MPC MAJOR RESEARCH PAPER

DISABLING LANGUAGE PRACTICES: DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTIONS OF
CHILDREN IN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN RESOURSE DOCUMENTS

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Abstract

Background: The Individual Education Plan (IEP) and related resource documents shape the lived realities of children in special education programs. Although these documents aim to assist children in achieving their educational goals, a point of disjuncture can exist between the documents' intentions and the actual experiences of children. Addressing this issue is crucial in order to prevent inequality and to foster educational development and social wellbeing for children.

Purpose: This study explores the discursive construction of children in IEP resource documents in order to illuminate the underlying implications of the language comprising these texts.

Method: Data was collected by gathering IEP resource documents from the Ontario Ministry of Education website. Discourse analysis was then employed to examine the presence of the equative and attributive models, the passive voice, and the possessive construction. Lastly, disability theory was used to explore how these language practices conceptualize children.

Results: The data set included zero instances of the equative model, an infrequent use of the attributive model, and a strong presence of both the passive voice and the possessive construction. These findings contributed to representations of children as exceptional, passive, and subordinate despite an explicit attempt to resist such conceptions.

Conclusion: This study serves as a model through which the language practices of other special education documents can be critically evaluated, and offers potential avenues for creating documents that avoid disabling children further.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Appendices

Introduction

In the context of special education in Ontario, the Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a culturally situated text that can shape the lived realities of children in alternative education programs (Murray & Forshaw, 2013; Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009). More specifically, the IEP outlines individualized education programs and services for children whose scholastic needs do not align with standard curriculum expectations (Ministry of Education, 2004). The process in which an IEP is planned, created, and implemented is governed by several IEP policy documents. These texts describe the policy informing the IEP process and act as a model that educators can employ in the production and modification of a student's IEP. In this regard, IEP resource documents aim to assist children, parents, educators, and health care professionals in constructing an IEP that successfully coordinates students' ongoing educational development (Zegarac, Drewett & Swan R, 2008). Collectively, the IEP and related resource documents intend to assist children in actively progressing towards the achievement of a particular set of goals. However, a point of disjuncture can exist between the intentions of IEP resource documents and the actual experiences of children in special education programs. This disjuncture can cause an "inefficiency and inequity in the process of considering, creating, implementing and refining/revising" a child's IEP (Ng et al., 2013, p. 5). Addressing this issue is crucial because inequality within special education can hinder children's educational development, as well as their social and psychological wellbeing (Phelan, 2011).

As culturally situated texts, IEP resource documents are discursive constructions that both inform and are informed by cultural practices and relations of power (Taylor, 2004). As such, the language practices of these documents are a type of discourse that determines knowledge production, constructs cultural practices, and produces 'truths' or 'norms' deeply embedded in individual and institutional power structures (Phelan, Wright & Gibson, 2014;

1

Hodges, Kuper & Reeves, 2008). According to Fairclough (1989), discourse is a socially conditioned process that both determines and produces social identities and cultural practices that legitimize existing relations of power. In this regard, the language practices of IEP resource documents are a culturally conditioned practice deeply rooted in individual and institutional power dynamics. With this in mind, one can extend the notion of language and its relations to power to investigate the possible disconnect between the intentions of IEP resource documents and the actualities of experience for children in special education programs. In order to do so, the present study employs critical discourse analysis informed by disability theory to examine the way in which the language practices of the documents conceptualize children. In doing so, this study proposes that the discursive construction of children may result in inequitable power relations that can prevent the intentions of IEP resource documents from being actualized in daily practice.

Literature Review

The following literature review takes a step back from the IEP to consider special education documents more generally. In broadening this scope, the present study provides a more substantial literature review comprised of three main areas. The first area begins broadly by exploring the importance of special education documents for children in individualized education programs. Subsequently, the second area involves an examination of both barriers and facilitators in translating the intentions of such documents into daily practice. The final section narrows the focus to examine the language of these documents as a cultural practice that shapes the lived realities of children in special education programs.

The Significance of Special Education Documents

As a crucial mode of communication within the context of special education, written documents are central in providing extended care for children with disabilities (Doyle, 2008). Several studies have concluded that the effective use of special education documents directly improves children's educational and developmental progress, ensures the effective delivery of services to children, decreases parent's stress, increases support for children and their families, and promotes effective communication between practitioners, educators, and parents (Andreatta, 2010; Doyle, 2008; McConkey, 2005; McConnellogue, 2011). For example, McConnelogue's study of integrated care for children with speech and language needs demonstrates that increased collaboration and shared documentation practices between educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, and educators positively influences children's developmental progress (McConnellogue, 2011). Similarly, McConkey's study of integrated work in Northern Ireland reveals that collaborative health and social care documents result in a significantly stronger quality of services (McConkey, 2005). Collectively, these studies illustrate that special education

documents are crucial in providing extended support for children in individualized education programs.

In contrast, lack of continuity between document policy and practice has been shown to have serious implications for children with special education needs. For example, a failure to effectively make use of special education documents can result in ineffective communication practices and a lack of information sharing between educators, health care practitioners, parents, and children (Doyle, 2008). Multiple studies claim that this form of miscommunication leads to missed or duplicated educational services, contradiction in children's special education plans, medical or educational errors, and poor information exchange between formal and informal caregivers (Doyle, 2008; Mur-Veeman, van Raak & Paulus, 2008; Kuziemsky & Varpio, 2010). Ultimately, the sustained presence of these negative outcomes can result in unmet educational needs for children with disabilities. According to Bussing and Zima's (1998) analysis of the prevalence of unmet needs for children with ADHD the United States, only half of those diagnosed receive appropriate educational support. In addition to demonstrating the importance of special education documents in gaining access to individualized education services, this figure indicates that a failure to effectively employ these documents can result in unmet educational needs for children. This notion is problematic because the sustained presence of unmet needs can directly hinder children's educational development and social wellbeing (Doyle, 2008). In this regard, it is evident that the inability to translate the intentions of special education documents to daily practice could have significant implications for children in alternative education programs.

Cultural Practices as a Barrier and Facilitator for Effective Documents in Practice

Despite the clear importance of special education documents at the health and education interface, the proposed intentions of such documents are often difficult to translate into daily

practice. This disjuncture can result in an inefficiency and inequality in the process of planning, producing, implementing, and maintaining a child's special education program (Ng et al., 2013). Several studies have explored this disconnect by exposing a number of potential barriers and facilitators. The majority of this research identifies cultural practices, rather than institutional structure, as most strongly influencing the success or failure of special education documents in practice (Holtom, 2001; Ng et al., 2013; Richardson, 2005). In this context, cultural practices include a number of barriers and facilitators such as "organizational and professional culture, professional identity, and documentary practices" (Ng et al., 2013, p. 3). This research establishes a perspective through which the language of special education documents can be viewed as a cultural practice with broad sociopolitical implications.

Cultural barriers can arise due to segregated professional cultures "where discipline-specific perspectives, methods, vocabulary, and identities become enmeshed in practice" (Andreatta, 2010, p. 346). For example, Andreatta argues that the professional preparation of practitioners and educators results in "different perceptions and recommendations for care, as well as distinct communication patterns and protocols" (Andreatta, 2010, p. 347). These differences in cultural practice can contribute to the formation of distinct goals, attitudes, and priorities, poorly defined roles and responsibilities, distinct documentation practices, lack of information sharing protocols, ineffective communication processes, and poor language practices (Atkinson, Doherty & Kinder, 2005; Doyle, 2008; Ng et al., 2013). For instance, in their study on the relationship between integrated care policy and practice in six European countries, Mur-Veeman, van Raak, and Paulus (2008) argue that all nations experience challenges due to the fragmentation of disciplines and services. Despite varying health care systems, cultures, and geographical locations, "dividing lines between sectors and a lack of transparency in the system" prevent the ability to translate the intentions of written documents into reality (Mur-Veeman, van

Raak & Paulus, 2008, p. 177). Stewart, Petch, and Curtice (2003) solidify this notion by arguing that fragmented cultural practices encourage the development of internal identities. Distinct professional identities can hinder communication, collaborative documentation efforts, and consistent language practices between health and education sectors. In sum, these studies assert cultural practices, rather than intuitional structure, produce barriers that prevent the intentions of special education documents from materializing in practice. Moreover, this research establishes the language practices of these documents as a culturally conditioned process that has the ability to mediate children's lived experiences.

In addition to those that have explored cultural barriers, several studies have investigated potential facilitators in actualizing special education documents in practice. This research asserts that a wide range of cultural practices can contribute to the successful production and implementation of special education documents in daily practice (Doyle, 2008). These cultural practices include consistent language, increased information sharing, effective communication, inter-agency training, time and resources, networking, efficient leadership and management systems, commitment from staff, partnership with children and families, and mindfulness of other's roles (Doyle, 2008). Similarly, Kuziemsky and Varpio (2010) argue that 'common ground' between formal and informal caregivers and across work processes is crucial in translating the intentions of documents into daily practice. Common ground refers to the "shared knowledge, language [practices], and beliefs necessary for communication to occur" (Kuziemsky & Varpio, 2010, p. 2). Establishing common ground in textual work processes involves the exchange of information, shared policies and documents, coordination of actions, collective generation of solutions, and consistent language practices (Kuziemsky & Varpio, 2010). McConnellogue's (2011) study of collaboration between speech and language therapists and teachers solidifies the notion that cultural practices, such as consistent policies, documents, and

language, are the most effective means of ensuring the successful implementation of special education documents. More specifically, consistent practices between formal and informal caregivers and throughout policy documents can influence the success of special education texts. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that cultural practices strongly influence the actualization of special education documents in daily practice. Moreover, this research establishes a foundation upon which one can view the language of these texts as a cultural practice embedded in both individual and institutional power structures.

