THE PRACTICE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE
THOHOYANDOU AREA - A CRITICAL REFLECTION

by

MU CohenlelI GRACE SIDOGI

Submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of

MASTERS IN EDUCATION

in the subject

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR : DR FH WEEKS

AUGUST 2001
DECLARATION

Student number: 654-708-7

I declare that THE PRACTICE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE THOHOYANDOU AREA - A CRITICAL REFLECTION is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

Sidogi M.G

Date: 2001-08-22
SUMMARY

THE PRACTICE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE THOHoyANDou AREA – A CRITICAL REFLECTION

The National Commission of Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) Document (1997) which portrays the new Education Policy in South Africa, clearly states that one of the crucial outcomes is that all possible barriers to learning must be eliminated so that all learners are able to actualise their full potential.

Inclusive education, as embedded within the Education Policy, is regarded as an approach which will allow learners to actualise their full potential.

This study is a critical reflection on whether inclusive education is practised in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area. The research findings indicated that inclusive education is not practised in the Thohoyandou area. A major factor or barrier in this regard is that teachers and principals are not empowered in terms of knowledge to practise inclusive education. Other factors acting as barriers to the implementation of inclusive education are that the school buildings do not cater for physically and visually impaired learners as well as the attitudes of teachers, parents and peers are inclined to be negative towards learners experiencing barriers to learning. The community should also be educated and empowered to assist and understand these learners, who will become the future members of the community, more effectively,

As inclusive education is one of the means whereby all learners are given the opportunity to actualise their full potential, these barriers must be addressed so that inclusive education can be practised in all primary schools in the Thohoyandou area. A few strategies to implement inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area are suggested by the researcher.
KEY TERMS

Inclusive education; learners experiencing barriers to learning and development; actualise full potential, learners with special educational needs; attitudes; integration; mainstreaming; medical model; ecological systems model; impairments; disabilities; school support team; new education policy; primary school, systems or subsystems; learners-at-risk.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following persons:

- **Dr FH Weeks** who supervised, guided and assisted me patiently during the research.
- **Prof EM Lemmer** for her assistance in editing the text and **Mrs A Kukkuk** for the typing.
- **Mr & Mrs NT Ratshitanga, Mr & Mrs P Ramatsea, Mr N Tshitereke and Peace Corps Volunteer, Miss L Clay** for assistance in order to computerise the study.
- **Mr & Mrs T Sidogi and Mr & Mrs AR Netshitungulu** who provided accommodation during my visit to my supervisor at Pretoria.
- **To Mr & Mrs T Ramugondo** for the love, loyal support and unfailing belief that this work would eventually be completed.
- **The teachers, departmental heads and principals** from the pilot schools for their cooperative response and valuable comments towards the study.
- **Mr & Mrs ZA Makwarela, Mrs H Demana, and Miss T Maphiri** for assisting with the completion of the questionnaires and organising the interviews with respondents.
- **To my mother and father, Mr & Mrs O Nematatani** for acting as a source of unconditional love and support.

**THIS DISSERTATION IS DEDICATED TO:**

My dear husband Samson
and my children Thendo, Hulisani and Elelwani Mukonazwothe,
who have granted me the freedom and the support to complete
this study.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION 1

1.2 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS 3
1.2.1 Practice of inclusive education 3
1.2.2 Inclusive education 4
1.2.3 Integration 9
1.2.4 Mainstreaming 12
1.2.5 Medical model 13
1.2.6 Ecological systems model 13
1.2.7 Learners who experience barriers to learning (Learners with Special Educational Needs or LSEN) 17
1.2.8 Disability and impairment 22
1.2.9 Developmental problems 23
1.2.10 Learning problems 24
1.2.11 Emotional problems 25
1.2.12 Behaviour problems 28
1.2.13 Learners-at-risk 34
1.2.14 Primary school level 36
1.2.15 Attitudes 37
1.2.16 Outcomes-based education 38
1.2.17 NCSNET Document 38
1.2.18 The SA Constitution 38
1.3 FACTORS GIVING RISE TO THE STUDY

1.3.1 Teaching experience of the researcher

1.3.2 The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, the White Paper of Education and Training and the NCSNET Document

1.3.3 The implementation of outcomes-based education

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 General outcomes of the study

1.5.2 Specific outcomes of the study

1.6 FIELD OF STUDY

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.8 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

1.9 COURSE OF STUDY

CHAPTER 2
THE PHENOMENON OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.3 THE MAIN POINTS OF DEPARTURE REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.3.1 A flexible curriculum

2.3.2 Holistic development
2.3.3 Work life related education
2.3.4 Inclusive learning environment

2.4 ADVANTAGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
2.4.1 Academic performance
2.4.2 Social skills performance
2.4.3 Personal principles
2.4.4 Contact with people who are different
2.4.5 Patience
2.4.6 Friendship

2.5 DISADVANTAGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.6 CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 3
THE ATTITUDE OF TEACHERS, PARENTS AND PEERS TOWARDS LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.2 THE IMPACT OF THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS ON LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING
3.2.1 Positive attitude of teachers towards learners who experience barriers to learning
3.2.2 Negative attitudes of teachers towards learners who experience barriers to learning
3.2.2.1 The labelling of learners by teachers
3.2.2.2 The isolation of learners with barriers to learning
3.2.2.3 Frustration experienced by teachers regarding learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom
### 3.3 CAUSATIVE FACTORS LEADING TO NEGATIVE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2</td>
<td>Lack of knowledge and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.3</td>
<td>Lack of motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4 POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO CHANGE THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>Intensive training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2</td>
<td>Individualisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.3</td>
<td>Creating an inclusive environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.5 ATTITUDES OF PEERS TOWARDS INCLUDING LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1</td>
<td>Positive attitudes of peers towards learners with barriers to learning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2</td>
<td>Negative attitudes of peers towards learners with barriers to learning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2.1</td>
<td>Labelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2.2</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3</td>
<td>Causative factors that lead to negative attitudes of peers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3.1</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.3.2</td>
<td>Lack of motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4</td>
<td>Possible strategies to change negative attitudes of the peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4.1</td>
<td>The implementation of a reward system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4.2</td>
<td>Partners working together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4.3</td>
<td>Limit criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4.4</td>
<td>Curriculum 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.4.5</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5.4.6 Peer relationship
3.5.4.7 Individualisation
3.5.4.8 Social support categories
3.5.4.9 Peer tutoring
3.5.4.10 Humanness ("Ubuntu")

3.6 ATTITUDES OF PARENTS TOWARDS LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

3.6.1 Positive attitudes of parents towards learners experiencing barriers to learning

3.6.2 Negative attitudes of parents towards learners experiencing barriers to learning

3.6.2.1 Labelling

3.6.2.2 Lack of motivation

3.6.3 Causative factors that lead to learners who have barriers to learning

3.6.4 Possible strategies to change the negative attitude of parents

3.7 CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.2 QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE PRACTICE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE THOHOYANDOU AREA
4.3 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES
4.3.1 The semi-structured questionnaire
4.3.2 The semi-structured interview

4.4 VENUE

4.5 ANALYSIS OF DATA AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.6 POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

4.7 CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.2 ENVISAGED OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STUDY

5.4 THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.6 CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY
CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A range of needs exists among learners and within the education system which must all be met if effective learning and development is to be provided and sustained. The education system must be structured and function in such a way that it can accommodate a diversity of learner needs and system needs. It is when the education system fails to provide for and accommodate such diversity that learning breakdown takes place and learners are excluded.


The above quotation makes it clear that meeting the diverse needs of learners, is a prerequisite for effective learning and development. As the focus is on diverse needs of learners within the education system, an inclusive education system addressing diverse educational needs of learners as well as system needs, is the answer to the challenge of providing effective learning and development opportunities whereby learners are considered more than mere numbers in a classroom. It is also the strategy to prevent a breakdown in learning.

Bengu (1997:10) supports the fact that inclusive education provides for a diversity of learner needs, by maintaining that inclusion creates a diversity of enriching learning experiences for all learners. Naicker (1996:2) argues that schools should develop their capacity to provide education within an inclusive and supportive learning environment. Learning programmes should structure opportunities for a diversity of learners to learn, work and play together.

Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (1999:47) maintain that learner diversity can be regarded as an opportunity, with potential for growth through an interchange of shared different experiences. The learning situation can act as a forum where a learner’s diversity should be encouraged.
Discrimination of learners because of diversity, prevents them from experiencing life fully. According to Burden (1994:2) exposure to a diversity of other learners’ beliefs, ideas and values in the inclusive classroom, will enable the learner to acquire alternative insights and understanding through a mutual learning experience with other learners. Learners will be able to experience the different learning needs of other learners which will enable them to obtain a much broader basic frame of reference. In this way a learner can evaluate his or her existing knowledge with newly acquired knowledge and insights.

In view of the necessity for inclusive education as a prerequisite for effective learning and development to be implemented in all educational settings, this study will focus on the implementation of inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area specifically in the following way:

• In what way can inclusive education impact on education in primary schools?
• In what way can the implementation of inclusive education impact on the attitudes of teachers, parents and peers?
• In what way can inclusive education impact on the diverse educational needs of learners?
• In what way can inclusive education impact on the diverse needs of the education system?

In order to critically reflect on the practice of inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area, the relevant concepts will be clarified, the research problem will be formulated, the research objectives will be formulated, as well as the demarcation of the field of study, the research methodology and the course of the study as reflected in the different chapters.

The following paragraphs clarify concepts relevant to the study:
1.2 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.2.1 Practice of inclusive education

Oberholzer, Gerber, Van Rensburg, Barnard & Moller (1990:15) relate practice to a Greek verb derived from the term *praxis*. Its derivation has rich nuances of meaning, i.e., *to move through, to finish off, and to consummate*. Besides its use as a verb, it also refers to a planned and considered movement, in the sense of behaviour or action. The emphasis is on the fact that human action, strictly speaking, is theorising practice. Thus teaching practice is human activity performed in a planned, systematic and purposive way (Oberholzer et al 1990:15). The NCSNET Document (1997:80) recommended the following practices of teaching and learning, in order to accommodate a diversity of learners in the classroom situation:

- A variety of innovative teaching, learning and classroom management strategies should be pursued in order to facilitate inclusion, providing a sense of belonging to all learners.
- The Department of Education should implement on-going educator development programmes, which will equip educators with the necessary knowledge, attitudes, and skills enabling them to be competent as well as confident in their practice and effort to develop a supportive classroom environment.
- Management at all centres of learning must adapt organisational arrangements to promote and support innovative teaching and learning practices.

For the purpose of this study on inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area, Oberholzer et al's (1990:15) definition on the practice of inclusive education will be applied in the following way:

- Inclusive education involves a human activity whereby the teachers are able to accommodate a diversity of learners in the classroom.
• The assistance to a learner is planned in a systematic and purposeful way, allowing each learner to actualise his or her potential to the fullest.
• Barriers to learning that might exist must be attended to in order to enable the learners to benefit optimally from the teaching situation.

1.2.2 Inclusive education

According to Alper, Schloss, Etscheidt and MacFarlane (1995:6) inclusive education entails the provision of educational experiences for ALL learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. Such learners would participate in the same classroom situation with those learners who are not experiencing barriers to learning and development, at the same mainstream schools and same mainstream classes that their peers attend.

Inclusive education implies "QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL" which in turn indicates a mindshift from:

• "special needs and support" to the development of quality education for all learners.
• changing the learner to enable him or her to conform to the norms and values of a specific society (this implies the presence of barriers and excludes the learner from certain aspects of the school system) which has to change to accommodate all learners.

Learners must be supported by the environment and the role players within the environment, in order to actualise his or her full potential.

This mindshift or paradigm shift was created and necessitated by the shortcomings of the medical model which was widely and internationally accepted. The present day focus is thus on the environment and in what way the environment can eliminate factors that create barriers to learning.
The rationale behind the mindshift, indicating a change from the medical model to the ecological systems model is as follows: (Burden 1995:45; Jenkins & Siles 1994:16; Meyer and Grenot-Scheyer 1994:16; Rankin, Hallich, Ban, Hartley, Bost & Uggla 1994:237).

- Inclusive education or “Education for All” maintains that a society consists of a diversity of people who are part of a diversity of cultures, languages, races, genders, abilities and temperaments. It is a “normal” characteristic of a “normal” society.
- All people are regarded as being equal to one another in society. No one is superior to another person. Because of the fact that a society consists of people, every person has the right to be part of the society which also entitles them to be accommodated with tolerance, to be respected and to be treated with dignity.

Learners who experience barriers to learning also form part of a “normal” society and have the same rights as other persons in society. In the classroom a learner who experiences barriers to learning should be regarded as an individual, a unique person with his or her own needs. This in turn implies that all learners can learn, but not at the same speed and that certain adjustments need to be made eg. curriculum changes, additional time granted during examinations, et cetera. They are thus entitled to the same education as their counterparts who do not experience barriers to learning. They must be accepted “just as they are”. Inclusion implies non-discriminatory practices towards learners who experience barriers to learning. According to Hilton and Smith (1994:253) and Burden (1994:15), inclusion is about a specific view of people. It implies attitudes towards people and implies value systems.

Value judgements are expressed in terms of “labels” eg. “stupid”, “different”, “abnormal” et cetera. The end result is that learners who experience barriers to learning experience themselves as being “abnormal”, “stupid”, “a problem”, “a burden to others”, “different”, “not one of us” and even “they are not worth as much as we are”. Labels exclude learners from the ordinary experiences of life and opportunities to actualise their full potential. In fact, the attitudes of and the way that members of society treat these learners, create a barrier to
learning. The environment causes an impairment to a learner and negatively reinforces the possibility of a barrier. Burden (1994:15) warns that the focus must be on "...consolidation, unity, holism, inclusivity, equality and changing the social context, not the individual". The system must change and remove existing barriers to learning and not the individual or person. People should be respected for what they are and not for what others and the community expect them to be in order to be in line with that criteria of normalisation and excellence. Burden (1994:15-16) comes to the following conclusion:

In providing basic and quality education for all, and thus accommodating diversity according to the principles of equality and industry, it is believed that all human beings should be enabled to affirm themselves and live and work in a dignified manner.

Ainscow (1994:2) maintains that the old education system: "...not only works to the disadvantage of particular pupils but also acts as a barrier to overall school improvement.”

Naicker (1996:2); Philips, Sapona, & Lubic (1995:262) and Salend (1990:49) elaborate more on the concept of “education for all” in stating that inclusive education should be practised in a teaching and learning situation where it welcomes, acknowledges and accepts all learners including learners experiencing barriers to learning, by educating them together in appropriate educational programmes. All learners should be allowed access to mainstream schools and no learner should be excluded from the mainstream education.

Snell, Lowman & Canady (1996:265) supports the fact that all learners should be educated in one classroom and maintains that learners need to acquire life skills alongside peers, while receiving the necessary support services. Support services (for example therapists) should be readily available and provided, rather than taking learners to the services. Inclusive education is non-discriminative regarding the nature or degree of the needs. Inclusive education integrates all learners who experience barriers to learning, particularly those with disabilities into the
regular age appropriate classroom of their community school within one education system (Murphy 1996:471). Inclusion is not simply about reconstructing provision for advocacy towards learners experiencing barriers to learning, but is a means of extending educational opportunities to a wide range of marginalised groups. These barriers are the learners who may historically have had little or no access to school regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or linguistic aspects. These include disabled, gifted, street learners, learners from remote or nomadic populations, minorities and learners from other disadvantaged or marginal areas or groups (Engelbrecht et al 1990:32).

For a better understanding and clarification of the concept "inclusive education" the reports of the NCSNET Document (1997:VI) as well as documents released by the Centre for the Study of Inclusive Education (CSIE) (1999:16) maintains that inclusive education:

- Promotes the full personal academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, socio-economic status, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning style and language.
- Is free of discrimination, segregation and harassment.
- Facilitates an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and respect.
- Creates an environment which respects and values each other as unique individuals and as partners in the teaching and learning process.
- Respects the rights of all learners and enables them to participate fully in a democratic society.
- Corresponds to the individual learner's requirements or needs and the provision that is made for them.
- Enables learners to participate in the life and work of mainstream institutions to the best of their abilities, whatever their needs may be.

The main points of departure regarding “inclusive education” can be summarised as follows (Alper et al 1995:6; Engelbrecht et al 1999:32; Naicker 1996:2; NCSNET Document 1997:vi;
Inclusive education implies "Education for All" and "Quality Education for All".

Inclusive education is practised within the frame of reference of the Ecological System Model.

The environment not the learner is accountable for presenting barriers to learning.

The environment must eliminate factors which act as barriers to learning and change accordingly - not the learner having to change to match norms and standards of society.

Each learner is unique and experiences his or her own individual needs which have to be met by the environment.

Inclusive education includes a diversity of learners. Every learner has an equal right to be included in the education system. The one learner is not better than the other.

Inclusive education depicts a picture of a "normal society" as it includes a diversity of people and needs.

All learners have access to a single education system.

All learners should have access to mainstream schools.

Labelling or discriminatory practices are eliminated. All learners are accepted, respected and treated with dignity, just as they are. Everybody belongs together on an equal basis.

Holism, unity, equality, inclusivity and changing the social context are key terms in inclusive education.

All learners must be understood and assisted to actualise their full potential.

Special provision must be made for those learners who experience "special" needs eg. adjustment of the curriculum, additional time granted during examinations.

All learners must have access to the same education whether they experience barriers to learning or not.
Inclusive education as an educational philosophy, underpins outcomes-based education in the following ways: It is based on a flexible, accessible curriculum, learning support strategies, open schools as well as support services whenever necessary. By allowing a diversity of learners in the classroom, learners can learn from one another and are encouraged to form caring friendships. Learners are taught and role modelled by the teacher to accept the differences between people; Teachers are able to compile a relevant, tailor-made individual programme for each learner who experiences a barrier to his or her learning.

The attitude of teachers towards all learners as well as the availability of sufficient support and resources to teach all learners, are determining factors towards the successful outcome of the practice of inclusive education.

In order to gain a better understanding of inclusive education, the concept of integration will be discussed in the next paragraph in order to clarify the differences and similarities between inclusion and integration.

1.2.3 Integration

According to O'Halon (1997:68) and the report from the CSIE (CSIE 1999:6), integration refers to a process where learners with or without barriers to learning and development are given the opportunity to learn together with one another in the mainstream school system. It implies the physical placement of learners with varying needs on regular school campuses. There is full participation of learners who experience barriers to learning in the ordinary curriculum. According to the CSIE (1999:6) report, integration involves dealing with the individual needs of each learner, subject to the capacity of the mainstream school in meeting those needs. The emphasis is on learners who experience barriers to learning obtaining their education alongside their peers, for the purpose of an integrating community, society, and world. The ordinary school should be able to provide facilities (that is accommodation,
specialised teachers, equipment, multi-disciplinary professional support, etc.), which are suitable for each child's special needs.

Wilezenski (1992:307) describes integration, as multifaceted focussing on a physical, academic, behavioural and social dimension. Each factor needs to have its own allocation in regular classes. Therefore the physical integration of learners who experience barriers to learning must promote a conducive classroom setting compatible with the academic track and the social and behavioural maturity (according to that particular age group) of the learners. All learners must feel socially comfortable and the integration must not disrupt, but instead enhance the learning environment.

Snell et al (1996:265) stresses that with integration learners who experience barriers to learning spend some time with peers but they may not attend their neighbouring schools or be "class members" with peers. Snell et al (1996:265) maintains that integration can be done "socially" (during lunch time and friendship groups) or "functionally" (integrating learners who experience barriers to learning and development within mainstream lesson and classes). Wiegand (1994:55) argues that learners have the same basic human needs, one of which is the need to be respected and accepted as member of the community and society.

Integration involves more extensive participation of learners with special needs in age-appropriate activities with non-disabled peers. Integration did not necessary challenge or alter the education system but focussed on an individual or a small group of learners for whom the curriculum was adapted, different activities devised, or assistance provided (Engelbrecht et al 1999:8). Integration bases its theory on the human values supporting the placement of learners who experience barriers to learning in mainstream schools whereas the more recent movement towards inclusion sees it as a matter of human rights. According to Fairbairn & Fairbairn (1992:29) there is a change of terminology from "integration" to inclusive education to imply an education free of segregation.
Engelbrecht et al (1999:8) and Fairbairn & Fairbairn (1992:32) note the following characteristics regarding integration:

- Integration can be regarded as a concept implying a social component (eg. the interaction amongst learners with and without barriers to learning during break or the playground) location of the school (eg. no “special” school providing for learners experiencing barriers to learning) and functional (which is the actual integration of learners who experience barriers to learning within mainstream classes).
- Integration does not imply that special provision should be made for learners who are experiencing barriers to learning in terms of the curriculum.
- Integration implies the placement of learners who experience barriers to learning in mainstream schools depending on the needs of the learner, whereas inclusive education sees placement in a mainstream school as a matter of human rights.

The two approaches are related but a slight difference is placed on the application of integration with its assumption that additional arrangements be made to accommodate learners who experience barriers to learning within a system of schooling, whereas in the case of inclusive education there is an aim of restructuring schools in order to respond to needs of learners (Burden 1995:49).

The similarities between the concept “integration” and the concept “inclusive education” are as follows:

- All learners are considered as learners experiencing a diversity of barriers to learning; learners are graded according to their impairments.
- Both concepts imply non-segregation, no discrimination amongst learners according to their needs.
- A policy of non-segregation and non-discrimination towards all learners in classrooms must be implemented.
• The society must facilitate the acceptance of learners who experience barriers to learning as they are the future members of the community.
• Learners are together in all activities presented.

The clarification by Engelbrecht et al (1999:9), O'Halon (1995:68) and Wiegand (1994:55) of the concept "integration" is applicable to this study as it is maintained that:

• All learners are integrated together in the mainstream school system.
• Learners have rights to have access to quality education for all according to their human needs.
• All learners need to be accepted and respected as they are.

1.2.4 Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming and inclusive education are two approaches associated with the normalisation principle as opposed to the traditional customs in specialised education whereby learners were placed in separate schools, excluding them from mainstream education and stigmatising them as not being "normal".

Mainstream aims at educating all learners under normal circumstances so that all learners can live "normally". By creating diversity in the classroom, all learners learn to understand and accept learners with physical impairments and to behave in a "normal" way towards them.

During the late 1970's (Davies & Green 1998:97) mainstreaming gained momentum in the United States of America. The attention regarding "mainstream" education was focussed on the fact that learners had to be able to learn in "the least restrictive environment". This implies that the environment must eliminate barriers, which will prevent learners from actualising their potential in a "normal" way. *The learner must thus not adapt to the system, but the system must be tailormade to provide for the individual needs of each learner.*
1.2.5 Medical model

During 1900 to approximately 1965, the education of learners with physical impairments was to a large extent, influenced by the medical or clinical or individual or healing profession. According to the medical profession, learners were grouped into categories because of their medical diagnosis. Learners were taught in “special” schools providing for the “special” needs that those learners experience, eg. the deaf, the blind, et cetera... The placement of learners in these special schools, excluded learners from mainstream education. There were limited opportunities to interact with “normal” learners. Each learner’s deficiencies and problems had to be improved by making use of a multidisciplinary approach as different professional people were part of the team. The impact of the environment and especially the home as a causative factor was ignored. Learners were excluded by being sent away from home to a school in another community. They became estranged from their own communities. The main focus of education offered to learners, was to improve their deficiencies and not so much to prepare them for becoming part of a community.

The medical model or approach gave rise to the concept “specialised education”. This concept is not acceptable as it accentuates exclusion and marginalisation of learners, which eventually often results in stigmatisation of learners. Burden (1994:13) describes stigmatised learners as “charity models” and who were treated in a “patronising and pitying manner”, being changed into “objects of charity and not human beings of worth”.

