Copyright Statement

The digital copy of this thesis is protected by the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

This thesis may be consulted by you, provided you comply with the provisions of the Act and the following conditions of use:

- Any use you make of these documents or images must be for research or private study purposes only, and you may not make them available to any other person.
- Authors control the copyright of their thesis. You will recognise the author's right to be identified as the author of this thesis, and due acknowledgement will be made to the author where appropriate.
- You will obtain the author's permission before publishing any material from their thesis.

To request permissions please use the Feedback form on our webpage.
http://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/feedback

General copyright and disclaimer

In addition to the above conditions, authors give their consent for the digital copy of their work to be used subject to the conditions specified on the Library Thesis Consent Form and Deposit Licence.
Supporting inclusive teaching practices:
An investigation into
consultant special educator use
of the collaborative problem-solving model

Joanne Joy Walker

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The University of Auckland, 2013
Abstract

The RTLB service was established as part of the SE2000 policy to provide a “world class inclusive education system” within a decade. They were envisaged as change agents who would build school and teacher capability to achieve successful outcomes for learners. As National Director of the RTLB training programme, I was interested to explore if and how RTLB used an inclusive, collaborative problem-solving process in the field to improve complex problem situations. Many RTLB had previously been employed in traditional special education roles focused on working with students directly rather than consulting and supporting teachers to improve their practices for students experiencing learning and/or behavioural difficulties.

Consultation has a considerable research base in disciplines such as school psychology, counselling and business but less research exists related to teacher consultation (Friend, 2008). Previous researchers noted that relatively little is known about the variables that influence the implementation of interventions developed within consultation, the characteristics of effective problem solvers within this context or the micro-processes in changing teacher beliefs and practices.

My research involved two studies: Study 1 (contrasting retrospective cases) and Study 2 (collaborative current cases). Data in the first study were provided by RTLB, teachers and senior school leaders. Study 2 was designed to address a gap in New Zealand research by exploring and analysing data on the actual practice of a group of RTLB working alongside regular classroom teachers to resolve complex problem situations. Taping key meetings was the least intrusive method of following the collaborative process and enabled reflections by RTLB and teachers to be shared with me. Findings suggest that RTLB were able to use the CPS model to foster inclusive practices in these settings. Reflections and analysis of transcripts illustrate RTLB professional learning of the characteristics applied in school contexts. This in turn had an impact on teacher and RTLB professional learning and practices. Using CPS provided more opportunities to develop a partnership and maintain relationships where RTLB and teachers could respond more quickly and jointly to issues as they arose. Examination of the process also enabled the identification of factors that
facilitated and those that impeded the use of collaborative problem solving in fostering teacher capability and inclusive practice. Thesis findings demonstrating effective RTLB practice has implications for further professional development and direct relevance for the current Ministry of Education *Success for All-Every School, Every Child* plan to achieve an education system that is fully inclusive by 2014.
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to those who have assisted me throughout my doctoral journey. Special acknowledgement and thanks to my supervisors, Associate Professors Mary Hill and Mavis Haigh who have provided professional and personal support during this time. My sincerest thanks to you both for your diligence, dedication, and constant desire to help me achieve the best possible outcomes for my thesis. Your high quality feedback has also helped me to develop as a researcher. Professor Ted Glynn also supported me in the early stages of my study,

A warm thank you to the RTLB, teachers and senior leaders who gave up their time for my research. This project would not have been possible without the commitment and interest of the RTLB who were prepared to record their collaborative discussions with teachers, to be interviewed multiple times over several months and to share their personal stories and reflections with me.

I also wish to thank my colleagues who have encouraged and supported me to complete this project despite professional commitments and several personal setbacks. Very special thanks to friends Marie Cameron and John Medcalf. I am humbled by their support, belief in my ability to complete this thesis and interest in the project. The doctoral process is not always an easy one, and their support has kept me going through some difficult moments. Particular thanks go to Linda Newlands for her technical expertise and personal support.

This thesis is dedicated to my family, especially my husband, John, and parents, Joy and Lawrie. During the course of this research they have never faltered in supporting me in completing my thesis. Although there were several setbacks and obstacles to overcome, I am humbled by their encouragement and inspired by their courage and resilience.
Table of Contents

Abstract.................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgements................................................................................................. iv
List of Figures .......................................................................................................... ix
List of Tables ....................................................................................................... xi

Chapter One: Introduction ............................................................................... 1
1.0 Introduction and Overview of the Research ............................................ 1
1.1 Overview of the Thesis ........................................................................... 4

Chapter Two: Literature Review .................................................................... 7
2.0 Introduction .................................................................................................. 7
2.1 Historical overview .................................................................................. 7
  2.1.1 Inclusive education: What does it mean? ......................................... 10
  2.1.2 The New Zealand context ................................................................. 12
    2.1.2.1 Establishment of the RTLB service ........................................... 17
    2.1.2.2 RTLB Professional Development Programme 1998-2010 ....... 20
    2.1.2.3 Challenges............................................................................... 24
  2.2 Effective consultation for inclusive practice ........................................ 25
    2.2.1 CPS and the RTLB professional development programme .......... 27
      2.2.1.1 Characteristics of each phase ................................................. 29
  2.3 Consultant expertise and inclusive teaching ...................................... 35
  2.5 Current research .................................................................................... 41

Chapter Three: Research Design .................................................................. 47
3.0 Introduction and Rationale ....................................................................... 47
3.1 Case Study Approach ............................................................................. 49
3.2 Interviews .................................................................................................. 52
3.3 The Studies that Contribute to this Thesis ......................................... 54
  3.3.1 Setting the Scene: Exploratory Study .............................................. 54

Chapter Four: Methodology ........................................................................... 56
4.0 Introduction .................................................................................................. 56
4.1 Background: Exploratory study conducted prior to the research for the thesis ............................................................... 57
4.2 Study 1: Retrospective Cases ................................................................. 59
  4.2.1 Study 1: Design .............................................................................. 59
  4.2.2 Ethical Procedures ........................................................................... 64
  4.2.3 Data Generating Strategies: Interviews and Rating Scales .......... 64
6.2 Inhibiting Factors .................................................................................................................. 142
6.2.1 Structural Factors ............................................................................................................ 142
6.2.2 RTLB and Teacher Factors ............................................................................................... 144
6.3 Summary .................................................................................................................................. 147

Chapter Seven: Practice Vignettes ............................................................................................. 148
7.0 Introduction ............................................................................................................................. 148
7.1 Vignette 1: Robyn (RTLB) and Tamara (Teacher) ............................................................... 148
  7.1.1 Context for Robyn’s Work ................................................................................................. 149
  7.1.2 Case Overview .................................................................................................................. 149
7.2 Vignette 2: RTLB Mary with Teachers Carla and Jenny ....................................................... 166
  7.2.1 Context of Mary’s Work .................................................................................................... 166
  7.2.2 Case Overview .................................................................................................................. 167
7.3 Summary .................................................................................................................................. 176

Chapter Eight: Discussion ............................................................................................................. 177
8.0 Introduction ............................................................................................................................. 177
8.1 Contribution to the field .......................................................................................................... 185
8.2 Limitations ............................................................................................................................... 186
8.3 Implications for professional development providers, policy and future research ............ 187

References ..................................................................................................................................... 190

Appendices ...................................................................................................................................... 223
Appendix A: ................................................................................................................................. 224
Appendix Bi: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form .................................................. 225
Appendix Bii: Entry Meeting Checklist ....................................................................................... 229
Appendix Biii: Feedback Meeting Checklist .................................................................................. 233
Appendix C: Instructional Environment diagrams adapted from Ysseldyke & Christenson (1993)............................................................................................................................................. 234
Appendix D: Study 2 Overview of Process and Procedures .......................................................... 236
Appendix E: Ei: RTLB Entry Meeting Notes ............................................................................... 241
  Eii: Sample Teacher’s Recording Sheet (frequency of behaviour) ............................................. 243
  Eiii: Feedback Meeting Data: Observations .............................................................................. 244
  Eiva: Feedback Meeting Summary Data, Agreed Goals & Intervention Plan........................ 246
  Eivb: Feedback Meeting: Resilience Wheel with Annotations ............................................... 248
  Ev: Feedback Meeting: Summary of Antecedents and Target Areas ..................................... 249
  Evi: Sample Student Self-Reflection Sheet ................................................................................ 251
  Evii: Monitoring & Evaluation: Summary of Pre-and Post-intervention Data ....................... 252
Appendix F: Vignette 2 Supporting Documents ........................................................................... 254
List of Figures

Figure 1. Collaborative problem solving process: Key phases and considerations. ...28

Figure 2. Overview of the components underpinning RTLB practice with expected outcomes. ..................................................................................................................35

Figure 3. Schematic overview of integrated model of school consultation. ..........44

Figure 4. Exploring and analysing reported recollections of contrasting cases. ....62

Figure 5. Ratings of RTLB and Teacher perceptions of professional relationships in type I and II cases. ........................................................................................................89

Figure 6. Ratings of RTLB and Teacher perceptions of teacher engagement during the four collaborative problem-solving (CPS) phases in type I and II cases. .......91

Figure 7. Ratings of inclusive interventions described by RTLB and Teachers in type I and II cases................................................................................................................92

Figure 8. Ratings of school policy and inclusion described by Senior Leaders in type I and II cases........................................................................................................94

Figure 9. Ratings of RTLB, Teacher, and Senior Leader perceptions of professional relationships in type I and II cases. .................................................................95

Figure 10. Senior leader perceptions of RTLB commitment and effectiveness in type I and II cases........................................................................................................96

Figure 11. Senior Leader perceptions of RTLB skills and knowledge in type I and II cases..............................................................................................................96

Figure 12. RTLB perception of support from Cluster Management, Senior Leaders and other staff.................................................................................................105

Figure 13. RTLB perceptions of support from RTLB colleagues. .................106

Figure 14. RTLB and teacher perceptions of support from each other..............107

Figure 15. Respective RTLB & Teacher perceptions of their professional relationships at two points (I & II) in the CPS process.................................119

Figure 16. RTLB and teacher perceptions of power sharing during problem-solving within target cases...............................................................125

Figure 17. Summary of ratings of teacher and RTLB perceptions of the extent of responsibility shared between them across CPS phases. .........................128
Figure 18. RTLB and teacher perceptions of each other’s commitment to the CPS process............................................................................................................. 136

Figure 19. RTLB and teacher satisfaction with the CPS process across phases and outcomes for each case. ............................................................................................................. 138
List of Tables

Table 1. A comparison of two studies designed to examine collaborative problem-solving for inclusive teaching. ..........................................................57

Table 2. Inter-rater reliability across RTLB, teacher and senior staff member transcripts ...............................................................................71

Table 3. Overview of case participants and referral concerns across nine cases involving RTLB- Teacher collaborative problem solving ..............................................79

Table 4. Overview of sources of data from each participant combination and meeting or interview .................................................................................81

Table 5. Overview of researcher-participant interviews in which selected dimensions of collaborative problem-solving were discussed and rated ..................85

Table 6. Examples of codes used to indicate quotes from transcripts of case meetings and interviews with the researcher .........................................................87

Table 7. Overview of concerns and interventions across nine cases involving RTLB-Teacher collaborative problem-solving) .......................................................117

Table 8. Overview of ratings in relation to perceptions of teacher and RTLB responsibility expressed as percentages .................................................................127
Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction and Overview of the Research

Special education consultants, termed Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), were introduced in New Zealand in 1998 as a consequence of the *Special Education 2000* policy (*SE 2000*). Over 750 positions were established within designated geographical clusters of schools nationwide, comprising an amalgam of approximately 500 currently employed special education itinerant teachers and 250 newly recruited staff. The new roles required RTLB to assist school leaders to develop inclusive school-wide approaches to teaching and learning, as well as supporting classroom teachers to work inclusively. RTLB were required to undertake professional learning, (completing a Graduate or Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Special Needs Resource Teaching)) from a consortium of universities while they worked in schools. One of the key components of this qualification was to learn to use a collaborative problem-solving (CPS) model of inclusive education service when responding to school referrals. RTLB were envisaged as change agents who would build school and teacher capability to achieve successful outcomes for all learners. This included working alongside teachers to articulate issues of concern, examining their own practice with a critical lens, and using and acting on data when designing interventions (the responsive teacher model) rather than an approach which abdicated teacher responsibility by attributing learning or behavioural issues to factors within the child (the student deficit model).

I had an interest in exploring this area further from a research perspective but also for personal and professional reasons. My interest in collaborative problem-solving and advocacy for inclusive practice in schools have been ongoing for a number of years in a range of roles as a primary teacher, resource teacher of the deaf, psychologist, tertiary educator and professional learning and development facilitator. I have practised according to the model myself and found it particularly useful in a national project focused on enhancing effective practice in special education across ten schools (primary, secondary, special and regular). I have also played a key role in the development and delivery of the RTLB programme since 1999 including the role of National Director for the consortium of
three universities involved in this initiative. The research could provide useful feedback on
transfer of skills from the University RTLB programme and findings would be used to
enhance the content and assignments.

This thesis focussed on the extent to which the responsive teacher, CPS model,
(taught in the qualification), was followed in practice. It examined the critical factors
influencing effective RTLB implementation and achievement of inclusive outcomes
which addressed the learning needs of students. An earlier exploratory study carried out
by the author (Walker, 2001, 2003), found that a sample of trained RTLB perceived they
had assisted some teachers to shift from a student focus to a teacher focus with respect to
some students. Facilitating and inhibiting factors were elicited through interviews with
RTLB and teachers. However, insufficient information was given about how the shift
actually occurred. More detailed data were needed about the practices and underlying
beliefs related to the presence or absence of the reported inclusive practices involving
teachers. Many RTLB had operated under the withdrawal and remediate system prior to
being appointed as RTLB. Although the initial study was informal in nature, the results
informed the development of a more structured and elaborate research design for the
studies in this thesis.

Two studies were undertaken to determine the critical aspects that enabled RTLB to
employ teacher-responsive rather than student deficit-focussed strategies in their work
with teachers. Both studies were designed to capture and understand salient features of
RTLB practice during complex collaborative problem-solving within field-based
contexts, (i.e., the degree of engagement of the teacher and interactions between RTLB
and teachers; the nature of the professional relationship between the RTLB and teacher,
the establishment and maintenance of this relationship during the selected cases; the
extent of inclusive practice during the intervention phase; and the impact on teachers and
students).

The first study explored and documented contrasting examples of professional practice
from a sample of trained RTLB, teachers and senior school leaders with whom they
worked. Participants were asked to recall two contrasting cases that demonstrated recent
work in each model, (i.e., the first case demonstrated the responsive teacher collaborative
problem solving model (designated Type II) and the second case was one where, despite
the intention to use the CPS model, RTLB reverted to a more traditional student deficit-focused approach (designated Type I).

Results of Study 1 in turn informed the design of Study 2 which focussed on success case studies of current RTLB and teacher collaborative problem-solving practice. Studies 1 and 2 were designed to contribute to an in-depth understanding of the practice of two groups of RTLB practitioners as well as provide information on the impact of those practices on those involved. The second study explored the collaborative nature of the consulting relationship between RTLB and teachers during problem-solving of current cases. The focus was on the nature and significance of the problem solving process for a sample of RTLB who believed they were practising according to the CPS model, by working to enhance regular class teachers’ ability to cater for a range of students within their classrooms. Evidence of: professional relationships, engagement of teachers throughout the process, inclusive practice by the teacher during the intervention phase, the use of the collaborative problem solving process and effectiveness of the intervention was documented and analysed.

In Study 2, case data were gathered from transcripts of a series of key field-based meetings between RTLB and teachers as well as from researcher interviews with RTLB and teachers reflecting on their problem-solving practices and attempts to use the collaborative problem-solving process. Interviews were complemented with data from rating scales as they participated in each case. Transcripts of meetings provided data at three key points in the process: 1. entry, 2. feedback and intervention planning, and 3. monitoring and evaluation of the intervention and outcomes. Subsequent semi-structured interviews facilitated RTLB and teacher reflection on these meetings and led to identification of factors that facilitated or hindered effective collaborative problem-solving practices and productive outcomes for students and teachers.

I anticipated that by working across several cases involving RTLB and school personnel, I would be able to synthesise findings about the practice of these RTLB in particular contexts. Collectively, the cases could be instrumental in providing data that allowed for the emergence and discussion of themes and theorising about relationships and process. This approach was considered to be particularly appropriate given the complex nature of the field-based practice in which RTLB engage and the need for a strategy that
could capture high levels of interpersonal communication, the meaning of those interactions for participants and the opportunities for professional learning. To date, research into consultation has also placed insufficient emphasis on field-based practice (Brown, 2008; Friend, 2008; Kratochwill et al., 2008; Noell & Witt, 1999). The studies in this thesis were designed to assist in addressing this gap.

A qualitative approach was deemed the most suitable as that it enables the description of processes, participants and relationships, all of which are important in this study. A case study approach was the form or style of research selected while interview and transcript analysis were the main data gathering strategies in this thesis.

1.1 Overview of the Thesis

Chapter 1 provides a brief introduction to the thesis and an overview of the chapters that follow. Chapter 2 draws on national and international literature about developments in special education leading to more inclusive policies and the establishment of the RTLB service. The second part of this chapter focuses more on collaborative problem solving characteristics and implications for fostering inclusive practice as well as professional learning and coaching.

Chapter 3 describes the research design and rationale for this choice. Chapter 4 outlines how the research questions were investigated, describes how participants were selected, the data generating strategies used, and interview format for Study 1 (Retrospective Cases) and Study 2 (Collaborative Cases). Findings for Study 1 are presented in Chapters 5 and for Study 2, in Chapters 6 and 7.

Chapter 5 presents the Study 1 retrospective cases findings based on my semi-structured interviews with RTLB, teachers and senior leaders about their perceptions of practice during problem-solving within different school contexts. The results include RTLB and teacher perceptions across the four phases of the problem-solving process: data gathering (entry and assessment); pre-intervention data analysis and interpretation (problem-solving, based on analysis and synthesis of assessment and observational data, and exploration of strategies); intervention; and, post-intervention data analysis (monitoring and evaluation). I used this as a framework within which to seek information
about the extent of teacher engagement and power sharing. This chapter concludes with a vignette illustrating one RTLB’s experience in two schools. Two cases, one with successful outcomes and one which was unresolved, are outlined to illustrate the complexity of the factors that contribute to the success or otherwise of RTLB use of the collaborative problem-solving model.

Study 1 focused on RTLB, teacher and senior leader perceptions and recall of cases where the RTLB had employed either inclusive or non-inclusive approaches to referrals. However, although RTLB and teacher recollections and perceptions about the joint problem-solving in the cases were consistent, this did not constitute evidence about the actual practices and outcomes. Collaborative problem-solving (CPS) is a complex, dynamic process with interrelated components. Furthermore, previous research and Study 1 results suggest that there may be critical factors which contribute to its successful implementation. Study 2 was designed to address a gap in research by exploring the actual (rather than espoused) practice of a group of RTLB working collaboratively with regular classroom teachers to resolve problems. Findings from Study 2 collaborative current cases are presented in Chapter 6.

Examination of the data suggested eight main factors facilitated the implementation of a CPS approach. These were: positive professional relationships between the RTLB and teacher, engagement through power sharing, acknowledgement of each other’s perspectives, defining and sharing responsibilities, RTLB confidence in advocating for the CPS model, teacher and RTLB commitment to working collaboratively, satisfaction with the process and outcomes, and, alignment between school policy, the RTLB programme and practice.

As Study 2 included a purposive sample of RTLB who believed in the CPS approach, were willing to record evidence of their practice and reflect on it, inhibitors and constraints were less evident for the selected Study 2 cases than in Study 1. However, RTLB commented on issues encountered and on experiences they had in other schools or clusters. Inhibiting factors were often the converse of the facilitating factors. Inhibiting factors are described under the following sub-headings: structural factors, RTLB and teacher factors. Chapter 7 provides a description and analysis of two in-depth case vignettes that demonstrate in a richer way how the CPS approach operated in two
contrasting contexts. The work context and referral of RTLB Robyn in vignette 1 provides a strong contrast with that of Mary, in vignette 2. Robyn was a sole RTLB in a rural cluster while Mary was in a team of five RTLB working within a large urban cluster. Robyn’s referral was initially for a specific student but the intervention involved both individual and class strategies. Mary’s referral involved a syndicate of two teachers. The vignettes demonstrate Robyn’s and Mary’s practice and the resulting teacher professional learning that occurred during the collaborative problem-solving process. Chapter 8 discusses the major findings from the research. Limitations of the project and the implications for future research are identified.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

There have been significant changes internationally in education over the past three decades that have impacted not only on the roles and responsibilities of educational professionals, but also on practices in both special and general education. These changes are in relation to: access to education in regular mainstream schools; how learning and behaviour issues are conceptualised and addressed; and, catering for a wider range of diverse needs in regular education classes, (i.e., taking the ‘special’ out of special education). In recent years there have been concentrated efforts to improve student achievement through the improvement of teaching rather than by focusing attention on aspects that have less impact on student learning such as administrative reforms. Until relatively recently there has not been the expectation that all children will be successful learners.

The thesis begins with a historical overview of government policy towards the education of children with special needs, with most focus on the changes in the past two decades. It then describes the model by which practising teachers were professionally developed to enable them to assist other teachers to cater more effectively for the needs of these students in their classrooms. This model “produced” a new category of teacher: the RTLB. I describe the intentions of the professional learning programme and the problem-solving approach that this programme intended RTLB to use in their consultant special education work in schools. In this description I include some key research about the extent to which adults are able to utilise learning from professional programmes in their later practice.

2.1 Historical overview

The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) that arose out of the Salamanca World Conference in Special Needs Education is arguably the most significant international document in the field of special needs. This statement argued that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the “most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes,
building an inclusive society and achieving education for all.” “… It acknowledged that large numbers of vulnerable and marginalized groups of learners were excluded from education systems worldwide (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). The statement included the following assertions:

- every child has a basic right to education;
- every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs;
- education services should take into account these diverse characteristics and needs;
- those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools;
- regular schools with an inclusive ethos are the most effective way to combat discriminatory attitudes, create welcoming and inclusive communities and achieve education for all.

Furthermore, it suggested that such schools can provide an effective education for the majority of children to improve the efficiency and ultimate cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994). This had considerable influence in several countries over the ensuing decade and beyond (Ainscow et al., 2006, 2008; Artiles, Kozleski, & Waitoller, 2011; Mittler, 2000, 2005; Peters, 2007).

There have been two major paradigm shifts in the way proponents of the inclusive model have influenced special education policy and practice. The first is the shift away from the provision of separate educational services and toward inclusive educational services that incorporate appropriate supports to meet all students’ needs in the same general educational contexts (Florian, 2007; Jackson & Panyan, 2002; Mitchell, 2010).

The second paradigm shift is how student learning and behavioural issues tend to be conceptualised and addressed. Previously, services were provided which aligned with the accepted view that difficulties were perceived to arise primarily out of deficits within the students themselves, which led to a model of diagnosis and remediation, and often an accompanying label that pathologised the characteristics of students who differed from
“normal”. Each of these shifts has had implications for the policies and services provided for students who have special education needs. These shifts are described briefly in the following paragraphs and elaborated further following the initial descriptions.

Learning is increasingly conceptualised as an interactive and contextualised process (Carrington & MacArthur, 2012; Kershner, 2009). The socio-cultural context of New Zealand classrooms and the importance of the social context of relationships in teaching and learning have been highlighted and researched by Alton-Lee (2003). Positioning learning difficulties or troublesome behaviours within learners is an inadequate explanation because there has also been greater recognition of the role that social and environmental contexts play in influencing student learning and behaviour (Barnett, Lentz, Bauer, Macmann, Stollar, & Ehrhardt, 1997; Ryndak, 2002). Increasingly, the focus now emphasises understanding the interrelationships between students and their learning environments when considering ways of preventing or reducing learning and behavioural difficulties. A socio-cultural position on learning underpins the view that classroom contexts that can support “all student…learning needs, and in particular the needs of those who experience difficulties, should be responsive” (Glynn et al., 2006, p. 40). Responsive strategies encourage engagement of and initiation by learners. Opportunities are provided for peer support through shared and reciprocal activities where a more skilled child assists a less skilled one. Although there are different views on the extent to which students manage their own learning (Rogoff, 2003), there is considerable support for the Vygotskian concept of scaffolding where initial support is gradually reduced and finally withdrawn once the child can manage independently (Bruner, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978).

As a result of these two trends/shifts, many students who would previously have been removed from general education are now more likely be in mainstream classrooms with the expectation that they will receive positive supports to allow them to be successful. There is growing policy recognition of a broader view of inclusion that positions schools as places where all students are valued members (Capper & Keyes, 1999; Sergiovanni,1996), and where the mainstream system accepts its responsibility to educate all of the children and young people who enter its doors, not just those who ‘fit’ the system. The Review of Special Education (2010) states that “All students are legally entitled to go to their local school” (p.10) . Where education systems commit to the provision of an optimal
educational opportunity for all students, the focus is slowly moving away from an exclusive paradigm and toward inclusive schools with the intention that students with and without disabilities will have equal opportunity to have their educational needs met within general mainstream education (Brown & Kennedy, 2001). This requires teachers, specialists and school leaders to develop knowledge, skills and dispositions to address the many domains of diversity that are present in the general education classroom (Alton-Lee, 2003; Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn, & Christenson, 2006; Mitchell, 2010). This review now moves to deepen the discussion on the term ‘inclusive education’ and to unpack some of the key issues and debates inherent in the term.

2.1.1 Inclusive education: What does it mean?

Despite international trends towards inclusion and local policy supporting students’ entitlements to the services and supports to enable them to access the New Zealand curriculum in their local school, there is considerable confusion around the term and lack of clarity evident in the literature as well as in policy documents. Terms are often ambiguous or not defined at all, leading to a range of interpretations and debate. Rouse and Florian (1996) noted that one of the problematic features of this debate [about inclusion], however, is that different people have different views about inclusion and different visions of the inclusive school. It is hardly surprising therefore that the inclusive education debate is full of confusion because it has inherited the paradoxes and contradictions of special education itself (p. 71).

Several definitions acknowledge the role of the school leader in promoting and supporting inclusive practices, given that “inclusion is a school-wide reform that integrates programs and blends resources so that all students can benefit” (Doyle, 2004, p. 362). In the United Kingdom, several Local Education Authorities have developed their own definitions taking into account local circumstances, cultures and history. Nevertheless, despite local differences, four particular elements feature in British policy documents describing inclusion as:

- a process (i.e., a never ending search to find better ways of responding to diversity);
• involving the identification and removal of barriers (which requires using appropriate evidence to stimulate creativity and problem solving);

• being about the presence (i.e., where and how often students attend), participation (the quality of the experiences) and achievement of all students (i.e., learning outcomes across the curriculum);

• involving a particular emphasis on groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or underachievement (Ainscow et al., 2003).

Research projects carried out by Ainscow and his colleagues (2003, 2004, 2006) suggest that effective inclusive schools are diverse problem solving organisations with a common mission that emphasises learning for all students. They employ and support teachers and other staff who are committed to working together to create and maintain a climate conducive to learning. The responsibility for all students is shared. Effective inclusive schools acknowledge that such a commitment requires clear policies, administrative leadership and long-term professional development. Because schools are diverse, dynamic places, each with its own history and culture, there are different ways of achieving effective inclusive schools. A central assumption relates to Ainscow’s working definition of educational inclusion, which is seen in terms of the presence, participation and achievement of all students in local mainstream schools, rather than simply focusing on any one group of vulnerable learners. Booth (2011b) also states that inclusion is “a never-ending process of increasing participation for everyone…and challenging and reducing all forms of exclusion” (p. 304). These definitions and research have influenced trends in several countries, including New Zealand.

The Index for Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2011) is seen as an effective tool for developing inclusive school communities through a process of school review and development of inclusive culture, policy and practice (Bourke, Holden, & Dharan, 2007; Carrington, 2006). While this Index has been found to be useful in some New Zealand schools, the Ministry of Education has recently commissioned the New Zealand Council for Educational Research to develop an Inclusive Practices Tool (2012) with school leader, teacher, student and community surveys available on-line or in hard copy. This tool is intended to encourage and support school review of inclusive policies and practices.
pilot version is available for use now with the final version available later this year. This is one of a number of new initiatives supporting the special education strategy *Success for All: Every School, Every Child* (Ministry of Education, 2010).

### 2.1.2 The New Zealand context

The movement toward inclusive education has also occurred in New Zealand. Frequent reviews and major policy changes have characterised special education over the past twelve years (Thomson, Brown, Jones & Manins, 2000; Mitchell, 2000) resulting in debate of issues of concern to both general and special education. Evans (2000) stated that ‘modern special education is not only complex but rife with dialectical contradictions’ (p.5). The *SE 2000* policy (Ministry of Education, 1996) advocates an ecological, inclusive model and has resulted in increased non-categorical educational support funding to schools to establish school-based programmes. However, despite this policy, much service delivery is organised around syndromes or disorders and categories of disability or impairment. The same policy also funds segregated placements.

In a conceptual review of issues involved in the delivery of special education in New Zealand, Moore, Anderson, Timperley, Glynn, Macfarlane, Brown and Thomson, (1999) outlined a paradigm shift for the management of special education within the new policy, a shift away from the traditionally dominant deficit/functional limitations perspective to an inclusive/ecological one. The traditional paradigm assumed that the principal difficulties of people with disabilities resided within those individuals. The task of educators was to fix, improve or compensate for these deficits which required regular classroom teachers and schools to adapt minimally, if at all to student needs (Skrtic, 1995; Thomson, 1998). Even today, the provision of teacher aides (intended to support teachers to ensure that students successfully access the curriculum), is funded as portable entitlements carried by individual students, with the result that teaching responsibility is frequently diverted from the classroom teacher to low-paid, temporary, untrained people (NZCER, 2007).

In contrast, the ecological paradigm recognises that factors external to individuals also impact on people with disabilities. Thus the contexts that surround an individual enable or constrain their development. Contextual factors play a contributing role. The task of educators working within this paradigm is to alter, adapt and improve educational
organisations and environments to meet the needs of all students. Such adaptation is a necessary pre-condition for the successful inclusion of all students in regular education (Udvari-Solnar, 1994, 1995).

The establishment in 1975 of Guidance and Learning Units (Thomas & Glynn, 1976) signalled the emergence of an ecological model of support in New Zealand. Specially trained teachers provided in-class support for students with significant learning and behavioural difficulties. These teachers were also supported by a management committee and psychologists. The focus included not only the student’s current performance but also the influence of contextual factors such as the academic programme, teacher and peer behaviour. This model was based on the theory of applied behaviour analysis that recognises the role of the environment in shaping behaviour. Nevertheless the services were directed towards hands-on support of students, rather than increasing the classroom teacher’s abilities to cater for these children as part of their day-to-day programme.

The concept of mainstreaming gained impetus during the 1980s which is evident in the Department of Education policy statement: ‘…that students with special needs should lead as normal a life as possible, that resources should be allocated on the basis of individual need rather than of a student’s membership of a category of handicap…’ (New Zealand Education Gazette, May 2, 1988). This led to the use of new terms— integration and mainstreaming.

Integration or mainstreaming is the process of bringing students who have previously been excluded or segregated from the mainstream of education into regular schools. While the mainstreaming movement was intended to educate students with specific learning or behavioural needs into regular education classes, a continuum of services was still maintained. These ranged from segregated residential and day special schools to attached units, integration in a regular class for part of a day to full integration. The intention was for a gradual transfer of students and resources to the mainstream (Brown & Thomson, 1988). This transfer was successful in parts of New Zealand (e.g. Wellington) where Department of Education psychologists, who were gatekeepers to special schools and segregated settings, were committed to supporting students in mainstream classes. In other parts of New Zealand, educational psychologists continued referring students to segregated settings, with the result that there is a dual system in places such as Auckland.
The inclusive education initiative arose out of the mainstreaming movement as well as changes brought about by civil rights, views about social justice and equity as well as the emerging view of the social construction of learning. However, inclusion went further than mainstreaming, requiring the organisational structures to change to meet the needs of diverse learners. Thomson (1998) noted that inclusion was not just an education process or a model of service delivery. It was also a philosophical concept embracing values, beliefs and attitudes about justice, equality, equity, freedom and human dignity (Booth, 2011; Karagiannis, Stainback, & Stainback, 1996). Slee (2011) described the process of schooling as an apprenticeship in democracy, with inclusion being a prerequisite of a democratic education. He views inclusion “as an ethical project and political position that challenges the attachment of hierarchical values to people that lead to some children and young people being considered more worthy than others” (MacArthur, 2013, p.14).

The Draft Review of Special Education (Department of Education, 1987) set the scene for fundamental changes in special education. It suggested a significant change, proposing the following fundamental principles for special education:

- universal;
- integral with other education programmes;
- lifelong;
- unified across sectors, home and school;
- needs based; and,
- effective and accountable.

The Draft Review led to alterations in the Education Amendment Act (1989), ensuring all children in New Zealand would receive education as of right. It also set the scene for fundamental changes in special education recommending that “to achieve the ultimate aim of normalisation through mainstreaming it will be necessary to move to a single stream of education with special education acting as a support service.” (p.93) In order to achieve
this aim, 31 non-sequential steps to development were suggested, eight of which are outlined below:

- Decisions on educational planning include resource allocations to be developed as far as possible for local action within national guidelines. (iv)

- The introduction of procedures whereby parents and the community can become more involved in the planning and participation in special education. This included ensuring that cultural and ethnic differences were catered for. (v)

- A comprehensive review of pre-service, specialist and in-service training for all involved in special education, including non-teaching staff. (vi)

- The recognition of educational practice based on individually assessed needs and teaching programmes provided in a form that permits accountability. (vii)

- The establishment of a significant number of special education support units based upon a guidance unit model and aimed at the generic support for students with special teaching needs already in regular educational facilities. (viii) (Department of Education, 1987, p 93)

Students with disabilities were primarily catered for in withdrawal units or special schools until the 1980s. Although some special classes and schools still exist, many were disestablished between 1980 and 2000. Brown and Thomson (1988) noted that the initial move from segregation to inclusion was uneven across the country. However, Resource Teachers Special Needs (RTSN) positions were created where units were phased out. RTSN were released to support students in mainstream classrooms.

In order to facilitate the implementation of the mainstreaming policy, a new initiative, Support Teams within schools, was proposed in 1987. Funding from the closure of a residential school for children with behavioural and learning difficulties was used to assist the implementation of this initiative from 1988. This was a carefully implemented model, supported by central administration. Moore, Glynn and Gold (1993, p.195) identified six distinguishing characteristics of this model of special education service delivery:
1. [An emphasis on] a team approach to meeting teacher and student needs within the school.

2. Intervention is provided in the regular classroom and is not a withdrawal/remedial process.

3. Assistance from the Support Teacher is primarily consultative. Classroom teachers remain responsible for the continued education and management of their students.

4. Intervention consists of a collaborative process of assessment, problem analysis, planning, implementation, and systematic evaluation.

5. Parents are involved as fully as they wish in all stages of the assessment, intervention and evaluation process.

6. A major focus of the work of the Support Teams is on the empowerment of teachers – through skill development, collaborative problem resolution, and support – so that they can deal more effectively with individual differences in their own class.

In 1991, the researchers, Moore, Glynn and Gold (1993), surveyed the first 69 schools to check on the extent of implementation of the Support Team initiative. Respondents were uniformly positive about the work of the support teacher in assisting children with special needs within their schools, and were also enthusiastic to see the resource maintained. (Moore, Glynn, & Gold, 1993, p.200) However, the authors noted several difficulties with establishment and programme adherence. Where Support teachers received professional development and were supported by an active management committee, they were more likely to engage in the intended in-class support and less likely to have their role “eroded into pupil withdrawal and one-to-one remedial tutoring” (Moore, Glynn, & Gold, 1993, p. 201). In schools where there was inadequate teacher selection and training or management committee support, there tended to be a drift back to the functional limitations paradigm focus on individual deficits and away from adapting curriculum, classroom instruction or environments.
New Zealand then experienced major educational restructuring designed to separate policy from operations and school from central control. Following the implementation of *Tomorrow's Schools* in 1990, authority was devolved to individual schools making the implementation of a national special education policy difficult. Recommendations from the Draft Review of Special Education were put on hold during this time. The policy documents associated with these changes (National Administration Guidelines, National Education Guidelines and the New Zealand Curriculum Framework), did not specifically address special education. However, they clearly recognised the diversity of New Zealand society and gave direction towards an inclusive system of education (Ministry of Education, 1993). Embedded within these documents was the recognition of equity and equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity. There was an emphasis on problem solving by analysing barriers to learning and achievement, and working towards removing structural and organisational barriers. These policies were clearly designed to improve learning opportunities for all students, particularly those with special needs, many of whom had been segregated previously (Ministry of Education, 1997).

The co-existence of the two paradigms is still reflected in the diversity of service delivery. However, the Ministry of Education policy on Special Education (*SE2000*) was a reform which aimed “to achieve, over the [past] decade, a world class inclusive education system that provides learning opportunities of equal quality to all students” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.5). One of the aims of the policy was to meet the educational needs of all students within the regular school setting (Ministry of Education, 1998). This was reflected in increased non-categorical educational support funding (Special Education Grant) to students with moderate needs and the creation of consultant special educators known as Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour (RTLB). Previous initiatives (e.g., Guidance and Learning Unit and Support Team models), laid the groundwork for the evolution of the current inclusive services. However, the policy document did not define inclusive education explicitly, resulting in different interpretations about the nature and extent of what is meant by inclusion.

2.1.2.1 Establishment of the RTLB service

Seven hundred and twenty-five RTLB positions have been established nationwide since 1998. Five hundred of these were originally special education teachers who were
translated into RTLB. Some of these teachers had been in Guidance and Learning Unit teachers or Resource Teachers of Special Needs who itinerated within one or more schools. Others taught in special classes. In addition, approximately 225 positions were created to ensure a teacher: student ratio of 1:750 (Cabinet Paper, November 1997). This service was intended to provide itinerant specialist support to schools by working with regular class teachers to assist them to ensure success for Year 0-10 students with ‘moderate’ learning and behavioural difficulties (Ministry of Education, 1998), although the term moderate has never been defined explicitly in any of the policy documents. The service was intended to support classroom teachers to teach the least successful thirty percent of the school population. Other services exist for those students with greater than moderate needs (i.e., those with high needs, low incidence disabilities such as vision impairments or deafness). These special education consultants work across a designated geographical cluster of schools and each is employed by a school board within that cluster.

The Ministry of Education determined geographical clusters of schools when the SE 2000 policy was introduced in 1998. RTLB were allocated to clusters “on a formula basis that reflected the student population, schools’ deciles, as well as other factors including isolation and the number of small schools in a cluster.

RTLB provide service to a cluster of schools, with the allocation of staffing based on a ratio of RTLB to cluster population, determined and reported on annually. … RTLB have a pivotal role to play in assisting cluster school to meet these requirements [National Administration Guidelines.] (2-1, Ministry of Education, Effective governance and management and practice, 2003).

Each cluster is responsible for developing its own management structure with respect to management and governance. “The cluster committee sets the policies that govern the way the cluster and the RTLB will work.” (2-3, Ministry of Education, 2003).

As Glynn (1998) stated: “The RTLB has the challenging task of supporting all those ‘other’ teachers to take up their individual and collective responsibility for the learning and behaviour of all the students in their classes and schools” (p. 5). This approach of working with others as agents of change is consistent with the ecological paradigm that recognises that the learning and behaviour of students is a result of the interaction between the student
and the learning context. If a change is to occur, it will be as a result of changes in this interrelationship. The class teacher is crucial to this process (Thomson et al., 2003), as is the degree that school leaders accept the principle that they are responsible for the learning of all of the children in their school. “Effective leadership at the local level can contribute to the success of inclusive education policies” (Morton et al., 2012, p. 53). Riehl (2000) found that successful change was more likely when the vision was shared between government, school leaders, teachers and the community. She highlighted the key role principals have to play, as educational leaders, in “fostering new meanings about diversity, promoting inclusive practices within schools, and building connections between schools and communities” (Riehl, 2000, p. 59).

Cuban (1996), Forlin (2006), Kershner (2009) and Sapon-Shevin (1996), among others, claim that inclusive education reform will be achieved by changing the nature of the general education classroom. Regular class teachers are therefore central to the success of inclusive teaching. Traditional ‘pull-out’/withdrawal models have been criticised on the grounds that they provided no or insufficient support for teachers. There were also problems with co-ordination, instructional congruence and transfer of learning from the remedial setting to the regular classroom (Idol et al., 1995; Mitchell, 2010). Effective implementation of the consultation process at the class level has the potential to overcome these problems, enhance teachers’ ability to cater for diverse students in inclusive settings, and thereby create lasting change in educational practice (Friend, 2008; Jordan, 1994; McNab, 2009; Mentis, Quinn & Ryba, 2005).

The RTLB initiative includes teacher development and support. As a group, these consultant special educators were pivotal to encouraging equitable, inclusive education in New Zealand (Walker et al., 2000). Assisting teachers to establish inclusive learning environments demands a high degree of professional expertise, knowledge and experience. Consultants are expected to work effectively within school systems and to use collaborative problem solving to facilitate change where necessary. This requires an ability to negotiate, facilitate and co-ordinate changes in school systems and routines. Building networks with schools, their communities and other relevant professionals may assist consultants in putting effective strategies and programs into place that will enhance learning outcomes for all students.
Several authors have indicated a range of beliefs, skills, and experience, together with an understanding of base theory, which constitute the necessary background for consulting school psychologists (Berliner, 1987; Ervin et al., 2010; Jordan, 1994; Jordan et al., 2010). These same qualities are necessary for RTLB confronted with similar challenges and the implementation of a demanding policy (Thomson, 1998; Brown, 2008).

In relation to their own knowledge and skills in inclusive pedagogies, the resource teachers should be effective practitioners themselves who are knowledgeable about teaching and learning and able to model good practice. They also require:

- an understanding of the philosophy of inclusion and the complexities of this concept, their own beliefs and the implications of these for practice;

- a knowledge of wider school reforms and policies relevant to special and regular education;

- a knowledge of the curriculum and principles of curriculum adaptation;

- an understanding of the organisational systems of schools and principles of change;

- skills in equity pedagogy (i.e., teaching strategies that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, ability/disability and social class groups);

- skills in effective collaborative problem-solving with adults who are responsible for children and young people (school leaders, teachers, parents and caregivers).

The professional development programme for RTLB was developed to build these skills.

2.1.2.2 RTLB Professional Development Programme 1998-2010

Once appointed to RTLB positions, RTLB were required to successfully complete a two year professional development programme, developed and delivered collaboratively by staff from three New Zealand universities under contract to the Ministry of Education
and Group Special Education. The programme, which RTLB completed while working in the role, was comprised of four university papers, which led to either a Graduate or Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Special Needs Resource Teaching) or may have contributed towards a master’s degree in either Education or Special Education, depending on entry qualifications.