Theoretical Approaches in Analyzing the Language Practices of Documents

Upon identifying cultural practices as key in translating the proposed intentions of special education documents to daily practice, several studies have further explored this process by specifically examining the language practices of these texts. This research frames language as a culturally conditioned process that informs social identities, shapes cultural practices, and legitimizes power relations within the context of special education. Moreover, this perspective situates language within its sociopolitical context in order to understand the broader cultural implications of these discourses (Fairclough, 1989). To date, these studies remain characterized by two main schools of thought, namely critical discourse analysis and critical disability theory.

Critical discourse analysis is a theoretically informed approach that analyzes written texts to reveal discursive sources of power and inequality (van Dijk, 1996). More specifically, discourse analysis seeks to determine relations of causality between language practices and broader social and cultural structures, relations, and processes (Fairclough, 1993). As such, this theoretical approach aims to investigate the way in which language practices "arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power" (Fairclough, 1993, p. 135). Thus, discourse analysis intends to expose the way in which language is situated in specific

social, political, and historical contexts (Sheyholislami, 2001). Research that employs this theoretical approach provides a fine-grained linguistic analysis with an emphasis on the wider cultural practices in which special education discourses are situated. In sum, critical discourse analysis is a highly relevant means of analyzing the language practices of special education documents.

In employing critical discourse analysis, several studies explore the way in which specific special education discourses create a textual reality that is implicated in institutional power relations. For instance, Daniel (2005) provides a focused examination of textual forms of knowledge, communication, and practice by examining the work processes required for a funding document called the Intensive Support Amount (ISA) folder. Daniel (2005) argues that the "increasingly bureaucratic nature of special education funding 'textualizes' particular students as having high needs for funding purposes" (p. 764). In other words, ISA funding documents are a "complex work process that separates the textual mode from the lived experience through an inter-textual dialogue in which the lived experiences of children, teachers, parents, educational assistants, and others are subsumed by the textual process of identification and labeling" (Daniel, 2005, p. 764). Nichols and Griffith (2009) solidify this notion by examining accountability discourses in textually mediated work processes at the health and education juncture. They argue special education documents create a textual reality established by the concepts the documents legitimize and the actions they coordinate (Nichols & Griffith, 2009). This textual reality is problematic because it contributes to representations of disability that become perceived as natural by society (Taylor, 2004). Collectively, these studies demonstrate that particular discourses can mediate children's lived experiences and reaffirm inequitable power structures within education. This process implies that language practices have the potential to inform social constructions and cultural practices that legitimize existing

relations of power at the health and education interface (Fairclough, 1989). In sum, these studies demonstrate that critical discourse analysis permits an extended investigation of the discursive practices employed in special education documents. However, this research is limited because it does not explicitly link the analysis of these discourses to the challenges in translating the intentions of special education documents to daily practice.

Critical disability theory arose, in part, to disrupt dominant medicalized perspectives that pathologize disabilities (Erevelles, 2005). More specifically, the medical and educational models of disability generally portray human variation as deviance from the norm, as a pathological impairment, and as a personal tragedy or individual burden (Linton, 1998). In contrast, critical disability theory argues that disabilities are products of cultural perceptions of the ideal body, rather than properties of bodies themselves (Garland-Thomson, 1997). This notion locates disability within society, rather than within the individual, and calls for accountability at the societal level (Phelan, 2011). In this sense, critical disability theory disrupts normalized constructions of disability and offers an "epistemological basis for inquiries and actions that could not have been imagined from the restrictive thresholds" of the medical model (Linton, 1998, p. 133). This foundation provides an opportunity to reconsider normalized standards of education that both inform, and are informed by dominant sociopolitical understandings of disability. More specifically, such a foundation permits a critical analysis of language as a cultural practice with the potential to shape dominant societal perceptions of disability.

In addition to those that employ discourse analysis, several studies adopt a disability theory perspective to explore classification as a means of shaping the lived experiences of children in special education programs. While this research employs a similar theoretical foundation to that of discourse analysis, disability studies place more emphasis on representations of disability than the specific effects of language. For instance, Erevelles (2005)

combines disability theory with curriculum theory to broadly explore the material implications derived from interpretations of normality in the education curriculum. More specifically, she examines the curriculum as a discursive construction that acts as a classification text in traditional educational practices (Erevelles, 2005). In this regard, the curriculum is a site of interpretation characterized by normalizing discourses that "efface any signs of deviance/disability that serve to threaten the social order" of the education system (Erevelles, 2005, p. 433). According to Erevelles, this process occurs through standardized evaluations that segregate students based on their 'natural' abilities and through classification as 'gifted', 'regular', or 'special' (Erevelles, 2005, p. 433). Thus, classifying and labeling students is a discursive cultural practice that perpetuates inequality in the education institution.

Runswick-Cole and Hodge (2009) extend the notion of classification by adopting the social model to examine 'special needs' discourses in education policies. Similar to disability theory, the social model asserts individuals are disabled by society's discrimination and prejudice, rather than by their own impairment (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009). Thus, children are disabled by the label 'special needs' because this language emphasizes "individual deficits and, therefore, plays a part in constructing and sustaining exclusionary practices" (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009, p. 7). This notion is founded on Foucault's (1973) contention that language has the power to construct experience. In this instance, 'special needs' discourses exert power over children by reducing their identity to a syndrome or condition (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009). In this regard, the language practices of these texts can both determine and produce social identities and cultural beliefs that legitimize existing educational power structures. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that critical disability theory disrupts normalized constructions of disability and power within education. In doing so, this approach permits an investigation of the way in which children are subjected to underlying systems of classification and inequality

through language. Although these studies demonstrate that the discursive practices of special education documents can strongly influence the lived experiences of children, this research does not explicitly extend its analysis to the ways these language practices may limit the actualization of special education documents in practice.

Although a significant body of research has explored the language practices of special education documents in respect to broader power relations and cultural processes, few studies have explicitly connected this analysis to the challenges of translating the intentions of such documents to daily practice (Daniel, 2005; Erevelles, 2005; Nichols & Griffith, 2009; Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009). In this regard, one can extend the previous analyses of language and disability to draw meaningful conclusions about the possible disconnect between special education policy and practice. The present study intends to investigate this notion by combining discourse analysis with critical disability theory to closely examine the way in which the language practices of special education documents conceptualize children. In doing so, this study will explore how these conceptualizations may be implicated in the potential disjuncture between special education policy and practice.

In combining discourse analysis with critical disability theory, the present study synthesizes previously distinct perspectives to critically analyze the intersection of language, disability, and power in special education documents. In doing so, this study opens "a dialogue between disciplines concerned with linguistic analysis and disciplines concerned with theorizing and researching social processes" and sociopolitical change (Fairclough, 2001, p. 229). This analytical approach provides a textually oriented and fine-grained discourse analysis while simultaneously focusing on the wider cultural practices in which the texts are situated. Such a combination can be particularly useful for analyzing documents because it is "explicitly critical: first, in relation to its concern to reveal the discursive construction of power relations; and

secondly, in its commitment to progressive social change" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 230). Thus, this approach provides a foundation upon which one can analyze connections between the discursive conceptualization of children, broader power relations, and the challenges in translating the intentions of special education documents to daily practice. In sum, discourse analysis informed by disability theory provides a contextualized understanding of both language and disability with which one can aim to initiate social change.

A Starting Point: Individual Education Plan Resource Documents

In order to examine the way in which the language practices of special education documents conceptualize children, this critical approach will be directly applied to Individual Education Plan (IEP) resource documents. The IEP is a textually mediated work process that outlines the specific educational services required for children whose scholastic needs do not align with standardized curriculum expectations (Ng et al., 2013; Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 6). As a crucial mode of communication at the health and education interface, the IEP aggregates a wide range of medical and educational documents provided by healthcare practitioners, social workers, and educators in order to coordinate a student's individualized curriculum. As such, the IEP aims to support children in achieving their specific learning goals and expectations within a measurable period of time. Therefore, the IEP is predominantly comprised of a description of the student's special education program and services, an explanation of their goals and expectations, and an outline of how their progress will be monitored (Kurth & Mastergeorge, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 6; Prunty, 2011). Thus, the IEP intends to aid children in achieving an individualized set of goals and expectations that will facilitate ongoing educational development.

