are more open to new ideas, less critical of student errors and work longer with a student who is struggling, the

converse is true with regard to teachers with lower efficacy levels. It can be claimed that teachers with lower efficacy levels, as is the case in this study, are also less open to new ideas and less willing to experiment with new methods to meet the needs of their students. They are more likely to refer students with learning and behaviour problems to special education and, overall, employ less positive classroom management strategies (Emmer & Hickman, 1991; Jordan et al. 1993).

In conclusion, it can be stated that SEN efficacy is different to GTE and PTE, indicating that teachers regard this type of knowledge as different and additional to what is reflected in their levels of PTE and GTE. This supports the view that knowledge in relation to working with pupils with special educational needs is specific and additional to knowledge acquired to work with pupils who have no such needs.

The Relationship Between Demographics and SEN Efficacy

The impact of demographic factors on all measures of teacher efficacy reveal surprising findings, in that no significant differences exists for variables relating to school denomination, school population and whether the school is designated with disadvantaged status. Similarly, there are no significant differences for any teacher related variables, such as the number of years teaching, class level and whether or not they have the support of an SNA in the classroom.

In examining the impact of demographic variables on SEN efficacy, while a similar story emerges, there is a significant relationship between the highest level of qualification and teachers' SEN efficacy. Teachers with higher qualifications report

higher levels in terms of SEN teacher efficacy. This suggests that SEN efficacy points to a more specialist knowledge with levels of SEN efficacy increasing as more knowledge, skills and competencies are required. In addition, PTE was higher for teachers whose classes included pupils with moderate general learning disabilities. This finding, however, is very much an exception, with no other significant results arising.

While research suggests that efficacy judgments are more malleable in the early years of mastering a skill and become more set with experience, as (37%) of the sample had 4-6 years teaching experience it can be suggested that teacher efficacy beliefs may prove more difficult to alter with increasing length of service. In addition, if early experiences are positive, teachers are better able to persist in the face of the inevitable disappointments and discouragements as they hone their teaching skills in the early years. On the other hand, unsuccessful early experiences in teaching can direct graduates away from the profession. If, as Brownell and Pajares (1999, p. 154) claim, individuals pursue activities and situations in which they feel competent and avoid situations in which they doubt their capability to perform successfully, it can be suggested that the teachers in this study are clearly compromised with regard to the firmness of their knowledge relating to the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs as supported in research by (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996; Cook, 2001; Rose, 2001; Winzer, 1999; Cains & Browne, 1996; Lombardi & Hunka, 2001).

In conclusion, while the impact of external environmental factors such as home background and parental support have been clearly identified in the literature

(Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002), in this study the factors which impacted most significantly on SEN efficacy levels relate to personal factors such as perceived inadequate pre-service preparation and lack of specific knowledge, skills and competencies in relation to pupils with SEN (Tables 13, 14 and 15).

Pre-Service Teacher Education: Is It Adequate Preparation for SEN?

The findings of this study indicate that perceived pre-service preparation is strongly predictive of teachers' sense of efficacy beliefs in that the higher the feeling of adequacy the higher the level of SEN efficacy (Figure 9). Responses to the question *My pre-service adequately prepared me for working with pupils with special educational needs* reveal that a majority reported that they were inadequately prepared at pre-service to work with pupils with special educational needs. However, PTE scores do not reflect this assertion (Table7). In addition, despite the assertion of inadequate preparation in relation to working with pupils with special educational needs, SEN efficacy was higher than would have been expected. It can be postulated that these higher levels of competence were directly related to two *contextual factors*, namely, the high number of pupils with mild general learning disabilities (58.7%) which by virtue of their assessment would be closest to the general population and, secondly, the reported high level of withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs (64.8%). However, it is important to highlight that had teachers received adequate pre-service preparation, their expressions of confidence in their own competence would have been stronger, as shown in the outcome of the ANOVA analysis.

The data from the open-ended questions support the research by Rault, Molina and Gash (2001) and provide an indication of what competencies teachers identify as needing more attention at pre-service level. In rank order, the biggest challenge for teachers as outlined is a lack of knowledge ranging from: to *what to expect from students with special educational needs; how to assess and prioritise their needs; knowing how and what to teach; and understanding their difficulties.* The second biggest challenge relates to knowledge in relation to differentiation, knowing how to differentiate content, approaches and methodologies with respect of pupils' special educational needs. The third challenge in relation to working with pupils with SEN needs is related to a lack of time to co-ordinate, plan, communicate and liaise with others. The type of knowledge identified as lacking is closely aligned to that highlighted as necessary for all teachers working with pupils with special educational needs, identified by Lewis and Norwich (2005). Specifically, they identified knowledge in relation to the nature of the special needs group, personal knowledge in order to be aware of value positions that may help or hinder meeting the needs of all learners; knowledge in relation to learning theory and knowledge of curriculum and general pedagogical strategies. Additional knowledge was again first in rank order responses to a question about which additional supports would assist in addressing pupils' special educational needs. Other factors relate to additional in-service and increased resources (Table 14 and 15).

While evidence internationally points to the importance of preparing knowledgeable teachers to work with an increasingly diverse school population (Darling-Hammond, 1999), in this study, 64% expressed a preference for a model of teacher pre-service which addresses SEN in all courses in addition to a stand-alone module. This is in

174

line with findings from a similar study in Northern Ireland, which examined teachers' perceptions of their pre-service preparation for inclusive education (Winter, 2006).

The findings highlight the need to develop a comprehensive approach to examining teacher competence in relation to working with pupils with special educational needs. In addition, they point to the necessity of moving away from the frequent and exclusive focus on pre-service teacher preparation. By inviting a fuller examination of the specific *teaching task and context*, not just the constraints, facing teachers in general, the model outlined by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) provides a more finely tuned picture of teacher efficacy, while at the same time recognising the active agency role of the teacher in the sense-making process (Spillane et al. 2002).

From a broad perspective, set against a background of research at a macro level which paints a depressing picture of teacher preparation for inclusive education, the findings from this study illustrate that any examination of teacher's perceived competency to work with pupils with SEN must adopt a holistic approach which respects the active agency of the teacher as they implement inclusive policy in practice. In this regard, the study clearly demonstrates that teacher efficacy beliefs in relation to the extent to which they possess the knowledge, skills and competencies to address the needs of pupils with SEN, cannot be sectioned into either an examination of teacher education programmes (inputs) or of teacher competencies (outputs) in isolation, but instead should be regarded in an interactive way using the lens of social cognitive theory. This interactive model of social cognitive theory allows for a more detailed interpretation of the teacher as an active agent negotiating

and renegotiating their knowledge in relation to specific tasks in different contexts. Using this interactive approach, the study clearly shows that learning to teach in an inclusive environment is best understood as a complex process requiring multiple knowledge bases, skills and understanding set in the contextual aspects of school supports and collegiality which serve to act as supports or impediments to the teaching task.

Impact of Contextual Factors on Teacher SEN Efficacy

SEN Teacher Efficacy: The Contribution of Perceived Contextual Supports

In line with the model of teacher efficacy outlined by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), while judgements of SEN *teacher competence* are lower than PTE, when judged against the factors such as the supports, resources, and constraints in a particular teaching context related to the *teaching task,* a different picture emerges. It is the assessment of the interaction of these two components – *teacher competence* and *the teaching task* – that lead to judgments about teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al. 1998).

Through applying the theory of efficacy to teacher competence, this study shows that intrinsic and extrinsic contextual factors have a significant impact on SEN teacher efficacy beliefs, to the extent that it can be stated that SEN efficacy is not solely dependant on knowledge acquired at pre-service level. This supports Bandura's advice that teacher efficacy is not based solely on the possession of the necessary skills; it also requires the confidence to use these skills effectively. The confidence to use the skills effectively will in turn be influenced by the intrinsic and extrinsic contextual factors in any given situation. In this regard, examining teachers' SEN

beliefs calls for recognition of both competence and contingency of contextual factors.

Teacher Attitudes

Several researchers have noted that the critical components for successful inclusion are teacher attitudes both towards the principle of inclusion, and towards teaching students with special educational needs (Forlin et al. 1999; Cook, 2001; Avramidis et al. 2000; O'Brien, 2000). Teachers in this study have positive attitudes to pupils with special educational needs, believing that they are rightfully placed and well supported in mainstream school. In addition, they see themselves as responsible for their teaching and learning. The item on this scale which shows the most positive agreement, relates to the belief that having pupils with special educational needs in the class results in other pupils becoming more caring. However, as Cook (2002) tells us, being willing is not enough, if pre-service teachers do not possess the knowledge and skills to implement inclusion appropriately. The finding in relation to the expressed view on whether or not teachers were adequately prepared indicates that many teachers do not feel well prepared for inclusive classes. This supports the research by (Dwyfor Davies and Garner, 1997; Garner, 1996; Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996; and Winter, 2006) who highlight similar findings. Overall, a significant correlation has been found between teachers' attitudes and SEN efficacy beliefs. This correlation is in strong contrast to that between teacher attitudes and PTE and GTE scales. While increased training has been associated with more positive attitudes in this regard (Briggs, Johnson, Shepard, & Sedbrook, 2002; Harvey, 1992; Powers, 2002; Subban & Sharma, 2006), one can conclude that, if

teachers' perception of the adequacy of their pre-service was increased, increased positive attitudes would ensue.

Support from the School Principal

The act of teaching requires that lessons be planned, classrooms managed and students assessed while at the same time incorporating policy directives in relation to the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. In order to function while applying this complex set of skills and knowledge, a number of factors affect teachers' efficacy judgements of their ability to teach students with special educational needs. Prominent among these is the perceived support of the principal (Moore & Esselman, 1992; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1993; Lee, et al. 1991).

In this study, teachers feel strongly that they are well supported by the principal and support staff within the school, with one exception – the reported lack of resources. In support of the research which shows that mainstream teachers who receive support from principals exhibit more efficacious beliefs in relation to teaching pupils with special educational needs than teachers who receive poor quality support (Yee, 1990; Micheline et al. 2007), the findings in this study show a medium correlation between principal support and SEN teacher efficacy. Lindsay (2007) advises that key factors in support of positive attitudes are resources, both physical and human, and support from the head teacher. It is interesting to note that, while principal support is correlated to PTE and GTE, the correlation is small in comparison to SEN teacher efficacy, suggesting surprisingly that support in relation to SEN is perceived to be more independent of the principals' power to remediate, in other words more personal in how the respondents perceive it.

Collegiality

Many researchers have highlighted the importance of collegiality, claiming that increased collegiality results in teachers feeling more confident in dealing with uncertainties that arise, through increased opportunities to learn from colleagues by sharing expertise and receiving advice (Ashton & Webb, 1986: Rosenholtz, 1989). Consequently, in schools where collaborative relationships are fostered and encouraged, newly qualified teachers should perceive themselves more efficacious in teaching pupils with special educational needs (Yee, 1990; Portner, 2003; Costigan, 2004). The results from this study confirm that there is strong collegial support for teachers with regard to working with pupils with special educational needs. There is also evidence that this support is collectively agreed and espoused in school policy documents, which further act as a support for teachers. Scores for collegiality, while significantly correlated with all three measures of teacher efficacy, are more strongly correlated with SEN teacher efficacy. The difference in correlation points to the perceived significance of collegiality as a factor in supporting teachers' SEN efficacy beliefs.

Parental Support

The important role of the parent as a contributor to the whole education process is well documented in literature and legislation (Education Act, 1998; Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs EPSEN Act, 2004). In relation to pupils with general learning disabilities, the need to communicate with parents increases by necessity in regard to planning for pupils' individual needs, (EPSEN, 2004). While the importance of role of the parent in their child's education is widely recognised,

the impact of parents' participation on teacher efficacy is less familiar. However, in recent studies it is suggested that teachers' efficacy beliefs are reinforced by support from parents, which serves to reaffirm them in their role as effective teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2002). There is a strong perception of support from parents for teachers' efforts in addressing their pupils' needs in the *general sense* in comparison to *special educational needs* as indicated by the stronger covariance for this scale with the measures of PTE and GTE in comparison with the scale on SEN efficacy.