The four papers were cyclical in nature and were designed to be taken sequentially in year 1 and concurrently in year 2. They were designed to foster the development of generic abilities and those specific to the role. Mentowski et al.’s (2000) definition captures the range and interrelatedness of the abilities required for the position. They define abilities as “complex combinations of motivations, dispositions, attitudes, values, strategies, behaviours, self-perceptions, and knowledge of concepts and procedures” (p.10).

The following learning outcomes of the programme formed the basis of the RTLB graduate profile, outlined in all course booklets written by the RTLB consortium programme team.

An RTLB will:

1. work to a high professional and ethical standard;
2. work to improve the learning and behavioural outcomes of Māori students;
3. work to ensure equitable educational opportunity for all learners;
4. follow an educational model;
5. work to a collaborative consultation model;
6. be skilled practitioners and promoters of effective teaching skills; and,
7. be reflective practitioners.

One key programme outcome was being ethical and professional. The importance of confidentiality was discussed. Pseudonyms were expected to be used in assignments and when sharing field notes and case details in class. Formal written consent was sought for assignments related to authentic cases. Assignments across all courses included components where RTLB were required to reflect on their practice in relation to research
and their own personal theories. Reflection was a key component of the portfolio in the fourth paper.

The four papers scaffolded the development of the skills and knowledge through face-to-face sessions and assignments requiring field-based practice evidence consistent with the educational model. A key component of the courses was working to improve outcomes for Māori students. Gaining an understanding of other world views, such as Māori, would also assist in clarifying each RTLB’s personal theory and view of their own ethnicity. There were specific assignments and requirements to demonstrate culturally responsive practice in this area within each of the four courses.

The first paper, *Students in context (Te Kuhuna)* examined the philosophy and practice of inclusion compared with mainstreaming, expectations of the RTLB role contrasted with previous roles, and the contexts in which students experience learning and behavioural issues. The processes of ecological assessment and consultation (in particular, the collaborative problem solving process) were introduced.

The second paper, *Classroom Contexts, (Te Putanga)*, further examined the classroom contexts in which students operate and focused on understanding and implementing inclusive teaching programmes, including approaches such as peer tutoring, reciprocal teaching, self and class management strategies and cooperative learning. Overviews of key theories and research related to learning and behaviour, motivation, cognitive behaviourism and information processing theory were also presented and discussed in relation to assessment and interventions options. Not all RTLB had undergraduate papers in education and or psychology.

The third paper, *School and Community Contexts, (Te Raranga)*, examined the impact of school and community systems on individuals operating within these, notably students and teachers. Research on effective school systems, leadership, change and multiculturalism were key components of the curriculum and assignments.

The fourth paper, *Professional Practice, (Te Huarahi)*, involved the development of a professional practice portfolio involving RTLB in the demonstration of effective casework within the ecological, inclusive paradigm. They were required to demonstrate the skills of
a collaborative consultant in working with others to develop shared understandings of the nature of problems based on educational/ ecological data and promote commitment towards related interventions. As RTLB were pivotal to the implementation of the SE 2000 policy, it was essential that they understood what was required of the new role and demonstrated a commitment to applying it. Jones (2010) investigated the introduction and use of this particular portfolio during a four-year action research project. She found that for some RTLB, it acted as “a prompt for reflection and reflective practice that enhanced [their] professionalism … through improved practice, development of a theory of practice, and increased clarity and confidence in their role” (p. 593).

The portfolio was selected as an “authentic performance-based assessment task” (Jones, 2010, p.595) to enable the RTLB to demonstrate their competence in meeting the learning outcomes across three contexts: an individual student, the classroom, (e.g. class or group programmes to support identified students), and, school and community. The third context related to introducing or supporting school policies or systems to support students with learning and/or behavioural needs (RTLB consortium course booklet). RTLB had to select evidence from cases and annotate how each piece demonstrated the learning outcomes with reference to relevant literature and their own personal theory. Reflective statements were a key expectation of each set. RTLB programme team members provided support through modeling and supervision. They also provided “class exercises, a set of prompt questions, [and] coaching in how to engage in critical friendship dialogues to promote reflection on practice and evidence” (Jones, 2010, p.596).

Delivery was via regional block courses, incorporating individual and/or small group tutorials in addition to interactive workshops, and field-based assignments within the clusters of schools in which RTLB work. The professional development programme promoted the RTLB role as a proactive, data-based problem solver working collaboratively with other educational professionals and families to optimize the learning opportunities for students presenting with learning and/or behavioural difficulties. Further details about the CPS process that underpinned RTLB practice may be found in Section 2.2 along with examples of how the professional development programme scaffolded RTLB use of this approach.
The content and philosophy of the university professional development programme were initially supported by the *RTLB governance and management guidelines* (Ministry of Education, 2001) and later, by the *RTLB Policy and Toolkit* (Ministry of Education, 2007), which aligned policy and practice requirements with the professional development programme. This document clarified the requirements of RTLB Management Committees, who oversaw the work of the RTLB, in a more definitive manner than previous policy material which provided guidelines for practice (Ministry of Education, 2001).

The professional development programme had a strong emphasis on evaluating the RTLB ability to perform practical tasks central to the role (Ministry of Education, 2007) within a framework that has long been supported as appropriate for consultant resource teachers (Conoley & Conoley, 1992; Friend, 2008; Idol & West, 1987; West & Cannon, 1988) and was in line with both local and international trends in special education service delivery and effective schooling (Ainscow, 2004; Davies & Prangnell, 1999; Levin, 2008; Robinson et al., 2009; Spedding, 1996; Thomson et al., 2003).

2.1.2.3 Challenges

There were a number of challenges that faced RTLB in carrying out their work as intended in the policy and *Toolkit*. Firstly, the way RTLB were trained and expected to carry out their role as data-based collaborative consultants was not universally accepted or necessarily understood within the practitioner group, nor within the wider educational community. ERO reports in 2004 and 2009 confirmed the variability in governance and management of RTLB and the need for more consistency as well as appropriate supervision once they graduated. Secondly, the competing medical/pathological and educational/ecological paradigms continued to cause challenges for RTLB on a daily basis, from the level of individual casework to that of influencing school systems. There has been no research that examines, in context, the ways that RTLB carry out their work. Timperley et al. (2008) also noted that the skills of facilitators who work with teachers to promote their professional learning was rarely the subject of investigation. This thesis looks at how effective RTLB worked and managed these challenges. A key component of the professional development programme was developing RTLB competence in the collaborative problem-solving model underpinning their practice. The next section looks at this area and related issues in more detail.
2.2 Effective consultation for inclusive practice

Kurpius and Fuqua (1993) pointed out that the way consultation is defined and subsequently operationalised will affect the way it is practised. The focus in this research is on the implementation of a collaborative consultation process which is consistent with the ecological/educational model rather than a functional limitations one or expert model.

The educational model of collaborative consultation is compatible with a view of collaboration including joint responsibility and mutual development of interventions (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2011; Friend & Cook, 1996; Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb & Nevin, 1995). Research indicates that teachers are more likely to work towards providing effective inclusive learning environments for all students if they are engaged in the problem solving process and receive appropriate support when implementing new strategies.

Collaborative problem solving is a systematic way to create solutions to barriers for student success in inclusive classrooms (Hobbs & Westling, 1998; McNab, 2009; Peacock et al., 2010). They reported that when professionals used collaborative problem solving, more problems, antecedents, objectives, and plans were identified than when teachers worked alone. It can also be an effective tool in facilitating student achievement.

Although the benefits of consultation, including collaborative problem-solving, have been described by many, including Caplan (1970), Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (1995), Reinking, Livesay and Kohl (1978), Scott and Smith (1987) and Dettmer et al., (2002), a common definition has not yet been reached. Contradictory findings on the outcomes/effectiveness of consultation have been reported in several studies by Witt et al. (1991) and Wickstrom (1995). Methodological factors may account for the mixed results and the absence of a common definition (Frank & Kratochwill, 2008; Gresham & Kendall, 1987; Noell, Duhon, Gatti, & Connell, 2002; Sheridan, Welch & Orme, 1996).

Jordan (1994), however, maintains there are three goals to collaborative
consultation that can be achieved in a variety of ways:

- To solve an immediate problem;
- To assist the client to master skills and knowledge to prevent and/or respond more effectively to similar, future problems;
- To effect change-to enhance the ways in which teachers conduct their work with problem pupils. (p. 29)

Any effective training programme would need to address all three.

While names and number of stages vary, most descriptions of the consultation process include: data gathering/assessment, problem definition, strategy/intervention selection, implementation, and, monitoring and evaluation, (Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990; Brown, Pryzwansky & Schulte, 2001; Erchul & Martens, 2010; Kurpius, 1978). They all acknowledge the complexity of this process and conceptualise it within a cyclical, problem-solving framework. In many ways the implementation of this approach is very similar to the stages followed in action research, thus each referral undertaken by an RTLB is like a case study.

The most critical components of this approach are problem identification, hypothesis setting and implementing a negotiated evidence-based intervention based on valid data. Practitioners using this approach have been shown to be more effective when they resist the urge (and possible pressure) to come to premature action but rather spend time in problem analysis. Sometimes participants get immersed in what Katz, Earl and Jaafar (2009) have termed ‘activity traps’, moving quickly to finding solutions or feeling productive, with insufficient attention to selecting the right things to do, given the evidence (Earl & Timperley, 2008).

Interpersonal skills also influence the success of the problem solving process. (Brown, Pryzwansky & Schulte, 2011; Peacock et al., 2010) “In addition, trust, respect and belief in the value of collaboration are prerequisites for, as well as outcomes of, collaboration” (Friend & Cook, 1996, p.11).
While there is much discussion from experts in the field about competencies in the consultation process, the database is limited. Brown, Pryzwansky and Schulte (2001, 2011) point out that many of the skills have not been extensively studied and where there are studies, results have been mixed due to inadequate procedures. Commonly mentioned characteristics of effective consultants include the following: heightened awareness of their own values and beliefs as well as an ability to anticipate how these will influence expectations about and approaches to consultation (Caplan, 1970; Conoley & Conoley, 1992; Dougherty, 1990, 2009); an ability to analyse problems from a number of perspectives and facilitate problem-solving with a range of consultees (Henning-Stout, 1993; Kurpius & Fuqua, 1993); an ability to establish relationships and working alliances which requires empathy, genuineness and positive regard (Brown et al., 2001; Horton & Brown, 1990; Kurpius & Rozecki, 1993); a willingness to take interpersonal risks; and, motivation to succeed as indicated by their commitment, determination and persistence to enhance effectiveness (Maher, 1993).

Interactive communication and problem-solving skills, as well as personal characteristics, values and beliefs, originally rated highly in a survey by West and Cannon (1988), continue to be highlighted in the current consultation literature (Brown et al., 2011; Erchul & Martens, 2010; McNab, 2009; Annan & Mentis, 2013; Peacock et al., 2010). However, as Jordan points out (1994, p.99), “while substantive knowledge and technical expertise are required, it is the consultant’s delivery of the role and personal self-confidence that will ultimately ensure success or otherwise”. Tactical flexibility, that is, the ability to analyse problems from many perspectives, along with a strong self-concept, is essential to success in consultation (Bushe & Gibbs, 1990; Hunsaker, 2001; Varney, 1985).

2.2.1 CPS and the RTLB professional development programme

Throughout the two-year professional development programme, a number of teaching approaches were used to introduce and encourage application of the CPS model in RTLB field practice. Details about the CPS phases and process are illustrated below. A description of the ways in which the RTLB programme introduced these has been described in this section. The focus was on using a CPS process to change a problem situation, (i.e., helping the teacher or leader to move from the current undesirable situation
to the desired one or at least moving closer to it). This approach is similar to the action research and inquiry and knowledge-building processes supported by many studies as summarised in several Best Evidence syntheses (e.g., Aitken & Sinnema, 2008: Alton-Lee, 2003, 2008).

Collaborative problem solving requires negotiation and consultation rather than a hierarchy of power. (Carrington & Macarthur, 2012). Allen (2007) also noted the importance of building partnerships which were developed and co-constructed through building respect and trust. Reciprocity, (i.e. the mutual exchange of ideas and information between participants), is central to these partnerships. This involves the recognition that all participants make valid contribution to the partnership in which inclusive decision-making is being promoted. In a collaborative model, shared decisions are made about the following: what participants know already and what they need to know and gather information about; how they will gather and analyse this data to inform decisions about the most appropriate interventions for the particular context and problem situation.

![Diagram of steps in the consultation process]

**Figure 1.** Collaborative problem solving process: Key phases and considerations.
The diagram above is one example that reflects the typical activities and their usual sequence in the problem solving process. The CPS model taught on the RTLB programme was drawn from Graden’s (2004) model used to train psychologists and Tilly et al.’s (2010) integrated model of problem solving. Each of the phases is described in the next section along with examples of how the RTLB professional development programme introduced and scaffolded the development of the skills within each phase.

2.2.1.1 Characteristics of each phase

The Preparation phase occurs before the first meeting and includes the RTLB clarifying their personal theory and role; identifying the skills they bring to the situation and those they need to develop, and, being aware of their own world view and the impact on their interactions.

In the professional development programme, activities and readings were included to help RTLB to clarify their personal theory and their theoretical base, (e.g., interviews, role plays, Korthagen’s Wall activity and explicit assignment components).

The Entry Phase involves initiation of the consulting relationship by establishing contact with the teacher. An entry meeting was defined as one at which the RTLB and teacher discussed the referral, nature of the problem and planned the baseline data gathering phase. Baseline data are basic information gathered before an intervention begins. It was used later to provide a comparison for assessing the impact of the changes employed by the teacher and/or others. During the entry meeting the RTLB and teacher determined the most appropriate data to collect, as well as who would collect it, and when it would be collected. This also included: establishing and clarifying roles and responsibilities, discussion of confidentiality issues, and, establishing an initial hypothesis. This could be at different levels as RTLB could work with individual, class/group referrals or a school-wide systems or syndicate project. RTLB needed to be aware of any cluster and school protocols to follow regarding agreement of responsibilities.

This phase involves two professionals with different areas of expertise engaging in more effective problem solving. Conscious effort is required to set the scene and build a productive working relationship. RTLB professional development programme workshop
activities included discussion about what makes a good collaborative relationship and potential challenges. There were also opportunities for role-playing entry meetings in groups of three to enable one person to observe and give feedback. RTLB were asked to bring authentic case information to these role plays. Taping and analysing an entry meeting also became an assignment in the first course following preliminary findings from Study 2. Assessment of RTLB understanding and application of the entry meeting phase in the field RTLB was based on the quality and relevance of the analysis of and reflection on their meeting data in relation to expectations and best practice identified in the literature. A sample Entry Meeting checklist, used on the professional development programme, may be found in Appendix Bii.

Initial discussion of roles and establishing parameters of relationship is a crucial part of this stage. If this was not clear and mutually acceptable there were likely to be difficulties in later phases or the case might not proceed. The teacher may have been used to an expert or extra pair of hands model in the past. Her/his expectations might be very different to that of the RTLB.

The information gathering phase involves the examination of factors relevant to the problem situation and in the contexts in which the problems are occurring (e.g., classroom and/or playground). Often when additional information is gathered, the original problem statement is discovered to be only a symptom of the real problem. RTLB were encouraged to start with the teacher’s perspective of the situation and then decide jointly what else needed to be gathered. Engaging and involving the teacher in at least some of the data collection was encouraged as this would assist understanding and analysis at the follow-up feedback meeting. Data was to be collected to clarify the problem situation and assist with intervention choice rather than labelling an individual child.

In the professional development programme, issues concerning assumptions and the ladder of inference (Argyris & Schön, 1996) were raised through activities using photos and illustrative scenarios. An overview and analysis of different data gathering techniques was also provided. One of RTLB tasks at this point is to help the teacher step back and view the problem in a more complex way, avoiding early judgements about the information. The choice of data gathered is influenced by the theoretical base of the
consultant which has a significant effect on subsequent stages of the process (i.e., problem
definition and strategies implemented).

Personal theories about the causes of human behaviour and how people change
influence what people look for: deficits in the child or the interactions between the child
and his/her environment. An inflexible belief system can bias observations as people tend
to look for and find what they are looking for. RTLB were encouraged to look for
confirming and disconfirming evidence and to check assumptions through interview and
observation. Assignments and course activities provided opportunities to examine data
gathering techniques that were compatible with an educational/ecological rather than a
deficit one.

From a social constructivist perspective, the problem is viewed not as a result of the
student’s deficits, but as a product of social factors in which he/she participates that create
barriers and limit opportunities for equal participation and/or access to the curriculum.
RTLB and teacher assessment needed to reflect the importance and relevance of
interrelated factors consideration of behaviour and learning in context. “Experienced
educators, whatever their role, build up rich personal encyclopaedias of situations and
appropriate actions that allow them to become experts in their fields of operation.” (Earl &
Timperley, 2008, p.6) In many situations this knowledge base is sufficient. However,
these authors comment that it is often based on untested assumptions about outcomes.
Involving consultees in joint data gathering and problem identification may help to
challenge existing assumptions. Exposing teachers to new strategies may also open up
possibilities they were previously unaware of. If consultants are to be successful in
changing teachers’ schema, they will need skills in reframing problem situations.

A follow-up feedback meeting(s) focused on sharing and interpreting the baseline data,
defining the problem, as well as exploring and evaluating proposed intervention strategies,
goals and agreed actions and responsibilities. If the problem situation could not be clarified
sufficiently, the teacher and RTLB would go back to gathering more information before
discussing intervention options. Alternatively, if the issue was beyond the expertise or role
of the RTLB, referral to a more appropriate professional was made. A sample Feedback
Meeting checklist used on the professional development programme may be found in
Appendix Biii.
During this phase, the assessment information that has been gathered is utilised to define the problem in order to determine the goals for change. Reliability and validity of the data are important. Before the problem is defined, RTLB and teachers must ensure that the data they have gathered is useful and dependable. The interpretation of the data is extremely important. The RTLB’s role is to establish a more complex conceptualisation of the problem. The problem is restated or reframed as a goal to be achieved. Research (e.g. Tilly et al., 2010; Jordan et al., 2010), indicates that good consultants are problem finders. Expert consultants spend a relatively large proportion of their time defining the problem, the givens of the situation, the constraints, the past attempts, whereas less skilled consultants focus on planning strategies for what may be ill-defined problems. Novices tend to isolate the causes and present the problem as a set of causes requiring solutions (e.g., Erchul & Martens, 2010; Peacock et al., 2010) or fall into activity traps (Earl & Timperley, 2008). The best predictor of a good outcome is problem definition. Appropriate interventions tend to follow if the problem is properly defined.

Expert consultants restructure the problem as a desired goal - a discrepancy between where you are and where you want to be. Ysseldyke (2006) points out that the “problem” is not the child’s behaviour in isolation but lies in the interaction between the child, tasks expected and instruction/management aspects. Careful definition of the problem situation based on credible data leads to a range of possible solutions.

The exploring strategies stage involves analysing and synthesising of information in search of the best solution to the problem as presently defined. It also involves proposing a number of possible interventions before selecting the most suitable given all the characteristics of the situation. There are multiple ways of achieving the same goal. As in previous phases, it is important that interventions are consistent with the ecological/educational approach to facilitating inclusive practice rather than withdrawal.

Evaluating proposed strategies and deciding action are also part of the follow-up feedback meeting(s) following data gathering and analysis. Interventions are conceptualised as refinements of what teachers could do. A range of strategies should be explored and evaluated prior to implementation. It is important to find ethical and effective interventions that are least intrusive and acceptable to the teacher as helping teachers to be
more effective managers of instruction and behaviour should simplify rather than
complicate their lives.

Implementation of the plan should be jointly devised and should clearly specify: what
is to be done, how, when, who is responsible, and, what the expected outcomes are.
Sindelar and Kilgore (1995) pointed out that ‘mentioning strategies is not enough.
Teachers must have clear examples of how strategies work for different types of students
and how to orchestrate the whole.’ (p.352) Consultant special educators need to be able to
model appropriate strategies and support teachers while they are becoming proficient at
using these in their classrooms. Research (e.g., Erchul & Martens, 2010; Jordan et al.,
2010; McNab, 2009) indicates that teachers are more likely to work towards providing
effective inclusive learning environments for all students if they are engaged in the
problem solving process and receive appropriate support when implementing new
strategies.

The Monitoring and evaluation phase involves the monitoring of the on-going
activities (process evaluation) culminating with the measuring of the final outcomes for the
teacher and student(s). Process evaluation focusses early attention on possible difficulties
with the plan and enables adjustments to be made as the plan is being implemented.
Outcome evaluation measures and interprets progress during the implementation stage and
at the close of the process. RTLB were encouraged to consider the following questions at
this stage: Have the interventions achieved the desired change? How well have they
worked? Is continuing intervention required? Are there unexpected effects of the selected
interventions? How might we respond? What action do we take from here? If goals have
been achieved, a decision to close the case might be made. Alternatively, the RTLB and
teacher might jointly decide to make changes to the original plan or revise the goals,
depending on the data discussed.

Given that consultation is not an exact science, changes and adjustments should be
seen as common and acceptable practice. As the process is cyclical rather than linear,
phases may overlap and the process may involve going back and forth between a number
of phases, (e.g., if information gathering is insufficient to clarify the problem situation,
more data can be gathered before exploring strategies). Similarly, goals and strategies may
be revisited and adapted during the implementation phase.
Recycling if a phase has not been completed adequately is part of the problem solving process rather than an attribution of blame or failure. Witt and Martens (1988) commented that the most persistent of consultant delusions is that a clear cut solution exists for each and every problem and can be applied independently of ongoing instructional practices. The RTLB professional development programme supported the use of a problem solving approach rather than a recipe or formulaic one. The context within which they were working and the nature of the role, required that they have the competence to work with complex problem situations where solutions were not immediately evident.

RTLB professional development course components also included managing resistance and exploring alternative theories of action (Robinson, 2011), through role plays and reflective checklist to help RTLB examine their role in contributing to or reducing resistance. Many RTLB were ‘caught between stories’ (Moore et al., 1999), as were some of their school colleagues so resistance was likely. Supervision sessions and critical friend discussions also provided opportunities to discuss cases. Components of assignments in the first three papers, were designed to scaffold RTLB skills and knowledge of the CPS process. The fourth paper, *Professional Practice Portfolio*, enabled them to demonstrate their understanding and application of the process as a whole, as well as outcomes for students and teachers in the authentic field-based referrals.
2.3 Consultant expertise and inclusive teaching

A key component of the RTLB skill set is to be able to influence the attitudes and behaviours of classroom teachers. They have a professional development role since teacher attitudes and strategies are the key to success in an inclusive classroom. It may be necessary to collect data that challenges a teacher’s perception of the reasons for a ‘problem’. For example, the data may show that behaviour problems may result from the
curriculum being inappropriate for a particular student (e.g., too hard, too boring, or too easy). The intervention may focus therefore on helping the teacher to use more effective curricula or teaching approaches matched to the student’s needs.

Regular classroom teachers require a range of new skills to successfully teach all of their students. These include a foundation of co-operative learning, applied behaviour analysis skills, inclusive instructional practices and flexible programming. Teachers are more likely to be committed to developing these skills if they appreciate the values of the philosophy of inclusion and the need to develop classroom practices consistent with these (Annan & Mentis, 2013; Brown et al., 2001; Kearney, 2011; MacArthur, 2009), yet the RTLB has to work with all teachers, even those who initially are resistant to their responsibility to teach everyone in their class.

If consultant special educators such as RTLB are to enhance regular class teachers’ ability to cater for a diverse range of needs, they not only need sound consulting and problem-solving skills, but also personal knowledge and expertise in a range of inclusive and strategic teaching strategies. Strategic teaching practices include multi-level programming, integrated curriculum, co-operative learning, instructional scaffolding, action-based learning, reciprocal teaching, and, peer tutoring programmes (Alton-Lee, 2003). However, Sindelar and Kilgore (1995) pointed out that “mentioning strategies is not enough. Teachers must have clear examples of how strategies work for different types of students and how to orchestrate the whole” (p.352). Consultant special educators need to be able to model appropriate strategies and support teachers while they are becoming proficient at using these in their classrooms.

There has been an increasing acknowledgement of the importance of consultee and client variables within the school consultation literature, such as principal beliefs and vision, teacher beliefs and skills, which are examined in the following section.

2.4 Working with adults (Consultee variables)

Caplan (1970) was the first to point out that the assessment of consultees and their environments is a crucial step in the consultation process. He provided a framework for understanding consultee difficulties, indicating potential problems that may exist in the
consultee: lack of knowledge, lack of skill, lack of self-confidence, and lack of objectivity. The result of the consultee assessment process should be a mutually agreed upon set of target areas that, if strengthened, will enable the current problems to be addressed as well as similar problems in the future. However, “there is no comprehensive model relating system, resource, and personnel variables” (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2001, p. 157). However, the skill set needed to carry out consultation is a complex one developed over time (Duncan, 2004; Earl & Timperley, 2008; Erchul & Martens, 2010).

Teacher beliefs about their ability to cope with the increasing diversity in their classrooms and about providing an inclusive learning environment, will determine the degree of willingness or resistance to making changes when working with consultant special educators. Annan and Mentis (2013) highlighted the strong influence of perspectives, beliefs and understandings in fostering and maintaining exclusive practices which stand in contrast to the research, policies and legislation that outline the rights, values and obligations associated with an inclusive approach. How the teacher conceptualises the presenting problem will influence the process. The skills of the RTLB in building rapport and relational trust (Robinson, 2011) while engaging the teacher in constructive dialogue, are the catalyst for change (Babinski, Knotek, & Rogers, 2004).

A study by Jordan, Kircaali-Iftar and Diamond (1993) explored teachers assumptions and beliefs about the needs of at-risk and exceptional students, and about their roles and responsibilities in meeting such needs. They found that teachers appeared to hold consistent and coherent belief systems which differ along an ordinal scale. At one end, ‘restorative’ beliefs assume problems reside largely within the student, and therefore the teacher’s duty is to refer the student for confirmatory assessment as soon as possible. At the other ‘preventive’ end, teachers assume that the environment, including instruction, plays a part in a student’s problems, as consistent with the ecological/educational model.

“The teacher therefore attempts prerereferral interventions and requests assessment to identify instructional alternatives” (p.45). Teachers’ ratings on the restorative-preventive construct correlated highly with their self-ratings of teacher efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Woolfolk, Hoy & Spero, 2005). Teachers with preventive beliefs had higher self-efficacy scores than those with a restorative profile. In addition, teachers with restorative beliefs rated the withdrawal of problem students from the classroom as a more desirable
resource service than those with preventive beliefs, who preferred in-class consultative support.

Stanovich and Jordan (1998) researched teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about teaching in heterogeneous classrooms. They attempted to predict performance of teacher behaviours associated with effective teaching from a set of variables identified as important: teacher beliefs and attitudes, principal beliefs and school norms, and teacher efficacy in relation to inclusive practice. The principal’s attitudes and beliefs were the strongest predictor followed by the teachers’ responses on the pathognomonic-interventionist interview scale. This set of beliefs labelled ‘pathognomonic’ is characterised by the idea that any learning and behavioural problems exhibited by a student exist within the student. Jordan-Wilson and Silverman (1991) used the term ‘restorative’ which is consistent with a medical/functional limitations paradigm and what Sarason and Doris (1979) refer to as a ‘search for pathology’. Examples of pathognomonic or restorative behaviours include few or no interventions, little interaction with resource teachers, a lack of a demonstrated link between assessment and curriculum, and minimal parental contact. Teachers holding this belief set believe that the heterogeneity in their classrooms has been imposed on them and think that systemic measures should be employed to reduce such diversity.

In contrast, teachers holding assumptions at the ‘interventionist’ (or preventive) end of the continuum, believe that their students’ learning problems result from the interaction between the student and the instructional environment. These teachers try significant interventions prior to making referrals, work with support personnel using a team-based approach, link assessment procedures with their curriculum and instructional methods, and have regular communication with parents. They accept the increasing diversity resulting from changes in socio-cultural conditions and educational policy (Stanovich & Jordan, 1998).

These findings had major implications for consultant special educators working with teachers who have congruent or dissimilar beliefs to themselves. These consultants were more likely to be able to engage teachers who held preventive or interventionist beliefs in problem solving than those who held restorative or pathognomonic beliefs. This indicated a need for consultants to be able to identify key constraints and have appropriate strategies for working through issues of resistance. Relational skills are crucial in the CPS process.
Robinson (2011) recommends uncovering theories of action rather than viewing teacher behaviour as resistant.

In a more recent study, Swedish researchers, examined the mismatch between professionals’ espoused and actual practices (Guvä & Hylander, 2012). Participants were from a range of professional roles including special educators, teachers, school principals, paediatricians, nurses, psychologists and, social workers. They considered the approaches these professionals took along two intersecting continua. The first focused on factors associated with disease (pathological) to those associated with health and well-being (salutogenic) while the second considered from individual to general or systemic views. Each group expressed a preference for an ecological, systemic health promotion rather than individual-centred, medical model intervention. However, there were mismatches between their espoused and actual practice. Although some participants were aware of the discrepancy, they found it hard to work ecologically when others (e.g., teachers) did not share their view. Guvä and Hylander (2012) suggest that this may have been due to the absence of a culture of inclusion in the Swedish education system. Some school principals had shifted from locating the problem in the child to laying blame with teachers. Practice tools were often incompatible with the new way of working. Tools developed on traditional theories tended to constrain professionals’ practice accordingly even when they were willing to try a new approach.

The importance of changing teacher beliefs and practices has also been recognised in school improvement efforts and the conceptual change literature (Vosniadou, 2008). However, Timperley and Robinson (2001) pointed out that little empirical work had been reported on the microprocesses involved. Schema theory was used to explain the persistence of teacher beliefs about poor performance. They identified three conditions which are critical for schema revision, including the salience of discrepant data, the presence of an external agent to assist with the interpretation of that data, and the availability of information on alternative practices. The authors’ conclusions draw attention to the role of external agents in assisting schema revision to take place. In order to be effective, they need to take teachers beyond their understandings and analysis of current situations and challenge accepted schema through data-based intervention processes. This is particularly relevant if consultant special educators (such as RTLB) are
to shift teachers from operating under a functional limitations paradigm towards a more inclusive, ecological one.

Involving consultees in joint data gathering and problem identification may help to challenge existing assumptions. Exposing teachers to new strategies may also open up possibilities they were previously unaware of. If consultants are to be successful in changing teachers’ schema, they will need skills in reframing problem situations (Tilly et al., 2010).

Teacher willingness to take risks and try new strategies or approaches will be influenced by a number of factors including their relationship with the consultant, the perceived amount of work and change required, and the degree of support they are likely to receive while developing their own expertise. Logan and Sachs (1988) use three orders of learning as an organising concept in relation to teacher development: re-orienting, initiating and refining. Re-orienting requires teachers to make significant revisions to current practice as a result of, for example, the introduction of new teaching methods, changed management procedures or expectations. Initiating involves social induction into new roles or the incorporation of new ideas and practices learnt through re-orienting programmes into classrooms and school life. Refining involves strengthening and extending teachers’ current practices. King-Sears (1997) noted that teachers might need more support while learning and refining new methods. Initial training is insufficient to guarantee accurate, systematic implementation. He also reported that ‘the most effective inclusive methods are determined, implemented, and monitored by … people…who are collaborating’. (p13). General and special educators consistently rated personal training and support as high-need areas for implementing successful inclusion (Ainscow et al., 2006; Wolery, Werts, Caldwell, Snyder & Lisowski, 1995). Support along with challenge to current practice, are important elements in building capability (Duignan, 2012; Robertson, 2005).

While researchers have acknowledged the complex, multi-dimensional nature of the consultation field, they have also highlighted the need for sound research studies. Gresham and Kendell (1987) found little empirical evidence to show that what people are calling consultation is actually consultation. They summarised most consultation research as descriptive, which has been useful for identifying key variables in consultation processes.
and outcomes, but not for determining interactions between variables or directions of influence on the outcomes of consultation. Over a decade later, Noell and Witt (1999) noted, “relatively little is known about the extent to which teachers implement interventions developed within consultation and less is known about the variables controlling that implementation.” (p.30) Consultation research does not address how educational contexts and consultation procedures may interact, (Peacock et al., 2010; Tilly et al., 2010). While policy and resources may also affect consultation effectiveness, they are not the direct focus of the present study. In addition, little is known about the characteristics of effective problem solvers in the context of consultation (Brown, Pryzwansky & Schulte, 2011; Bushe & Gibbs, 1990; Erchul & Martens, 2010) or the micro-processes in changing teacher beliefs and practices (Earl & Timperley, 2008; Timperley & Robinson, 2001). Friend (2008) also noted the lack of valid studies involving teachers and the challenges in researching the complexities of consultation particularly the collaborative aspects. Roach, Kratochwill and Frank (2009) acknowledged the major contribution that school-based consultants could play in facilitating change in classrooms.

2.5 Current research

The research studies in this thesis have not been conducted within any single theoretical framework. The research design has been influenced by those that underpinned the RTLB preparation programme, including a range of perspectives which relate to teachers’ professional learning. Programme perspectives included:

- A commitment to the principles of inclusion.
- A conceptualisation of the RTLB role as that of consultant special educators who use a collaborative problem solving approach to foster the enactment of inclusion in schools (illustrated in Figures 2 & 3).
- A commitment to improving the capability of those with responsibility to children and young people, in particular, teachers.
- The provision of learning experiences that develop adaptive expertise (e.g., peer coaching, collaborative planning, reflective conversations using authentic data from casework, inquiry approaches to practice, group discussions about practice dilemmas).
• Recognition of the strengths of the ecological model, where attention is directed towards supporting the connections between adults and learners within the contexts in which children and young people are situated.
• Using evidence of the impact of interventions on learners.
• Cultural diversity: challenging everyday cultural assumptions, to enable RTL to examine their own frames of reference in relation to students’ families and their communities. Skills in equity pedagogy (i.e., teaching strategies that facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, ethnic, ability/disability and social class groups).
• The impact of wider school reforms and policies relevant to special and regular education.
• Understanding of the organisational systems of schools and principles of change.

Two perspectives were particularly visible in the research. First, the study has a phenomenological slant, in that I endeavoured to investigate the experiences of participants from the perspectives of the individuals involved (Hycner, 1985). The paradigmatic perspective of this study was interpretive/constructivist, reflecting the view that reality is socially constructed within the context of social interaction and phenomena are interpreted in terms of meanings people bring to them (Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A constructivist epistemology subscribes to the notion that knowledge is based on experience and insight rather than transmitted and acquired. Exploring teacher and RTL viewpoints, perceptions and practical realities with reference to implementing a collaborative problem-solving inclusive model was the central aim of the research.

Second, the design of the study was informed by social constructivist perspectives in which learners (in this case RTL) view and interpret new information and experiences through their current knowledge and understandings (Fosnot, 1996). This perspective is of particular relevance to my study because most to the RTL were challenged by the programme to practise in a different paradigm from the ways that they had been expected previously. Not only did they have to be convinced that the new practice expectations were “better” than previous practice, they had then to learn and use new approaches effectively. The social contexts in which they worked were also relevant. They now had to
advocate for a model that required teachers to exercise much more agency than previously, a situation here they would have to deal effectively with teacher resistance in many instances. I anticipated that social constructivist factors would impact on RTLB use of the collaborative problem solving model, and perhaps contribute to cases where they used another model.

As the CPS process was such a critical part of RTLB being able to enact the role, the phases formed the framework for the research interviews, ratings scales and document analysis (described in detail in Chapters 3 and 4). The CPS processes were adapted from Erchul and Martens (2010) integrated model of school consultation. This model integrates two theoretically distinct approaches to consultation (mental health (based on Caplan’s seminal work, 1970, 1999) and behavioural (e.g., Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990; Bergan, 1995)) as well as two general approaches (i.e., social influence and professional support). The integrated model includes interaction between the problem solving task, social influence and support and development. These aspects have been influenced by empowerment philosophy, social psychology and social constructivist perspectives. Vygotsky’s (1977, 1978) concept of scaffolding within the zone of proximal development was particularly important part informing the support and development component. From his perspective, social structures provide the frameworks for the ways in which people learn how to think, communicate, and act. Any social context constrains the choices of those practicing within it. Grossman et al., (1999) use the term to describe the ways in which environments provide facilitative structures to foster development (Valsiner, 1998). Annan and Mentis (2013) have also recently emphasised the importance of positive psychology (Nickerson, 2007) being integrated with, not supplementary to, inclusive practice (Edwards & Holtz, 2007).
The figure provides an adapted schematic overview of Erchul and Marten’s (2010) integrated model of school consultation. This includes additional precursors, the consultation process with three interrelated tasks (problem solving, social influence and support and development), and possible outcomes. In this diagram, precursors relate to key...
perspectives that underpinned the RTLB programme, while outcomes indicate how RTLB practice could have an impact at different levels (i.e., individual, class, and/or school-wide). Erchul and Martens (2010) believe that the objectives of school consultation could only be achieved through “a social influence process between the consultant and consultee, the goals of which are to assist the consultee in expanding his or her repertoire of professional skills” (p.111).

An empowerment model argues for providing teachers with the support they need to do their job, but argues against doing the job for them. This informed the focus in my research on teacher engagement in all phases of the CPS process which was seen as critical for success. Supporting the consultee’s efforts as a teacher and an intervention agent is consistent with an empowerment philosophy of helping (Erchul & Martens, 2010; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Witt & Martens, 1988). This is based on “the assumption that consultees are skilled individuals who can become more capable of resolving their own problems by knowing what resources are available to them and how to make use of them” (Dunst & Trivette, 1987, p.120). The RTLB has the potential through CPS to scaffold teacher implementation of strategies where needed which is consistent with Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of scaffolding and development within the zone of proximal development.

The current research was designed to identify the consultation processes that are used by consultant special educators (RTLB) to facilitate change. To what extent were they able to successfully shift school practices from predominantly student deficit-foocussed strategies to teacher-focussed strategies, enhancing capability, which was more likely to achieve successful outcomes for all students? The introduction of consultant special educators (RTLB) as a result of the SE 2000 policy provides an opportunity to explore some of these factors. More specifically, these studies sought to determine what aspects of the collaborative problem-solving process are most critical in bringing about this shift in consultant practice and the constraints most likely to hinder it.

The studies were designed to increase understanding of the interrelationship between the learning and practices, introduced and demonstrated on the RTLB professional development programme, and the RTLB practice in the field once they had graduated, (i.e. to what extent was there evidence of transfer / commitment to and implementation of the
CPS model to support inclusive practices?) The research also aimed to contribute to the improvement of practices in the preparing professionals through university programmes such as the RTLB programme. Loughran, Mitchell and Mitchell (2002) identify the need for research that is both responsive to, and developed in, the practice setting.
Chapter Three: Research Design

3.0 Introduction and Rationale

Research within the context of special education practice has a history of different methodological approaches, but there is general agreement that the roots of research in special education arose out of the positivistic traditions of the natural sciences (Brantlinger, et al., 2005; Pugach, 2001; Odom et al., 2005). A positivist approach emphasises data that are directly observable and measurable because other data sources are more subject to error, bias, and are less likely to be repeatable. Positivist methodologies tend to emphasise data that can be statistically analysed and reported in a numerical form. They commonly employ scientific methods such as assigning “subjects” to random groups (samples), using operationally defined variables, and statistically analysing data. However, a number of scholars (e.g., Heshusius, 2004; Skrtic, 1995) have critiqued positivistic traditions of special education research for being too mechanistic and narrow to address many important questions in the field. The socio-cultural contexts of individuals with special learning needs and disabilities are complex and not readily addressed by a positivist approach. It has been argued that qualitative research methods can more appropriately capture this complexity (McPhail, 1995; Pugach, 2001). Qualitative research gathers data through methods such as interviews or observation. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are committed to the generation of knowledge through a reasoned and reflective examination of empirical data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Dougherty, 2009; Polkinghorne & Gibbons, 1998). However, given that most educational questions seek to understand what, how and why something is happening, qualitative research in which the data are narrative descriptions or observations are often more appropriate than quantitative data. More researchers are also valuing quantitative and qualitative methods as complementary (e.g., Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003) and acknowledging that “the clear value of mixed methods is that the studies are more inclusive of questions that could not be addressed by either approach alone” (Paul, Fowler & Cranston-Gingras, 2007, p.179).

The job description and training of RTLB (as outlined in an earlier chapter) require them to use a collaborative problem-solving approach to referrals and to work within an
ecological/inclusive paradigm, employing assessment procedures that assess the characteristics of the child(ren), the environment (teacher and peer behaviour, tasks) and the interaction between the two. A key aspect of the RTLB role is to support teachers to make environmental, attitudinal, and pedagogical changes to support referred children to learn new strategies and experience success as opposed to viewing the problem or cause of the problem as residing solely within the child. It was therefore important in the investigation reported here to take a research approach that was congruent with the RTLB role and which took the complexities and multiple layers of each situation into account. Research methods were therefore required to cope with the multidimensional process (complex service delivery model) within complex contexts (special education and educational) and diverse classroom settings. Qualitative research has been described as multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Flick, 1998, p.229).

Qualitative research is also defined as a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; interview; artefacts… texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 7).

The paradigmatic perspective of this study was interpretive/constructivist, reflecting the view that reality is socially constructed within the context of social interaction and phenomena are interpreted in terms of meanings people bring to them (Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A constructivist epistemology subscribes to the notion that knowledge is based on experience and insight rather than transmitted and acquired. The nature of inquiry is therefore interactive and interpretive. Researchers gather detailed descriptions of the contexts and perspectives of the participants, explain and draw inferences from those descriptions and attach significance to them (Brown, 2008). Central to the investigations reported was gaining an understanding teacher and RTLB beliefs about their respective roles in relation to the child who has been referred to the RTLB, the type of consultation model that they anticipated would be employed, and the influence these beliefs had on how RTLB dealt with subsequent referrals. Exploring teacher and
RTLB viewpoints, perceptions and practical realities with reference to implementing a collaborative problem-solving inclusive model was the central aim of the research. The underlying interpretive notions of understanding, meaning and action, discussed by Candy (1989), were therefore fundamental to the inquiry to foster understanding of the participants’ motives, intentions, beliefs, concerns, actions and unconscious behaviours (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Research in a qualitative paradigm can take many forms including: narrative, ethnography, phenomenology, autobiography, oral history and case study (Cohen et al., 2000). Interviews, accounts, document analysis and participant observation are the most commonly used strategies for data gathering. A strength of a qualitative approach is that it enables the description of processes, participants and relationships, all of which are important in this study. A case study approach was the form or style of research selected while interview and transcript analysis were the main data gathering strategies in this thesis. Rating scales were included during interviews to check RTLB, teacher and school management perceptions of the problem-solving process and as a prompt to seek illustrative examples of field-based practice.