1.2.6 Ecological systems model

Teachers are expected to take control of the motley assortment of different behaviours to be found in their classrooms. Less desirable behaviour needs to be redirected and more desirable behaviours encouraged and strengthened. Some of the behaviour tends to be less serious and others more serious in nature. Dealing with behaviour problems consumes a great deal of a teacher’s time and leaves him or her with little or no time to encourage desirable behaviours,
such as effective social skills (making and keeping friends, dealing successfully with peer pressure), self-regulatory behaviours (working independently, finishing a task on time), and behaviour that is indicative of a good self-image, for example taking pride in what one has done and feeling good about one's successes.

The ecological model offers teachers an opportunity to target and deal with problem behaviours directly, by paying special attention to the environmental and situational factors that can either make a contribution towards the aggravation of the problem, or enhance the successes in dealing with it, if dealt with in an appropriate manner. In effect it is contended that desirable behaviours can be inhibited by situational and environmental factors, which must therefore be taken into consideration in addressing the behaviour concerned.

The concept ecology refers to a study of the relationships between an organism and its environment. Rhodes (Rizzo & Zabel 1988:21) distinguishes between different models, namely the behavioural, psychodynamic, biophysical, sociological and ecological models. With the exception of the ecological model, each of the other models tends to focus on the learner as the guilty party, in analysing problem behaviour. Only the ecological model focuses on the interaction between the learner and the different systems/ecologies that are part of his or her environment. Clearly, the ecological model therefore is of substantial significance, in researching a future methodology for dealing with problem behaviour within the school context.

Paul and Epanchin (1991:216) describe the ecosystem as something that is not separate from individuals. They maintain that learners are not within an ecosystem - they are part of the ecosystem. Learners have their own unique niches, psychological places that are comfortable to the learners and the rest of the ecosystem.

The ecological model is based on two fundamental principles, namely:
Ecosystems are continually in a process of seeking to establish a state of equilibrium. Because of the complex composition of the different elements of the ecosystem, permanent equilibrium is never possible. However, the system is always seeking equilibrium, although it can only be achieved on a temporary basis. Disturbance occurs when the various elements of the ecosystem are so out of harmony that the stability of the environment is in jeopardy. Four processes are needed to harmonise the disturbance, namely:

- **adaptation** (a component changes to fit in better with the rest of the components),
- **assimilation** (if adaptation does not occur, and the disturbance perseveres, the ecosystem can assimilate it by creating a new niche for it or expel it from the system completely or if any of the two mentioned processes are unsuccessful, ecological succession takes place),
- **expulsion,**
- **succession** (the whole ecosystem is being altered in a basic way, together with associated changes in relationships and expectations).

The *interrelatedness of the components* of the ecological model. Every component or element of the model affects another component, which in turn is affected by yet another component. If one component changes, it affects another component within the same environment. The ecosystem must thus be seen as an entity and not as isolated components. This reality highlights the complexity of obtaining any form of equilibrium in a context where change has become the norm rather than the exception to the rule.

Davie (Charlton & David 1993:11) explains what is meant by the ecological model, when he argues that "each individual child is embedded in a number of systems, notably family and school, and that the individual's behaviour can only meaningfully be viewed in that sort of
context”. No behaviour takes place in a complete vacuum - it is always embedded in the environment. Rhodes and Paul (Hammill & Bartel 1995:294) explain that ecological theories are “holistic phenomena that explained how the various social, physical and psychic processes of an ecosystem become a disability and are transformed into deviance”. This theory points out in a definite way that deviance can be regarded as a result of disturbed relationships between an organism (the learner) and its environment (eg. the home, the peer group, at school). Therefore, the teacher needs to take into consideration this interaction that takes place, when formulating strategies, as to how to best deal with problem behaviour. Factors that teachers should pay attention to are classroom structure, school rules and regulations, the curriculum, friendships and cliques among peer group members and their impact on learners who may be experiencing difficulty in socialising with members of the peer group. Several environments may therefore be looked at when assessing the behaviour problem.

The advantages of the ecological model are as follows (Apter & Conoley 1984:21; Hammill & Bartel 1995:293,294):

- It allows the teacher to assess a learner's status within the various ecologies or systems or environments within which he or she functions.
- It provides the teacher with a much broader and more natural picture of the learner, than has been the case with conventional evaluations in the past, which removed the learner from the classroom to be evaluated in the principal or psychologist’s office.
- It focuses on various factors that could have aggravated the behavioural problem; Instead of placing the blame on the learner, as was the case in the past, “troubled children are actually representatives of troubled systems” (Apter & Conoley 1984:21).
- It prevents labelling, as learners are no longer to blame, but the different ecologies or systems take responsibility for the learner's behavioural problem.
- It clearly highlights the fact that a piecemeal approach, in contrast to a holistic or “wholeness” (all parts being part of the “whole”) approach, is not acceptable, as the
former approach merely focuses on the problem behaviour, thereby failing to view the problem behaviour within the broader framework of organisational complexity.

- It prevents a study of only the learner or only the environment, as it focuses on the interaction between the learner and the environment.
- It focuses on relations instead of entities, as well as on process and change variables.
- It focuses on relations instead of entities, as well as on process and change variables.
- It provides more insight than any other model has done in the past, and far greater opportunities for formulating strategies to deal with the problem behaviour in a realistic way. Specific behavioural outcomes can be planned, in accordance with a well-designed systems analysis and systems change process.
- It is such a complex model any specific intervention can in effect cascade into a wide range of unanticipated consequences, which accentuates the unique encapsulation of each learner within his or her environment.

The school is regarded as an open system, namely a system that is in constant interaction with other systems in the environment that it serves, for example the church, the community, and the family. It serves different systems and receives input from these systems, for example society at large. The success of a school can be measured in terms of how well it can maintain an internal state of equilibrium, while serving and adapting to the constantly changing needs of society. Its success will also depend on its ability to adapt its products, in terms of satisfying the needs and demands of society, while simultaneously attending to the needs and problems of staff, learners and parents as well.

1.2.7 Learners who experience barriers to learning (Learners with Special Educational Needs or LSEN)

The concept "learners with special educational needs" (LSEN) is a fairly new concept, as it has been used for the first time in England during 1978 in the Warnock Report on Special Educational Needs. Hereafter it was incorporated in England in educational legislation. Other countries followed in the footsteps of England by using the concept LSEN more freely. During
1981, in the Report of the Working Committee, compiled by the HSRC, as well as in the new White Paper in 1995 on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa and the SA Schools Act no. 84 of 1996, the concept LSEN was used.

The two commissions, appointed by the Minister of Education namely The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS), investigated the Education Policy on "Learners with Special Educational Needs". The concept "learners" was introduced by these abovenamed two committees, and not children, as it is not age restricted and also refers to young people and adults (apart from referring to children as well) being educated and who may experience special educational needs and are accommodated by the teacher in the following ways:

"Special educational needs" implies that certain learners experience different needs from other children so that "different special" measures need to be taken to meet the "special" needs of these learners, eg:

- the curriculum must be changed - it must be made more difficult or simpler.
- additional time is needed by these learners to complete an examination paper or test or activity.
- a special seat must be allocated, because of the fact that the learners may be in a wheelchair.
- special tuition because a learner has fallen behind other learners and needs to catch up.
- additional help rendered in a certain learning area in order to overcome difficulties experienced.
- additional attention because of behaviour problems experienced, eg. disruptive behaviour.
- special guidance and interest in each learner, especially certain learners with eg. emotional or behavioural problems in order to positively reinforce a good self-image.
According to the NCSNET Document (Burden & Landsberg 2000:3), the following reasons were cited as to why the concept "learners who experience barriers to learning" is preferred to the concept "learners with special educational needs":

- Barriers to learning refer to the needs of the individual learner or the system that needs to be addressed e.g. barriers within the learner him or herself, the curriculum, the learning centre, the system of education and the broader social context. The barriers within these subsystems should be decreased, removed or prevented so that a learner can actualise his or her full potential.

- The concept "learners with special educational needs" (LSEN) is too broad and all inclusive and does not explain the causative factors of why a particular learner cannot actualise his or her full potential or why such a learner should be excluded from mainstream schools.

- In order for equal education to be offered to all learners, the education system must provide for a diversity of needs. These causative factors causing a learner not to actualise his or her full potential, can be regarded as barriers to learning and development. Learners can experience not only one barrier but combined barriers to learning, e.g. a physical and physiological barrier.

The emphasis is on "barriers" within the new Education Policy, indicating a mind shift from "needs" to "barriers" and how to remove or eliminate these barriers. This approach is inclined to be more positive as the focus is on what learners know and can do. "Needs" is a stigmatising concept, excluding learners from mainstream education. It must be seen as embedded within a social model instead of a medical model.

A learner can be regarded as "disabled" when he or she experiences barriers to learning that are caused by the community's attitude towards people with physical impairments. This learner with a "disability" can then be regarded as a person who was not granted the opportunity to be educated and who was hindered and prevented by society from fully participating at all levels of society and not being able to actualise his or her full potential.
The “disability” is, according to the official definition accepted by the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons in the Office of the Presidency, regarded as a socio-political perspective stating that “disability” is localised or caused within the environment. Disabled persons are thus restricted and constrained by the environment in the pursuit of full and equal participation.

Barrier free environments can prevent or alleviate disabilities. “A barrier free environment” will allow access to all facilities and services thus making it equally available to all learners (South Africa 1997 - Equal Education for All).

Impairment, however, refers to learners with physical (referring to body structure problems) impairment, that is, learners who experience permanent defects in their constitution. A learner is usually born with a certain impairment, or, because of some detrimental factor or other, eg. an illness or an accident, manifestations of a physical and/or physiological nature, may occur.

Engelbrecht et al (1999:53) maintains that the focus should not be on what is wrong with the learners who experience barriers to learning but what barriers to learning the learner is experiencing. Learners who are experiencing barriers to learning experience the following circumstances (Engelbrecht, et al 1999:53):

- Socio-economic barriers (for example lack of funds.)
- Factors which place learners at risk (for example violence)
- Negative attitudes towards differences (for example racism)
- An inflexible curriculum (for example apartheid education system)
- Inappropriate language communication channels and competencies (for example second language as a means of instruction)
- Inaccessible and unsafe environment (for example broken furniture and unsafe classrooms)
- Disability, inappropriate and inadequate provision of support (for example no specialist services provided)
• Lack of parental involvement and care at home (for example no parent involvement in schools)
• Inadequate or inappropriate utilisation and development of human resources activities (for example no available teaching aids)
• Inadequate policy and legislation (for example no proper policy on inclusive education implemented at schools).

From the above clarifications of the concept learners who experience barriers to learning, the following categories of learners experiencing barriers to learning in the Thohoyandou area can be identified:

• Learners with difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical and social skills in the classroom.
• Learners who are always behind in learning within the context of the class situation.
• Learners who are intellectually gifted.
• Learners who require specialised equipments, modified teaching practices or support in order to access the curriculum and participate effectively in the learning process.
• Learners with impairments of the vision, hearing or speech.
• Learners who experienced socio-economic barriers.
• Learners who experienced inadequate language and communication channels and competencies.
• Learners with inaccessible and unsafe building environment.
• Learners with inappropriate transport.
• Learners who lack parental recognition and involvement.
• Learners who are seriously emotionally disturbed and experience specific learning disabilities.
• Learners with physical, sensory, intellectual and multiple impairments.
There are various forms of special educational needs or barriers to learning. In other words, certain types of barriers to learning, manifest similar symptoms or signs. These manifestations are important because they enable teachers to identify learners who need special forms of assistance. The manifestations can be divided into the following groups:

1.2.8 Disability and Impairment

The meaning of the concept “disability” is changing. The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (as compiled by the Disability Desk in the Office of the Vice President 1997), clarifies the concept of “disability” as follows:

- it is a human rights and developmental issue
- it is the result of factors present in the social environment.

This concept refers to permanent shortcomings in a person’s make-up. Learners may be born with such disabilities or they may be caused by some harmful factors such as an illness or an accident. The following types of disabilities can be distinguished:

- Sensory disabilities: these occur when one (or more of the senses has been affected. A person may be blind or deaf, when his/her sense of seeing or hearing is affected.
- Physical disabilities: a physical disability affects a person’s outward appearance or movements. For instance an arm may be missing, or a hand or limb cannot be used, with the result that the learner requires the use of a wheelchair or crutches.
- Intellectual disability: a learner is intellectually disabled when he or she is less capable of understanding or learning than the average person.
- Multiple disability: learners who suffer from more than one disability, are multiply disabled.

The following facts regarding disabilities need to be kept in mind (Du Toit 1997:3):
Several forms of disabilities, such as epilepsy, autism and others exist.
Disabilities are usually of a permanent nature.
Disabilities can be identified at an early age.
Disabilities can be caused by internal factors (intrinsic factors).
External (extrinsic) factors can intensify disabilities - especially if not identified at a young age and if parents did not have the necessary support.
Learners with disabilities have the same rights as other learners.

Impairment can be caused by various causative factors and manifest in various ways, eg. sensory impairments, mental or medical intellectual impairments.

Impairments are of a permanent nature, affecting the learner's development and learning, resulting in a disability. "Impairment" refers to a specific deficit, whilst "disability" refers to the handicapping conditions a learner is experiencing which causes him or her not to lead a full life, caused by societal attitudes. Causative factors of impairments can either be physical (eg. epilepsy, cerebral palsy, hearing impairment) or physiological (genetic factors, prenatal, perinatal and postnatal brain damage) or personality problems (unmet emotional needs causing behaviour problems).

1.2.9 Developmental problems

A learner is experiencing developmental problems, when his or her development does not correspond to that of peers. In other words, the learner may be late in acquiring the so-called "developmental milestones", namely sitting, walking, talking and reading, to but name a few.

Developmental problems could manifest as:

- a total delay in all or most of the developmental areas,
• a delay in one or more aspects of development such as motor, perceptual, language or intellectual development, for example a learner who cannot speak fluently by the age of six, and
• not being school ready at the accepted age for new entrants.

1.2.10 Learning problems

Learners experience learning problems when they find it difficult to master those learning tasks which most other children in the class can manage. Learning problems are manifested in all school subjects, only certain school subjects, or in certain aspects of a school subject.

The following concepts are associated with learning problems:

• **Underachievement**: This implies that a learner does not do as well as one would expect of someone with his or her intellectual ability. There is therefore a gap between the learner’s achievement and what he or she is actually capable of doing.

• **Learners who do not do well at school**: They may be trying their very best but because they lack good mental abilities, they cannot be expected to show better results.

• **Disadvantaged learners**: This concept refers to those learners whose education has fallen behind as a result of social, economic or political circumstances. In many cases they start their school career with a disadvantage and this disadvantage tends to increase with time.

According to the proposed Education Policy (NCSNET Document 1997:6,7), *special needs* are regarded as resulting from barriers, in the way that the curriculum has been presented. It has thus been suggested that the concept *learners with special educational needs* be replaced by *learners who experience barriers to learning*. Barriers imply learners who experience some form of difficulty in engaging in the learning process.
Learners who experience barriers to learning are deemed to be the following (NCSNET Document, 1997:12-19):

- Learners who experience socio-economic barriers eg. inadequate numbers of centres of learning;
- learners who experience a lack of access to basic services eg. inadequate transport, inadequate access to clinics;
- learners who experience poverty and underdevelopment eg. unemployment, the inability of families to meet the basic needs of their children;
- factors that place learners at risk eg. the emotional and social well-being of learners due to violence, crime, HIV/AIDS;
- discriminatory attitudes towards learners who are labelled eg. slow learners, drop-outs;
- inflexible and inaccessible curriculum and inadequate training of teachers as well as teaching styles that do not meet the needs of all the learners;
- language and communication where the medium of instruction is not the home language of the learner; inaccessible and unsafe built environment eg. wheelchairs or blind learners;
- inadequate and inappropriate provision of support services;
- lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy;
- lack of parental recognition and involvement;
- disability eg. the learning environment and the broader society do not provide in the needs of these learners and a lack of human resource development strategies eg. the absence of ongoing in-service training programmes leads to insecurities, uncertainties, low self-esteem, lack of innovative practices which in turn impacts on the attitudes of teachers.

1.2.11 Emotional problems

According to Grossman (1998:237) emotional problems can be identified as follows:

- Learners whose emotional responses do not guide their behaviour appropriately
- Learners whose emotional responses are too intense (eg. you have to be careful about what you say because they are devastated by the slightest criticism; a little blood from
a scrape on the knee or a small cut on the finger petrifies them; they become very anxious when they have to answer questions - especially if it is in the presence of other learners, or when they must complete a test or exam; they are angry about little things and react like somebody who has a chip on the shoulder; minor delays, small obstacles or other irritants, frustrate them immensely; they get depressed easily over little disappointments that to usually not bother other learners).

- Learners whose emotional responses are too weak (eg. when their peers mistreat or abuse them, they will only experience resentment but not enough to enable them to do something about it - usually a learner will eventually rise up and protest such treatment; their failures and mistakes are not corrected by them, because they are not concerned enough to try and correct them or to improve; pleasant things don't particularly please them and make them happy).

- Learners who experience incorrect emotions and have a mistaken view of reality (eg. they worry about things that they know are extremely unlikely to happen; when inflicting pain on other children, pets or animals, they laugh; they get involved with dangerous activities and appear exhilarated by any possibility of getting hurt; when other learners treat them with respect or show that they like them, they seem uncomfortable and anxious).

- Learners who experience contrasting or conflicting emotions and for whom it becomes a problem to sort out their emotions to act one way or the other. These conflicting emotions can have an immobilising effect on learners when they have to make a decision (eg. when they have to learn how to play an instrument, to build a project or to form part of a team, they pretend that it does not bother them, while in the meantime, they are scared of being a failure deep down; they will rather persist, even though they know what they are doing is incorrect, than to ask for help).

- Learners who experience emotional responses that are either too intense, or too weak, or the incorrect ones, or in conflict, usually act appropriately for their emotional response, but inappropriately for the situation. They experience a mismatch between emotion and situation. Learners react in three different ways instead of implementing
appropriate solutions to the problems of everyday living, namely they avoid facing up to challenging situations (eg. they will rather break up relationships than to try and work something out when they are encountering difficulties with other people), or they go on the defensive (eg. they are inclined to blame their teachers and peers for their own failures instead of admitting that it is their own fault that they were unsuccessful) or they suffer through the experience without feeling capable of dealing therewith (eg. they are inclined to fall apart during exams and are unable to function as they would have in a less stressful situation). Learners' emotional problems are caused by emotional reactions, which causes them to consistently avoid, defend or suffer with these problems, instead of thinking creatively of solutions to solve the problems.

*Behaviour problems* differ from *emotional problems* in the following respects:

- Learners with *behaviour problems* are able to behave differently, but they either do not want to do so or think it is not necessary to do so. Learners with *emotional problems* are not capable of behaving differently although they would like to. They need to have opportunities to experience more appropriate emotional respondents and be capable of avoiding, defending and suffering in a lesser way and to resolve their problems more effectively.

- Learners who experience *behaviour problems* do so at the expense of others and to the benefit of themselves in trying to have their emotional needs met by significant other persons within their environment. They therefore have to learn that they cannot always regard their own needs as being the most important. They need to learn to consider other people. Learners with *emotional problems* are not necessarily acting in self interest - they must be assisted to discontinue behaviour from which they derive no benefit.
1.2.12 Behaviour problems

According to Morgan and Reinhart, (1991:4), Bower's definition of behaviour problems is widely accepted as relevant within various contexts. Notably, it is currently being used by the United States Federal Government with slight modifications. In the literature that has been explored for the purposes of this study, Morgan and Reinhart's (1991:4) contention appears to be confirmed, as Bower's definition of behaviour problems is frequently used and accepted by many of the researchers and authors concerned. Ashman & Elkins (1994:298) with material received from Michigan (Haring 1978:128,129) has compiled the following definition of learners with behaviour problems or disorders:

- a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance in the following ways:

  - an inability to learn, which cannot be related to intellectual, sensory or health factors.
  - an inability to keep up good, solid social relationships with peers and teachers.
  - inappropriate feelings or types of behaviour that are exhibited during normal conditions.
  - a general, ever present mood of unhappiness or depression.
  - a tendency to develop psychosomatic symptoms, eg. fears or pains, that are related to problems experienced within the school.
  - exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics: disruptive behaviour in the classroom, over a longer period of time, as well as extreme withdrawal from involvement with other learners over a longer period of time; the manifestation of symptoms that can be categorised as psychosis, schizophrenia or autism; the overall presentation of disruptive and aggressive behaviour which can
eventually result in placement in a place of safety, awaiting Children’s Court procedure and placement in an Industrial School.

England’s Code of Practice (Farrell 1995:8) provides the following guidelines for identifying learners with behavioural problems:

The learner:

- does not attend school regularly;
- exhibits obsessional and unhealthy eating habits;
- is dependent on a drug or drug related substance;
- behaves in an uncontrolled, unanticipated, bizarre and disruptive way;
- is inclined to bullying of other learners; and
- is mentally not healthy.

Apter and Conoley (1984:15), Bos and Vaughn (1994:3-5) and Zarkowska and Clements (1988:2) present the following characteristics that may act as criteria for identifying learners with behavioural problems:

- They continuously draw attention to themselves in the classroom because they experience difficulty in learning and interacting appropriately.
- They have a poor academic record - problems experienced in spelling, reading, or mathematics can cause them to underachieve.
- They experience attention span problems - they cannot concentrate for long periods of time on a single task, they may also experience problems in following the teacher’s instructions, and their attention is easily distracted.
- They are inclined to be hyperactive - they experience difficulty in staying in their seats up to the end to complete a task. While they are concentrating on a task, the least noise will distract their attention.
• They have a difficult time trying to remember what they have learnt - they may remember something on one day and forget it the next day.

• They have poor motor abilities - poor coordination, spatial problems and fine-motor problems, for example an inability to cut with scissors handicaps them.

• They are inclined to be socially maladjusted and to act antisocially - learners who could, but who do not want to conform to the expectations of society and who do not experience any feelings of guilt or anxiety.

• They experience conflict and stress due to their problems.

• They are inclined to experience poor perceptual abilities, which causes auditory and/or visual perception problems, for example visual discrimination difficulties.

• They exhibit poor language ability that causes them to have difficulties with vocabulary, to understand concepts, use language adequately, express themselves appropriately, or pronounce words correctly.

• They act aggressively, either verbally or physically, for example by hitting or kicking other learners or by insulting others. They become easily upset, are inclined to overreact and make use of “acting out” behaviour to get rid of their frustrations.

• They are inclined to be withdrawn and seldom interact with other learners. They frequently do not even have any friends - they are real loners and choose to avoid any contact with other learners.

• They display bizarre behaviour, for example staring at objects for long periods of time or they may sit and rock themselves continuously.

• Their behaviour itself or the severity of their behaviour is inappropriate in terms of their age and level of development.

• Their behaviour results in danger to themselves, as well as others.

• Their behaviour acts as a barrier to learning, as it inhibits the learning of new skills or excludes the learner from important learning opportunities.

• Their behaviour causes significant stress to themselves and to others in their lifeworld, and impairs the quality of these persons’ lives, as well as their own quality of life.

• Their behaviour is contrary to socially accepted norms.
Apter and Conoley (1984:22,23), Bos and Vaughn (1994:4), Rich (1982:94,95) and Zarakowska and Clements (1988:2) have listed the following questions that need to be considered when determining the seriousness of a behavioural problem:

- How long has the problem persisted?
- How long does the behaviour episode last?
- How often does the behaviour occur?
- In how many types of situations does the behaviour occur?
- How disruptive of the learner's other activities is the problem behaviour?
- How easily can the circumstances that produced the behaviour be identified?
- Does the learner have difficulty being accepted by peers?
- How quickly is the situation leading to the episode forgotten?
- Does the behaviour of the learner disrupt the activities of others?
- Do others copy the problem behaviour?
- Does the behaviour represent a loss of contact with reality?
- How severe is the problem?
- What are the comments of his or her previous teachers regarding his or her behaviour?
- What is the relationship between the teacher and the learner?
- What mechanisms did the teacher employ to assist the learner with learning or behaviour problems?
- What "range of tolerance" has the teacher for dealing with learners with behaviour problems?
- Has the teacher explored the possibility of other factors that could have an impact on the learner's learning/behaviour problems?
- Do the behaviour problems of the learner cause stress in the lives of the rest of the members of the family?
- Can the behaviour problem of the learner be judged as being socially unacceptable in terms of accepted social norms or in terms of socially, accepted behaviour?
Is the behaviour a reasonable response to the situation?