In-Service Education

In keeping with the expressed belief that pre-service did not adequately prepare them for inclusive education, a clear majority (84%) agreed that additional in-service was necessary to support the development of the required knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to work with pupils with special educational needs. As there exists no national structured programme of in-service provision, it is difficult to see how these expressed needs will be met in a comprehensive manner at a local or national level. In addition, as no time is allocated to the provision of professional development annually in the school timetable, it remains for the most part the responsibility of individual teachers at a personal or school level to seek out further support in this regard.

It is interesting to note that while the majority favour in-service support to increase their mastery in relation to SEN pupils, the findings suggest no significant difference in SEN efficacy ratings for those who received in-service professional development in school or for those who attended in-service courses. This would suggest that the

changes occurring following in-service in respect of these teachers was a *first-order change* resulting in no structural or personal change in practices or outcomes occurring (Lyddon, 1990). The lack of change on teacher SEN efficacy beliefs following in-service, as evidenced in this study, supports the research by Ross (1994), who suggests that exposure to in-service alone will not contribute to increased teacher efficacy. Forsberg (1984) points to the importance of the quality of the in-service and the subsequent supports provided in the follow-up period. It would appear that supporting the development of positive teacher efficacy at in-service level is a complex task underpinned by school culture and stages of concern at both an individual level and an organisational level. Hall (1991) describes seven stages of concern which range from: awareness; informational; personal; management; consequences; and collaboration. The stages of concern are associated with the degree and level of change that occurs.

Awareness of External Supports

Inclusive education has major implications for all schools, teachers and learners as they interact with a wide diversity of student population and learner needs. The *Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities* (NCCA, 2003, 2007) were designed to support schools and teachers in implementing inclusive policy in practice. It is interesting to note in this study that scores on the SEN efficacy scale were much higher for those who used the guidelines in comparison to those who were unaware and did not use them. The use of the guidelines also significantly impacted on scores of PTE suggesting that the difficulties experienced and reported by teachers in the open-ended response data, such as differentiation, knowledge of pupils needs, approaches and strategies,

assessment and planning are well supported through access to the guideline materials. These findings support the research by Hoy and Woolfolk (1993), which reports that the provision of resources is a significant contextual factor impacting on teachers' personal efficacy. In addition, an awareness of the EPSEN (2004) Act resulted in a significant difference in SEN efficacy scores suggesting that an understanding of policy directives is an important factor in furthering SEN teacher efficacy.

Job Anxieties

In this study there was a consistent expression of lower levels of SEN efficacy when compared to PTE coupled with a large percentage of teachers either agreeing or disagreeing with these negative statements regarding the extent to which they worry, or are frustrated by, aspects of their teaching position.

Bandura (1997) reports that teachers who doubt their abilities are quick to regard these activities as threats to be avoided. In this study, while teachers agree with the inclusion of pupils with SEN, they doubt their capacity to comprehensively meet these pupils' learning needs, resulting in a feeling of uncertainty and incompetence (Brouwers & Tomic, 1998). Accepting the cyclical nature of teacher efficacy as previously outlined, lower levels of efficacy could be said to lead to lower levels of effort and persistence. This, in turn, could lead to deterioration in performance, resulting in teachers experiencing continuous self-doubt in relation to their teaching competencies.

Implication of the Findings for Implementing Inclusive Educational Policy

SEN Efficacy: A New Proposed Model
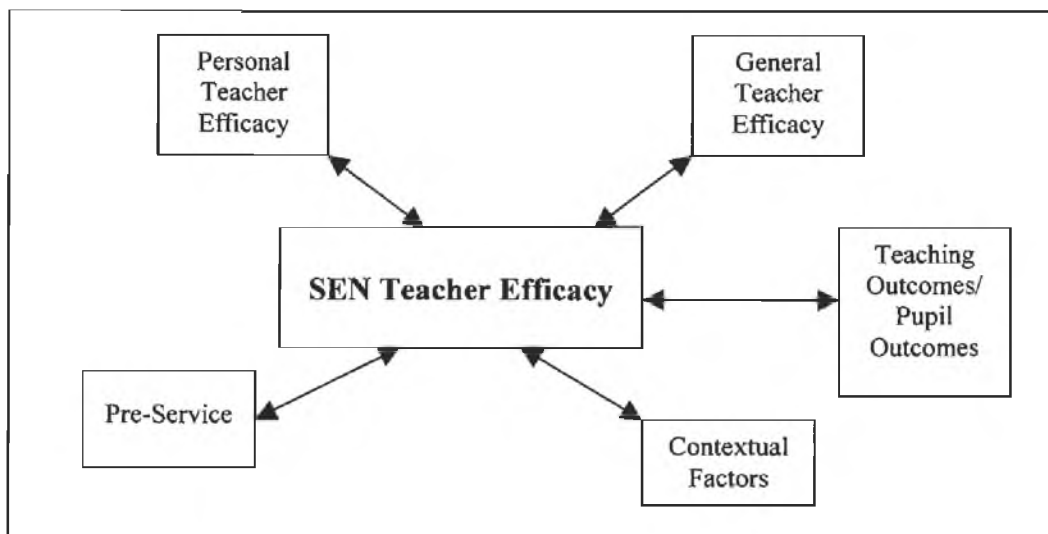
Figure 20: A model proposing factors which contribute to SEN efficacy

Inclusive educational policy demands that mainstream class teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies in respect of pupils with special educational needs. The importance of teachers' having a high level of efficacy with regard to pupils with SEN is of paramount importance in that teachers with high efficacy will make greater efforts to reach difficult or unmotivated pupils, will be less critical towards student performance, and overall possess a more positive attitude about students' ability to achieve.

Can pre-service education do it at all?

The debate in relation to the inadequacy of teacher pre-service preparation for inclusive education has continued unabated for decades. For many, the blame lies firmly and squarely at the door of pre-service educators. From others, there is a call for more in-service. Using the lens of social cognitive theory, this study provides us

with a more comprehensive picture of how, and in what circumstances, teacher feel high or low levels of efficacy in respect of pupils with SEN. It clearly indicates that regarding teacher efficacy as something solely determined at pre-service is a simplified interpretation of the complexity that exists in the interactions that occur in the analysis of *teaching competence* and the *teaching task i.e.*, contextual supports.

While this study accepts the cyclical model of teacher efficacy proposed by Tschannen-Moran (1998), it goes further to claim that SEN efficacy is different to other measures of efficacy – PTE and GTE – and relates specifically to measures of specific tasks employed in the teaching and learning of pupils with SEN. In this regard, there is a need for a new layer to be added in respect of SEN efficacy to the cyclical model presented by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998). This new layer is not intended to replace the existing model proposed by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), but instead is intended to add a level of specificity in relation to the measurement of SEN efficacy.

The proposed model includes four sets of factors that impact on SEN efficacy, and, in turn, influence the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream settings. While PTE and GTE are significant factors in the context of general teaching competence, which must to some extent contribute to SEN efficacy, it is of paramount importance that teachers possess an adequate level of SEN efficacy in order to fulfil the policy requirements of inclusive education.

While the study shows that teachers feel inadequately prepared at pre-service, there is an urgent need to address these concerns by providing a specific SEN stand alone

course in addition to embedding instruction regarding special education across all curriculum areas. Using this approach, the generic skills identified by Lewis and Norwich (2005), as essential to all teachers and supported by teachers' evidence from this study would be addressed.

The outcomes from this study point to the need for a new direction at pre-service which recognises the importance of developing teacher SEN efficacy through the provision of opportunities that engage in mastery modelling programmes that, utilise all four sources of information, *mastery, emotions and physiological states, vicarious experience and social or verbal persuasion*. In this regard, we need to provide a more hands on approach by allowing teachers at pre-service level: more practical or simulated experience of working with pupils with SEN; more observation of others teaching pupils with SEN; and more opportunities for discussion and receiving feedback from peers and tutors on their performance. In such a programme, the expert in special education would work with a group of teachers to show them how to cope effectively with an otherwise fearsome situation. In this way, the expert is facilitating student exposure to unfamiliar lessons and skills while at the same time experiencing the four sources of efficacy building information to appraise their own sense of teacher efficacy (O' Donnell, Reeve & Smith, 2007).

Limitations

This study examined teacher efficacy in relation to special educational needs knowledge, skills and competencies. As information collected in the study was of a self-report nature, it may be affected by social desirability bias (Robson, 2002), prone to some inaccuracy as a result of less than accurate recall, lack of information,

185

or discomfort with self-disclosure. There is also the possibility of respondents misunderstanding the questions. In addition, due to the use of a singular method of analysis, there is no possibility of triangulating the findings.

As the study was not supported by qualitative methods which would have served to enhance and enrich the quantitative data, resulting in the fact that apart from the data from open-ended questions, it lacks rich description, observational records, interviews or focus group reports, resulting in no triangulation of the findings. However, all the necessary precautions were taken to ensure that consistency, reliability and validity were firmly established so as to ensure that the findings emanating from the study would be credible and plausible.

As the sample for this study was restricted to teachers who qualified between the years 1998-2007 inclusively, findings from the study cannot be generalised to the general population of teachers. Likewise, as it can be inferred that teachers, in the sample, attended different colleges of education, it cannot therefore be stated that all teachers received the same special education input at pre-service.

While the results of this study represent a modest beginning in examining teacher efficacy in relation to implementing inclusive policy, in the Irish context, the finding should be interpreted with care. It is conceivable that the outcomes from this study could serve to inform additional observation and examination of the relationship among teachers' beliefs, teacher's instructional practices, and student achievement in school contexts where teachers are instructing pupils with special educational needs.

Summary

In keeping with the model of analysis of teacher efficacy presented by Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998), which presents a holistic examination of the factors that contribute to and support teacher efficacy, this chapter discussed the findings and explored how they differed or compared with other relevant research in the field. In addition, the limitations of the study are outlined.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is set against a background of inclusive educational policy which safeguards the entitlement of all pupils, regardless of their difficulties or disabilities, to a quality education in mainstream schools. Using a social cognitive framework, this study explores the impact of inclusive policy refracted at teacher level and asks the question: – to what extent do teachers believe they are capable of translating these principles into practice?

Despite significant changes in the teachers' role as a consequence of inclusive policy, research examining the adequacy of teacher preparation paints a dismal picture, with teachers continuously reporting that they are ill-prepared for their role of inclusive educator. Examining teachers' beliefs through an efficacy perspective has proven helpful in elucidating our knowledge about teachers' ability to include pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools. While prevailing research in this area examines teacher preparation in a linear manner, this research presents a more comprehensive view.

While many issues have muddied the waters regarding the assessment of teacher efficacy (Pajares, 1996, 1997), taking Bandura's (1986) advice that specific competencies cannot be extrapolated from general measures of teacher efficacy, a new scale was developed for the purpose of this research. This scale assesses SEN teacher efficacy at the optimal level of specificity that corresponds to critical tasks in relation to meeting the teaching and learning needs of pupils with SEN. The level of specificity of the items in the scale devised are closely aligned to the teachers' role and responsibility as outlined in the Irish legislative documents and government

Circulars. As this study represents a first attempt to measure SEN teacher efficacy, in the Irish context, this scale will serve well for use in further research in the area of special educational needs since the more closely the teacher efficacy beliefs correspond to the critical task the more predication is enhanced (Pajares, 1992). In addition, the scale will provide a more holistic framework to examine how teachers' knowledge is mediated through the triangular interaction of cognitive, personal and environmental factors.

Three major findings emanate from this study. These relate to: differences between personal teacher efficacy and special educational needs efficacy; teacher pre-service education; and the importance of contextual factor in support of teacher efficacy.

Special Educational Needs Efficacy is Different to Personal Teacher Efficacy

While the majority of teachers report that they were inadequately prepared at pre-service in relation to working with pupils with SEN, the findings from the study underscore the independence of personal teacher efficacy and SEN teacher efficacy. The small correlation between SEN teacher efficacy and PTE suggests that SEN is not a subset of PTE but, in fact, a different construct. This contradicts arguments which claim that mainstream teachers' pre-service education adequately prepares them to teach *all* pupils; and secondly, that there are no additional special skills required to teach pupils with special educational needs (Croll & Moses, 2000; Westwood, 2003; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Thurlow, 2000). If PTE can be said to apply to expressions of confidence to teach in the general context, SEN efficacy is regarded as different to PTE, and refers to a more specialised knowledge base of skills and competencies as evidenced by the difference between PTE and SEN

teacher efficacy levels. Logically it follows that, if special approaches and methodologies and curriculum adaptations are required for pupils with SEN, then additional skills and competencies will also be necessary.