3.1 Case Study Approach

Although there is a range of meanings and definitions in the literature, there is agreement on the features distinguishing case studies from other types of qualitative research in that they describe in depth, and analyse in detail, a bounded system (Burns, 1997; Cohen et al., 2007; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2005). Stake (2005) claims that understanding selected individual cases can lead to a more comprehensive knowledge and, perhaps, better theorising about a large collection of cases.

Case study research enables educators to gain an in-depth understanding of particular contexts and situations and the meaning of those contexts for those involved in them. It assists in capturing the inbuilt complexity of most educational environments and enables the researcher to study the detailed, complex social interactions within those environments (Anderson, 1990; Cohen et al., 2009; Haigh, 2001; Merriam, 2009; Yin & Davis, 2007). More recently, Yin and his colleagues extended their technical definition as follows: The case study inquiry:
• copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
• relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
• benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2009, p. 18).

Case studies provide useful frameworks for enabling a researcher to identify a case of interest, collect data, analyse and interpret those data in relation to the context in which they were collected and report the results. Case study research is most appropriate when the research addresses “how”, “what”, and “why” conditions, with a concern for accommodating the perspectives of those involved. It is also useful when the research focuses on contemporary events and behaviours that the researcher(s) cannot control or manipulate (Yin, 2009). The advantage of the case study approach is that it can provide ‘the force of example’ (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 228) as a source of understanding, enabling generalisation. Case studies also have the advantage of being able to “‘close in’ on real-life situations and test views directly in relation to phenomena as they unfold in practice” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 235). By comparing experiences of RTLB and teachers around the same problem situation I anticipated being able to identify key success factors, as well as factors that might lead to less successful outcomes.

Successful implementation of case study research requires the researcher to have the knowledge and skills to: 1. bound the case, conceptualising the object of study; 2. organise the case around issues, phenomena and themes and develop research questions based on these; 3. have the knowledge and ability to collect data skilfully from multiple sources; 4. analyse, interpret and synthesise those data; and 5. have the expertise to support the findings from prior theoretical knowledge (Stake, 2005).

Case study research is data-based and can play an important part in contributing to the knowledge base of education. Quality case study research is rigorous and aims for the same high levels of trustworthiness as any good research. It can lead to insights that contribute to future research and have implications for policy and practice. The contributions it makes to practitioners and policy makers lie not in claims of prescriptions for practice but rather in detailed descriptions of cases that can inform practice and policy
An intention of my case study research was to ascertain whether the goals of the RTLB training programme (in relation to the collaborative problem-solving process) were, in fact, achievable in practice.

In this thesis, a case study approach enabled investigation of the experiences of key players (primarily teachers and RTLB) in the collaborative problem-solving process. This approach was used to gain description of the processes and reflections on the experience. Merriam (2001) comments that a case study “illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomena under study…and can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known” (p. 30).

There has been dissatisfaction with both the limited empirical knowledge base of collaborative consultation and the research contributing to it (Gresham & Kendall, 1987; Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Kratochwill, 2005). The predominant methodology has typically been the large-N group design, much of it taking a univariate approach despite the multivariate, complex nature of consultation (Brown, 2008). To date, there has been limited research in the collaborative problem-solving area using case study design (Prywansky & Noblit, 1990; Thomson, 2008). Much of the research in collaborative problem-solving has been carried out by psychologists who have been trained predominantly in positivist approaches. Positivist research can be useful in establishing cause and effect relationships but is less helpful in determining how and why certain interventions worked. However, a case study approach may provide valuable insights into the consultation process that enables practitioners to improve their practice. Case studies can also generate hypotheses, leading to the development of theory, thus contributing to the knowledge base of the indirect service delivery model. These can also be used to complement experimental research (Yin, 2009; Shavelson & Towne, 2002).

Collaborative consultation is a complex phenomenon. Simple relations of effect are not likely to be found, as relationships are most often complex and interactive. A case study approach is therefore an excellent vehicle for studying this complex phenomenon as it provides a format for understanding the dynamics of a situation, linking context, process and outcomes. Pryzwansky and Noblit (1990) support the “infusion” of case study investigation in consultation research (p. 293). Data for each case in Study 1 were gathered
from transcripts of retrospective case interviews I had with individual RTLB, teachers and senior leaders.

Participants were asked to recall two contrasting cases that demonstrated recent work in each paradigm, (i.e., the first case was to demonstrate the collaborative problem-solving model and the second was to illustrate a case where they had intended to use problem-solving but resorted to a more traditional student deficit-focussed approach or withdrawal strategies). This study was designed to capture their perceptions of practice during problem-solving within school contexts, (i.e., degree of engagement of the teacher; the extent of inclusive practice during the intervention phase; and, the nature of the professional relationship between the RTLB and teacher).

In Study 2, case data were gathered from transcripts of a series of key field-based meetings between RTLB and teachers as well as from researcher interviews with RTLB and teachers reflecting on their problem-solving practices and attempts to use the collaborative problem-solving process. Interviews were complemented with data from rating scales as they participated in each case.

I anticipated that by working across several cases involving RTLB and school personnel, I would be able to synthesise findings about the practice of these RTLB in particular contexts. Collectively, the cases could be instrumental in providing data that allowed for the emergence and discussion of themes and theorising about relationships and process. This approach was considered to be particularly appropriate given the complex nature of the field-based practice in which RTLB engage and the need for a strategy that could capture high levels of interpersonal communication and the meaning of those interactions for participants. To date, research into consultation has also placed insufficient emphasis on field-based practice (Kratochwill, et al., 2005, 2009; Noel & Witt, 1999; Brown, 2008; Friend, 2008). The studies in this thesis were designed to assist in addressing this gap.

**3.2 Interviews**

Interviews are probably the most widely used method of data collection in educational research (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997; Fontana & Frey, 2000; 2005) and are particularly
prominent in qualitative research (Merriam, 2001, 2009). Kvale (2007) defines the research interview as “an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest. It is a specific form of human interaction in which knowledge evolves through dialogue” (p. 435). Interviews are the preferred method of data-gathering when the purpose is to obtain “a rich, in-depth experiential account of an event or episode in the life of the respondent or to garner a simple point on a scale of 2 to 10 dimensions” (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 698).

Interviews can range from highly structured approaches, where the interviewer asks the same questions of all participants, to open ended or unstructured approaches where the interviewer does not have a predetermined intended outcome for the interview, but is prepared to allow the interviewee to influence the direction of the interview (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 1990). Semi-structured interviews have a basic framework of areas that the researcher wants to explore, but they allow for more two-way conversation about the areas of interest. The person being interviewed is encouraged to contribute his/her own ideas and perspectives and may generate further avenues for exploration. Open-ended interviews tend to have even less structure than the other approaches and are often only an introductory statement to situate the discussion.

A semi-structured interview format was selected for studies in this thesis. This provided opportunities for respondents, who have particular experience or knowledge in the focus area, to provide their perspectives and interpretation of particular situations of interest to the interviewer. These respondents are sometimes referred to as ‘key informants’ (Anderson, 1990). This format is a responsive, flexible one which still allows appropriate focus on salient issues and is less time consuming than a totally open-ended interview. It enabled data analysis to be more systematic as some key issues were identified in advance. Rating scales were used within the interviews to prompt the participants to focus on particular aspects of the collaborative problem-solving process, (e.g., level of support provided by the RTLB and perceived effectiveness). They were also used as a prompt in seeking further details or specific examples illustrative of the ratings. A 5-point scale was used with 5 being the highest, denoting the most effective practice or highest level of support. For example, a rating of 5 indicated perceptions of the highest
level of support provided by an RTLB whereas a rating of 1 indicated little or no support. Respondents were asked to provide reasons for each rating.

3.3 The Studies that Contribute to this Thesis

Effective RTLB practice is likely to be influenced by the interaction of a number of factors. RTLB are more likely to be effective in supporting classroom teachers and working at a systemic level when there is a shared understanding about the role of the RTLB and the service that they provide to the school and teacher. Where teachers see the “cause” of a learning or behavioural problem as inherent within the child, and intervention by the RTLB as a solution to their problems, they are less likely to want (initially at least) to engage in the type of collaborative problem-solving that also examines how they think about the problem, what they have tried to do to address it, and how this has worked. When teachers’ responses indicated that they saw the problem as inherent within the child, this was categorised as a student-focused or paradigm I framework in this context. This contrasted with a teacher-focused framework (or paradigm II approach) which acknowledged that the teacher has a responsibility to work to change things (i.e., level of instruction, teaching methods) to enable the child to experience success. Noell and Witt (1999) have argued that we need to know more about how consultants (such as RTLB) work in practice to identify how educational contexts and consultation procedures interact and the implications of these for effective practice, moving teachers from a student-focus to a teacher-focus.

3.3.1 Setting the Scene: Exploratory Study

An earlier exploratory study carried out by the author (Walker, 2001, 2003), found that a sample of trained RTLB perceived they had assisted some teachers to shift from a student focus to a teacher focus with respect to some students. Facilitating and inhibiting factors were elicited through interviews with RTLB and teachers. However, insufficient information was given about how the shift actually occurred. More detailed data were needed about the practices and underlying beliefs related to the presence or absence of the reported inclusive practices involving teachers. Many RTLB had operated under the withdrawal and remediate system prior to being appointed as RTLB. Although the initial study was informal in nature, the results informed the development of a more structured
and elaborate research design in Study 1. Data collection was through semi-structured interviews with RTLB, teachers and school leaders, focussing on contrasting, retrospective cases (designated Type I and Type II). Results of Study 1 in turn informed the design of Study 2 which focussed on success case studies of current RTLB and teacher collaborative problem-solving practice. Studies 1 and 2 were designed to contribute to an in-depth understanding of the practice of two groups of RTLB practitioners as well as provide information on the impact of those practices on those involved. The following chapter outlines the method for both studies.
Chapter Four: Methodology

4.0 Introduction

The investigations reported in this thesis involved two studies carried out sequentially. Study 1 data related to retrospective cases. The data were elicited from participants who had previously worked with RTLB in the problem-solving process (RTLB, teachers and senior leaders) while Study 2 data were elicited from participants (RTLB and teachers) at the time they were working on current cases. Both studies were designed to capture and understand salient features of RTLB practice during collaborative problem-solving within field-based contexts. This involved investigating the degree of engagement of the teacher and interactions between RTLB and teachers, the extent of inclusive practice during the intervention phase, and the nature of the professional relationship between the RTLB and teacher.

It was anticipated that data from these studies would help to determine if teacher professional learning occurred during collaborative problem-solving between RTLB and teachers. This shift was expected if the policy of an inclusive RTLB approach and increased teacher capability, advocated by the Ministry of Education, was to be fulfilled (as outlined in the RTLB Governance and management guidelines (Ministry of Education, 2002). Both studies 1 and 2 were designed to contribute to an in-depth understanding of the practice of two groups of RTLB practitioners as well as provide information on the impact of those practices on those involved. These studies built on findings from an earlier exploratory study carried out by the author soon after the establishment of the RTLB service (Thomson et al., 2003; Walker et al., 2001).

This chapter provides a brief description of the initial study sample selection issues and how these influenced the subsequent design of study 1. This is followed by an outline of how the research questions were investigated, a description of how participants were selected, the data generating strategies used, and interview format for Study 1 (Retrospective Cases) and Study 2 (Collaborative Cases). Findings for Study 1 are presented in Chapters 5 while those from Study 2 are in Chapters 6 and 7. Table I below
provides an overview and comparison of key features of both studies reported and discussed in detail in this and the following four chapters.

Table 1
A comparison of two studies designed to examine collaborative problem-solving for inclusive teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study 1</th>
<th>Study 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To gain understanding of beliefs of RTLB, teachers and Senior leaders through discussion of contrasting retrospective cases.</td>
<td>• To capture and examine collaborative practice of RTLB and teachers working to resolve field-based problem situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To identify factors that facilitate or inhibit RTLB use of CPS in the field.</td>
<td>• To identify factors that facilitate or inhibit RTLB use of CPS in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data generating Strategies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Data generating Strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• RTLB interviews</td>
<td>• RTLB-Teacher CPS meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher interviews</td>
<td>• Researcher-RTLB interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Senior Leader interviews</td>
<td>• Researcher-Teacher interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rating scales</td>
<td>• Rating scales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results: key characteristics</strong></td>
<td><strong>Results: key characteristics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engagement of the teacher</td>
<td>• Positive professional relationships between RTLB &amp; teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusive practice during the intervention phase</td>
<td>• Engagement through power-sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professional relationships between RTLB &amp; class teacher</td>
<td>• Acknowledgement of each other’s perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• RTLB skills &amp; knowledge</td>
<td>• Defining &amp; sharing responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sources and level of support for RTLB</td>
<td>• RTLB confidence in explaining &amp; advocating for the CPS model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher &amp; RTLB commitment to working collaboratively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Satisfaction with the process &amp; outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alignment between school policy, RTLB programme &amp; practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Background: Exploratory study conducted prior to the research for the thesis

RTLB Annual report data provided to the Ministry of Education indicated the range of work activities in which RTLB were involved. They were required to indicate the percentage of time spent in working with individual students compared with their work with teachers. With the exploratory study (Thomson et al., 2003; Walker, 2001), my original intention was to select and interview participants from two groups of RTLB, of
whom the first reported spending most of their time working with the teacher and less with individual students, and the second group reported the converse, (i.e. spending most of their time with individual students and some, but less, time with teachers). However, the two groups were more homogeneous than anticipated. This may have been the result of a number of factors, including, different interpretations of the reporting expectations, lack of clarity around the categories, different understanding of the role and context within which they were working, and/or differing expectations of teachers, school contexts and the professional development programme approved and funded by the Ministry of Education.

Facilitating and inhibiting factors were elicited through interviews with RTLB and teachers. Although this initial study was less formal, findings indicated that a sample of trained RTLB perceived that they had assisted some teachers to shift from a student deficit focus to enhancing their own skills with respect to some referred cases. However, insufficient information was given about how the shift actually occurred. More detailed data were needed about the practices and underlying beliefs related to the presence or absence of the reported inclusive practices involving teachers.

It was also clear that not all RTLB practice was consistent with the collaborative problem solving approach advocated for and taught on the professional development programme (Thomson et al., 2003; Walker et al., 2001). Some RTLB reported attempting to use a collaborative problem solving approach with teachers but not consistently, and reverted to an individual student approach on several occasions. Some RTLB reported finding the approach useful but were constrained by working alongside colleagues who had avoided the training and were withdrawing students for remedial work on a regular basis. These findings were not entirely surprising given the significant percentage of RTLB who had worked in more traditional special education roles prior to their appointment as RTLB. This was a challenging time of transition for many RTLB. Moore et al., (1999) describe RTLB and others being ‘caught between stories’ in reference to the different paradigms and their influence on practice as well as RTLB and school understanding of the shift required in the new role. The inclusive model and training was not widely accepted nor understood by all RTLB employers.

The research process and findings from this exploratory study were, nevertheless, helpful in informing the design of Study 1 in this thesis and further examination of the
factors influencing practice required within the new role compared with previous special education roles.

4.2 Study 1: Retrospective Cases

Study 1 was designed to gain an understanding of the beliefs of RTLB and other school practitioners in relation to problem-solving student cases referred to the RTLB service. The research questions that guided this study were: Did RTLB use the collaborative problem-solving framework taught in their training? What factors facilitated or impeded RTLB use of the collaborative problem-solving model in fostering teacher capability and inclusive practice (as illustrated in type II cases)? What differences did these make to the problem-solving process and outcomes for the selected student cases (type I compared with type II)?

This study explored ten retrospective cases from a purposive sample of five RTLB. The participants were all graduates from the RTLB programme who had demonstrated that they could work in the collaborative problem-solving model paradigm II, as taught in their programme. Professional practice portfolios submitted in the final year of their training provided evidence of practice on selected cases as well as RTLB and teacher reflections on the outcomes. When RTLB were unable to use the collaborative problem-solving model they reverted to paradigm I, the paradigm that positioned the referred student as the problem. The sample for study 1 therefore included RTLB who acknowledged that while they espoused using the problem-solving model they sometimes still engaged in paradigm I practice. Retrospective case methodology (Hess, 2004), was chosen as it would enable the researcher to explore this practice phenomenon in more depth.

4.2.1 Study 1: Design

Rationale for retrospective design

Study 1 used contrasting retrospective examples of RTLB professional practice to investigate past experiences during a time of transition when many RTLB were adjusting to a new role. This design enabled me to gain insight into RTLB understanding of the collaborative problem solving process to facilitate inclusive practice. It also allowed me to check whether this sample of RTLB knew the difference between the contrasting
approaches: one based on the inclusive problem solving paradigm taught during their professional development programme, the other based on a traditional student deficit-focused approach where withdrawal strategies were commonly used.

Use of a prospective design for this study was considered but discounted as it would have been difficult to predict when or if the same RTLB would experience contrasting cases within a reasonable research timeframe. Use of contrasting retrospective cases provided a better platform from which I could encourage RTLB, teachers and senior leaders to reflect on practice around specific cases and share their perceptions of outcomes and effectiveness. This focus on reflection was also consistent with the professional development programme learning outcomes. One of the key themes and expectations of the programme was that RTLB would become reflective practitioners and evidence-based problem solvers.

Hess (2004) recommends prospective studies where feasible but acknowledges that retrospective studies have useful applications. He lists the advantages of retrospective studies, describing them as: “inexpensive; using existing records; allowing study of rare occurrences; [providing] easier access [to] conditions where there is a long latency between exposure and disease; [enabling the generation of a] hypothesis that can then be tested prospectively…” (p. 1174). A retrospective study [such as Study 1 in my research] can be useful as a pilot study that is completed in anticipation of a prospective study [such as Study 2 in my research]. It “can help focus the study question, clarify the hypothesis, determine an appropriate sample size, and identify feasibility issues ” (p. 1171). This type of design also has advantages for analysing multiple outcomes and can be carried out on a smaller scale (Hyde, 2004). Although comments from Hess (2004) and Hyde (2004) relate to research in the field of medicine, many of the underlying principles are applicable to Study 1 in my research.

Retrospective studies are also thought to be advantageous for the practitioner-researcher, provided threats to validity are counteracted through triangulation of data from other sources (Hanley, 2010). I was aware of the limitations of using a retrospective approach as remembered information may be faulty, selective, or inaccurate. Participants may forget, suppress, reinterpret or fail to remember certain details (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). Potential weaknesses in relying on recall were minimised through
triangulation as RTLB, teachers and senior leaders were interviewed about the same cases. More details about potential sources of bias and how these were mitigated, are described later in this chapter (4.3). I also sighted relevant case file documentation as support for the participants’ reflections. Findings from this study informed the focus for richer data collection during current collaborative cases in Study 2.

Participant selection and involvement

I conducted semi-structured individual interviews with five RTLB who had each undertaken a consultant role in two student cases. Interviews were also conducted with each of the students’ teachers and a senior leader, nominated by the RTLB, who was familiar with the RTLB role and practice in their particular school. Each interview was audio-taped and transcribed for later analysis.
I selected RTL B from the Auckland-Northland region data base of 180 trained RTL B who were itinerant across two or more primary, intermediate or middle schools and had completed the university accredited RTL B professional development programme in special needs resource teaching (SNRT) graduating with a Graduate or Postgraduate Diploma in Education (SNRT). This enabled them to be employed as RTL B.

The first ten RTL B randomly selected from the North Island graduate lists were initially invited by telephone to ascertain if they were willing to be interviewed and discuss recent student casework about two contrasting interventions: one for a student where the intended intervention was targeted primarily to the referred student and one that was subsequently reframed, resulting in an intervention which also included working with the teacher(s), syndicate or whole staff. I designated these type I and II respectively to distinguish between cases reported to represent the different paradigms/different ways for working. Five of the ten RTL B had student cases that met the criteria and agreed to be interviewed. These five RTL B became the participants in this study. The remaining five did not have two recent, contrasting student cases but expressed interest in being involved at a later date, if invited.

Five RTL B, aged between 40 and 55, agreed to be interviewed. All five were registered teachers with extensive experience in New Zealand primary and intermediate schools. Prior to their appointment to RTL B roles, they had all had experience working with students with diverse special needs. Some had held Guidance and Learning Unit
positions while others had additional experience and training in the following areas: speech
language therapy, vision impairment, counselling, and, language teaching for students who
are speakers of languages other than English. RTLB were from different clusters across the
North Island. The student cases they selected were from a range of primary school settings
from rural Northland to urban Auckland.

The participants, Rose, Barbara, Denise, Liz and Karen, agreed to discuss each case
from referral, initial data gathering, intervention, through to monitoring and evaluation
and/or closure. These phases were based on those identified in the consultation literature
(Friend & Cook, 1992; Kratochwill, Elliott, & Busse, 1995; Noell & Witt, 1999; Sheridan,
Welch & Orme, 1996). The phases also underpin the RTLB training programme. I was
interested in exploring the processes, decisions and actions involved in the two types of
case. Participants were asked to have appropriate file notes and policies available for
reference, if needed, during the interview.

I asked participants to recall two contrasting cases that demonstrated recent work in
each paradigm, (i.e., the first case demonstrated the collaborative problem-solving model
and the second case was one where they had intended to use this but resorted to a more
traditional student deficit-focussed approach or withdrawal strategies). I collected the data
through semi-structured interviews with RTLB and school personnel. Interviews were
designed to obtain information about the degree of engagement of the teacher; the extent of
inclusive practice during the intervention phase; the nature of the professional relationship
between the RTLB and teacher; and, the outcomes for students.

During the interviews, I also asked RTLB to nominate at least one senior leader who
would have knowledge of their work within the school (e.g., a principal, deputy principal
and/or special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) or equivalent). These people were also invited
to participate as were the teacher(s) involved in each case. Each RTLB informed each
teacher and senior staff member of their own involvement in the study and of my desire to
interview them. If these staff members were keen to be involved in the study, the RTLB
provided me with their names and contact details.
4.2.2 Ethical Procedures

Following initial phone contact, potential participants were provided with written documentation outlining the purpose of the interview as well as University of Auckland approved ethics consent forms and participant information sheets (see Appendix B). Individual informed consent was gained from each participant who agreed to take part. Interviews were conducted at a time and place suitable to the participants. RTLB interviews were approximately an hour and a half to two hours duration. Interviews with school personnel and teachers were approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

4.2.3 Data Generating Strategies: Interviews and Rating Scales

I interviewed RTLB and teachers separately. Rating scales were included during interviews to gauge RTLB, teacher and school management perceptions of the problem-solving process and as a prompt to seek illustrative examples of field-based practice. I followed standard interview protocols. At the start of the interview, I checked mutual understanding of the process and ethical matters. Confirmation of permission to take notes and to tape the interview was also gained. All taped interviews were later transcribed by a professional transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement. She had extensive experience in educational research, having been employed as a postgraduate research assistant at the University of Auckland.

In the development of the interview schedules, I attempted to avoid problematic questions (those that are double-barrelled, two-in-one, restrictive, leading or loaded) as suggested by Anderson (1990). Respondent and informant roles were fulfilled as I questioned RTLB and teachers about their actual experiences and also their views of the practices. I used probes throughout the interviews in order to get beyond merely descriptive accounts, and to encourage them to elaborate on ideas.

4.2.3.1 Interviews with RTLB

RTLB were asked to describe two student cases from referral, initial data gathering, intervention, through to monitoring and evaluation or closure: one case that resulted in an individual intervention for a student (designated Type I or student-focussed to denote a paradigm I approach) and a second case that was reframed, resulting in an intervention
which also involved working with the teacher(s), syndicate or whole staff (designated Type II or inclusive, teacher-focussed to denote a paradigm II approach).

During the interviews, RTLB were also asked to rate the level of support received for working within an inclusive paradigm, primarily with teachers, from any or all of the following sources: RTLB Cluster Management committee, senior leaders, other school staff, individual teacher(s), and, RTLB colleagues. A 5-point scale was used with 5 indicating the highest level of support. Respondents were asked to provide reasons for each rating.

4.2.3.2 Interviews with Teachers and Senior Leaders

Teachers and senior leaders were asked similar questions about each of the student cases, consultation practices, and consequences of the process. I asked similar questions on most dimensions although the depth of information for some items varied, reflecting the differences between classroom teaching and school management contexts. Teachers were asked to provide details about the process, their own role, specific RTLB involvement, relationships and the nature of the intervention, whereas senior leaders could describe RTLB work in general in their school. Interviews with the teachers involved a similar semi-structured question format except that more detail was asked about the problem-solving process and specific RTLB involvement (e.g., assessment data collected and/or interventions implemented with RTLB support).

I also sought the views of teachers and senior leaders (i.e., the Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Co-ordinator of Students with Special Needs (SENCOs)) on:

1. school policies concerning students with special needs and the role of the RTLB;
2. the RTLB role (before and after experience with at least one student case with this particular RTLB);
3. the nature of the work the RTLB did in the school;
4. the perceived effectiveness of the RTLB’s work;
5. the perceived level of support from the RTLB (for the student and/or teacher);

6. the nature of the work he/she had done in relation to the process involving the referred student;

7. other issues about RTLB practice including the factors that facilitated or inhibited RTLB practice; and,

8. changes they would like to see concerning the way the RTLB operated in their class or school.

During the interviews, I asked teachers and senior leaders to rate two specific dimensions of RTLB work: effectiveness of their RTLB’s work and level of support provided by the RTLB. Participants’ ratings were on a five-point scale. They were asked to give reasons for their ratings during the interview.

Documentation from RTLB casework was shared with me by the RTLB and teachers during the interviews, where appropriate. This included pre- and post-intervention assessment data and joint plans and minutes where available. Documentation provided the basis for validation of roles and responsibilities at different phases; the relationship between assessment and intervention(s) selected; and recorded evidence of outcomes.

4.2.3.3 Analysis of Interviews with RTLB and Teachers

I used a predetermined deductive framework, based on effective consultative practices, to analyse the data from each interview. Participant data were organized in relation to the presence (or absence) of elements of effective consultative RTLB practice as outlined in the literature review, that is, the nature of the relationship between the RTLB and teacher, the extent of teacher involvement in problem-solving and implementing the intervention, and inclusiveness of the intervention. The degree of alignment between the descriptions of RTLB practice and the consultation model taught in the training programme was thus ascertained.

The four main problem-solving phases, learnt during the RTLB programme, provided a framework within which to elicit information about relationships, the extent of teacher engagement and the nature of intervention practices. These phases are: the data gathering phase (entry and assessment); the pre-intervention data analysis phase (problem-solving,
based on analysis and synthesis of assessment and observational data, and exploration of strategies); the intervention phase; and, post-intervention data analysis phase (monitoring and evaluation). RTLB and teacher practices/actions, and consequences /outcomes for the student and/or teacher were also noted. Any other relevant information relating to the context and/or case was included for each of these phases.

Participants’ responses were scored in terms of the following dimensions:

- Class teacher engagement in each phase of the problem-solving process;
- Inclusive practice (also defined a Paradigm II) during the intervention phase;
- Professional relationship between the RTLB and teacher.

These dimensions were selected for several reasons: they were identified as important in the special needs problem-solving literature and were also a key component of the model taught in the RTLB university programme. In addition, the exploratory study findings indicated that these factors had the potential to influence the direction of the collaborative problem-solving process.

I scored the transcripts using a 1–3 scale for each of the dimensions described below. This scale was selected to enable comparison of reported practices in the small sample of contrasting student cases.

i. *Engagement of the class teacher* was rated according to the extent that he/she was actively involved in each phase of the problem-solving process: data gathering, pre-intervention data analysis, intervention, and, post-intervention data analysis. Scores were recorded for each phase and percentages calculated for combined involvement across the process as a whole. A score of 1 denotes no involvement in contrast to a 3 which denotes clear evidence of active teacher involvement. A 2 was assigned if the teacher was involved in one or two phases.

ii. *Evidence of inclusive practice(s)* during the intervention phase was scored as follows: a

1 was assigned to an intervention which involved withdrawing the referred student from his/her peers; a score of 2 was given when the referred student remained with his/her
peers but was provided with separate learning tasks; and a 3 was given for clear evidence of inclusive intervention(s), such as the use of adapted reading material, reciprocal teaching, peer tutoring. However, if there was individual differentiation for all learners in any of these classes, a score of 3 would have been assigned.

iii. *The Professional Relationships* dimension was scored as 1 according to evidence indicating a distant or defensive relationship between the RTLB and teacher(s) where discussion of issues was avoided in comparison with evidence indicating collegiality, warmth, empathy, an ability to share information and raise issues where a 3 was assigned. A score of 2 was assigned where there was a mixed or unclear relationship with evidence of some sharing and some reticence or defensiveness.

iv. *Level of support received from others*

During the interviews, RTLB were also asked to share their perceptions of the levels of support they received from others for working within an inclusive paradigm. They rated the level of support from each of the following sources on a scale of 1–5 (with 5 being the most favourable response): Cluster Management committee, senior leaders, other school staff, individual teacher(s), and, RTLB colleagues. Comparisons were drawn between different cases based on the emerging patterns and reasons provided.

v. *Level of support received from RTLB*

In their interviews, teachers were also asked to rate their perceptions of the level of support they received from the RTLB (on scales of 1–5, 5 being the highest). I collated ratings and compared contrasting Type I and Type II referrals based on the emerging patterns and reasons provided, for example, teachers’ perceptions of RTLB effectiveness according to each type of case were recorded. Effectiveness of the intervention was assessed according to whether the mutually agreed to goals had been met as well as satisfaction reported by both the teacher and RTLB.

4.2.3.4 Analysis of Interviews of Senior Leaders

I identified repeating themes within the transcribed material from Principals, Deputy Principal and/or Special Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). These were coded and
highlighted in different colours. Transcripts were then scored using a 1–3 scale (with scores of 3 indicating responses most closely aligned to the Ministry of Education RTLB policy guidelines (2002)) for each of the following dimensions:

Context: School policy

RTLB professional relationships with school personnel

RTLB skills/knowledge

RTLB commitment.

Senior leaders were also asked to rate their views of the effectiveness of the RTLB’s work and the level of support provided to students and teachers by the RTLB. A scale of 1–5 was used with 5 being the highest. This provided information on their perceptions in relation to their own view of the role as well as expectations of how and with whom they thought the RTLB should work. Ratings were collated and comparisons drawn between different referrals based on the emerging patterns and reasons provided.

i. School policy responses were scored as 1 where evidence suggested these were constraining or not facilitative of the RTLB role as specified in the Ministry of Education Policy and guidelines (2002). In these instances, the senior leaders perceived the child to be the main problem rather than considering the interplay between the child and classroom factors and the possibility of instructional mismatch. Examples of this viewpoint included timetabling RTLB to withdraw students for individual tuition on a weekly basis and/or making referrals for a child without seeking information from the teacher. Evidence of school policies that were actively supportive and facilitative of the designated role were rated as 3. This included allowing teachers to meet with RTLB to discuss referrals (releasing them during class time in several cases) or including the RTLB in decision-making at regular meetings about students with special needs. Where there appeared to be a mix or moderately inclusive practice, a 2 was allocated.

ii. The Professional Relationships dimension was scored as 1 according to evidence indicating a distant or defensive relationship between the RTLB and teacher(s) where discussion of issues was avoided in comparison with evidence indicating collegiality, warmth, empathy, an ability to share information and raise issues which were scored as 3.
A rating of 2 was assigned where there was a mixed or unclear relationship with evidence of some sharing and some reticence or defensiveness.

iii. The Skills/knowledge dimension was scored as 1 where participants saw the RTLB as showing little or no awareness of needs or knowledge of strategies. A 2 was assigned where there was some knowledge of these in discussions but not evident in the design of or implementation of the intervention. Evidence indicating RTLB awareness of student, teacher and/or school needs as well as knowledge of effective strategies was scored 3.

iv. The Commitment dimension included RTLB commitment to meeting needs and/or improving outcomes, effort and responsiveness demonstrated. Low degrees of commitment and responsiveness were rated 1 whereas higher degrees were scored 3. Two was assigned where commitment varied across phases.

4.2.4 Reliability

All transcripts were scored by me and twenty percent of the transcripts were independently scored by a second educational psychologist in order to check accuracy and as a safeguard against researcher bias. This psychologist was involved in the training of RTLB in a different part of the country and had not taught or met any of the research participants. In each case, the scorers used a different coloured highlighter for each dimension as a means of indicating which evidence in the transcript supported the rating given.

Inter-rater reliability was calculated by checking the extent of agreement and disagreement in: 1. ratings and 2. meaningful phrases and/or lines highlighted. Agreement included phrases and/or lines within the transcript highlighted by both scorers and those not highlighted by both scorers for the same dimension. Disagreement included phrases and/or lines within the transcript highlighted by one scorer but not by the other.

Reliability was calculated using Glynn’s (1980) formula:

\[
\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{agreements}}{\text{agreements} + \text{disagreements}} \times 100
\]
Scores from the three-point scale were collated separately according to the interviewee (RTLB, teacher or senior staff member) as well as the type of transcript: I or II, according to the referrals selected for discussion during the interview. Type I transcripts pertain to referrals the RTLBs reported to involve student-focussed strategies while type II transcripts pertain to those reported to involve teacher-focussed strategies. Where the reliability check revealed differences, examples were discussed and relevant transcripts were re-scored. Inter-rater reliability results have been summarised in the table below.

Table 2

*Inter-rater reliability across RTLB, teacher and senior staff member transcripts.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>% agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engagement of the teacher</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive practice during the intervention phase</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional relationship between the</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings from my conversations with RTLB, teachers and senior leaders are presented in Chapter 5. Quotes have been coded with the role (e.g., teacher, RTLB, SENCO, Principal) and type of student case (I or II to denote the paradigms). Pseudonyms have been used for RTLB with the role of each person identified for each case. For example, Teacher: Liz I, RTLB: Liz I and SENCO: Liz I were all involved with the same student, designated as a paradigm I case by the RTLB Liz. Although there were four female and one male RTLB in this study, female pseudonyms have been used throughout and male pronouns in quotes have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

### 4.3 Researcher role and credibility

Patton (1991) discusses bias with reference to “expertise and perspective” (p.290). The researcher must be seen to be competent and have experience related to the research focus if the research is to have credibility. An important measure of credibility is “researcher reflexivity” (Brantlinger et al., 2005, p.201). This refers to researcher attempts to
understand and self-disclose assumptions, values and biases, as well as clarity about his/her views and the effect that may have on actions and interpretations.

My interest in collaborative problem-solving and advocacy for inclusive practice in schools, has been ongoing for a number of years in a range of roles as a primary teacher, resource teacher of the deaf, psychologist, tertiary educator and professional learning and development facilitator. I have practised according to the CPS model myself and found it particularly useful in a national project focused on enhancing effective practice in special education across ten schools (primary, secondary, special and regular). I had an interest in exploring this area further from a research perspective but also for personal and professional reasons. I have summarised some of my key experiences and influences below as a way of demonstrating that I bring in-depth, and relevant experience of different aspects of practice as well as academic credibility to the research.

I completed undergraduate study in education and psychology and postgraduate study in educational psychology (Masters) prior to beginning my career as a classroom teacher and subsequently as an itinerant teacher of deaf children. During my study time, I was privileged to have lecturers who were or still are leading educators and researchers in New Zealand (including Dame Marie Clay, and Professors Viviane Robinson, Ted Glynn, Michael Corballis, Stuart McNaughton). While my goal on leaving secondary school had always been to become a psychologist working with children, their families and teachers, I realised I needed to build up knowledge, credibility and expertise through teaching experience in the field first.

I then practised as an educational psychologist in Special Education Services under the Ministry of Education. This work was varied and focused on students identified as having special needs from birth to post-secondary. My work has been influenced by inclusive philosophy alongside an eclectic mix of developmental, cognitive-behavioural, educational psychologists and socio-cultural theorists. My training was very much influenced by Bronfenbrenner’s ecological approach as well as Vygotsky’s notion of the mediated learning and the recognition of the zone of proximal development. I was not the typical ‘test and tell’ psychologist. Much of my work as a psychologist was in classrooms supporting teachers to adapt curriculum and/or enhance their skills (including modeling or co-teaching inclusive strategies). Many of the interventions I supported teachers to use
were curriculum-based and aimed at providing supporting learning environments for all children and young people. I also facilitated the implementation of class and school-wide interventions related to improving learning and behavioural outcomes. These positions provided opportunities for me to work in different but related roles across different parts of the wider Auckland region. They also gave me experience with challenging cases across a wide age and cultural range, in home and educational settings, from early childhood to secondary level as well as regular and special education contexts.

My experiences on national Ministry of Education working parties and advisory groups (curriculum, professional development and special education), research and in different roles has enabled me to understand classrooms and schools from different perspectives from policy to classroom levels. During my career, I have been a strong advocate for students who have previously been excluded or marginalised. I have also witnessed the shift from mainstreaming and the subsequent introduction of inclusive policies such as SE 2000 and the current Success for All. I have used inclusive strategies (e.g. peer tutoring, co-operative learning, reciprocal teaching), in my own teaching. I have also co-authored a book on paired writing (Cameron & Walker, 1994) that was based on research (Dip Ed Psych Honours) comparing the benefits of paired writing with extra writing time. My master’s thesis examined staff-child interactions in a residential school for students with significant behavioural and emotional difficulties. The Guidance and Learning Units and Support Team model (Moore, Glynn, & Gold, 1993) were forerunners of the RTLB model (Thomson et al., 2000). I had some involvement with both initiatives in my work as a psychologist and teacher educator.

My tertiary experience began as a lecturer in pre-service teacher education (undergraduate and graduate) and later as practicum co-ordinator at the then Auckland College of Education, prior to becoming Coordinator of the Students with Special Teaching Needs, a funded postgraduate course where experienced teachers won study awards and were released full-time for one year. I also had informal responsibility and a pastoral care role or several undergraduate deaf students on campus. I was awarded a Fulbright vocational scholarship during this time which enabled me to share my experiences and learn from teacher educators and special education experts in the field in the United States as well as reflecting on the New Zealand scene on my return.
I took up a position as Head of Teacher Education (primary and secondary) at another tertiary institution in the late 1990s before being asked to join several of my mentors and colleagues in the RTLB Consortia of three universities (Auckland, Waikato and Victoria) in 1999. I was involved in the RTLB professional development programme as a coordinator, lecturer and examiner for the Auckland-Northland and as National Director from 2003-2010.

These experiences collectively provided a wealth of information from my personal learning from which to draw when designing and teaching the RTLB professional development programme.

4.3.1 Implications for Studies 1 and 2: ensuring trustworthiness

Brantlinger (2005), Lather (2001) and Merriam (2001) have identified similar strategies for ensuring the soundness of qualitative studies, including triangulation, member checks (i.e., having participants review and confirm the accuracy of interview transcripts), external audit. Brantlinger (2005) also identified peer debriefing and detailed or thick description while Merriam (2001) included clarification of researcher bias. These researchers advocate for a systematic rather than checklist approach.

While my pivotal role in the RTLB programme had advantages in terms of relationships and credibility presented above, there was also potential for bias.

“Increasingly, qualitative researchers are realizing that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but rather active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results” (Fontana & Frey, 2006, p.716).

RTLB involved in the studies were already graduates of the programme and knew me well as a lecturer, examiner and National Coordinator for the RTLB programme. They were aware of my role in the design and delivery of the professional development programme through personal experience, programme documentation and /or research information prior to consenting to be involved. As the RTLB had completed the requirements of the qualification prior to participating in these studies, there was no conflict of interest with respect to marking of their assignments, nor any consequences for their employment if they chose not to participate.
Denzin and Lincoln (2000) emphasise the importance of the researcher establishing:

… trust, rapport, and authentic communication patterns with participants. By establishing trust and rapport at the beginning of the study, the researcher is better able to capture the nuances and meanings of each participant’s life from the participant’s point of view. This also ensures that participants will be more willing to share everything, warts and all, with the researcher (p.384).

The quality of the relationship between the interviewer and its influence on the quality of the data has been recognised by Measor (1985). A number of other researchers have also highlighted the impact of interviewer knowledge, skills and personal attributes on the quality of the information obtained (e.g., Cohen et al., 2001; Fontana & Frey, 2006). I taught RTLB about interviewing skills through role play on the RTLB programme, having built up my own skills and experience as an interviewer through my work as a psychologist, counsellor, teacher educator and researcher. I also had an appreciation of the context within which RTLB were working and had personal experience using collaborative problem solving in a range of educational settings. RTLB knew I was genuinely interested in their work and field experiences.

Prior to gaining consent from the participants, I openly discussed my role and also emphasised my genuine desire to find out what was actually happening in the field following graduation from the programme. RTLB and teachers were aware that results from the studies would be used to change or enhance aspects of the programme in the future. I did not assume that RTLB practice would be perfectly executed according to the model and was expecting variability given the range of contexts in which RTLB work, prior roles RTLB had been in and beliefs about the model.

Possible sources of bias included RTLB reporting what they thought the interviewer wanted to hear, the interviewer asking leading questions to elicit favourable responses or inadvertently giving feedback to responses consistent with the model taught on the programme. These potential sources due to my role were mitigated by audio-taping and outsourcing the transcription of interviews between the researcher and all participants for both studies. Audio recordings of meetings between RTLB and teachers in Study 2 were also sent to a professional transcriber.
Member checks were also used to ensure trustworthiness. These checks refer to procedures for soliciting the views of or a sample of the target population, in order to confirm the quality, credibility and interpretations of the data (Brantlinger, Jiminez, Clinger & Pugach, 2005; Cresswell, 2012; Nastasi & Schensul, 2005). Participants were sent copies of transcripts to check accuracy and had opportunities to discuss any issues and interpretation by phone or at subsequent meetings with me. A second educational psychologist undertook analysis and scoring of twenty percent of the transcripts in Study 1. Details may be found under reliability (4.2.4).

Hall (2002) distinguished between corroborative and coherence triangulation. “In corroborative triangulation, while different methods, sources and techniques may have been employed, the data focus on the same object or aspect of an object. [However, in coherence triangulation, the focus is on] using different sources and techniques to build a coherent picture of what is happening” (p.31). Corroborative triangulation occurred in both studies through my interviewing of key people in each case as well as viewing documentation related to the discussion and outcomes. These follow-up meetings with RTLB and teachers in Study 2 enabled comparisons of their espoused and actual practice. The researcher looked for both confirming and disconfirming data when analysing the transcripts in both studies. Extensive quotes and vignettes were included to substantiate claims and conclusions.

After establishing the themes and categories, I looked for evidence inconsistent with these themes (outlier or atypical examples) to ensure an accurate account of key aspects of the problem solving process (Brown, 2009; Cresswell, 2001; Nastasi & Schensul, 2005). Another qualitative technique, peer debriefing, was used to assure the trustworthiness of my analysis. Two sets of Study 2 transcript data were given to a second psychologist researcher. A set included transcripts between RTLB and teachers as well as researcher–teacher and researcher–RTLB meetings related to each case. This provided an opportunity for discrepant analysis. This colleague acted as a critical friend cross checking quotes selected and interpretations with my draft results chapter. No major discrepancies were found. However, as a result of this process and feedback from my supervisors, some quotes were reduced.
4.4 Study 2: Current RTLB Practice

Study 2 was designed to address a gap in research by exploring the actual (rather than espoused) practice of RTLB working collaboratively with regular classroom teachers to resolve problems.