In conjunction with the IEP, a number of related resource documents aim to assist children in actively progressing towards the achievement of a particular set of goals. More

specifically, the resource documents aid students and their families, the school board, principals, teachers, healthcare professionals and social workers in "meeting the planning and regulatory requirements for students with an IEP" (Zegarac, Drewett & Swan R, 2008, p. 12). In addition to shaping communication practices at the health and education interface, these documents outline the policy informing the IEP process and act as a model that educators can employ in the construction and modification of a student's IEP. As such, the discursive and linguistic features of the resource documents can influence how an IEP is interpreted and implemented in the education system (Taylor, 2004). Therefore, analyzing IEP resource documents can illuminate the way in which language is a cultural practice deeply rooted in individual and institutional power relations. In sum, these culturally situated documents are a highly relevant site for exploring the discursive conceptualization of children in relation to the actualization of special education documents in daily practice.

Research Questions

Three research questions guide the present investigation of the discursive conceptualization of children in IEP resource documents:

1. How do the language practices of Individual Education Plan resource documents conceptualize children with special education needs?

2. What power relations are produced and perpetuated through the language practices used to conceptualize children?

3. How might these language practices and subsequent power relations shape the way in which the intentions of Individual Education Plan resource documents materialize in practice?

Data Sources

In order to answer these questions, the primary mode of data collection in the present study involves gathering all Individual Education Plan resource documents currently available on the Ministry of Education website (http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/speced.html). To date, this includes three publically accessible documents.

The first IEP resource document included in the data set is titled "Individual Education Plans: Standards for Development, Program Planning, and Implementation" (herein referred to as the Standards Document). This 24-page document describes province-wide standards that must be met by school boards when developing, implementing, and monitoring IEPs for both "exceptional students" and "students not identified as exceptional" but who receive special education services (Ministry of Education, 2000). The purpose of the Standards Document is to improve the consistency and quality of special education programs, while increasing communication between health care practitioners, the school board, teachers, and families. Each section of the Standards Document identifies "the purpose of the standard described in the section, the requirements to be met in achieving the standard, and the criteria according to which compliance with the standard will be assessed by the Ministry of Education" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 3). In sum, this document outlines the provincial standards that guide the creation, implementation, and maintenance of a child's IEP.

The second document is titled "The Individual Education Plan: A Resource Guide" (herein referred to as the Resource Guide). The Resource Guide is an 85-page document intended to assist practitioners, teachers, and parents in developing, implementing, and monitoring a high-quality IEP (Ministry of Education, 2004). The Resource Guide elaborates on the explanatory notes in the government-provided IEP template, provides "guidelines for planning a student's special education program, and offers instruction for developing an IEP that

meets the requirements of the Standards document" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 5). In this regard, the Resource Guide outlines the steps that must be taken when planning, creating, and implementing a child's IEP.

The final source of data in the present study is a series of documents titled "Sample IEPs". Currently, there are 30 IEP samples on the Ministry of Education website that were developed by writing teams from across Ontario. The samples were written in accordance with the two documents listed above, ministry policy, IEP samples provided by school boards, and the results of the Provincial IEP Collaborative Review from 2006-2007 (Ministry of Education, 2008). The main purpose of the samples is to act as a model for the construction of a real IEP. More specifically, the samples exemplify appropriate language practices and provide content to inform the collaborative development of an IEP. Each of the sample IEPs were assigned a number based on the order of their appearance on the Ministry of Education website. Subsequently, 15 out of 30 Sample IEPs were selected for analysis by a random number generator.

Collectively, the Standards Document, the Resource Guide and the IEP Samples aim to facilitate integrated work processes required for a successful IEP. Moreover, these texts intend to assist children in actively achieving their educational goals and expectations (Ministry of Education, 2000). While the Standards Document and the Resource Guide outline the policy informing the IEP process, the samples act as a model that educators can employ to generate and modify a student's IEP. As such, the discursive features of these texts have significant implications on the way in which an IEP is constructed, interpreted, and implemented in the education system. In this regard, the resource documents collectively establish a dataset through which one can investigate the conceptualization of children through language in relation to broader cultural processes and relations of power.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze these documents, the present study conducted a critical discourse analysis informed by disability theory. As described below, this interdisciplinary investigation consisted of four consecutive steps.

The present study adopted Hodge and Kress's (1993) syntagmatic model of discourse analysis to code the data set. In particular, this study employed the equative and attributive sections of the syntagmatic model because these linguistic structures can directly shape the conceptualization of children in IEP resource documents. More specifically, equatives are a form of classification that reveals a relation between two entities that are both nouns. For instance: *The child is an exceptional student.* In this example, a relationship is established between the subject (the child) and a noun category (exceptional student). In contrast to equatives, attributives are a form of evaluation that establishes a relation between a noun and a quality. This mode of evaluation is made possible through the use of an adjective and can appear in both the traditional or transformational structure (Hodge & Kress, 1993). The traditional attributive model is characterized by the "noun-'is'-adjective" structure, for example: *The child is exceptional.* In this instance, the subject (the child) is linked to an attribute (exceptional). In contrast, the transformational attributive model "transforms" traditional attributives by employing the "adjective+noun" structure, rather than the "noun-'is'-adjective" form (Hodge & Kress, 1993). For instance: *The exceptional child goes to school.* In this example, the word "exceptional" is implicated in the transformational attributive model because it establishes a relationship between an adjective (exceptional) that precedes a noun (the child) (Hodge & Kress, 1993). As explicit acts of classification and evaluation, equatives and attributives can sustain harmful discourses about children, perpetuate negative constructions of disability, and reinforce unequal power relations within special education. In this regard, exposing the presence of these language

practices in IEP resource documents is crucial in order to illuminate underlying assumptions regarding children in the special education context.

In addition to equatives and attributives, Hodge and Kress (1993) provide descriptions of other linguistic structures also found in the data set, notably, the passive voice and the possessive construction. The passive voice is a syntactic feature in which the subject is the recipient of an action, rather than the performer of that action (Hodge & Kress, 1993). In this regard, the passive voice is a "transformation" of the active voice because the subject is not responsible for the action designated by the verb, as for instance: *The child has been identified as exceptional.* In this example, the child is the recipient of the action designated by the verb (to identify), rather than performer of that action. The possessive form is a grammatical construction that indicates a relation of ownership between a possessor and a possessed entity (Hodge & Kress, 1993). For instance: *The child's desk is in the classroom*. In this example, the desk (the possessed entity) belongs to the child (the possessor). Appendix A summarizes the previous explanation of equatives, attributives, the passive voice, and the possessive construction.

Subsequently, the second step was to conduct a textually oriented and fine-grained discourse analysis of each of the resource documents. In order to focus this process, only sentences that employed the words "student" or "students" were coded. This parameter ensured that the data coded and collected related directly to the way in which students were conceptualized through language. The coding process began by investigating instances of the equative and attributive models, and then turned to focus on emergent linguistic patterns such as the passive voice and the possessive form. A visual sample of the coding methodology is provided in Appendix B.

After completing the coding process, the frequency of recurring language practices was aggregated for each resource document in Tables 1, 3 and 4. In each instance, the linguistic

feature was divided into subcategories to provide a more detailed investigation. The purpose of aggregating this data was to map patterns in the texts and to identify areas requiring further exploration. Thus, Tables 1, 3 and 4 outline the most common linguistic structures used to conceptualize children in IEP resource documents.

Following a close discursive analysis, the final step was to conduct a broader social analysis of the data detailed in Tables 1, 3 and 4. This thematic exploration employed a disability theory perspective to investigate the ways in which children are conceptualized through language. Moreover, this analysis illuminated the relationship between the discursive conceptualization of children in IEP resource documents, broader power relations, and the challenges of translating the intentions of these texts to daily practice. This investigation provided a platform that could expose and perhaps contest some of the implicit assumptions regarding language, disability, and power in IEP resource documents. It is important to note that the purpose of this critical analysis was not to portray these documents as detrimental or undesirable. Rather, the goal was to illuminate some of the ways in which the language practices of these texts may be implicated in broader cultural practices and power relations that have come to be perceived as natural.

Findings

The following section presents the findings of the previously described data analysis. This section begins by outlining the presence of the equative and attributive models and then turns to a number of other recurring patterns such as the passive voice and the possessive form.

As evident in 'Table 1' below, the equative model was not present within any of the documents in the data set. In other words, IEP resource documents do not employ the "noun-'is'-noun" structure to classify or categorize children. This finding indicates that the language practices of IEP resource documents avoid conceptualizing children by equating them with another entity or noun category.

Table 1: The Equative and Attributive Models in IEP Resource Documents

Language Practices: The Equative and Attributive Models in IEP Resource Documents

		Standards Doc	Resource Guide	Sample Template	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 4	Sample 5	Sample 7	Sample 11	Sample 12	Sample 13	Sample 14	Sample 17	Sample 21	Sample 24	Sample 26	Sample 28	Sample 30	Total
A	Equative Model																			
	"…student-'is'-noun…"	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	Attributive Model																			
B1	Traditional: "…student is adjective…"																			
B1a	16 years of age	2	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
	Total	2	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
B2	Transformational: "…adjective noun…"																			
B2a	"…exceptional student…"	5	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
B2b	"…exceptional pupil…"	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
B2c	"…gifted student…"	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Total	9	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14

In addition to the absence of the equative model, the coding process revealed that IEP resource documents are characterized by a relatively infrequent use of the attributive model. As

shown by codes B1 and B2, the data set included only 13 instances of the traditional attributive model and 14 instances of the transformational attributive model. An example of these linguistic structures appears in 'Table 2'. It is crucial to note that both types of attributives were only present in the Standards Document and the Resource Guide. In this sense, the Sample IEPs contained no instances of either the traditional or transformational attributive model. This pattern likely exists because the Standards Document and the Resource Guide provide a more extensive description of the students, whereas the Sample IEPs focus primarily on describing a specific special education program for an individual student.