In this study, teachers identified their skills deficit in relation to pupils with SEN as related to different types of knowledge, skills and competencies, namely: knowledge of pupils' learning needs and knowledge in relation to applying suitable approaches and methodologies, in particular how to differentiate and assess pupils learning needs. This supports the advice by Lewis and Norwich (2005), which suggests the necessity of different types of knowledge that "focus on the cultivation of craft knowledge, beginning with the commonality position and moving through degrees of intensification and deliberation" (p. 218). In keeping with the needs identified by teachers in this study, they advise that there is a need to apply the knowledge of developmental psychology and learning theory to the context of special education needs in order to inform the processes of teaching and learning by opening up practical options for teachers.

Teacher Pre-Service Education

In support of the evidence that suggests that initial teacher training has a different impact than input received after teachers are working in the field (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990), findings from the study suggest that there is a serious need to address teacher mastery of SEN competencies at pre-service level. In addition, as *teaching competence* is weighed against contextual school factors associated with the *teaching task*, there is also a need to develop teachers' personal competencies in relation to

190

additional skills necessary for communication, collaboration and co-operation within the whole school community.

One would expect that certain demographic variables would impact on efficacy, namely, whether or not the teacher worked in a designated disadvantage area, where there exists a possibility for increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs. However, in this study, the only significant impact on efficacy was related to highest qualification, with more highly qualified teachers having higher SEN efficacy ratings.

While teachers in this study show a reasonable level of SEN efficacy, despite reporting high levels of dissatisfaction with their pre-service preparation, it can be stated that teacher efficacy is not solely dependant on a perception of mastery at pre-service level as suggested by (Ross, 1994). However, this is not to downplay the importance of adequate pre-service preparation, as the study shows that if teachers had received adequate pre-service preparation, their expressions of confidence should increase significantly.

The findings from this study clearly show that since SEN efficacy is different from personal teacher efficacy, there is a need to address the perceived deficit at pre-service level in relation to special educational needs preparation. The preferred model chosen by 64% of the respondents is one which addresses SEN in all courses, in addition to a stand alone course focused on specific topics.

The Importance of Contextual Factors

The findings in this study strongly support the literature which claims that, while policies relating to inclusion have been drafted, their implementation is dependant on the individual class teacher, the social context, and the support available at school level. Teacher efficacy beliefs are significantly influenced by the degree of co-operation between the different partners in the school community in fulfilling a number of interconnecting and mutually supportive roles.

Despite the expression of dissatisfaction with pre-service preparation, levels of SEN teacher efficacy ratings were not as low as one would expect, with the majority reporting reasonable levels of SEN efficacy. The findings suggest that, while teachers may feel unsure of their competencies in relation to pupils with SEN, interaction with the contextual school factors serves as a support to their efficacy beliefs (Brownell & Pajares, 1999). This is an important finding since in past times, much blame has been laid at the door of pre-service teacher preparation this points to the importance of developing a more collective and connected approach to supporting teachers at school level.

It is interesting to note that these contextual supports in the main impacted more significantly on levels of SEN efficacy than on any other measures of efficacy, indicating the importance of teacher contextual supports in this work related area. In particular, the findings support the view that the perceived support of the principal affects teachers' efficacy judgements of their ability to teach students with special educational needs (Hoy & Woolfolk 1993, Woolfolk, Hoy & Burke-Spero, 2000).

The importance of teacher attitudes in relation to SEN efficacy is also demonstrated by this study, and it is heartening to note that despite expressed inadequate preparation, teachers attitudes to inclusion were positive, with the majority believing that, not only were pupils rightfully placed but their presence served to develop more caring attitudes in others. It is also interesting to note the strong sense of collegiality expressed which impacted more significantly with levels of SEN efficacy than for others measures, indicating that, in relation to pupils with special needs, teachers require more collegial support. Awareness of supports and of the national guidelines is also a significant factor in support of teachers' sense of SEN efficacy. One surprising finding is that, while the majority favoured additional in-service support, for those who received it, either in school or out of the school context, it had no significant impact on SEN efficacy suggesting that only first order change has occurred as suggested by Lyddon (1990). These findings have implications for the providers of continuous professional development. While teachers report positive attitudes coupled with adequate levels of contextual supports, it is surprising to note a high level of worry and frustration expressed by the majority. It can be postulated that this related to a cyclical feeling of inadequacy in relation to SEN efficacy.

In conclusion, the study shows that the relationships between teachers' sense of efficacy and personal and organisational variables are complex and will be masked if teachers' sense of efficacy is not treated as a multidimensional construct.

Recommendations for Further Research

While this research presents a modest first step in examining teachers' SEN efficacy in the Irish context, it is of significance for a number of reasons. Firstly, it points to

the important relationship between teacher efficacy beliefs and teachers' ability to implement inclusive policies in practice. Secondly, in light of much research which highlights repeatedly the importance of teacher efficacy, it points to the need to examine how teacher efficacy in general, and more specifically in relation to SEN, can be nurtured and supported at pre-service level.

Special Educational Needs Efficacy

Based on the findings from this research study, and in recognition of much research that repeatedly highlights the importance of developing teachers' sense of efficacy, there is an urgent need to examine how teacher SEN efficacy, as distinct from personal teacher efficacy can be nurtured and supported at pre-service level. While this study highlights the specific knowledge, skills and competencies required to work with pupils with SEN, in light of our knowledge of how teacher efficacy develops, adding content knowledge alone is not a sufficient response. Teachers need to receive the knowledge, skills and competencies within a framework that simultaneously addresses teacher efficacy development.

In accepting that teacher efficacy beliefs rely on four sources of information: *mastery experience*; *vicarious experience; emotional and physiological arousal; and social and verbal persuasion*, it is necessary to examine the sources of knowledge, apart from content knowledge, that pre-service teachers require. Ross (1994) claims that while teachers need knowledge, access to knowledge alone is not sufficient; teachers need knowledge about their performance and opportunities to practise the skills and apply the knowledge in the classroom. Secondly, they need opportunities to discuss not just their own concerns but to discuss and experience the struggles and successes

194

of others. Thirdly, they need opportunities for direct in-class support so as to persuade them that they are acquiring the target skills and are capable of successful implementation.

Pre-Service Teacher Preparation

While inclusive ideology is well cemented in legislative policies, circulars and directives, it is at the level of access to curriculum and pedagogy that pupils with special educational needs will feel included or excluded. The findings from this study reveal that, despite the requirements of legislative directives, teachers feel ill-prepared for their role as inclusive educators. In recognition of the diversity of pupils' needs, which reflects the reality of inclusive classrooms, there is a pressing need for reform at pre-service level to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared for their task. It is not enough to regard generic knowledge, skills and competencies as sufficient to work with pupils with SEN. As this study shows, there is need for additional and more specific knowledge with regard to pupils with SEN. In addition, as suggested above, there is a need for this knowledge to be transmitted within a framework which supports the development of teacher efficacy.

While researchers have tended to use quantitative measures of efficacy Pajares (1999), a logical next step in the inquiry is to engage in observation studies in order to ascertain the influence of efficacy beliefs on student achievement and effective outcomes. Using a qualitative approach, there is a need to explore in greater depth and detail the views of teachers in relation to the factors that help or hinder their sense of SEN teacher efficacy at pre-service level.

Contextual Factors

Lastly, while the findings in this study point to the importance of contextual factors in supporting teacher efficacy, another related follow-up research area of interest relates to an examination of collective teacher efficacy in respect of SEN at teacher and at school level. As Pajares (1996) notes, one of the most valuable insights provided by social cognitive theory has been the observation that confidence is both a personal and a social construct, an examination of how teachers' collective efficacy is influenced and sustained would provide valuable insights to inform pre-service, in-service and continuous professional development.

Additionally, an examination of the factors that support the development of a strong sense of teacher efficacy among qualified teachers is important in light of the research findings which claims that, once established, efficacy beliefs of experienced teachers seem resistant to change (Ross, 1994).

Summary

(1)   The lack of correlation between SEN teacher efficacy and personal teacher efficacy indicates that SEN teacher efficacy is not a subset of personal teacher efficacy but is in fact a different construct.

(2)   There is a serious need to address teacher mastery of SEN competencies at pre-service level.

(3)   Teacher efficacy beliefs are significantly influenced by the degree of co-operation between the different partners in the school community in fulfilling a number of interconnecting and mutually supportive roles.

Recommendations for Further Research

- Research using a qualitative approach to explore in greater depth and detail the views of teachers in relation to the factors that help or hinder the development of SEN teacher efficacy.

- Research to examine collective teacher efficacy in relation to SEN at teacher and at school level.

- Pre-and post-research studies at pre-service level in relation to students who attend additional SEN courses, experience teaching placements with SEN pupils, and are given an opportunity, in collaboration with colleagues, to discuss and debate their successes and challenges.

- Research to examine how low levels of teacher efficacy, among qualified teachers in the field, can be modified, nurtured and supported.

- Research to examine differences in inclusive classroom practices among teachers with high and low levels of teacher efficacy.

- Research to examine the relationship between SEN teacher efficacy and learning outcomes for pupils with SEN.

- Research to examine pupils' and parents' perspectives of inclusion as set against teacher efficacy levels.

Conclusion

In summary, this study is the first of its kind in the Irish context to examine mainstream teacher efficacy beliefs in relation to implementing inclusive policy with regard to pupils with special educational needs.

Firstly, while numerous studies in the past have identified the inherent difficulties that teachers are experiencing in implementing inclusive policies, this study provides a more comprehensive analysis of a number of factors. By recognising the active agency of the teacher as outlined in social cognitive theory, this study highlights the importance of considering teacher efficacy beliefs when examining the extent to which inclusive education policy is implemented in practice.

Secondly, there is the age-old question – is good teaching good teaching in all contexts? Are there additional skills and competencies required to work with pupils with special educational needs or can all teachers do the job effectively? This research study points to the difference between personal teacher efficacy (PTE), and SEN teacher efficacy indicating that there are different and additional skills and competencies required to work with pupils with special educational needs.

Thirdly, while much is written on how – despite the legislative directives – teachers' are inadequately prepared at pre-service level for inclusive education, this study, while highlighting the importance of adequate pre-service preparation, goes further to state that, pre-service preparation in isolation does not provide a complete picture. With our increased knowledge of the impact of teacher efficacy on teacher performance, continuously laying the blame at the door of pre-service is no longer an

adequate response. Instead we must look to how we can provide practical opportunities for teachers to increase their efficacy in relation to working with pupils with special educational needs at both pre-service, in-service level and school support level.

Fourthly, the impact of contextual support factors, as shown in this study, point to the importance of the social context of schooling in that the intrinsic and extrinsic supports available to the teachers served to support or diminish teacher efficacy with regard to implementing inclusive education policy.

Lastly, while much debate has taken place on the effectiveness of teacher pre-service education, with regard to working with pupils with special educational needs in mainstream settings, using a social cognitive lens, this study provides an integrated model detailing the factors emanating from the study which contribute to the development of SEN teacher efficacy. In addition, it addresses the deficit in research by developing a specific scale to measure SEN teacher efficacy.

REFERENCES

Abberley, P. (1987). The concept of oppression and the development of a social theory of disability. *Disability Handicap and Society, 2*(1). 5-19.

Ainscow, M. (1991). *Effective schools for all*. London: Fulton.

Aldridge, J.T., & Clayton, G.A. (1987). Elementary teachers' cognitive and affective perceptions of exceptional children. *Psychological Reports, 61*. 91-94.

Alton-Lee, A. (2003). *Quality teaching for diverse students in schooling: Best evidence synthesis*. New Zealand: Ministry of Education. June 2003.

Armstrong, F., Armstrong, D., & Barton, L. (Eds.), (2000). *Inclusive education: policy, contexts and comparative perspectives*. London: David Fulton.