The questions that guided the second study were:

- To what extent is the responsive teacher, collaborative problem-solving model implemented in practice?
- What factors facilitated or impeded RTLB use and effectiveness of the collaborative problem-solving process in fostering teacher capability and inclusive practice intended to result in better outcomes for students?

The focus in this second study was on the nature and significance of the collaborative problem-solving process for RTLB as they worked together with regular classroom teachers in diverse school contexts to enhance their capability to cater for the range of student learning needs in their classrooms. In-context practice was captured by RTLB taping the key meetings between themselves and referring teachers as this was the least intrusive method of capturing detail about the collaborative process and also enabled reflections by RTLB and teachers to be shared with me.

My main intention was to develop deeper understandings of the reality and complexity involved in undertaking casework using an inclusive, collaborative problem-solving approach. I also set out to investigate the professional learning opportunities this approach to casework provided for RTLB and teachers. Study 2 was therefore designed to investigate the factors that contributed to inclusive, responsive teacher-focussed decisions and strategies /interventions rather than predominantly student deficit-focussed strategies.

While collaborative problem-solving is a complex, dynamic process with interrelated components, previous research, the collaborative problem-solving model taught on the training programme, and Study 1 results suggest that there are critical factors which contribute to successful implementation. In summary, successful collaboration appears to depend on building and maintaining positive professional relationships. Indicators of positive professional relationships include mutual trust and respect for each other’s ideas
and expertise, reciprocity, and a willingness to learn from each other. Professional relations are evident in a willingness to share power, definition of respective roles, and acceptance of joint responsibility for decisions and their outcomes. If the process is truly collaborative and aimed at fostering or enhancing learning and capability, teacher involvement in the problem-solving process is crucial. The interactive, cyclical nature of the collaborative process provides multiple opportunities for professional learning and reflection.

4.4.1 Study 2: Design

Following the analysis of Study 1, a new sample of RTLB from the Central and Northern regions of New Zealand were invited to participate if they:

- had completed the university accredited RTLB professional development programme in special needs resource teaching;
- itinerated within one or more schools (i.e., were not based in one classroom or heavily timetabled into regular teaching commitments), and
- intended to work in an inclusive paradigm as much as possible within the context of one selected referral from a teacher. The referral could be for: an individual student; group of students; class; teacher; or syndicate/department.

Once the RTLB had agreed to participate, I approached the principals and teachers from the schools where the RTLB planned to work to invite them to participate and proceeded with cases only when the school and the referring teachers agreed to participate in the research and were willing to be interviewed by me.

Twelve RTLB were initially prepared to be involved in this study. Two RTLB withdrew because their referred students moved out of their areas prior to the intervention and two of the tapes from a third RTLB were inaudible. Results are therefore based on nine cases (a mix of individual, group/class and syndicate referrals) from a range of different schools (primary, full primary, rural, provincial and suburban). With the exception of two RTLB and one teacher, all of the nineteen participants were female. Female pseudonyms and pronouns have been used throughout to protect participant identities. The following table provides an overview of the case participants and initial referral issues.
Table 3
Overview of case participants and referral concerns across nine cases involving RTLB-Teacher collaborative problem solving.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case identifier</th>
<th>Case participants</th>
<th>Referral concerns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Robyn RTLB 1</td>
<td>Rural school individual: Year 5/6 boy inappropriate social behaviour, low self-image and lack of resilience, high risk taker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tamara Teacher 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rachel RTLB 2</td>
<td>Urban school Year 3 / 4 Group of 14 students learning &amp; behaviour: off-task behaviour &amp; underachievement in written language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karen Teacher 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rebecca RTLB 3</td>
<td>Rural school: Year 1–6 bilingual unit: teacher assistance with class management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mona Teacher 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mary RTLB 4</td>
<td>Suburban school: Year 0–1 two class syndicate oral language needs in conjunction with school-wide goals in this area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carla &amp; Jenny</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Teachers 4a &amp; 4b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Laura RTLB 5</td>
<td>Suburban school: Year 1–2 group of boys and girls learning: literacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hayley Teacher 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pat RTLB 6</td>
<td>Rural school: Year 5 boy behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Melissa Teacher 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Alison RTLB 7</td>
<td>Suburban school: Year 2 boy (refugee): learning &amp; social behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miriama Teacher 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kelly RTLB 8</td>
<td>Rural school: Year 1 boy: learning &amp; behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bronwyn Teacher 8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Trish RTLB 9</td>
<td>Suburban school: Year 1 girl: learning &amp; social behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leanne Teacher 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.2 Ethical Procedures

I provided participants with Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms approved by the University of Auckland, and gained individual informed consent to participate from RTL and teachers. I arranged interviews at a time and place suitable to them. A copy of the Participant Information Sheets and Consent Form may be found in Appendix B.

4.4.3 Data Generating Strategies

Semi-structured interviews (researcher-teacher and researcher-RTL) were used to gain a more in-depth picture of the critical factors that acted as catalysts to engage teachers in more inclusive practice. Factors covered were:

- professional relationships (initiating, building, maintaining relationships; balance of power, reciprocity);

- use of the collaborative problem-solving process including sharing of responsibility between RTL and teachers during each phase;

- focus on data to track progress towards achievement of shared goals and evidence of outcomes;

- inclusive practice demonstrated by the teacher, or teacher and RTL, during the intervention phase;

- professional learning opportunities; and,

- perceptions of effectiveness (satisfaction with outcomes for the student(s) and teacher(s)).

Table 4 below sets out the data sources for each of the nine cases. Ticks indicate key points in the collaborative problem-solving process when taped meetings/reflections were recorded between the:

a) RTL and referring teachers;

b) researcher and RTL; and,

c) researcher and referring teachers.
### Table 4

*Overview of sources of data from each participant combination and meeting or interview*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>MEETINGS/INTERVIEWS</th>
<th>INTERVIEWS I</th>
<th>INTERVIEWS II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RTL (R) &amp; Teacher(s)(T)</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RTL (R) &amp; Researcher (J)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Reflection &amp; ratings on process &amp; transcripts from i and ii</td>
<td>Reflection &amp; ratings on process &amp; transcripts from ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher (T) &amp; Researcher (J)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Reflection &amp; ratings on process &amp; transcripts from i and ii</td>
<td>Reflection &amp; ratings on process &amp; transcripts from iii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 4.4.3.1 RTL-teacher meetings

As asked, RTLB audio-taped their professional discussions with the referring teacher on the following occasions:

1. the first meeting between teacher and RTLB (entry meeting) (i)
2. follow-up feedback meeting (data analysis leading to selection of
an intervention)(ii), and,

3. evaluation meeting (iii).

(i) An *entry meeting* was defined as one at which the RTLB and teacher discussed the referral, nature of the problem and planned the baseline data gathering phase. Baseline data are basic information gathered before an intervention begins. It was used later to provide a comparison for assessing the impact of the changes employed by the teacher and/or others. During the entry meeting the RTLB and teacher determined the most appropriate data to collect, as well as who would collect it, and when it would be collected.

(ii) A *follow-up feedback meeting* focused on sharing and interpreting the baseline data as well as exploring and deciding on intervention options, goals and agreed actions and responsibilities.

(iii) An *evaluation meeting* occurred when the implementation of the intervention and outcomes for the student(s) and teacher were discussed and evaluated. If goals had been achieved, a decision to close the case might be made. Alternatively, they might jointly decide to make changes to the original plan or revise the goals, depending on the data discussed.

4.4.3.2 *Interviews: a. Researcher-RTLB and b. Researcher–Teacher*

I conducted semi-structured interviews separately with RTLB and the referring teacher(s) at two points in the process: first, following the feedback and intervention planning meeting and second, once the intervention was under way. This helped to gain a picture of how the consultation process was going as well as its impact on their relationships, the strategies they had agreed to use and their satisfaction with progress to date.

At the beginning of each interview, I checked that there was mutual understanding of the process and ethical matters. Permission to take notes and to tape the interview was also confirmed. At the second interviews, I asked RTLB and teachers to confirm whether the
transcripts from the previous interview were accurate records and amended them where they suggested this was necessary.

Following each interview, I asked the RTLB/teacher to provide his/her interpretation of the transcribed professional discussions between the RTLB and the teacher. Participants were asked questions to gain an appreciation of their perceptions and feelings about the meetings prior to and following the intervention. I also sought information about the referral, consultation and problem-solving practices, the rationale for these and consequences in relation to specific examples in the transcripts. If insufficient detail was provided, I probed further. The following questions/statements were used to prompt/facilitate RTLB and teacher commentary:

- What were your expectations of the meeting?
- What were your impressions/feelings about the meeting?
- Summarise positives/concerns/surprises from transcript of the earlier meeting:
  You seemed to be pleased/concerned/surprised about ...
- To what extent do you feel your opinions/ concerns were heard?
- Did you feel uncomfortable at any point? If so, tell me about it.

The interviews took between one and one and a half hours per person and were conducted at a time and place suitable to the RTLB and teachers. These interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed for analysis. RTLB and teachers also shared relevant documented information relating to the referral at any time from the first meeting until evaluation of the intervention outcome(s) and/or closure (e.g., assessment data, intervention planning, minutes of meetings, examples of shifts in student behaviour or learning).

During individual interviews, I asked RTLB and teachers to rate the following six dimensions of their collaboration on a 1–5 scale with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest:

- Professional relationships between the RTLB & teacher
• Sharing of power and shared responsibilities between RTLB & teacher

• Teacher perspective/ opinions heard by RTLB

• Teacher participation in the collaborative problem-solving process

• Teacher and RTLB commitment (co-operation/goodwill/support)

• Satisfaction with the process and outcomes for teachers and students.
Table 5

Overview of researcher-participant interviews in which selected dimensions of collaborative problem-solving were discussed and rated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>INTERVIEWS I</th>
<th>INTERVIEWS II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Researcher-RTL &amp; Researcher-Teacher</td>
<td>Researcher-RTL &amp; Researcher-Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIMING</td>
<td>Following the RTLB-Teacher feedback, intervention planning meeting(s)</td>
<td>Following an RTLB-Teacher monitoring &amp; evaluation meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING DIMENSIONS (rated separately by RTLB and Teachers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RTLB-Teacher professional relationships &amp; responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional relationship between RTLB &amp; teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher perspective/ opinions heard by RTLB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power sharing between RTLB &amp; Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of responsibility between RTLB &amp; teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher &amp; RTLB Commitment (support, co-operation/goodwill)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Satisfaction with the process & outcomes

| Problem clarification | √ |
| Feedback & data analysis | √ |
| Intervention: exploration & Selection | √ |
| Intervention: implementation, monitoring & evaluation | | √ |
| Teacher & student outcomes | √ |
I asked teachers and RTLB to provide reasons and examples to support the ratings given during the interviews. This provided me with opportunities to check and compare my own perceptions with those of the RTLB and teachers. RTLB-teacher meeting transcripts were also referred to for particular examples and probes during my interviews. Data from all the sources described above were analysed to judge the degree to which there was evidence of the dimensions listed earlier.

Results are presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Findings are based on information from selected key meetings between RTLB and teachers during the CPS process, interviews with me, and ratings made by RTLB and teachers with accompanying quotes to illustrate reasons for their comments. Initials are used to indicate the data sources as follows:

\[
\text{RT} = \text{RTL}B – \text{Teacher meetings} \\
\text{RJ} = \text{RTL}B – \text{Researcher interviews} \\
\text{TJ} = \text{Teacher – Researcher interviews.}
\]

Initials and numbers have been used to identify relevant quotes from the interviews. Numbers refer to each of the nine cases. RT2 refers to a meeting between the RTLB and Teacher from Case 2 whereas RJ2 refers to an interview between the RTLB and me (J, the researcher) about Case 2. As two teachers were involved in Case 4, a and b were used for each one. Examples of the coding system have been summarised below.
Table 6

Examples of codes used to indicate quotes from transcripts of case meetings and interviews with the researcher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting / Interview</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case 2 meeting</td>
<td>RTLB and Teacher(s)</td>
<td>RT2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2 interview</td>
<td>RTLB and researcher</td>
<td>RJ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2 interview</td>
<td>Teacher and researcher</td>
<td>TJ2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 4 interview</td>
<td>Teachers and researcher</td>
<td>TJ4ab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results are presented under key themes within two main sections—facilitating and inhibiting factors—in Chapter 6, followed by two in-depth vignettes in Chapter 7.
Chapter Five Findings: Study 1 Retrospective Cases

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from my semi-structured interviews with RTLB, teachers and senior leaders about their perceptions of practice during problem-solving within different school contexts. RTLB shared their recall of two contrasting cases with me that demonstrated their approaches in an inclusive collaborative problem-solving paradigm and a traditional non-inclusive paradigm.

The results include RTLB and teacher perceptions across the four phases of the problem-solving process: data gathering (entry and assessment); pre-intervention data analysis and interpretation (problem-solving, based on analysis and synthesis of assessment and observational data, and exploration of strategies); intervention; and, post-intervention data analysis (monitoring and evaluation). I used this as a framework within which to seek information about the extent of teacher engagement.

Findings are presented for the contrasting cases designated Type I and Type II. Type I cases were where RTLB intended to use the collaborative problem-solving model as taught to them during their RTLB learning programme but instead resorted to a more traditional student deficit-focussed approach and/or employed withdrawal strategies for intervention. Cases where RTLB demonstrated the collaborative problem-solving model and facilitated inclusive practices were described as Type II. Their perceptions of practice in Type I settings are presented first, followed by their descriptions of practice in Type II settings. Results have also been presented in pictorial form in a series of graphs throughout to further illustrate the contrasting practices and outcomes of the two different approaches.

A summary of findings concludes this section. This chapter concludes with a vignette illustrating one RTLB’s experience in two schools. Two cases, one with successful outcomes and one which was unresolved, are outlined to illustrate the complexity of the factors that contribute to the success or otherwise of RTLB use of the collaborative problem-solving model.
5.1 Type I Practice: RTLB and Teacher Perceptions

A summary of RTLB and teacher perceptions of professional relationships and teacher engagement in the CPS process during type I practice examples have been presented below, followed by senior leader perceptions.

5.1.1 Professional Relationships

There was some variation for type I referrals with teachers reporting more positive relationships than RTLB for the same referrals. Ratings for type I cases were consistently low on the professional relationship dimension: only one type I teacher transcript and no RTLB transcripts were rated highly (3), (i.e., collegial, warm, empathetic and willing to discuss issues). Four type I cases were rated moderately (from two RTLB and two teachers) and five were rated low on this dimension (three from RTLB and two from teachers) (i.e., distant, defensive or unwilling to discuss issues).

![Figure 5](image)

Figure 5. Ratings of RTLB and Teacher perceptions of professional relationships in type I and II cases.

The RTLB (Rose) in one type I case reported frustration with what she viewed as the teacher’s negativity towards the referred child. Her observations indicated that the teacher had difficulty adapting the programme to meet student needs and with class management. Rose had taken the referred child out of the room to assess her literacy levels. The teacher reported that the RTLB (Rose) had:
offered to help me … but I’d rather do it on my own. Rose takes her out of the class and then shows me what wonderful work [the child] can do. I know she can do this. [The child] loves working one-to-one with Rose but it’s not resolving the problem in the classroom. [Teacher: Rose I]

The sole teacher who rated the RTLB highly on the professional relationship dimension, described her as: “very approachable on things… I haven’t felt like I was left out. She worked with these children. I trusted her to get on with it”. [Teacher: Denise I]
The same teacher also commented that one of the strengths was “the fact that the RTLB was familiar with the school and the teachers. They’re not strangers even though she’s [her office is] off site”. [Teacher: Denise I]

RTLB often experienced difficulties in setting up meeting times with teachers for type I referrals as teachers were not as readily available or changed appointments at the last minute. Many of these teachers did not see the need to talk about the problem. In one instance, the referring teacher, who was also a senior leader, considered the child to be incapable of learning anything new from the outset. The RTLB then felt a responsibility to advocate for the child and demonstrate that learning was possible. However, her repeated attempts to engage the teacher were unsuccessful. RTLB in type I cases tended to believe that teachers believed it was the RTLB’s job to ‘sort the child out’ or ‘fix the problem’. Hence, there were few opportunities to develop or maintain a professional relationship.

5.1.2 Teacher Engagement in Collaborative Problem-Solving

RTLB and teachers expressed almost identical views of teacher engagement throughout the collaborative problem-solving phases, confirming that the teacher had little or no active involvement throughout any of the phases (ratings of 1) in the type I cases (see Figure 6 below). These transcripts consistently indicated evidence of non-engagement during the intervention phase, even though the extent of teacher participation varied across phases.
For example, one RTLB (Liz) preferred to work in an inclusive way, where she worked alongside teachers to adapt curriculum to match the child’s instructional level. She was also willing to co-teach with the teacher to model more inclusive teaching approaches. Liz found in this school that the teacher often attributed the problem to issues in the child’s home. She also had difficulty getting the teacher to commit to meeting times. In her interview, the classroom teacher described Liz as:

very thorough in investigating and generally supportive. [However, in her view, there had been] less involvement in terms of getting strategies. I thought she would give me strategies but that hasn’t happened. … Liz hasn’t really set up anything in the class. She offered to pay for a teacher aide but that’s not the answer. That would make it worse as this is what [the child] loves. It is still making her special. [Teacher: Liz I]

Liz and an RTLB colleague, who worked in the same school, also reported “feeling frustrated at the lack of staff awareness of needs and their unwillingness to take responsibility”. [Liz I]

Figure 6. Ratings of RTLB and Teacher perceptions of teacher engagement during the four collaborative problem-solving (CPS) phases in type I and II cases.
RTLB and teacher perceptions about the presence or absence of inclusive practices during the intervention phase were also similar, as illustrated in Figure 7 above. None of the type I referrals discussed with me involved inclusive interventions. However, there was one example where an RTLB (Denise) and teacher shared assessment and exploration of strategies. The teacher commented that she:

provided the academic data, what their maths level was, the reading level, spelling level, that sort of thing. [RTLB Denise] did the observations. … Denise would sit down and chat with me and see what was happening, what I thought and give me some ideas. … It wasn’t a structured format. … She’d work out what essentials I wanted, what the kids wanted and then we’d formulate a plan. [Teacher: Denise I]

However, the intervention was carried out by the RTLB and involved parental contact in addition to a pull-out group programme. While the teacher was generally satisfied with progress made by the children, she had not implemented the new strategies herself. The teacher also reported that the children’s behaviour was variable when the RTLB was not in the room.

In another type I referral, the teacher “agreed to it [the paired writing intervention] at the meeting but then at the beginning of the year did not want to know about it”. [RTLB Barbara I] On reflection, the RTLB realised she had been advocating for the strategy but
had not secured the commitment of the teacher. When exploring strategies at the feedback meeting, Barbara suggested:

that a paired writing programme would be a fantastic thing. You know she’s got the ideas but it would really give her the spelling feedback and everything. At the beginning of term 2 she was thinking it might be quite a good idea, well I sort of kept bringing it up. She [the teacher] said okay but she was responding to my pressure really. Anyway when I met her there were lots of barriers. She didn’t want to do it before this or after the reading programme. In the end we compromised that I would come and train the children. I spoke to her about the ways that we could perhaps adapt the tutoring procedure … However she just decided that a couple of aspects of the programme would be useful to her in writing programmes she wanted to run. So for instance, she thought the buddy brainstorming together would be quite a good idea and she wasn’t that keen on tutor feedback during the writing process. She thought the children should just be able to write without having interruptions all the time but that they could help each other with some pre-reading. … She wanted me to come and train the children in the writing tutor procedure and so I contracted with her to do three sessions. I came back for the first session and found they were doing something else. That was pretty much what happened all the time. It was complete control by her. She didn’t really want anything else but my individual support to [the child] but she gave no support though at all. [RTLB: Barbara I]

The RTLB told me she felt frustrated with the teacher’s attitude and lack of involvement. However, with hindsight, this was a predictable outcome given that she and the teacher had not come to a shared agreement about the most suitable approach to the referral. Although the child made some progress during the time she worked with him, it was unlikely to be sustained without teacher input. The teacher was satisfied with the work Barbara had been doing with the student. She had senior leader responsibilities and didn’t feel she had time to make changes for one student. She also saw this kind of work (one-to-one remedial assistance) as part of the RTLB role, in contrast to the principal’s espoused views and Ministry of Education Toolkit.

5.2 Type I Practice: Senior Leader Perceptions

School leaders were asked to describe their school policies on teaching children with special learning needs. The policies were rated as providing low, moderate or high support for inclusive practice as specified in the Ministry of Education RTLB Policy and
Guidelines (2002). Three type I referral schools were rated as having highly supportive policies and two were moderately supportive as illustrated in Figure 8 below. Less supportive policies led to school practices that impeded inclusive practice such as timetabling RTLB at regular, specific times thereby allowing less flexibility to observe and respond to needs in different schools or expected RTLB to teach children in withdrawal groups on a regular basis.

Figure 8. Ratings of school policy and inclusion described by Senior Leaders in type I and II cases.

Senior leader descriptions of relationships in type I referrals were rated highly in two and moderately in three cases (see Figure 9 below). Senior leaders often based their judgements on RTLB work as a whole in the school rather than the specific case RTLB and teachers were able to recall in more detail. One acting principal thought the RTLB role involved being:

out there to work with children with mild behaviour or mild disabilities. I think the reality of it is that it’s so hard to access people through Special Education that they [RTLB] end up with children that have high learning problems, high needs. The difference between the concept and the reality is a very big gap. [Senior leader member: Rose I]
Figure 9. Ratings of RTLB, Teacher, and Senior Leader perceptions of professional relationships in type I and II cases.

Senior leader descriptions of RTLB commitment in type I referrals were rated highly in two cases, moderately in two cases and low in one case, as illustrated in Figure 10. In the quote that follows, one teacher’s comments confirm that her perception of the RTLB’s role was to take responsibility for the student as an expert or provide an ‘extra pair of hands’ rather than assisting her to adapt her programme or strategies:

We were … doing role plays. It just felt like another body was in the room, so I worked with her and we just shared taking lessons… which was good … but it wasn’t as in depth as I thought it would be. … I would have liked her coming more frequently into the classroom and working with [the student] on a one to one because he was in need of a little ... support at that time because ... she really enjoyed talking to Denise about dealing with anger. [Teacher: Denise I]

An exception, in one type I case was a principal who described the RTLB as “a very astute and supportive person… I think the ownership of this whānau support team network … makes a difference and Barbara was very pivotal in helping us to develop this”. [Principal: Barbara I]
Senior leader descriptions of RTLB skills/knowledge of student, teacher and/or school needs as well as effective strategies in type I referrals were rated highly in three and moderately in two cases, (see Figure 11). Their judgements were often based on work within the school rather than the specific referred case.

One senior leader judged RTLB skill and ‘effectiveness’ by the absence of problems. She commented that the RTLB had:
been working with the girls and it’s all about how to handle situations, how to deal with it and I must say thinking off the top of my head, a lot of those boys that are in that group haven’t been in trouble which is good. [Senior leader: Denise I]

Two principals mentioned cultural issues in relation to RTLB work in general in their schools, not referring to either of the selected referrals. (Only one of the selected cases involved a Māori student and another one involved a Pasifika student.) One principal was particularly impressed with the Pakeha RTLBs’ expertise and success in working with the teachers in the Māori immersion unit:

The RTLB have worked with Māori whanau of the Immersion Unit so they’re actually taking on board challenges like that in terms of stepping outside their own comfort zones…That’s based on their commitment to all children and there is a huge gap in terms of support for learning and behaviour support for Māori children in Immersion Units.

I think [they] have made a huge commitment and as a result of that take on a whole lot of things that maybe others would do reluctantly but they do it with a passion and they believe that they can make a difference. They have a desire to make a difference. [Principal: Barbara I]

One Senior leader who was involved with a type I referral, described her RTLB’s strengths with class-wide strategies as follows:

She’s very good too on different strategies and I know she’s itching to get into some classes to model cooperative learning and cultural strategies. …and with my Year 1 teacher last year, she did some work on cooperative learning and reciprocal teaching, whole class and she’s doing some work for the provisionally registered teacher this year as well, management strategies. … I think she’s got good ideas. She looks at how the teachers manage the whole class and hopefully the management angle delivery of their teaching. I think she works alongside the teacher as well and she’s keen to do demonstration work and help make resources or lend them to the teachers.

[Senior Leader who is also the SENCO: Rose I]

Both Senior leaders spoke highly of all Rose’s work and particularly of her professional development expertise not only with individual teachers but also with syndicates and the whole staff. However, the teacher involved with the selected type I case avoided making changes to her programme and wanted the RTLB to work with the
referred student as she didn’t believe the Year 4 student was capable of learning much more. The RTLB did work with the student although she believed this would be less effective long-term than working with the teacher. She thought that if she demonstrated that the student could make progress, the teacher might be more willing to change in the future. Her decision was also influenced by the teacher’s position as a senior leader. The RTLB was wary of challenging her too much in case it jeopardised her role on the special needs committee and relationship with the school overall.

5.3 Type II Practice: RTLB and Teacher Perceptions

5.3.1 Professional Relationships

RTLB and teacher perceptions were similar for all type II referrals (as illustrated earlier in Figure 5, 5.1.1). Professional relationships were rated highly as collegial, warm, empathetic and willing to discuss issues. Selected typical responses from type II interviews are included below. Teachers in these interviews tended to be specific and elaborate more in their examples.

She’s very approachable. She makes you feel like it’s okay to go to her with new issues. You can see she is a very busy person but she’d make the time to pop into your room and …share a resource or ask how it’s going which is great. … She engenders confidence in us, not just me as a teacher but the kids as well. [Teacher: Barbara II]

This teacher’s comment also suggests that, not only did she feel reassured that she was making progress with the intervention, but also felt that it was safe to discuss concerns with the RTLB.

The following comments from Liz’ and Karen’s case II teachers indicate a professional development role fulfilled by RTLB during the shared implementation and monitoring of the intervention. Teachers reported learning through observation of good role models and by receiving timely constructive feedback from RTLB they trusted and whose expertise they valued:

I think it’s very valuable because you can learn so much, not just from watching other people but working with them too and it is just so neat. [Teacher: Liz II]
It was fantastic because I was really starting to lack in confidence by the time I met [RTLB Karen] and for me that was a new experience because as a student I had always been very confident and just thought teaching was the bees’ knees and I was wonderful and everything was going to be fine. By the time I met Karen, I was starting to think I had made a mistake and that I didn’t know what I was doing and I needed someone else who had been in my room and seen how I did things, to say to me, you’re doing fine… She said you’re doing fine but look what else you could do and I did that…she took the class for part of a lesson while I observed and then we swapped. … She was great on giving me feedback and asking me questions. It was good. I needed it. [Teacher: Karen II]

One provisionally registered teacher (PRT) felt more able to discuss issues with the RTLB than her mentor teacher as the latter ‘knocked her confidence’ ” by pointing out her mistakes in front of the class. Given that mentor teachers contribute to school decisions about recommendations for Full Teacher Registration, it can be risky for PRTs to ask for help. She reported: “I can be honest with Karen. I wasn’t willing to admit to anyone in the school that I didn’t actually feel I was coping “. She felt able to raise areas of concern with the RTLB, Karen. Karen was able to engender confidence in this teacher while asking challenging questions rather than accepting the status quo. Despite the teacher’s initial anxiety and concerns, she found the questioning and feedback valuable and welcomed it, which were strong indicators of the rapport between them.

Common themes expressed by the teachers related to their feeling valued and reassured:

Denise always makes you feel that you’re very valuable and the child as well… I find that very reassuring. [Teacher: Denise II]

… It was also exciting, bouncing ideas off each other. Rose listened to me. I felt my ideas were valued too…We worked it out together and it was fine. [Teacher: Rose II]

5.3.2 Teacher Engagement in Collaborative Problem-Solving

Perceptions were sought across the four phases of the problem-solving process: data gathering (entry and assessment); pre-intervention data analysis and interpretation (problem-solving, based on analysis and synthesis of assessment and observational data, and exploration of strategies); intervention; and, post-intervention data analysis
(monitoring and evaluation). These provided a framework within which to seek information about the extent of teacher involvement.

RTLB and teachers in type II cases also expressed almost identical views on teacher engagement (see Figure 6, 5.1.2). Results from type II RTLB and teacher transcript analysis indicated high rates of teacher involvement throughout the problem-solving process. Even though the extent of teacher participation varied across phases, all five type II referrals had reported active involvement of the teacher during the intervention phase. These also provided multiple professional learning opportunities. Shifts in teacher engagement over time were noted in some cases:

I guess in the beginning [the strategies] came more from her but she’d say something about him and I’d go yeah, yeah and then she did this and the other day she did that and so I could sort of back up what she had observed with what I had observed in my own time so it was good to discuss it. Then of course the bulk of the work ended up us putting a social skills programme in for the whole class which was fantastic and we worked on that together. We planned it together. She implemented it mostly to start with. She’d come in and then I’d carry it on with it in other lessons and homework, …but each time we’d introduce a new book or a skill and talk to the whole class about it and I really felt it made a big difference. [Teacher: Karen II]

Examples of reported active engagement in several cases included RTLB and teacher sharing assessment and analysis tasks, making resources together, co-teaching or the RTLB modelling a strategy then giving feedback when the teacher tried it over successive days or weeks. Similar examples were consistently reported in type II cases.

Shared monitoring, through recording, regular discussions or a mixture of both, was also reported. Engagement in any of these phases tended to result in more consistent implementation of agreed interventions and more successful outcomes not only for the referred student but for the teacher and other students. RTLB and teachers judged outcomes to be successful when goals were achieved and/or there was satisfaction with progress in relation to the initial pre-intervention situation.

RTLB and teacher perceptions about the presence or absence of inclusive practice during the intervention phase were similar (as illustrated earlier in Figure 7, 5.1.2). Four of the type II referral interventions discussed by RTLB were inclusive and one was
undertaken in the classroom but separate whereas three of the type II referral interventions
discussed by teachers were inclusive and two were in class but separate.

In several cases, teachers reported changes in their own knowledge and understanding
resulting from their work with the RTLB such as their use of new strategies, improvement
in teaching and managing their students. One teacher reported that initially:

I found it actually very hard, but [the RTLB Karen] didn’t just help me with K
[the student], she helped me with me basically. … I really felt Karen taught me
not just how to cope with K but how to deal with other kids that need that little
bit of extra help and I use a lot of the skills she taught me last year for D that I
have this year and that’s been fantastic! [Teacher: Karen II]

In this case, the RTLB also sought the teacher’s permission to video interactions
between the teacher and students in the classroom. She used this data to discuss the way
the teacher gave feedback and to enable the teacher to see the progress she was making
with the student who had been referred and with her general classroom management. The
teacher commented that:

Karen just gives you lots of positives: I really love your classroom or I really
love the way you do things like that. … There was this one girl that she saw a
while ago, she was being very difficult and I was just tearing my hair out and so
she observed for quite a while and then she asked me if she could video him. She
said, “just do what you normally do”, so I set the groups up ... so she did the
video. I was quite surprised. After that she said, well I just really liked the way
you handled that … She never makes you feel inferior. … I thought - I can do
this now! [Teacher: Karen II]

This provisionally registered teacher’s professional learning from the experience of
working with the RTLB helped her to gain confidence as a teacher. She also felt a sense of
achievement seeing the difference the changes she made had for the student.

5.4 Type II Practice: Senior Leader Perceptions

School leaders were asked to describe their school policies on teaching children with
special learning needs. The policies were rated as providing low, moderate or high support
for inclusive practice as specified in the Ministry of Education RTLB Policy and
Guidelines (2002). All type II referral school policies were rated as highly supportive (as
RTLB in these schools were actively involved in committee meetings where issues and students of concern were raised prior to referral (e.g., Special Needs or whanau support). They tended to be viewed as part of team with shared responsibility. None of the school leaders/managers described their policies in ways which could be considered constraining or not facilitative of the designated role. Interpretation and application of the policies by individual teachers were often the determining factors, not the policy itself. Schools with highly supportive policies and practice tend to make reference to the Ministry of Education RTLB Policy and Guidelines (2002) and the role defined within this document. Their understanding of the collaborative problem-solving nature of the work was reflected in policy documents, referral forms and reports. They were facilitative of not only interventions for individual students but also for groups, classes, or syndicates. Some actively involved RTLB in school-wide projects and staff development.

Senior leader descriptions of relationships in all type II referrals were consistently rated highly, indicating evidence of collegiality, warmth, empathy, and an ability to share information and raise issues (see Figure 9, 5.2). Results for type II transcripts were similar to those described by RTLB and teachers. The importance of constructive, supportive relationships was stressed by all participants and confirms previous research findings in this area. However, the relationship dimension was not the sole factor in determining whether the intervention practices were inclusive, as illustrated in the following examples.

One principal believed that his RTLB was effective because she showed:

initiative and integrity, … confidentiality, approachability and that whole thing about mutual respect and the fact that I guess that [she’s] a part of us not apart, so … not like a stranger coming into the school but part of who we are.
[Principal: Barbara II]

Another principal stated:

I have a huge trust and respect for her in this role and I suppose because I’m a believer in feedback making a difference. [The RTLB] knows how to give feedback. Feedback actually creates change so it’s part of the culture of the school. [Principal: Rose II]
A Special Needs Coordinator was “so delighted [that the RTLB] is in our area. She is such a sensitive, empathetic, diligent, hardworking person”. [SENCO: Liz II]

RTLB commitment in type II referrals was consistently described as meeting needs and/or improving outcomes, demonstrating effort and responsiveness beyond expectations and therefore rated highly by senior leaders in all five transcripts (as illustrated earlier in Figure 10, 5.2). The quotes below are illustrative of their experiences with RTLB. The SENCO and teacher in Barbara’s case II independently shared similar positive perceptions of her work and that of her colleague:

We have a total trust in their professional efficiency, their professional presentation, their diligence, their willingness. They go over and beyond their call of duty. They’re prepared to come early, stay late, do the extra thing, preparedness—phenomenal, reporting back – excellent—…and it’s not just to me but to the whole team. [SENCO: Barbara II]

The same SENCO also commented on the RTLB impact on teacher professional learning and described their two RTLB as:

wonderfully helpful, not only in dealing with children and their direct teaching needs and the families, but in upskilling and mentoring staff involved with those students. … There is a flow-on inclusive effect and those same skills are being transferred from year to year and then they [the teachers] recognise other needs. It’s really beautiful to see. It gives the school a lovely atmosphere. [SENCO: Barbara II]

The teacher from the same school also commented that the RTLB was:

always available. … She’ll follow up. … I know she has a big workload but if you need help and leave a message she’ll always get back to you. You’re not left floundering and she does deal with issues. She doesn’t duck shove anything. [Teacher: Barbara II]

Senior leader descriptions of RTLB skills/knowledge of student, teacher and/or school needs as well as effective strategies in all type II referrals were rated as having high levels of skill and knowledge (see Figure 11, 5.2). RTLB were described as “highly skilled”, “very knowledgeable” or as “having expertise” but “not dominating or putting you down”. [Senior leaders Barbara, Liz, Karen and Rose II]
One SENCO expressed her view of the RTLB role and importance of positive, empowering relationships as follows:

I don’t think Liz should take over as the key worker for the child and all decisions come through them. I do believe they should work as Liz does, in a co-operative fashion where they’re sharing out responsibilities and planning with the team so everybody feels involved. Everybody is empowered. [She] is very, very good at empowering parents … especially those who blame the school…She’ll get a positive working relationship going. …get teachers very aware and planning appropriately for the child. No doubt she is a key worker…but she doesn’t set herself up as such, you know. She’s the mentor of the facilitators and it’s working wonderfully well. I think people will cop out if someone set themselves up as the font of all knowledge. [SENCO: Liz II]

Another SENCO expressed her views about the RTLB role. She noted Rose’s ability to support teachers by giving them confidence to try new strategies and scaffolded implementation so it was manageable:

You’re trying for people internalising strategies and skill be it in the home environment, be it in the teaching environment, be it the students themselves. That’s what you’re going for. I can cope. I can do this. …It’s setting realistic steps. That’s another thing Rose is wonderful at. Setting steps that the kids and parents can see happen, actually happen. Not setting such big steps that frustration sets in before you get there. Being realistic and moving on until those steps become leaps and bounds if you set them small enough in the beginning. [SENCO: Rose II]

These perceptions are also compatible with the collaborative problem-solving approach espoused by the University RTLB programme where there is mutual respect for each person’s expertise. They work together to improve the situation for the students and teacher(s), setting realistic goals based on data and implementing appropriate interventions to reach these goals.

5.5 RTLB and Teacher Perceptions of Levels of Support in Type I and II Settings

RTLB were asked to rate the level of support received for working within an inclusive paradigm, primarily with teachers, from any or all of the following sources: Cluster management committee, senior leaders, school staff, and, RTLB colleagues. RTLB
perceptions of support from different sources are presented for both types of setting to illustrate similarities and differences and have been complemented by Figures 12-14.

As explained in Chapter 2, RTLB are employed by Ministry of Education designated clusters of schools. “A cluster is a geographical grouping of schools that determines its own governance and management structure within the RTLB policy framework and manages the cluster service” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p.4). Each cluster has a Cluster management committee which may not necessarily facilitate practice in accordance with the official guidelines, *The Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour policy toolkit* (2007). This document provided a policy which all clusters were expected to follow. However, as reported earlier, ERO evaluations in 2004 and 2009 reported wide variability in governance and management practices across clusters. “Aspects of referral and intervention practices were inconsistent with RTLB policy, and the lack of monitoring systems at management level meant that such inconsistencies were not being identified or addressed” (Ministry of Education, 2009, p.1).

![Figure 12. RTLB perception of support from Cluster Management, Senior Leaders and other staff.](image)

Figure 12. RTLB perception of support from Cluster Management, Senior Leaders and other staff.

RLTB rated the level of *Cluster management committee* support for their work within an inclusive paradigm as high in four referrals of each type and low in one of each type. No differences between type I and II referrals emerged. In contrast, RTLB ratings of the level of support from *Senior leaders* (i.e., principal/ D.P./A.P.) and *other school staff*
varied across referrals. A higher level of support was consistently reported for all type II referrals compared with one type I referral. Moderate levels of support were perceived in five type I referrals by school staff, three of whom were in senior positions. Low levels were perceived by three staff, two of whom were in senior positions. Ratings are likely to have been influenced by the respondents’ knowledge of the cases and perception of the RTLB role. Cluster Management committee members are representatives from the schools within their RTLB cluster and usually include principals and or senior leaders responsible for students with special needs and associated staff, as well as at least one RTLB. Membership varies from cluster to cluster. However, these staff members were not necessarily familiar with any or all of the cases of the RTLB within the study, especially if the particular RTLB did not work within the representative’s school.

Figure 13. RTLB perceptions of support from RTLB colleagues.

RTLB rated the level of support from their own cluster colleagues high in three type I and three type II referrals and low in two type I and two type II referrals (as illustrated in Figure 13 above). No differences between type of referral emerged. In both type I and II cases, the degree of collegial support reported varied according to several factors such as: the particular RTLB within their cluster, their beliefs about the role, whether they had been trained, cluster management expectations and the range of knowledge and skills RTLB had collectively. Some clusters actively fostered additional professional interactions, support and collegial discussions between RTLB while others were reported to have separated RTLB, located them in different schools and discouraged regular contact.
Figure 14. RTLB and teacher perceptions of support from each other.

RTLB ratings of the teacher(s) with whom they worked most closely on the reported case showed the greatest differences between types of referral. RTLB consistently reported high levels of support from teachers for all type II referrals. In contrast, low levels of teacher support were reported for all type I referrals. One teacher described the RTLB as:

an excellent classroom teacher (with whom she had worked previously), but her personal opinion is that reducing class numbers in our schools is far more effective. … I’ve got five children there that are all very difficult and Liz has had dealing with all of them at varying times, but if they were split so there were three in one class and two in another, they wouldn’t be half as much problem. [Teacher: Liz I]

The same RTLB in School II was described by the teacher as ‘very professional’, ‘really helpful’ and ‘extremely knowledgeable’. [Teacher: Liz II]

Teacher perceptions of both the effectiveness of RTLB work and the level of support from the RTLB indicated marked differences between types of referrals. Moderate satisfaction with RTLB effectiveness and level of support was reported in one type I referral and low satisfaction in four referrals. Some improvement during withdrawal but no generalisation to the class was noted in two of the referrals while no change or sustained improvement for the target student and/or others was noted in three type I referrals. In contrast, teachers reported high satisfaction with RTLB effectiveness and level of support in all type II referrals. They appreciated RTLB sharing resources with them and ideas that
had worked in other classes and schools. They also noted improvements in the target student and others following intervention.

One teacher described the support from her RTLB as ‘fantastic’:

She was great in that she gave me in the beginning just little tips and then she came in and helped, took lessons with the whole class which allowed me to sit back and watch what was going on and learn from her and from the kids. …Because you really need to be able to see all the interactions and things and that was great. [Teacher: Liz II]

Several teachers also acknowledged the significance of being listened to:

She would pop in and see how I was getting on as well. Sometimes after a hard day she’d just sit and listen to me rattle off everything, yeah she was very good at listening. [Teacher: Denise II]

All the teachers involved with type II referrals reported feeling ‘reassured’ or ‘empowered’. One teacher commented that she:

was impressed with Karen’s ability to keep a smile on her face … also to engender confidence in us, not just me as a teacher but the kids as well. …She has this amazing ability to always have a smile on her face and to always be enthusiastic and even the kids pick up on it. She quickly builds a rapport with them. …She always made us feel good about ourselves which was good. I needed it last year. She just has such a lovely manner. [Teacher: Karen II]

This was one of several teachers who felt they could take risks with changing their strategies or trying new approaches because the RTLB (Karen in this case) provided a ‘sounding board’ and ‘safety net’.

Comments from different staff members (SENCOs and teachers) tended to be consistently positive for each type II case. This sense of empowerment is seen as significant in the collaborative problem-solving process. This model of consultation has often been referred to as an empowering one (Friend, 2010; Reshly, 1998; Friend, 2010).

Thus, RTLB perceptions of support and levels of teacher engagement in each collaborative problem-solving phase appeared to be related. These may have been
influenced by the match or mismatch between teacher expectations of the RTLB role and practice related to particular cases.

5.6 Summary

RTLB and teachers consistently expressed similar views on each dimension across both types I and II cases: teacher engagement, inclusive practice during the intervention, perceptions of professional relationships and support, RTLB skills and knowledge. However, contrasting results emerged between type I and II referrals. All participants reported more inclusive practices and a greater degree of teacher engagement in the type II referrals, suggesting that the practices were both identifiable as inclusive and as successful (in terms of adopting the training model and outcomes for the student and teacher). While RTLB and teachers were positive about the process and outcomes, teachers tended to assign higher ratings than RTLB in relation to the same case. RTLB tended to be more critical of their own practice even when teachers reported satisfaction with outcomes and RTLB support. School policies appeared to be supportive of type II practices in some schools.