Table 2: Examples of the Attributive Model in IEP Resource Documents

The Attributive Model		
Type of Attributive Model	Traditional Attributive Model ("noun-'is'-adjective" structure)	Transformational Attributive Model ("adjective+noun" structure)
Example from the data set	"A form documenting all consultations with parents and the student, **if the student is 16 years of age** or older, [...] must be prepared" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 42).	"The principal is responsible for ensuring that an IEP is developed for **exceptional pupils**" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 9).
Noun	Student	Student
Adjective	16 years of age	Exceptional

The traditional attributive model employs the "noun-'is'-adjective" construction to form a relation between the subject of a sentence and an attribute (Hodge & Kress, 1993). A closer analysis of this linguistic structure revealed that all 13 instances establish a relation between the student (noun) and the student's age (adjective). The traditional attributive model is demonstrated by the quotation: "A form documenting all consultations with parents and the student, if **the student is 16 years of age** or older, [...] must be prepared" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 42). This type of attributive does not contribute to the conceptualization of children because it merely alludes to the potential age of the student in question. In other words, the use

of the traditional attributive model does not influence the way in which children are discursively conceptualized in IEP resource documents.

In addition to the traditional attributive model, 14 transformational attributives were employed in the data set to conceptualize children. As outlined by code B2 in 'Table 1', these instances "transform" the traditional attributive model by employing the "adjective+noun" structure instead of the "noun-'is'-adjective" formation (Hodge & Kress, 1993). The transformational structure establishes a relation between an attribute (exceptional or gifted) and a noun (the student or the pupil) (Hodge & Kress, 1993). This form of the attributive model is demonstrated by the quotation: "The principal is responsible for ensuring that an IEP is developed for **exceptional pupils**" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 9). In such instances, the use of the word "exceptional" is implicated in the attributive model because it establishes a relation between a quality (exceptional) and a noun (the pupils) (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Although there are relatively few transformational attributives in the data set, this linguistic practice is extremely important because it repeatedly classifies and labels students as an exception in relation to a standardized norm.

In contrast to the absence of the equative model and the infrequent use of the attributive model, one highly prominent linguistic structure present in the data set is the passive voice. The passive voice is a syntactic feature in which the subject is the recipient of an action, rather than the performer of that action (Hodge & Kress, 1993). In this regard, the passive voice is a transformation of the active voice because the subject (the student) is no longer responsible for the action designated by the verb (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Although the passive transformation is present in all documents, it is only used to conceptualize children in the Standards Document and the Resource Guide. In other words, the Sample IEPs do not employ the passive voice to represent children. This finding mirrors the way in which the attributive model is present in the

Standards Document and the Resource Guide, yet absent in the Sample IEPs. As such, it is evident that the language practices of the resource documents are not uniform across all three texts.

Table 3: The Passive Voice in IEP Resource Documents

C	Passive Voice	Standards Doc	Resource Guide	Sample Template	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 4	Sample 5	Sample 7	Sample 11	Sample 12	Sample 13	Sample 14	Sample 17	Sample 21	Sample 24	Sample 26	Sample 28	Sample 30	Total
C1	**Perfect Simple Passive Voice**																			
C1a	"...student has been..."	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C1b	"...student has not been..."	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C1c	"...student who has been..."	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C1d	"...student who has not been..."	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C1e	"...students who have been..."	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C1f	"...students who have not been..."	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Total	8	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
C2	**Simple Passive Voice**																			
	"...student is verb(-ed)..."																			
C2b	Expected	1	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C2c	Placed	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C2d	Identified	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C2e	Scheduled	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C2f	Diagnosed	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
C2g	"...students are verb(-ed)..."																			
C2h	Provided	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	Total	1	14	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17

Language Practices: The Passive Voice in IEP Resource Documents

As indicated by codes C1 and C2 in 'Table 3', the passive voice appears in both the 'perfect simple' and the 'simple' forms. More specifically, the data set included 19 instances of the 'perfect simple' passive voice and 17 instances of the 'simple' passive voice. The 'perfect simple' passive voice is exemplified by the quotation: "**The student has been identified** as exceptional by an IPRC [Identification, Placement, and Review Committee]" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 20). This example is a clear transformation of the active voice because the subject (the student) is not responsible for the action designated by the verb (to identify). Rather, the student is the recipient of the action and the IPRC is the actor behind that action. A closer examination of the 'perfect simple' passive voice revealed that 15 out of 19 instances refer to the process in which the student is identified as exceptional. Similar to the findings associated with the transformational attributive model, this figure further contributes to the conceptualization of children as an exception in relation to the norm. Furthermore, 12 out of 15 passive phrases do not explicitly state the actor responsible for identifying the student as exceptional. This pattern suggests that the passive transformation effectively conceals the educators' responsibility in conceptualizing students as "exceptional". This notion is exemplified by the excerpt: "If the **student has been formally identified** as exceptional, the IEP should include the strengths and needs" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 8). This example employs the passive transformation as a means of eliminating the actor responsible for identifying the student as exceptional and minimizing their accountability for that action. In sum, the 'perfect simple' passive voice "transforms" the active voice in order to describe the process in which students are identified as exceptional and to conceal the actor responsible for this process.

Similar to the 'perfect simple' passive voice, IEP resource documents are strongly characterized by the use of the 'simple' passive voice. This form of the passive transformation is illustrated through the quotation: "**The student is placed** by the IPRC in a special education

class" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 22). In this instance, the subject (the student) is not responsible for the action designated by the verb (to place). Rather, the student is the recipient of the action and the IPRC is the actor behind that action. Similar to the findings associated with the 'perfect simple' passive voice, the actor is only explicitly mentioned in 3 out of 17 instances of the 'simple' passive construction. This pattern is exemplified by the quotation: "**The student is placed** in a special education class" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 21). Unlike the first example, this quotation employs the passive transformation to eliminate the actor responsible for placing the student in the special education class. This further demonstrates that this language practice conceals the educators' governance over students. Thus, both the 'perfect simple' and the 'simple' passive transformations mask the actor responsible for carrying out an action in which the student is the object.

A closer examination of both the 'perfect simple' and the 'simple' passive constructions revealed that these language practices strongly resemble the surface structure of the traditional attributive model (Hodge & Kress, 1993). In other words, the passive voice in IEP resource documents is a linguistic transformation of the traditional attributive model. This transformation exists because the passive voice also establishes a relationship between a noun and a quality, and therefore has a close affinity with the "noun-'is'-adjective" construction (Hodge & Kress, 1993). This transformation is crucial because altering one linguistic structure into another is "an act of choice", no matter how "habitual or unconscious the transformational process may be" (Hodge & Kress, 1993, p. 119). This process can be demonstrated by examining the quotation: "**The student is identified as exceptional** by an IPRC" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 20). In this excerpt, a relation is established between the subject (the student) and the process of being identified as exceptional. In this instance, the passive transformation causes the process of being identified as exceptional to be structured as an attribute of the affected participant (Hodge &

Kress, 1993). In other words, a relation is formed between the student (the subject) and the word exceptional (a quality). Therefore, the passive voice resembles the "noun-'is'-adjective" attributive construction because it forms a tie between a noun and an adjective (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Situated within the attributive model, this exceptionality ultimately becomes a defining quality in the representation of children in these texts. In this regard, the passive transformation contributes to the conceptualization of children in IEP resource documents because it facilitates an attributive relationship between students and the adjective "exceptional".

A second highly prominent linguistic practice used to conceptualize children in IEP resource documents is the possessive form. The possessive form is a grammatical construction that indicates a relation of ownership between a possessor and a possessed entity (Hodge & Kress, 1993). In IEP resource documents, the possessive construction is most often marked by a noun followed by a "'s", for example: *student's*. This language practice is exemplified by the quotation: "The present resource document elaborates on the explanatory notes, providing guidelines for planning a **student's special education program**" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 5). In this example, the special education program (the possessed entity) belongs to the student (the possessor). Overall, the data set included 290 instances of the possessive form. Although this linguistic practice occurs primarily in the Standards Document and the Resource Guide, most Sample IEPs contain several possessive constructions. Thus, unlike the attributive model and the passive voice, the possessive construction appears in all three resource documents.