Behaviour problems can be categorised in terms of:

- **more serious behaviour**, for example juvenile delinquency. These behaviour problems affect only a smaller percentage of learners and are usually related to psychiatric problems, such as anorexia or child schizophrenia,

- **less serious behaviour**, for example being disruptive in class. These behaviour patterns seem to occur for a longer period of time. The causes of these problems are more often than not deep-seated and will thus require the professional assistance of a psychologist to unravel the underlying factors giving rise to the behaviour problem, and

- **of a minor nature**, such as not being punctual. These problems seem to be present for some time and can be ascribed to certain disruptive circumstances in the learner's life. They are, however, only of a temporary nature and with the necessary love, interest and support of significant other people within the life world of the learner, these problems can be readily overcome.

In terms of the preceding discussion, common characteristics shaping the profile of the learner with behavioural problems, can be identified. They are summarised as follows:

A learner with behavioural problems is inclined to: set unrealistic goals for himself; show an inability to learn; be unable to maintain good social relationships with peers and teachers; experience inappropriate feelings or types of behaviour; not act according to what is regarded as being age related; be unhappy most of the time, feeling depressed and aggressive; experience minor emotional disturbances; express behaviour that is uncontrolled, unanticipated bizarre and disruptive; bully other learners, act destructively and exhibit delinquent behaviour; suffer from a bad self-image; and be unable to function independently.
For the purposes of this study, the concepts misconduct, behaviour problems and emotional problems will be regarded as being interactive and interwoven with each other, as the one condition can be regarded as a causative factor to the other. For example, a learner who has a poor self-image and experiences a need to be accepted (unmet emotional needs) can be influenced by peers to exhibit misconduct, for example smoking on the school ground although they know that it is prohibited (misconduct) and at a later stage he or she could even become involved with the peer group in depicting criminal behaviour (behaviour problem).

For the purpose of this study the following are the most common and important characteristics of learners who experience barriers to learning (Du Toit, 1997:5; Engelbrecht 1999:53; NCSNET Document 1997:vii,2; 12-19; Pijl et al 1997:120):

- These learners experience physical, sensory, intellectual and multiple impairments.
- These learners require specialised equipment; teaching and support in order to have access to the curriculum so that they can participate effectively in the learning process.
- These learners experience socio-economic barriers.
- These learners experience negative attitudes of eg. peers, parents and teachers.
- These learners experience inappropriate language and communication skills.
- These learners experience a lack of parental recognition and parental involvement in school activities.
- These learners do not progress adequately scholastically.
- These learners experience emotional and behavioural problems.

For the purposes of the study, the abovementioned categories describe the learners experiencing barriers to learning, which will be relevant to the study.
1.2.13 Learners-at-risk

Wood (1991:24) maintains that learners-at-risk constitute the fastest growing component of the learner population. This factor in itself makes them the focus of growing concern. In the past, different labels were used to identify these learners, for example the culturally deprived learner, the marginalised learner, the underprivileged learner, the low-achieving learner. Nowadays there is no clear consensus on how to identify the at-risk learner. These learners are not necessarily disabled. Helge (Wood 1991:25) constructed a profile of the at-risk-learner. In terms of the profile these learners are:

- making misuse of drugs and other related dependancy substances,
- involved with crime,
- suicidal/depressed/exhibit low self-esteem,
- being abused (physical, emotional, verbal and/or sexual),
- poor,
- the children of alcoholics or substance users,
- members of dysfunctional families,
- illiterate or use English as their second language,
- migrants,
- in a disabling condition,
- experiencing health problems,
- performing significantly below their potential, and
- resident in a rural or remote area.

The Iowa Department of Education (1989) has defined the at-risk-learner as follows (Wood 1991:25):

Any identified student who is at risk of not meeting the goals of the educational program established by the district, not completing a high school education, or
not becoming a productive worker. These learners may include, but are not limited to, dropouts, potential dropouts, teenage parents, substance users and abusers, low academic achievers, abused and homeless children, youth offenders, economically deprived, minority students, culturally isolated, those with sudden negative changes in performance due to environmental or physical traumas, and those with language barriers, gender barriers, and disabilities.

The impact that these risk-factors and combinations thereof can have on a learner will differ from one learner to another. Wood (1991:27), however, warns that the earlier the learner is exposed to these at-risk factors, the longer it is going to take to remediate the effects of these at-risk factors - especially during the adolescent period, the situation can become quite complicated.

The growing statistics and the vast impact of these at-risk factors on learners, families, parents and communities, act as a warning sign to educators to no longer work in isolation, but to form partnerships with community leaders in order to assess community resources, parents as well as the development of "in-house" resources, to provide for the needs of these learners.

According to Du Toit (1996:6), the concept "learners-at-risk" refers to those learners whose circumstances are such that they do not have a good chance of making a success of their school careers. Slavin et al (1989:4,5) in contrast, maintain that the meaning of this concept is never exact and that it can vary considerably in practice. A possible definition would indicate that these learners are unlikely to graduate from high school. Risk factors would for instance be low achievement, retention in grade, behaviour problems, poor attendance, and low socioeconomic status. They are quite likely to drop out of school. Causative factors to these problem situations are often related to socioeconomic status. The learners concerned, are unlikely to leave school with an adequate level of the basic skills. Their intelligence is within normal limits, but they fail to acquire the basic skills that are necessary for success in school and in life. They can thus be regarded as eligible for special or compensatory education.
1.2.14 Primary school level

Gwin, Norton & McHenry (1992:441) define primary education as the first stage traditionally found in formal education, beginning at about five to seven years and ending at the age of eleven to thirteen years. Primary education is often preceded by some form of pre-school education for learners aged three to five or six. According to Van Schalkwyk (1990:12), primary education is an education, which is of an elementary nature. Primary education is complete education and therefore balanced, that is no single function may be isolated for development in differentiated education.

Salend (1990:49), Van Schalkwyk (1990:106-107) and Van Rooyen (1993:58) list the following criteria of primary education:

Primary education enables the learners to:

• Acquire basic primary skills like reading, writing, calculating, speaking, listening, studying and being independent.
• Acquire knowledge on the basic culture of his/her community, various kind of sports, mathematics, science, religion, morals and values.
• Expand his or her knowledge and encourages an eagerness and willingness to learn.
• Benefit from functional and practical training together with development programmes which enables learners to improve their living conditions, for example, painting, drawing, singing, needlework and domestic science.
• Master the basic techniques of thinking and reasoning.
• Think about and explore the learning content and environment.
• Express themselves via opportunities begin provided.
• Be tolerant towards other learners.
The above criteria of primary education are relevant to a primary school learner and should be implemented in order to provide for inclusive education in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area. The implementation of these criteria will emphasise the following matters:

- The "same education for all" must be offered to all primary school learners - whether the learner is experiencing a barrier to learning and development or not.
- All primary school learners should have access to all mainstream primary schools.
- Education in primary schools must be non-discriminatory.
- All learners in primary school should be academically and professionally developed to the fullest.
- An atmosphere of mutual acceptance and respect should be facilitated in all primary school classrooms.
- The needs of each primary school learner must be satisfied so that he or she can participate fully in his or her adult life in a democratic society.
- Each primary school learner, whatever barrier he or she is experiencing or not experiencing, should be assisted in mainstream primary school education, to actualise his or her full potential.

1.2.15 Attitudes

According to the Dictionary of Psychology (1968:42) and the Oxford Dictionary (1960:45) the concept "attitude" implies a way of thinking, which determines a person's reactions towards persons, objects, institutions or issues in either a positive or negative way. Attitudes, apart from determining a person's reaction, also imply the tendency to categorise based on a positive or negative attitude. The sources of attitudes are cultural, familial and personal and quite often are passed on from one generation to the next generation. The impact of the environment and especially significant other role players, also impact on attitudes being shaped into being either positive or negative. Attitudes, however, differ in degree and in types eg. mildly negative or very negative.
1.2.16 Outcomes-based education

According to the NCSNET Document (1997:vii) outcomes-based education is described as “a design for education which is learner-centred and orientated towards results or outcomes. It is based on the belief that all individuals can learn. In outcomes-based education the curriculum is designed to promote attitudes, values and skills which are needed by the learner and the society. In this way the learner is equipped with what he or she should know to be able to participate actively in the society. It also includes a realisation that learners differ and that assistance may be needed to enable a learner to reach his or her full potential”.

1.2.17 NCSNET Document

The Minister of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS). The NCSNET and NCESS had to make recommendations to be Minister of Education on all aspects of “special needs” and support services in education and training in South Africa. The recommendations of these two bodies were published in the NCSNET Document during 1997. The investigation conducted by these two bodies concerned the development of education in order to ensure that the education system of South Africa became more responsive to the diverse needs of all children in South Africa (NCSNET Document 1997:1). The approach adopted by these bodies has focussed on the broad initiative of development of education in South Africa during 1997/1998 with the vision of quality education for ALL learners.

1.2.18 The SA Constitution

The premises of the policy on learners experiencing barriers to learning are incorporated in the South African Constitution within the section on “Human Rights” by accentuating equality (point 8). This implies that every person has equal rights in the eye of the law and that no
discriminative practices against any person are allowed on the grounds of race, gender or social
descent, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, faith, culture or language. **Human
dignity** which implies that every person has the right to respect and to the protection of his or
her dignity. **Education** allows all learners the right to basic education and equal access to
education.

These "**human rights"** pave the way for ALL learners to enjoy freedom from discrimination
because of a specific barrier(s) that they might experience. "No discrimination" implies **inclusive
education**.


The White Paper on Education and Training as the "first steps to the development of a New
System" provided the basic framework for the provision of education in South Africa. A
document was needed that could serve the interests of all learners in the country. The main
themes of the document must be "equality" and "non-discriminative practices". The main
outcomes would be learning and academic excellence within a diverse classroom situation.
Communities as well as interest groups should take responsibility for collaboration with schools
and principals in order to utilise existing sources to the utmost so that learners will benefit in
order to actualise their potential and to eventually become respected members of the
community.

The following basic values and principles, were refined to be tailor-made according to the
diverse needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning (Du Toit 1996:90):

- The basic right of every child in South Africa to education, regardless of race, class,
gender, religion or age.
- Quality lifelong education and training must be available to everybody in South Africa.
- All children should have free access to education.
• The inequalities in education must be redressed in order to eliminate discriminatory education practices.
• A unitary education system must be created resulting in one Education Department for the whole of South Africa.
• The total development of each learner, including academic, occupational, psychological, health and social needs, must be envisaged.

With relevance to learners experiencing barriers to learning, the following matters are specified:

• The education of these learners should be an integral part of mainstream education in order to include and not to exclude and to prevent learning problems from occurring these learners.
• Provinces and districts should take responsibility for the education of these learners; On a central level, the government will undertake investigations, will deal with the formulation of the Education Policy as well as to provide guidelines to the provinces.
• The interests of learners should be underpinned by authorised representatives of the education staff concerned with these learners, serving on legal and consultative bodies.
• Concerted assistance in terms of all government departments collaborating with one another, eg. Department of Health and Labour, Welfare, Education.
• A National Commission on Special Needs Education must submit recommendations on the assistance rendered to these learners, to the Minister of Education and Training.

1.3 FACTORS GIVING RISE TO THE STUDY

The following factors led to the researcher's interest in the study of inclusive education in primary schools and specifically in the Thohoyandou area.
1.3.1 Teaching experience of the researcher

The researcher as an experienced primary school teacher has identified the following factors acting as barriers to the learning and development of primary school learners in the Thohoyandou area:

- Socio-economic barriers (eg. families suffering from a lack of funds and parents who are unemployed)
- Factors, which place the learner at risk (eg. family violence caused by polygamy)
- An inflexible curriculum (eg. the implementation of the apartheid education system)
- Inappropriate language communication channels and competencies (eg. use of Afrikaans and English as the medium of instruction instead of Tshivenda)
- An inaccessible and unsafe built environment (eg. lack of needed furniture in classrooms and having to teach outdoors)
- Lack of transport (eg. learners living 15km away from the school)
- Lack of parental recognition and involvement (eg. illiterate parents)
- Inadequate support provision (eg. lack of text books and teaching aids)
- Inadequate policy on learners experiencing barriers to learning (eg. the implementation of apartheid policies and legislation on education)

Apart from the listed barriers to learning and development causing primary school learners not to actualise their full potential, another barrier exists caused by the teachers who are not empowered to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning and development as well as the lack of information regarding inclusive education.
1.3.2 The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, the White Paper on Education and Training and the NCSNET Document

The South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996 is relevant to this study as it states that "The member of the executive council must, where reasonably practical, provide education for learners with special educational needs at ordinary public schools and provide the relevant educational support services for such learners".

- Section 5(7) of the Act reads "A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way."
- The member of the executive council must take reasonable measures to ensure that the physical facilities at public schools are accessible to disabled persons (Sections 1,2,3,4,5).
- The rights and wishes of the parents of learners with special educational needs should be taken into account (Section 5,6 NCSNET Document 1997:44).

The Constitution, the SA Schools Act no. 84 of 1996 and the principles embedded in the White Paper on Education of Training provided a basis for the findings of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET). The findings acted as a basis for the formulation of the vision, principles and strategies relating to the diversity of learners and addressing barriers to learning and development that learners are experiencing. This is the crux of "inclusive education" and therefore motivated the researcher's interest to support inclusive education in this study. This change of South African Education Policy involves "quality education" and therefore inspired the researcher to study the phenomenon of learners who experience barriers to learning.
1.3.3 The implementation of outcomes-based education

Outcomes-based education stimulated the researcher's interest in Inclusive Education as this approach focusses on the following similar aspects of education as would be relevant to an inclusive Education Policy:

- Each learner's strengths and needs must be identified and accommodated in order to achieve the designated outcomes at individual levels and to enable the learner to actualise his or her potential to the fullest.
- Every learner can experience success in his or her individual way and according to his or her potential.
- A diversity of learners with a diversity of needs must be catered for by the education system.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In terms of the preceding discussion the following factors emerged, as giving rise to the problem to be researched in this study, namely:

- A diversity of learners is to be found in the Thohoyandou area with diverse needs.
- The learners are experiencing barriers to learning because their needs are not met by the environment and different systems within the environment and thus they cannot actualise their full potential.
- Parents of learners need to be involved as equal partners in the education of their children.
- Inclusive education is not practised although this approach allows for the satisfaction and recognition of different needs of learners.
- Teachers are not empowered to effectively assist and understand learners who are experiencing diverse needs and barriers.
The new Education Policy is not fully implemented in the schools.

The negative attitudes (eg. labelling a learner, isolating a learner) cause emotional barriers within learners, as their self-image is harmed hereby.

The needs that learners experience in the Thohoyandou area, caused by barriers with themselves and the environment, as well as the education system, will have to be addressed for inclusive education to be practiced.

The answer to the following research question will thus have to be found:

"Can the barriers to learning that primary school learners in the Thohoyandou area experience, be overcome by the implementation of the policy of inclusive education?"

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The following general and specific outcomes of the study are formulated in order to provide answers to the above research problem:

1.5.1 General outcomes of the study

The following general outcomes relating to barriers experienced in regard to the learning centre system, barriers within the learner and the broader social context as well as the system of education are identified for this study:

• To implement inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area in all primary schools.
• To empower teachers by providing knowledge on inclusive education so that they will be able to understand and assist primary school learners who experience barriers to learning, more effectively.
• To empower teachers so that they will understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning in such a way that the learners can actualise their full potential.
• To guide the community on inclusive education so that the community will become "co-owners" of the learning centre by assisting and understanding learners experiencing barriers to learning more effectively by providing for the diverse needs of these learners and thus eliminating barriers to learning.
• To empower the parents of the learners to become more involved in the education of their children.

1.5.2 Specific outcomes of the study

Specific outcomes in terms of the elimination of barriers, impacting on the learning centre (school) system, barriers within the learner and the broader social context and the system of education, identified for the study are:

• To empower teachers via workshops and in-service training to obtain knowledge on inclusive education, to improve their skills and insight to understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning in a different way and to change their attitudes towards these learners by realising what impact they have on learners.
• To empower teachers via workshops and in-service training on how to involve parents as partners in the education of their children's education.
• To change the views of members of the community on parent involvement via workshops or talks at meetings in order for them to realise that they and especially the parents of learners, should become more involved with the education of learners experiencing barriers to learning.
• To introduce the approach on inclusive education to members of the community via workshops and talks so that they will regard inclusive education as one of the ways to cater for the diverse needs of learners.
• To convince principals and governing bodies via talks and workshops to be held, in the Thohoyandou area of the credibility of inclusive education, providing for diverse needs of learners, so that they will be prepared to make changes regarding the curriculum, the
attitudes towards learners as well as to provide in the physical needs of the learners by eg. providing ramps for wheelchairs.

1.6 FIELD OF STUDY

The field of study comprises that of Special Needs Education. The study will focus on the diverse needs of learners and ways of providing for the needs, acting as barriers to learning, so that each learner can actualise his or her full potential. The implementation of "inclusive education" as an approach, stemming from the normalisation principle, is regarded as a way to understand and assist learners to actualise their full potential. Teachers, parents and members of the community and governing bodies need to be convinced of the credibility of inclusive education, as embedded in the new Education Policy so that factors acting as barriers to learning can be eliminated.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To attain the general and specific outcomes as previously defined in this study, the following research methodology will be implemented:

- An extensive literature study focussing on the following matters:
  - Theoretical models on inclusive education.
  - The impact of inclusive education in relation to satisfying the diverse needs of learners within mainstream schools.
  - The necessity of parent involvement.
  - The impact of teachers' attitudes on and understanding of learners experiencing barriers to learning, especially seeing that this factor can act as a barrier to learning within a learner.
  - Strategies to be implemented to provide for the needs of learners, in terms of the inclusive education approach, regarding barriers with the learner, the
curriculum, the learning centre (school), the system of education and the broader social context.

- Interviews conducted with teachers, principals, head of departments and senior teachers to substantiate the above research findings and the empirical findings of this study.
- Questionnaires to be completed by teachers, principals, heads of departments and senior teachers, on inclusive education and the attitudes of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning.

The study, being an insight study is analytic-descriptive and not statistical - interpretive in nature. The study is based on two fundamental dimensions - the first is acquiring a sound theoretical understanding of the concept and models on inclusive education and strategies to implement inclusive education. The second dimension focusses on substantiating the insights gained from the theoretical analysis, by means of interviews with teachers, principals, heads of departments and senior teachers in eight selected pilot primary schools in the Thohoyandou area. It is maintained that teachers are not empowered with knowledge on inclusive education. Therefore, inclusive education is not implemented in the primary schools in the Thohoyandou area and learners experiencing barriers to learning are not understood and assisted effectively so that they can actualise their potential.

The recommendations and conclusions that the researcher reaches will be expressed in chapter five and will be based on the interpretation of the data gathered from the received questionnaires and unstructured interview.

1.8 DEMARCATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

The research will be conducted in Venda at eight pilot primary schools in the Thohoyandou area in the Northern Province.

The target group will be primary school teachers, departmental heads and principals in the Thohoyandou area. The research will include both young, experienced, male and female teachers.
1.9 COURSE OF STUDY

The research problem will be explored, described and explained in the following chapters:

Chapter one as the orientation chapter introduces the study, clarifies relevant concepts to the study, presents the research problem, discusses the factors giving rise to the methodology, and demarcates the field of study and expected outcomes.

Chapter two describes the phenomenon of inclusive education, focussing on the historical background of inclusive education, the main points of departure regarding inclusive education and the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education within the frame of reference of the new Education Policy.

Chapter three deals with the attitudes of teachers, parents and peers towards learners who experience barriers to learning.

Chapter four deals with a qualitative investigation of the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, focussing on method of research, selection of respondents, time and duration of research, the role of the researcher and research methods implemented, purpose of the study and questionnaires.

Chapter five will reflect the results of empirical findings, conclude the study and include recommendations for further research to be undertaken.
CHAPTER 2

THE PHENOMENON OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

"Discrimination against learners who experience barriers to learning, however, subtle, as well as their segregation from ordinary education life can no longer be countenanced in the light of the new social order which is now in place in this country".


From the introductory quotation, the focus is on the non-acceptance of discriminatory practices by including learners who experience barriers to learning in mainstream schools and promoting their full personal, academic and professional development irrespective of factors like race, gender, class, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning styles or language within an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and respect (NCSNET Document 1997:vi,vii).


• The principles of the right to equality, protection from discrimination, respect for human diversity, the right to equal benefit and protection from the law, redress of past inequalities, equal opportunities for all and an accessible education system as described in the Constitution and White Papers on Education and Training.

• All learners should have equal rights to quality education and their human dignity be valued and respected.

• All learners must be allowed to participate in their communities by making use of a variety of educational and social opportunities offered to them.

• All learners must have access to a single education system that provides for the needs of a diversity of learners.

• The common education curriculum must entitle all learners to participate, whether learners need to be supported especially or not.
All learners must be treated equally and be able to benefit from the education system and society as a whole in order to allow them to integrate and to become part of society.

If inclusion is to be practised in the Thohoyandou area, the above principles of the new Education Policy must be implemented and the barriers to inclusive education, as well as the demands being made on teachers, as discussed by the following authors must be eliminated and dealt with.

According to researchers Bursuck and Munk (1998:45); Buysse, Wesley, Bryant and Gardner (1999:311); Spenser and Salend (1990:50); Tennessee Department of Education Draft (1994:7); Murphy (1996:473), the following factors could act as possible barriers for practising inclusive education:

- Teachers in mainstream schools are not empowered to assist and understand learners who experience barriers to learning.
- Learners who experience barriers to learning and development will acquire additional input from the teacher, thus impending the progress of the other learners.
- Existing teacher preparation is based on an outdated paradigm and beliefs about education.
- Teachers do not regard parents at present as participants and partners in the educational process.
- School buildings are designed in such a way that they create barriers to learning.
- Family structures (for example, parents who work far from the home) and an increasing number of dysfunctional family situations complicate the implementation of inclusive environment as this support system is not available to the learner experiencing barriers to learning.
- The emphasis on excellence in education creates greater discrepancies between learners experiencing barriers to learning and their peers.
- Learners experiencing barriers to learning and development because of a shortage of appropriate services and specialised education, fall further behind their peers.
• In mainstream schools teachers and peers can exhibit negative attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, which can result in the isolation and stigmatisation of learners.

• Education in mainstream schools is not structured to accommodate the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

• The social needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning (e.g. basic communication and life skills) are addressed adequately in mainstream classes as these learners require at least one individualised instructional period in a controlled environment, which must, according to Murphy (1996:473) be provided by teachers who have received extensive specialised training.

Paul and Epanchin (1991:40) stress that integration of learners experiencing barriers to learning into mainstream education, is difficult, frustrating and stressful for the teacher and often causes a low morale and a loss of job satisfaction. The high degree of stress in the workplace is the result of additional and unrealistic demands on the teacher’s professional and personal abilities. The demands may be categorised as follows:

• Demands of preparation for a diversity of learners.

• Demands of a mental, physical and emotional nature, are placed on the teacher by the diversity of learners, peers, parents and other professionals.