Type II referrals were reported to have more evidence of inclusive practices and active involvement of teachers throughout the whole collaborative problem-solving process but particularly commitment to implementing the intervention with support from the RTLB.

Examples of reported active engagement in several cases included RTLB and teacher sharing assessment and analysis tasks, making resources together, co-teaching or the RTLB modelling a strategy then giving feedback when the teacher tried it over successive days or weeks. Shared monitoring through recording, regular discussions or a mixture of both was also reported. Engagement in any of these phases tended to result in more consistent implementation of agreed interventions and more successful outcomes not only for the referred student but for the teacher and other students. Reported changes in teacher practices due to the collaborative approach providing professional learning opportunities were evident in several cases. For example, in these cases, the teachers learned to use new strategies and improved teaching and management of their students.
RTLB reported consistently higher levels of support from teachers in type II referrals. Satisfaction with the effectiveness and level of support from the RTLB was also high in these referrals. Teachers appreciated RTLB sharing resources with them and ideas that had worked in other classes and schools. They also noted improvements in the target student and others following intervention. Several teachers also acknowledged the significance of ‘being listened to’, ‘reassured’, or ‘empowered’ and ‘feeling more able to take risks with changing their strategies or trying new approaches’ because the RTLB provided a ‘sounding board’ and ‘safety net’. They felt they could trust the RTLB. Senior leaders consistently described RTLB as meeting needs and/or improving outcomes, demonstrating effort and responsiveness beyond expectations and therefore received high ratings on the commitment dimension in all type II cases.

Conversely, there was little or no evidence of teacher engagement throughout the phases or inclusive practices in type I referrals. None of the teachers was directly involved in implementing the intervention. Many of these teachers did not see the need to talk about the problem. RTLB in type I cases tended to think that teachers believed it was the RTLB’s job to ‘sort the child out’ or ‘fix the problem’. Hence, there were fewer opportunities to develop or maintain a professional relationship compared with type II student referrals where feeling valued and reassured were common themes. The descriptions of commitment in type I referrals ranged from low to high depending on the degree of alignment between expectations of the role and practice. Teacher perceptions of both the effectiveness of RTLB work and the level of support from the RTLB indicated marked differences between types of referrals. Moderate satisfaction with RTLB effectiveness and level of support was reported in one type I referral and low satisfaction in four referrals. Some improvement during withdrawal but no generalisation to the class was noted in two of the referrals while no change or sustained improvement for the target student and/or others was noted in three type I referrals.

There were no distinct differences between type I and II referrals in RTLB perceptions of Cluster management support for their work within an inclusive paradigm. In contrast, RTLB perceptions of the level of support from senior leaders (i.e., principal/ D.P. /A.P.) and other school staff varied across referrals. A higher level of support was consistently reported for all type II referrals. Ratings are likely to have been influenced by the depth of
knowledge the respondents had about the case from referral to closure as well as their perceptions of the RTLB role.

Similar findings emerged with respect to RTLB perceptions of collegial support within their clusters. In both type I and II cases, the degree of collegial support reported varied according to several factors such as: the particular RTLB within their cluster, their beliefs about the role, whether they had been trained, cluster management expectations and the range of knowledge and skills RTLB had collectively. Some clusters actively fostered additional professional interactions, support and collegial discussions between RTLB while others were reported to have separated RTLB, located them in different schools and discouraged regular contact.

None of the school leaders for either type of referral described their school policies in ways which could be considered constraining or not facilitative of the designated role. Interpretation and application of the policies by individual teachers were often the determining factors, not the policies themselves.

Senior leader descriptions of RTLB skills/knowledge of student, teacher and/or school needs as well as effective strategies in type I referrals were rated moderately to highly whereas RTLB in all type II referrals were rated as having high levels of skill and knowledge. These perceptions are also compatible with the collaborative problem-solving approach espoused by the training programme where there is mutual respect for each person’s expertise but they work together to improve the situation for the students and teacher(s).

5.7 Vignette: Rose’s Story

In this case study, Rose’s experience in two schools is explored to reveal how one RTLB experienced successful outcomes in one (Type I case) and unresolved issues in the other (Type II case). These cases in which Rose was the RTLB are outlined to illustrate the complexity of the factors that contribute to the success or otherwise of RTLB practice in a collaborative problem-solving model.

The cases Rose selected to discuss showed the most contrast in practice by the same RTLB. Prior to becoming an RTLB, Rose had experience teaching in New Zealand and
overseas. She had also been a Deputy Principal and had worked in urban and rural settings. She had established credibility in her cluster and generally had good relationships with Senior Leaders and staff as demonstrated by high ratings in both Schools I and II. Rose was also in demand to provide professional development for individual staff members and whole staff or syndicate groups.

Firstly, Rose’s experiences in School I (a type I case) are explored to examine why difficulties implementing a collaborative problem-solving approach might have occurred. The new principal in the Case I school was supportive of the RTLB working in a collaborative manner, but in fact, the practice of the school was for the RTLB to work in a traditional remedial manner, an approach which the teachers valued. In addition, teacher aides were organised to work with individual students with little direct input from teachers. The SENCO, who was also one of the senior leaders, believed that their school catered well for students with special needs but thought that the school sometimes received ‘problem children’ transferring from other schools. The referred child in Rose’s Type I school case was seen as ‘a complex case’ who had received early intervention support at preschool. The SENCO and Rose appeared to have a good working relationship. The SENCO spoke positively about the work Rose had done especially with students with behavioural difficulties and her ability to network with parents and other agencies. However, Rose felt that while the SENCO was happy with casework related to individual referrals, she did not support Rose taking professional development sessions during staff meetings as this was ‘crossing into her territory’.

The principal in School I spoke highly of the work Rose did in her school and said that she appreciated her keeness to keep up to date and share research with her but did not want to spend much time discussing this with Rose. Essentially the problem in School I was that the principal moved into a school with non-inclusive practices and but did not seek to discuss her espoused support of inclusive practice with her staff. This left Rose in the position of trying to change long established school organisational practices without tangible support from the principal. It was understandable that the SENCO considered that Rose was “crossing over into her territory” because staff development was her responsibility and changes in their respective roles had not been negotiated between the principal, the SENCO and Rose.
Communication was an issue in this school. For example, the SENCO belatedly told Rose she had reservations about the referring teacher’s classroom management but these had not been shared openly with the teacher. This was another school-related factor which made it difficult for Rose to work effectively in an inclusive manner.

In School I, teacher and RTLB perspectives of the problem differed as did expectations of Rose’s role. Rose thought the problem arose from the teacher’s difficulties with differentiating the curriculum and classroom management and the teacher believed she had too many children with special needs in her class which was making it difficult to manage the class and impossible to cater adequately for their different needs. She had not asked for RTLB help: the individual referral had been made by the previous teacher. The teacher also felt that by having an RTLB in her class, other teachers and senior leaders would judge her to be incompetent or not able to cope. She was mistrustful of the process. Not surprisingly, they were unable to agree on one mutual goal.

Rose reported feeling very frustrated about the teacher’s negativity towards the referred child and the teacher’s resistance to making any changes to her own style of teaching and management. Her observations supported her impression that the teacher was having difficulty adapting the programme to meet student needs and also had trouble with overall class management. Rose took the referred child out of the room to assess her literacy levels, an action that was misinterpreted by the teacher as showing up the inadequacies in her classroom practice. While Rose wanted a quiet space to give the child a chance to show what she could do rather than feeling like she was a failure, the teacher reported that Rose had:

offered to help me … but I’d rather do it on my own. Rose takes her out of the class and then shows me what wonderful work [the child] can do. I know she can do this. [The child] loves working one-to-one with Rose but it’s not resolving the problem in the classroom. [Teacher: Rose I]

Senior leaders’ views also differed. One Senior Leader in School I thought the RTLB role involved being:

out there to work with children with mild behaviour or mild disabilities. I think the reality of it is that it’s so hard to access people through Special Education that they [RTLB] end up with children that have high learning problems, high
needs. The difference between the concept and the reality is a very big gap. [Senior Leader: Rose I]

Rose’s experiences in School II stood in marked contrast to those in School I. In School II Rose had demonstrated effective practice in the past with individual and class referrals as well as whole school professional development projects. This was confirmed by senior leaders and teachers in the school. She enjoyed a range of work, gaining satisfaction from supporting and coaching teachers and seeing the difference this made for students. While Rose had encountered some resistance in a school she had worked in previously, she had always been able to manage this and ‘turn things around’ by examining the data and through scaffolding with the teacher. Rose reported that School I and II principals were supportive of the RTLB model outlined in the Ministry of Education Toolkit.

Much of Rose’s work in School II was proactive. The focus on enhancing teacher learning and strategies was welcomed and encouraged by the principal and teachers. One teacher commented that:

… It was also exciting, bouncing ideas off each other. Rose listened to me. I felt my ideas were valued too. …We worked it out together and it was fine. [Teacher: Rose II]

On one of my visits to this school, students spoke spontaneously and enthusiastically about the changes to their classroom programme and volunteered information about the skills they had learnt. The principal in School II had regular meetings with Rose to discuss professional issues and research and appreciated her sharing resources from the University course and assignments. She fostered a school culture of enhancing teacher capability which was confirmed in my discussions with teachers.

Senior leaders’ views supported teachers’ praise and acknowledgement of Rose’s work. The SENCO expressed the following views:

You’re trying for people internalising strategies and skill be it in the home environment, be it in the teaching environment, be it the students themselves. That’s what you’re going for. I can cope. I can do this. …It’s setting realistic steps. That’s another thing Rose is wonderful at. Setting steps that the kids and parents can see happen, actually happen. Not setting such big steps that
frustration sets in before you get there. Being realistic and moving on until those steps become leaps and bounds if you set them small enough in the beginning.

[SENCO: Rose II]

In summary, Rose’s work in these two schools shows the difference that contexts can make. Although the principal in School I said she was supportive of Rose, she had not yet addressed school ways of doing things that undermined her intentions. Despite Rose having the skills and competence to use the collaborative problem-solving approach to facilitate inclusive practice, the school’s ingrained support of the traditional model led to resistance from some school leaders and staff. In contrast, school II staff welcomed Rose’s enthusiasm and appreciated her expertise working alongside them. She was treated more like a senior leader and described by several as inspirational. Rose had a key role in staff development in this second school. Staff felt they could take risks to try something new with Rose’s support. Teachers and students in school II were positive about the changes they were making and the reasons for these. They could describe the difference it made to them. In contrast, Rose’s practice was constrained by the difference in beliefs and expectations of the principal and senior leaders in school I. It was not possible to get agreement on mutual goals and to engage teachers in making changes due to their belief in the child and/or family as some of the problems.
Chapter Six Study 2: Collaborative Cases Findings

6.0 Introduction

As described in Chapter Five, Study 1 focussed on RTLB, teacher and senior leader perceptions and recall of cases where the RTLB had employed either inclusive or non-inclusive approaches to referrals. However, although RTLB and teacher recollections and perceptions about the joint problem-solving in the cases were consistent, this did not constitute evidence about the actual practices and outcomes. Collaborative problem-solving (CPS) is a complex, dynamic process with interrelated components. Furthermore, previous research and Study 1 results suggest that there may be critical factors which contribute to its successful implementation. Study 2 was designed to address a gap in research by exploring the actual (rather than espoused) practice of a group of RTLB working collaboratively with regular classroom teachers to resolve problems.

My main intention for Study 2 was to develop deeper understandings of the reality and complexity involved in collaborative problem-solving using an inclusive approach and test the factors in the framework from the literature. I also set out to investigate the professional learning this approach provided for RTLB and teachers. The questions that guided the second study were:

To what extent is the responsive teacher, CPS model, taught on the University RTLB programme, implemented in practice?

What factors facilitated or impeded RTLB use and the effectiveness of the CPS process?

Study 2 was conducted as set out in Chapter 4. Findings are based on information from key meetings between RTLB and teachers during the CPS process, interviews with me as researcher, and ratings made by RTLB and teachers. Figures have been included throughout under each sub-heading to illustrate cross-case comparisons and participants’ ratings for each aspect. The graphic summaries also indicate similarities and differences between RTLB and teacher perceptions on the same dimension of the CPS process. Table 6 summarises the initial referral concerns and jointly determined interventions for each case. The two cases (1 & 4) with shaded backgrounds are presented in more depth in
Chapter 7. The findings in this chapter are presented in two main sections: facilitating factors and inhibiting factors.

6.1 Facilitating Factors

Examination of the data suggested eight main factors facilitated the implementation of a CPS approach. These were: positive professional relationships between the RTLB and teacher, engagement through power sharing, acknowledgement of each other’s perspectives, defining and sharing responsibilities, RTLB confidence in advocating for the CPS model, teacher and RTLB commitment to working collaboratively, satisfaction with the process and outcomes, and, alignment between school policy, the RTLB programme and practice. Each is explored in some depth below.

Table 7
Overview of concerns and interventions across nine cases involving RTLB-Teacher collaborative problem-solving (*In-depth vignettes presented in Chapter 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case identifier and participants</th>
<th>Referral concerns</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Additional comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case 1 * Robyn RTLB 1 Tamara Teacher 1</td>
<td>Rural school individual: Year 5/6 boy inappropriate social behaviour, low self-image and lack of resilience, high risk taker</td>
<td>Tailored programme for referred student including self-management &amp; resilience focus + scaffolding of class management strategies for teacher</td>
<td>Originally a grandparent initiated referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 2 Rachel RTLB 2 Karen Teacher 2</td>
<td>Urban school Year 3 / 4 Group of 14 students learning &amp; behaviour: off-task behaviour &amp; underachievement in written language</td>
<td>Paired writing programme (PWP) plus established associated routines and cooperative skills</td>
<td>Existing writing programme not tailored to range of needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 3 Rebecca RTLB 3 Mona (Teacher 3)</td>
<td>Rural school: Year 1–6 bilingual unit: teacher assistance with class management</td>
<td>Planning and managing learning &amp; behaviour; liaison with whanau (family)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 4* Mary RTLB 4 Carla &amp; Jenny (Teachers 4a &amp; 4b)</td>
<td>Suburban school: Year 0–1 two class syndicate oral language needs in conjunction with school-wide goals in this area</td>
<td>Oral language programme across two classes</td>
<td>Carla was a very experienced NZ Senior teacher. Jenny trained overseas and was new to NZ and this school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 5 Laura RTLB 5 Hayley Teacher 5</td>
<td>Suburban school: Year 1–2 group of boys and girls learning: literacy</td>
<td>Adapted programme for the target student plus planning and class strategies</td>
<td>Data indicated need for more intensive academic help for one 6 year old girl. The teacher, Hayley, is in her second year of teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 6 Pat RTLB 6 Melissa Teacher 6</td>
<td>Rural school: Year 5 boy behaviour</td>
<td>Class-wide cooperative learning &amp; individual contract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case identifier and participants</td>
<td>Referral concerns</td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Additional comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 7 Alison RTLB 7 Miriama Teacher 7</td>
<td>Suburban school: Year 2 boy (refugee): learning &amp; social behaviour</td>
<td>In-class support for literacy (Buddy reading &amp; Spelling programme) &amp; mathematics; on-task behaviour contract</td>
<td>Data gathering indicated inappropriate social behaviour was related to playground management of a larger number of children. Separate intervention implemented by staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 8 Kelly RTLB 8 Bronwyn Teacher 8</td>
<td>Rural school: Year 1 boy: learning &amp; behaviour</td>
<td>Adapted curriculum and class management strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case 9 Trish RTLB 9 Leanne Teacher 9</td>
<td>Suburban school: year 1 girl: learning &amp; social behaviour</td>
<td>Curriculum adaptation &amp; home-school liaison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.1.1 Positive Professional Relationships between the RTLB & Teacher

Relationships are thought to be one of the key factors in a CPS model, as proposed in the conceptual framework for facilitating factors in Chapter 2. I therefore asked RTLB and teachers to rate perceptions of their initial relationships following the entry meeting and again once the CPS was under way, from data gathering onwards, including implementation of the intervention. Because previous research had not presented teacher or special education consultant/psychologist perceptions of what this means during different phases of working together on a current case, I asked participants to rate factors relating to initiating, building and maintaining relationships, balance of power and reciprocity, as well as rapport building and credibility under this dimension. I used RTLB and teacher ratings as prompts for further questioning during the interviews and sought reasons for their ratings. This enabled me to elicit RTLB and teacher interpretations of their relationships at two points in the process, at our first meeting after the case had begun (professional relationship I) and towards the end of the case (professional relationship II) respectively. (See Figure 15 for a summary of ratings across the cases.)
Figure 15. Respective RTLB & Teacher perceptions of their professional relationships at two points (I & II) in the CPS process.

RTLB and teacher perceptions were similar in most cases. Nearly all the RTLB and teachers rated their relationships highly at the ‘warm, collegial, empathetic’ end of the five-point scale on both occasions rather than distant or defensive (at the other extreme of the continuum). Interviews with RTLB and teachers confirmed their awareness of the need to build trust and maintain relationships over time. In some instances, rapport was established early in the entry phase (particularly in cases 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9). In others, relationships developed as trust and credibility built over time. For example, Laura initially rated her relationship with the teacher she worked with as a 3 because she felt the teacher was not being totally open with her. Laura (Case 5) believed she needed to build trust and credibility before the teacher, Hayley, would “open up to her”. Subsequently, she reported that their relationship had improved, once the problem-solving process was underway. However, Hayley did not express any concerns and rated their relationship highly on both occasions. This was her first experience with an RTLB and she was getting used to the shared problem-solving approach and to working with another adult.
Excerpts from Kelly (RTLB) and Bronwyn’s (T) transcripts for Case 8 also showed how perceptions of the relationship developed throughout the process. Kelly rated her relationship lower than the teacher (3, 4 respectively) compared with Bronwyn’s 5s but noticed improvements as the case progressed. For example, Kelly stated that she felt that:

the [first] meeting was very rushed. We had it after school. We got interrupted by a parent … but that is okay but Bronwyn (T8) was also trying to read the computer while she was talking to me and I felt that that was a reflection on how seriously she was taking this and that she probably considered my role as not being a particularly important one . . . I mean this is the first time I’ve worked with her, she’s new into this school . . .[but it was] a functional meeting. I believe that at the end of it our relationship was no better or worse than it had been in the beginning. [RJ8]

Kelly also thought that Bronwyn was “still establishing her identity as a teacher [as she was new to this school], … and checking out whether she could trust [the RTLB]”. However, at the second meeting, Bronwyn subsequently acknowledged the need to help the child and welcomed RTLB support.

Hayley and Bronwyn, Teachers 5 and 8, also both reported that they felt they had been listened to and their opinions had been heard at various points in the process. Bronwyn’s (T8) comments also confirm Kelly’s (RTLB 8) ability to listen to her perspective to aid problem-solving:

… I think [Kelly] is naturally a very good listener and wise, very knowledgeable. She won’t just discount things. She’ll listen to both sides of the story … and work on the best way to manage problems. [TJ8]

In general, RTLB and teachers used terms such as ‘collegial, trusting, warm, honest and non-judgemental’, when describing their relationships with each other. The teachers reported feeling comfortable having RTLB in their classrooms and were able to give examples of what this meant to them. They liked having another adult to bounce ideas off and felt more confident to try something new alongside a supportive professional colleague. For example, Trish and Leanne (RTLB & T 9) described their relationship as a collegial and trusting one where issues could be raised honestly and where there was a will to resolve matters in a non-judgmental manner. In another pairing, Carla (T4a) described Mary (RTLB 4) as ‘very approachable’ … “She’s very non-threatening as well. I really
enjoyed having her. She could walk in any time of day, just very easy to approach”. Her colleague, Jenny (T4b) reported that she “felt quite excited. She’s motivated me a lot.” Carla also described Mary as: “very focused, she really takes on board what you’re saying”. [TJ4ab]

In Case 4, Carla was a very experienced New Zealand trained Senior Teacher whereas Jenny was trained overseas and was new to New Zealand and this school. Given they were expected to work together on a combined group referral for the two classes, I wanted to check how Jenny felt and if there were any issues given the power relationship and difference in experience as these were potential sources of difficulty in a collaborative process. Mary (RTLB 4) was mindful of this from the outset. However, Jenny’s response when asked if she felt uncomfortable at any time, confirmed that this had not been an issue due to Mary’s skill in managing the situation:

Initially I thought oh now she’s going compare to Carla - she’s had years and years of experience and I’ve got only two. But it was nothing like that. She just has that unique way about making you feel at ease and I never felt oh she’s comparing the two of us.

Additional comments from Carla and Jenny indicated the extent of the relationship and rapport that had been built up with the RLTB. For example, Carla thought that:

from day one [Mary] goes out of her way to be open and friendly. … I just like her whole easy manner. She’s not coming in with a list of things and saying you need to do this, this and this and walk out and leave you and come and check if I’ve done it a few weeks later. She’s very understanding. She knows where I’m at. A beautiful approach. [TJ4a]

Comments from Carla and Jenny also indicated that Mary used a collaborative approach rather than a distant or expert one. She made an effort to get to know them and their children. Jenny said that Mary “puts everybody at ease straight away, and she interacts with the children…knows their names …without checking”. [TJ4b] They also acknowledged the positive relationship she had with other staff members and the trust that had been built: “She’s in the staff room frequently, not only for us and you feel that you can just sit and chat about anything”. [TJ4b]
These comments were consistent with Mary’s comments about the way she liked to work in schools, getting to know the staff and school context so teachers felt comfortable making referrals. Incidental comments from other staff members during my visits to the school confirmed the rapport and credibility Mary had in this school as a result of previous successful casework and her on-going efforts to be part of the staff. This example also illustrates Mary’s awareness of the importance of relationships and of building credibility within the school context, not only with the referring teacher for this case but also with other school personnel.

Robyn (RTLB 1) also believed that it was necessary to build trust:

trust [had been] built up [when we did the big intervention together last year] and there’s also been a contract of honesty and whereas or whereby I’ve asked Tamara [T1] is she happy for me to give her an honest appraisal of things and if she wants me to and she has said yes and she may have found it difficult at first but now I think it’s become quite helpful to her, but also I still want her to feel like she is part of that process as well. [RJ1]

The teacher interview confirmed her trust in the RTLB. While Tamara (T1) had initially found the RTLB’s frankness daunting, the benefits far outweighed the negatives in her view. She found the process hard work because it meant she had to make changes and take risks but reported it was definitely worthwhile. Tamara commented that she enjoyed working with Robyn.

Across all cases, informal conversations as well as formal meetings helped to establish and maintain relationships. Contact by email, text, phone or informal ‘popping in’ to see how everything was going were also seen as important in maintaining relationships. Melissa (T6) recalled:

Well we had a couple of informal chats before the initial meeting which I was really happy with and it made me feel a lot more comfortable. … I had seen her round in the playground the previous year but I just hadn’t met her and yeah so she came over, she introduced herself, it was just her whole manner, she was just really happy and positive and really approachable. … I don’t think that there was anything that she could have done to make me feel more comfortable about any of this [case]. [TJ6]
Melissa trusted Pat (RTLB 6) and felt safe discussing concerns with her and in trying new strategies. She actively sought out guidance and support once she got to know Pat:

With some of the other staff members you know, you go to them for off-loading or you go to them for advice. Pat could give me both of those and it was balanced. I’ve never had any trouble asking her or going to her for support. She’s always been there for me like whenever I see her round the school. [TJ 6]

While these RTLB had expertise in building trusting, positive relationships, effective collaborative practice requires additional skill in encouraging teachers to reflect on their own behaviour and that of their children. When RTLB were able to give appropriate constructive feedback based on valid data, teachers were able to develop broader or alternative perspectives about problems and were more willing to make sustainable changes to their practice.

Laura (RTLB 5) assisted her teacher, Hayley, to feel comfortable initially “by picking out the good things that you’re doing and taking the time to praise you”. [TJ5] As Hayley indicated:

Laura’s always been very good and takes the time to give us a really good relationship to start with and praises me and what a wonderful job I’m doing and never ever is judgemental. Even slightly which is quite amazing when you’re doing that job to say you shouldn’t be doing it that way you should be doing it this way, she’s never ever made me feel I’m doing anything wrong which is quite good. I probably have been at times. [TJ5]

The way in which RTLB give feedback or ask questions was frequently mentioned by teachers. Bronwyn’s (T8) comments below illustrate the warm, trusting relationship that had developed which enabled her to learn from the process, become aware that her own behaviour was contributing to the problem situation and to feel safe enough to try something new. She also appreciated the specific feedback about her own teaching behaviour. This was particularly significant as Bronwyn had initially firmly believed the child’s misbehaviour was the problem, rather than her responses to the problem. After data gathering and a feedback meeting with Kelly (her RTLB), she acknowledged that her own attention to inappropriate behaviour from the referred child, and others, was contributing to maintenance of the problem situation. Kelly (RTLB 8) was described by Bronwyn as having:
a particular manner and way of being able to listen …and say to anyone…, I think this would be a good idea or a good way of doing this but she has a way of saying it that doesn’t seem like a criticism, … Rather than saying you’re doing it wrong … Kelly introduces it in a way that is said so nicely and calmly that you sort of think, yeah that’s great and I accept that and let’s try that one as a new idea so to speak rather than fixing something. … It’s just all in the way she says it and she [gives] constructive criticism. … My problem has been being positive in the classroom. She came in the other day and [commented on the noticeable shift in how much more positive] I was so that was really neat and I hadn’t realised I was making that much of an effort but obviously it just came quite naturally because of her support and her techniques she offered me. … Kelly has always been such a naturally warm person, she’s got that personality anyway, coming from a teaching background and being a mum. [TJ8]

Bronwyn’s comments also highlight how she valued Kelly’s expertise, teaching experience and interpersonal skills. These aspects were commonly discussed in my interviews with teachers.

In summary, CPS practices were more likely to occur where there were positive, trusting relationships which laid the foundation for listening to, and respecting, each other. Learning from each other was more likely when both teachers and RTLB indicated that respect was mutual.

6.1.2 Engagement in the CPS Process: Power Sharing Between RTLB & Teacher

RTLB and teacher perceptions of power within their professional relationship were also used as an indicator of a collaborative rather than an expert relationship. As Figure 16 reveals, both RTLB and teachers rated this dimension similarly and highly with most ratings being 4 or 5. RTLB and teacher ratings were the same for cases 1, 3, 4 and 9. The teachers, Karen and Miriama, rated power sharing slightly lower (4) compared to the RTLB ratings of 5 from Rachel and Alison in cases 2 and 7 whereas the converse was true for cases 5 and 6, although comments from these four pairings were similar and did not indicate any issues.
Although Kelly (RTLB 8) rated the extent of power sharing the lowest with 3, the teacher, Brownyn (T8), rated it at 5. This RTL felt she had to show more initiative at times to maintain the momentum but the teacher was happy with the balance of power and welcomed guidance and direction from an experienced RTLB. As Kelly explained:

Well I make a real effort in an interview to lessen the power. I try to take the lowest seat. I try to consider her opinion, like ask her opinions. I really try to put myself as an equal partner. [RJ 8]

Kelly also found the teacher in her case initially expected her to be the expert and ‘fix the problem’ but worked hard on building a relationship and being open about the collaborative process in order to move to a position of power sharing:

I tried to find out what the issues were for her and what she wanted. I tried to get across the idea that I was working with her and I wasn’t the expert coming in. I tried to affirm what she was doing.

…I’m doing most of the assessment but that’s more a time factor. … She was actually gathering the data on what actually happens in the classroom. She did that for two weeks which is a long time and I think she really understood that, I think she really understood that we needed to do that together. [RJ8]
Mutual respect and power sharing are related elements of the process that enable RTLB and teachers to share information and feel confident enough to challenge each other when necessary. One teacher, Leanne, commented that Trish (RTLB 9) “was quite respectful of my opinions. … It was very even power sharing. … It wasn’t like Trish was the expert coming in”. [TJ 9] Overall, ratings and comments from RTLB and teachers confirmed their awareness of the balance of power and its influence on their relationships and the process. They made conscious efforts to work collaboratively.

6.1.3 Engagement in the CPS Process: Teacher Perspective and Opinions heard and acknowledged by RTLB

I asked teachers if their opinions had been listened to and acknowledged. I sought teacher beliefs about this at two key points in the process: following the entry meeting and once the CPS was under way, from data gathering onwards, including implementation of the intervention. Most ratings at both points in the process were 5s with Karen (Teacher 2) giving 4.5 on both occasions. (TJ2)

Several teachers reported that they felt listened to and could say no or seek clarification if necessary. Other RTLB were described as ‘non-judgemental’ and ‘good at clarifying in a positive way.’ They ‘shared information and ideas’ rather than ‘telling you what to do’. Leanne’s comments below are typical of the teachers’ perceptions:

She does listen to everything, she will listen to any comment that you make and value it, not just write off anything you say. She’s got a very positive spin on things. …

She will clarify what I have said and [feed]back to me in a way that will make it sort of obvious where we need to go or what the problem is….Then she’ll summarise and clarify and just make it a lot easier. [TJ9]

Analysis of the RTLB-Teacher professional discussions indicated that RTLB tended to spend time paraphrasing teacher concerns and comments, checking assumptions and asking more open-ended questions to facilitate communication. The RTLB reported that these were the skills taught during their University programme, indicating that the skills had been learned sufficiently to enable them to be used in day-to-day practice with teachers.
A related aspect to power sharing was whether teachers believed that *RTLB listened to their feelings and perspectives* rather than having a predetermined agenda or controlling the conversation. Understanding the perspective the teacher brings to the problem they are facing and why they do what they do are helpful in clarifying the problem situation. Active listening skills are also important in maintaining relationships.

### 6.1.4 Engagement in the CPS Process: Roles and Responsibilities clearly defined and shared between the RTLB and Teacher

Interdependence is an essential part of the collaborative process. RTLB and teachers were asked to rate shared responsibility within each of the CPS phases: problem clarification; data gathering; feedback (data analysis and exploration of the intervention); and, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A rating of 4 indicated that the RTLB and teacher were taking about the same amount of responsibility whereas a 5 indicated that the teacher was taking more responsibility than the RTLB. Ratings of 1–3 indicated that teachers were taking less responsibility than RTLB. The following table indicates approximate percentages in relation to the amount of responsibility each person had. Taking equal responsibility was not expected in every phase. The more skilled teachers were more likely to take an active role earlier. Taking at least some responsibility for implementing the agreed intervention was expected if the collaborative process had been followed. This also provided RTLB and teachers with opportunities for professional learning from each other.

Table 8

*Overview of ratings in relation to perceptions of teacher and RTLB responsibility expressed as percentages*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Teacher %</th>
<th>RTLB %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>&lt;50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25–30</td>
<td>70–75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>&lt;25</td>
<td>&gt;75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each CPS phase was rated separately (numbers within columns) resulting in a cumulative total out of 20 for each case in the figure. RTLB and teacher ratings are presented separately. This enabled comparison of RTLB and teacher perceptions across phases, across each case as a whole, and, across cases as illustrated in Figure 17 below.

Figure 17. Summary of ratings of teacher and RTLB perceptions of the extent of responsibility shared between them across CPS phases.

RTLB and teachers had similar perceptions in seven cases across phases within each case. There were notable differences in two cases where RTLB in cases 5 and 6 thought there was less shared responsibility in the initial phases. Both teachers were less experienced than the others and were in their second and third years of teaching respectively.

Shared data gathering, including observation of learning and behaviour in context, was an important part of the CPS process which facilitated problem-solving. RTLB and teachers who felt secure and relaxed observing each other created opportunities to give feedback and check if they shared similar or different perceptions. Leanne was one of several teachers who recognised the value of having a neutral observer:

In a lot of cases it was actually really valuable because you can’t do it yourself. It’s not something that you can do so you actually see a lot more patterns and children’s behaviour, you can actually see more about what’s happening than what you can do [by yourself]. [TJ9]
Encouraging teachers to observe often enabled them to see their classrooms from a different perspective. Melissa (T6) commented:

I was very overwhelmed with all the different behaviours that I was getting from [the student] but felt reassured when the RTLB helped me to focus and clarify problem behaviours. [The RTLB] really led me in a direction to see, for me to focus on what the thing was that was bugging me the most because I was having such a hard time, … so she really led me through her questions and her prior experience to focus on one that was really upsetting me. I just couldn’t see it at that stage … I was concerned that [he] was calling out to get attention from her peers but it wasn’t until Pat had come in and did the observations and I had recorded over a week that I found out that it was probably more likely me that she was trying to get attention from … When I had that formal written data, the observations that she had made and I’d made, I could make a much clearer decision and since [our intervention] the calling out has decreased. There were over 50 calls out one day that we recorded and it’s got down to a lot less. [TJ6]

Several participants, RTLB and teachers, commented that it was a ‘fluid’ process: responsibility could change within phases as well as across phases, especially during the implementation of the intervention. In several cases, scaffolding was provided through modelling or co-teaching by the RTLB, the teacher then trying the new strategy with RTLB support and feedback until the teacher felt confident enough to do it independently.

RTLB modelled appropriate strategies in several of the cases. For example, Carla commented on her RTLB’s modelling of a skill using puppets:

Her use of puppets was good because she would actually make the puppet model someone who wasn’t listening properly and someone who was asking good questions and giving good answers. [T4a]

Rebecca (RTLB 3) and Mona (Teacher 3) worked together on a class intervention in the bilingual unit. Mona commented that:

We’ve been doing the programme now for roughly three weeks. The first week it was all Rebecca modelling and me observing, just picking up on the strategies she was using like the timing and stuff like that.…

She would say: “Did you notice the way I used my voice? Did you hear the way I was saying….?” So I could see the differences.
In the second week Rebecca was still modelling but with me adding my ‘come on now be respectful, use your listening skills thank you’. Reinforcing what she was modelling. Like this week I’m saying you are going to do what it looks like, what it sounds like. … We did the role modelling, role playing and I sort of added my little ra-ra-ra in Māori and just putting a Māori sort of flair Te whakaute to what she was doing, the skills that she was using”. [The RTLB said this in English while the teacher used Māori in this bilingual unit.]

Next week I’m going to introduce the skill and Rebecca will give me some feedback. [TJ3]

This example shows how an RTLB could scaffold a teacher through role play and co-teaching allowing for planned shifts in the teacher taking sole responsibility over time. They also gave each other feedback.

Sharing of responsibility was more likely to occur where RTLB and teacher roles had been discussed and clarified. Most of the teachers interviewed were able to describe the role of the RTLB and understood that they would be involved in at least some part of the intervention. For example, Bronwyn (T8) described the RTLB as “a support to teachers that are in need of help supporting children in their class with behavioural or learning needs and she will put in place different techniques and systems to help me manage them”. [TJ8] In another case, Miriama described:

[an] RTLB [as] a person you can refer a child to who you have concerns about academically and socially, who will come in and find out about the child from you, then make observations in the classroom and the playground and put together a programme that you could run or maybe that the school could run. They will also upskill a teacher aide with the necessary programmes that hopefully would advantage that child. They’re also people that you can just sit down and talk things through with. They might not necessarily even need to refer the child, just talk about some different strategies that you could use in the classroom. … Some of them have actually developed specific programmes to help disadvantaged learners like we have a spelling rules programme that runs here and a word works and they’re all little programmes that have been developed …and we have teacher aides running them very successfully. [TJ7]

Mary (RTLB 4) worked with Carla and Jenny (Teachers 4a and b) on an oral language programme across two Year 0–1 classes. The following comment by Jenny indicates her awareness of the teacher’s role in problem-solving:
It all comes down to us. We were aware of the problem and I think Mary prompted us to get on to it. … Mary came in and also modelled the doughnut the first time round and we had a bit of difficulty but the next time we worked it out. We put a hula hoop down and had them sit on that because they couldn’t make a circle and we did that for two or three days, similar to Carla, they were too close for me to sit and hear and the only time you could really get something out of it at the end of it when they had to stand up and report back which was really not what I was looking for. I was looking for the interaction of each other so gradually we took the hoop away and had them move out and only then did it really come the [cooperative learning] doughnut ¹…. every corner of the room. [TJ4b]

Melissa (T6) also commented on their shared decision making:

I didn’t feel like she told me how to fix calling out. I felt like we sort of came to that decision together but she was able to suggest how we do it and you know I was very iffy about the whole thing. … because her main thing for fixing the calling out was I’ve got to praise [children] for putting up your hand, I like the way you’re using manners and things like that and it wasn’t sounding like me, it was sounding very superficial but it worked and she [encouraged] me to try it some more and it worked! [TJ6]

RTLB responded to teacher needs in different ways. In case 8, Kelly demonstrated an expert rather than collaborative approach at times but the teacher (Bronwyn) appreciated the RTLB’s expertise and guidance. She welcomed the RTLB Kelly ‘taking a lead role’. Kelly’s perceptions of the initial entry meeting as well as information gained from observations and interviews, helped her to get a better understanding of the context and clarify the problem with Bronwyn. Kelly shared her perceptions as follows:

In the initial interview … I wanted to know what [Bronwyn] wanted to know and how she perceived the problem … but I actually found out what the real problem was …through later classroom observation and other information… The mother told me quite a bit. … I learnt a lot from the speaking with the child and then one of the other teachers who is in charge of literacy [asked me] if I was aware of how many children in that class were emergent readers and turning

¹ A ’doughnut’ is used to describe a cooperative learning structure for facilitating discussion. Participants form two circles: the inner and outer circles form pairs by facing each other. Pairings can be easily changed by getting one of the circles to move clockwise or anticlockwise.
six … I was aware that the DP [did] the six year nets when they were seven. Children were being put onto Reading Recovery in a panic rather than …in a more objective fashion [based on need]. So I uncovered a lot of underlying tension and issues that were occurring in the school which I hadn’t intended to do and then another teacher came to me who had a son in the class and said what I was going to do about the way the teacher spoke to the children. [RJ8]

These comments also illustrate Kelly’s awareness of contextual issues and the importance of clarifying and getting agreement on the actual problem situation prior to making decisions about interventions which are characteristics of effective problem solvers. Engaging teachers in the process was crucial. The more CPS phases in which they were engaged, and the earlier, the more likely they were to get desired outcomes. However, sharing of power and/or responsibilities did not have to be 50–50 all the time. The dynamic nature of the CPS process permitted variations according to needs.

6.1.5 RTLB Confidence in Advocating for the CPS Model

Success in implementing the CPS model was contingent upon the RTLB skill in explaining this approach to schools and teachers. As discussed earlier, many adults, including teachers, tend to frame issues with children’s learning or behaviour as problems that are inherent in the children’s nature rather than seeing them in a wider context. It is difficult to address issues with this perspective as contextual factors are not considered. One of the responsibilities of the RTLB is to assist teachers to surface these beliefs about children so that they can be tested. RTLB assisted teachers to learn about the ecological approach for addressing problems of practice in a number of ways, which included talking explicitly to all school staff about the ecological approach to addressing referrals from the outset. This approach was also discussed with teachers during the entry meeting, using the triangle summary diagram (see Appendix C) introduced on the RTLB programme. This diagram summarises aspects of the instructional environment and has been adapted from Ysseldyke and Christenson’s (1993) material in the TIES II manual. RTLB found this diagram useful particularly in planning the initial data gathering phase and in encouraging teachers to consider aspects of the task and instruction that might be influencing student learning and behaviour. Discussion around the diagram also provides opportunities to hear any other teacher explanations for the problem.
Seven of the RTLB interviewed had developed ways of introducing the CPS process in a meaningful way. The most explicit example was provided by Laura (RTLB 5) who listened first to Hayley’s view of the problem, described the CPS approach and then checked Hayley’s understanding as follows:

I’d like to … talk with you about the collaborative problem-solving approach that [we’re going to use]. It’s the way in which RTLB work with teachers so that it’s solving problems together as equal partners. You have that shared responsibility for gathering the data but you also for the outcome with the intervention … I’m not the expert. You have expertise and I have expertise and together we’ll work on solving that problem so it’s almost like two heads are better than one. Through this process today, I hope we will agree on a focus area(s). There might be one or two particular curriculum areas that you want to look at specifically… So then we agree to gather data around that area(s). We get together again … in about two weeks or so, depending on how things go and the type of data we’re trying to gather to [identify or] clarify the problem. Our data tells us this, okay so we think this might be the problem. We wonder if we did A then B would happen. So if we did intervention A then it is likely that the outcome is the students would interact better. So that’s forming your hypothesis. …The intervention is to test the hypothesis … and see if it makes the difference. We both need to monitor all the way so when we get to the evaluation we can compare pre-data and post-data to see if there’s any changes. That will let us know if that was the right intervention or the hypothesis was right… If we’ve got it wrong, then the nature of this process is that it is okay to either go back and re-identify the problem or go back and re-gather data…. So how do you feel about that as a process we’re working through? [RT5]

Laura’s explanation provided an overview of the different phases, the cyclical nature to the process, the importance of sharing responsibility and expertise and checking assumptions through data. Laura acknowledged this could be different way of working than some teachers expected. Although this was the first time Hayley had worked with an RTLB, she confirmed she was comfortable with the model and saw how it was similar to the action research, inquiry approach she knew. As a relatively new teacher, she wanted help to cope with a problem situation she hadn’t encountered before. Hayley wanted to learn new pedagogical skills; she was not expecting Laura to solve all her classroom problems for her.
Rachel (RTLB 2) provided an example of her approach to explaining the model for the first time, focusing more on clarifying the problem by looking at behaviour in context:

Well I use the triangle model. I actually visually show them and I tend to take a very simple mismatch, for example, between a task given by the teacher and the amount of time needed for that task, that seems to be one that they relate to quite easily and we just talk through and sometimes the teachers just say, oh so you mean this and I always make sure that they know that the child brings to the process some of their things because very often the focus for them is the deficit looking model of the child but I just try and broaden it for them a little bit saying that there are other characteristics that we have found very valuable to look at. [Another example] is just a simple task and whether it’s at the right level for the child and [discuss] how we can collect data around all those aspects... [RJ2]

Rachel also found that when she had explained the model and process earlier or with previous referrals, teachers became familiar with it over time. Subsequent mention of the triangle acted as a prompt and scaffold for future cases:

I think what you’ll find [interesting] with my cases, is that because they’ve worked with me before, they know the process. When we talk and they still know it’s okay to offload but they also know that we’re there actually to look at something pretty specific from their experience and just get on with the process. …They always know that I’m there really to listen if they want me to… [RJ 2]

The ‘triangle’ diagram (see Appendix C) was sometimes used by RTLB to encourage teachers to give specific examples of who was misbehaving and when the behaviour was occurring most often. It was also used to elicit teacher beliefs about why the problems were occurring.