Table 4: The Possessive Form in IEP Resource Documents

Language Practices: The Possessive Form in IEP Resource Documents

		Standards Doc	Resource Guide	Sample Template	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 4	Sample 5	Sample 7	Sample 11	Sample 12	Sample 13	Sample 14	Sample 17	Sample 21	Sample 24	Sample 26	Sample 28	Sample 30	Total
D	Possessive Form																			
D1	Alienable Possessives: **Total**	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D2	Inalienable Possessives:																			
D2a	special education program	18	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	44
D2b	strengths and needs	18	24	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	46
D2c	achievement/success	16	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	31
D2d	progress	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	15
D2e	individual education plan	14	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
D2f	characteristics	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
D2g	exceptionality	4	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
D2h	ability	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
D2i	learning	14	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36
D2j	other actors (parents, teachers)	4	14	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	21
D2k	skills	4	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
D2l	school grade/work/records	3	15	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	20
D2m	signature	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
D2n	writing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
D2o	participation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
D2p	balance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
D2q	impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
D2r	laptop	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
D2s	goals	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Total	105	152	2	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	3	3	2	3	0	290

As 'Table 4' outlines, the possessive construction was further analyzed by differentiating between inalienable and alienable possessions. This analysis revealed that IEP resource

documents contain 290 inalienable possessions and zero alienable possessions. Inalienable possessions indicate a relation where the two entities are regarded as integrally and essentially part of each other (Hodge & Kress, 1993). The inalienable construction includes personal qualities, attributes, characteristics, body parts, or relatives/family members, for example: "Planning […] is best accomplished through the combined efforts of […] the student, the **student's parents**, the school…" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 9). In this instance, "the student's parents" are an inalienable possession because they represent a perpetual relationship with the student that cannot be readily severed. In contrast, alienable possessions indicate a relation where the possessed entity is not an integral part of the possessor (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Generally, alienable possessions include tangible objects, for example: "The child's desk is in the classroom". Although the terms "special education program" and "Individual Education Plan" could be considered alienable beyond the realm of IEP resource documents, these terms are implicated in an inalienable relation in the data set because they refer to a term that is *individualized* to suit one particular child. In other words, the terms "special education program" or "Individual Education Plan" are inalienable in IEP resource documents because they are individually planned, created, implemented, updated to suit the particular needs of *one* child. In this regard, all possessed entities in the data set are implicated in an inalienable relationship.

In light of the previous findings, it is evident that two overarching patterns exist within the data set. First, the Standards Document and the Resource Guide are characterized by different language practices than the Sample IEPs. For example, the Standards Document and the Resource Guide employ the attributive model, the passive voice, and the possessive construction. In contrast, the Sample IEPs do not contain the attributive model or the passive voice, and employ only a few instances of the possessive construction. This pattern likely exists because the Standards and the Resource texts provide a more extensive description of the students, whereas

the Sample IEPs focus primarily on describing a specific special education program for an individual student. A second possible explanation for this pattern is that the Sample IEPs imitate real IEPs by using point form rather than complete sentences. As a result, many sentences in the Sample IEPs drop the first clause, for example: *The student is working towards a secondary school diploma,* would appear as *working towards a secondary school diploma* in a sample IEP. This variation ultimately caused different linguistic patterns to emerge within the texts.

A second overarching pattern is the persistent use of "transformed" linguistic practices rather than standard structures. More specifically, IEP resource documents are strongly characterized by the transformational attributive model and the passive transformation, rather than the traditional attributive model and the active voice respectively. According to Hodge and Kress (1993), transformations "transform one [linguistic] model into the form of another" so that "the transformed structure differs in significant ways from the [original] structure" (p. 34). In other words, transformations have a similar, yet slightly altered grammatical structure to the standard form. This overarching pattern is crucial because transforming one linguistic structure into another is a significant act of choice, no matter how "habitual or unconscious the transformational process may be" (Hodge & Kress, 1993, p. 119). Moreover, this process is particularly important in relation to special education documents because transformations can function as a mode of suppression and distortion (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Thus, the repeated use of "transformed" linguistic structures throughout IEP resource documents is highly significant in relation to the conceptualization of children.

In sum, a close discursive analysis of the language practices in IEP resource documents revealed that equatives and traditional attributives are not highly present. Rather, transformational attributives, the passive voice, and the possessive form are the most prominent linguistic practices used to conceptualize children in the resource documents.

Discussion

The following section adopts a critical disability theory lens to interpret the aforementioned findings. First, this discussion will answer research questions 1 and 2 by providing a thematic analysis of the discursive conceptualization of children in relation to power dynamics implicit in IEP resource documents. This analysis consists of four main themes: language as a form of resistance, children as an exception, children as passive, and children as subordinate. Lastly, this discussion will consider the third research question by integrating all four themes.

Language Practices as a form of Resisting Harmful Conceptions of Children

The absence of the equative model and the infrequent presence of the traditional attributive model within IEP resource documents illustrate an attempt to resist conceptualizing children in a harmful manner. According to Hodge and Kress (1993), the equative and attributive models act as a mode of classifying and evaluating a particular individual or group. In the context of special education, these models are often employed as a standardized mode of classifying and evaluating students who do not meet normalized curriculum expectations. This form of classification and evaluation acts as an instrument of control to label, categorize, and impose order on students. As such, these linguistic practices can sustain harmful discourses, reaffirm dominant constructions of disability as negative or abnormal, shape a child's physical and social reality, and perpetuate inequality within the education system. Indeed, equative and attributive language practices can determine knowledge production, construct social identities and cultural beliefs, and produce norms deeply embedded in individual and institutional power structures (Hodges, Kuper & Reeves, 2008). Thus, avoiding equative and attributive language practices demonstrates an attempt to resist labeling children by explicitly equating them with any

negatively perceived nouns or adjectives. In doing so, IEP resource documents seek to avoid reinforcing harmful perceptions of disability, imposing an identity on students, and shaping their daily experiences. Moreover, this pattern suggests that IEP resource documents aim to provide a neutral conception of children that is free from judgment and stereotyping. In this regard, the language practices of these texts contain an element of resistance towards stereotypical representations of children in special education programs. In sum, the absence of the equative model and the infrequent presence of the traditional attributive model within IEP resource documents illustrate a form of resistance towards harmful conceptualizations of children.

First Conceptualization: Children as an Exception to the Norm

Although the absence of the equative model and the infrequent use of the traditional attributive model demonstrate a desire to provide a neutral conception of students, alternative language practices are implicated in various representations. More specifically, the use of the passive voice and the transformational attributive model consistently conceptualize children as an exception to a standardized norm. As discussed in the "Findings", the passive voice is a "transformation" of the attributive model because they both have a strong affinity with the "noun-'is'-adjective" construction (Hodge & Kress, 1993). This similarity exists because the passive voice also facilitates an attributive relationship between a noun and an adjective. In this regard, both the passive voice and the transformational attributive model establish a relation between a noun (the student) and a quality (exceptional). This similarity is crucial because employing a linguistic practice that strongly resembles another is an act of choice, no matter how unconscious it may appear to be (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Implicit in these attributive constructions is an act of judgment that causes that judgment to become a defining attribute of the affected subject (Hodge & Kress, 1993). As 'Table 5' demonstrates, the student in question is

judged as "exceptional" and that "exceptionality" becomes a defining quality in the student's textual identity. In this regard, both the passive voice and the transformational attributive model conceptualize students as an exception in relation to the "norm".

Table 5: Language Practices with the Surface Structure of the Attributive Model

Language Practices with the Surface Structure of the Attributive Model		
Type of Attributive Model	The Transformational Attributive Model	The Passive Voice
Attributive Structure	"adjective+noun"	"noun-'is'-adjective"
Example from the data set	"Some exceptional students may experience difficulty in making the transition from secondary school to postsecondary education" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 40).	"If the student has been formally identified as exceptional, the IEP should include the strengths and needs" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 8).
Noun	Students	Students
Quality	Exceptional	Exceptional

From the perspective of Foucault's (1973) contention that language has the power to construct experience, framing children as exceptional is a discursive cultural practice that governs children's social identities. This notion is made evident upon examining the way in which the act of judgment implicit in the attributive model foregrounds the child's impairment and reduces their identity to a syndrome, condition, or "exceptionality" (Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009). In this regard, the language practices of IEP resource documents impose a standardized identity on students by marking them as exceptional. This notion is further solidified upon considering 'person first language'. 'Person first language' asserts that a phrase should be structured so that the individual is placed before the impairment (such as *students with exceptionalities*) rather than after (such as *exceptional students*) (Collier, 2012). This linguistic structure places less emphasis on the impairment, does not reduce or redefine an individual's identity, and situates disability in society rather than in the individual (Collier, 2012). In contrast

to 'person first language', the attributive model foregrounds the student's impairment, diminishes their identity, and situates the "exceptionality" within the student. In addition to shaping children's social identities, this representation portrays disability as deviance from the norm, as a problem in need of fixing, and as an individual deficit (Linton, 1998; Runswick-Cole & Hodge, 2009). These notions are embedded in existing relations of power because they threaten children's unique individualities and suppress their own self-expression (Foucault, 1989). Moreover, the process in which able-bodied society employs discourse to construct disabled identities legitimizes inequitable relations of power (Fairclough, 1989). Thus, conceptualizing children as an exception through the use of transformational attributives and the passive voice is a means of governing children's social identities.