• The way the facilitator groups the learners (that is when efforts are made to keep learners on task), results in anger and abuse. It is difficult for teachers to monitor learning whilst having to understand the learners’ personal needs and wants. The fact that consultants visit the classroom frequently, also becomes burdensome for teachers (Martin 1995:54).

• The degree of mainstreaming into regular classes should depend on the careful assessment of the individual needs of each learner who is experiencing barriers to learning and development. A continuum of special education placement and services must be maintained (Murphy 1996:473; Salend 1990:50).

• Naicker (1996:1) and Grossmann (1998:4) show the difficulties of practising inclusive education in the same form in different countries, provinces, regions and districts. The difference is situated in human resources, fiscal resources, the state of development of the education system related to educational training, physical
facilities, the extent to which the concept has been debated, the value attached to human dignity, infrastructure, personnel and teacher training.

Before discussing the phenomenon of inclusive education and how it is implemented in the Thohoyandou area, it is necessary to view the historical development of inclusive education, leading up to the present concept of "inclusive education", as included in the new Education Policy. Hereafter the main points of departure, acting as criteria of inclusion, will be highlighted. The advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education will conclude this chapter.

2.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusion and mainstreaming are two approaches that stem from the normalisation principle. Normalisation implies that learners should be treated as "normal" as possible in terms of a normal environment, a normal daily routine, normal education practices and a normal exposure to society. Normalisation includes "integration" indicating a "normal" lifestyle and life amongst "normal" people - for the purposes of this study all learners must be treated as "normal" children in a "normal" classroom.

Because of the fact that the principles of normalisation and integration, oppose the traditional customs in specialised education, it did not foster inclusive education but rather excluded certain learners by placing them in separate schools, eg. schools for the blind or deaf learner.

During the late 1970's "mainstreaming" was implemented to try and treat learners with physical impairments in a "normal" way under "normal" circumstances.

According to Du Toit (1997:6) and Dave and Malanie (1998:148) in order to appreciate and to understand the advantages and possibilities of inclusion, an overview of how learners who experience barriers to learning were dealt with in the past, is relevant (Du Toit, 1997:6; Dave & Malanie 1998:48).
According to Daniel and King (1997:61) parents, teachers and government educational planners' attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning and development seem to be part of this process of inclusive education. During the 1950's and 1960's learners experiencing barriers to learning and development (for example the blind, physically disabled and mentally disabled learner) were isolated and treated by their parents as "demonised", wicked, or evil due to the superstitious belief of the people of those days (Du Toit 1997:7; Forline, Hattie & Douglas 1996:200).

A great concern during the 1960's, in Western societies (eg. Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Norway, West Germany, and Belgium) was the rights to education of all learners, irrespective of the severity of the disability (Clark, Dayson and Millward 1995:43). High standards in policy for the disabled learner, were set in the 1960's. In the 1970's and early 1980's, various integration policies and school reforms were implemented.

Barnatt and Kabzems (1992:135), D'Alonzo and Giordano (1996:305), Smith (1991:295), Sale and Carey (1995:7) contend that during the 1970's special education reform movements were commenced. New laws and dedicated individuals (examples of the impact of the reform movement can be noted in the Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 noted in the 1975 Public Law 94, 142, the rise of the National Association For Retarded Citizens, groups of special education leaders, and individuals working to develop the Disabilities Education Act) advocated for the rights of learners with special educational needs to be educated in the normalised school environment with their peers.

Inclusive education gained support during the 1980's and 1990's when it was implemented. Inclusive education was promoted as it allowed all learners to be involved in appropriate educational programmes. This implied that learners should be supported in an integrated classroom setting. This kind of educational setting would stimulate the learners to learn, even more so than in an exclusive, segregated setting (Forline, Hattie and Douglas 1996:120; Richard and Garry 1996:6; Stainback and Stainback 1991:5).
In the United States of America, several Federal Laws, indicated the manner in which learners, experiencing barriers to learning and development, were identified, assessed, placed and taught (Alper et al 1995:7-8 and Winzer 1993:73). These laws resulted in the development of the Rehabilitation Act of 1986 and the education of the Handicapped Education Act of 1990. The major implication with regard to these laws for inclusion practices were as follows (Alper et al 1995:7-8; Forline 1995:120 and Richard and Garry 1996:6):

- Special education services suitable to the needs of the learners with special education needs should be provided at no cost to the family of learners.
- Parents should receive written notification of the possibility of their children being identified (prior to the school's conducting a case study evaluation), as learners who experience barriers to learning.
- The learner's unique characteristics and needs were identified by means of an individualised, comprehensive and non-discriminating assessment.
- An individualised educational programme (IEP) should be developed annually for learners with special educational needs. The programmes should contain a statement of current performance levels, annual goals, short term objectives, specific services to be provided, the extent of participation in regular education settings, projected duration of services and an objective and evaluation procedure.
- An individualised family service plan should be provided to learners (three to five years) who experience barriers to learning. The individualised family service plan should contain information on the learner's current performance level as well as information on necessary appropriate services that could be utilised.
- An individual transition programme (ITP) for adolescents and young adults should be included with the individual family service plan (IFSP). The individual transition programme (ITP) is developed with the assistance of community based, vocational, rehabilitation personnel. Their assistance complements the individual education programme run by teachers, as this kind of assistance provides skills training as well as services needed to support the transition from school to a formal employment situation.
Beyond specific educational services, learners with special educational needs should be assisted with developmental and social adaptation programmes. These may include transportation, counselling and recreation therapy.

Educational services should be provided in the least restrictive setting appropriate to the learners' educational characteristics.

During the 1948-1994 apartheid era in South Africa, the Education Policy was characterised by differentiation based on race and colour. The fragmented, specialised education situation was manned by 17 separate education departments, which each had their own posts, schools, support system and staff. The authority was centralised and all decisions were made at government level. Separate schools for learners with different kinds of disabilities existed, although only few opportunities for changing between ordinary and specialised education existed. The approach used was the medical approach, based on clinical criteria for admission. Multi-disciplinary teams assisted and assessed the needs of these learners. Because the services were separated, there was a lack of coordination between the various government departments. Striking dissimilarities between different education departments included terminology and classification.

After the democratic election in April 1994, there has been a general resolve to cooperate and to collaborate in planning the future of an integrated system of specialised education.

Various meetings were held with policy makers, principals and academics. In influential documents which were published even before the new government came into being, certain general trends had already begun to emerge. Most of these are reflected in the new White Paper.

In recent decades, people have become, in contrast to the period 1960-1965, more conscious of the importance of the environment. During the 1960's, the emphasis was on the medical model which included blaming, labelling and was symptom focussed. Most social sciences such as psychology, education, sociology and theology acknowledge the decisive impact of the environment. The result, regarding specialised education, is that the medical model has made way for the ecological model.
The Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Denmark and Norway have been the forerunners of this movement. High level provision for the sick, the aged, the disabled and others who are dependent on the state, are developed. They are known as “welfare states”. The education of disabled children was promoted by a group of Swedish parents of children with disabilities who pressurised the government to provide their children with “normal” accommodation and education. The concept of “normalisation” was inserted in the legislation for the disabled.

Normalisation implied circumstances that resembled “normal” circumstances, including such aspects as a normal environment, a normal daily routine, normal education practices and a normal exposure to society. This implied that a “disabled” child would be allowed to live in a normal family by being part of the family system in a normal society. He or she will be taught to behave as “normally” as possible and he or she will eventually be able to work in a normal, ordinary community. Normalisation thus implied integration, which indicates a “normal” lifestyle among “normal” people.

The principles of normalisation and integration opposed the traditional customs in special needs education, where learners had to be excluded from mainstream education by sending them to separate schools and where they had very little contact outside the school.

Inclusion, is embedded in mainstreaming. Inclusive education accentuates diversity and regards every learner as normal and to be accepted as he or she is. The classroom is an example of the society where a diversity of people with different needs are to be found. The one person is not a better person than another. Everybody has the right to be part of the society and to be accepted and accommodated with tolerance.

During 1996 at a world congress on LSEN (Learners with Special Education Needs) held in Salamanca, Spain, inclusion was accepted as the obvious policy for the care and education of children with disabilities. During 1995, an international congress on “Special Education Needs” held in Birmingham confirmed this decision.
According to Hilton and Smith (1994:253), the motives behind the principle of inclusion, concern a specific perspective on people's specific attitudes and value systems. Learners were often treated as though they are not as good as we are, not "being one of us", and not being normal. The outcome of these discriminatory practices was that those were not regarded as "normal", must be kept safe. Disabled learners were obliged to receive separate education which excluded them from the ordinary experiences of life.

The South African proposals which emerged from the National Commission of Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET Document 1997:27), provided guidelines for transformation on all levels and aspects of education, to meet the diversity of needs of all learners, the needs of the population, minimising, removing and preventing barriers to learning so that effective teaching and learning can occur in all learners (NCSNET Document 1997:27). The guidelines are based on the South African Educational Act of 1996. (See Appendix 3)

The code of practice in Part of the Education Act 1996 recommended the kind of assistance that should be provided to learners who experience barriers to learning and development. The CSIE report (1999:30) and Richard and Garry (1996:27) explained the following five stages which the class teacher of the inclusive classroom should implement when assisting learners who experience barriers to learning:

**Stage 1**
The class teacher identifies, gathers the information and consults the special educational needs co-ordinator.

**Stage 2**
The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) together with the class-teacher draws up an individual educational plan and also co-ordinates the special provision.

**Stage 3**
The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) with the support from the school brings in outside specialists to advise the school support team.
Stage 4  The local education agency (LEA) with the school support team considers the need for statutory assessment and makes a multi disciplinary assessment.

Stage 5  The local education agency (LEA) and the school consider a need for a special educational needs statement, make a statement, monitor and review provision.

(See Fig. 2.1 for a graphic representation of the abovenames five stages of classroom assistance, rendered by the teacher.)
**Figure 2.1: Five Stages Helping Learners with Barriers to Learning**  
*(CSIE Report 1999:30 and Richard & Garry 1996:27)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| STAGE I | Class teacher  
- identifies  
- gathers information  
- consults the special educational needs coordinator |
| STAGE II | Special Educational Needs Coordinator and Class Teacher  
- coordinate special provision  
- draw up an individual education plan |
| STAGE III | SENCO and SCHOOL  
- brings in outside specialist to advise |
| STAGE IV | Local education agency and SCHOOL  
- consider a need for statutory assessment  
- make a multidisciplinary assessment |
| STAGE V | Local education agency and SCHOOL  
- consider a need statement  
- monitor and revise provision |

Figure 2.1 forms a pyramid, as assistance starts with the class teacher and ends with outside involvement by the specialists practising "inclusive education". Education includes other stakeholders for assisting learners who experience barriers to learning and development (eg.
therapists, psychologists, and social workers). The code of practice in South African Education Act of 1996 therefore leads to the possibility of practising inclusive education at an elementary level. (Engelbrecht et al 1999:29). The different conditions in the South African provinces pose challenges to an inclusive system of education, as there are discrepancies in terms of fiscal allocation, service provision, rural or urban disparities and infrastructure.

2.3 THE MAIN POINTS OF DEPARTURE REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education or "Quality education for all" is a feature of "Curriculum 2005", which is embedded in the new Education Policy (CSIE 1999:1 and NCSNET Document 1997:55). This policy accepts that learners experience different educational needs. A diversity of learner needs is the crux of an integrated education system (see paragraph 2.2 in this regard). The new Education Policy supports a learning environment where mutual acceptance and respect for all learners exists and they are allowed to participate fully in the learning process (Stakes & Hornby 1996:2).

According to the CSIE report, (1999:1), regular or mainstream schools which implement inclusive education, provide the most effective means of combatting discriminatory attitudes, as well as creating welcoming communities and building an inclusive society, while providing education for all. Schools, where inclusive education is practised, provide an effective education to the majority of learners and improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the entire education system.

Researchers (Du Toit, 1997:20; Engelbrecht et al 1999:57; O’Halon 1995:100; Landsberg and Burden, 1998:3; NCSNET Document 1997:55-75; and Robb 1994:12) highlight the following aspects of inclusive education:

- A flexible curriculum.
- Holistic development.
- Work life related education.
- An inclusive learning environment.
2.3.1 A flexible curriculum

Schools focussing on "Education for all" which are able to meet different special educational needs should be flexible to each individual situation of the learners. All learners should receive the benefits of the grade level curriculum. There should be one national curriculum framework for all learners, which is developed and applied to ensure that each learner's barriers to learning are addressed and accommodated.

A flexible curriculum should be accepted and valued internationally and be based on:

- Addressing the diverse educational needs of learners adequately.
- Flexibility so that it can be responsive to the full range of diverse needs of learners.
- The inclusion of life skills education, being incorporated into the different learning areas via specific life skills programmes. (The traditional division of skills and knowledge to encompass the concept lifelong learning for all, functionally and academically will be addressed in this way).
- Outcomes-based education which aims at the success and preparation for real life outside the school.
- The developmental level of learners in order to suit the curriculum.
- The process of identifying, describing and publicising the appropriate outcomes for each phase of education. Learners must be fully aware of the demands and develop an awareness of their own personal responsibilities as part of the learning programmes.
- Fundamental reconstruction of South Africa as a democratic society.
- Adequate and appropriate resource management and support provision.
- Adequately designed assessment of outcomes in order to accommodate barriers to learning experienced by learners. The progress and scholastic performance of learners should be assessed against their previous performance and not in comparison with the performances of other learners.

The flexible curricula should be practised by all stakeholders in the outcomes-based education approach (OBE), that is, nationally, provincially, regionally and for the purposes
of this study, in the district including the Thohoyandou area. Parents, teachers, education authorities and learners should plan it so that many people can participate. This implies that it will vary from school to school by responding to specific community needs and wants (Bengu 1997:11). In the Vhufuli area, schools are situated in close proximity to a hospital. Therapists, mental health nurses, and social workers working at the hospital should be encouraged to get involved in their communities and to establish partnerships with schools. In other villages, situated more rurally, the parents of learners experiencing barriers to learning need to disclose themselves and cooperate to form a support network in addressing and voicing their concerns to schools and communities.

2.3.2 Holistic development

Holistic development with its emphasis on the interactive nature of development implies that personal, vocational and educational issues cannot be separated and must thus not be dealt with via different services, in order to deal with life skills (Lazarus & Donald 1996:45).

According to the NCSNET Document (1997:60) a holistic approach involves developing all aspects of the school (centre of learning), as an environment where learning and development can take place. This includes the:

- Physical environment
- Psycho-social ethos of the school (centre of learning)
- Development of a vision and mission strategies to achieve the vision and mission
- Structure and procedures to stimulate learning and development
- Staff
- Parents and governing bodies
- Management and leadership

All abovementioned aspects are interrelated and interdependent in the following ways (Engelbrecht et al 1999:57; Clark et al 1995:1):
Leadership and management (governing body and school management team) should be empowered and equipped to facilitate the development of a culture of learning and teaching.

School policy (mission, aims and objectives) should include the essences of inclusive education.

Strategic planning, (eg. school development) should aim to implement school programmes which are anti-discriminative and democratic by nature.

Curriculum development, (eg. flexible life skills education, curriculum plans, goals and evaluation procedures of school) should ensure that the diverse needs of learners are being adequately addressed.

The school culture, (eg. values and norms in an inclusive and supportive teaching and learning environment) should reflect the values and norms of an inclusive and supportive teaching and learning environment, as well as the norms and values of the community.

Human resource utilisation and development (eg. the optional use of staff, parents, learners, educational support providers, community resources, training and support for all role players, positive relations between role players) should be fair and supportive in providing an effective and inclusive teaching and learning environment.

Technical and other support services (eg. administrative support, adequate financial or material resources, control of financial resources and education support services) should be sufficient to enable schools to pursue their outcomes.

Extrinsic determining factors (eg. family, community, district, provincial, national, global, contextual factors that hinder or support the development of inclusive schools) should also be considered.

(See Figure 2.2 for a graphic presentation of the relatedness and the mutual interdependence of the above aspects as well as Figure 2.2 for the hierarchy and interdependence of the difference aspects of holistic development).
FIGURE 2.2: SUMMARY OF THE RELATEDNESS AND INTERDEPENDENCE OF DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

(Engelbrecht et al 1999:57; Clark et al 1995:1)
2.3.3 Work life related education

Integrating work and community living should begin at an early age, e.g. at a primary school level. The education of the learners experiencing barriers to learning, must be in line with the changing society. Learners should obtain appropriate education, which is relevant to work and community life, providing for the needs of the community. Naicker (1996:20) emphasises that the education and training needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning, should be catered for. Addressing these barriers should form part of the process of facilitating access to facilities and to the economy, so that disadvantaged groups should be seen as assets by themselves within the community. This challenge has to be addressed within the curriculum to ensure that what is taught is relevant to life and the world of work (NCSNET Document 1997:77).

"Curriculum 2005" focuses on outcomes-based education (OBE) via preparation of all learners (including learners who experience barriers to learning and development) for life after school. The eight areas of learning will provide all learners the opportunity of being assimilated into the community. Learners will, according to Bengu (1997:15) be able to move through different levels of education during their school career. According to Bengu (1997:15) a balanced curriculum consists of the following learning areas, that will prepare all learners to have opportunity in life after school, that is:

- Technology
- Human and Social Science
- Physical and Natural Science
- Culture, Arts and Artistic crafts
- Economic and Management Science
- Life Orientation

For the purposes of the study, the learning areas will ensure the successful transition of learners who experience barriers to learning in the Thohoyandou area to an active working life. Inclusive education relating to real life and working life needs must be practised in
school in order to contribute towards the development of an inclusive society where all members of the society are able to participate optimally.

2.3.4 Inclusive learning environment

According to NCSNET Document (1997:VI) an inclusive learning environment is an environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning style and language. (See par 1.2.2 of chapter 1 in this regard). It is free of discrimination, segregation and harassment. An inclusive learning environment can be identified by the following characteristics (CSIE report 1999:10; Du Toit 1997:3; Engelbrecht et al 1999:46; Snell, Lowman & Canady 1996:268):

- Creating caring, supportive communities in the classroom.
- Educating societies to accommodate learners with adversity of educational needs in order to support these learners to actualise their full potential.
- Improving the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the entire education system.
- Employing teachers who focus not on the "barriers" but on what must be implemented in order to learn more effectively.
- Developing genuine respect for all people by treating everybody as dignified human beings.
- Acknowledging, supporting and encouraging the equal rights of all learners to partake in the learning and teaching process.
- Offering a range of learning contexts which offer diversity in terms of curriculum and mechanisms to address barriers to learning and development.
- Developing a flexible curriculum that meets the diverse needs of the learner population.
- Drawing on the different support services available in the teaching and learning context to the mutual benefit of all. Schools need to be provided with the full range of human resources necessary to deliver a comprehensive curriculum for learners through a combination of class teachers, permanent and auxiliary staff that should have certain support services (Snell et al 1996:268).
• Specialised teachers, being empowered to especially understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning in particular.

• Collaborating with other professional persons eg. speech therapists and occupational therapists, in order to meet the diverse educational needs of learners.

• Providing quality education to all learners.

• Learners are respected for what they are and not for what others and the community expect them to be in order to be in line with that criteria of normalisation and excellence.

• Creating a "normal" classroom which provides for the needs of a diverse group of learners as a resemblance of the community consisting of a diversity of "normal" persons with different needs.

According to the NCSNET Document (1997:112), primary education should be more effective and available to a greater diversity of learners. Schools need to be responsive to learners' individual needs. Teachers need to develop a more differentiated repertoire of teaching strategies to match the diverse needs of learners. The school system should develop the capacity to improve and adjust the curriculum as well as to present educational programmes, which are appropriate for all learners. The recognition of the importance of a flexible curriculum, holistic development, working life related education and an inclusive learning environment in order to institute partnerships between significant other role players, eg. parents, external funding sources such as sponsoring bodies or private businesses and the school system, needs to be implemented. Funding for overcoming barriers to learning and development, preventing breakdown and meeting the diversity of learning and system needs, must form parts of the South African education system as a whole (NCSNET Document 1997:112; Ware 1996:2).

The government funding support should plan according to the following characteristics of an inclusive learning environment (NCSNET Document 1997:153):

• The extensive classroom building programme which accommodates all learners to ensure barrier-free access eg. learners in wheelchairs must also be moved around freely.
- Smaller class-size.
- Funding whole-school or centre development programmes that focus on developing an inclusive and supportive environment.
- Training teachers who will initiate and orientate the training programmes.
- Supporting the parent empowerment programmes including the national parent character campaign.
- Developing the braille materials for blind or shortsighted learners.
- Assigning language development programmes for teachers, parents and interpreters.
- Developing the assessment and consultation procedures for identification of learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

(See Figure 2.3 for a graphic representation of "An inclusive learning environment" summary on schools practising inclusive education.)
Physical Facilities Accessible for all

Classroom Building programme

Language Development programme

Materials Required access For all e.g. brailles

Assessment Consultation Including specialties

Funding programme

Parent programme

Lower Class size

Training programmes
For the purpose of the study, the main points of departure regarding inclusive education which can be utilised as criteria in order to determine whether a school practices inclusive education or not, are as follows:

Inclusive education:

- caters for the educational needs of a diversity of learners.
- supports the following values: respect for others and to treat other persons with human dignity, mutual acceptance of one another; non-discriminative attitudes toward one another; all learners must feel welcome, supported and being cared for; all learners must feel they want to belong to the classroom community; the acknowledgement of the right of all learners.
- offers educational opportunities for all learners.
- accommodates the needs of all learners individually in order to allow the learner to actualise his or her full potential eg. a flexible curriculum.
- envisages the holistic development of the whole learner in order to actualise his or her full potential.
- embedded within outcomes based-education, ensures that learning content meets the needs of the community and is related to real life and work situations.
- promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners, irrespective of race, gender, class, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning style or language.
- implies that teachers will focus on what must be implemented in order to learn more effectively and not on the barriers to learning that learners experience.
- promotes the availability of support services which will meet the educational needs that learners experience.
- challenges teachers to become empowered so that they will be able to understand and assist learners in the most effective way so that they can actualise their full potential.
- implies a concerted effort by all the role players in the environment of the learner in order to assist and understand the learner in the most effective way.
• demands collaboration and partnership in opposition to competition amongst the different significant other role players.
• implies respect for learners for what they are and not for what others and the community expect them to be in order to be in line with the criteria of normalisation.
• no labelling or exclusion from educational opportunities.
• a "normal" classroom resembling a "normal" community.
• implies a more differentiated repertoire of teaching strategies to match the diverse educational needs of learners.
• is dependent on a physical barrier-free environment, eg. ramps for wheelchairs.
• implies fewer learners in the classroom.
• appeals to parents to become involved in the education of their children.
• implies the development of an assessment and identification programme in order to identify learners who experience barriers to learning.
• the development of a language programme in order to empower parents, learners and teachers.
• underpins outcomes-based education.
• that learners learn to accept differences among people as they see it role-modelled by their teacher and their teacher's attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning.
• is determined by the attitude of teachers towards all barriers as well as the availability of sufficient support services and resources.
• grants access to all learners to one single education system.
• is practised within the frame of reference of the Ecological Systems Model, implying that the environment and significant other role players within the environment are important in determining the success or failure of inclusive education.
• declares that the environment and not the learner is accountable for presenting barriers to learners.
• implies that the environment and not the learner must change to match the norms and standards of society.
• determines that each learner is unique and experiences his or her individual needs which have to be satisfied by the environment.

In the next section, the advantages and disadvantages of inclusive education will be discussed in order to determine whether the practice of inclusive education for the purposes of this study, in the Thohoyandou area, will be a determining factor in actualising the full potential of all learners.

2.4 ADVANTAGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The advantages of inclusive education being practised in schools, as reflected by research findings, will be discussed in terms of advantages in general, applicable to all learners in all mainstream schools as well as advantages applicable specifically to learners who are experiencing barriers to learning.