The ecological model requires a focus on learning and behaviour in context. Pat (RTLB 6) demonstrated skill in focussing Melissa on data and examples in her classroom. Melissa acknowledged that this was helpful and more constructive to reflect on her own practices in relation to student behaviour and achievement instead of focusing solely on the student’s deficits:

I knew she couldn’t just come and take her away and bring her back all fixed. …She [Pat] didn’t sit there and tell me what to do. She didn’t judge me and even better than that, when I started going off on side-tracks - she’s doing this … she brought me back to the subject so I wasn’t sitting there for ages and ages having

134
a big moan. I was actually doing something really constructive, so it was excellent. [TJ6].

One RTLB, Alison, reflected on how she has changed her approach, recalling how she used to introduce the approach with new referrals by describing her role and CPS process and assuring the teacher that she would be looking at the child learning rather than their teaching. However, she found this difficult several times when observations showed classroom management and/or instructional match were issues:

Sharing data at the feedback meeting was tricky because I hadn’t been open about what I was recording … because I didn’t want to spoil the initial rapport building… so it worked the other way instead… it’s about the on-going relationship. [RJ7]

Alison realised that approach did not help to engender trust and resulted in having to repair relationships. She is now more open about looking at the interactions between the teacher and student(s) and talks about the student and peer behaviour, tasks and instruction from the outset. Getting teachers to collect data has also helped to minimise the ‘tricky’ situations she previously encountered because they also have an opportunity to check out their assumptions and beliefs about the problem situation.

While most assessment and intervention practices within the nine cases were characteristic of an inclusive ecological model, there were some inconsistencies within cases. For example, the intervention in case 7 was inclusive, in-class but some assessments were not compatible with the inclusive approach e.g., an ASTON index was used as a key assessment tool. This is a type of cognitive assessment from the United States. It is not aligned with the curriculum here and identifies strengths and areas of concern in isolation from the classroom context. Although some of the assessments were not ecological, other aspects were. For example, observations showed no incidents in playground for the target student but did reveal a wider playground problem which was then able to be addressed in an inclusive way. RTLB awareness of the wider context and sharing of valid data enabled this issue to be resolved.
6.1.6 Teacher and RTLB Commitment to Working Collaboratively

Participants were asked to what extent they believed the partners in the case were committed to working collaboratively to resolve the problem situation. This includes co-operation, a commitment to using valid information to analyse and solve problems as well as checking out assumptions. The term data is used in its broadest sense including RTLB and teachers’ values and beliefs about student behaviour, observations of teacher-student interactions and the consequences of these interactions for student behaviour.

As demonstrated in Figure 18 below, most RTLB rated the teachers they were working with as highly committed (ratings of 4, 4.5 and 5). Likewise, the teachers also believed that the RTLB were committed to this process (also rated 4, 4.5 and 5). RTLB and teacher ratings were the same for cases 4, 5, 6 and 7. Teachers rated RTLB commitment slightly higher (by half or one point) than RTLB ratings of teacher commitment in cases 1, 2 and 3. In case 9, the RTLB rated the teacher slightly higher. Comments for these four cases did not indicate significant differences in perception of issues. Case 8 was the exception to these high ratings. Kelly (RTLB 8) believed Bronwyn (T8) was variable in her commitment to the process and rated Bronwyn’s commitment at 3 although Bronwyn rated Kelly’s commitment at 5. Although Bronwyn was able to describe the role of the RTLB as a support in helping teachers solve problems, she often looked to the RTLB as the expert and wanted her to take the lead in decision-making.

Figure 18. RTLB and teacher perceptions of each other’s commitment to the CPS process.
One indicator of RTLB commitment was the way several teachers appreciated RTLB providing additional and unexpected support for them. They described this as “going the extra mile” for them or the schools. Such comments included the following from Melissa:

In fact if there was a five plus I would give it for the level of support because she came in between those meetings for the co-operative learning things. She brought in books when she was passing the school. She made me role cards so I could give every person in my group a card to tell them what their role was as part of co-operative learning and as part of delegating roles and responsibilities for everyone. I really felt that she went over the top in between our meetings or since that first meeting. It was great! [TJ6]

Another teacher, Miriama, who was also the school SENCO, described the support Alison gave when the school was looking for a new principal:

Alison had been through the process when she was on the Board at X and … she came to all our meetings of developing the prospectus to be sent out and even when we did the interviews she sat in as the non-participating observer and that was evening after evening that she gave up of her own time, plus the Saturday when the interviews were on. She certainly supported our school beyond just being an RTLB who comes in and out. [TJ7]

These comments highlight the value of RTLB becoming part of the school community despite the itinerant nature of their role. Senior leaders in many of these schools perceived their RTLB to be part of the school, not outsiders, even if their office was at another school. Another comment was provided by Miriama, a teacher who described Alison as “highly supportive”:

I actually know that she really likes the school, she likes the atmosphere in the school, she likes the, we’ve got a very collegial staff and the RTLB come into the classrooms. They’re just treated like one of our everyday staff members and they usually come along at the beginning of the year and bring us some morning tea and introduce themselves to new teachers and just generally set the tone for the year. [TJ 7]
6.1.7 Satisfaction with the CPS Process and Outcomes for Teachers and Students

RTLB and teachers rated this dimension out of five for each phase of the CPS process and outcomes shown as numbers within each column. RTLB and teacher cumulative rating totals are presented separately for each case.

Despite some differences in perception of shared responsibility described earlier, satisfaction with the CPS process and outcomes was rated highly by both RTLB and teachers in all cases as summarised in Figure 19 below. RTLB and teacher ratings within and across phases were similar. The lowest rating of 3.5 (from RTLB 8) was given because, while the RTLB had noticed positive changes in teacher management and some improvement in the target student’s behaviour, the intervention was on-going at the time of interview and they were still working towards goals. RTLB and teachers were asked to give reasons for their rating. The teacher also shared documentary evidence with me (e.g., a Paired Writing Programme table of shifts in reading and writing levels, samples of children’s work, observation summaries during monitoring).

Figure 19. RTLB and teacher satisfaction with the CPS process across phases and outcomes for each case.
Working together helped one teacher, Melissa, to change her attitude towards the referred child. A crucial part of this was encouraging Melissa to collect data to check out her assumptions about the child and problem situation. Melissa described her initially negative feelings:

I had met this child in the playground several times and I had actually asked for him not to be in my classroom because I had a bit of a clashing of heads every time I had met him. … [Through working with the RTLB] I’ve found out quite a few things that I actually like about him so I’ve had a bit of a change around in my whole attitude and how to deal with him. … I started with … I don’t really like you, don’t like you in my class, but now it’s fine. I’m really enjoying it because it just brings a new challenge to my whole professional life. …It’s been a turnaround [in six weeks]. [TJ6]

Melissa was initially very sceptical about trying any intervention. She described herself as “iffy” at the beginning of the problem-solving process. While she recalled that collecting data “was a pain, it was extra work” she acknowledged “but it’s absolutely worth it”. However, Melissa commented that RTLB Pat was “really good at clarifying my ideas in a positive way”. (TJ6) She also described the process of data analysis as “really informative”.

It was quite interesting. … it’s changed my whole perspective on the problem. Had Pat not been helping me with N [the student], I would not be in this happy place so no there is nothing I don’t think I would have done different. I have been very happy with how it’s been progressing. … I feel like we are [a good team] and I feel we can talk. I feel really supported. [TJ6]

RTLB, Pat, confirmed the mutual satisfaction at the success of the intervention. She thought the teacher “was blown away [by what she had achieved] and in actual fact I think she really did make an effort. She really did modify her own behaviour and it was very hard for her but she did it”. [RJ6]

In Case 8, the teacher, Bronwyn, had noticed an increase in the child’s confidence and change in attitude. She described how the child was:

now more confident with the reading and writing. She’s been having extra support with the teacher aide after lunch and in the classroom so she’s not so scared to sort of make a mistake or get things wrong. She knows more now so
she’s not as likely to get frustrated with herself …She’s writing bigger stories and getting that support in … and outside the classroom so I think she feels better about that and it’s not a big struggle at writing time because it’s like ‘now I can write so it’s okay’ and she’s actually shining through as the better one out of that group of three [although they are getting similar support]. [TJ8]

Bronwyn was also able to describe the specific progress made by the child based on student test results and her own observations during written language time:

Kelly tested her the other day and she’s come out at Level Four which is good whereas when I tested her she was Level Two and that was in June or May, May/June so that’s a good progress for that level, that low down to come up a couple of levels in those months. …

[She] actually sees herself as a writer now whereas before it was just letters, she didn’t know her sounds whereas now she sits down and she’s talking about what she wants to write and she can say the word to herself without any prompting and figure out the beginning letters, some middle letters and the end letters, so that’s fantastic. I don’t have to sit there and make sure she stays on track now. … I’m extremely satisfied with the results … so far with the intervention. [TJ8]

This quote was also testimony to the significant shifts in Bronwyn’s perception of the child which were negative at the outset of the CPS process.

In some cases, teachers commented not only on academic and social outcomes for the student but also on personal emotional impact on themselves. The most notable response was from Hayley who commented: “It’s been really worthwhile working with Laura. I’m feeling much better about the whole thing. I got so worked up about not coping [in the beginning]. I don’t dread coming to school anymore”. [TJ5]

RTLB engagement with teachers in the problem-solving approach to challenges in classroom practice constitutes an opportunity for professional learning for both RTLB and teachers although the main focus in this investigation is on the professional learning of classroom teachers. Satisfaction with the CPS process and outcomes was enhanced when RTLB supported teachers by providing resources, modelling appropriate practices and giving feedback. For example, in Case 4, Jenny commented that:

[Mary] had a good variety of resources. …She also showed us how to introduce the skills. She U-shaped the children, the first to join, the next to join, so did that
and she also came in with her puppet for them. The children got quite attached to the puppet, she had a little performance to get them sort of homing in. So the paired thing was good in my classroom for kiddies too shy to come up the front would actually talk. I couldn’t get round everyone to monitor exactly what they were saying and the noise in the room when you’ve got eight pairs all talking at once it was quite difficult to monitor how well they were speaking really but it did get them speaking even the shy ones. [Jenny, TJ4b]

Interventions were more likely to be implemented if they were responsive to teacher concerns and fitted well with the teacher’s current programme. RTLB needed to ensure that the teacher had ownership of the intervention and a role in implementing some or all of the strategies. Sharing implementation initially was reported as helpful and provided opportunities for support as well as reflection, joint monitoring and evaluation. Teachers found interventions more acceptable if they were practical, easy to apply and minimally disruptive to routines. Strategies based on evidence-based practice and known to have a high chance of success were preferred but RTLB needed to assist teachers to develop the skills to implement them. Interventions also needed to align with curriculum expectations.

Providing sufficient support/scaffolding and feedback throughout from initial implementation to monitoring and evaluation was therefore crucial for success. RTLB and teachers commented on the helpfulness not only of formal scheduled meetings but also of incidental contact by phone/text or when the RTLB ‘popped in’ when they were in the school or area. Frequent incidental contact was seen by the teachers as evidence that the RTLB cared about them as people. Informal contacts also provided more opportunities to share insights and teacher feedback about how the students were responding to the intervention.

6.1.8 Alignment between Policy, RTLB Programme and Practice

Another facilitating factor was the alignment between the policy, research-based ecological approach and RTLB training programme. The role and use of CPS to foster inclusive practices are explicit in the Toolkit. RTLB were able to implement CPS because the RTLB programme aligned well with what was expected from them in their roles as RTLB. The assignments and block courses at University scaffolded RTLB for the role. Most of the assignments involved using artefacts from their practice. Where Cluster and
individual school policies were also accepting of the model of practice, RTLB found it easier to use a CPS approach. However, if one or more schools did not accept the CPS approach, it was more difficult as they tended to expect remedial or withdrawal work. Clusters and/or schools who focussed on a medical deficit approach rather than an inclusive ecological one were less likely to allow time for CPS.

RTLB and teachers commented that it was also beneficial being involved in the research as they did not usually take enough time to reflect on the process. One RTLB, Laura, commented: “It’s good reflective practice actually seeing the transcripts and the way I say things…” [RJ5] It was also a good source of immediate feedback for RTLB and teachers. Laura also realised when she saw the first transcript: “Well it certainly showed me how much more focussed I needed to get before we could clarify the problem and plan our data gathering”. [RJ5] In most cases, it was affirming for RTLB and teachers to see what they had achieved together over time.

6.2 Inhibiting Factors

As Study 2 included a purposive sample of RTLB who believed in the CPS approach, were willing to record evidence of their practice and reflect on it, inhibitors and constraints were less evident for the selected Study 2 cases than in Study 1. However, RTLB commented on issues encountered and on experiences they had in other schools or clusters. Inhibiting factors were often the converse of the facilitating factors.

6.2.1 Structural Factors

Inflexible cluster referral systems and timetabling of RTLB could hinder use of the CPS process. For example, if an RTLB was expected to visit schools within a cluster on certain days every week rather than responding to referrals and visiting at optimum times, it was impossible to observe when problem situations arose. Needs-based referral systems facilitated CPS work whereas referrals pro-rated by school rolls or an expectation that RTLB would teach withdrawal groups on a regular basis, hindered problem-solving and innovative practices. For example, Trish (RTLB 9) recalled:

I left X cluster and came to this one because they timetabled us. They wanted me to spend Monday and Wednesday mornings in one school and afternoons in
another. It was all rostered in the same pattern. Such a hassle if you wanted to go to one class to observe three times in the morning during literacy time … or set up an intervention if you’re scheduled to be somewhere else. It wasn’t needs-based. Each school wanted their cut of the pie. It worked on roll numbers not needs. Some RTLB still have to work under those systems. [RJ9]

Another RTLB, Alison, considered herself and RTLB colleagues:

lucky because our cluster involves us in the referral process. We now have a system where we track cases and record which stage [of the CPS] process we’re at. It’s really useful information at the Intake and Referral meetings… Before it was a numbers game, not enough attention to the details of each case we already had. Schools wanted us to pick up more and more referrals. Now they’re more realistic. If we’re already collecting data, observing… or just helping to get interventions underway, they know not to give us any new referrals. Another RTLB picks it up if they’re at monitoring or closure stage with a case. [RJ7]

Referral systems and schools that made multiple referrals for the same child instead of clarifying the problem first or informing the RTLB others were involved or might be involved, also impeded the process. Kelly (RTLB 8) commented on a previous case:

I was annoyed when I found out the case I was working on had been referred to GSE [Group Special Education] too. They hadn’t said anything to me. I got a surprise when the psychologist turned up at the school. She’d already assessed the child and had a plan they wanted me to fit in with! With no consultation before that! … Then I was expected to monitor a programme that was designed by someone from GSE who hardly knows the school. [RJ 8]

The size of RTLB caseloads and geographical distance were also constraints particularly in rural areas. Consideration of the number of cases and stage at which each one was in the process, were critical factors in both urban and rural areas. For example, more time needs to be scheduled to complete initial data gathering and implementation phases properly. RTLB who cover predominantly rural areas, made similar comments to Rebecca:

I have less schools in my patch [than my city RTLB colleagues] but one of my schools is 80km away from the other four. So you have to schedule visits carefully to allow enough travel time to do anything worthwhile when you get there. … It’s even more crucial to build in system supports in the school because you can’t get there as often. [RJ3]
Rebecca’s comments also show her awareness of the need to balance individual school needs, overall workload demands across several schools, and, logistics in order to be effective. Building professional learning communities within and across cluster schools, especially in geographically isolated areas, was even more important if inclusive practices are to be used and sustained.

### 6.2.2 RTLB and Teacher Factors

RTLB also reported that colleagues, particularly those within the same cluster, who had not completed the RTLB programme or who were exempt from it, could impede their work. These RTLB were often using a deficit approach and were unfamiliar with the inclusive, ecological model. Rachel recalled:

> My predecessor used to work more in the traditional withdrawal, pull-out way. Schools expected me to do the same when I was first came here. [RJ2]

Teacher perceptions of the risks involved in making a referral were mentioned by two RTLB. Teachers in some schools were reluctant to make a referral for fear of being perceived as not able to cope by colleagues. Referrals made by SENCO or other senior staff members with inadequate or no consultation with the teacher, led to the latter feeling suspicious of underlying agendas and unsafe in their school environment. RTLB often had to work harder in these situations to get accurate information and to build safe, trusting relationships. For example, Kelly (RTLB 8) commented on the teacher’s role in the referring process:

> It’s important to have a system when the teacher signs the referral because if someone else makes the referral, like a SENCO or AP, and the teacher doesn’t know about it, you’re on the back foot to start with. Sometimes the teacher is ok about it and is relieved someone has come to help but other times the teacher feels like the DP is out to get them. [RJ8]

Another RTLB, Alison, recalled a time with a different case where the school had started a disciplinary process with a teacher. A referral came in for classroom management assistance but the RTLB wasn’t informed about the true nature of the problem situation and how it had arisen:
It was really awful. I was pretty new in the job. I turned up really keen to get
started and the teacher doesn’t want to see me, says she doesn’t know why I’m
here. There isn’t a problem. She was defensive, naturally. [RJ7]

Perceptions of, and assumptions about, RTLB and teacher knowledge and skills in
relation to the referral could facilitate or impede the process depending on the nature of the
problem. This could be managed through appropriate appointments by clusters and
effective referral systems where RTLB could be matched to referrals where particular
expertise was required. Teacher interest in collaborating may vary depending on their
expectations of the role and/or previous experience with RTLB. One RTLB, Kelly,
recalled a previous case where the teacher and her had worked well on the initial referral
but had not reached mutual agreement on the next phase or subsequent intervention
strategies:

[The teacher] had started doing some co-operative learning but it was very
piecemeal and she didn’t truly get the idea of the co-operativeness of it and it
became a sort of, that was just a very light part of it. For her it was the behaviour
of the child was the main thing and none of the direction we were heading in
seemed to suit what she wanted. I kind of got the feeling that she was happy to
talk to me and listen to what I was saying and nod and agree and say yes I’ll try
something and would happily say, yeah, that sounds like a really good idea
…and then not follow through and so we had sort of a regular occurrence of
things not being done. I just got the feeling that she was sabotaging the good
work that had gone on in Term one. …I know that now, she simply doesn’t like
this child and she’s had a hidden agenda from day one to get rid of him
basically. She actually didn’t want him in her classroom and she has said as
much to me [recently]. [RJ8]

If the RTLB maintained an expert role throughout the process rather than sharing
expertise in a collaborative manner, goals were sometimes actioned but usually only when
the RTLB was directly involved. However, in these cases insufficient scaffolding of
teachers had occurred and sustained changes in their practices were less likely. This was
not noted in Study 2 cases but some RTLB commented on situations where this had
happened. Trish recalled two contrasting experiences and the difference in outcomes:

One time I hadn’t connected with the teacher from the end of the observations to
the return of the report. She read it but didn’t have any questions. She didn’t
really have any ideas about strategies, just left it to me. She hadn’t been involved
in the data collection so felt left out. There was no commitment, no buy-in really.

… It was so different with this [current case] because when I took the agreement … [the teacher] was confident to share and it was really like a take two of discussing the report, discussing extra information the parents had … then we started the support plan and scribbled on [paper] as we talked … We were focusing things more and fine tuning … This meeting seemed to be more of a discussion of the data so that we had a clear idea before we talked with the parents and before we planned and just to check that there was anything, that she was happy for me to share, or to do or to implement and sorted what she was going to do too. After meeting with the parents and planning the IEP, we just talked through [the documents] and clarified opportunities. She had thought about it and came up with a list of all the times when she was going to do paired opportunities. I was quite blown away. … So she had obviously given it some thought and was keen to get started. … She liked the first plan but wanted to make a few changes to suit her class. [RJ9]

Trish’s second example illustrates how joint discussion and planning was more enjoyable and productive for her and the teacher, Leanne, resulting in a collaborative parent meeting. The importance of making data-based decisions to inform the selection of the best intervention is also emphasised. The teacher felt safe and confident enough with Trish’s support to take more initiative as the case progressed. She had previously been concerned about the parent meeting.

Another RTLB, Kelly, commented on the difficulties and consequences when teachers are not involved in collecting data themselves:

If the teacher isn’t involved in collecting any data, they actually rely on the RTLB for the analysis. Because it’s the data I’ve collected … It’s very hard to then draw them in and ask them for an opinion. They see it as my data. There’s less ownership or energy after that. …

… If it supports their concerns they’re very happy to listen to the report and get an analysis of the report but then I invite them to assist with what it is they think would be the best intervention because ultimately they’re the ones that have to run it…. It’s much better if they have been part of the data gathering. They have more of a vested interest and contribute a lot more. [RJ8]
6.3 Summary

As the RTLB service was part of the special education policy supporting inclusion in regular schools, it was important to see if CPS decisions resulted in inclusive practices with improved outcomes for students rather than remedial or withdrawal strategies. Findings suggest that RTLB were able to use the CPS model to foster inclusive practices in regular classroom settings. Reflections and analysis of transcripts illustrate RTLB professional learning of the characteristics of the model applied in school contexts. This in turn had an impact on teacher and RTLB professional learning and practices. Using CPS provided more opportunities to develop a partnership and maintain relationships where RTLB and teachers could respond more quickly and jointly to issues as they arose.

The results indicate that successful collaboration depended on the skill of the RTLB in building and maintaining positive professional relationships with teachers. Indicators of positive professional relationships were mutual trust and respect for each other’s ideas and expertise: reciprocity and a willingness to learn from each other. Professional relations were evident in a willingness to share power, definition of respective roles and accept joint responsibility for decisions and their outcomes. If the process is truly collaborative and aimed at fostering or enhancing learning and capability, teacher involvement in the problem-solving process is crucial. The interactive, cyclical nature of the collaborative process provides multiple opportunities for professional learning and reflection by RTLB and teachers.

A CPS approach is evidence-based and provides opportunities for RTLB to be responsive to the learning needs of the teachers who can then be more responsive to the learning needs of their students. Effective RTLB were familiar with curriculum content and teaching practices that make a difference. They were able to build professional relationships and facilitate inclusive practices that were meaningful for teachers and manageable within regular school contexts.

Chapter 7 provides an analysis of two in-depth case vignettes that demonstrate in a how the CPS approach operated in a richer way than has been possible in this Chapter.
7.0 Introduction

The following in-depth descriptions of two case studies illustrate how these RTLB implemented the collaborative process in their clusters. The work context and referral of RTLB Robyn in vignette 1 provides a strong contrast with Mary, in vignette 2. Robyn was a sole RTLB in a rural cluster while Mary was in a team of five RTLB working within a large urban cluster. Robyn’s referral was initially for a specific student but the intervention involved both individual and class strategies. Mary’s referral involved a syndicate of two teachers. The differences in the experience of the two teachers meant that one had more power and authority in their working relationship, which was a potential source of difficulty for the CPS process. The vignettes demonstrate Robyn’s and Mary’s practice and the resulting teacher professional learning that occurred during the collaborative problem-solving process.

7.1 Vignette 1: Robyn (RTLB) and Tamara (Teacher)

Robyn’s case shows how she interpreted and implemented the collaborative problem-solving approach. She demonstrated the most awareness of the model and made conscious efforts to implement a CPS approach to foster inclusive practice. She also showed the most change of all the RTLB. Robyn worked as a sole practitioner across a diverse range of primary and secondary schools in a predominantly rural cluster. Given that the cluster principals initially expected Robyn to work in a traditional, paradigm 1 manner (which she did when first appointed) there was potential for the CPS model not to be implemented. However, Robyn was successful in helping her colleagues to shift their expectations towards inclusivity by building sound relationships and practice congruent with her beliefs in CPS and inclusion. This vignette illustrates that she was able to win support and credibility with teachers and senior leaders.
7.1.1 Context for Robyn’s Work

Robyn worked in a cluster of four primary schools, with similar rolls of approximately 130 students and an Area School of approximately 500 students. She described the socio-economic background of parents as varying “from affluent business people and farmers to those on welfare benefits”. [RJ1] Although Robyn was based at the Area School, her employer was one of the primary schools. She commented that she “felt lucky … to have a supportive management and employer principal”. [RJ1]

The setting for this case study was a small, rural full primary school with five teachers and a roll of approximately 120 students. Two-thirds of the students were New Zealand European / Pākehā and one-third were Māori.

Tamara had worked with Robyn previously, while Robyn was a student on the RTLB course. On this occasion, Robyn had modelled and co-taught class-wide co-operative learning strategies with Tamara. Robyn recalled that:

trust [had been] built up [when we did the class-wide co-operative learning together last year] and there’s also been a contract of honesty and whereas … I’ve asked Tamara [T1] is she happy for me to give her an honest appraisal of things and if she wants me to and she has said yes and she may have found it difficult at first but now I think it’s become quite helpful to her, but also I still want her to feel like she is part of that process as well. [RJ1]

Tamara’s interview with me also confirmed her trust in Robyn. While she had initially found Robyn’s openness and directness daunting the previous year, she felt the benefits far outweighed her discomfort. The co-operative learning intervention had made a difference to the whole class atmosphere resulting in a more positive class climate and higher levels of student engagement. Tamara considered that working with Robyn had been valuable professional development for her too as she had learnt some new teaching strategies she could use with subsequent classes.

7.1.2 Case Overview

The overview that follows provides an insight into Robyn and Tamara’s journey through the collaborative problem-solving process, from the initial referral by Bill’s
grandmother (Nana), who was his caregiver, to implementing and monitoring an ongoing intervention. Robyn interviewed Bill’s grandmother and Tamara individually. Initial concerns expressed by Bill’s grandmother and the teacher were discussed and summarised in the RTLB entry meeting notes. [Appendix Ei]

In Robyn’s first meeting with Bill’s grandmother, Nana, she was concerned about Bill putting himself down and describing himself as ‘dumb’, ‘stupid’ or ‘bad’. She was also concerned about his unsafe risks. Nana recalled rages Bill displayed at home at least once a week and had also noticed his challenging behaviour at school when she visited. She had shared some of her concerns with the teacher and agreed to Robyn’s meeting with Tamara. Tamara was also aware of Nana’s concerns. She commented to Robyn that:

[Nana’s] very involved with Bill and I know she is supportive of every trip her children have ever been on. She’s there. She’ll bend over backwards to help those children and she seems to treat Bill with just as much favour as her other daughters and I know she’s really, really concerned. [RT1]

Tamara had completed a class description to bring to the first referral meeting. At this meeting, she spoke about eight students with special needs within her Year 5/6 class of 26 students (17 boys and 9 girls). These were: a student with significant second language needs who had a dual enrolment with the Correspondence School; a student with Down’s Syndrome; one on medication for ADD and one with Asperger’s Syndrome whom she described as gifted; a student with a hearing impairment; another undergoing a cognitive assessment; and, two others on Reading Recovery programmes, including Bill (the individual child referred.)

It was apparent that Tamara was feeling overwhelmed by the complexity of catering for such a diverse range of learning needs in her class. She tended to attribute the difficulties she had in catering for their needs to problems within the children. This was not surprising given the range and complexity of student need. Robyn’s reflection on the entry meeting confirms she was aware of the purpose and characteristics of the entry meeting phase of CPS such as establishing rapport, clarifying the problem from the teacher’s perspective, eliciting specific data about the nature and frequency of the concerns and planning further data gathering.
In discussing the entry meeting, Robyn recalled that she had wanted the teacher to clarify for herself what the priority problems were:

I wanted us to have a look at the mismatch between the desired and actual outcome, situation. I wanted to get an idea of what [she] had been doing specifically already with him for some of his classroom behaviours and then to just, I wanted us to work out a bit of a working contract and a [data gathering] plan of where to go to, taking into account the ecological factors of looking generally first and then getting more specific later on.

Tamara also reported challenging behaviours in class and a recent deterioration in Bill’s class work. She had tried talking to Bill and had also used lunchtime detentions but these had not been effective and his behaviour had not improved. Robyn frequently asked questions to elicit details about Bill’s behaviour. The Entry meeting transcript includes numerous examples including:

…what does that mean?

Can you give me an example of that?

What does he say when he challenges you?

Does he do that to other people? Does he put down others?

It’s always self-directed?

Have you noticed any patterns with his using a loud voice…?

How often do you think he does that?

Tamara initially found the questions challenging but also helpful in sorting out the real issues. She liked the way Robyn listened to her and believed Robyn had the skills and ‘right manner’ to help solve the problem.

Robyn recalled that her practice is to:

check out what people are saying and … to get examples of things. I like to think that people have an opportunity to talk so I try to be pretty careful with my questioning about the actual situation. I like to make reference to data and to keep things hopefully along the ecological model but it’s good for people if
they’re really feeling frustrated or not too good about something, I’m fine with that too, it’s just how they’re feeling. [RJ 1]

The following example from the entry meeting illustrates how Robyn probed for specific information and involved Tamara in looking for and sharing data:

Robyn: Have you got any data? I know we’ve got anecdotal stuff from when we were thinking of this group of boys, how they were working as a group. Have you got any data about how often he seems to do that or what time? The two times I’ve noticed it he was giving his news and also when you were doing paired writing, he was calling across the room to Gary. Are there any other patterns? Have you noticed any patterns with his using a loud voice or anything like that?

Tamara: Well … his tactlessness has come to attention.

Robyn: What do you mean by that?

Tamara: Well he may be, I can’t quite remember what he says, but he’s tactless in his dealings with other people. Just says something that’s not socially appropriate. …He’ll talk like that when it’s not necessary.

Robyn: How often do you think he does that?

Tamara: He hasn’t done it a lot recently but it used to bother me.

Robyn: It was like enough for you to notice?

Tamara: Mm.

Robyn: I notice that you’ve got your frequency charts here that you use for that group and it’s something that seems to be across the board with those boys.

Tamara: Mm.

Robyn: Put downs and that sort of thing. … We would be looking at me coming in and doing some more specific observations of Bill along the lines of trying to give ourselves some more data on his interactions and this sort of thing. What sort of questions could we ask?

How often is a question that comes to mind for me, how often is he doing some of these behaviours? Do we want to find out things like that do you think?
Tamara: Yeah that would be good. A lot of it is low level stuff that a teacher wouldn’t normally take a note of but maybe some sort of frequency chart could help.

Robyn: I think what might be important too is there’s like when and possibly exploring why. I’d like to know for example, with his loud voice, what could be some of the reasons behind him using that and I haven’t talked to him about it of course and he may not be aware he’s doing it so that’s something else we could explore I suppose, how, when and why with all these things. How do you find your interactions with him if you feel that challenging behaviour coming and are you happy with the results of what happens when you pull him up on it? Is there a reaction to you in any way in all this?

Tamara: Yeah, there is an awareness there that he’s done something wrong and he wants to put it right but also it can come with quite an oh, you know surprise, oh did I do something wrong when he clearly knows he has…. And also he may apologise but then it will happen again.

The following interaction illustrates Robyn’s use of the problem-solving approach including agreement on their respective roles and a shared assessment plan. Robyn was able to engage the teacher in shared data gathering from the start which is a characteristic of successful problem-solving. Robyn agreed to make further observations in the classroom. Tamara agreed to continue making anecdotal notes about antecedents and consequences related to the group causing concern which included Bill. She also checked to see what work he was completing and whether he understood the tasks. Robyn also checked that Tamara was happy for her to inform Bill’s Nana and for data to be shared with her. This also shows Robyn’s awareness of ethical issues around communicating information with key people in the child’s life. This helped to foster a trusting relationship.

Robyn: Are you happy to carry on making some anecdotal notes in your planning book there and making note of any specific times or reasons why you think some of this is happening while I’m not here, are you happy to do that?

Tamara: Okay and I’ll also try and dig a bit deeper into why he’s saying what he says. I’ll ask him. What do you mean by that if he puts himself down or if he does something surprising or stupid? I’ll make a point of getting to the bottom of it more rather than just raise my eyebrows.

Robyn: Okay I think that might be a good idea just to try and see if he’s got a reason. So I’ll come in next week and do those two things and then we’ll see if
we’ve got enough, I’ll go over the data that we’ve already got from that group referral and see if there’s anything … more specific that’s come out for Bill and … the following week, …we’ll get together and see if we’ve got our finger on what the problem might be, work out a bit of a hypothesis or analyse the problem a little bit. … I’d like to keep Nana informed about what we’re doing and the process. Are you happy for me to do that?

Tamara: Yes

Robyn: Now the information that we get, are you happy for those to be shared with nana too?

Tamara: Yes, definitely.

Tamara had also made a referral for a group of students in her class. Tallies on her recording sheet focused solely on incidence of inappropriate behaviour e.g., interruptions, abuse and tactlessness. [Appendix Eii] Robyn felt the data on the teacher’s notes represented a focus on student deficits rather than also looking at the problem situation as well as incidence of appropriate behaviour. This view was prevalent amongst many of the teachers in Robyn’s cluster. However, she used it as “a platform for reintroducing the ecological model” [RJ1] she worked with and would be using for the new referral for Bill. This enabled Robyn to discuss ecological assessment tools like an ABC (antecedent-behaviour-consequence) analysis and its value to Bill’s case. She felt Tamara was “happy to learn new things”. [TJ 1]

Robyn had built effective relationships with staff in this school and established her credibility through success with effective interventions. However, she still recognised the importance of spending time in clarifying the process and problem situation before exploring interventions in each one, a well-documented characteristic of effective problem solvers.

And I think what has made it more successful is our ongoing knowledge that the more time we spend on problem analysis the better intervention we get. That really has hit home for us. Especially me, the more I can to support a teacher being patient with the process the more success we have at the end.
Robyn consistently demonstrated use of the ecological model and was able to reflect on its use at various points in the process. She used it to engage teachers in data gathering and decision making.

Tamara [The teacher] was already aware of the ecological model that I use and so that made it a lot easier for us to set up a contract and she was very involved in the process of working out what questions she felt needed answering and she was really happy to work through the first bit of the process, what we were going to do, our assessment plans, everything like that.

Robyn’s approach to her work and explanation of the ecological model resulted in professional learning for staff in her cluster. She made a conscious effort to include teachers in the process in this instance by choosing a presentation format that would encourage joint discussion and information sharing.

Following class observations, Robyn and Tamara met to discuss the information each had collected which was collated and summarised (see Appendix Eiii). Robyn used this format as a means of presenting observation data for discussion and feedback. She believed this was part of ecological assessment and the meeting was an opportunity for the teacher to reflect on her contribution to the students’ performance, behaviour, style of teaching and patterns of interactions with individual students as well as the class. Robyn commented that an agreed observation format was valuable to assess teacher interactions with Bill as well as his behaviours and reinforced the ecological approach to the teacher as well as evidence-based practice. The following quote also shows Robyn’s awareness of the impact of power relations and the need to engage the teacher:

I always make sure the teachers are comfortable and aware that I record their responses as well and that this can be a valuable tool for them to evaluate their own in class interactions. Also highlighted are some general questions which I put in an ideas column on my observation sheet and offer these if the teacher would like to discuss. I try not to present such things as being from an expert model but more as a brainstorm.

Robyn’s commitment to ethical and professional behaviour (the first learning outcome of the University programme) and in particular, her honesty, helped to foster relationships with teachers and senior leaders. Robyn’s practice of engaging teachers matched her espoused beliefs about the importance of power sharing.
A summary of data under headings from the Three-cornered connection as well as an initial hypothesis, goals and intervention plan may be found on Appendix Eiv a and b. The headings are consistent with an ecological approach. Robyn’s annotations on the typed summary indicate how the information was obtained e.g., from observations or interviews. Both sheets were worked on collaboratively with the teacher. Robyn believed using the three cornered connection (an adaptation of a handout from the RTLB qualification programme), “improved the chances of more successful problem analysis rather than a focus solely on student deficits”. Robyn and Tamara agreed that Bill’s behaviour patterns were a result of a combination of teacher influences through interaction, management and consistency issues and a need for him to develop stronger social skills. Robyn and Tamara constructed the intervention plan together. It included the use of several strategies, detailed in the following paragraph below which include the use of a resilience wheel, the use of antecedent behaviours and a self-reflection sheet for the student. RTLB annotations on the Resilience wheel and antecedent information with proposed related target areas may be found in Appendices Eiii c and d.

The teacher and I were attracted to the Resilience wheel as a vehicle to provide an umbrella of support for Bill. We chose it as part of the intervention not a stand-alone factor. It gave clear guidance to what support we could provide and matched perfectly with the use of co-operative learning techniques we had already explored. Those essential skills outlined in the Curriculum Framework document could be part of the practice we could give Bill in the classroom.

This quote also indicates Robyn’s awareness of building on previous teacher professional learning (co-operative learning strategies) and ensuring interventions related to the curriculum.

The RTLB programme had taught about the importance of triggers in the environment (antecedents) in providing opportunities for prevention of problem behaviours and the teaching of new behaviours. Robyn determined that it was timely for the intervention to focus on antecedents. Previously she had tended to focus more on helping teachers identify consequences for problem behaviour but now recognised that antecedent events serve as cues or signals for positive and negative behaviours. As she and Tamara analysed the classroom data they both saw the possibilities inherent in a more proactive, preventative response to behavioural problems.
The idea of modifying antecedents became an exciting one for us as we explored behaviours and the data around them. [Appendix E] pages 1 and 2 show how we explored each behaviour and worked out an antecedent change to trial. This helped keep the focus on ecological factors and proved very successful for the teacher.

In discussion with me, Robyn recalled how refocusing herself and teachers more on antecedents and setting events had been revelatory in many ways, giving both of them more choice when selecting interventions. She described the process as “exciting” because it helped with reframing problems in this case and others.

Bill was encouraged to complete a self-reflection sheet daily as he worked through his goal settings and social skill development programme. An example of one of his self-reflection sheet may be found in Appendix Evi. Robyn also used some of these sheets to cross reference observations of indoor and outdoor activities.

We were checking up to see if Bill had heard some of the positive feedback he had been getting [from Tamara] during his lesson. What he wrote suggested he had. For much of this intervention, I had been using ideas and concepts presented in the RTLB training session on teaching adaptive behaviour: Self-management strategies.

The monitoring and evaluation phase of CPS is often less well done or based on self-reported data. However, Robyn and Tamara’s transcript of a planned meeting for this purpose is evidence of their commitment to the process. Teacher engagement in the process of reflecting on and evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention is evident from the start of this transcript. Robyn and Tamara met formally to check on progress after the intervention had been underway for a term, as confirmed by these monitoring meeting transcript excerpts:

Robyn: So Tamara, how do you think things are going?

Tamara: Well I’m really pleased with the way things are going with Bill, in fact he just seems so much more as a normal child, part of the classroom but at the same time there’s things I’m still doing specifically for him and so that’s probably helping. A lot of those things with his structure, things that you suggested I do, like keeping him near me and making sure he understands what to do and … giving him more focus than I normally would.
Robyn: Great. So when we look back at our antecedent interventions, you’re managing to find use for those … so he doesn’t get the chance to act out those behaviours.

They reflected on the school trip and whether Bill had acted safely and not taken risks. Tamara reported that Bill had been pretty good most of the time. Robyn probed further by checking that none of the alarming pre-intervention behaviours occurred during the trip. This shows Robyn’s awareness of the need to check if the intervention was making a difference by looking at their goals and comparing pre-intervention data with current data while they are both implementing different aspects of the intervention.

Robyn: Well some of the other behaviours we were thinking about as risk behaviours were quite out there weren’t they like doing somersaults and not finishing them off, sitting on barb wire fences, running across roads. Was he doing any of that … on the class trip?

Tamara: No, nothing like that at all today, it was really good to see that, I was quite anxious. We were in an outside area, big holes in the ground and he didn’t pretend to shove kids down a hole and stuff like that. No, it was just very, very normal. They still had fun running through some tracks but nothing to worry about.

Robyn: And did you try keeping them close a lot of the time where you thought it might be dangerous?

Tamara: I had to keep the whole class between the guide and the parents so it was a pretty controlled, structured outing.

Changing some of her classroom strategies had been agreed to in the plan contributing to Tamara’s professional learning and practice. Robyn also sought Tamara’s view of the progress she was making with these strategies:

Robyn: How are you going with some of the other classroom management interventions that we’re trying, the structure, directions, guidelines and consequences and things like that? Have you been trying some of the things that we’ve been talking about?

Tamara: Yes and no. I have had a few times when I just feel in myself just not up to and when they happen, the classroom management slips but when I know okay just take
control here and set those all in place, there is a huge difference. They seem to know when my guard is down.

Robyn had provided Tamara with a structure which she found useful:

Tamara: … I’m really, really grateful for the structure that you’ve suggested for me because it works and it works really well and it’s worth taking the time to do. This week I trialled the Reading partners programme. Just amazed at how it was accepted. I didn’t have any problems at all.

Robyn: This was after interval or after lunch?

Tamara: It was after interval. A good time because that is our normal reading time and I set it up as you suggested with the behaviour goals, what I’d be looking for and that it was going to be fair ... Bill particularly was no problem at all but I had noticed he is really good at the reading programme but the original one I had, he just stood out actually. He was the leader for that group and that was the structure working again. Again, he’s away from his friends that lead him on a bit. He was in with quite a tiny little group and yeah I’m pleased he’s accepting working with other people because you know what he was like before.

Robyn: That’s great.

Robyn’s interaction with the teacher illustrates a desire to seek specific relevant information with respect to their goals but also affirms progress and achievements to date. Tamara was able to provide information as part of the shared process.

Robyn also provided feedback from recent class observations and on her work with Bill which complemented and supported Tamara’s role in the intervention. Robyn individually taught particular social skills which Bill practised in the classroom. Tamara ensured there were opportunities within the regular class programme for all the children, although Bill was expected to reflect and record his progress. These interactions illustrate Robyn’s awareness of the importance of encouraging teacher and student self-reflection.

Robyn: … The social skills work I have been doing … we had that contract for three weeks and I felt that was a good amount of time for him. Any longer and I don’t think it would have worked as well but there are indicators to me that he is picking up on the positive comments that you are making now and … he did make an effort when he was reflecting and recording. He knew what was expected of him to fill in those sheets and he actually did think about it carefully,
the number of times that I was there when he filled them in without prompting. The language he was using, he was saying things like mm now what do I need to do, that’s right look at the language that Miss has been using with me and look at my own language and then he’d record things. The day that I observed you and made observations and compared that with his reflection, this was that Thursday Olympic Sports Day, and they were bang on. He’d picked up the things that you were saying so I think we can take that as an indicator that that part of things is working quite well for him. What do you think?

Tamara: That surprises me that he’s actually picking up and thinking back on positives so often now because he was so negative about himself that at one time I had a little sticker on the desk and he had a tick every time there was a negative or positive interaction with him and because he told us …that he was no good and no-one ever says he’s good and so we did that little chart then.

Robyn: We’ve talked a little bit about management. Part of the wheel is setting clear consistent boundaries, so he’s being reminded of those and do you think he understands the rules of the classroom and the school? Do you think he’s gaining a good understanding of those?

Tamara: Yes I do and I’m setting those boundaries for the whole class.