In discursively defining children's social identities, IEP resource documents shape both individual and societal perceptions of children in special education programs. This relation exists because such conceptions produce powerful discourses that "shape and limit the ways individuals and institutions can think, speak, and conduct themselves" (Hodge, Kuper & Reeves, 2013). This notion is made evident upon considering the way in which attributive language practices perpetuate discourses of exceptionality and normality by classifying students as an exception. In the context of special education, such discourses reproduce conceptual dichotomies between ability and disability, as well as between regular students and exceptional students (Phelan, 2011). In doing so, discourses of exceptionality and normality reinforce the notion that traditional education is "normal" and special education is "abnormal". Rather than accepting a diverse range of abilities as equal, these discourses reaffirm a hierarchal relationship that positions regular students as superior to exceptional students (Phelan, Wright & Gibson, 2014). This hierarchy is then employed by society as a means of understanding difference and the disabled body (Linton, 1998; Phelan, 2011). In sustaining this hierarchy, IEP resource

documents shape individual and societal perceptions of ability versus disability, regular students versus exceptional students, and traditional education versus special education. More specifically, this hierarchy equates disability and special education with "helplessness, dependency, […] incompetence, inadequacy and deviance" (Hammel, 2006, p. 76). In contrast, it positions ability and standard education as dominant, normal, and natural (Davis, 2006). These perceptions naturalize negative assumptions regarding students in special education programs and legitimize hierarchal relations of power implicit in the education system. In this regard, it is evident that discourses of exceptionality and normality shape individual and societal perceptions of disability, construct cultural beliefs regarding special education, and produce 'norms' deeply embedded in societal power structures (Hodges, Kuper & Reeves, 2008). According to Lyons (2000), these processes occur because society obtains its understandings of disability and normality from the discourses and norms produced by society itself. In this regard, the discursive practices of IEP resource documents ultimately determine and produce unequal power structures within special education. Thus, discourses of exceptionality and normality sustained through the attributive model produce and are produced by systemic ideologies that shape individual and societal perceptions of children in special education programs.

In discursively determining children's social identities and shaping individual and societal perceptions of those in special education programs, IEP resource documents reproduce powerful discourses that mediate children's lived realities. More specifically, such discourses perpetuate dominant understandings of disability that can limit children's everyday social encounters and contribute to the development of their self-identities (Priestly, 1999). This process occurs because these discourses are continually reproduced in children's daily social interactions both within and beyond the realm of education. Through the repeated exposure to such discourses, children can internalize these messages in a manner that shapes their beliefs,

sense of self, learning processes, and daily actions (Phelan, 2011; Phelan, Wright & Gibson, 2014). This internalization process occurs because individuals absorb socially produced discourses in order to understand their own position within society (Fairclough, 1989). Individuals then employ these internalized messages to engage in social practice. Thus, classifying and labeling children as exceptional is a discursive cultural practice that can govern children's physical and social realities. This act of governance is implicated in relations of power because it controls and threatens students' autonomy and perpetuates inequality within and beyond the education system (Foucault, 1982). In sum, attributive language practices are a form of control that subjects children to the normalizing and disciplinary relations of power implicit in the education system.

Second Conceptualization: Children as Passive in Respect to their own Education

In addition, the language practices of IEP resource documents consistently frame students as passive and powerless with respect to their own educational development. This conception is a direct result of the continued use of the passive voice throughout the Standards Document and the Resource Guide. As a common linguistic practice in these documents, the passive voice "transforms" the active voice into an alternative linguistic structure with new significance (Hodge & Kress, 1993). More specifically, the passive voice consistently frames students as the recipient of an action, rather than the performer of that action (Hodge & Kress, 1993). In this regard, IEP resource documents position students as passive objects rather than active subjects. This notion can be demonstrated by the quotation: "**The student is placed by the IPRC** in a special education class" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 22). In this phrase, the IPRC is responsible for the act of placing the student in the special education class, while the student is merely subjected to that action. Thus, the passive transformation establishes a dichotomy in

which educators are framed as actively in control of students' educational futures and students are perceived as passively compliant objects.

Representations of children as passive and powerless are highly ideological because they sustain discourses that further shape individual and societal perceptions of disabled childhoods. More specifically, these conceptions reaffirm the notion that those in special education programs do not possess the agency, ability, or desire to partake in the planning of their own educational development. In doing so, these representations perpetuate hegemonic discourses that equate disability with "helplessness, dependency, loss, tragedy, incompetence, inadequacy and deviance" (Hammel, 2006, p. 76). On an individual level, discourses of disability as personal tragedy, individual burden, and lack of agency can be internalized by children in a manner that may shape their understanding of both themselves and their disabilities (Phelan, Wright & Gibson, 2014). These self-perceptions can influence children's social, psychological, and developmental wellbeing in both educational and non-educational settings. Moreover, this process is implicated in relations of power because it demonstrates that able-bodied society has the ability to define and control representations of disability (Wendell, 2006). Thus, a close analysis of passive conceptualizations of children in IEP resource documents illustrates the significance of language in the production, exercise, and maintenance of power for one social group over another (Fairclough, 1989). In sum, such representations produce powerful discourses that shape individual perceptions of children in special education programs and perpetuate unequal power dynamics.

On a broader societal level, discourses that equate disability with passivity, helplessness, and dependency contribute to the assumption that children in special education programs should not have a voice in planning their own education. This process occurs because society obtains its "beliefs regarding health and illness from the [dominant] discourses and constructions available"

(Lyons, 2000, p. 349). Through the repeated use of such discourses, IEP resource documents naturalize the notion that children should remain passive with respect to their own education. According to Wendell (2006), permitting the able-bodied world to define and control such ideologies contributes to unequal power relations and excludes the voices of those with disabilities. In this regard, the language practices of IEP resource documents both determine and produce social identities and cultural beliefs that legitimize systemic power relations (Fairclough, 1989). In other words, these discursive practices naturalize negative perceptions of disability both within and beyond the special education context and perpetuate existing inequalities on a systemic scale. In sum, conceptions of children as passive and powerless in IEP resource documents can shape societal perceptions of those in special education programs, naturalize taken for granted assumptions regarding disability, and legitimize relations of power within and beyond the educational institution.

In addition to shaping and naturalizing negative perceptions of disability, discursively conceptualizing children as passive can mediate the lived realities of those in special education programs. As policy texts that define real world IEP practices, the notions established within the resource documents can easily translate into daily practice. In this regard, there is a risk that constructing children as passive and uninvolved will prevent them from participating in the actual development of their own special education plan. Without a voice in their own education, children may be subjected to a standardized future conceived solely by educators. Therefore, the language practices of the resource documents insinuate that students must adhere to the educational future generated for them by educators. According to Priestly (1999), children's understandings of their own identity and of disability as a social concept are formed as they negotiate with this predetermined future. Moreover, this predetermined future can create overly high expectations of both the child and the IEP (Phelan, Wright & Gibson, 2014). These

expectations can be damaging to a child's social and psychological wellbeing and sense of self if they are not achieved. For example, the inability to meet these obligations and expectations can influence children's self-confidence and self-worth (Phelan, 2011). In this regard, IEP resource documents can shape a child's everyday life by the concepts they aim to legitimize and the actions they coordinate (Nichols & Griffith, 2009). Thus, it is evident that discursively framing children as passive and powerless has the potential to mediate the lived realities of children in special education programs.

Furthermore, the passive voice is consistently employed to conceal the actor responsible for the action imposed on students. This notion is a direct result of "transforming" the active voice into the passive voice in IEP resource documents (Hodge & Kress, 1993). More specifically, the passive transformation alters the sentence structure of the active voice so that it is not grammatically necessary to include the actor. In this regard, the passive voice is employed to explicitly exclude the actor accountable for the action imposed on students. This process can be exemplified by comparing the same quotation in both the active and passive constructions. In the active voice, a sentence must include a subject, followed by a verb, and finished by an object. For example: "**The educator places the student** in a regular class". In contrast, the passive voice "transforms" the "subject-verb-object" structure so that the same quotation appears as: "**The student is placed** in a regular class" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 21). In this phrase, the student is placed in a regular classroom, but the educator who placed that student in the class is eliminated from the sentence through the use of the passive voice. As an explicit transformation, the passive voice deletes the actor from the sentence and weakens the causal connection between the actor and the action (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Thus, the passive transformation distorts and conceals meaning by explicitly excluding the actor (Hodge & Kress, 1993). More specifically, the passive voice removes accountability from the educator, masks the

act of authority imposed on the student, and naturalizes the process in which the student is controlled by a governing figure. In this regard, the passive transformation is implicated in relations of power because it perpetuates and naturalizes the assumption that educators can impose authority over children in special education programs. In doing so, this linguistic structure acts as a form of control that subjugates children to normalized power dynamics in the education system.