Ashton, P.T., & Webb, R. B. (1986). *Making a difference: Teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement*. New York: Longman.

Avramidis, E., Bayliss, P., & Burden, R. (2000). A survey into mainstream teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school in one local education authority. *Educational Psychology, 20*(2), 191-121.

Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration/inclusion: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 17*(2), 129–147.

Ball, S. (1990). *Policy and policy making in education: Explorations in policy sociology*. London: Routledge.

Ballou, D., & Podgursky, M. (2000). Reforming teacher preparation and licensing: What is the evidence? *The Teachers College Record, 102*(1), 5-27.

Bandura. A. (1977). Teacher efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*, 191-215.

Bandura, A. (1978b). The self system in reciprocal determinism. *American Psychologist, 33*, 344-358.

Bandura, A. (1982). Teacher efficacy mechanism in human agency. *American Psychologist, 37*, 122-147.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. (1988). Teacher efficacy conception of anxiety, stress and coping. *Research, 1(2)*, 77 – 98.

Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist, 44*, 1175-1184.

Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived teacher efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist, 28*, 117-148.

Bandura, A. (1997). *Teacher efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.

Bandura, A. (1999). Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9*(3), 75-78.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentive perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*, 1-26.

Banerji, M., & Dailey, R.A. (1995). A study of the effects of an inclusion model on students with specific learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 28*(8), 11-22.

Barnes, C. (1996). Theories of disability and the origins of the oppression of disabled people. In L. Barton, (Ed.), *Western society, disability and society: Emerging issues and insights.* Essex: Addision Wesley Longman.

Barton, L. (1997). *The politics of special educational needs.* Lewis: Falmer

Barton, L. (2003). *Inclusive education and teacher education: A basis of hope or a discourse of delusion.* London: Institute of Education.

Barton, L., & Tomlinson, S. (1984). The politics of integration in England. In A. Cohen, & L. Cohen (Eds.), *Special needs in the ordinary school.* London: Harper & Row.

Bender, W.N., & Ikechukwu, C.U. (1989). Instructional strategies in mainstream classrooms: Prediction of the strategies teachers select. *Remedial and Special Education, 10,* 23-30.

Benjamin, S. (2002). *The micropolitics of inclusive education: An ethnography.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bernstein, B. (1996). *Pedagogy, symbolic control and identity: Theory, research, critique.* London: Taylor.

Best, J., & Kahn, J. (1998). *Research in Education.* London: Allyn & Bacon.

Blanton, L.P., Griffin, C.C., Winn, J.A., & Pugach, M.L. (1997). *Teacher education in transition: Collaborative programmes to prepare general and special educators.* Denver: Love Publishing Co.

Bong, M., & Clarke, R.E. (1999). Comparison between self-concept and teacher efficacy in academic motivation research. *Educational Psychologist, 34*(3), 139-153.

Booth, T. (1996). Stories of exclusion: Natural and unnatural selection. In E. Blyth & J. Milner (Eds.), *Exclusion from school: Inter professional issues for policy and practice*. London: Routledge.

Booth, T., & Ainscow, M. (1998). *From them to us: An international study of inclusion in education*. London: Routledge.

Booth, T., Ainscow, M., & Black-Hawkins, K. (2000). *Index for inclusion, Developing learning and participation in schools*. Bristol: CSIE.

Booth, T., Nes, K., & Strømstad, M. (2003). *Developing inclusive teacher education*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Borsay, A. (1986). Personal trouble or public issue? Towards a model of policy for people with physical and mental disabilities. *Disability, Handicap & Society, 1*(2), 179-93.

Bowe, R., Ball, S.J., & Gold, A. (1992). *Reforming education and changing schools: Case-studies in policy sociology*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Bradley, D., & Switlick, D. (1997). The past and the future of special education. In D. Bradley, M. King-Sears & D. Tessier-Switlick (Eds.), *Teaching in inclusive settings: From theory to practice*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Brennan, W.K. (1985). *Curriculum for special needs*. Open University Press: Milton Keynes.

Briggs, J.D., Johnson, W.E., Shepherd, D.L., & Sedbrook, S.R. (2002). Teacher attitudes and attributes concerning disabilities. *Academic Exchange Quarterly, 6*(2), 85-89.

Brookhart, S.M., & Freeman D.J. (1992). Characteristics of entering teacher candidates. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(1), 37-60.

Brouwers, A., & Tomic, W. (2000). A longitudinal study of teacher burnout and perceived teacher efficacy in classroom management. *Teacher and Teaching Education, 16*(2), 239-253.

Browder, D., Flowers, C., Ahlgrim-Delzell, L., Karvonen, M., Spooner, F., & Algozzine, R. (2004). The alignment of alternate assessment, content with academic and functional curricula. *The Journal of Special Education, 37*, 211-223.

Brownell, M., & Pajares, F. (1999). Classroom teachers' sense of efficacy to instruct special education students. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 22*, 154-164.

Burke, A. (Ed.). (2004). *Teacher education in the Republic of Ireland: Retrospect and prospect.* Armagh: Cross Border Studies.

Burke, K., & Sutherland, C. (2004). Attitudes towards inclusion: Knowledge vs. experience. *Education, 125*(2), 163-172.

Burley, W.W., Hall, B.W., Villeme, M.G., & Brockmeier, L.L. (1991). *A path analysis of the mediating role of efficacy in first-year teachers' experiences, reactions and teaching plans.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Burnstein, N.D. & Sears, S. (1998). Preparing on-the-job teachers for urban schools: Implications for teacher training. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 21*(1), 47-62.

Cains, R., & Brown, C. (1996). Newly qualified primary teachers: A comparative analysis of perceptions held by B.Ed. and PGCE trained teachers of their training routes. *Educational Psychologist, 16*(3) 257-270.

Campbell, J., Gilmore, L., & Cuskelly, M. (2003). Changing student teachers' attitudes towards disability and inclusion. *Journal of Intellectual and Developmental Disability, 28*(4), 369–379.

Cant, H. (1994). Inclusive education: The Alberta experience. *Practising Administrator, 16*(3), 38-41.

Carpenter, R., Ashdown, R., & Bovair, K. (Eds.). (1997). *Enabling access: Effective teaching and learning for pupils with learning difficulties*. London: David Fulton.

Carrington, S. (1999). Inclusion needs a different school culture. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 3*(3), 257-268.

Carroll, A., Forlin, C., & Jobling, A. (2003). The impact of teacher training in special education on the attitudes of Australian preservice general educators towards people with disabilities. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 30*, 65-79.

Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE). *Supporting inclusion, challenging exclusion*. Retrieved November, 8th, 2008, from http://www.csie.org.uk/inclusion/index.shtml

Chester, M.D., & Beaudin, B.D. (1996). Efficacy beliefs of newly hired teachers in urban schools. *American Educational Research Journal, 33*(1), 233-257.

Chwalisz, K.D., Altmaier, E.M., & Russell, D.W. (1992). Causal attributions, teacher efficacy cognitions and coping with stress. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 11*, 377-400.

Clarke, C., Dyson, A., Millward, A. & Skidmore, D. (1997). *New Directions in Special Needs: Innovations in Mainstream School*. London: Cassell.

Clarke, D., & Hollingsworth, H. (2002). Elaborating a model of teacher professional growth. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 18*, 947–967.

205

Clayton, M. (1996). Clearing the way for inclusion: A response to Thorley, Hotchkis & Martin. *Special Education Perspectives*, 5(2), 39-44.

Claxton, G. (1996). Integrating learning theory and the learning teacher. In G. Claxton, T. Atkinson, M. Osborn, & M. Wallace, (Eds.), *Liberating the Learner: Lessons for Professional Development in Education*. London: Routledge.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (1999). Teacher learning in communities, *Review of Research in Education, 24*, 249–306.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2001). Reforming teacher education: Competing agendas. *Journal of Teacher Education, 52*, 263-265.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2004). *Walking the road: Race, diversity and social justice in teacher education: Multicultural Education Series*. London: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2005). The new teacher education: For better or for worse? *Educational Researcher, 34*(7), 3-17.

Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner, K.M. (2005). *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA on research and teacher education*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Cohen, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education* (5th. ed.). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Coladarci, T. (1994). Teachers' sense of efficacy and commitment to teaching. *Journal of Experimental Education, 60*(4), 323-337.

Coolahan, J. (Ed.). (1994). *Report on the national education convention*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Coolahan, J. (2002). *The teaching career in an era of lifelong learning*. OECD Working Paper No. 2. National Education Convention Secretariat.

Coolahan, J. (2003) *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers: Country background report for Ireland.* Dublin: DES. Paris: OECD.

Coolahan, J. (2004) *Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers. Country background report for Ireland.* Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Connolly, P. (2007) *Quantitative data analysis in education: A critical introduction using SPSS.* London: Routledge.

Cook, B.G. (2001). A comparison of teachers' attitudes toward including students with mild and severe disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education, 34,* 203-213.

Cook, B. (2002). Inclusive attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses of pre-service general educators enrolled in a curriculum infusion teacher preparation program. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 25* (3), 262-277.

Corbett, J. (1997). Include/exclude: redefining the boundaries. *Inclusive Education, 1*(1), 55-64.

Corbett, J., & Norwich, B. (2005). Common or specialised pedagogy? In M. Nind, J. Rix, K. Sheehy, & K. Simmons (Eds.), (2005). *Curriculum and pedagogy in inclusive education: Values into practice,* (p. 15). London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Corbett, J. & Slee, R. (2000). An international conversation of inclusive education. In F. Armstrong, L. Barton & D. Armstrong (Eds.), *Policy, contexts and comparatives perspectives.* London: David Fulton.

Corcoran, E. (1981). Transition shock: the beginning teacher's paradox. *Journal of Teacher Education, 32*(3), 19-23.

Cortina, J.M. (1993). What is coefficient alpha? An examination of theory and applications. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*(1), 98-104.

Costigan, A. (2004). Choosing to stay, choosing to leave: New York City teaching fellows after two years. *Teacher Education Quarterly, (Spring).*

Croll, P., & Moses, D. (2000). *Special needs in primary school: One in five,* London: Cassell.

Croll, P., & Moses, D. (2000). Ideologies and utopias: Education professionals views of inclusion. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 15*(1), 1-12.

Czaja, R., & Blair, J. (1996). *Designing surveys: A guide to decisions and procedures.* London: Pine Forge Press.

Cuban, L. (1990). Reforming again, again and again. *Educational Researcher, 19*(1,) 3-13.

Daniels, V.I., & Vaughn, S. (1999). A tool to encourage 'best practice' in full inclusion. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 31*(5), 48-55.

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *Doing what matters most: Investing in quality teaching.* New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Darling-Hammond (1999). Target time toward teachers. *Journal of Staff Development, 20*(2): 31-36.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2000a). Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 8*(1).

Darling-Hammond, L. (Ed.). (2000b). *Studies of excellence in teacher education (three volumes).* Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Youngs, P. (2002). Defining "highly qualified teachers:" What does "scientifically-based research" actually tell us? *Educational Researcher, 31*(9), 13-25.

Denscombe, M. (2003). *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Department of Education and Science (DES) (1978). *Special Educational Needs: The Warnock Report*. London: H.M.S.O.

Department of Education and Science (DES) (2002). *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Education and Science (DES) (2003). *Allocation of resources for pupils with special educational needs in national schools. Circular SP.ED 24/03* Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Education and Science (DES) (2004). *Allocation of resources for pupils with special educational needs in national schools. Circular SP.ED 09/04*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Department of Education and Science (DES) (2005). *Organisation of teaching resources for pupils who need additional support in mainstream primary schools Circular 02/05*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Destefano, L., Shriner, J.G., & Lloyd, C.A (2001). Teacher decision making in participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessment. *Exceptional Children, 68*(1). 7-22.

Dewey, J. (1929). *The sources of a science of education*. New York: Liveright.

DfEE, (1998). Teachers meeting the challenge of change. London: DfEE.

DfES, (2004). Removing barriers to achievement: The government strategy for SEN. London: DfEE.

Dillman, D. (2000). *Mail and internet surveys: The tailored design method*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Dunn, L.M. (1968). Special education for the mildly retarded-is much of it justifiable? *Exceptional Children, 35*, 5-22.