Robyn concluded the mid-way evaluation meeting by summarising the progress to date and seeking Tamara’s opinions:

Robyn: My feeling is that the things that we’ve put in place, the structures that you’re using in your management techniques and structures in the classroom combined with the skills training that you’ve been doing with him, I think they’re working for him. We know we’re nowhere near completion of this intervention but I think we’re on the right track by the looks of it. I don’t think we need to go back and rethink what the problem is, do you? … I’m very impressed with the effect that these antecedent interventions have had where you’re stopping things happening by the way you react to him, by the things that you say and the expectations that you have shared with Bill and the class. I think that that’s been very successful. Would you agree with that?

Tamara: Mm. It seems to have worked well most of the time. However …when it’s unravelled a bit have been the times where I haven’t done that, haven’t stuck to the plan and put a structure in place.
The teacher’s thoughtful and honest responses are another indicator of the relationship with the RTLB. Tamara felt safe enough to share her successes and areas where she still needed help.

Robyn and Tamara discussed and compared the data prior to and following one term of intervention. A summary resulting from this collaboration may be found in Appendix Evii. Robyn’s annotations indicate data sources. Some aspects of the Resilience wheel were ongoing at the time of our interview. Robyn and Tamara agreed to refocus on using co-operative learning strategies rather than social skills training which could now be integrated into curriculum subject areas. They decided to provide more opportunities for Bill to contribute more in class and group discussions. Tamara felt more confident and able to do this at this time.

Selected documents have been included as illustrations of positive results from what Robyn believed was an intervention based on ecological data gathering from a variety of sources. Both Robyn and Tamara found the summary useful in indicating changes made to date but also the focus on ecological factors very powerful in changing behaviour (teacher and student). Tamara also confirmed with me how the focus on antecedents had helped to change her approach and attitude.

In the final evaluation session, several weeks later, Robyn asked Tamara to reflect on the progress made by Bill in relation to the goals set. They also planned a positive transition for Bill moving into a new classroom next year to help maintain the progress made to date.

Robyn: Tamara, how do you feel Bill’s been going with some of the goals he set for himself, some of the personal things that he did with me alone and coming back and practising them in the classroom? How is he going with his own reflection and making choices?

Tamara: Well I think when he had those jobs to do, you call them goals but we sort of said here you could do this job or set a goal for at the end of the day if you stay on task and do what you’re expected to do, you could organise something like a game of T ball. I think those are really, really good for Bill and doing them routinely sort of set up a nice thing for him to work towards as well which he really enjoyed doing. He saw the point of working hard and liked to be rewarded so that part I felt went really, really well. I felt that you hit the nail on
the head when you suggested doing that. … I was looking through my planning book and I was keeping careful notes on Bill and do you know there’s not one entry for Term 4.

Robyn: So that’s quite a lot different.

Tamara: Not a serious entry. I just went wow! That’s amazing and looking through his file that we’ve worked on here, I was going to ask you, do we keep this, do we hand it on to the next teacher? What do we do about this now?

Robyn and Tamara shared appropriate information with Ray, the teacher Bill would be going to next year. They had already involved Ray in the intervention plan to date so there was already some rapport between Bill and this teacher. Robyn commented that: “the relationship is there and Ray understands the need to give Bill practice with co-operative activities and I’ve done co-operative learning with Ray already”.

Robyn: …You said some of the behaviours weren’t as evident because of the choices he seems to be making, more positive choices.

Tamara: That’s happening too. I see when he was given a job to do, he took it on, as I was saying before, he wanted to do that job and did his best. He was the bus monitor for our class, taking the class down and yeah that was a big ask for him because he had to be responsible for himself and he was doing his best. Mind you, he had a real tough job because the other boys just made fun of him and sort of tried to get around him and wouldn’t do what he asked and that. It was a difficult job for him to do but he persevered.

Robyn also asked Tamara to reflect on her own progress and feelings about how they had worked together on this case. The following excerpts illustrate the changes made in relation to goals and intervention plan and also highlight Robyn’s awareness of the importance of giving and receiving feedback:

Robyn: So taking into account that this class has been known as a challenging class with a high percentage of behaviour challenges, how do you feel since we began working together? How do you feel your own teaching has changed? Are you doing things different now than you used to in terms of strategies and managing the behaviour and what have you?

Tamara: Yeah I feel as if I’ve got some basic strategies that I call upon and one of them was having a virtue, time of writing out virtues, you know short sharp five minutes we’re all writing out the virtue that we need to practice. We talk
about it and then we aim to practice and that’s worked really, really well. That’s one of the things. …I’m using the antecedent strategies more often too, like making expectations clear. Sometimes I sound like a cracked record because I’m just saying those things over and over again but generally they’re really good. … As far as my teaching style perhaps has changed, is still changing is that I’m making allowance for Bill when we do certain activities, new activities that I think he will react to.

Robyn: I think we’ve talked about it once before haven’t we, what happens when he’s confronted with something new, you know there are certain strategies that he uses that aren’t quite modified yet and it sounds to me like what you’re saying, are you saying that perhaps you’ve modified your expectations a little bit so that you don’t react quite as quickly as you used to therefore he just goes through a little cycle by himself and then comes right. Is that what we’re saying?

Tamara: Definitely. That’s been pleasing for me to observe instead of me getting upset and trying to make him conform straight away.

Robyn: It sounds to me like he’s using more self-checking strategies. That’s what I was talking about before with the choices thing. I think there are certain traits that he’s got that he can’t help himself doing but also we’ve managed to give him a few more social skills in self-talk, self-checking and making the right choice after a period of time. Would you agree with that?

Tamara: Yes, and that example today where he was self-checking, he was checking to see if he was going to get caught and that would decide whether he would do what he was going to do or not.

Robyn: So he’s making informed choices.

Tamara: Mm.

Robyn: Interesting isn’t it. Well that’s great.

While Robyn took a key role in summarising progress, the excerpts also show she often gave Tamara opportunities to confirm or disconfirm. Tamara was able to add examples too. She also suggested that she thought Bill would benefit from being a tutor for a younger child now, as part of their reading partnership programme. Tamara commented to me that she enjoyed having the chance to brainstorm ideas with Robyn. She found the Resilience Wheel to be a useful tool too.
Robyn referred to the Māori proverb “He tini nga whetu e ngaro I te kapua iti” (Many stars cannot be concealed by a small dark cloud) when reflecting on this case: “This proverb connected well with me with the outcomes of this intervention. Many ‘stars of understanding’ were revealed for the teacher and student as well as myself”. Using the educational model and ecological assessment poses a challenge for those working from a deficit perspective.

Robyn judged that she was successful in raising the awareness of the teacher to a need to move away from Bill as being the problem and just looking at the problem situation itself. Tamara acknowledged that she had initially felt “overwhelmed by all my special needs students ” but now realised her feelings of not being able to cope and her lack of knowledge of strategies to change the situation were preventing her from changing the situation, and were also contributing to the problems. She initially wanted Robyn to withdraw the problem children – a typical ‘make the problem go away’ response. Mentoring from Robyn and the sharing of responsibility for solutions enabled Tamara to build her self-efficacy and ability to make changes to her classroom practice. She described herself as initially fearful of failing but Robyn’s ability to build relational trust, knowledge and skill had improved her own capability. She now felt a great sense of achievement, looking back at the evidence of behaviour.

Robyn commented that she saw herself “as being proactive and that she recognised the value of being systematic in my approach and partnership with the teacher. Feedback from the teacher suggested big shifts in thinking which could have a beneficial result for Bill and other class members”. My discussions with Tamara confirmed that this was an accurate perception.

Was the intervention successful? Robyn felt the intervention was ‘on target’ because the pre- and post-intervention comparisons showed a shift in Bill’s behaviour patterns. Many of the antecedent changes and environmental factors relied on the teacher and support colleague to remain consistent however so Robyn saw her job was to monitor these as well as Bill’s on-going resilience development.

Robyn considered herself “lucky with this intervention in terms of the relationship building that took place”. She believed that her credibility as an ‘agent of change’ had been
enhanced by previous successful interventions in the school. Nevertheless she still needed to focus on the collaborative model as a basis for their decision making. Robyn also felt careful analysis and definition of the problem were key factors in achieving the outcomes for Bill and Tamara. She was glad she had spent time gathering a variety of data before moving onto the intervention although there had initially been pressure to do so sooner. In this case her knowledge of the importance of antecedent data and how this could be used was her “biggest learning curve”.

This case showed how Robyn used a data-based approach to problem-solving, involving the teacher, Tamara, as much as possible. It also shows how Robyn trialled and adapted materials from the RTLB programme. Tamara’s perception of her class changed dramatically over the term working with Robyn. She was now able to take more responsibility for planning and make suggestions about possible strategies. Tamara told me she found the process hard work because it meant she had to make changes and take risks but reported it was definitely worthwhile. She could see the difference the changes were making. Tamara enjoyed working with Robyn.

Robyn showed insight in reflecting on her own journey and the changes she felt she had made from the time she was appointed until now. I have included excerpts Robyn shared with me below:

When I first arrived in the job I had to wait three terms to get onto the training course so pre-training activities were largely governed by the needs of the principals who made up the membership of the Cluster Management committee. There was a perceived lack of constant and reliable contact with professional educational and Iwi agencies so I was asked to network and successfully formed lasting relationships with a large number of support agencies including government agencies. This success led to a steady stream of referrals and assessments for individuals (90-98% Māori and male) based on the old ‘functional limitations’ paradigm but also useful relationship building (whanaungatanga) with local Māori Whanau. A short way into my training I began realising much of my past work in the cluster was not in tune with the inclusive ‘ecological model’ that I had accepted and had innately been using in my own teaching practice. My time since then has been spent gently, but with conviction, acting as a change agent in my area working with whanau, teachers, principals, schools and pupils in a variety of interventions.
Being in a small cluster and having a positive relationship with my principals and teachers has helped my work be successful and meaningful. Many of the culturally responsive methodologies and pedagogies which I have been introducing into this area as important for successful inclusive practice, have been accepted by schools to varying degrees. For myself, a more acute awareness of the Treaty principles and cultural audit processes has helped with challenges like the one at … School. [RJ2] ²

Robyn also believed that: “Teachers in my cluster… through my processes are constantly exposed to the ecological model and it has now been accepted as part of what I do”. This was in marked contrast to when she was first appointed, prior to training as an RTLB.

7.2 Vignette 2: RTLB Mary with Teachers Carla and Jenny

Mary’s case was selected from the nine Study 2 cases as this was the only referral for a syndicate of two classes. Mary’s work context and school for this case also provided a strong contrast with vignette 1. This vignette demonstrates Mary’s practice using the CPS process in one of her liaison schools and the resulting professional learning for the two teachers who had different preservice teacher education and experience.

7.2.1 Context of Mary’s Work

Prior to training as an RTLB, Mary had over twenty years teaching experience in a wide range of settings, including primary, intermediate and Year 1-13 schools in a range of state, independent and integrated schools and colleges.

Mary was part of a cluster of five RTLB who worked in nine decile 4 to 10 primary, intermediate, secondary and integrated Year 1-13 suburban schools. Each RTLB worked primarily in two liaison schools, although they were able to receive referrals from any of the schools. During the research project, Mary’s caseload required her to work with teachers, parents and students in four schools.

² In Robyn’s cluster, Māori students make up more than 60 percent of the rolls in three of the four schools.
The setting for this referral was a suburban decile 10 contributing primary school with a roll of approximately 450 students. Almost 80 percent of the students were New Zealand European/Pākehā, 10 percent were Māori, and the rest comprised European, Asian and Pasifika students.

7.2.2 Case Overview

This referral for junior syndicate assistance was made by the principal who was concerned about the oral language of a number of children entering Year One. Although Mary had met the two teachers of the Year one classes in her role as liaison RTLB at this school, she had not worked with either of them. One of the teachers, Carla, held a senior position and had had many years’ experience at the school; the other, Jenny, had recently arrived from South Africa. This was her first teaching position in New Zealand. The large differences in the experience of the two teachers meant that Carla had more power and authority in their working relationship, which was a potential source of difficulty for the CPS process. Interview comments from Carla and Jenny indicated that Mary had successfully built relational trust and positive relationships with them both. For example, Carla thought that:

from day one [Mary] goes out of her way to be open and friendly. … I just like her whole easy manner. She’s not coming in with a list of things and saying you need to do this, this and this and walk out and leave you and come and check if I’ve done it a few weeks later. She’s very understanding. She knows where I’m at. A beautiful approach. [TJ4a]

I also checked how Jenny felt about the situation and whether she had felt uncomfortable at any time throughout the process. She confirmed that Mary’s manner ensured that she felt accepted and supported despite her relatively limited experience as a teacher in New Zealand:

Initially I thought oh now she’s going compare to Carla - she’s had years and years of experience and I’ve got only two. But it was nothing like that. She just has that unique way about making you feel at ease and I never felt oh she’s comparing the two of us.

Mary commented positively about her relationship with Jenny and Carla. Their comments were consistent with Mary’s and are indicative of her preferred practice in
schools, getting to know the staff and school context so teachers felt comfortable making referrals. This comment also highlighted Mary’s awareness of the importance of relational trust and of building credibility within the school context, not only with the referring teachers for this case but also with other school personnel. Jenny commented that: “Mary’s in the staff room frequently, not only for us and you feel that you can just sit and chat about anything”. [TJ4b] Incidental comments from other staff members during my visits to the school confirmed the rapport and credibility Mary had as liaison RTLB in this school as a result of previous successful casework and her on-going efforts to be part of the staff.

At the Entry meeting the teachers and RTLB discussed the contrast between the skills students currently demonstrated and skills they expected of five year old students. In clarifying concerns, Carla and Jenny explained that in their view some students, especially Māori and Asian, were reluctant to participate orally. Others appeared to have difficulty with listening and only a few were able to question for information. When Mary sought specific data by questioning the teachers about children’s opportunities for practising oral language within their classrooms, they cited sharing news on the mat and one class sometimes shared in groups. However, Jenny reported that she noticed the children didn’t always take turns and some dominated.

Teacher engagement and shared data gathering were demonstrated early in this case. It was agreed that current data were needed around children’s participation and oral language skills. Mary agreed to observe in the classrooms while Carla and Jenny agreed to collect individual student baseline data about oral language. Following decision-making on the skills expected, Jenny offered to draw up an individual checklist for both classes.

By the next meeting checklists had been completed and one teacher commented that the data collection had prompted her to assess children’s oral language skills, as previously, she had not targeted these strands in the English curriculum. She noted that her data indicated that although some children presented as communicative, they did not necessarily demonstrate the skills she had assumed.

During her observations in both classes, Mary looked for relevant structured opportunities that supported children to communicate information and thoughts, and how frequently these occurred. She found that planned oral language practice was restricted to
sharing personal news where confident students competed to be chosen to address the class. Observations revealed that there was no specific teaching and monitoring in place and that: “reticent or less assertive students had little or no opportunity to practise speaking and listening skills, apart from incidental chat with friends”. [RJ4] Mary was concerned about the inequity of the situation where children who needed the most practice and feedback were getting the least.

Once the data were shared and discussed with the teachers, they could see that lack of opportunity to learn was a barrier to students learning and practising oral language skills. This in turn suggested that the students had needs that were not currently being addressed and needed a programme to better fit their identified needs. They all agreed that the strategies selected should be useful for all the children. This involved selecting and implementing a programme that offered opportunity to learn and practise skills in a safe environment.

Mary, Carla and Jenny worked collaboratively on an action plan. This involved a six-week programme during which target skills were taught and practised using co-operative learning structures. Mary believed that cooperative learning strategies, where students interact with peers in pairs and small groups, offered maximum opportunity for practising oral language skills within the classroom. She also believed that by “implementing inclusive strategies that allowed children to function at their own level, [she] would be nurturing and supporting both academic and social needs”. [RJ4]

Carla and Jenny provided individual feedback and monitored progress by moving systematically among groups during sessions. On Mary’s regular visits to the two classrooms, both teachers enthusiastically reported the developing confidence and skills of their students. Their enthusiasm was also evident in their meetings with me. Mary believed that through promoting opportunities for “nurturing and supporting the skills of individual students”, she was also raising teacher awareness of equity issues in the class. Working to support equitable opportunities for all learners was one of the core learning outcomes of the RTLB programme.

Mary was aware of the importance of building relationships and of establishing rapport with both teachers during the CPS process. Comments from Carla and Jenny also
indicated that Mary used a collaborative approach rather than a distant or expert one. She made an effort to get to know them and their children. Jenny said that Mary “puts everybody at ease straight away, and she interacts with the children…knows their names …without checking”. Carla described Mary as ‘very approachable’ … “She’s very non-threatening as well. I really enjoyed having her. She could walk in any time of day, just very easy to approach”. Jenny reported that she “felt quite excited. She’s motivated me a lot.” Mary’s commitment to hearing the teachers’ perspectives and engaging them in problem-solving were also evident throughout this case. Carla also described Mary as: “very focused, she really takes on board what you’re saying”.

The teachers’ concerns were clarified at the Entry meeting. The teachers and Mary agreed that the key social skills needed were turn taking, sitting still and making eye contact and the oral language skills were speaking clearly, organising thoughts, forming and answering questions. “We realised the need to identify and analyse individual achievement and needs in respect of the skills clarified, specific data were needed ”. [TJ4a] Jenny offered to format a data collection sheet, a checklist of the children’s names and the listening and speaking skills expected.

By the next meeting, Carla and Jenny had collaborated and modified their original format. They had also completed data gathering. This illustrated their will to be involved and recognition of the importance of gathering baseline data. Pre-intervention data collected by the Carla, Jenny and Mary were used to inform the collaborative problem-solving process and is evidence that both teachers were engaged in data gathering.

The teachers’ summary of data indicated a wide range of achievement with some students presenting as confident and articulate, others hindered by what Carla described as “limited language experiences”. The data sheet completed by Jenny around skills in listening and speaking and a summary of the initial data across the two Year One classes may be found in Appendix Fi. Jenny was keen to report that Mary’s involvement had prompted her to assess oral language which she had not done previously. When she observed more closely, she discovered that children who appeared articulate did not necessarily display the social skills she had initially assumed they had. Observations of interactions in the classroom had enabled her to see the situation from a different perspective.
Some of the data collected by Mary were recorded on a scratch pad (Appendix Fii). This is an adapted version of a sample presented and discussed during the RTLB programme. It is derived from the ecological assessment tool TIES II (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1998) which considers interactions between teaching, task and student characteristics. Relevant practice is one of the dimensions in the tool. In observing the instructional environment Mary found that opportunities for practising oral language were limited to the sharing of personal ‘news’ each morning. There was no structure in place in either class for the teaching or monitoring of the speaking and listening strands of the curriculum. In Carla’s room, individual children were selected to speak to their peers who were seated on the mat. The audience were then invited to raise their hands if they had a question. Mary observed that: “the more confident students tended to vie with each other to be chosen to speak or question, thereby gaining more opportunities to speak while the more reticent or less confident students had little or no opportunity”. In Jenny’s room, students shared their ‘news’ in groups of four or five seated at their communal tables. Again, “students competed with each other to speak”. Jenny also noticed that some dominated while others became restless. There was little natural social interaction or engagement around typical new entrant conversation topics.

Mary adapted one of the handouts (Appendix Fiii) that was shared during the RTLB programme, based on the Ysseldyke and Christenson’s (1998) ‘Three cornered connection’. This is further evidence of Mary’s awareness of engaging the teachers in defining the problem situation using data. It is also illustrative of an ecological approach. Mary used the diagram to guide the teachers to acknowledge the current inequitable opportunities for learning oral language and also to set goals to address the concerns.

Using the observational and individual baseline data, I lead the teachers to see the mismatch between students’ needs and the opportunities currently provided for learning and practice. I explained that the problem situation was not solely with the student deficits [and the home environment] as the comments of one teacher had implied, but rather how the instructional environment was contributing to this. The students who were identified as not achieving were also the ones who were not participating during baseline observations. [RJ4]

Carla and Jenny acknowledged that having little or no opportunities to practise oral language was a barrier to the students’ learning. Collecting data prior to the feedback
meeting had made Jenny realise some of her assumptions about her students’ skills were incorrect and also that she was only teaching part of the English curriculum. She admitted that she had not included speaking and listening in her teaching programme to date.

We talked about the requirements of the curriculum and National Education Goals (Ministry of Education, 2004). Guided by our discussion around equity issues and the need to provide all students with access to the curriculum, we designed an inclusive programme that would enable students to develop oral language skills. [RJ4]

Collaborative analysis was consistent with best practice in making decisions based on data. It was important to discuss and share information in a way that enabled team members to analyse students’ learning needs in relation to the instructional environment. Planning meeting notes may be found in Appendix Fiv. Mary also shared New Zealand research by Brown and Thomson (2000) about the benefits of co-operative learning and some of the disadvantages of competitive classroom environments. The outcome of these planning meetings was an inclusive programme of co-operative teaching and learning activities designed to meet their objective of enabling all students to develop oral language skills. They also provide evidence of Mary’s knowledge of cooperative learning principles and structures as well as her expertise in coaching the teachers to tailor the programme to meet the needs of the students within New Zealand curriculum requirements.

Mary reflected that:

In sharing ideas around an intervention plan that would provide equitable opportunities of all students, we sought flexible strategies that would be inclusive of current students but would also accommodate the changing rolls of new entrant classrooms.

A copy of the plan may be found in Appendix Fv.

The teachers also acknowledged that currently some children were not engaging or interacting, including three Māori children and one Japanese student, “our intervention needed to nurture acceptance and appreciation of all class members and their different ethnicities”. Carla and Jenny agreed that talking in small groups would offer a safe inclusive environment and maximise participation.
Mary fostered teacher professional learning by modelling the use of the cooperative doughnut structure where partners are taught particular skills and then share in a safe inclusive setting which facilitates participation. They agreed to implement this approach over two weeks after which they would jointly evaluate progress and plan for the remaining four weeks of the term. Mary was:

heartened that both teachers took ownership. Carla suggested that partnering a more skilled student with a less skilled one would foster more successful interactions. We shared and tried various methods of pairing up and practised physically forming a doughnut as the logistics of this were initially challenging for many new entrants. Jenny used matching adult and baby animals while Carla used a folded line-up, jigsaw and moving to other parts of the room.

By the second planning meeting, Jenny was highly enthusiastic, announcing: “They had no alternative but to participate! It was so great to see!” Carla was pleased with progress but suggested a change from the doughnut so further ideas were explored. Mary “followed the flow” as she was pleased they were taking responsibility. The outcome of this planning and brainstorming was agreement on a progression of strategies from pairs to working in threes and finally a buzz group structure shared by Jenny. Modelling and practising using the simple cooperative structures, pairs and small groups offered all students access to individual teaching and practice in safe settings. The following comment by Jenny indicates her awareness of the teacher’s role in problem-solving:

It all comes down to us. We were aware of the problem and I think Mary prompted us to get on to it. … Mary came in and also modelled the doughnut the first time round and we had a bit of difficulty but the next time we worked it out. We put a hula hoop down and had them sit on that because they couldn’t make a circle and we did that for two or three days, similar to Carla, they were too close for me to sit and hear and the only time you could really get something out of it at the end of it when they had to stand up and report back which was really not what I was looking for. I was looking for the interaction of each other so gradually we took the hoop away and had them move out and only then did it

3 A `doughnut’ is used to describe a cooperative learning structure for facilitating discussion. Participants form two circles: the inner and outer circles form pairs by facing each other. Pairings can be easily changed by getting one of the circles to move clockwise or anticlockwise.
really come the [cooperative learning] doughnut …. every corner of the room. [TJ4b]

Mary also used developmentally appropriate tools, glove puppets that proved to be highly motivating to demonstrate the social skills they wished the students to practise. Carla commented on Mary’s modelling of a skill using puppets:

Her use of puppets was good because she would actually make the puppet model someone who wasn’t listening properly and someone who was asking good questions and giving good answers. [T4a]

Following the lesson, they discussed the merits observed and summarised below:

All students participate simultaneously.

Students have more opportunities to practise.

The structure is non-competitive and encourages turn-taking; no-one dominates.

There is a reason to listen and opportunities to respond.

The safe setting promotes confidence and independence.

The social skills practised apply to many situations and across the curriculum.

(Summary provided by Mary, Jenny and Carla)

This illustrates Mary’s awareness of the need to provide time to allow teachers to reflect and ensure everyone had a shared understanding of what they were planning, goals and rationale.

A detailed plan (see Appendix Fv) was a useful model for Carla and Jenny to ensure concepts and processes are followed. They appreciated that the participation and progress of every student exemplified the integral principles of cooperative learning: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, reflection and interpersonal skills, shown in the lesson outline.

Mary’s engagement with Carla and Jenny in the problem-solving approach to challenges in classroom practice provided opportunities for professional learning for them all. Satisfaction with the CPS process and outcomes was enhanced when RTLB supported teachers by providing resources, modelling appropriate practices and giving feedback.
There are several examples of this in Mary’s case such as adapting recording sheets, encouraging teacher observation, using evidence based practices and planning consistent with the curriculum and providing timely feedback. Jenny commented that:

[Mary] had a good variety of resources. …She also showed us how to introduce the skills. She U-shaped the children, the first to join, the next to join, so she did that and she also came in with her puppet for them. The children got quite attached to the puppet, she had a little performance to get them sort of homing in. So the paired thing was good in my classroom for kiddies too shy to come up the front would actually talk. I couldn’t get round everyone to monitor exactly what they were saying and the noise in the room when you’ve got eight pairs all talking at once it was quite difficult to monitor how well they were speaking really but it did get them speaking even the shy ones. [Jenny, TJ4b]

The teachers were jointly engaged in completing the final phases of the problem-solving process. They completed a checklist of post-intervention skills for each individual and a summary of outcomes across the two classes (see Appendix Fvi). Over a six-week period, Mary, Carla and Jenny took part in implementing and monitoring the impact of the intervention. Mary provided support and encouragement by making regular visits to both classrooms. She observed that the teachers used the planned cooperative structures as a vehicle for teaching the skills through modelling, prompting and providing feedback to individual students. Carla completed the assessment checklist with comments during the final week of the intervention for that term. Jenny recorded progress each week. Mary showed awareness of the importance of giving constructive feedback to the teacher and, in turn, of them giving feedback to the students.

Mary reflected that: “they believed that this close monitoring showed individual progress in more specific steps. This record also enabled Jenny to provide feedback and feed-forward, guiding each student to meet their goals”. Jenny did this because she believed “a one-off summative assessment would not necessarily provide a valid picture, especially if a child was having a ‘bad day’.” This is also evidence of appropriate scaffolding. Jenny also provided a pre- and post-numerical analysis showing the shift in skills across the class. Analysis of post-intervention data across the two classes indicated that in the skills targeted, the range of ‘always’ achieving from 42-69 percent (pre intervention) to 67–85 percent (post intervention).
They summarised their analysis of improvements in areas of significant concern as follows:

- Ability to form a question: 67% were now consistently demonstrating appropriate questioning compared with 42% at initial data collection.

- Organising thoughts: 85% were now demonstrating this compared with 48% at initial data collection.

- Sitting still: 85% could now sit still and attend to their partner consistently compared with 65% previously.

Sharing the summary information indicated overall trends and identified children who had made significant progress using the group structures and those for whom ongoing targeted support was still needed. On Mary’s regular visits to the classes, she observed growing confidence of the children who had previously not participated. The teachers and Mary also showed me photos taken during sessions that captured some of the appropriate skills practice and also served as prompts for the children.

Mary commented to me that she was pleased with the progress made and particularly the way in which the two teachers worked together given the differences in their teaching experience and status. This case also demonstrated how Mary started from where the teachers were rather than imposing her own views about an intervention from the outset. While the data showed overall trends in the right direction, Mary, Carla and Jenny were keen to maintain the progress made by following-up and planning next steps especially for those children who needed more targeted strategies.

7.3 Summary

The in-depth descriptions of two case studies illustrated how these RTLB implemented the collaborative process to foster inclusive practice in their particular clusters, despite contrasting referrals, individual and syndicate respectively, and very different work contexts. The vignettes demonstrated Robyn and Mary’s relationships, practice and the resulting teacher professional learning.
Chapter Eight: Discussion

8.0 Introduction

The RTLB service was established as part of the SE2000 policy to provide a “world class inclusive education system” within a decade. RTLB were envisaged as change agents who would build school and teacher capability to achieve successful outcomes for learners. Many RTLB had previously been employed in traditional special education roles focused on working with students directly rather than consulting and supporting teachers to improve their practices for students experiencing learning and/or behavioural difficulties.

As National Director of the RTLB professional development programme, I was interested in exploring if and how RTLB used an inclusive, collaborative problem-solving process in the field to improve complex problem situations.

The RTLB role is arguably one of the most challenging and potentially rewarding ones in the New Zealand education sector. Few jobs have the level of autonomy and the range of presenting challenges within and to the role faced by RTLB. They have a key role in promoting inclusive educational practice within an educational environment where expectations on teachers and schools are already substantial. An important part of their initial professional development involved implementing a CPS model of practice.

Consultation has a considerable research base in disciplines such as school psychology, counselling and business but less research exists related to teacher consultation (Friend, 2008). Previous researchers noted that relatively little is known about the variables that influence the implementation of interventions developed within consultation, the characteristics of effective problem solvers within this context or the micro-processes in changing teacher beliefs and practices. Friend (2008) also noted the lack of valid studies involving teachers and the challenges in researching the complexities of consultation particularly the collaborative aspects. This is particularly relevant given that many researchers report that teachers feel they lack sufficient knowledge and skills to teach learners with special needs (Blecker & Boakes, 2010; Lambe & Bones, 2006; Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008). Roach, Kratochwill and Frank (2009) acknowledged
the major contribution that school-based consultants could play in facilitating change in classrooms.

The two studies in this thesis: Study 1 (contrasting retrospective cases) and Study 2 (collaborative current cases) were designed to examine RTLB use of a collaborative problem solving (CPS) approach to facilitate change and support inclusive practices. Study 1 focussed on RTLB, teacher and senior leader perceptions and recall of cases where the RTLB had employed either inclusive or non-inclusive approaches to referrals. However, although RTLB and teacher recollections and perceptions about the joint problem solving in the cases were consistent, this did not constitute evidence about the actual practices and outcomes that were achieved. Furthermore, previous research and Study 1 results suggested that there might be critical factors that contribute to the successful implementation of CPS. Study 2 was designed to address a gap in research by exploring evidence of the actual (rather than espoused) practice of a group of RTLB who were working collaboratively with regular classroom teachers to resolve problems.

The research questions that guided the first study were: Did RTLB use the collaborative problem-solving framework taught in their training? What factors facilitated or impeded RTLB use of the collaborative problem-solving model in fostering teacher capability and inclusive practice (as illustrated in type II cases)? What differences did this make to the problem-solving process and outcomes for the selected student cases (type I compared with type II)?

Data included RTLB and teacher perceptions across the four phases of the problem-solving process: data gathering (entry and assessment); pre-intervention data analysis and interpretation (problem-solving, based on analysis and synthesis of assessment and observational data, and exploration of strategies); intervention; and, post-intervention data analysis (monitoring and evaluation). This framework indicated the extent of teacher engagement which was a key factor in the use or otherwise of inclusive practices and improvements for students.

My main intention for Study 2 was to develop deeper understandings of the reality and complexity involved in collaborative problem-solving using an inclusive approach and test the factors in the framework from the literature. I also set out to investigate the
professional learning this approach provided for RTLB and teachers. The questions that guided the second study were:

To what extent is the responsive teacher, CPS model, taught on the University RTLB programme, implemented in practice? What factors facilitated or impeded RTLB use and the effectiveness of the CPS process?

Analysis of the data suggested that the main factors facilitating the implementation of a CPS approach to foster inclusive practice were: positive professional relationships between the RTLB and teacher, engagement through power sharing, acknowledgement of each other’s perspectives, defining and sharing responsibilities, RTLB confidence in advocating for the CPS model, RTLB knowledge, competence and interpersonal skills, teacher and RTLB commitment to working collaboratively, satisfaction with the process and outcomes, and, alignment between school policy, the RTLB programme and practice. Brown’s (2008) research investigating RTLB practice through portfolio analysis and interviews, found similar facilitating factors.

Did RTLB use CPS?

Evidence from interviews and transcripts revealed that all of the RTLB in this study were able to apply the principles of CPS taught in the professional development programme when they were “on the job”. Successful implementation of CPS was shown to impact on both teacher and RTLB professional learning and practices. Using CPS provided more opportunities to develop a partnership and maintain relationships where RTLB and teachers could respond more quickly and jointly to issues as they arose.

What factors facilitated RTLB use of CPS?

The use of CPS was facilitated by a number of factors related to: RTLB (i.e., knowledge, skills, competence and ability to establish and maintain relationships), school (e.g., leader and teacher beliefs, systems, policies), and, the professional development programme.

Successful use of the CPS process was strongly influenced by the skill of the RTLB in building and maintaining positive professional relationships with teachers. Indicators of
positive professional relationships were mutual trust and respect for each other’s ideas and expertise: reciprocity and a willingness to learn from each other. Professional relations were evident in a willingness to share power, definition of respective roles and accept joint responsibility for decisions and their outcomes. Critical to a productive RTLB/teacher relationship was teacher commitment to the process as securing this was associated with higher levels of engagement in different phases of the CPS process.

Findings from studies 1 and 2 indicated that when the teacher was involved in the CPS process early and in more phases, the likelihood of successful inclusive practice and outcomes for students was increased. Analysis of the RTLB-Teacher professional discussions indicated that RTLB tended to spend time paraphrasing teacher concerns and comments, checking assumptions and asking more open-ended questions to facilitate communication. The RTLB reported that these were the skills taught during their University programme, indicating that the skills had been learned sufficiently to enable them to be used in day-to-day practice with teachers. These are essential components of learning conversations within a collaborative process, referred to as open-to-learning conversations by Robinson (2011) who views such skills as critical for tackling complex issues. Teacher involvement in the process also assisted with the development of relational trust. The importance of relational trust has been emphasised by Robinson (2011) and Robertson and Timperley (2011).

Another factor that was critical to the successful implementation of the CPS model, was the RTLB’s knowledge (i.e., subject matter, general & pedagogical content knowledge) with respect to the New Zealand Curriculum. RTLB knowledge of effective teaching approaches that supported, challenged and engaged learners and an ability to model these and scaffold teacher use, also helped. RTLB had a realistic appreciation of the costs and benefits of a range of teaching interventions and were able to negotiate with the teachers about what was feasible in a given situation.

A related aspect to power sharing was whether teachers believed that RTLB listened to their feelings and perspectives rather than having a predetermined agenda or controlling the conversation. Understanding the perspective the teacher brings to the problem they are facing and why they do what they do are helpful in clarifying the problem situation. Active listening skills are also important in maintaining relationships. Previous research by
Katz et al. (2009) indicates that relationships are a key factor or the connective tissue underpinning successful collaborative practice. Relationships provide the social capital that allows people to work together over time and exceed what either of them could accomplish alone (West-Burnham & Otero, 2004). RTLB in the thesis studies demonstrated social competence in building empathy and accepting difference. They also demonstrated personal skills (e.g., commitment to making a difference, willingness to support the teacher, advocacy for students), and, personal competence (e.g., self awareness, self-regulation and motivation).

Study 1 findings highlighted the impact of school context, senior leader and teacher beliefs in enabling or constraining their use of the problem-solving model. RTLB, who believed in the model and had demonstrated effective practice in some settings, did not always use it. Senior leaders had the potential to support or constrain practice from the referral and intake system onwards. However, some RTLB had built credibility and used the model within some schools but had difficulty with one individual teacher. This was illustrated in one of the study 1 cases. However, there appeared to be additional issues that had not been openly discussed with the teacher or RTLB. A senior leader had made the referral ostensibly for a child but had concerns about teacher management. A climate of mistrust existed from the outset. Robinson (2011) and Timperley (2011) have recognised the importance and impact of leadership on professional learning and practices in schools.

The lead principal or chairperson of the cluster management committee should have a clear understanding of the resource teacher role and be in a position to act as advocate and/or provide guidance where necessary. This is despite no required or funded training/guidance for principals in this role. It is unsurprising therefore, that research and reviews of the service have found great variability amongst principals in terms of their understanding and/or commitment to the RTLB role (Blair, 2005; ERO, 2004, 2009).

Blair (2005) examined the beliefs and practices of a sample of New Zealand school principals associated with the role of the RTLB. The research showed principals had received no comprehensive professional development on the role of the RTLB, but that those that had received some professional input as to the role were more likely to uphold beliefs and practices aligned with the Ministry of Education’s requirements for RTLB. Such principals were also “more active and influential” in assisting RTLB to operate
within MOE guidelines at that time, which have subsequently become requirements (Blair, 2005, p.123). The thesis research confirmed the support some RTLB received from principals like those in Blair’s sample who facilitated CPS practice.

The Education Review Office evaluation of the RTLB service (2004) found that “many principals were unclear about their expectations for RTLB and how to manage their role as employer” and that “the overall quality of the performance appraisals of RTLB by their employing principals was low” (p. 33). Data collection on referred student achievement and RTLB performance was often lacking, limiting the ability to identify specific deficits in service delivery and other impacting variables and arguably reinforcing a superficial evaluative style of performance appraisal within some RTLB clusters. As the ERO report put it “In short, most clusters did not know what difference their service had made for students” (ERO, 2004, p. 34). Similar findings were reported in 2009.

Principal and cluster management knowledge of, and involvement with the RTLB role have an impact on the ability of RTLB to perform effectively and be able to demonstrate that effectiveness. The Ministry of Education RTLB Policy and Toolkit (2007) provides a framework for the performance management of RTLB, including identifying professional standards against which performance can be measured through an appraisal cycle. However, detailed appraiser knowledge and involvement with the RTLB role is necessary for an effective formative appraisal system to be able to enhance, shape and, where necessary, direct RTLB performance. In the absence of this, a less than rigorous process seems difficult to avoid. In short, some training and initial support for principals engaged in the performance management of RTLB should promote a process similar in rigor and effectiveness to the best teacher appraisal systems – something principals are much more knowledgeable about. Where principals will typically have clear views about the expectations they should have for teachers in their schools, it would be wrong to assume they have similar clarity about the role of the RTLB (see Blair, 2005). While RTLB in the thesis studies were clear about their role and had sufficient support to implement the model, inconsistencies were evident in the contrasting Type I cases in Study 1 and RTLB reported that some of their colleagues did not follow the model advocated in the Toolkit. “Individual autonomy potentially reduces teacher efficacy when teachers cannot count on colleagues to reinforce objectives” (Stoll, 2011, p.105).
“Research indicates that trainee factors can have a significant impact on transfer of learning from training to practice through the effect on learning outcomes and that individual trainee characteristics can account for as much as 21 percent of all barriers to training transfer” (Foxon, cited in Kennedy-Merrick et al, 2008). In the light of such research the importance of selection issues are highlighted, prior to any consideration of the provision of ongoing support post-training. Kennedy-Merrick et al., (2008) claim that the main problem for training programme designers in relation to programme transfer is their lack of influence over the work environment. RTLB volunteers in the research sample had the attributes to implement the model successfully. However, the researcher in her role in the professional development programme had RTLB on the course who were not suited to the role and were not able to demonstrate appropriate practice through field-based assignments.

Practitioners using the CPS approach have been shown to be more effective when they resist the urge (and possible pressure) to come to premature action and spend time in problem analysis. Interpersonal skills also influence the success of the problem solving process (Brown, Pryzwansky, & Schulte, 2011; Peacock et al., 2010). In addition, trust, respect and belief in the value of collaboration are prerequisites for, as well as outcomes of, collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1996, p.11). Study 2 provided evidence of the importance of interpersonal competence and on most occasions avoided the ‘activity trap’ referred to by Katz, Earl and Jaafar (2009) when participants move quickly to finding solutions or feeling productive, with insufficient attention to selecting the right things to do, given the evidence (Earl & Timperley, 2008). They made a conscious effort to establish partnerships which were developed and co-constructed through building respect and trust (Allen, 2007).

While there is much discussion from experts in the field about competencies in the consultation process, the database is limited. Brown, Pryzwansky and Schulte (2011) point out that many of the skills have not been extensively studied and where there are studies, results have been mixed due to inadequate procedures. Commonly mentioned characteristics of effective consultants include the following: heightened awareness of their own values and beliefs as well as an ability to anticipate how these will influence expectations about and approaches to consultation (Caplan, 1970; Conoley & Conoley,
an ability to analyse problems from a number of perspectives and facilitate problem-solving with a range of consultees (Henning-Stout, 1993; Kurpius & Fuqua, 1993); an ability to establish relationships and working alliances which requires empathy, genuineness and positive regard (Brown et al., 2001; Jordan, 2008; Kurpius & Rozecki, 1993); a willingness to take interpersonal risks; and, motivation to succeed as indicated by their commitment, determination and persistence to enhance effectiveness (Maher, 1993). The thesis findings added to the research base in these areas and demonstrated their interrelatedness.

Interactive communication and problem-solving skills, as well as personal characteristics, values and beliefs, originally rated highly in a survey by West and Cannon (1988), continue to be highlighted in the current consultation literature. However, as Jordan points out (1994, p.99), while substantive knowledge and technical expertise are required, it is the consultant’s delivery of the role and personal self-confidence that will ultimately ensure success or otherwise. Several RTLB in the research demonstrated tactical flexibility, that is, the ability to analyse problems from many perspectives, along with a strong self-concept, is essential to success in consultation (Bushe & Gibbs, 1990; Peacock et al., 2010).

Another facilitating factor was the alignment between the policy, research-based ecological approach and RTLB training programme. The role and use of CPS to foster inclusive practices are explicit in the Toolkit. RTLB were able to implement CPS because the RTLB programme aligned well with what was expected from them in their roles as RTLB. The assignments and block courses at University scaffolded RTLB for the role. Most of the assignments involved using artefacts from their practice. Where Cluster and individual school policies were also accepting of the model of practice, RTLB found it easier to use a CPS approach. However, if one or more schools did not accept the CPS approach, it was more difficult as they tended to expect remedial or withdrawal work. Clusters and/or schools who focussed on a medical deficit approach rather than an inclusive ecological one were less likely to allow time for CPS.
8.1 Contribution to the field

This research has sought to contribute an understanding of the nature of, significance and potential of CPS in schools. Studies 1 and 2 helped to identify factors that appeared relevant to the success of the practice of participating RTLB such as developing trust, sharing power and expertise, engaging teachers in every phase of problem-solving and having the knowledge and competence to implement, monitor and evaluate inclusive practices. This research also enabled tentative predictions to be made about factors that are absent. For example, an RTLB who was unable to engender relational trust is unlikely to be able to implement the model. Leadership and contextual factors such as school expectations of the role and belief in the model also influenced practice. Findings from the study 2 success case studies provided rich descriptions of how collaborative problem solving is implemented and also provides examples to RTLB who are newly appointed or those wanting to improve their practice. In this study, RTLB were able to support teachers and improve their ability to use inclusive practices, scaffolding them within their zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) through the CPS process. The components of the integrated model of consultation (adapted from Erchul & Martens, 2010) were evident: RTLB demonstrated knowledge of and competence in the problem solving process, appropriate social competence and influence related to the inclusive paradigm, as well as a support and development component, with resulting positive outcomes for the students and teachers.