Third Conceptualization: Children as Subordinate to an Inanimate Entity

In addition to the previous conceptions, the language practices of IEP resource documents consistently frame children as subordinate to another entity. More specifically, the documents employ the possessive form to establish a relation between students and an inanimate object in a manner that prioritizes the object over the students. This notion can be specifically examined by considering the high quantity of inalienable possessions in these texts. According to Hodge and Kress (1993), inalienable possessions indicate a relation where the possessed entity is integrally and essentially part of the possessor, such as a body part, a family member, a characteristic, or an attribute. However, a closer analysis of this linguistic structure in IEP resource documents revealed that the terms of this model are reversed. More specifically, the inalienable relation is inverted because the possessor (the students) are actually integrally and essentially part of the possessed entity (Hodge & Kress, 1993). In this regard, the focus of the sentence shifts so that the possessed entity becomes more prominent than the possessor. This inversion can be demonstrated by the quotation: "A representative sample of the **student's learning expectations** in each subject […] must be recorded in the IEP" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 10). In this example, the possession (learning expectations) is more fundamental to the sentence than the possessor (the student). This notion is clear because the sentence could

40

maintain its meaning without the word "student's", but it could not do so without the words "learning expectations". In this regard, the focus shifts so that the "learning expectations" are the more prominent and significant entity, and the "student" functions as a mode of further describing those specific learning expectations. This pattern is crucial because inverting the possessive model "transforms" the linguistic structure to one that holds new meaning and significance (Hodge & Kress, 1993). The "transformed" construction differs from the original because it restructures the relationship between the possessor and the possessed entity. As a transformation of the original structure, inalienable language in IEP resource documents contributes directly to the discursive conceptualization of children. More specifically, the repeated use of this transformation positions students as subordinate to an inanimate object. As exemplified in 'Table 6', the data set contains two main types of inalienable possessions in which this process is particularly evident. These include possessions related to a student's disability and possessions related to an institutional term.

Table 6: Types of "Transformed" Inalienable Possessives in IEP Resource Documents

Type of Possession	Example from the Data Set	Possessor	Possessed Entity
Related to the student's "disability"	"The description of the **student's exceptionality** must be consistent with that provided in the IPRC's statement of decision"(Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 6)	Student	Exceptionality
	"The severity of the **student's intellectual impairment** is unknown" (Ministry of Education, 2009).	Student	Impairment
Related to an institutional entity	"The special education teacher will take direct responsibility for certain aspects of the **student's special education program**" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 18).	Student	Special Education Program
	"The applicable reason for developing the **student's IEP** must be indicated in the IEP" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 5).	Student	IEP (Individual Education Plan)

A closer analysis of "transformed" inalienable possessions related to a student's disability, such as "exceptionality" or "impairment", reveals that this linguistic feature sustains dominant medicalized perspectives of disabled identities. More specifically, "transformed"

inalienable language foregrounds the "exceptionality" or "impairment" in a manner that reduces the prominence and importance of the student as a living individual. In foregrounding the disability, "transformed" inalienable language frames the "impairment" or "exceptionality" as the child's most prominent and defining characteristic. This linguistic feature reaffirms dominant medical perspectives that determine children's social identities primarily by their apparent disability. According to Runswick-Cole and Hodge (2009), inalienable language practices exert power over children by reducing their identity to an "impairment" or "exceptionality". This process is harmful towards children because it sustains notions that equate childhood disability with negative constructions such as deviance and abnormality (Garland-Thomson, 1997). These notions marginalize children with disabilities by framing them as subordinate to their able-bodied counterparts. Thus, this process further demonstrates how able-bodied society can define and control representations of disability in a manner that legitimizes inequitable power relations (Fairclough, 1989). In this regard, "transformed" inalienable possessions related to a student's disability, such as "exceptionality" or "impairment", perpetuate dominant medical discourses that diminish children's individual identities and produce inequitable relations of power.

In the context of special education, dominant medical discourses produce negative perceptions of disability that shape children's self-development. More specifically, the medical model equates disability with pathological impairment, individual deficit, and problems that need fixing through alternative education programming (Garland-Thomson, 1997; Linton, 1998). Such perceptions are problematic because they are founded on a system that excludes difference, rather than one that accepts a diverse range of abilities as normal. As children encounter these perceptions during their daily social interactions, they can play a role in constructing their understandings of both themselves and of disability as a social concept (Phelan, 2011). This process occurs because children internalize their experiences of dominant perceptions of

disability in order to understand their own position within society (Fairclough, 1989; Swain & Cameron, 1999). Thus, the use of the "transformed" inalienable structure in IEP resource documents reveals more than a straightforward possessive relationship between a student and another entity. This process is implicated in relations of power that threaten children's unique individualities, suppress their self-development, and shape their everyday lives (Foucault, 1989). In this regard, "transformed" inalienable language in IEP resource documents produces harmful cultural beliefs that legitimize inequitable practices within special education.

Similarly, "transformed" inalienable possessives that establish a relation between a student and an institutional entity, such as "special education program" or "Individual Education Plan", further support medicalized perspectives of disability. Although the institutional entities exemplified in 'Table 6' initially appear to belong to the student in question, a critical disability theory perspective revealed that the possession (special education program or Individual Education Plan) is the larger term, and the apparent possessor (the student) is integrally implicated in the possessed entity (Hodge & Kress, 1993). Thus, the terms of the possessive construction are inverted so that the possessed term is framed as the more prominent and significant entity and the possessor becomes part of that institutional term. According to Hodge and Kress (1993), this possessive transformation is implicated in relations of power because it establishes an asymmetrical relation between an individual and an institution. In the context of special education, this construction is damaging because it contributes to a hierarchical relationship that positions students as subordinate to an institutional entity. As a result, the student is reduced to an object implicated in a larger institutional structure and is no longer perceived as an independent individual. In this regard, "transformed" inalienable language practices in IEP resource documents function as a mode of suppression and distortion (Hodge & Kress, 1993, p. 119). This linguistic transformation suppresses children's individual identities

and distorts relations between individuals and institutions by framing hierarchy as natural. Thus, it is crucial to consider how institutional terms, such as "special education program" or "Individual Education Plan", are discursively positioned in relation to students in order to illuminate the underlying implications of such language.

Moreover, inalienable transformations related to an institutional entity are particularly problematic because the terms "special education program" and "Individual Education Plan" are normalizing institutions that aim to minimize perceived differences (Erevelles, 2005). Implicated within a normalizing institution, children's disabilities are framed as problems that need fixing in order to achieve normalcy (Linton, 1998). This perception further conceptualizes childhood disability as negative, abnormal, and deviant. In this regard, inalienable transformations reaffirm dominant medical perspectives that emphasize perceived differences and establish impermeable boundaries around the term "normal". Thus, this linguistic structure sustains inequalities that marginalize children who are not perceived as "normal" in relation to their able-bodied peers. In sum, a critical analysis of the possessive construction in IEP resource documents revealed that this linguistic practice prioritizes and emphasizes the possession, causing students to be framed as subordinate and secondary to a normalizing institutional entity.

IEP Resource Documents in Practice

In bringing together each of the four aforementioned themes, it is evident that the language practices of IEP resource documents consistently frame children as exceptional, passive, and subordinate despite an explicit attempt to resist such conceptions. These representations are a result of the repeated use of linguistic transformations, such as the transformational attributive model, the passive voice, and "transformed" inalienable possessives. Further analysis revealed that these representations are rooted in relations of power that produce and are produced by

inequality within the education system. In order to answer the final research question, one must extend the previous discussion to consider how these language practices and subsequent power relations can shape the way in which the intentions of Individual Education Plan resource documents materialize in practice.

Although IEP resource documents initially appear to provide a neutral conception of children, deeper analysis revealed that the underlying effects of the language is inherently disabling. As a result, the language practices of the resource documents establish a tension within the texts. This tension arises from the explicit attempt to provide a neutral representation of children by avoiding equative and attributive language, coupled with the implicit presence of harmful conceptions produced by transformations. In other words, the language practices of these documents contain both an overt resistance to damaging representations of children and an underlying persistence of dominant and disabling discourses. In analyzing this ongoing tension from a disability theory perspective, it is evident that the insidious nature of transformations overshadows the well-intentioned attempt to provide a neutral conception of children. This process occurs because transformations perpetuate dominant medical discourses that undermine the aim to employ neutral language when conceptualizing children. Thus, the repeated use of transformations contributes to an ongoing tension that alters the significance of language and challenges the aim to be neutral in IEP resource documents.

In considering the final research question, it is evident that this tension establishes a contradiction that may prevent the intentions of the documents from actualizing in practice. More specifically, dominant conceptualizations of children produced by the use of transformations directly contradict the overall purpose of the IEP. While the IEP aims to assist children in actively progressing towards the achievement of a particular set of goals, these conceptualizations give the impression that children do not possess the power, ability, or desire

to do so. Arguably, this contradiction could shape the way in which the intentions of IEP resource documents materialize in practice. This notion can be further understood by individually examining this inconsistency in relation to each conceptualization previously discussed.

Firstly, framing children as an exception and positioning them in opposition to "regular" students directly contradicts the overarching objectives of the IEP. More specifically, the IEP aims to support children in achieving an individualized set of goals that will bring them closer to "standard" curriculum expectations. Therefore, a contradiction exists because the IEP seeks to assist children in becoming "more normal", yet the resource documents continually frame children as "abnormal". In this regard, avoiding transformations that sustain exclusionary language, such as the transformational attributive model and the passive voice, would expand the definition of "normal" and diminish the need to label some students as "exceptional". Therefore, avoiding transformational language practices would minimize this contradiction.