Dupoux, E., Wolman, C., & Estrada, E. (2005). Teachers' attitudes toward integration of students with disabilities in Haiti and the United States. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 52*(1), 45-60.

Dwyfor Davies, J., & Garner, P. (1997). (Eds.). *At the crossroads: Special Educational Needs & Teacher Education.* London: David Fulton.

Egan, E. (2004). *Teacher education in the republic of Ireland: Retrospect and Prospect.* Armagh: The Centre for Cross Border Studies.

Eichinger, J., Rizzo, T., & Sirotnik, B. (1991). Changing attitudes toward people with disabilities. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 14*(2), 121-126.

Emmer, E., & Hickman, J. (1991). Teacher efficacy in classroom management and discipline. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 51*, 755-765.

European Agency for Development in Education, (2003). *Special needs education in Europe.* Brussels: Author.

Farrell, P. (2001). Special education in the last twenty years: have things really got better? , *British Journal of Special Education, 28*(1), 3–9.

Feiman-Nemser, S. (1983). Learning to teach. In Shulman, L. and Sykes, G. (Eds.), *Handbook of Teaching and Policy.* New York: Longmans.

Fisher T., Higgins, C., & Loveless, A. (2006). *Teachers Learning with Digital Technologies: A review of research and projects.* Bristol: Futurelab.

Foley, R., & Mundschenk, N. (1997). Collaborative activities and competencies of secondary school special educators: A national survey. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 2*(1), 47-60.

Forlin, C., Tait, K., Carroll, A., & Jobling, A. (1999). Teacher education for diversity. *Queensland Journal of Educational Research, 5.*

Forsberg, B. (1984). *Emotional need and analysis of need in staff training.* Stockolm: Arbetskivscentrum.

Frederickson, N., & Cline, T. (2002). *Special educational needs: Inclusion and diversity: A textbook.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Freire, S. & Cesar, M. (2003). Inclusive ideals/inclusive practices: How far is a dream from reality? Five comparative case studies. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 18,* 341-354.

Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L.S. (1994). Inclusive schools movement and the radicalization of special education reform. *Exceptional Children, 60*(4), 294-309.

Fulcher, G. (1989). *Disabling policies: A comparative approach to education policy and disability.* London: Falmer Press.

Garmon, M.A. (2005). Six key factors for changing preservice teachers attitudes/beliefs about diversity. *Educational Studies, 38*(3), 276-286.

Garner, P. (1996). Students' views on special educational needs courses in ITE. *British Journal of Special Education, 23*(4), 76-79.

Garner, P. (2000). Pretzel only policy? Inclusion and the real world of initial teacher education. *British Journal of Special Education, 27*(3), 111-116.

Garner, P. (2001). Goodbye Mr Chips: Special needs, inclusive education and the deceit of initial teacher training. In T. O'Brien (Eds.), *Enabling inclusion: Blue skies...dark clouds?* London: The Stationery Office.

Gash, H. (2006). Beginning primary teachers and children with mild learning difficulties. *Irish Educational Studies,* 25(3), 275-287.

Gerber, M. (1995). Inclusion at the high-water mark? *Journal of Special Education,* 29(3), 181-199.

Gersten, R., Walker, C., & Darch, C. (1988). Relationship between teachers' effectiveness and their tolerance for handicapped students. *Exceptional Child, 54*(5), 433-438.

Ghaith, G., & Yaghi, H. (1997). Relationship among experience, teacher efficacy, and attitudes toward the implementation of instructional innovation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 13*(4), 451–458.

Giangreco, M., Dennis, R., Cloninger, C., Edelman, S., & Schattman, R. (1993). 'I've counted Jon:' Transformational experiences of teachers educating students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 59*, 359-372.

Gibson, S. & Dembo, M. H. (1984). Teacher efficacy: A construct validation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 76(4)*, 569-582.

Gist, M.E., & Mitchell, T.R. (1992). Teacher efficacy: A theoretical analysis of its determinants and malleability. *Academy of Management Review, 17*(2), 183-211.

Gittelman, R. (1985) Controlled trails of remedial approaches to reading disability, *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 26*(6), 843-846.

Goetz, L., & Soto, G. (1996). *AAC specialization for teachers serving students with low incidence disabilities* (U.S. Department of Education grant H029A0059). San Francisco: San Francisco State University, Department of Special Education, California Research Institute.

Golder, G., Norwich, B., & Bayliss, P. (2005) Preparing teachers to teach pupils with special educational needs in more inclusive schools: Evaluating a PGCE development. *British Journal of Special Education, 32*(2), 92-99.

Goodson, I.F. (1994). *Studying curriculum*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Gorrell, J., & Capron, E. (1994). Cognitive modelling and teacher efficacy: Effects on preservice teachers' learning of teaching strategies. *Journal of Teacher Education, 41*, 15-22.

Guskey, T. R. (1998). Teacher efficacy, self-concept, and attitudes towards the implementation of instructional innovation. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 4*, 63-69.

Guskey, T.R., & Passaro, P.D. (1994). Teacher efficacy: A study of construct dimensions. *American Educational Research Journal, 31*, 627-643.

Hahn, H. (1985). The politics of physical difference: Disability and discrimination. *Journal of Social Issues, 44*(1), 39-47.

Hall, B., Burley, W., Villeme, M., & Brockmeier, L. (1992). *An attempt to explicate teacher efficacy beliefs among first year teachers*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Hall, K. (2005). *Level descriptions and national curriculum assessment: an empirical study at key stage one*. London: Economic Social Research Council.

Hall, P.M. & McGinty, P.J.W. (1997). Policy as the transformation of intentions: Producing program from statutes. *The Sociological Quarterly, 38*, 439-467.

Hammond, H., & Ingalls, L. (2003). Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion: Survey results from elementary school teachers in three Southwestern rural school districts. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 22*(1), 24-30.

Hargreaves, A. (1994). *Changing teachers, changing times: teachers' work and culture in the postmodern Age*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Harvey, D.H.P. (1992). Integration in Victoria: Teacher attitudes after six years of no choice policy. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 39*, 33-45.

Haskell, D.H. (2000) Building bridges between science and special education. *Electronic Journal of Science Education, 4*(3),

Hebert, E., Lee, A., & Williamson, L. (1996). Teachers' and teacher education students' sense of efficacy: Quantitative and qualitative comparisons. *Early Child Development and Care, 125*, 73-83.

Hipp, K.A., & Bredeson, P.V. (1995). Exploring connections between teacher efficacy and principals' leadership behaviors. *Journal of School Leadership, 5*, 136-150.

Hodkinson, A.J. (2006). Conceptions and misconceptions of inclusive education one year on: A critical analysis of newly qualified teachers knowledge and understanding of inclusion. *Research in Education, 76*, 43-55.

Hornby, H. (1999). Inclusion and delusion: Can one size fit all? *Support for Learning, 14*(4), 152-157.

Hoy, W.K., & Woolfolk. A.E. (1990). Organizational socialization of student teachers. *American Educational Research Journal, 27*, 279-300.

Hoy, W.K. & Woolfolk, A.E. (1993). Teachers' sense of efficacy and the organizational health of schools. *The Elementary School Journal, 93*, 356-372.

Huang, X. Liu, M., & Shiomi, K. (2007) An analysis of the relationships between teacher efficacy, teacher self-esteem and orientations to seeking help. *Social Behaviour and Personality: An International Journal 35*(5), 707-716.

Ireland (1960). *The problem of the mentally handicapped.* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1965). *Report: Commission of inquiry on mental handicap.* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1966). *Investment in education report.* Dublin: Stationary Office.

Ireland (1980). *White paper on educational development.* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1984). *Programme for action in education,* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland, (1987). *Guidelines on remedial education*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1992). *Educating for a changing world: Green paper on education*, Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1993). *Report of the special education review committee* (SERC). Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1995). *Charting our educational future: White paper on education.* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1996). *A strategy for equality, report of the commission on the status of people with disabilities.* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1998a). *Education act.* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1998b). *Employment equality act.* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (1999). *Primary school curriculum.* Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Ireland (2000a). *Equal status act.* Dublin: Stationery Office).

Ireland (2000b). *Learning support guidelines*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Ireland (2001a). *The report on the task force on dyslexia*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Ireland (2001b). *The report on the task force on autism.* Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Ireland (2002). *Preparing teachers for the 21st century*. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Ireland (2004). *Education for persons with special education needs act* (EPSEN). Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (2005). *The success in reading report*. Dublin: Stationery Office.

Ireland (2005). *Beginning to teach.* Dublin: Stationery Office.

Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) (2000). *Inclusion–proceedings of special education conference*. INTO: Dublin.

Irish National Teachers Organisation (INTO) (2007) *Approaches to teaching* Consultative Conference on Education, Sligo (9-10 November).

Irish Association of Teachers in Special Education (IATSE) (2000). *National survey of special needs resource teachers in primary schools*. Dublin: IATSE.

Jenkins, A., Pateman, B., & Black, R. (2002). Partnerships for dual preparation in elementary, secondary, and special education programs. *Remedial and Special Education, 23*(6), 360-372.

Johnson, K.E. (1992). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices during literacy instruction for non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Reading Behaviour, 24*, 83-108.

Johnson, S.M., & Birkeland, S.E. (2003). Pursuing "a sense of success": New teachers explain their career choices. *American Educational Research Journal. 40*(3), 581-617.

Jones. R. (1984). *Attitude and attitude change in special education: Theory and practice*. Reston, V.A: Council for Exceptional Children.

Jones, P. (2002). Promoting inclusive practices in primary initial teacher training: Influencing hearts as well as minds. *Support for Learning, 17*(20), 58-63.

Jordan, A., Kircaali-Iftar, G., & Diamond, C.T.P. (1993). Who has a problem, the student or the teacher? Differences in teacher beliefs about their work with at risk and integrated exceptional students. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 40,* 45–62.

Kagan, D.M. (1992). Professional growth among pre-service and beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(2), 129-169.

Kamens, W.M., Loprete S.J., Slostad, F.A. (2000). Classroom teachers' perceptions about inclusion and preservice teacher education. *Teaching Education, 11*(12), 147-158.

Kauffman, J.M., & Hallahan, D.P. (1995). *The illusion of full inclusion: A comprehensive critiques of a current special education bandwagon.* Austin: Texas: Pro-Ed.

Keady, F. (2003). *An examination of the process of development and application of individual educational plans by resource teachers for children with special educational needs in selected mainstream Irish primary schools.* Unpublished M.Ed. thesis, St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

Kearns, H., & Shevlin, M. (2006). Initial teacher preparation for special educational needs: policy and practice in the north and south of Ireland. *Teacher Development, 10*(1), 25-42.

Kelleghan, T. (2004). Preparing teachers for the 21st Century: Report of the working group on primary preservice teacher education, In A. Burke (Ed.), *Teacher education in the republic of Ireland: Retrospect and prospect,* Armagh: Centre for Cross-Border Studies.

Kittay, E.F. (2005). Equality dignity and disability. In M.A Lyons, & F. Waldron (Eds.), *Perspectives on Equality.* Dublin: Liffey Press.

Knight, B.A. (1999). Towards inclusion of students with special educational needs in the regular classroom. *Support for Learning, 14*(1), 3-7.

Knight, T. (2000). Inclusive education and education theory: Inclusion for whom? *Melbourne Studies in Education, 41,* 17-43.

Kortman, W. (2001). *The modus operandi of special education: Teachers' ability to analyse student needs and apply it to classroom planning.* Australian Association of Special Education, Melbourne, Australia.

Larivee, B. (1982). Factors underlying regular classroom teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming. *Psychology in the Schools, 19,* 374–379.

Lee, V., Dedick, R., & Smith, J. (1991). The effect of the social organization of schools on teachers' efficacy and satisfaction. *Sociology of Education, 64,* 190–208.

Levin, B. (2001). Conceptualizing the process of educational reform from an international perspective. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 9(14).*

Lewis, A., & Norwich, B. (2005). *Special teaching for special children: Pedagogies for inclusion.* Buckingham: Open University Press:

Liaw, E-C. (2009). Teacher efficacy of pre-service teachers in Taiwan: The influence of classroom teaching and group discussions. *Teaching and Teacher Education 25,* 176-180.