The benefits of inclusive education are not only relevant to learners who experience barriers to learning, but also to all mainstream schools and the community at large (Du Toit 1997:133).

Researchers (Bengu 1997:16; Burden 1994:55; Engelbrecht et al 1999:46; Burden et al 1996:7; Salend 1990:51; Stainback and Stainback 1996:6-7) highlight the following advantages of inclusive education:

• A miniature society, characterised by a diversity of learners and their needs, is established in the mainstream classroom. Being part of a miniature society, characterised by diversity, prepares learners for adult life in the community, in the following ways:

  • Learners learn to communicate, to develop friendships, to work together and to assist one another.
  • All learners are encouraged by a caring atmosphere in the classroom to fulfil their potential and to participate optimally.
The moral and ethical values that are upheld in the community are practised in the classroom.

- Learning environments that are barrier-free and supportive towards the individual and diverse needs of learners are created. These environments are particularly important to enable learners to actualise their full potential.
- Extended educational opportunities are offered to marginalised groups who may historically not have had access to education.
- The negative impact of labelling learners because of a special educational need experienced, which in the past in an exclusive setting, discriminated against these learners, is eliminated by the practice of inclusive education.
- Social and instructional support systems within the classroom are created. In the past, this kind of support was provided by families of learners, neighbourhood friendships as well as extended familial relationships.
- Learners can experience a sense of belonging and acceptance with the classroom as everybody is treated in the same way as persons with human dignity. Acceptance and belonging to a special "family" in the classroom, will discourage learners who experience barriers to learning to mix with peers that belong to gangs and eventually exhibit behaviour problems in their search for acceptance and belonging.
- The sense of collaboration amongst teachers is enhanced as good, regular and effective communication is underpinned by an attitude of cooperation instead of opposition.
- Teachers as classroom facilitators are granted greater flexibility in terms of teaching styles as they have to provide for a diversity of teaching styles.
- By being included in a mainstream classroom setting, learners experiencing barriers to learning experience, a feeling of "normality" as they are not excluded from mainstream education and "parked" elsewhere in a "special school".
- It provides the most effective means of combatting discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities and building an inclusive society, providing education for all learners.
- It provides the learner with a flexible curriculum, to suit the diverse needs of the learner in order to actualise the full potential of the learner.
• It establishes an individualised, well-balanced academic, functional, social and personal aspect of schooling.

• It offers an educational opportunity where learners with different characteristics and abilities participate in sharing educational experiences while pursuing individually appropriate learning outcomes with the necessary support and accommodation.

• All learners including those who are experiencing barriers to learning will enjoy the benefit of the grade level curriculum.

The flexible curriculum with its holistic development and inclusive environment emphasises learners working together as a group, organising and managing themselves in their classroom activities, and sharing ideas with one another.

Apart from the abovenamed advantages of inclusive education for all learners in mainstream schools, Staub (1996:76) and Walther (1997:399) record the following as advantages specifically for learners who experience barriers to learning and development:

According to Elliot and McKenney (1998:57); Reisberg (1998:274); Nietupski, Dvorsky, McKee, Nietupski, Cook & Costanza (1999:236) the following are also considered to be advantages of inclusive education:

• both learners benefit in life skills and academics.

• cooperative learning becomes essential as learners of varying abilities will be working together. Learners with low abilities will benefit greatly from working cooperatively with those with higher abilities.

• learners will work together with common goal.

• inclusive education also allows teachers for doing more realistic assessment of what learners can or cannot do, based on performance rather than individually administered tests.

• allows teacher to give learner more ownership as learners will take responsibility of assessment. The purpose of assessment is learning.

• learners grow personally as learners success will depend on self-esteem and strong trusting relationship with classroom teacher.
• learners feel a sense of belonging within the group and have the opportunities to be contributing members.

• inclusive education will be a simple means of learners with barriers to learning and development to add appropriate content from the areas of independent living and social skills (for example budgeting dressing).

• learners, teachers, parents have shared commitment and support.

• teachers who are expected to be involved in the inclusion process have opportunity for preparation and training.

• teachers have communication and collaboration time between themselves as they are to work as a team.

• inclusive education as a structured planning process with an ongoing direct service, consultative support and resources lead to the benefit of all learners.

• teachers enjoy flexibility, apathy and teacher-learner interaction.

2.4.1 Academic performance

Learners who experience barriers to learning and development and who are placed in diverse groups, may participate more freely in class activities and present fewer learning and emotional problems. They may eventually even experience that many of their skills and knowledge are actually better than those of some of the other learners.

2.4.2 Social skills performance

Inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development in their community school environment instead of being sent away to a "special school", will provide learners with a major opportunity for socialisation, that is, normalisation and ultimate functioning. When planned programmes of interaction are instituted, learners with and without barriers to learning, learn to interact and assist one another.

The inclusive learning environment is a means of allowing learners who experience barriers to learning, to develop the skills in order to adapt to an environment not catering
specifically for the needs of the disabled learner. It also provides the learners with opportunities to make the connections that they will need in order to live, as well as to participate productively in meaningful work and recreational activities in their communities. It encourages the learner who has been educated in the mainstream education to seek alternative arrangements.

Walther (1997:399) contends that most participants in inclusive education encourage the improvement and identification of a learner's positive feelings resulting in a good self-esteem and a feeling of self-confidence. These learners have greater faith, in their abilities to succeed in school and they feel better about who they are. Many learners who experience barriers to learning and development are freed from their labels, when the special education service delivery format changes. Many identified learners develop better attitudes about themselves and others, they are less critical and defensive, more motivated and more capable of looking at their own strengths and weaknesses objectively. Such learners pay more attention to school-work and many are more motivated to attend school. They seem to participate in classroom and extra-curriculum activities more actively.

2.4.3 Personal principles

Staub (1996:76) advocates inclusive education in that learners who do not experience barriers to learning, grow in their commitment to their own moral and ethical principles and become advocates for their friends who do experience barriers to learning. When developing these strong personal principles, learners benefit throughout adulthood.

2.4.4 Contact with people who are different

Learners who do not experience barriers to learning, development become less fearful of learners who look different or behave differently, because of they have come to understand learners experiencing barriers to learning more effectively.

2.4.5 Patience

In inclusive education learners learn together, share ideas and help one another, and therefore they become more patient towards one another. Both learners who experience
barriers to learning and learners who do not experience barriers to learning, benefit from inclusive education, as they all develop patience towards one another.

2.4.6 Friendship

Friendship makes learners feel loved, safe and cared for. According to Staub (1997:78); Salend and Duhaney (1999:119), meaningful long lasting friendships between learners who experience barriers to learning and those learners not experiencing barriers to learning and development, will be to the benefit of both groups of learners.

The main advantages of inclusive education can be summarised in that inclusive education meets every personality needs a learner is expected to experience, for example a need for:

- Acceptance and belonging
- Meaningful participation and interaction via relationships
- Developing responsible behaviour
- Mutual respect and understanding
- Self-actualisation
- Recognition
- Exercising lifelong skills in the community in which he or she is living.

According to the NCSNET Document (1997:83), the above needs can only be satisfied by both learners who experience barriers to learning and learners who do not experience barriers to learning and development in an inclusive education. All learners will be able to develop their potential to the fullest and contribute meaningfully to the community in which they live. Early identification and assessment of learners who are likely to experience barriers to learning and development, as well as early intervention through inclusive education, is a primary responsibility of and should be a national priority.

2.5 DISADVANTAGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The disadvantages and advantages of inclusive education can be summarised as follows in Table 2.1.
### TABLE 2.1: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Learners learn how to communicate, to develop friendships, to work together, to assist and to care for one another which creates a barrier-free, supportive learning environment in the classroom which will in turn stimulate learners to fulfil their full potential</td>
<td>• Teachers need to be empowered to understand and assist learners who experience barriers to learning eg. how to deal with additional demands on time, on the preparation of lessons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No labelling by teachers according to barriers experienced, eliminates discriminatory attitudes and provides an inclusive educational environment, which will allow learners to feel accepted and that they belong to a “family” who understands them and wants to support them.</td>
<td>• School buildings do not cater for the needs of learners experiencing barriers of learning eg. no ramps for wheelchairs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An inclusive environment with its focus on belonging, caringness, acceptance, individualisation, no discrimination, equality, human dignity, emotional and physical support, collaboration, can substitute dysfunctional family life by providing all learners with a “family”.</td>
<td>• Partners are not involved in the education of their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A barrier-free inclusive educational environment, assures that all learners will enjoy ultimate provision in their needs be it emotional or physical or scholastic (eg. flexible curriculum) by attempts being made by all the role players in the life world of learners as well as by education system.</td>
<td>• An emphasis on excellence and good scholastic performances accentuates the discrepancy between the performance of learners experiencing barriers to learning and the performance of learners who do not experience barriers to learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusive education offers educational opportunities to all learners.</td>
<td>• A shortage of relevant services to provide in the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning, handicaps the proper practice of inclusive education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners experiencing barriers to learning are, in an inclusive educational setting allowed to experience themselves as being normal.</td>
<td>• Mainstream education is not geared to accommodate the educational needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The negative attitudes of teachers and peers handicap learners who experience barriers to learning from excelling and actualising their full potential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The different demands that the teacher has to deal with, cause the teacher to experience less job satisfaction resulting in the teacher leaving the teaching profession.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advantages

According to Elliot and McKenney (1998:57); Reisberg (1988:274); Nietupski et al, (1999:236) the following are also considered to be advantages of inclusive education:

• both learners benefit in life skills and academics.
• cooperative learning becomes essential as learners of varying abilities will be working together. Learners with low abilities will benefit greatly from working cooperatively with those with higher abilities.
• learners will work together towards common goal.
• inclusive education also allows teachers for doing more realistic assessment of what learners can or cannot do, based on performance rather than individually administered tests.
• allows teacher to give learner more ownership as learners will take responsibility of assessment. The purpose of assessment is learning.
• learners grow personally as learners success will depend on self-esteem and strong trusting relationship with classroom teacher.
• learners enjoy self-contained heterogeneous setting to nurture development.
• learners feel a sense of belonging within the group and have opportunity to be contributing members.
• inclusive education will be a simple means of learners with barriers to learning and development to add appropriate content from the areas of independent living and social skills (for example budgeting dressing).
• learners, teachers and parents have shared commitment and support.
• teachers who are expected to be involved in the inclusion process have opportunities for preparation and training.
• teachers have communication and collaboration time between themselves as they are to work as a team.
• inclusive education as a structured planning process with an ongoing direct service, consultative support and resources lead to benefit all learners.
• teacher enjoys flexibility, apathy and teacher-learner interaction.
Disadvantages

According to Davies and Green (1998:14); Heckmon and Rike (1994:34); Raisch, Gay and Simpson (1996:14), the following factors show the disadvantages of inclusive education:

- learners miss out on significant amount of class time, leading to further complications such as lags in academic work.
- learners have to attend intensive remedial education after school, putting a heavy burden on the learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, not allowing learners experiencing barriers to learning and development to have time for fun.
- the regular learner in the system will be neglected, due to the teacher’s time and effort being consumed by the learners with barriers to learning and development.
- the standards of education will drop due to the neglect of the regular learners in order to accommodate the learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.
- learners without barriers to learning and development are disadvantaged by carrying and supporting learners experiencing barriers to learning and development when their focus should be on their own education.
- the needs caused by learners experiencing barriers, would not be met in regular schools as these schools have no necessary facilities to satisfy the needs of learners.
- teachers have to change their teaching method and have to cope with too much diversity in their classrooms.
- learners experiencing barriers are labelled, have no peers to identify with and consequently develop numerous emotional problems.
- with primary level learners it is difficult to achieve the goal of inclusive education as it should provide an appropriate educational programme in the least restrictive environment.
- the instruction given in the attempt at remediating academic deficiencies is not congruent with the ongoing teaching strategies used in the general education classrooms.
• if inclusion education fails to meet the educational difficulties of learners experiencing barriers to learning, it will unwittingly create barriers to their education.
• resources available in general classrooms can be inadequate to ensure that learning occur for learners with special educational needs, who are mainstreamed.
• the classroom teacher has to implement elements of an individualised education programme so that each learner’s needs are met.

According to Bursuck and Munk (1998:45); Buysse et al (1999:311); Spenser and Salend (1990:50); Tennessee Department of Education’s draft (1994:7); there are possible barriers for practising inclusive education, which have to be considered as they are supportive to the above factors on disadvantages of inclusive education.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter focuses on the development that has taken place in bringing all learners together from isolation, segregation, discrimination into one inclusive educational system. This has been established by the South African proposals emerged from NCSNET Document (1997:55-75) and the CSIE Reports (1999:30), with five stages to be implemented in order to assist learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

Although the disadvantages of inclusive education are a reality, the positive impact of inclusive education is notable as more advantages than the disadvantages seem to exist. The new education system, which provides quality education for all, flexible curriculum, holistic development, working life related education and an inclusive learning environment creates a welcoming and inclusive society.

A paradigm shift in the minds of teachers, parents and peers in their attitude towards learners who experienced barriers to learning will lead to the possibilities of practising inclusive education. These will eliminate barriers to including learners with barriers to learning and development in the mainstream schools. Therefore, the attitude of teachers, parents and peers should be dealt with in chapter three in order to reflect the possibility of practising inclusive education as an important approach.
CHAPTER 3

THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS, PARENTS AND PEERS TOWARDS LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING

3.1 INTRODUCTION

"I am not who I think I am.
I am not who you think I am.
I am who I think you think I am".

McNamara and Moreton (1995:11)

"The success of inclusion of learners with barriers to learning into the school setting seems to be principally dependent on teacher's attitude".


From the introductory quotations it is clear that teachers exercise a powerful impact on the self-concept of learners. The attitude of teachers, parents and peers will determine to what extent inclusive education will be practised in mainstream schools. For the purpose of this study, it can thus be argued that if inclusive education is implemented in the Thohoyandou area, the teachers' attitudes (as well as the attitudes of parents and peers) towards learners experiencing barriers to learning, will be determining factors.

The following research highlights the importance of the attitudes of teachers, parents and peers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning, as these attitudes also determine whether a teacher, parent or peer will be positive or negative towards the practice of inclusive education:

• According to Goldring (1990:21) and Winzer (1998:243), meeting the needs of learners who experience barriers to learning in the regular classroom situation, has
placed demands on learners, parents and teachers, as they all play a central role in the success of the implementation of inclusive education.

Winzer (1998:231) maintains that for the successful implementation of inclusive education, teachers must be prepared to commit themselves to a cooperative relationship. Practising inclusive education is based on the expertise of all the significant role players.

The need to change negative attitudes of teachers, parents and peers towards inclusion, can be met through the training of these significant other role players. Teachers should be equipped with the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to enable them to improve their teaching practice and to develop an inclusive learning environment (Bengu 1997:28).

According to Villa, Thousard and Chapple (1996:43) a factor that determines the successful outcomes of the implementation of inclusive education is the positive impact of teachers, parents and peers. These significant other role players must, however, be empowered via training (Villa et al 1996:43). This argument is substantiated by the NCSNET Document which maintained that a lack of awareness and inadequate training of both teachers and parents alike can cause them to respond negatively to the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning (NCSNET Document 1997:29).

Attitudes can create barriers within teachers and within the education system, the broader social context, the learning centre as a subsystem and especially within learners, if these attitudes are not eliminated or rectified. Attitudes can also prevent inclusive education from being implemented in mainstream schools.

The positive and negative impact of the attitudes of teachers towards learners and the practice of inclusive education, factors causing negative attitudes within teachers as well as possible strategies to change the negative attitudes of teachers will be discussed.
Hereafter the impact of the attitudes of parents and peers as significant other role players in the life-world will be discussed in relation to the practice of inclusive education.

This chapter will focus on the impact of the attitudes of teachers on the practice of inclusive education, causative factors leading to negative attitudes of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning, possible strategies that could be implemented to change the negative attitudes of teachers, as well as the attitude of parents and peers, towards learners experiencing barriers to learning.

3.2 THE IMPACT OF THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS ON LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

The attitudes of teachers comprising the willingness to partake in the implementation of inclusive education and to be positive towards learners who experience barriers to learning and development, affect the successful implementation of inclusive education. (Winzer 1998:243). Teacher values and teacher attitudes play a central role in the successful implementing of inclusion. The way teachers perceive competence in inclusive education, the values they hold with respect to the task and their concern about the interpretation of the change also form their attitudes towards inclusive education (Winzer 1998:243 and Forline & Cole 1994:13).

According to Wolery & Wilbers (1994:13) teachers behave differently towards learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. These different attitudes of teachers can be related to the presence of an inherent fear, a lack of knowledge about these learners as well as a lack of motivation to understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning to actualise their potential. Teachers need to be motivated to implement the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, in the mainstream classroom. (Clark et al 1995:431; Buel, Michael, McCormic & Scheer 1999:152).

In the following two sections, factors causing teachers to feel either positive or negative towards learners experiencing barriers to learning will be discussed, as well as the outcomes of attitudes.
3.2.1 Positive attitudes of teachers towards learners who experience barriers to learning

According to Salend and Duhaney (1999:121), Olson, Murphy and Olson (1999:79) and Stanovich (1999:55) the following factors can create a positive attitude within the teacher towards learners experiencing barriers to learning:

- Effective instructional adjustments, which is to the benefit of all learners.
- The stimulation of a willingness to interact with learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- The involvement of the teacher to accept co-ownership from a learner.
- An increased co-ownership and willingness to interact with learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- The knowledge of a variety of teaching strategies being made available to teachers (applicable to learners experiencing barriers to learning).
- The altering of attitudes towards the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning in the mainstream classroom.
- The development of a greater awareness of the impact of teachers as positive role models for all learners including learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- The experiencing of an enhanced feeling of being in control and being empowered in order to actualise the potential of all learners in the classroom.
- The presence of an increased openness and preparedness to change and a growing willingness to adjust instructional techniques in order to promote learning of all learners in the classroom.
- The preparedness to bring to light the necessity of the implementation of inclusive education.
- The involvement of stake holders (like parents, principals, learners experiencing and not experiencing barriers to learning, representatives, other professionals) in the planning of school activities in order to include learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- The identification of partners in education in the community who can assist satisfying the needs of all learners, in order to eliminate barriers to learning.
• The creation of an attitude of dedication in order to provide excellent "education for all".
• The commitment to collaborate with other teachers in order to understand and assist all learners to actualise their full potential.

The following outcomes of positive attitudes towards the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning can be listed: (Prom 1999:79; Olson et al 1999:23; Chapman 1999:81).

• An improvement of learners' academic performances.
• A change in peer relationships as they identify with the teacher as a role model.
• An intensified focus on the "whole" learner, when outcomes of learning programmes are envisaged.
• A consciousness of the importance of respect for one another and the diverse needs of other learners, as well as the need to know more about one another in order to be able to work together in one classroom and to include other learners.
• The presence of an increased openness and preparedness to change and a growing willingness to adjust instructional techniques in order to promote learning of all learners in the classroom.

A positive attitude exhibited by teachers in the Thohoyandou area implies that the barriers identified by the researcher, (eg. the absence of listening, reading, writing and social skills, learners who are experiencing backlogs in terms of expected scholastic outcomes, learners who need specialised equipment to enable them to learn properly, learners experiencing visual, hearing and speech related impairments, learners who experience socio-economic barriers) can be overcome, thus allowing learners to actualise their potential as is envisaged by the new Education Policy.

3.2.2 Negative attitudes of teachers towards learners who experience barriers to learning

According to Engelbrecht et al (1999:70) and Winzer (1998:236), teachers can stimulate learning within learners. The attitudes of teachers, their beliefs and feelings with regard to
what is happening in the school and in the classroom, are of crucial importance as how they react towards learners, systems or other role players.

According to Du Toit (1997:53), Goldring (1990:21) and Pankake & Palmer (1996:26), the negative attitudes of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning, manifest in terms of labelling of learners, isolating learners and in the frustration that teachers experience towards these learners. The manifestations of the above negative attitudes of teachers will be discussed in the following paragraphs:

Negative attitudes within teachers, resulting in the isolation of learners, are caused by the lack of knowledge, the lack of experience and a lack of training of teachers who are teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning. According to the NCSNET Document (1997:27) teachers are influenced by feelings of fear (eg. fear of associating with learners who suffer transmitted diseases as well as the fear of not feeling in control of the situation because of a lack of knowledge on how to understand and assign learners experiencing barriers to learning.

According to D'Alonzo and Giordano (1996:309) the following factors contributed to the isolation or exclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning.

- The environment, due to a lack of the availability of support services.
- The disempowerment of teachers due to a lack of experience and training to enable them to teach and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- The lack of appropriate skills because of a lack of in-service training opportunities.
- The lack of opportunities to acquire skills to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.
- The learner-teacher ratio which creates problems for teachers, as there are more learners present in the classroom than what has been stipulated in the Education Policy.
Labelling of learners by teachers is regarded as constituting a negative attitude towards learners (Du Toit 1997:53). Teachers label learners as belonging to a specific category (for example being in grade five A), according to learners' achievements whereby a particular kind of educational placement is made. The placement is based on the attachment of labels not because of appropriate assessment of the educational needs of the learners. Primary schools in the Thohoyandou area are still classifying learners according to their scholastic performances. Du Toit (1997:53) points out that classifying the learners according to their group or class such as underachievers, physically disabled, learning disabled and mentally retarded, stigmatises, humiliates and labels learners. These experiences and feelings in turn impact on learners' self-images with the result that they do not actualise their full potential.

The NCSNET Document (1997:15) and Du Toit (1997:53) regard labelling as a negative association between the learners and the system, for example, "dropouts", "repeaters" and "slow learners". Labelling goes as far as categorising learners, especially those with severe mental disabilities as being uneducable. Such a label fails to identify strategies to meet the learners' needs and to actualise his or her potential to the fullest - especially if peers follow in the footsteps of the teacher as a role model and also label a specific learner.

Learners are labelled as "gifted" or "repeaters". Teachers also use words that have negative connotations, for example words like "unfortunate" and "handicapped" (Bradley 1997:8-9; Nielsen 1996:7). Little, Williams, Ward, Fraser and Churchill (1995:5) consider words, which one uses in referring to learners experiencing a barrier to learning, as a factor that can have a negative impact by preventing learners from acquiring a positive self-image. It is thus maintained that such learners experience a double barrier namely the personal barrier caused by a specific need, negatively reinforced by the barrier caused by the negative attitude of a teacher and manifesting in a poor self-image.

According to the NCSNET Document (1997:2) it is suggested that instead of referring to "disabled learners as learners with special needs, we should refer to them as learners experiencing barriers to learning and development". The discouraging use of certain
negative words should be replaced by motivating, encouraging and appropriate words focussing on the positive characteristics of a learner.

3.2.2.2 The isolation of learners with barriers to learning and development

Most groups of disabled learners have been excluded from or rejected by the mainstream schools or the community, by placing them in special schools which are quite often far away from the community in which they grew up. This strategy was implemented in order to get rid of these learners, as they were regarded as outsiders or as a curse or a misfortune (Goldring 1990:21). Forline et al (1996(b):29) support the principle of isolation of learners and maintain that learners who experience barriers to learning, should not be included in the regular classrooms, especially the intellectually disabled learners.

The end result of the isolation or exclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning from mainstream education is that these learners receive little relevant education for real life. Learners who do not experience barriers to learning in turn, are not exposed in the classroom to diversity, co-operation, respect for other learners who are different from themselves and thus place little value on these factors which they will find in the communities of which they are going to be members (Prom 1999:78).

3.2.2.3 Frustration experienced by teachers regarding learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom

Most teachers do not seem to know how to meet the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Instead of understanding and assisting these learners, teachers become frustrated and fail to actualise the intellectual and emotional potential of learners (NCSNET Document 1997:16; Ainscow 1994:73). The new approach of inclusive education includes a challenge (and a threat) to teachers as the experienced teachers are not used to new practices and are not keen to make a paradigm shift in order to implement new strategies.