In addition to the first conception, representations of children as passive and powerless in the resource documents also contradict the overall purpose of the IEP. More specifically, passive conceptualizations of children directly contradict the way in which the IEP encourages children to *actively* work towards educational development, progress, and improvement. These representations insinuate that children do not possess the agency, ability, or ambition to achieve their educational goals. In order to minimize this contradiction, children should be framed as active in their own education and fully capable of achieving their goals given the correct program, services, and environment. Thus, avoiding transformations that explicitly conceptualize children as passive, such as the passive voice, could minimize this inconsistency.

Lastly, representations of children as subordinate in relation to an inanimate entity further solidify this inconsistency. These representations foreground children's disabilities, emphasize

their "abnormalities", and frame their impairment as their most prominent and defining characteristic. These dehumanizing conceptions emphasize perceived differences, whereas the IEP aims to assist children in minimizing these differences. Thus, these representations directly contradict the purpose of the IEP. In this regard, re-evaluating the possessive construction in order to avoid "transformed" inalienable language could alleviate this contradiction.

Thus, dominant representations of children established by the use of transformations directly contradict the overall purpose of the IEP. This contradiction is a result of the ongoing tension produced by paradoxical language practices in the resource documents. Ultimately, this inconsistency may shape the way in which the intentions of the resource documents translate from policy to practice. For instance, this contradiction can send conflicting signals to children and parents regarding the child's role in the special education context. Ongoing ambiguity can hinder children's active achievement, individual progress, and ongoing improvement within their individual education program. These consequences are problematic because they can prevent the objectives of the IEP from being actualized in practice. A failure to effectively make use of the IEP can cause an "inefficiency and inequity in the process of considering, creating, implementing and refining/revising" a child's individual education plan (Ng et al., 2013, p. 5). This form of inequality has the potential to extend beyond the realm of special education to further shape children's social and psychological futures. Thus, it is evident that the contradiction produced by inconsistent language practices may shape the way in which IEP resource documents translate from policy to practice.

The previous discussion offers one perspective on the way in which the language practices of IEP resource documents may influence the ability to translate the intentions of such texts into practice. It is important to note that the purpose of this discussion is not to argue that the language practices of the resource documents are the sole barrier in aligning IEP policy and

practice. Rather, the aim was to illuminate some of the ways in which the language of these texts can influence the lived realities of children in special education programs. In doing so, this study initiates a discussion regarding the relationship between language, disability, and power in special education policy and practice. Such discussions are crucial in order to enact social change and to improve special education policies and procedures for children with Individual Education Plans.

Limitations and Future Direction

In conducting the present research, one major limitation shaped my analysis of the language practices in IEP resource texts. More specifically, this study was limited by the scope insofar as it only examined one group of special education documents. In this regard, the aforementioned findings and analysis cannot be extended to describe all special education documents, nor used to make comparisons between various types of documents. Rather, this research should be interpreted as a pilot study that can provide a model for conducting a critical discourse analysis of other special education documents. As such, this study should be understood as a means of initiating a discussion regarding the significance of language within special education texts.

Future research in this subject could employ this study as a model to investigate a broader and alternative range of special education documents. This research should aim to explore the way in which dominant ideologies that view authority and hierarchy as natural are embedded within language. Moreover, this research should continue to determine relations of causality between language and broader sociopolitical structures, relations, and processes within special education. In doing so, future research should seek to richen the former discussion, advance our understanding of the power of language, and enact social change for the betterment of children in special education programs.

Conclusion

Over the course of the present study, it became increasingly apparent that IEP resource documents are founded on a system of classification that categorizes children according to their "inherent" abilities. Although one might argue that this system is fundamental within the context of education, it is crucial to note that classification systems are socially constructed and exist only in discourse (Hodge & Kress, 1993). As such, these systems are neither natural nor static, but can be renegotiated through persistent critical reflection of the discourses that constitute them (Hodge & Kress, 1993).

With this in mind, the present study employed discourse analysis and disability theory to critically reflect on the discursive practices of IEP resource documents. In doing so, this study investigated taken for granted conceptualizations of children, contested normalized relations of power implicit in the education system, and considered correlations in IEP policy and practice. More specifically, this investigation found that children are consistently framed as exceptional, passive, and subordinate despite an attempt to resist such representations. These representations are a direct result of the repeated use of linguistic transformations, such as the transformational attributive model, the passive voice, and "transformed" inalienable possessives. Further analysis revealed that these conceptualizations are rooted in relations of power that shape individual and societal perceptions of those in alternative education programs, naturalize negative assumptions regarding disability, govern children's lived realities, and perpetuate inequality within and beyond special education. In collectively considering these conceptualizations and subsequent power relations, it is evident that such practices may shape the way in which the intentions of IEP resource documents translate into practice. In sum, this study aimed to illuminate the underlying significance of IEP discourses and its implications for children with Individual Education Plans.

It is crucial to note that the purpose of this study was not to suggest that IEP resource documents are poorly written, completely damaging, or wholly disadvantageous. Rather, the aim was to question some of the underlying assumptions regarding the discursive constructions of children and to illuminate the potentially harmful consequences of such conceptions. It is only through this form of critical reflection that one may initiate social change within special education documents.

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Appendix A
Sample Coding Methodology

THE IEP PROCESS

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Regulation 181/98, subsection 6(8), as amended by Ontario Regulation 137/01, requires the principal, within 30 school days after placement of the pupil in the program, to ensure that the plan is completed and a copy of it sent to a parent of the pupil and, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, the pupil.

Sample Coding Table

Colour	Code	Linguistic Structure
Red	B1a	Attributive Model: Traditional
Yellow	B2b	Attributive Model: Transformational
Green	C1a	Passive Voice: Perfect Simple
Pink	C2b	Passive Voice: Simple
Blue	D2j	Possessive Form: Inalienable
Blue	D1a	Possessive Form: Alienable

Under Regulation 181/98, the principal is responsible for ensuring that an IEP is developed for exceptional pupils.

Once a student has been identified as exceptional and placed in a special education program, successful practice suggests that the principal should assign to one teacher the responsibility for _coordinating_ the development, implementation, and monitoring of the student's IEP, employing a collaborative process. Planning a student's educational program is best accomplished through the combined efforts of, and close communication among, the student, the student's parents, the school, the community, and other professionals involved with the student. The IEP provides an opportunity for all those involved with the student to work together to provide a program that will foster achievement and success.

Regardless who is coordinating the IEP process, decisions related to program planning (represented in the IEP template by the sections covering Current Level of Achievement, Annual Program Goals, Learning Expectations, Teaching Strategies, and Assessment Methods) should be made by the individual who teaches the student and prepares the report card – usually the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher is responsible for instructing the student and assessing the student's knowledge and skills in relation to his or her learning expectations, including any modified or alternative expectations.

This guide recommends that a _team approach_ should underlie the IEP process, and that the process should be _curriculum-oriented_; that is, it should focus on how the student is expected to progress through the Ontario curriculum, with or without modification of expectations, and on the provision of alternative programs not described in the Ontario curriculum.

The IEP process involves the following five phases:

1. Gather information
2. Set the direction
3. Develop the IEP as it relates to the student's special education program and services
4. Implement the IEP
5. Review and update the IEP

Appendix B
Summary of Linguistic Structures
in IEP Resource Documents

Code	Linguistic Structure	Description	Example	Example from the Data Set
A	Equative Model	Establishes a relation between two entities that are both nouns through the "noun-'is'-noun" structure	The **child is an exceptional student**.	N/A
B1	Attributive Model: Traditional Form	Establishes a relation between a noun and a quality through the "noun-'is'-noun" structure	The **child is exceptional**.	"The parents and the student, if **the student is 16 years of age** or older, must be asked to sign the IEP" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 43).
B2	Attributive Model: Transformational Form	Establishes a relation between a noun and a quality through the "adjective+noun" structure	The **exceptional child** goes to school.	"An IEP must be developed within thirty […] days of the **exceptional student's** placement" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 20).
C1	Passive Voice: 'Perfect Simple'	The subject is the recipient of the action, rather than the performer of that action	**The child has been identified** as exceptional.	"An IEP must be developed for every **student who has been identified** as an exceptional pupil" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 5).
C2	Passive Voice: 'Simple'	The subject is the recipient of the action, rather than the performer of that action	**The child is placed** is a regular class.	"It should focus on how **the student is expected** to progress through the Ontario curriculum" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 9).
D1	Possessive Form: Alienable	Indicates a relation of ownership or possession where the possessed entity is not an integral part of the possessor	The **child's desk** is in the classroom.	N/A
D2	Possessive Form: Inalienable	Indicates a relation of ownership or possession where the possessor and the possessed entity are integrally and essential part of each other	The **child's parents** came to the school.	"It may be appropriate to include information relating to **the student's personal characteristics**" (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 23).