Lindsay, G. (2007). Educational psychology and the effectiveness of inclusive education/mainstreaming. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 77*(1), 1-24.

Lindsey, P., & Strawderman, C. (1995). The Quest for Teachers: On reviewing a decade of reform efforts. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 18*(4), 253-61.

Lobosco, A.Q. & Newman, D. (1992). Teaching special needs population and job satisfaction implications for teachers' education and staff development urban. *Urban Education, 27*(1), 21-31.

Lombardi, T.P. & Hunka, N.J. (2001). Preparing general education teacher for inclusive classrooms: Assessing the process. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 24*(3), 183-97.

Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Loucks-Horsley, S., & Matsumoto, C. (1999). Research on professional development for teachers of mathematics and science: the state of the scene. *School Science and Mathematics, 99*, 259-271.

Lyddon, W. (1990). First-and-second order change: Implications for rationalist and constructivist therapies. *Journal of Counselling and Development, 69*, 122-127.

Lynch, K. (2005). Equality, and education: A framework for theory and action. *Theory and Research in Education. 3*(2), 131-164.

MacKay, G., & McLarty, M. (2003). *Educational support for children with disabilities. Scottish Education* (2nd. ed.). Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press.

MacGiolla Phádraig, B. (2007). Towards inclusion: the development of provision for children with special educational needs in Ireland from 1991 to 2004. *Irish Educational Studies, 26*(3), 289 – 300.

McCarthy, M. (2001). *An investigation into the role of the resource teacher for children with special needs in Irish primary schools*. Unpublished M.Ed Thesis, Dublin: St Patrick's College, Drumcondra.

McCoy, K.M. (1995). *Teaching special learners in the general classroom*. Denver: Love.

McDonnell, L.M., & Elmore, R.F. (1987). Getting the job done: Alternative policy instruments. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis. 9*(2), 133-152.

McDonnell, P. (1992). Vested interests in special education in Ireland. *REACH Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland, 5*(2), 97-106.

McDonnell, P. (2003). Developments in special education in Ireland: deep structures and policy making. *Inclusive Education, 7*(3), 259–269

McGee, P. (1990). Special education in Ireland. *European Journal of Special Needs Education in Ireland, 5*(1), .48-71.

McLaughlin, M.W., & Marsh, D.D. (1978). Staff development and school change. *Teachers College Record, 80* (1), 69-94.

Matland, R.E. (1995). Synthesizing the implementation literature: The ambiguity-conflict model of policy implementation. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 5* (2), 145-174.

May, T. (2001). *Social Research: Issues, methods and process*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Maynard-Moody, S., Musheno, M., & Palumbo, D. (1990). Street-wise social policy; resolving the dilemma of street-level influence and successful implementation. *Western Political Quarterly, 43*, 831-48.

Meegan, S., & MacPhail, A. (2006). Inclusive education: Irelands' education provision for children with special educational needs. *Irish Educational Studies, 25*(1), 53-62.

Menlove, R.R., Hudson, P.J., & Suter, D. (2001). A field of IEP dreams: Increasing general education teacher participation in the IEP development process. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 33*(5), 28-33.

Mercer, G.R. (1973). *Labelling the mentally retarded*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Micheline, S., Malow-Iroff, O'Connor, E.A., Milner, B., & Bisland, B.M. (2007). Intention to return: alternatively certified teachers' support, ideology and efficacy beliefs. *Teacher Development, 11*(3), 263 – 275.

Midgley, C., Feldlaufer, H., & Eccles, J.S. (1989). Change in teacher efficacy and student self- and task-related beliefs in mathematics during the transition to junior high school. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 81,* 247-258.

Minke, K.M., Bear, G., Deemer, S.A., & Griffin, S.M. (1996) Teachers' experience with inclusive classrooms: Implications for special education reform. *Journal of Special Education, 30 (2),* 152-186.

Mintz, J. (2007). Attitudes of primary initial teacher training students to special educational needs and inclusion. *Support for Learning, 22*(1), 3-8.

Mittler, P. (1995). *Teacher education for special needs in Europe.* London: Cassell.

Mittler, P. (2000). *Working towards inclusive education.* London: David Fulton.

Mittler, P. (2005). Building bridges between special and mainstream services. *Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Journal, 16*(1), 24-28.

Moore, W., & Esselman, M. (1992). *Teacher efficacy, power, school climate and achievement: A desegregating district's experience.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco.

Moran, A. (2007). Embracing inclusive teacher education, *European Journal of Teacher Education, 30*(2) 119 - 134.

Morgan, M. & O'Leary, M. (2004). A study of factors associated with the job satisfaction of beginning teachers. *Irish Journal of Education, 35,* 73-86.

Morris, J. (1991). Care of empowerment? A disability rights perspective. *Social Policy and Administration. 31*(1), 54-60.

221

Mosley, C., Reinke, K., & Bookour, V. (2003). The effect of teaching outdoor environment education on elementary pre-service teachers' teacher efficacy. *Journal of Elementary Science, 15*(1), 1-14.

Mullen, C.A. (2001). Disabilities awareness and the preservice teacher: A blueprint of a mentoring intervention. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 27*(1), 39-61.

Murchen, D., Loxley. A., Johnson, K., Quinn, M., & Fitzgerald, H. (2005). *Evaluation of the Primary Curriculum Support Programme* (PCSP). An unpublished evaluation report commissioned by the Department of Education and Science and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Dublin.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (1998). *Primary school curriculum.* Dublin: NCCA

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (1999). *Special educational needs: Curriculum issues: Discussion paper.* Dublin: NCCA.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2003) *Draft curriculum guidelines for teachers of students with general learning disabilities.* Dublin: NCCA.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA/DES) (2005). *Primary curriculum review: Phase 1.* Dublin: NCCA.

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) (2007) *Curriculum guidelines for teachers of students with general learning disabilities.* Dublin: NCCA.

National Council for Special Education (NCSE) (2006). *Implementation report: Plan for phased implementation of the EPSEN Act, 2004.* Trim: NCSE.

Neuman, W.L. (2000). Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches (4th. ed.). Wisconsin: Allyn and Bacon.

Nind, M., Rix, J., Sheehy, K., & Simmons, K. (Eds.). (2005). *Curriculum and pedagogy in inclusive education: Values into practice*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Norwich, B. (1994). *Education in ordinary schools*. London: Cassell.

Norwich, B. (2000). Inclusion in education: From concepts, values and critique to practice, In H. Daniels (Eds.), *Special education reformed: Beyond rhetoric?* London: Falcon Press.

Norwich, B., & Lewis, A. (2001). A critical review of evidence concerning teaching strategies for pupils with special educational needs. *British Educational Research Journal, 27(3),* 313-329.

Nunnally, J.C. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd. ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

O'Brien, T. (Ed.). (2001). *Enabling inclusion: Blue skies...dark clouds?* London: The Stationery Office.

O'Donnell, A.M., Reeve, J.M., & Smith, J.K. (2007). *Educational psychology: Reflection for action*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

O'Donnell, M. (2000). *The voice of the pupil: pupils' perspectives on their inclusion following transfer from special school*. Unpublished Thesis, Dublin: Dublin City University.

O'Leary, Z. (2004). *The essential guide to doing research*. London: Sage Publications.

OECD (2005). *Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers*. OECD Publishing.

Ofsted (2006). Inclusion: Does it matter where pupils are taught? Manchester: Ofsted.

Oliver, M. (1990). *The politics of disablement*. London: Macmillan

Pajares, F. (1992). Teachers beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62,* 307-332.

Pajares, F. (1996). Teacher efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research, 66,* 543-578.

Paneque, O.M., & Barbette, P.M. (2006). A study of teacher efficacy of special education teachers of English language learners with disabilities. *Teaching & Teacher Education, 6,* 137-148.

Patton, J.M. (1998). The disproportionate representation of African Americans in special education: Looking behind the curtain for understanding and solutions. *Journal of Special Education, 32*(1), 25-31.

Pearson, S. (2005) SEN – a politically correct phrase to replace terms such as disabled? A study of the views of students entering a secondary PGCE course. *Support for Learning, 20*(1), 17-21.

Peterson, M., & Beloin, K.S. (1992). Teaching the inclusive teacher: Restructuring the mainstreaming course in teacher education. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 21(4),* 306-318.

Pigge, F.L., & Marso, R.N. (1993). Outstanding teachers' sense of teachers' efficacy at four stages of career development. ERIC, ED 356206.

Pijl, S.J., & Meijer, C.J.W. (1994). Introduction. In C.J.W. Meijer, S.J. Pijl. & S. Hegarty (Eds.), *New perspectives in special education. A six-country study of integration,* (pp. xi-xiv). London, New York: Routledge.

Pijl, S.J., Meijer, C.J.W., Cor, J.W., & Hegarty, S. (Eds.). (1997). *Inclusive education: A global agenda.* London: Routledge.

Pintrich, P.R. (1990). Implications of psychological research on student learning and college teaching for teacher education. In W.R. Houston, (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education,* (pp. 826-857). New York: Macmillan.

Plowden Report (1976). *Children and their primary schools: Report of the central advisory council for education*: London: HMSO.

Podell, D.M. and Soodak, L.C. (1998). Teacher efficacy and bias in special education referral. *Journal of Educational Research, 86*, 247–53.

Portner, H. (2003). *Teacher mentoring and induction: The state of the art and beyond*. London: Sage Publications.

Powers, S. (2002). From concepts to practice in deaf education. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, 7(3)*, 230-243.

Pugach, M.C., & Johnson, L.J. (2002). *Collaborative practitioners, collaborative schools*. (2nd. ed.). Denver: Love Publishing.

Randenbush, S.W., Rowan, B., & Cheong, Y.F. (1992). Contextual effects on the self-perceived efficacy of high school teachers. *Sociology of Education, 65*, 10-27.

Rasch, B.W., Smelter, R.W., & Yudewitz, G.J. (1994). Thinking of inclusion for all special needs students? Better think again. *Phi Delta Kappan. 76*, 35-38.

Rault, C. (2006) Beginning teachers confront special educational needs in some of their pupils: A synthesis. pp 153-172. In H.Gash (Ed.) Beginning teachers and diversity in school: A European Study. Braganca, Portugal: Instituto Politéchnica de Braganca.

Raymond, A.M. (1997). Inconsistency between a beginning elementary school teacher's mathematics beliefs and teaching practice. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, 28(5)*, 550-576.

Reinhiller, N. (1996). Co-teaching: New variations on a not-so new practice. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 19*(1), 34-48.

Reynolds, M.C., & Ainscow, M. (1994) Education of children and youth with special needs: An international perspective. In T. Husen & T.N. Postlethwaite (Eds.), *The International Encyclopaedia of Education*, (2nd. Ed.). Oxford: Pergamon.

Reynolds, M.C. (1990). Educating teachers for special education students. In: R.W. Hauston (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education.* (pp. 423-436). New York, Macmillan.

Richardson, V. (1996). The role of attitudes and beliefs in learning to teach. In J. Sikula, T.J. Buttery, & E. Guyton (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teacher education: A project of the association of teacher educators* (2nd ed., pp. 85-101). New York: Simon and Schuster.

Ring, E., & Travers, J. (2005). Barriers to inclusion: a case study of a pupil with severe learning difficulties in Ireland. *European Journal of Special Education Needs Education, 20* (1) 41–56.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner- researchers* (6th ed.). London: Blackwell Publishing

Rokeach, M. (1968). *Beliefs, attitudes, and values: A theory of organization and change.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Rose, R. (2001). Primary school teacher perceptions of the conditions required to include pupils with special educational needs *Educational Review, 53*(2) 147-156.

Rosenholtz, S.J. (1989). *Teachers' workplace: The social organization of schools.* New York: Longman.

226

Rosnow, R.L., & Rosenthal, R. (1997). *People studying people: Artifacts and ethics in behavioral research*. New York: WH Freeman and Company.

Ross, J.A. (1992). Teacher efficacy and the effect of coaching on student achievement. *Canadian Journal of Education, 17*(1), 51-65.