The following factors, identified by researchers, reinforce the negative feelings of teachers towards inclusive education and should be eliminated in order to impact positively on

- A curriculum, which negatively reinforces the existence of barriers within learners, causing even more barriers to learning for learners.
- Insufficient and irrelevant teaching materials, which are not representative of a variety of cultural groups or life experiences.
- Insufficient facilities that do not eliminate barriers to learning but instead reinforces the barriers, e.g. shortage of classrooms, stairs and ramps.
- School subjects are presented, that can be regarded as gender sensitive, for example, agricultural science and needlework.
- A lack of specialist training and a lack of knowledge concerning the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- A feeling of disempowerment, of anxiety and confusion caused by extra responsibilities and an overwhelming workload.

In the preceding paragraphs, it became clear that negative attitudes of teachers, can be improved by the acquirement of knowledge and skills in order to understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning more effectively.

3.3 CAUSATIVE FACTORS LEADING TO NEGATIVE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

According to the NCSNET Document (1997:35) teachers appear to have a disturbing lack of awareness and skills for dealing with diversity among learners and identifying needs in learners. Teachers show that they are better equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deal with learners who do not experience barriers to learning. They are, however, not equipped with skills and knowledge on how to deal with or how to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning. This can be clearly illustrated by the following aspects that cause negative attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning (NCSNET Document 1997:35).
3.3.1 Fear

Feelings of fear are a result of the teacher who does not feel in control of his or her situation. Feelings of being out of control, can be traced back to a fear of the unknown as the teacher does not feel at ease and is not familiar with strategies on how to understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Negative attitudes and labelling result from fear and a lack of awareness of the particular needs of certain learners. Barriers within the teacher resulting from fear and lack of awareness may arise. They are caused by the negative feelings of the teacher, (eg. learners with high ability are also regarded as threatening). Learners who are HIV positive (because of negative assumptions and misconceptions associated with the disease) and learners with disabilities or impairments (fear about disabilities or impairments) experience significant barriers to their learning and development due to teachers' fears (NCSNET Document 1997:15).

Educators fear the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning in the mainstream classroom and respond negatively towards these learners because of the following reasons (Pankake & Palmer 1996:26; Villa et al 1996:53; Vlachou & Barton 1994:104; Wolery & Wibers 1994:13):

- Educators do not know how to teach learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- Teacher/learner ratio.
- Lack of adequate consultation with special educators and support services, eg. psychologists, occupational therapists.
- Fear of financial constraints that can lead to a shortage of classrooms and related support services for learners experiencing barriers to learning which will prevent teachers from catering for the needs of these learners. The educators do not want to face the responsibility of motivating parents, so that together they can do fundraising.
• Fear of the implementation of the new Education Policy, whereby teachers are obliged to create circumstances which will allow the needs of a diversity of learners to be satisfied as barriers to learning are eliminated.

According to Buel et al (1999:152) fear leads to labelling and isolation of learners as well as feelings of frustration concerning learners experiencing barriers to learning. These emotions are caused by a lack of knowledge.

3.3.2 Lack of knowledge and skills

The educators as role models to all learners should give direction to the learners who experience barriers to learning (Salend & Duhaney 1999:121) Lack of knowledge, experience and training seems to be major factors that lead to negative attitudes. Many educators are not motivated to teach learners with disabilities, gifted learners and learners with chronic diseases because of a lack of knowledge of strategies for teaching these learners (Stanovich 1999:54). Colleges and universities are to be blamed for not preparing teachers to deal with diversity in the classroom (Villa et al 1996:53). Only since 1998, South African universities have included learners with learning problems, eg. UNISA.

Teachers with little experience of learners with disabilities are likely to experience negative attitudes towards the inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning, in the mainstream classroom. Experience tends to change attitudes. Teachers in South Africa should assist learners experiencing barriers to learning and who have been "mainstreamed by default" (Engelbrecht et al 1999:710 and Buel et al 1999:152).

Experienced teachers who have made the mindshift, no longer experience themselves as experts in teaching. They are concerned that they are not in line with the new South African Education Policy. They need confidence in their own knowledge and adequate training regarding the new policy and new curriculum (Forline et al 1996(b):122). According to Richard and Garry (1995:62), regular class teachers appeared to lack specialised training or specific qualifications in dealing with:
• Models of outcomes-based instruction.
• Models of family-centeredness and curriculum-based assessments.
• Approaches to curriculum adaptation.
• Strategies for peer-mediated instruction (e.g. peer tutoring, co-operative group learning)
• Approaches to the understanding of classroom behaviour and discipline.
• Strategies concerning the teaching and reinforcing of social skills within learners.

According to Forline et al (1996(b):123) inadequate knowledge and skills cause teachers to reject learners experiencing behavioural, emotional and intellectual disabilities more easily. The teacher as a role model is expected to be equipped with knowledge about dealing with inclusive education (Bradley et al 1997:8-9). This is one of the defence mechanisms teachers should have mastered during their training which will help them to cope with inclusive education.

3.3.3 Lack of motivation

According to Giangreco (1997:11) teachers need to be motivated and encouraged to be able to deal with a diversity of learners in the classroom. This implies that teachers should know how all learners learn. Teachers should also spend time with each learner. Regular educators should be praised and shown that if they are successful in teaching learners without barriers to learning, they can acquire the skills to teach learners experiencing barriers to learning (Giangreco 1997:11).

According to Golombo and Hammeken (1996:49), motivation of teachers is a crucial factor in the implementation of inclusive education. A lack of motivation is related to the negative attitudes of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning. The acceptance of inclusive education depends on whether the teacher is convinced about the meaningfulness of inclusive education, especially in relation to the academic performance of the learner. Educators should be convinced that learners experiencing learning barriers to learning have a right to equal educational opportunities in mainstream education (Forline et al 1996:120).
The NCSNET Document (1997:80) recommended that all centres of learning should be organised in such a way as to grant maximum opportunity to learners experiencing diverse learning needs to be accommodated in the mainstream classroom. The schoolday should be organised to expose learners to diverse learning styles and tempos and maximum learning opportunities.

Extrinsic factors like redeployment, retrenchment, low salaries and no appraisal can lead to negative attitudes within teachers who have a stressful and demanding role to fulfil, as expected within a policy of inclusive education. Coping with learners experiencing barriers to learning in a mainstream classroom is stressful and teachers need to feel secure and motivated to understand and assist each learner in the classroom successfully (Cooper & Goldman 1995:59; Forline et al 1996(a):203).

According to Murphy (1996:485), factors, which improve the motivation of teachers, are: certificates granted to teachers after completion of a course in special needs education, a reduction of class size or a programme which focuses on working with learners experiencing barriers to learning.

3.4 POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO CHANGE THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS

Negative attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning lead to the exclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning from the education system. If effective learning is to be promoted and learning breakdowns prevented, the South African education system should consider the following as factors that can lead to ways of changing the attitudes of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning:

3.4.1 Intensive training

Educators need more information and training in order to understand and assist learners who experience barriers to learning more effectively. In-service training can change the
attitude of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning in the following ways (Aefsky 1995:42; D'Alonzo & Glordano 1996:311; Gilbert & Hart 1990:183):

- Enabling teachers to cope with present and future demands of inclusive education and thus being able to understand and assist a diversity of learners experiencing barriers to learning in the classroom.
- Helping the educators to alter their attitude towards these learners and gain skills in understanding and assisting learners experiencing barriers to learning.
- Assisting teachers to become aware of learners experiencing barriers to learning, for example, to be able to identify a learner with partial eyesight.
- To expose teachers to learners experiencing barriers to learning so that they can put themselves in the shoes of these learners and get to know the impact of barriers in the lives of these learners.

In-service training could reduce the teacher's anxiety about including learners experiencing barriers to learning as teachers are continuously being confronted with the following questions (Pankake & Palmer 1996:59; Vlachou & Barton 1994:105):

- In what way can the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning be met?
- In what way can learners experiencing barriers to learning be understood and assisted whilst fulfilling all other classroom responsibilities?
- In what way can stress be prevented, which teachers experience when they have to cope with learners experiencing barriers to learning?

The anxiety that the educators experience in relation to the above challenges, should be reduced in such a way as to change the negative attitudes of teachers towards including learners experiencing barriers to learning. Programmes need to be developed and implemented in order to equip the teachers with necessary skills and knowledge, as well as to promote positive attitudes to enable teachers to respond to the needs of all learners (NCSNET Document 1997:67; Smith 1991:540).
3.4.2 Individualisation

According to Wade and Moore (1992:27) the teacher should treat each learner as an unique, individual who has equal opportunities to education. Individualising teaching styles impacts on the social and emotional components of school life which determine factors regarding successful learning.

Stainback and Stainback (1996:10) support the argument by stating the importance of the development of self-confidence, mutual respect and a sense of community and reciprocal support being available to learners. Individualised teaching implies a respect for a diversity of learners focussing on different needs and values.

Inclusion, although it offers educational opportunities to all learners, provides for individualised teaching within a diverse classroom population. As learners are individuals and unique, they should be treated according to their individual needs. According to the NCSNET Document (1997:25) and Thomas & Montemayor (1998:373), every learner has the following unique special needs:

- The need for encouragement, because of a lack of self-reliance and being the subject of some teasing.
- The need for assertive devices and adaptive technology.
- The need for recognition of expertise in practical work such as gardening, pottery, woodwork and the need for their competence in some particular sports (need adapted sport and physical education programmes).
- The need to be acknowledged as keen, conscientious, hardworking, although of limited ability, sensible, capable and reliable learners.
- The need to be delighted to learn, to make good progress in a small group situation.

According to the NCSNET Document (1997:250) specialised educator competence, dedicated teachers with positive attitudes to learners experiencing barriers to learning and support from external sponsoring bodies can address the diverse needs of all learners. This can be done through Individualised Education Programmes (IEPs) for the learners which
are based on effective instructional practices. When principles such as “least restrictive environment”, “technically adequate assessment”, and “individualised educational programmes” are thoughtfully integrated into the school resources, staff development and planning for learners, special education becomes an effective means for serving all learners (McMillan, Gresham, Lopez & Bocian 1996:3).

3.4.3 Creating an inclusive environment

The implementation of inclusive education implies that the teacher has a positive attitude towards learners experiencing barriers to learning. However, in order to establish an inclusive environment, which will lead to a change of attitudes, the following aspects of inclusive education should be noted (Bradley et al 1996:8-9; Forline 1995:180; Lewis 1994:49; Pastor & Jimenez 1994:53):

- The teachers should be provided with information regarding the present skills and objectives of learners along with his or her strengths and weaknesses.
- The impact of barriers to learning experienced by learners, should be explained to teachers.
- A conference for the administrators and educators who are responsible for the education of learners experiencing barriers to learning must be organised, so that strategies to include learners experiencing barriers to learning in the regular classroom can be discussed.
- The furniture and equipment of the room should be changed to accommodate learners experiencing barriers to learning. Prior orientation to the classroom will help learners to adjust, to feel comfortable and secure in the room.
- Collaboration with the special education teacher will ensure that all needed devices are available to learners, in order to actualise their full potential.
- Fewer learners in the classroom (not more than 30 learners) as a fair learner/teacher ratio ensures a positive climate in the classroom.
- A differentiated curriculum, which makes it possible for learners who experience barriers to learning, to participate.
A variety of teaching methods so that all learners, including those who experience barriers to learning, can respond actively to activities.

The development of learners' self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

Appropriate recognition and praise of learners' performance.

Fostering of learners' independence and autonomy in learning.

Effective use of resources.

A problem solving approach to teaching so that learners especially those experiencing barriers to learning should be seen as a challenge not as an obstacle to the development of educators.

Commitment of educators to a policy of inclusion. The more committed the educators are the more sympathetic and helpful they are to learners experiencing barriers to learning.

(See Figure 3.1 for the summary of the impact of the teachers' attitudes on learners who experience barriers to learning).

3.5 ATTITUDES OF PEERS TOWARDS INCLUDING LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

"Learners would play an active role in the teaching and learning process. Peer education or 'child-to-child' approaches would be adopted to optimise the resources of learners themselves in pursuing educational goals and providing support to one another. Educators and learners would have access to appropriate training and support to pursue educational goals"


The role of peers in providing support to each other and especially their attitudes towards one another are key factors in creating an inclusive environment in a classroom situation as the attitudes of peers determine the understanding of and support to learners experiencing barriers to learning. A child-to-child, youth-to-youth or peer-support approach has been found to be an invaluable component in health promotion (NCSNET Document 1997:72; Prom 1999:78).
3.5.1 Positive attitudes of peers towards learners with barriers to learning and development

The success of inclusive education mainly depends on the quality of friendship which learners have towards each other (Heiman 2000:265).

Positive attitude of peers provide learners with the following benefits (Alper & Ryndak 1992:383; Heiman 2000:266).

- Unique opportunities to acquire additional social ability and refine existing skills.
- Mutuality, affection, support, willingness to share thoughts and secrets, loyalty, openness and intimacy.
- Emotional support, a means of relaxation, opportunities to voice various frustrations.
- Learners are less critical towards each other.
- Sharing entertainment going to school together, playing together, talking on the phone, sharing of intimate secrets and experiences, reliability and trust, empathy and respect.
- Warm and caring companions, growth in social recognition and self-concepts, development of personal principles.


3.5.2 Negative attitudes of peers towards learners with barriers to learning and development

Poor attitude of peers towards learners with barriers to learning and development creates conflict. Peers can have a negative attitude towards each other especially to those with barriers to learning and development and this results in labelling, isolation or rejection.
3.5.2.1 Labelling

Peer judgement of learners who experience barriers to learning seems to be influenced by pre-conceptions associated with labelling and by their actual and academic behaviour. According to Beaumont (1999:234), learners experiencing barriers to learning have been found to be less favoured, less accepted and interacted with peers less often, than learners not experiencing barriers to learning.

Learners who show incompetence at school with regard to classroom activities, learners who are physically disabled and who cannot participate effectively in extramural activities, as well as learners with behaviour and emotional problems, are classified and labelled by peers according to their potential. Peers should support these learners instead so that they will feel free to socialise and interact freely with all learners (Beaumont 1999:243).

Learners experiencing barriers to learning experience themselves labelled as intellectually impaired and as not being able to perform academically (NCSNET Document 1997:27). Labelling also affected learners with barriers in the researcher’s area as they are classified and labelled according to their achievement.

3.5.2.2 Isolation

Bamartji and Dailey (1995:513) and Smith (1991:540) discuss peer ratings to assess the social status of learners who experience barriers to learning and those who do not experience barriers to learning in an inclusion classroom. Learners who experience barriers to learning had a lower social status than their peers not experiencing barriers to learning.

Learners without learning problems sometimes develop negative attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning. They are inclined not to accept or include them in social activities. Forline and Cole (1994; 11-12) and Smith (1991:541) support this notion by showing the impact of attitudes of peers. The first contact established between learners who experience barriers to learning and those learners not experiencing barriers to learning
is an important factor. If learners experiencing barriers to learning are socially competent, their level of acceptance by peers is likely to increase.

### 3.5.3 Causative factors that lead to negative attitudes of peers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning and development

Peers sometimes develop negative attitudes mentioned above towards learners with barriers to learning and development. The learners experiencing barriers are rejected or ignored by their classmates and remain socially isolated (Heiman 2000:267). This can be caused by the following factors:

#### 3.5.3.1 Fear


- Learners without barriers to learning and development fear inclusive education.
- They think that the standard will drop as the teacher will have to take more of his time and effort with the learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and development.
- Learners experiencing barriers to learning and development can develop low self-esteem due to repeated failures in regular education.
- Fear that maybe they cannot keep up with the standard of their peers.
- Fear that the teachers will not give learners experiencing barriers to learning and development enough time after school hours.
- Learners experiencing barriers fear that they can have problems when participating in sport activities.
3.5.3.2  Lack of motivation

Reisberg (1998:273), and Bothman et al (2000:202) also indicate the learner with barriers to learning and development lack motivation because of their needs. They thought that the general classes will not be able to meet the following special needs:

- need for the therapist.
- need for better facilities (Braille) and infrastructure.
- small class size.
- need for more information and help which peers should give.
- need for parental involvement in their learning.

3.5.4  Possible strategies to change the negative attitudes of the peers

3.5.4.1  The implementation of a reward system

Teachers should initiate a reward system to encourage learners experiencing barriers to learning to develop quieter work habits, which would be accommodated by learners who are not experiencing barriers to learning. During lunch and extramural activities the teacher should encourage the peers to pair up learners who experience barriers to learning with learners who do not experience barriers to learning. If a learner is socially accepted and skilled, the selection of work partners will be easier.

3.5.4.2  Partners working together

Vaughn (1994:64) and Prom (1999:79) also established a 30 minutes, midweek peer time where all learners are free to select to work on homework, or to use learning centres, or are allowed to read or to draw together. The learners who experience barriers to learning should be accepted and elected as co-workers. Teasing of learners who do not experience barriers to learning will be limited. Learners experiencing barriers to learning need to be assisted by those without barriers to learning to stay on task. They should be motivated also to finish
the work so that they can attend schools with other learners. This motivation can be implemented in the new policy of education with Curriculum 2005.

3.5.4.3 Limit criticism

Teachers should control and limit learners when they criticise one another by focussing on enjoying one another's company and personalities. When the classroom teacher discovers that the learners' peers are very critical of each other, the teacher should learn gradually to ignore the learners' annoying habits and begin to enjoy the company and personality of learners who experience barriers to learning. As the relationships among peers become more positive they can tutor each other which will allow the teacher to have more time with the learners who require more individualised attention (Whiting and Young 1996:37; Smith 1991:541).

3.5.4.4 Curriculum 2005

Cockburn and Nicholson (1997:5) encourage the implementation of Curriculum 2005, which determines how learners should be grouped. There should be a diversity of different abilities and personalities in the classroom, for example, quiet learners, noisy learners, confident learners and more introverted serious learners. Blending these different learners into a "family" will encourage the more capable learners to help those who are experiencing barriers to learning with their work. Critical outcomes are achieved and the learners' attitudes are modified and become more positive. Blending the learners with different needs can build long lasting relationships (see section 2.4, of chapter 2).

3.5.4.5 Friendship

Staub (1996:74) considers friendship as one of the most important factors determining positive attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning.
According to Staub (1996:74) and Thomas & Montemayor (1998:375), everyone needs to be loved and cared for. Meaningful long-lasting friendships have benefits for both learners (eg. learners who experience barriers to learning and those who do not experience barriers to learning).

3.5.4.6 Peer relationship

Teachers should encourage learners experiencing barriers to learning and those who do not experience barriers to learning to establish positive peer relationships. Teachers can use class rules, bulletin boards, co-teacher models and structured free time options, for example, selecting learners experiencing barriers to learning to be part of classroom teams and activities, providing special awards and to be electing them to in learners’ councils positions (Duran 1996:17).

3.5.4.7 Individualisation

The group should allow individuals to reach beyond themselves, to be part of something that none of them would have attained on their own and to discover ways of thinking with others to their mutual benefit. This should go hand in hand with individualised education programmes, which meet the needs of each learner (Burden 1995:152), as discussed in 3.2.3.1 of this chapter.

3.5.4.8 Social support categories

Social support can be done in three ways, that is:

- Providing information to classmates about the learner who experiences barriers to learning concerning a communication system, adaptive equipment and education activities. This information can be shared during interaction amongst peers and during activities that are not part of friendship programmes.
- Identify and utilise the various media that could serve as the basis for interactive exchanges between the learners experiencing barriers to learning and learners not experiencing barriers to learning (for example, computer activities, games and shared materials).
An ongoing facilitation by educational staff of social exchange between learners experiencing barriers to learning and their classmates through the establishment of buddy system arrangements of interactive actions and interpreting communication (Hunt, Alwell, Davis & Goetz 1996:54; Smith 1991:541).

3.5.4.9 Peer tutoring

Salisbury, Gallucci, Palombaro and Peck (1995:133) and Martin (1995:198) recommended that peer tutoring and classroom roles (eg. the roles assumed by peers) can promote positive attitudes in learners. Peers assist and understand learners who experience barriers to learning which encourages them to reveal their true potential. Peer tutoring allows the learners who experience barriers to learning to obtain help from another learner, which is sometimes easier for them to take than from their teacher. The teacher can also create jobs in classroom to promote learning and personal development, for example, a "right-hand" helper, that is, he or she, with or without barriers to learning, can assume a leader's role. He or she may carry equipment to the next class or provide assistance to anyone who needs help. This can be an arrangement which lasts for a week.

3.5.4.10 Humanness ("Ubuntu")

The practice of inclusion education will engender an attitude of humanness among learners. They will begin to consider each other as human beings with potential, as unique beings.

In order to encourage positive attitudes towards one another the characteristics of "Ubuntu" should be inculcated with the learners. They should learn to accept, respect and understand each one's dignity, ability and weaknesses so that they can help each other with love and care (Burden 1995:12). The peer support approach is seen as an invaluable component of promoting a healthy knowledge, attitudes and skills (NCSNET Document 1997).
3.6 ATTITUDES OF PARENTS TOWARDS LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING

As parents are a source of experience and knowledge, they can improve the quality of the education of learners experiencing barriers to learning. Parents are the actual partners of the teachers. They are the extension of the teacher at home (Kochanek & Buka 1999:2; Paul & Epanchin 1991:69). The attitude of parents towards learners experiencing barriers to learning should therefore be taken into account. From early childhood the parents contribute to the shaping of abilities to reason. Parents carry on with the education of a learner even after the learner has started school (Kochanek & Buka 1999:29; Olson et al 1999:19).

3.6.1 Positive attitudes of parents towards learners experiencing barriers to learning

Heiman (2000:276) indicated that learners experiencing barriers to learning and development always turn to people within their homes for emotional support and other types of support.

Parent involvement and family support are essential in the education of learners especially learners experiencing barriers to learning. Lack of parent involvement of learners experiencing barriers to learning, is often compounded by negative societal attitudes towards these learners (NCSNET Document 1997:102; Smith 1991:503). Parents are the main agents of change (Burden 1995:51). Parent's involvement has also been stifled because of patronising ways in which they have often been approached by schools in the past. A change in the attitudes of parents and that of the teachers is necessary and needs to be pursued through various educational strategies.

The parents want their learners to acquire more life skills and socialisation. They desire enhanced opportunities for the development of friendship for their sons and daughters. (Kelly 2001:312).
3.6.2 Negative attitudes of parents towards learners experiencing barriers to learning

3.6.2.1 Labelling

Coutinho & Repp (1999:285); Murphy (1996:483) and Vondra, Shaw, Swearing, Cohen & Owens (1999:165) mention the following attitudes of parents on including learners who experience barriers to learning in mainstream education:

- Some parents do not believe that their children who experience barriers to learning can be assisted and educated adequately in mainstream schools.
- Some parents are concerned with the methods that schools are using to implement inclusive education.
- Some parents favour inclusion and regard, to the benefits of learners, the avoidance of labels and the increase of opportunities to socialise and to function in a real world setting.
- Some parents feel intimidated at the prospect of becoming involved in school matters.

The attitudes of parents should be taken into account as labeling of the learners by parents is condemned. Parents may label the learner when he or she shows incompetence with regards to household activities. This causes the learner to behave according to the way they have labelled him or her. According to the NSCNET Document (1997:28), the birth of a disabled learner often means ostracism from the community and for many women this means ostracism from their immediate family due to attitudes towards disability which are articulated in some religious teaching and traditional beliefs.

3.6.2.2 Lack of motivation

The challenges that learners experiencing barriers to learning and development experience, create a lack of motivation among parents towards inclusive education. Examples of these challenges are (Heckmon & Rike 1994:34; Alper & Ryndak 1992:381):
• High quality educational programme for their learners with barriers to learning and development.
• Time for parents to be educated about the programmatic offerings available at school.
• Improved parent involvement in learners-school activities in order to develop home-school relationships.
• Accurate information to be provided to parents before integration occurs, as sometimes insufficient and inaccurate information is provided.
• The tutoring of the child by parents at home using an individualised tutoring programme designed by the special educator after the initial evaluation of the child.