These studies also provide some evidence that there was transfer from the RTLB University programme to the field practice of these particular RTLB. Most transfer evidence across different groups fails to show that people (whether they be teachers, managers, psychologists), are actually able to use what they are taught in the field. Possible reasons for this were that the course aligned well with what is known about adult learning principles. These RTLB were able to use the problem-solving approach because the programme was written specifically to prepare them for the RTLB role. It therefore aligned well with expectation of the role identified in the Ministry of Education Toolkit (2007). Thesis findings demonstrating effective RTLB practice have implications for further professional development and direct relevance for the current Ministry of
Education *Success for All-Every School, Every Child* plan to achieve an education system that is fully inclusive by 2014.

The case vignette involving Tamara in Chapter 7 described how one RTLB changed her practices as a result of completing the university programme but had initially been appointed to a cluster supporting a different model. The programme became a catalyst for change strengthened by RTLB belief in the CPS model, sound relational skills and the appointment of a new principal on the local Management Committee.

The combination of cases (retrospective and current collaborative) with data provided by RTLB, teachers and senior leaders from a range of sources (interviews, transcript analysis of practice meetings, reflective meetings with the researcher and supporting documentation) lead to rich descriptions of collaborative practice in the field. Previous research had not considered this range of data or participants in one study nor had actual practice been captured over time with practising special education consultants in school settings.

Teacher learning is intended as an outcome of RTLB work, especially if the work is to be sustainable beyond the time scale of the intervention. Learning is understood as a change in a teacher’s ways of thinking about a problem and/or their use of new classroom strategies. The CPS approach is, in actuality, a form of peer coaching (Zwart et al., 2009). These authors assert that: “the professional development of teachers can be improved through experimentation, observation, reflection, the exchange of ideas, and problem-solving” (p.165), the processes that are fundamental to the RTLB CPS model. These studies provided evidence of teacher learning.

### 8.2 Limitations

One of the difficulties of capturing collaborative problem-solving in action is the need to be least intrusive. Video recording of interactions was considered but discounted because of its intrusiveness and logistical difficulties. In some situations, the RTLB and teacher meeting would have had to be carried out elsewhere to accommodate a video recorder. Audio-recording provided sufficient information from verbal interactions and could be collected in natural meeting places. However, the researcher relied on the
participants to turn the recorder on from the beginning and that the meetings occur in places where there is no or a low level of background noise.

Study 1’s focus on contrasting cases relied on participant recall of past actions and outcomes. As the cases were retrospective, it is difficult to verify the accuracy of the accounts although supporting documentation was of some assistance. Collecting data from three sources also helped to verify case details. RTLB and teachers’ perceptions and recall of case details and process as well as ratings of relationships, power sharing, inclusive practice and engagement were very similar in all cases. Some of the constraints from retrospective cases in study 1 were overcome by collecting transcript data and documentation on current cases as well as seeking reflections from teachers and RTLB.

Study 2 examined practice in success cases from RTLB who believed in the CPS model. Both RTLB and teachers involved in these cases were willing to have their problem solving conversations around a current case audio-taped and to be interviewed by me on at least two occasions. While this begins to address one gap in the literature by providing detailed information about the CPS experiences this particular group of RTLB and teachers, generalisation of findings is limited by the small sample size. Given these people were volunteers, they may have had more confidence in their ability to use it. In Study 2 there was no comparison with the practices of RTLB who were not successful in implementing the model. RTLB who did not volunteer may not have been using the model for any of a number of reasons: they did not believe in the model; they believed in it but lacked some attributes (such as relationship building) to be able to do it; or they believed in it but were not allowed to use it in their context. They were timetabled to take remedial groups in a withdrawal setting, for example. Some of the RTLB in the research group changed jobs as a result of being in this type of situation.

8.3 Implications for professional development providers, policy and future research

The studies were designed to increase understanding of the interrelationship between the learning and practices, introduced and demonstrated on the RTLB professional development programme, and the RTLB practice in the field once they had graduated, (i.e. to what extent was there evidence of transfer / commitment to and implementation of the
CPS model to support inclusive practices?) The research also aimed to contribute to the improvement of practices in the preparing professionals through university programmes such as the RTLB programme. Loughran, Mitchell and Mitchell (2002) identify the need for research that is both responsive to, and developed in, the practice setting.

Professional development providers need to be aware of the factors that can facilitate or impede application of CPS in the field. RTLB need to be very knowledgeable and skilled to be able to use CPS effectively. The professional development team and ERO confirmed that while some RTLB were competent in their new role, many were not applying the model as intended. Selection was an issue as Clusters appointed RTLB who were then required to complete the programme. However, the research demonstrated the usefulness of, and insights gained, by reflecting on a series of taped meetings in the CPS process. Analysis and discussion complemented by views from all participants enabled RTLB to check the match between their espoused views and actual practices as well as the match with expected inclusive practices. The professional development programme team could incorporate this approach into their programme and assessment. Including a set showing analysis of practice over one case would be helpful in developing competence in the process and enabling feedback from supervisors prior to graduation. Similarly, comparing taped entry meetings at the beginning of the course, part way through and in the second year would be one way of RTLB demonstrating development and getting support where there were difficulties. The CPS process is complex but pertinent to the work of consultant special educators such as RTLB. This research provided an insight into how some of the complexities could be captured in the least intrusive way. Incorporating findings and methodology from the research would further strengthen the course which already had a strong emphasis on authentic assessment tasks and theory-practice links.

RTLB practice requires knowledge building and sharing but these are not always supported by the structures of the wider educational community. This was evident in Blair’s study and the findings of two ERO (2004, 2009) evaluations.

It would be beneficial to explore further the professional learning dimension of the practice by following RTLB and teachers after a case has been completed to see the extent to which learning is transferred to another case or classroom practice. Several teachers mentioned that they found previous RTLB assistance with strategies useful for the
following year. Complementing the research with class observations and interviews with students where appropriate would extend the research in this area. The findings also have implications for future professional development of RTLB content and assignments as well as appraisals.

Further research would be beneficial in the following areas: examining current RTLB practices with a larger sample; examining practice of the same RTLB with several cases over a longer period of time; and more in-depth examination of particular phases of the CPS process such as Entry meeting or Feedback meeting dialogues and documentation. Further research is needed on RTLB CPS practice in school-wide interventions. Referrals in the research sample were for individuals or syndicates.

While some senior leaders, RTLB and teachers provided some detail about the context in which the collaboration took part, the impact of contextual factors warrant further investigation and is timely given the transformation of the RTLB service involving a different training provider and new cluster management arrangement. More in-depth examination of cluster and school policies and the impact of these on RTLB practice are needed.

The findings relate to participating RTLB and teachers prior to the transformation of the RTLB service which began in 2011. More research is needed to see how RTLB are practising given the recent changes to the initial professional development and cluster management arrangements following recommendations from The Review of Special Education (2010).

Given the inquiry cycle approach embedded in the CPS process and principles in common with professional learning communities, more consistent use of the model is desirable. The research is timely given the current policy of Success for All-Every School, Every Child which aims to achieve an education system that is fully inclusive of learners with special education needs by 2014. As part of this government plan there is an expectation that inclusion and raising achievement of learners with special education needs be embedded into every school’s annual planning and reporting cycle. RTLB like those in the research, are well positioned to continue to support schools in this endeavour.
References


and change. The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations, 7(2), 57-66.


players and payers. Symposium conducted at the Australian Teacher Education Association Twenty-eighth Annual Conference, Melbourne, Australia.


about disability and ability, and about their roles as teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(2), 259–266.


Leech, N. L., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2008). Qualitative data analysis: A compendium of techniques and a framework for selection for school psychology research and


McIntosh, K., Reinke, W.M., & Herman, K.C. (2010). School-wide analysis of data for social behaviour problems: Assessing outcomes, selecting targets for intervention,


New Zealand Education Gazette (May 2, 1988).


UNESCO (1994). Final report. World conference on special needs education, access and quality, Salamanca, Spain, UNESCO.


Appendices
Appendix A:
Special Education
New Zealand

Paradigm One
Functional Limitations
Deficit

Assumptions
- deficit lies with student
- student needs specialist programmes
- needs can be best met in withdrawal situations

Model
Diagnostic prescriptive

Practices
- expert consultation
- psychometric assessment
- identification, categorising, labelling
- special programmes
- withdrawal
- major responsibility with specialist teacher

Paradigm Two
Inclusion

Assumptions
- problem is to be found in the interaction between student & environment
- the classroom environment needs to adapt to meet student needs
- student needs can be best met in mainstream with support

Model
Ecological

Practices
- collaborative consultation
- ecological assessment
- problem identification & analysis
- inclusive classroom practices
- effective instruction in the mainstream
- major responsibility with class teacher
Appendix Bi: Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

RTLB Participant Information sheet

Title: RTLB (Resource Teacher of Learning and Behaviour) effective practice project: an exploration of consultation strategies

My name is Joanne Walker. I am currently RTLB Director based at the Research Centre for Interventions in Teaching and Learning at the University of Auckland. As part of my PhD, I am conducting research for the purpose of obtaining a better understanding of the work in practice of Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour within schools.

You are invited to participate in this project. I would appreciate any assistance you can offer. However, clearly your consent and participation is completely voluntary. This would involve being willing to track and share details from one referral with me and fulfill the tasks listed on the accompanying sheet. Your name, and that of anyone else involved will be changed, as will that of the school so that anonymity will be preserved.

If you agree to participate and subsequently change your mind, you are free to withdraw at any time up to three weeks after the data has been collected and to have all data identifiable as originating from you returned without needing to provide any explanation.

If you are prepared to participate please let me know by filling in a Consent Form and returning it to me. All information you provide is confidential to my supervisors, Associate Professor Dennis Moore and Professor Ted Glynn and me. Thank you very much for your time and help in making this study possible. If you have any queries or wish to know more please phone or write to us at:

Joanne Walker  
RTLB Program Director  
Research Centre for Interventions in Teaching and Learning.  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland. Tel 3737599 x 84759  
jo.walker@auckland.ac.nz

The Head of Department is:

Professor Viviane Robinson  
School of Education  
The University of Auckland  
Private Bag 92019  
Auckland. Tel. 3737-7999 extn 87379

For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact:

The Chair,  
The University of Auckland Human Subjects Ethics Committee,  
The University of Auckland, Research Office - Office of the Vice Chancellor, Private Bag 92019,  
Auckland. Tel. 373-7999 extn 87830

APPROVED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE, Reference 2000/053
CONSENT FORM

THIS CONSENT FORM WILL BE HELD FOR A PERIOD OF SIX YEARS

Title Resource Teachers Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) practice:
an exploration of consultation strategies

Researcher: Joanne Walker

I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered.

I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information traceable to me at any time up to three weeks after it has been collected without giving a reason.

I agree to take part in this research.

Signed:

Name:

(please print clearly)

Date:
Initial Context

RTLB

Teacher(s)

Principal

School

Phone

Referral issues

Type of referral: individual, group, class, teacher syndicate/department

School characteristics (size, ethos...)

RTLB knowledge of school/previous experience in school
Appendix Bii: Entry Meeting Checklist

1. RTLB TRAINING PROGRAMME
   COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATION
   REVIEW OF THE ENTRY MEETING

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What were your impressions / feelings about the meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>How would you rate the balance of participation in the meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>How well did you establish rapport? Were there any barriers to this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>How well did you establish the teacher’s concerns?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What were they?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you tentatively identify the problem? If so, what was it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Did you get a clear indication of the teacher’s expectations of your role of his / her role of the consulting process? If yes, state briefly what they were:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Did you communicate your expectations of the consultation to the teacher? YES / NO What points did you make?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>How did you handle the issue of confidentiality?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Did you note any signs of resistance or vulnerability? YES / NO If yes, what How did you deal with it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>What did you do to make the teacher feel supported?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>What information did you collect?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>What information do you still need to gather?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Have you made an initial tentative hypothesis? If so, what is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Did you share your hypothesis with the teacher?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If not, why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you did, did the teacher agree with this hypothesis? YES / NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Have you ended up with a clear agreement of what will happen next?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>What is your agreed to plan for the next step?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Is it clear from the plan who will do what by when?  YES / NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Did you offer any solutions to the problem?  YES / NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>What would you do differently next time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Which skills do you want to work on most?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Biii: Feedback Meeting Checklist

RTLB TRAINING PROGRAMME

FEEDBACK MEETING

CHECKLIST

1. Did the RTLB restate what was agreed to and go over the data gathering plan?

2. Did s/he get agreement about the structure of the meeting?

3. Was the data clear, in the sphere of influence, and important for the student(s)?

4. Was there ample opportunity for the teacher to express his/her reactions?

5. Were they listened to?

6. Was there equal participation?

7. Did the RTLB Collude
               Project
               Affirm
               Level If so elaborate.

8. Was there a clear decision on how to proceed?

9. Did the RTLB behave assertively?

10. Any other comments.
Appendix C: Instructional Environment diagrams adapted from Ysseldyke & Christenson (1993)
Appendix D: Study 2 Overview of Process and Procedures
Overview of Process

Preparation

1. Researcher contacts RTLB who meet criteria for inclusion in the project
2. Researcher-RTLB meeting to introduce project, ethics procedures, answer questions
3. RTLB confirm involvement: consent forms submitted
4. Researcher provides equipment, forms, envelopes
5. RTLB select referral
6. RTLB contact teachers and seek consent to participate in the project
7. Teachers confirm involvement: consent forms submitted

RTLB-teacher interviews (1 & 2)

8. RTLB-teacher meeting 1: entry (audio-taped)
9. RTLB sends tape to researcher
10. Researcher organises transcription
11. RTLB-teacher meeting 2: follow-up feedback (audio-taped)
12. RTLB sends tape to researcher
13. Researcher organises transcription
14. Researcher sends individual copies of transcripts of meetings 1 and 2 to:
   a. RTLB and b. teacher

Researcher-RTLB & researcher-teacher interviews I

15. Researcher organises individual interviews with: a. RTLB and b. teacher
16. a. Researcher-RTLB interview I (audio-taped) including rating scales & reasons
16. b. Researcher-teacher interview I (audio-taped) including rating scales & reasons
17. Researcher organises transcription

RTLB-teacher interview 3

18. RTLB-teacher meeting 3: evaluation (audio-taped)
19. RTLB sends tape to researcher
20. Researcher organises transcription
21. Researcher sends individual copies of transcripts of meeting 3 to:
   a. RTLB and b. teacher

Researcher-RTLB & researcher-teacher interviews II
22. Researcher organises individual interviews with: a. RTLB and b. teacher
23. a. Researcher-RTLB interview II (audio-taped) including rating scales & reasons
23. b. Researcher-teacher interview II (audio-taped) including rating scales & reasons

24. Researcher organises transcription

**Documentation**

Additional RTLB and teacher documentation shared with researcher during interviews

Researcher field notes from interviews

RTLB and teacher ratings and reasons/examples from researcher interviews
Procedure

Researcher responsibilities

The researcher asked RTLB to select one new referral involving a teacher with whom they had *not* worked with in the past two terms. The referral could be for: an individual student; group of students; class; teacher; or syndicate/department.

The researcher undertook to carry out the following tasks:

- provide tape recorders, tapes, batteries, diary sheets, and teacher consent forms;
- transcribe tapes;
- check with RTLB and teachers (individually) that the transcribed record was accurate;
- engage in a collaborative discussion with RTLB and teachers, using a semi-structured interview format and rating scales (audio-taped);
- provide self-addressed envelopes (postage paid) for return of written data (RTLB documentation) and audio-tapes;
- make fortnightly phone contact with RTLB until closure of referral;
- ensure confidentiality;
- summarise findings;
- provide a summary report of findings for all participants; and,
- answer any questions teachers and/or RTLB had prior to and/or during the project.

The researcher also recommended the following procedures for the RTLB to follow when interviewing teachers in order to increase the likelihood of audible recording and complete transcripts: that RTLB request a ‘quiet’ space rather than the staffroom or playground; include ‘chat’ or conversation starters on the tape; and, check that tape is recording clearly in the actual interview space.
**RTLB responsibilities**

RTLB undertook to:

- keep data on the selected referral throughout the problem-solving process from first contact with the school until evaluation of the intervention outcomes and/or closure, and to share this with the researcher;
- obtain consent from the teacher to participate in the study;
- send contact details and consent form to the researcher to confirm involvement;
- audiotape three successive meetings between themselves and the teacher(s): entry; feedback and data analysis; and, evaluation;
- send each cassette to the researcher within a day of each meeting (bubble envelope provided); and,
- meet with the researcher on two occasions to discuss a. transcript content and b. outcomes and satisfaction or otherwise with these.

**Teacher responsibilities**

In parallel with RTLB procedures, teachers involved in the selected referral who gave consent, agreed to participate in collaborative discussions with the RTLB and the researcher at appropriate times. This included being audio-taped during meetings and sharing additional referral-related documentation.
Appendix E: Ei: RTLB Entry Meeting Notes

RTLB ENTRY MEETING

DATE: 15/06/

TIME: 3-40 pm.

PRESENT: 1 [RTLB], 1 [Teacher]

STUDENT/S: Bill

MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN

Concern initially raised by Nana mum. Biggest concern is putting himself down. * If it looks like failure he will put himself down quickly. Self-esteem, Bill says things like: “I’m dumb”, “I’m stupid”. Also highlighted in writing eg. “I shouldn’t go because I am naughty and I’m real bad”.
* Seems to be a risk taker, somersaults half done, sitting on barb wire fence.
* Challenges teacher outside and inside-going against what others are asked to do.
* Hides or does something ‘stupid’ to be sent outside if out of his comfort zone.
* Nana has picked up challenging behaviour, loud voices, calling out etc on class visits. She wonders if he is easily led?
* At home he goes into a ‘blind rage’ once a week. Loud voice?? Challenging or drawing attention to himself?
* Tactlessness- says something inappropriate when not necessary not a lot recently.
* Acts surprised when pulled up for doing something wrong. Often makes mention when he is bored.
* Work standard has deteriorated recently- sloppy, careless, not much effort.

PRIORITY AREAS OF CONCERN

* Putting himself down / self image
* Risky behaviour
* Challenging teacher
* Classroom behaviour

STATED MISMATCH BETWEEN DESIRED AND ACTUAL SITUATION

There is a mismatch between normal classroom/ outside behaviours of students and what Bill is displaying including self image indicators.
INFORMATION COLLECTED TO DATE

Anecdotal teachers records, survey type records of group behaviour, general observations of whole class for other referral[RTLB].

INTERVENTIONS TO DATE

Teacher / pupil discussions. Lunch time detentions.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DATA COLLECTION

Is his loud voice attention seeking or something else?
How often do these behaviours occur? When and why? Why is his work deteriorating? Any patterns?
Is Bill a follower or a leader?
Why does he sulk, go into a downward spiral?
Why does he say/write he is bored?
Why does he use the pitch of his voice the way he does?

WORKING CONTRACT / ASSESSMENT PLAN [AGREED]
ROLES AND PARAMETERS

RTLB
* Start general observation process this Thursday and next week. During PWP.
* Go over observational data from group referral
* Keep Nana informed of the process.

TEACHER

* Carry on making anecdotal notes and antecedent/ consequence info
* Question Bill when he makes negative statements about himself eg. Why did you say that? What do you mean by that?
* Check up on his work

AGREED TIME FRAME

Get together in last week of term before holidays.

CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES

Information and observations shared between teacher and RTLB and Nana.
### Sample Teacher’s Recording Sheet (frequency of behaviour)

#### Interrupt, tactless, verbally abusive, physically abusive, easily upset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Interrupt</th>
<th>Tactless</th>
<th>Verbally Abusive</th>
<th>Physically Abusive</th>
<th>Easily Upset</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Interrupt</th>
<th>Tactless</th>
<th>Verbally Abusive</th>
<th>Physically Abusive</th>
<th>Easily Upset</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05/01/2023</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: * Says “What? I'm just...”
Eiii: Feedback Meeting Data: Observations

**Observation Summary Sheet**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:55 am</td>
<td>Bill calling out/answers back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:56 am</td>
<td>Hit W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:59 am</td>
<td>Answers back T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:04 am</td>
<td>Class on mat, Bill standing up then sitting on chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:06 am</td>
<td>T/ade tells him to get off chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:14 - 9:20 am</td>
<td>Working quietly on clouds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:21 am</td>
<td>Comments “ My clouds look like shit!!!!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:22 am</td>
<td>Over to bench to clear brushes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:35 am</td>
<td>Starts to talk to G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:39 am</td>
<td>Playing with R____’s jersey “I’ll chuck it in the bin!!!”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TIRED SAMPLING CONTINUED.

9.40 am. – Hiding from teacher after bringing art to the front.
9.44 am. Yells to T. I'm going in the back room to work with G____. T says no, Bill answers back.

9.45 am. Goes to D____'s table with G____. Putdowns and Bullying occur.
9.47 am. – Helps himself with G____ to D____'s pencils and pens on organiser.
9.53 am. – Working quietly with G____.
9.56 am. – Finishes act., gets another paper and uses D____'s pens again.
9.59 am. – Told to clean up. Boys wrestle with paper.
10.04 am. – Moves to mat with D____ and R_______. He and G____ hassle D____, poking tongues and kicking.
10.07 am. – Playing on floor rolling around.
10.09 am. – New act T stands over.... Detention given plus warning
10.11 am. – T goes, boys laugh and play on mat again. T comes over and takes Bill out of room.

GENERAL

1/ What is the purpose of calling out for the people who do it?
   a/ To get attention?
   b/ Habit?
   c/ A way of gaining power?
   d/ Because they can get away with it?
   e/ Lack of some social skills? Eg. Quiet voices??

2/ What did the Teacher feel about the beginning of the lesson? It seemed the setting up and introduction were a bit stressful??

3/ How would setting behaviour protocols at the beginning of the session help? Eg. “you will be using quiet voices, hands up for help, encouragement etc.

4/ How would time warnings for the whole class help? Eg. “You have 5 mins for this part.”

5/ Was so much time needed for this activity?? This caused a few problems later on with Bill and G____.

6/ How would asking for what you want help instead of saying what is being done wrong?

7/ Would the virtues language help here with people like T______, S______ and G_______???

8/ When G____ and Bill were rolling around on the mat would clear warnings and consequences help???
THREE CORNERED CONNECTION
YSSELDYKE & CHRISTENSON [1998]

WHAT DOES THE DATA TELL US?

PRE-INTERVENTION

Student Characteristics and Perceptions

- Puts himself down if senses failure eg. "I am a loser" "I don't deserve to go".
- Is a risk taker. Seems not to worry about danger or self harm.
- Possible self esteem issues.
- Challenges teacher. Calls out, uses loud voice in class.
- Grabs other pupil's things.
- Tactless - can say inappropriate things.
- Can sulk for a long time.
- Lacks self responsibility.
- Can appear depressed.
- Blind rage reported at home once a week.
- Bill says he is good at lots of sports. He says he makes a good friend and likes playing with them.
- The things Bill says he is not so good at are. Listening, fishing and some computer games. He loves playing with his real mum and dad.

Curriculum and Task Characteristics

- Appropriate tasks given at his level.
- Sometimes too much time may be given for some tasks.
- Work is interesting and varied.
- Groupings for core subjects.
- Work expectations sometimes given.
- Lesson introductions and instigation time hardest for teacher.

Teaching and Management Strategies

- More negative responses to behaviours than positive.
- Keeping Bill on task is frustrating to teacher.
- Some behaviour goes unnoticed by teacher.
- Behaviour expectations and consequences not communicated fully.
- Mostly teacher directed format and structure.
HYPOTHESIS:
If many of the antecedents to observed behaviours were modified and more structure and consistency were applied to management techniques along with a move to foster resilience through the resilience wheel then existing behaviour patterns would change.

GOALS:
# To develop the management style of the teacher and recognise antecedent indicators which can be changed and utilised as interventions.
# To teach life and social skills to student and provide practice for use.
# To assist student to build resilience through implementation of the resilience wheel.

MANIPULATING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT TO INCREASE LEARNING OUTCOMES:
# More structure in learning with clear guidelines and consequences.
# Modify/ change antecedents to displayed behaviours.
# Provide skills training and opportunities to practice them.

INTERVENTION PLAN
1/ Teacher practice changing antecedents as detailed on antecedent intervention sheet.
2/ Ongoing development with RTLB of classroom management to provide structure, clear directions, guidelines and consequences.
3/ Teacher to learn interaction techniques which positively reinforce students behaviour.
4/ RTLB to assist teacher with all of the above and take student for social skills three times per week for three weeks with ongoing reflection by student.
5/ Student to fill out daily reflection sheet for three weeks and set behaviour goals.

EVALUATION / MONITORING – 3 weeks and 5 weeks
Ongoing with RTLB observations, self-monitoring and teacher observations
Adapted from sheet created by Ann McLaughlin RTLB Crowshaw School
2.2. Profile of a Student With Characteristics of Resiliency

Reprinted by permission of the publisher. Copyright © 2007 by Harcourt, Inc. All rights reserved.

Edenb: Feedback Meeting: Resilience Wheel with Annotations
Ev: Feedback Meeting: Summary of Antecedents and Target Areas

**ANTECEDENTS**

What are the antecedents of some of the behaviours and what can we replace them with? [taken from data already collected.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1/ PUTTING SELF DOWN</th>
<th>SKILLS/SELF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>when?</em> Usually to an audience—more than one person as a reaction to comments or positive discussions.</td>
<td>Resilience wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE? Teacher creates more cooperative atmosphere. Extra vigilance to not set up for possible negative talk.</td>
<td>Self talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also happens? In writing to be read by teacher. Or read aloud to others.</td>
<td>Being positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE? Teacher introduce requirements and what is not appropriate.</td>
<td>Cooperative skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2/ IS A RISK TAKER</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When? Usually in front of teacher and others. Quickly does what he is told NOT to do.</td>
<td>Listening to praise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE? Teacher gives specific instructions To Bill... pausing “Look at me” Or have Bill stay close at all times.</td>
<td>How to write positive comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3/ CHALLENGES TEACHER</strong></td>
<td>Being safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When? Usually argues back when teacher observes behaviour or asks him to do something he doesn't want to do.</td>
<td>Obedience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE? Respectful but firm dialogue from Teacher including virtues lang. Not getting caught up in argument. Give instruction—walk away. Use “thank you” instead of please Give sense of expectation.</td>
<td>Respectfulness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

249
4/ CALLING OUT / LOUD VOICE

When? Usually to other students while working in fairly unstructured setting or answering a question.

Thoughtfulness
Obedience
Keep on task - if finished do an activity.

CHANGE? Teacher more consistent with setting protocols and expectations. Eg. "we will be putting hands up for help and using quiet voices".
More structure to lessons:
Less time on each part.
Teacher praise Bill when he doesn't call out. Set time frames eg. "I will be checking this part in 5 minutes" Also teacher have worksheets for those who finish.

Also happens? Usually when challenged by teacher.

CHANGE? Teacher gives instructions, says "thank you" and walks away.
Teacher uses virtues language as above.
Teacher interacts positively with Bill.

Role of teacher different to student.

5/ GRABBING OTHER PEOPLE'S THINGS

When? Usually with a friend/ bullying or ganging up on them.

Respect
Tolerance
Honesty

CHANGE? Teacher vigilance.
Lesson structure/ grouping eliminate possibilities as much as possible.

6/ TACTLESS CAN SAY INAPPROPRIATE THINGS

When? Usually in front of others group or mat.

Being friendly
Tolerance
Maturity

CHANGE? Teacher sets protocols/ pre-warns asks in advance: "is this going to be sensible?!" OR "Make sure it is sensible - thank you".
Evi: Sample Student Self-Reflection Sheet

DAILY SELF REFLECTION SHEET

FOR _______________________________ DATE _____________

WHAT SORT OF DAY DID I HAVE?? [circle words]
FUN BORING BUSY HAPPY SAD MAD

WHAT WAS THE BEST THING ABOUT TODAY?

________________________________________

________________________________________

HOW DID MY WORK GO TODAY?? [PUT A X ON THE LINE]
GOOD ______________ OK ______________ BAD __________

WHAT WAS HARD?

________________________________________

WHAT WAS EASY?

________________________________________

WHAT DID THE TEACHER PRAISE ME FOR TODAY??

________________________________________

HOW HAS MY TALK BEEN TODAY?

________________________________________

POSITIVE? EXAMPLE

________________________________________

NEGATIVE? EXAMPLE

________________________________________

HOW DID I SHOW RESPECT TODAY

________________________________________

HOW DID I SHOW FRIENDLINESS TODAY?

________________________________________

WHAT THINGS CAN I IMPROVE ON AND DO BETTER TOMORROW?

________________________________________

I believe I have filled this in honestly and agree to discuss it at my sessions with my support person.

Signed

________________________________________
## Evii: Monitoring & Evaluation: Summary of Pre-and Post-intervention Data

### Comparisons of pre and post data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area assessed</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Ecological factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Putting self down and others.</td>
<td>High frequency of self 'put downs' eg. &quot;I am a loser&quot; and others.</td>
<td>Much lower frequency, almost nil. Can be heard self checking. Teacher, Guide and Parent Interviews</td>
<td>Pre- Lack of skills and opportunities to practice them in a cooperative atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is a risk taker</td>
<td>Dangerous crossing road, sport antics, not listening to adults.</td>
<td>Almost nil occurrence at school and home.</td>
<td>Pre- No antecedents in place to encourage safety and lack of skills to be aware of dangers and self-reflect. Post- Antecedent interventions in place for specific behaviours and skills taught to reflect, self talk etc and practice responsibility. Time spent with support teacher to encourage and practice safe practice in an enjoyable setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging teacher</td>
<td>Answers back when pulled up or asked to do something.</td>
<td>Very low frequency, still uses loud voice sometimes. RTL observed big improvements.</td>
<td>Pre- Lack of consistency with teacher behaviour expectations, structure and consequences. Lack of awareness and skills to foster teacher / student relationship. Post- Antecedent interventions used for expected behaviour and consequences clarified and implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking responsibility</td>
<td>Concern by adults over taking ownership and initiative</td>
<td>Adults noticing more responsibility and responding by giving more.</td>
<td>Pre- Lack of skills and awareness of actions. Post- Increased reflection and skills to support development of responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher interaction and feedback</td>
<td>Ratio of negative responses to positive responses fairly high. eg. 13 -ve to 5 +ve.</td>
<td>Much decreased ratio of negative to positive responses sometimes nil.</td>
<td>Pre-Teacher was less aware of negative responses to children’s behaviours. Post-Through sharing observations and discussion there was more awareness of the value of positive responses: i.e. Looking for what you want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to hear and accept positive comments, Sulking, depressed.</td>
<td>Inappropriate responses to praise. Frequent sulking and occasional deep depression.</td>
<td>Hears positive comments, self reflects more. No observations of recent sulking or depression.</td>
<td>Pre-Student seemed unaware of positive comments being made by adults and gave frequent negative feedback. Post-Student taught to self reflect and record positive comments made and learn to accept them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General class behaviour Calling out, Taking things, Inappropriate comments.</td>
<td>High frequency of behaviours. Joining in with group doing same.</td>
<td>Very low frequency, evidence of self checking. Does not antagonise others.</td>
<td>Pre- Behaviours occurring during less structured activities and when clear expectations and consequences not expressed by teacher. Some lack of social skills necessary to self check these behaviours. Post-More structure and order on place in class with increased teacher management skills. Social skills taught and opportunities given to practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Vignette 2 Supporting Documents
Summary of Initial Oral Language Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 3 Notes</th>
<th>Pre Assessment</th>
<th>Week I</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interrupting</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form a question</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit still</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear voice</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize thoughts</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer questions</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes / ideas on where to next:
- Circle: during circle speak: inside a tall class partner's news
- 0: asked: Calm and very quiet pause often sit for always good listener
- C: Calm: Calm debate voice
- T: Tense to interrupt
- C: Calm: Calm debate conditions, very calmer: very quiet, very gender
- Read info on Oral Test (S.E.A.)

Year One Speaking and Listening Skills

Summary of pre intervention data. Context: sharing personal news

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Skills</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interrupting</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form a question</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit still</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Speaking Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear voice</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize thoughts</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer questions</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students demonstrating expected skills always:
- Range 42% - 69%

Students demonstrating expected skills sometimes:
- Range 9% - 33%

Students demonstrating expected skills never:
- Range 6% - 45%

Conclusions

Weakest skills:
- Forming a question 42%
- Organizing thoughts 48%

Strongest skills:
- Clear voice 69%
- Answering question 69%

Just over half the students sit still, 63% and maintain eye contact, 63% - 66%
Non European students rating the most frequently in "sometimes" and "never"
### TIES Observation Form One

**Room 1:**

**Instructional Match:**
- One child addresses class on the mat (Tend to look at the Teacher) or on quiet and expected play.

**Teacher Expectation:**
- List one child speaking at a time.
- Remainder are passive.
- Some attempt to dominate, moderated by Teacher.

**Teaching Presentation:**
- Friendly, encouraging approach.
- Rounds on mat or in the room.
- So participation not high; noted.

**Classroom Environment:**
- Team models questioning.
- Most learning observed to be children on mat / Teacher directed.

**Cognitive Emphasis:**
- Focus on asking a question.
- Tend to cut short been caused that searching for further information.

**Motivational Strategies:**
- Motivating activity around Olympic Games: making flags, torches, and Olympic rings.

---

**Room 2:**

**Teacher Encouraged Oral Language:**
- One child speaking at the same time.
- Remainder are passive.
- Some attempt to dominate, moderated by Teacher.

**Teaching Environment:**
- Round of notes on the mat.
- So participation not high; noted.

**Classroom Environment:**
- Teacher creative and enthusiastic, which is reflected in the environment.
- Class quiet, no much response - even to questions.

## Scratchpad

- New round in table groups: while the express participation not on the table.
- No eye contact. Some interrupt one another / dominate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELEVANT PRACTICE</th>
<th>Little oral presence in the curriculum other than one child speaking on the mat.</th>
<th>Little presence of oral skills in the curriculum. Teachers dominated from the roof</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High level of cooperation - get still and quiet while one speaks. Teachers modeled, repeated sentence if grammar incorrect, modified questioning. Positive and encouraging, but a lot of time on the mat!</td>
<td>Emphasis on vocabulary noted during P.M.P. was being lost. Over above under below vibrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACADEMIC TIMED TIME</td>
<td>Informed feedback. Performance comments (positive/negative encouragement, encouraging progress as well as specific suggestions for improvement). Feedback given in a way that is present &amp; constructive, correct errors, feedback for improvement.</td>
<td>One on one feedback of written work noted - cues, prompts, explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFORMED FEEDBACK</td>
<td>Adaptive teaching. Diagnosis errors, provides alternative &amp; verbal mediation of errors. Mediates verbal feedback and encourages verbal feedback.</td>
<td>Teacher says she has not used her buzz groups for some time. These children need practice yet addressing. The class 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAPTIVE TEACHING</td>
<td>Progress evaluation. Assess progress by observing active participation &amp; student attentiveness. Collect data on student performance. Note: any student who merits individual attention is noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRESS EVALUATION</td>
<td>Experience teaching. Noticeable comfort and familiarity. Proficiency in speaking and listening.</td>
<td>They are speaking clearly and feeling no audience. This will be the first time gathering around oral language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT UNDERSTANDING</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lene has taken ownership of our skill street for data gathering. Says R.T.B.I. movement has resulted in better practice in gathering oral language at the raices - in context.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Collation of Data Gathered by Teacher and RTLB

### Student Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening Skills</td>
<td>Focal</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Mostly</td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interrupting</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form a question</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit still</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Speaking Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear voice</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise thoughts</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer questions</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Curriculum Tasks

- In each task, students were asked to complete sentences.

### Teaching management/instruction

- No specific teaching programme or curriculum in place.
- Opportunities for practice, instructional arrangement, monitoring and feedback.
- Least skilled gaining least practice, least confident gain the least success. (3-5 students) in groups.

### What does the data tell us? Problem definition

- Less confident and less skilled have least opportunity to speak (practice).
- Monitoring/teaching of oral language in place.

### Goal Setting: Specific measurable achievable

**Objective:** To develop new themes, a programme that enables all students to develop oral language skills.

**Goal:** All students to participate, use social comments, learn and answer questions and form a question.

---

Planning Meeting Notes – Oral Language

Teachers and RTLBI meeting two share data gathered and develop an action plan with the objective of facilitating participation, practice and improved learning for all students.

It was agreed:
- Teacher and RTLBI to plan cooperative learning lessons together.
- RTLBI to model the donut in weeks one and two.
- The classroom teacher to spend 10 to 15 minutes at least three times during the week practising the structure and skills in different contexts, literacy, maths and health.
- Following two week trial period using the donut, Teacher and ensuring four weeks.
- RTLBI to assist teachers in integrating cooperative learning structures across the curriculum.
- Teachers and RTLBI to modify evaluation formats provided by RTLBI for students' reflection.

Goals: Following the programme the students to be able to:
- Interact cooperatively with other students in the class.
- Speak politely (greet, smile).
- Listen actively.
- Take turns at speaking and listening.
- Paraphrase what they have been told.
- Ask a question to gain information.
- Reflect/evaluate performance.
- Heightened Teacher awareness around equity issues.
- Use of cooperative learning structures to facilitate equitable outcomes for students.

Student achievement is to be monitored by individual observation of students during the course of the programme. Group processing and individual self-monitoring sheets is to be used to provide progress data and nurture independence and individual accountability.

Planning Meeting Two : Weeks 3 – 6

Feedback
C reports K the most reluctant is now speaking in a partner situation!

Other ways to partner children: RTLBI will model Fold over line and Jig saw.
J has a bag of animals, an adult and baby of the same species she will use these to partner off – give out and children find matching species.
C suggests using maths toys in colours and sizes to use for partnering off.
C is finding the donut difficult for monitoring J suggest make the circle bigger. RTLBI suggests when monitoring children take their partner anywhere in the room and teacher can move.
C suggests in planning for the remainder of the intervention she would like a change from the donut.

Suggestions for structures to practise target skills:
C presents her buzz group structure that she has not used for some time – a kit for each group with tasks and visual scaffolds. Comprises a leader, reporter to the class. Decision to build up to this.

Meanwhile other ideas were shared re-promoting practice in a safe environment – speaking with peers in 2's and 3's.

Decisions:
Week 3:
Spoken and listening in pairs. Greetings and asking, Are you my partner?
Finding partner in different ways, 2 piece jigsaws, adult and baby animals, matching maths toys by colour/size.

Week 4:
Working in threes, Round Robin
Feely Bag – Forming a question using Feely Bag. Where, Why, What?

Week 5:
Combine, practice skills. Buzz groups: assign roles as appropriate, leader, munger, reporter.

Week 6:
Revisit skills and strategies.

Week 7:
Complete data collection.
**Fv: Plan**

| Curriculum Area: | English: Communication skills  
Context: Sharing News |
|------------------|--------------------------|

**Learning Goal (Academic)** Interpersonal Speaking and listening  
Students to be able to:  
Talk about a personal experience  
Listen and respond to a partner  
Ask a question

**Learning Goal (Social)** Display conventions of courtesy and cooperation by:  
Greet partner, Sit facing partner, eye to eye, knee to knee, respond appropriately

**Structure** – Circle, Doughnut

**Lesson Sequence**
- Students sit in a class circle. Use glove puppets to demonstrate “good” and “bad” speaking/listening manners. Students identify  
- Revisit: How do we speak to others? How do we listen actively? What do we do? List criteria with students, develop T chart using symbols for non readers  
- Introduce goal - to listen and ask a question  
- Teacher selects pairs to ensure success, confident to support less confident  
- Sit with partner in donut, share weekend news, outer then inner circle  
- Form a question as modelled by the puppets, Where, When, Who?  
- Change partners by outer circle (confident cha) moving one partner to the right  
- Exchange news with a new partner– practise asking/answering a question  
- Revert to one class circle. Revisit goals and criteria. Evaluate what was achieved  
- Return to desks and complete evaluation sheet with partner

**Grouping**  
Pairs selected by teacher to ensure each student is successful

**Positive Interdependence**  
Students work in pairs, listening, responding and asking questions

**Small Group/Interpersonal Skills**  
Speaking clearly, quietly and courteously, greet partner, say name, listen, question.

**Face to Face Interactions**  
Sitting with partners, eye to eye, knee to knee, listening actively

**Individual Accountability**  
Each student to share information be able to form a question using Where, Why, or Who?

**Group & Individual Reflection**  
Discuss how well we worked together. Did we meet our goals? (Revisit these)  
How do we know? What did we do well? Next time we will ……. ?

**Teacher Evaluation/Reflection:** Discuss with class teacher.  
Was the purpose of the session achieved – the social goal, the academic goal? How do we know? What went well? What would we do differently another time? What is the next step for these children?
Fvi: Comparison of Pre-and Post-intervention Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term 3</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Notes on Student performance during Week 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>261</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY</td>
<td>Always: ✓</td>
<td>1. always</td>
<td>Sometimes: ✓</td>
<td>2. sometimes</td>
<td>Never: x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>← Pre Assessment →</td>
<td>→ Week 1 →</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Notes / ideas on where to next:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>No interrupting</td>
<td>Form questions</td>
<td>Sit still</td>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>Clear voice</td>
<td>Organise thoughts</td>
<td>Answer questions</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Very confident. Tends to dominate conversations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>At times hesitates to listen to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxed and good communicator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Always soft spoken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Always soft spoken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Calm and very relaxed. Adapts person well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Always soft spoken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tends to interrupt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dominates conversations. Very confident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Very quiet, soft spoken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>Scored 45/42 on Oral Test (S.E.A.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Year One Speaking and Listening Skills

Summary of pre intervention data. Context: sharing personal news

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Skills</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interrupting</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form a question</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit still</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking Skills</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear voice</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise thoughts</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer questions</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students demonstrating expected skills always: Range 42% - 69%

Students demonstrating expected skills sometimes: Range 9% - 30%

Students demonstrating expected skills never: Range 6% - 45%

Conclusions

Weakest skills: Forming a question 42%

Strongest skills: Clear voice 69%

Just over half the students sit still, 63% and maintain eye contact, 63% - 66%

Non European students score the most frequently in "sometimes" and "never"
### Year One Speaking and Listening Skills

**Summary of pre-intervention data. Context: sharing personal news**

#### Listening Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interrupting</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form a question</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit still</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Speaking Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear voice</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organise thoughts</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answer questions</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Students demonstrating expected skills always:
- Range 42% - 69%

#### Students demonstrating expected skills sometimes:
- Range 9% - 30%

#### Students demonstrating expected skills never:
- Range 6% - 45%

#### Conclusions

**Weakest skills**: Forming a question 42%

**Strongest skills**: Organising thoughts 48%

Just over half the students sit still, 63% and maintain eye contact, 63% - 66%