Ross, J.A. (1994). The impact of an inservice to promote cooperative learning on the stability of teacher efficacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 10*, 381-394.

Rotter, J.B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs, 80* (1), 1-28.

Rouse, M., & Florian, L. (1998). Inclusive education in the market-place. *International Journal of Inclusive Education 1*(4), 323 – 336.

Sadler, J. (2005). Knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of the mainstream teachers of children with a preschool diagnosis of speech/language impairment. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy, 21*(2), 147-163.

Sanders, W.L., & Horn, S. (1994). The Tennessee value-added assessment system (TVAAS): Mixed-model methodology in educational assessment. *Journal of Personnel Evaluation in Education, 8*, 299-311.

Sarason, S.B. (1971). *The culture of the school and the problem of change*. Boston: Allyn. & Bacon.

Sarason, S.B, (1996). *Revising the culture of school and the problem of change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Sebba, J., & Ainscow, M. (1996). International developments in inclusive schooling: Mapping the issues. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 26(1),* 5-18.

Schumm, J., & Vaughn, S. (1995). Getting ready for inclusion: Is the stage set? *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 10*, 169-179.

227

Schulz, J., Carpenter, C.D., & Turnbull, A.P. (1991). *Mainstreaming exceptional students: A guide for classroom teachers.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon Inc.

Scruggs, T.E., & Mastropieri, M.A. (1996). Teacher perceptions of mainstreaming/ inclusion, 1958-1995: A research synthesis. *Exceptional Children, 63,* 59-74.

Shachar, H., & Shmuelevitz, H. (1997). Implementing cooperative learning, teacher collaboration and teachers' sense of efficacy in heterogeneous junior high schools. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 22,* 53-72.

Shiel, G., Morgan, M., & Larney, R. (1998). *Study of remedial education in Irish primary schools.* Dublin: Department of Education and Science.

Shulman, L. 1986. Paradigms and research programs in the study of teaching: A contemporary perspective. *Handbook of Research on Teaching. 3,* 3-36.

Sindelar, P., Pugach, M., Griffin, C., & Seidl, B. (1995). Reforming Teacher Education: Challenging the practice of educating regular and special educators. In J.L. Paul, H. Roselli, & D. Evans (Eds.). Integrating school restructuring and special educational reform (pp. 140-166). Sydney: Harcourt.

Slee, R. (1998). The politics of theorising special education. In C. Clark, A. Dyson, & A. Milward, (Eds.), *Theorising Special Education.* London: Routledge.

Smelter, R.W., Rasch, B.W., & Yudewitz, G.J. (1994). Thinking of inclusion for all special needs students? Better think again. *Phi Delta Kappa, 76*(1), 35-38.

Soodak, L., Podell, D., & Lehman, L. (1998). Teacher, student, and school attributes as predictors of teachers' responses to inclusion. *Journal of Special Education, 31,* 66 – 81.

Soto, G., & Goetz, L. (1998). Teacher efficacy Beliefs and the Education of Students With Severe Disabilities. *The Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 23*(2), 134-143.

Sparks, D., & Loucks-Horsley, S. (1990). *Five models of staff development.* Oxford: National Staff Development Council.

Spillane, J., Reiser, B., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation. *Review of Educational Research, 72*(3), 387-431.

Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (Eds.). (1990). *Support networks for inclusive schooling: Divergent perspectives.* Baltimore: Brookes.

Stainback, S., Stainback, W., & Jackson, H. (1992). Toward inclusive classrooms. In S. Stainback & W. Stainback (Eds.), *Curriculum considerations in inclusive classrooms: Facilitate learning for all students,* (pp 3-17). Baltimore: Brookes.

Stanovich, P., & Jordan, A. (2002). Canadian teachers' and principals' beliefs about inclusive education as predictors of effective teaching in heterogeneous classrooms. *Elementary School Journal, 98,* 2221-238.

Stein, M.K., & Wang, M.C. (1988). Teacher development and school success in mainstreaming students with learning and behavior problems. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 22*(3), 154–164.

Stephens, T.M., & Braun, B.L. (1980). Measures of regular classroom teachers' attitudes toward handicapped children. *Exceptional Children, 46,* 292-294.

Stoler, R.D. (1992). Perceptions of regular education teachers toward inclusion of all handicapped students in their classrooms. *Clearing House. 66*(1), 60-62.

Strawderman, C., & Lindsey, P. (1995). Keeping up with the times: Reform in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education, 46 (2),* 95-100.

Subban, P. & Sharma, U. (2006). Primary school teachers' perceptions of inclusive education in Victoria, Australia. *International Journal of Special Education 21*(1), 42-52.

Swan, W.W., & Servis, B. (1992). The CEC common core of knowledge and skills essential for all beginning special education teachers. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 25*(1), 16-20.

Taylor, S., Fazal, R., Lingard, B and Henry, M. (1997). *Educational policy and the politics of change.* London: Routledge.

Thomas, G. (1997). Inclusive schools for an inclusive society. *British Journal of Special Education, 24*(3), 251-263.

Thomas, G., & Loxley, A. (2001). *Deconstructing Special Education and Constructing Inclusion.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Thomas, G. & Vaughan, M. (2004). *Inclusive Education: Readings and Reflections.* Maidenhead: Open University Press

Tomlinson, S. (1982). *The sociology of special education.* London: Routledge.

Travers, J. (2007). *Learning support for mathematics in Irish primary schools: A study of policy, practice and teachers views.* Unpublished EdD Thesis, Belfast: Queen's University.

Troyna, R.B., & Vincent, C. (1996). "The Ideology of expertism": The framing of special education and racial equality policies in the local state. In C. Christensen, & F. Rizvi (Eds.), (1996). *Disability and the Dilemmas of Education and Justice.* (pp. 131-144). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Tschannen-Moran, M., Hoy, A., Woolfolk, A.E., & Hoy, W.K. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research 68*(2), 202–248.

Tschannen-Moran, M. & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2000). Collaborative learning: A memorable model. *The Teacher Educator, 36*(2), 148-165.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A.W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*, 783–805.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2002). *The Influence of resources and support on teachers' efficacy beliefs.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Turkey, J. (1977). *Exploratory Data Analysis.* London: Addison-Wesley.

Tyack, D., & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering towards utopia: A century of public school reform.* London: Harvard University Press

UNESCO (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education.* Paris: UNESCO.

U.S. Department of Education. (2001) *The no child left behind act.* Washinghton: DC: Author.

Van Reusen, A.K., Shoho, A.R., & Barker, K.S. (2001). High school teacher attitudes toward inclusion. *The High School Journal, 84*(2), 7-17.

Veenman, S. (1984). Perceived problems of beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research, 54*(2), 143-178.

Velleman, P., & Hoaglin, D. (1981). *The ABC's of EDA: Applications, basics, and computing of exploratory data analysis.* Duxbury.

Vislie, L. (1995). Integration policies, school reforms and the organisation of schooling for handicapped pupils in Western societies. In: C. Clarke, A. Dyson, & A. Milward (Eds.), *Towards Inclusive Schools?* (pp. 42-53). London: David Fulton.

Vislie, L. (2003) From integration to inclusion: focusing global trends and changes in the western European societies. *European Journal of Special Needs Education 18*(1), 17-35.

Walter-Thomas C., Korinek L., McLaughlin V., & Williams B. (2000). *Collaboration of inclusive education: Developing successful programs.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Ware, L. (1995). The aftermath of the articulate debate: The invention of inclusive education. In C. Clarke, A. Dyson & A. Millward (Eds.), *Towards inclusive schools?* New York: Teachers College Press.

Weinstein, C.S. (1989). Teacher education students' preconceptions of teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(2), 54-60.

Westwood, P. (2003). *Commonsense methods in special education.* London: Routledge.

Whiting, M., & Young, J. (1995). *Integration: Social justice for teachers.* Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, Hobart, Tasmania.

Whitty, G. (2002). *Making Sense of Education Policy.* London: Sage Publications.

Wideen, M., Mayer-Smith, J., & Moore, B. (1998). A critical analysis of the research on learning to teach. *Review of Educational Research, 68*(2), 130-178.

Wilson. S.M., & Floden, E. (2002). Teacher preparation research: An insider's view from the outside. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(3), 190-204.

Winter, E. (2006). Preparing new teachers for inclusive schools and classrooms with special educational needs. *Irish Educational Studies, 25*(1), 53_62.

Winzer, M. (1999). *Children with exceptionalities in Canadian classrooms* (5th. Ed.). Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall.

Wishart, J.G., & Manning, G. (1996). Trainee teachers' attitudes to inclusive education for children with Down's syndrome. *Journal of Intellectual Disability, 40*(1), 56-65.

Wood, R., & Bandura, A. (1989). Impact of conceptions of ability on self- regulatory mechanism and complex decision making. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*(3), 407-415.

Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2000, April). *Changes in teacher efficacy during the early years of teaching*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Woolfolk Hoy, A. (2004). *Teacher efficacy in college teaching. Essays on Teaching Excellence: Toward the Best in the Academy*. Fort Collins, CO: The POD Network.

Woolfolk, A.E., & Hoy, W.K. (1990). Prospective teachers' sense of efficacy and beliefs about control. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 82*, 81-91.

Woolfolk, A.E., Rosoff, B., & Hoy, W.K. (1990). Teachers' sense of efficacy and their beliefs about managing students. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 6*, 137-148.

Woolfolk Hoy, A., & Burke-Spero, R. (2000, April). *Changes in efficacy during the early years of teaching*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Yee, S.M. (1990). *Careers in the classroom: When teaching is more than a job*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

York, J.L., & Reynolds, M.C. (1996). Special education and inclusion. In J. Sikula, T. J. Buttery & E. Guyton (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*. (pp. 820-836). New York: Macmillan.

York-Barr, J., Schultz, T., Doyle, M.B., Kronberg, R., & Crossett, S. (1996). Inclusive schooling in St. Cloud. *Remedial and Special Education, 17,* 92-105.

Ysseldyke, J.E., Algozzine, B., & Thurlow, M.L. (2000). *Critical issues in special education* (3rd. ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Zigmond, N., & Baker, M.J. (1996). Full inclusion for students with learning disabilities: Too much of a good thing? *Theory Into Practice, 35*(1), 26-34.

Zimmerman, B.J. (1995). Teacher efficacy and educational development. In A. Bandura *Teacher efficacy and changing societies*, (Ed.), New York: Cambridge University Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter to Principals

19th April 2008

Dear Principal,

In recent years, changes in legislation have resulted in an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs being enrolled in mainstream schools. This has profound implications for teachers as they face increasing pressure to perform to a wider set of roles than in previous generations.

As a student currently studying for my Doctorate in Education in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, I have chosen to examine *teacher efficacy*. This is understood as teachers' beliefs in their ability to carry out specific tasks, in this case, tasks in relation to supporting the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes.

This research asks the question:

Do teachers believe they have the knowledge, skills and competencies in relation to working with students with special educational needs in mainstream classes and if so, what factors contribute to their beliefs?

My estimation is that the questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete. I would be extremely grateful if you ask any teacher on your staff who has qualified in the last **10 years** to complete this questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided by **May 12th**

All responses will be treated with total confidentiality and there is no need for anyone to identify himself or herself in any way.

Thank you most sincerely for supporting me in getting this research completed, your co-operation is truly appreciated.

Your sincerely,

_____

Margaret O' Donnell

Appendix 2: Letter to Teachers

19th April 2008

Dear Teacher,

In recent years, changes in legislation have resulted in an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs being enrolled in mainstream schools. This has profound implications for teachers as they face increasing pressure to perform to a wider set of roles than in previous generations.

As a student currently studying for my Doctorate in Education in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, I have chosen to examine *teacher efficacy*. This is understood as teachers' beliefs in their ability to carry out specific tasks, in this case, tasks in relation to supporting the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes.

This research asks the question:

Do teachers believe they have the knowledge, skills and competencies in relation to working with students with special educational needs in mainstream classes and if so, what factors contribute to their beliefs?

My estimation is that the questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete. I would be extremely grateful if you could complete it by **May 12th** and return to me in the stamped addressed envelope enclosed.

Your responses will be treated with total confidentiality and you need not identify yourself in any way.