3.6.3 Causative factors that lead to learners who have barriers to learning

According to Du Toit (1997:69) and Murphy (1996:483) parent’s attitudes caused barriers to learning when the following factors were present:

• Pressurising their children to meet unrealistically high expectations, which results in learners becoming despondent and refusing to yield to parental pressure or learners who become hostile and who develop negative attitudes to school.
• Over protecting and not allowing their children to make their own decisions, which results in learners who do not learn to take responsibility for their lives or school work.
• Not being interested in learner’s activities, that is, academically, spiritually and physically which results in the learner’s school work and behavior being affected.
• Practising a laissez faire authority system where children are allowed to do what they like, which results in them not learning to be independent and disciplined in their school work.
• An authoritative parenting style, being too strict in disciplining their learners which results in learners becoming inhibited, sly or secretive, rebellious, aggressive and anti-social.
• Acting inconsistently in their upbringing of their children which results in learners who feel uncertain and confused.
• Acting dishonestly, irresponsibly and having unrealistic or unjustified demands which lead to unproductive learners who do not have norms and values.
• Abusing their learners, physically, emotionally or sexually which results in learners who are emotionally deprived or become reserved.
• Single parenthood due to divorce or death of one parent or a work situation which leads to learners who lack discipline or are aggressive.

For a better understanding of the above factors and to show the effect of the parents' attitudes toward learners who experience barriers to learning and development, the factors are summarised as follows (see Figure 3.1).

3.6.4 Possible strategies to change the negative attitude of parents

A mindshift in the above attitudes of parents can be pursued through the following educational strategies in order to empower and equip them with the skills (Bengu 1997:27; Du Toit 1997:126; Golombo & Hammeken 1996:50; NCSNETS Document 1997:102; Vitello 1994:67 and Heckmon & Rike 1994:34).

The following are strategies which can be used to change the negative attitudes of parents:

• Facilitate learning at home from a very young age.
• Acknowledge parents as primary care givers.
• Involve parents through school governing bodies.
• Make parents team members by meeting with parents early in the year to tell them about school programmes and to reassure them. Learners can write a weekly newspaper to inform their parents of the group’s studies.
• Empower parents to become change agents and effective advocates in the struggle for the rights of all learners.
• Allow parents to have access to resources.
• Allow parents to participate in policy development, assessment and monitoring of equity in education.
• Allow parents to participate actively in the learning of their children by supporting them after school.

• Teachers can meet with parents every two months, to share and develop inclusive education with regard to:

1. Development of educational plans
2. Improving preparation of support teachers
3. Increasing funding
4. Determining class sizes

If parents are actively involved in their children's schooling and if information is shared between parents and teachers, the learners' academic and social performance will increase (Du Toit 1997:126). The parents of the learners who experience barriers to learning should be empowered, developed and receive priority attention, through support, for the development and strengthening of parent organisations as stipulated in the national programme of Action of Children (NCSNET Document 1997:103) which will help them in supporting their children at school.

In Fig 3.1, a summary of the attitudes of teachers, parents and peers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning, will be presented:
Figure 3.1: A summary of the attitudes of teachers, parents and peers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHERS' ATTITUDE</th>
<th>IMPACT ON LEARNERS</th>
<th>IMPACT ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Labelling, isolating and being frustrated with learners experiencing barriers to learning. | - Learners feel stigmatised and humiliated.  
- Learners feel rejected, excluded and worthless which can lead to becoming drop-outs and underachievement.  
- Prevent learners from developing positive self-esteem and actualising their full potential.  
- Learners become alienated and do not feel that they are cared for and belong to a “family”.  
- Learners will not be responsible future members of the community as they are un-educated and have nothing to offer.  
- Disabled learners are seen by the community as a misfortune and a burden to the teacher.  
- Learners experience little acceptance by the teacher and peers. | - The classroom situation and teaching style of the teacher limits the involvement of and participation by learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.  
- The learning content limits the learners from developing intellectual and emotional capacities.  
- Insufficient balancing skills do not prepare learners to cope with life skills.  
- The curriculum implemented is not of an inclusive nature and does not provide for the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning.  
- The curriculum and media used, do not represent the diversity of culture groups grouped together in the classroom so that not all the needs of all learners are met.  
- Facilities do not provide for learners experiencing barriers to learning which cause them not to actualise their full potential.  
- Certain subjects can be regarded as being gender sensitive (e.g. needlework).  
- Lack of specialist knowledge on how to understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning can prevent teachers from offering quality education to all learners. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARENTS' ATTITUDES</th>
<th>IMPACT ON LEARNERS</th>
<th>IMPACT ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Label, overprotective, inconsistent, dishonest, irresponsible, physical, sexual and emotional abuse, not disciplined and laissez faire parenting style, as well as being authoritarian. | - Learners become emotionally deprived and reserved  
- Learners become unproductive and a lack of proper norms and values exists.  
- Learners seem to be insecure and confused.  
- Learners' behaviour and academic performance are affected.  
- Learners become aggressive, shy, secretive, and anti-social in the classroom and on the playground. | - Workshops offered to parents to empower them with knowledge to understand their children better. If this does not happen, the parents will continue exhibiting negative attitudes towards these learners and inclusive education will not be practised.  
- Parents have to be given recognition by the school as primary caregivers so that they can become partners in education.  
- If parents are not regarded as partners, inclusive education will not be able to be practised in the true sense of the word. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEERS’ ATTITUDES</th>
<th>IMPACT ON LEARNERS</th>
<th>IMPACT ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Labelling, isolating and being frustrated with learners experiencing barriers to learning. | - Learners experiencing barriers to learning, experience being less favoured and less accepted, during interaction in social activities.  
- Learners experiencing barriers to learning, develop an inferiority complex, as they believe they are unable to learn independently.  
- Learners experience themselves as being of a lower social status than those learners who do not experience barriers to learning.  
- Learners experiencing barriers to learning experience themselves as being labelled according to their academic achievement, their behaviour, and their able-bodiedness.  
- Peers assess and rate themselves in their relationships.  
- Learners experience themselves as being ignored by other learners, are criticised, and as having annoying habits towards other learners.  
- Learners who experience barriers to learning are teased by other learners.  
- Learners experience barriers to learning have difficulty in establishing friendships.  
- Learners experiencing barriers to learning are not easily chosen as leaders.  
- The abilities, human dignity as well as barriers or learners are not considered when learners experiencing barriers to learning cannot perform academically on the same level as peers. | - Learners have to learn to ignore and to accept the fact that not everybody is the same and that they must be able to live with one another. If peers cannot live with one another, inclusive education will not be practised as peers exclude learner’s experiencing barriers to learning.  
- The present tutoring capacity of the teacher is limited mostly to the learners without experiencing barriers to learning. This fact points to exclusion of learners instead of inclusion.  
- Extramural activities need to be developed in order to include all learners. If this is not the case barriers will be excluded and their needs will not be met.  
- Learners have to accept and respect one another as partners, working together. If learners do not accept one another and regard one another as “partners” no inclusive education can be practised.  
- Learners need to love and care for fellow learners just as they want to be loved and cared for. If this does not happen, negative attitudes will develop towards learners experiencing barriers to learning and these learners will be excluded.  
- The shortage of individualised programmes which meet the needs of learners with barriers should be catered for so that these programmes cater for the needs of all learners. If this does not take place, no inclusive education will be possible. |
3.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the impact of positive or negative attitudes, exhibited by the teacher towards learners experiencing barriers to learning is discussed. Positive attitudes of the teacher lead to improved academic performance of the learner, outcomes of learning programmes are achieved more effectively, teaching skills are developed. Learners start to care for one another in order to become partners. If the present negative attitudes of teachers are maintained, the labelling, discrimination and isolation and exclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning will be continued with the end result that more and more learners will fail and drop out of the education system. No quality education can be promised to any learner. The causative factors of negative attitudes of teachers can be traced back to feelings of fear, lack of knowledge and skills and a lack of motivation. Possible strategies to eliminate these causative factors are intensive training, individualisation and creating an inclusive environment.

The negative attitudes of parents are characterised by labelling, overprotecting, acting inconsistently, being dishonest and irresponsible towards their children, as well as abusing them physically, sexually and emotionally or being authoritarian or permissive towards their children. The impact of these attitudes towards these learners results in learners becoming emotionally deprived which has a direct negative bearing on the self-image of the learner, which leads to underachievement and a lack of norms and values. Their relationships and social skills are eventually at stake as they experience problems in establishing friendships and being accepted by peers.

From the above findings it is clear that teachers, parents and peers may exclude learners who experience barriers to learning. In order to include these learners, so that they can also actualise their full potential, inclusive education needs to be practised.

The negative attitudes of peers are characterised by labelling, isolation and frustration which impact on learners experiencing barriers to learning in the following ways: relationship problems, affecting the self-image negatively, being irritated by these learners, not choosing
these learners as leaders and not treating learners who experience barriers to learning with dignity.

In the next chapter, the research findings, critically reflecting on the practice of inclusive education at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, will be discussed.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The use of questionnaires and interviews based on the experiences and perceptions of teachers on the implementation of inclusive educational programmes and practices, can be significant in relation to the evaluation of the practice of inclusive education in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area.

In this study, questionnaires and interviews will be utilised to explore:

• the attitudes of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learners.
• whether teachers in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area are empowered with knowledge about practice of inclusive education.
• whether primary school teachers in the Thohoyandou area practise inclusive education in their classrooms.

The information gathered from the interviews and questionnaires will provide solutions to the research problem namely:

"Can the barriers to learning that primary school learners in the Thohoyandou area experience be overcome by the implementation of the policy of inclusive education?"

A qualitative investigation into the practice of inclusive education in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, the method of research, sampling, data collection strategies, time and demarcation of research, the role of the researcher and the research findings are presented in this chapter.
This chapter will include a discussion on the method of research, the sampling, the time and duration of interviews conducted and questionnaires completed, the role of the researcher of the study, the venue and a reflection of research findings and possible limitations.

4.2 QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE PRACTICE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE THOHOYANDOU AREA

The qualitative investigation conducted as part of this study serves as an essential source of information in exploring and analysing the practice of inclusive education from a national perspective. It was structured to complement the literature study that has been undertaken, as a point of departure for the study (chapters 2 and 3) and is specifically directed at gaining a practical perspective of the problems of the implementation of inclusive education encountered within the South African context. The personal experiences of the people interviewed provided valuable information for conducting a comparative analysis, just as the theory contains exploratory, descriptive and explanatory components that may be used for developing a model to implement inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area. It is reiterated that the research is analytical descriptive, rather than statistical in nature, as it is directed at gaining insight into the practice of inclusive education within the schools concerned.

The purpose of the study is to implement the practice of inclusive education in all primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, by empowering the various significant other role players in order to assist teachers who are experiencing barriers to actualise their full potential. The study focusses on teachers at primary schools. The selected sites for conducting in-depth interviews were mainly at schools. The persons selected to be interviewed, were teachers. The semi-structured questionnaire was used during in-depth interviews with individuals or small groups of teachers:

The following characteristics that qualified the study as qualitative are applicable (Gall, Gall & Borg 1999:289; Lemmer 1989:128,129; McMillan & Schumacher 1992:14,15; Prinsloo, Vorster & Sibaya 1996:287):
it is field focussed,
- it constitutes an in-depth study of the phenomenon of the practice of inclusive education,
- it does not presuppose a radical idealism,
- it attempts to discover the "real world" situation that exists within the classroom, which stands in contrast to theoretical deductions,
- it is based on a naturalistic-phenomenological philosophy,
- it incorporates an emergent design, as decisions about strategies to collect data are made during the study,
- it is ethnographic as it assists the researcher to understand the multiple constructions of the reality of behaviour problems in the classroom,
- it takes into account the possibility of subjectivity in the analysis of data and interpretations,
- it develops context-bound generalisations by believing that human behaviour is influenced strongly by the situations in which it occurs,
- it is an insider's perspective on the practice of inclusive education and the difficulties encountered by teachers, who neither understand inclusive education or know how to deal therewith,
- the researcher seeks to experience what the subjects of the study, namely the teachers are experiencing,
- the researcher attempts to acquire, analyse and interpret the information, in order to finally develop an appropriate model from the insights gained,
- it deals with subjective data on aspects of inclusive education in the classroom, as expressed during partly structured interviews and which are reflected in an interview schedule,
- it emphasises the importance of data collection by a skilled and well prepared researcher, in contrast to the use of an instrument,
- it reflects the participants' perspectives and understanding of the phenomenon of inclusive education,
- the researcher endeavours to reflect a true, complete, valid, and reliable picture of the research problem identified for the study,
it especially focusses on "disciplined subjectivity", self-examination, and the quality of the data obtained, while the problems encountered in the process are critically analysed,

- a partly structured interview and a partly open-ended questionnaire are used for conducting the interviews, and
- the researcher becomes immersed in the classroom situation that currently exists and that existed in the past, with specific reference to the phenomenon of inclusive education.

The study while being deemed to be a qualitative study, has an empirical component that may be regarded as being "field focussed". In terms thereof it was necessary to interview teaching staff and principals at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area in order to determine if inclusive education is practised in South African classrooms and what the attitudes of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning are.

As the study is of a qualitative nature, the researcher attempts to analyse and interpret the information acquired during the interviews utilising a partly structured interview questionnaire as a basis. During the interview, although time-consuming, the answers to open-ended questions can be clarified. The interviews are therefore regarded as being a flexible way of obtaining and exploring information (Vockell 1983:87). For the purpose of this study the interviews can be regarded as being both exploratory and structured in nature. The semi-structured interview questionnaire includes open-ended questions and structured questions in order to allow the respondent to take the initiative in deciding on his or her answer to the question or to choose between specified options. The semi-structured questionnaire was implemented during the interview so that the researcher could structure the interview accordingly. The insights gained from the survey need to be analysed and seen within the context of the findings derived from the literature study.

4.2.1 Sampling

A relatively small sample of eight pilot schools was used. The sample consisted of 40 teachers and principals, ranging from junior to senior staff members of the pilot schools.
There are researchers who contend that such a small sample is characteristic of qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen 1982:2; McMillan & Schumacher 1993:302). Most qualitative studies use small samples on account of the following methodological considerations:

Qualitative research seeks not only to merely identify behaviour but to understand the meaning thereof in a far more complex manner and thus lends itself to the use of a small sample approach (Condrin 1995:86). Such research focuses on the detail and quality of an individual or small group's experience rather than the way behavioural traits or individuals with specific characteristics are distributed in a known population (Powney & Watts 1987:22). Therefore, the validity of the sample depends not so much upon the number of cases studied, as upon the degree to which an informant faithfully represents a certain cultural experience (Mead in Honigmann 1982:83). Thus, "the researcher legitimately sacrifices breadth for depth". (Lofland & Lofland 1984:62).

As the investigation is of a qualitative nature, it was difficult to determine exactly how many schools or how many teachers should be included in the sample. Factors influencing how many teachers and schools should be included in the survey, were:

- the need to ensure that a representative sample of opinion was obtained, as to what constitutes the extent to which teachers and principals practised inclusive education.
- the quality of the information that the researcher could obtain from the respective interviews, in terms of the various teachers' experience and understanding of the practice of inclusive education per se.
- if it materialised that stereotyped or repetitive answers were being obtained in terms of the questions posed as incorporated within the questionnaire, no more interviews would be conducted as little purpose would be achieved thereby.

It should be emphasised that the interview and the use of a semi-structured questionnaire (see Appendix A), as one of the methods implemented to collect data in a qualitative study, were primarily directed at gaining an understanding into the situation confronting teachers and therefore tended to be analytical and insight based and not of a statistical nature. This
is deemed to be a typical representation of a qualitative study. (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:373). Approximately 40 principals and teachers were interviewed.

In conducting the respective interviews at schools, the Thohoyandou area was purposefully chosen, as it was deemed to be an "information rich" district. The following respondents were included, covering a spectrum of different teaching experience ranging from junior staff members to senior staff members at eight identified pilot primary schools in the Thohoyandou area:

- Two senior teachers from the eight selected pilot primary schools (schools equipped with better resources). The senior teachers were selected in accordance with their teaching experience and academic performance (that is the one was with upgraded qualifications and the other without).
- One junior teacher.
- Departmental heads from the same pilot primary schools.
- The principals of the selected pilot primary schools.

Teachers who are assisting with and understand a diversity of barriers in the classroom at present, although they feel disempowered to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning effectively and are not always familiar with the practice of inclusive education, are regarded as "information rich informants" to be utilised in the in-depth study (McMillan & Schumacher 1993:378).

4.2.2 Time and duration

- The questionnaires were designed and distributed to forty respondents of the pilot primary schools in the Thohoyandou area. The respondents were given two weeks to complete the questionnaires. The two weeks were regarded as enough time for the respondents to complete the questionnaires as they would not ignore, lose interest or misplace the questionnaires if a longer time was given.
- The follow-up unstructured interview was conducted after a week, in order to clarify the answers given by respondents. The questions focussed on during the
semi-structured interviews, were based on the responses of the respondents to the questionnaires.

- A thirty to forty minute semi-structured interview was conducted with each respondent at each of the eight pilot schools. The researcher needed time to listen carefully to each respondent, creating an environment that encourages and allows interviewees freedom of speech. The completion of the interviews took two weeks, using three to four hours per day in each school.
- Telephone contact was established with one of the respondents who took responsibility in each school to collect the questionnaires and to arrange appointments to interview teachers.
- The final interview was conducted as a focus group interview with all the respondents from each school. The respondents provided information on questions that summarised the need for the practice of inclusive education in the area. This interview took an hour at each of the eight schools. The respondents were provided practical examples to substantiate their arguments from their teaching experience.

4.2.3 The role of the researcher

According to McMillan & Schumacher (1993:374) the researcher becomes “immersed” in the situation and the research phenomenon. Because of their interactive roles, skilled, experienced, prepared and trained researchers, record their observations and interactions with respondents in many different situations and in the most possible objective and scientific way. McMillan & Schumacher (1993:393) record that invalidity of the data can be eliminated by the researcher spending enough time in the field and by either conducting a certain number of ethnographic interviews or by searching for documents to provide data from several perspectives and different kinds of sources. Data that has been obtained from informants and respondents are valid although it may represent a particular view or may be the subjective view of the researcher. The recording of data becomes problematic when the data are claimed to be representative beyond the context. The following measures can be implemented to prevent data from becoming problematic or invalid: extended time available to collect data which will allow the researcher to corroborate data and to identify sources that will most probably produce artificial, contrived or biassed information. The
most effective techniques to identify observer effect or researcher bias are the reactions of respondents, independent corroboration, and confirmation of data done at all stages of the research process.

4.3 DATA COLLECTION STRATEGIES

4.3.1 The semi-structured questionnaire

A semi-structured questionnaire was used with individual teachers. Five questionnaires were given to five respondents from each of the identified eight schools. The semi-structured questionnaire was finalised after a similar semi-structured questionnaire was utilised during a pilot study, conducted beforehand. During the focus group interview, key themes relating to the research question and deducted from the information gathered during the individual interviews and pilot study, were discussed according to the guidelines to be found in a questionnaire. (See Appendix B).

The questionnaires (see section 4.3.2 in this regard) were developed in order to obtain (Ambert, Adler, Detzemer 1995:95; Alverman et al 1996:117; Crowley 1995:61; Roberts 1996:246):

- Research data in a stimulating personal and informal way.
- Information on how learners experiencing barriers to learning can be included in mainstream education.
- Information on what is happening in primary school classrooms in the Thohoyandou area, regarding the practice of inclusive education as well as barriers to prevent the implementation of inclusive education in the abovementioned area.
- Information on the involvement of parents as partners in the education of their children.
- Information on what aspects of inclusive education teachers need to be empowered in order to practise inclusive education in the classroom.
- Information on whether teachers were able to identify learners who experience barriers to learning because they knew what the concept implied.
• Information on the attitudes of teachers, parents and peers on learners experiencing barriers to learning.

• Information on how the diverse needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning in the Thohoyandou area can be met via the practice of inclusive education.

• Information on the extent to which the new Education Policy (which includes the practice of inclusive education) is implemented in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area.

The respondents cooperated well resulting in the verifying of international research findings on a national level. After the questionnaires were collected, the findings were analysed and follow-up questions were formulated for the focus group interview. Some respondents needed more clarification on some of the questions as they were not used to the concepts "inclusive education".

4.3.2 The semi-structured interview

A semi-structured questionnaire was used during semi-structured interviews with individual teachers as well as during the group interviews conducted with teachers. Individual interviews were followed up with discussions with the respondents in a focus group situation, where junior and senior teachers were present as McMillan and Schumacher (1992:374) mention that "the multiple realities are viewed as being too complex that one cannot decide a priori on a single methodology". All confidential data that was disclosed by respondents was treated with the necessary confidentiality.

The aspects of inclusive education and the practice thereof as reflected in the questionnaire as themes to be explored via the follow-up individual and focus group interviews, were derived from:

• Research findings as reflected in the literature (national and international research findings) consulted.

• The Schools Act No. 84 of 1996.

• The NCSNET Document (1997).
The South African Constitution.
Curriculum 2005.
Teaching experience of the researcher.

The questionnaire (see Appendix A) was utilised during interviews, as a guideline for structuring the interviews. It should be noted that the recorded responses were in effect subjective in nature in that they related to the teacher's perception of the problems concerned and the frequency thereof. It needs to be reiterated that the results as tabulated within paragraph 4.5, should therefore be seen to be analytical descriptive in nature and directed at having insight into the practice of inclusive education with the schools concerned from a teacher’s perspective.

During the interviews, the researcher aimed at obtaining relevant information to:

• find answers to the questions posed and
• to correlate theory and practice by checking the international research findings against the South African findings in order to relate the findings to the practice of inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area.

Apart from the above relevant specific information obtained during interviews, the following contributions resulting from the interviews, were envisaged:

• To achieve the study aims.
• To enhance the teacher's teaching experience.
• To obtain teachers’ views related to their teaching experience, on the questions posed.
• To enhance the theoretical framework that influences the topic (that is, the critical reflection of the possibility of practising inclusive education on primary school level).
• To explore the teacher’s impact on learners experiencing barriers to learning at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area.
• To inform teachers who appeared uninformed about inclusive education (knowledge) and of the practical implication thereof (practice).

• To sensitise teachers to their impact on learners who experience barriers to learning (attitudes and conceptions).

• To make teachers aware of the fact that they act as role models for learners in promoting mutual respect and regard and treating one another with dignity and as human beings (behaviour values).

• To reflect on the need for learners to be identified as learners who experience barriers to learning. Primary school teachers will need the information regarding the background and history of development of these learners and then refer learners with special educational needs to coordinators and specialists.

• To explore the need for the presentation of a workshop for teachers and parents in order to acquire skills to assist learners who experience barriers to learning as embedded in a holistic developmental approach.

A fundamental question posed during interviews was: *In what way is inclusive education practised in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area?*

This question in itself poses a number of related questions, as reflected in the questionnaire namely (see Appendix A):

• What does inclusive education imply?

• What does the concept “learners experiencing barriers to learning” imply?

• Are there learners in the classroom who experience barriers to learning?

• What are the most influential factors contributing to the incidence of barriers to learning amongst learners in the school?

• Is there an existing policy on “inclusive education” at the school? What assurance is rendered to the learners experiencing barriers to learning?

• Does the school environment provide adequate ground and building facilities for learners experiencing barriers to learners?