Thank you most sincerely for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your co-operation is truly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret O' Donnell

Dear Teacher

Dear Teacher,

In recent years, changes in legislation have resulted in an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs being enrolled in mainstream schools. This has profound implications for teachers as they face increasing pressure to perform to a wider set of roles than in previous generations.

As a student currently studying for my Doctorate in Education in St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, I have chosen to examine teacher efficacy. This is understood as teachers' beliefs in their ability to carry out specific tasks, in this case, tasks in relation to supporting the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes.

This research asks the question:

Do teachers believe they have the knowledge, skills and competencies to fulfill the directives of inclusive policy in practice and if so what are the factors that contribute to their beliefs?

The purpose of this questionnaire is to:

(1) gather information on the extent to which teachers believe they possess the necessary skills and competencies in relation to working with students with special educational needs in mainstream classes

(2) identify the factors which contributed to the development of their beliefs.

Section 1: Background Information

Section 2: Focuses on classroom practice

Section 3: Examines beliefs in relation to different aspects of teaching, learning and management

Section 4: Focuses on the extent of support received at different levels

Section 5: Explores your views in relation to professional development at preservice and inservice level

Section 6: Asks you to expand on any other aspect that you would like to comment on.

My estimation is that the questionnaire should take about 15 minutes to complete. Your responses will be treated with total confidentiality. I would really appreciate if you could complete and return the questionnaire by May 12th.

If you would prefer to complete the questionnaire online you can access it at
http://staff.spd.dcu.ie/odonnema

Thank you most sincerely for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, your co-operation is much appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Margaret O' Donnell

Section 1: Background Information: Personal and Pupil

The purpose of this section is to gather background information. Please tick the appropriate circle

1. What is your gender?

◯ Female   ◯ Male

2. Years teaching (including this year)

◯ 1 year   ◯ 2-3 years   ◯ 4-6 years   ◯ 7-10 years

3. What age were you when you began teaching following qualification?

◯ 19-23   ◯ 24-29   ◯ 30-39   ◯ 40+

4. What is your highest qualification in teaching?

◯ Diploma   ◯ Bachelors Degree   ◯ Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate   ◯ Masters Degree   ◯ Doctoral Degree

5. What category does your school belong to? (tick one box only)

◯ Catholic Primary   ◯ Protestant Primary   ◯ Gaelscoil/ Gaeltacht School   ◯ Educate Together School   ◯ Other(please state)

6. What population does your school serve?

☐ Boys only   ☐ Girls only   ☐ Boys and girls   ☐ Junior   ☐ Senior   ☐ All levels

7. Is your school designated by DEIS (2005) as serving a disadvantaged community?

◯ Yes   ◯ No

8. What level are you currently teaching?

◯ Jun/Sen Infants   ◯ 1st/ 2nd class   ◯ 3rd/4th class   ◯ 5th/ 6th class

9. How many pupils in your class?

☐

10. Do you have pupils in your class whose special educational needs are related to any of the following categories?

☐ Mild General Learning Disabilities   ☐ Moderate General Learning Disabilities   ☐ Speech and Language Difficulty/Disorder   ☐ Exceptional Ability   ☐ Emotional/ Behavioural Difficulties   ☐ Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)   ☐ Visual/Audito Difficulties

11. Do you have a Special Needs Assistant (SNA)/SNAs in your classroom? If yes how many?

◯ Yes   ◯ No

How many?

[   ]

12. How many pupils in your class with special educational needs receive additional support from Resource/Learning Support Teacher?

[   ]

13. Where does this support take place?

◯ In the classroom   ◯ Withdrawal from classrom   ◯ Both In the classroom and withdrawal

Thinking about the pupils with special educational needs in your class how would you rate your skills in relation to the following tasks? Please tick the appropriate circle

1. I am able to identify pupils' special educational needs

○ Not sure at all   ○ Somewhat unsure   ○ Don't know   ○ Somewhat sure   ○ Absolutely sure

2. I understand the implications of pupils' special educational needs for teaching and learning

○ Not sure at all   ○ Somewhat unsure   ○ Don't know   ○ Somewhat sure   ○ Absolutely sure

3. I know how to plan for pupils' special educational needs

○ Not sure at all   ○ Somewhat unsure   ○ Don't know   ○ Somewhat sure   ○ Absolutely sure

4. I can adapt my teaching methodologies to meet the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs

○ Not sure at all   ○ Somewhat unsure   ○ Don't know   ○ Somewhat sure   ○ Absolutely sure

5. I know how to organise group work in support of pupils with special educational needs

○ Not sure at all   ○ Somewhat unsure   ○ Don't know   ○ Somewhat sure   ○ Absolutely sure

6. I know how to use a multisensory approach in working with pupils with special educational needs

○ Not sure at all   ○ Somewhat unsure   ○ Don't know   ○ Somewhat sure   ○ Absolutely sure

7. I know how to use diagnostic assessments to identify pupils' literacy difficulties

○ Not sure at all   ○ Somewhat unsure   ○ Don't know   ○ Somewhat sure   ○ Absolutely sure

8. I know how to use diagnostic assessments to identify pupils' numeracy difficulties

○ Not sure at all   ○ Somewhat unsure   ○ Don't know   ○ Somewhat sure   ○ Absolutely sure

9. I can apply strategies to help pupils develop their social skills

◯ Not sure at all ◯ Somewhat unsure ◯ Don't know ◯ Somewhat sure ◯ Absolutely sure

10. I can apply appropriate strategies to deal with challenging behaviour

◯ Not sure at all ◯ Somewhat unsure ◯ Don't know ◯ Somewhat sure ◯ Absolutely sure

11. I know how to develop an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) to support the priority learning needs of pupils with special educational needs

◯ Not sure at all ◯ Somewhat unsure ◯ Don't know ◯ Somewhat sure ◯ Absolutely sure

12. I have an adequate understanding of the impact of disabilities, medical conditions and sensory impairments on pupils' learning

◯ Not sure at all ◯ Somewhat unsure ◯ Don't know ◯ Somewhat sure ◯ Absolutely sure

13. I know how best to support pupils' special educational needs through the use of ICT

◯ Not sure at all ◯ Somewhat unsure ◯ Don't know ◯ Somewhat sure ◯ Absolutely sure

14. I can assess and identify pupils' priority needs in any area of learning

◯ Not sure at all ◯ Somewhat unsure ◯ Don't know ◯ Somewhat sure ◯ Absolutely sure

15. I know how to plan collaboratively with others in meeting pupils' special educational needs

◯ Not sure at all ◯ Somewhat unsure ◯ Don't know ◯ Somewhat sure ◯ Absolutely sure

16. I can explain to parents how best to support their son/daughter's special educational needs

◯ Not sure at all ◯ Somewhat unsure ◯ Don't know ◯ Somewhat sure ◯ Absolutely sure

17. I use the Guidelines for Teachers of Students with General Learning Disabilities to support my teaching and planning

◯ Yes ◯ No

241

18. At college I learned about pupils whose special educational needs relates to

	Dyslexia	Mild General Learning Disabilities	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	Autism	Down Syndrome	Attention Defecit Disorder (ADD)	Aspergers Syndrome
Yes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
No	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 3: Teacher Beliefs

Thinking about the students you are currently working with, indicate your agreement in relation to the following statements by ticking the appropriate circle

1. The amount a pupil can learn is primarily related to family background

○ Strongly agree   ○ Agree   ○ Undecided   ○ Disagree   ○ Strongly disagree

2. If pupils are not disciplined at home, they are not likely to accept any discipline

○ Strongly agree   ○ Agree   ○ Undecided   ○ Disagree   ○ Strongly disagree

3. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a pupils' home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement

○ Strongly agree   ○ Agree   ○ Undecided   ○ Disagree   ○ Strongly disagree

4. If parents would do more for their children, I could do more

○ Strongly agree   ○ Agree   ○ Undecided   ○ Disagree   ○ Strongly disagree

5. If a pupil has difficulty in recalling information from previous lessons, I would be able to apply strategies to help him/her recall information in future lessons

○ Strongly agree   ○ Agree   ○ Undecided   ○ Disagree   ○ Strongly disagree

6. If a pupil in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I would be able to resolve the situation

○ Strongly agree   ○ Agree   ○ Undecided   ○ Disagree   ○ Strongly disagree

7. If a pupil couldn't complete a given task, I could accurately assess, if the task given, matched the pupils' ability

○ Strongly agree   ○ Agree   ○ Undecided   ○ Disagree   ○ Strongly disagree

8. If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated pupils

○ Strongly agree   ○ Agree   ○ Undecided   ○ Disagree   ○ Strongly disagree

9. When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because a pupil's motivation and performance depends on his/her home background

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

This section examines your views on inclusion and the extent of support you receive from others. It also explores your views in relation to preservice and inservice teacher education.

Please indicate your agreement/disagreement to the following statements by ticking the appropriate circle

1. It is the right of pupils with special educational needs to be educated in mainstream schools, in their local communities

○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Undecided ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree

2. The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs is well supported in this school

○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Undecided ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree

3. Mainstream teachers have the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to teach pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes

○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Undecided ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree

4. Other pupils suffer because of the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes

○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Undecided ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree

5. Having pupils with special educational needs in the classroom helps other pupils to be more caring and understanding

○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Undecided ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree

6. Our staff have developed a policy statement outlining how pupils' special educational needs will be identified and supported in our school

○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Undecided ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree

7. Inclusion in mainstream school is not suitable for all pupils with special educational needs

○ Strongly agree ○ Agree ○ Undecided ○ Disagree ○ Strongly disagree

8. I have adequate resources to support the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs in my class

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

9. My principal supports me in dealing with issues related to pupils with special educational needs

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

10. I have close colleague/s with whom I can discuss problems in relation to pupils with special eductional needs in my class

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

11. I am well supported by the Special Education Support team (Learning Support/ Resource/ Language Support) in addressing the needs of the pupils in my class

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

12. I can discuss any issue of concern in relation to working with pupils with special educational needs, with other teacher/s in the school

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

13. The staff of this school have a positive attitude towards pupils with special educational needs

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

14. I feel that it is soley the responsibility of the Learning Support/Resource teacher to deal with pupils with special educational needs

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

15. Most of my pupils' parents respect and support the things that I do to address the special educational needs of their son/daughter

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

16. Most of my pupils' parents are involved in supporting their son/daughter's special educational needs

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

17. In general I have a good working relationship with other support personnel (Learning Support/Resource teachers, SNAs, other therapists)

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

18. I frequently worry about school problems at home

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

19. I am often frustrated at work

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

20. If I had to do it all over again, I would become a teacher

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

This section examines your views in relation to preservice and inservice professional development in support of pupils with special educational needs. Please tick the appropriate circle

1. My preservice teacher education adequately prepared me for working with pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

2. In order to acquire the necessary skills and competencies to teach pupils with special educational needs, I will need further inservice teacher education

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

3. The model which is best suited to providing teachers with the knowledge, skills and competencies in relation to special education at preservice level is one where:

◯ SEN is addressed in all courses

◯ SEN is addressed as a stand alone course

◯ SEN is addressed in all courses in addition to a stand alone course

Other (please specify)

4. At school level, I have received further professional development in relation to working with pupils with special educational needs

◯ Strongly agree   ◯ Agree   ◯ Undecided   ◯ Disagree   ◯ Strongly disagree

5. Since I qualified from college, I have attended inservice teacher education course/s which addressed issues in relation to the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs

◯ Yes   ◯ No

6. I am aware of the support services that can help my school in planning to meet the needs of pupils with special eductaional needs

◯ Yes   ◯ No

7. I am aware of the requirements of the Education for Persons with Special Needs Act (EPSEN), (2004) in relation to pupils with special educational needs

◯ Yes   ◯ No

If there is any additional information that you would like to include in relation to this section, or any additional information not referred to in the questionnaire please feel free to do so here

1. In relation to working with pupils with special educational needs, what are the three greatest challenges you face?

a

b

c

2. To help you to address the learning needs of pupils with special educational needs in your class, what three things would you consider most important?

a

b

c

3. Any additional information that you would like to add:

Please add comments here:

Thanks

Thank you so much for completing this questionnaire. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Margaret O' Donnell