• Can inclusive education provide opportunities for educating learners who experience barriers to learning?
• Does the school implement a holistic developmental approach that ensures an inclusive and supportive learning environment?
• Does the school in terms of a holistic developmental approach, offer different programmes to learners who experience barriers to learning.
• In what way do learners experiencing barriers to learning participate in the learning activities, extra-mural activities and activities taking place on the playground?
• What are the attitudes of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning?
• What is the importance of implementing the practice of inclusive education at the primary schools in the Thohoyandou area?
• Do the teaching staff, principals and heads of departments lack insight into the envisaged practice of inclusive education?

The answers to these questions are to be found in paragraph 4.5 of this chapter.

4.4 VENUE

The study was conducted in Venda in eight pilot primary schools in the Tshinane circuit in Thohoyandou area in the Northern Province. The target group consists of primary school teachers, departmental heads and principals. The research includes junior and senior male and female teachers in the Tshinane circuit.

4.5 ANALYSIS OF DATA AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In this section the information collected from the literature study, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews will be analysed. The data is categorised into groups of common themes through questions. The questionnaires were given to teachers at eight pilot schools (schools with better resources in Thohoyandou area). Five copies of the questionnaire were distributed to each school, one copy for the principal, one for the departmental head, two for senior teachers and one for the least experienced teacher.
The researcher collected the completed questionnaires from respondents, after which each questionnaire was discussed with the respondent individually. Hereafter specific questions from the questionnaire were highlighted in an additional questionnaire (see appendix 3) which were discussed at the focus group meeting with the group of respondents. The findings of the semi-structured interviews, four group discussions and questionnaires are reflected in the following tables.

Question 1: What does "inclusive education imply?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from the literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from the questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from the focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The assistance which takes into consideration all learners' needs in the same learning environment.</td>
<td>• Respondents did not show a clear understanding of the concept. Some have indicated that it requires that the teachers must be able to assist the entire spectrum of learners without specifying specific strategies of assistance or understanding a specific barrier being experienced.</td>
<td>• During the focus group interview, respondents were asked to discuss each statement. The concept &quot;inclusive education&quot; has been introduced during 1997 in the NCSNET Document (1997:vi) as it is embedded in the new Education Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assistance planned with the purpose of actualising each learner's unique potential.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education whereby learners benefit from the teaching situation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education which provides &quot;quality education for all learners&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion: Teachers do not show a clear understanding of the concept of inclusive education and its practice. This has a direct bearing on the practising of inclusive education, as teachers cannot practise something that they are uninformed about.
Question 2: What does the concept "learners who experience barriers to learning and development" imply?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from the questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from the focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Learners with physical, sensory, intellectual, and multiple impairments who require specialised equipment, teaching strategies, and support in order to have effective access to the curriculum and participate effectively in the learning process.</td>
<td>• Most of the respondents (except those who are upgrading their academic qualifications) do not show a clear understanding of the concepts &quot;barriers to learning&quot; eg. &quot;Children who learn according to their pace&quot; (the person is not furthering his or her studies). &quot;any learners with effects or defects that could hinder the learner to acquire knowledge properly&quot; (the person is upgrading his or her qualifications).</td>
<td>• During the focus group interview, respondents were asked why they are having difficulties in understanding the concept &quot;barriers to learning&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners with emotional and behavioural problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The respondents indicated that they are not yet familiar with the concept of inclusive education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners who experience developmental problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners who experience learning problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners who are gifted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion: Teachers seem unfamiliar with the concepts of inclusive education. This implies that they will not be able to identify learners experiencing barriers to learning nor can they render effective assistance to these learners, as they do not understand the impact of the barriers that they are experiencing. These teachers will once again, not be able to practise inclusive education.
**Question 3:** In your classroom, are there any learners whom you think experience barriers to learning and development?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from the focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Learners experiencing partial hearing, eyesight, and impaired speech, are learners who are also found in mainstream classroom situation.</td>
<td>The respondents indicated that in the classrooms there is an incidence of learners who:</td>
<td>During the focus group interview, respondents could, with the assistance from the researcher, identify some barriers that learners might be experiencing eg.:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners who experience emotional and behavioural problems.</td>
<td>• are not achieving according to their abilities because of developmental delays experienced.</td>
<td>• emotional problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners who require specialised equipment or support in order to have access to the curriculum and participate effectively in the learning process.</td>
<td>• are lacking concentration and therefore unable to participate effectively.</td>
<td>• a lack of parental support and interest in school activities and in the learner him or herself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners who do not progress adequately in school activities because of possible barrier problems or a developmental problem.</td>
<td>• are underachieving because of socio-economic problems.</td>
<td>• high failure rate and underachievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners who are partially deaf and are hearing impaired.</td>
<td>• lack of participation in school activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• high absentee rate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• who are partially deaf and are hearing impaired.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion:** In most classrooms, learners experiencing barriers to learning can be identified vaguely. However, if a teacher is empowered with knowledge on barriers which cause a learner not to actualise his or her full potential, the teacher will be able to practise inclusive education by meeting the specific learner’s individual needs.
Question 4: What are the most influential factors contributing to the occurrence of barriers to learning and development amongst learners in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from the focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Inappropriate and lack of provision of adequate support.</td>
<td>Respondents show that the most operative causes identified are:</td>
<td>No follow-up questions were asked as the respondents showed an understanding of the questions and concepts and did not produce additional information on this matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inflexible or rigid curriculum.</td>
<td>• Lack of learning materials.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inappropriate language and communication channels.</td>
<td>• Lack of properly equipped and adequately built classrooms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inadequate training of teachers.</td>
<td>• Exceedingly high teacher/learner ratio.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Socio-economic barriers experienced.</td>
<td>• Poverty being experienced by failures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Illiterate parents.</td>
<td>• Lack of parental involvement.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of special educational co-workers.</td>
<td>• High incidence of family separation, parental divorce and, single-parent or caregiver families.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Insufficient and hazardous building structures.</td>
<td>• Disabilities (ie, partial hearing and visual impairments).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Language and communication problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inadequate training of teachers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion: The following causative factors of learners experiencing barriers to learning, with the exception of irreversible physical ones, contributing to the children's barriers to learning, are eg. socio-economic problems, lack of parental involvement, single parent homes/divorced parents, and inadequate training of teachers and parents in coping with children with barriers to learning and development. These factors need to be eliminated before the existing barriers to learning can be removed and inclusive education be practised.

Question 5: Do you know of any existing policy on inclusive education in your school? If 'yes', name it and indicate in what way learners experiencing barriers to learning are assisted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive Education Policy promotes &quot;quality education for all&quot;.</td>
<td>Most of the respondents reflect that they do not have the policy or know of the policy on special Needs Education which caters for learners experiencing barriers to learning. No strategies on how the learners experiencing barriers to learning are known to teachers.</td>
<td>During the focus group interview, it was established that no policies on learners experiencing barriers to learning are available. The participants responded that inclusive education is a new concept in the Education Policy. Learners experiencing barriers to learning are assisted by repeating the class and this leads to a high drop-out occurrence. It was also established that learners experiencing barriers to learning were assisted by letting them repeat the grade, leading to eventual drop-out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are five stages of assisting learners who experience barriers to learning and development:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Class teacher identifies and consults the special educational coordinator.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Special educational coordinator, together with class teacher, draws an individualised educational plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Special education coordinator brings in the outside specialist.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Local educational agency considers the need for statutory assessment and makes a multi-disciplinary assessment.

5. Local educational agency and school consider a special educational need statement, monitors and reviews provision.

Conclusion: Mainstream primary schools in the Thohoyandou area do not have a policy on learners experiencing barriers to learning. Schools are in need of a policy on how to assist learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Question 6: Does the physical school environment provide for the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from the literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from the questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• School environment should be developed holistically in such a way that physical conditions like playgrounds, toilets, school ramps, teaching aids (i.e., overhead projectors, Braille) and desk arrangements are to be accessible to learners in wheelchairs or cerebral palseed learners walking with the aid of crutches or blind and/or short sighted learners.</td>
<td>• Respondents mentioned that playgrounds, toilets, school ramps, teaching aids and desk arrangements not accessible to the physically and visually impaired.</td>
<td>During the focus group interview, it appeared that respondents feel that the physical environment at schools do not cater for the physically or visually impaired learners because of a lack of knowledge of the needs of these learners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion: The physical environment of school buildings does not cater for the needs of the physically and visually impaired learner. Architects should consider the needs of these learners when designing school buildings.

Question 7: Can inclusive education contribute towards the actualisation of the full potential of a learner who experiences barriers to learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from the literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive education promotes a learning situation where all learners have equal opportunities to actualise their full potential.</td>
<td>Respondents regarded inclusive education as a means of catering for the needs of learners as individuals.</td>
<td>During the focus group interview, it was determined that barriers or obstacles in practising inclusive education in schools in the Thohoyandou area, existed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision is made for individualised assistance in the learning situation according to the learner's personal barriers which he or she may experience.</td>
<td>Inclusive education will limit the teacher/student ratio. Learners will learn at their own individual pace. The focus on the uniqueness of each learner, will support learners in actualising their full potential.</td>
<td>Respondents reported that inclusive education seems to be expensive, as the following aspects needed to be underpinned:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners are empowered towards personal fulfilment, educational and life orientation.</td>
<td>Inclusive education will promote non-discriminative group participation as well as assist all learners to mature into open-minded, well-rounded citizens in their community willing to educate and promote social tolerance among other individuals.</td>
<td>• Teachers must be empowered via training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive education promotes a learning environment of mutual acceptance, support, respect and care.</td>
<td>• Adequate facilities must be provided.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusive education does not allowing blaming, labelling or discriminative practices.</td>
<td>• School buildings posing architectural obstructions to learners, must be altered.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Inclusive education focuses on the meeting of educational needs of all learners.

• Special education coordinators must be appointed in schools in order to implement the practise of inclusive education.

Conclusion: Teachers regard inclusive education as a possible solution to provide for the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning. The practice of inclusive education, however, can only be implemented if proper finances are available as well as changes be made in terms of teacher/learner ratio, a learner learning at his or her own pace and a focus on the uniqueness of the learners.

Question 8: Do schools have a flexible curriculum that responds to the educational needs of all learners, including those experiencing barriers to learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from the literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from respondents</th>
<th>Information gathered from focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A curriculum with life skills empowerment which focuses on vocational skills, guidance, counselling and practical areas ie, needlework.</td>
<td>• According to respondents, their curriculum does incorporate life skills empowerment, outcomes-based education, and regular assessment of learners in order to determine their potential. However, the majority of teachers did want special education coordinators to be appointed.</td>
<td>No further follow-up question was posed as respondents seemed to understand the question and did not have any further comments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A curriculum which responds to the full range of diverse needs, ensuring access for the hearing impaired, speech impaired, learners with multiple disabilities and learners who are taught by means of a second language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• A curriculum with regular assessment of learners, in order to determine their specific potential and assistance strategies to be implemented according to the outcomes-based education system

• A curriculum which provides for the opportunity and availability of special educational needs coordinators

Conclusion: Teachers report that the curriculum does not provide for the diverse needs of all learners which implies that inclusive education is not practised at present at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area.

Question 9: Do schools function in terms of a holistic developmental approach that ensures an inclusive and supportive learning environment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from the literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from the questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The literature notes that the situation at institutions of learning should promote:</td>
<td>The respondents indicate that their governing bodies are not yet adequately empowered and equipped to facilitate the development of a culture of learning with supportive parental involvement.</td>
<td>The respondents were asked if there is any possibility of workshops to empower and motivate both parents and management teams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An environment with the empowerment of the governing body and school management body.</td>
<td>Some respondents indicate that they have no mission statements, year planning programmes, and no inclusive school policy.</td>
<td>This would stimulate the development of a culture of learning together with supportive parents, year planning programmes, as well as the incorporation of a school policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• An environment with a school policy upholding the essences of inclusive education.

• A learning environment with strategic planning which promotes anti-discrimination and democracy.

• An environment with supportive parents, teachers and peers, who provide an effective and inclusive teaching and learning process.

The respondents agreed that the implementation of such changes would be beneficial. However, the training of staff to implement these measures will be financially difficult.

Conclusion: Teachers indicate that they are not yet competently trained to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning.

Question 10: Do schools provide different learning programmes in terms of an inclusive and holistic learning environment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from the questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from the focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The literature suggests:</td>
<td>Some respondents did indicate that they do have fund-raising programmes and language development programmes intact. However, there is a lack of teacher training, parental involvement and support,</td>
<td>The respondents were asked if there is any possibility of developing any programmes that are not at present in existence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher training programmes.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The respondents stated that the implementation of such</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Language development programmes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fund-raising programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Parent involvement programmes.
• Assessment and consultation sessions.
• Facilities that are accessible to all learners.

**Conclusion:** Most teachers indicated that primary schools in the Thohoyandou area do not implement language development programmes and assessment and consultation sessions. This implies that inclusive education is not practised at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area.

**Question 11: How do learners experiencing barriers to learning participate in the learning activities and extra-mural activities and on playgrounds?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from the literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Learners play with other learners on the playground.</td>
<td>Respondents indicated that learners experiencing barriers to learning often separate themselves from other learners when playing on the playground.</td>
<td>Respondents indicated that the barriers experienced, prevented learners from participating with peer group members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners who experience barriers to learning participate with other learners who do not experience barriers to learning in group-work activities.</td>
<td>• Respondents indicated that learners do not participate in group work with other learners.</td>
<td>The response was that most of the learners who did not experience barriers to learning labelled learners experiencing barriers to learning; isolate themselves from these learners and showed no interest in socialising with learners who experience barriers to learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion: Learners experiencing barriers to learning lack social skills. This implies that these learners experience difficulty in their social relationships which has a direct bearing on their self-image.

Question 12: What are the attitudes of teachers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information gathered from literature study</th>
<th>Information gathered from questionnaires</th>
<th>Information gathered from focus group interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers label, isolate, and discourage learners experiencing barriers.</td>
<td>• Respondents indicated that teachers are not dedicated to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning.</td>
<td>During the focus group interview, respondents were asked if they could change their attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers lack the knowledge and skills to understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning.</td>
<td>• They are not trained to assist and understand, identify and assess learners experiencing barriers to learning.</td>
<td>Respondents indicated that their attitudes towards these learners can change to a more positive attitude, if they felt less insecure and more in control of the learning situation. This can be realised if teachers are trained and motivated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers lack the motivation to understand and assist learners who experience barriers to learning.</td>
<td>• They indicated that they lack time to assist the learners experiencing barriers to learning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers lack confidence and experience fears when they have to implement inclusive education as they are disempowered because of a lack of knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion: Teachers indicated that they are not competently trained to identify, assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning.
After the follow-up unstructured questions were asked, reflecting the responses from the questionnaires, the following questions were also asked in order to attain more information regarding the respondents' concept of inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area:

**Question 13:** Do teachers at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area regard the practice of inclusive education as important?

The general response from the participants was yes, as learners experiencing barriers to learning were already educated in mainstream schools. If these learners are assisted and understood, assistance can be rendered to address their problems so that they can actualise their full potential.

**Conclusion:** Teachers attested that their participation in this study gives them an opportunity to gain more knowledge and understanding of the practice of inclusive education.

**Question 14:** Did teachers at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area become more knowledgeable about inclusive education whilst taking part in the research?

The response was, yes, as the teachers now realise that they should identify, assess, and assist learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

Some teachers indicated that they plan to initiate school programmes and policies that will incorporate learners experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers also indicate the following as challenges in the implementation of inclusive education:
- shortages of classrooms
- unsafe buildings and unequipped structures for physically challenged learners
- lack of teacher training/empowerment programmes
- high teacher/learner ratios
- a shortage of special education coordinators for the implementation of inclusive education in their area.

**Conclusion:** Teachers realised that they should identify, assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning. However, factors that should be taken into consideration, before the envisaged understanding and assistance can be rendered are, eg. factors regarding the buildings and availability of classrooms, the availability of empowerment programmes, teacher/learner ratios and the availability of specially trained staff members.

### 4.6 POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

The qualitative study is small and of a limited size, thus care must be taken when research findings are generalised to other districts or areas or provinces in South Africa. The comparability, validity, translatability and typicality of the research findings are, however, established by the fact that the subjective, individualised findings of the respondent were checked and compared during the focus group interview as well as during the pilot study, conducted beforehand.

### 4.7 CONCLUSION

The following very important conclusions can be drawn from this chapter:

- Teachers at pilot primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, do not understand the concept "inclusive education". This implies that they will have to be empowered with knowledge in this regard, before they will be able to practise inclusive education in the classroom.
The respondents are not familiar with the concept "barriers to learning". This implies that if they are not familiar with the concept, they will not be able to identify barriers, or render effective assistance, or understand the impact of the barrier on the utilising of the learner's potential or be able to practise inclusive education.

Teachers can vaguely identify learners experiencing barriers to learning. In-depth knowledge which will enable them to understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning is, however, not available. This has a direct bearing on the quality and type of assistance rendered and understanding exhibited.

It appears from the answers given to the questions posed in the questionnaires on which factors are the most influential factors contributing to the occurrence of barriers to learning, that the main causative factors are of a physical nature (e.g. poverty, lack of parental involvement, high incidence of family separation, divorce and single parent families), as well as impairments experienced due to e.g. genetic causes, language and communication problems, as well as a high teacher/learner ratio and teachers who are not empowered with knowledge on assisting and understanding learners who experience barriers to learning. The implication of this is that the physical nature of schools and classrooms that could act as barriers to learning, matters regarding the parents and families of learners, the training of teachers as well as teacher/learner ratios need to be explored in terms of barriers to learning. No inclusive education will be practised, while these barriers exist, as inclusive education demands that the needs, created by the occurrence of the above factors, must be eliminated, before a learner can actualise his or her full potential and inclusive education practised.

No policy on or strategies to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning, are available at schools. The ignorance of teachers regards this matter, results in an increase of the drop-out and failure rate, as learners are not assisted and understood, but left to themselves.

School buildings are not learner-friendly as they do not cater for the needs of the physically and/or visually impaired learner. Architects do not know nor consider the needs of these learners when designing a building.
Inclusive education can be regarded as a solution to providing for the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning, as individualised attention to learner needs will only be possible if the teacher/learner ratio is limited and learners are allowed to learn at their own individual pace. A focus on the uniqueness of learners will enforce an individualised educational approach, resulting in the actualisation of each learner's full potential. The practice of inclusive education, however, implies financial constraints as teachers need to be empowered by training, school buildings will have to be upgraded, special education coordinators have to be appointed.

Curricula used at the primary schools in the Thohoyandou area do not provide for the individual educational needs of each learner. This indicates that inclusive education is not practised in the Thohoyandou area.

Most teachers indicated that primary schools in the Thohoyandou area do not implement language development programmes, nor assessment and consultation sessions. This implies that inclusive education is not practised at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area.

Learners experiencing barriers to learning lack social skills. This implies that these learners feel stigmatised, different, not normal and excluded from the others learners who do not experience barriers to learning.

Teachers are not adequately trained to identify, assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning. Teachers do not have enough time to assist individual learners, experiencing barriers to learning.

Teachers indicated that participation in the study convinced them that inclusive education can provide quality education for all learners.

Teachers realised after acting as respondents that they should identify, assess, assist and understand learners who experience barriers to learning. "Barriers" to the practice of inclusive education by teachers were identified as follows: shortage of classroom; unsafe and not child friendly buildings catering only for those learners who are not visually or physically impaired; the lack of teacher training programmes offered to teachers; high teacher/learner ratios as well as a shortage of special needs education coordinators appointed at schools in order to ensure
effective services rendered to the learner who experiences barriers to learning, in particular.

The above information as discussed in this chapter has paved the way for the discussion to be followed in the next chapter (Chapter 5), namely "Summary, findings and recommendations". In this chapter teachers' responses to a questionnaires on the practice of inclusive education have been discussed.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

"Inclusion for us, is a carefully planned programme that brings out the best in general and special educators, general and special education students and general and special education parents as they work together for the good of everyone".


"Inclusion is a shift in terms of mainstreaming to inclusion which marks a dramatic shift in thinking about serving the needs of all earners".


Inclusive education offers something special - both to learners and teachers. From the above quotations, the "something special" seem to include a programme that brings out the best in both the teacher and the learner, as well as the fact that the needs of all learners are served. Salend and Duhaney (1999:14) support the fact that inclusive education is to the benefit of learners and teachers, when they contend that inclusive education benefits ALL learners in terms of an increased acceptance, understanding and tolerance of the individual differences as well as factors like "a great awareness" and "a great sensitivity", "greater opportunities to have relationships" with others, as well as to have acquired "an improved ability to deal with disability in their own lives".

According to the NCSNET Document (1997:53), the new Education Policy is focussed on "an education and training system that promotes education for all and fosters the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they can develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society".

Practising inclusive education at schools or centres of learning, will comply with the essences embedded in the vision of the NCSNET/NCESS (NCSNET Document 1997:53) as reflected in the new Education Policy in the following ways, it:

• provides “inclusive and supportive centres of learning” (“serving the needs of everyone” - Philips et al 1995:262).
• “enables all learners to participate actively” (“work together for the good of everyone: - Rankin et al 1994:235).
• “develops and extends their potential” (“to the benefit of the learner and teacher” - Salend and Duhaney 1999:14; “increased acceptance, understanding and tolerance of the individual differences, greater sensitivity, greater opportunities, an improved ability to deal with disability in their own lives” Salend and Duhaney 1999:14).

The NCSNET/NCESS (NCSNET Document 1997:1/2), as an advisory body to the Minister of Education had to develop an education system that ensured that the diverse needs of ALL learners are met. All factors that acted as “barriers to learning: (eg socio-economic barriers, attitudes towards learners), in the past, had to be eliminated so that “an effective learning and teaching environment” (NCSNET Document 1997:19) could be created. Inclusive education, as described by the NCSNET Document (1997:vi) offers a learning environment that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners. It is one which is free from discrimination, segregation and harassment and which intentionally tries to facilitate an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and respect.

From the quotations, the conclusion can be drawn that “inclusive education” must be practised in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area in order to provide opportunities for learners to actualise their full potential and to enable them “to participate fully in a democratic society”. (NCSNET Document 1997:vii).

The research findings of this study (chapter 4) indicated that teachers and principals in the Thohoyandou area do not practice inclusive education in primary schools, as they are (apart
from other factors like fear) not familiar with the concept “inclusive education”. The impact of teachers who are not empowered to practise inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area can be seen in high failure and drop-out rates (see chapter 4 in this regard). If teachers and principals at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area want to put an end to this, as well as to take up the challenge, as has been stated in the vision of the NCSNET/NCESS, namely to assist all learners “to participate fully in a democratic society” (NCSNET Document 1997:viii), they must be empowered to practise inclusive education.

In the light of the fact that inclusive education is not practised by teachers and principals at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, the following factors identified personally by the researcher as factors giving rise to the study, will continue to prevent learners in this area from actualising their full potential.

- An inflexible curriculum that does not meet the diverse needs of learners.
- Language and communication problems.
- Afrikaans and English as the medium of instruction, causing language and communication problems.
- Inaccessible and unsafe physical environment.
- Lack of recognition and involvement of parents as partners in the education of their children.
- Inadequate support provision by teachers not empowered to understand and assist learners.
- Inadequate policy on learners experiencing barriers to learning because the new Education Policy is not fully implemented in schools.

Other factors, which need to be attended to by professional persons in the community, which have a direct bearing on the learner’s performance at school are:

- Socio-economic barriers.
- Factors, which place the learner at risk.
- Lack of transport to and from schools.
If these needs are not met, learners will not be able to

(i) actualise their full potential
(ii) be able to contribute to the community as responsible, future citizens
(iii) benefit from the practice of inclusive education.

This implies that the community will have to be educated to realise that they are co-accountable for the emotional, physical and social well-being of the learners in actualising their potential to be able to make a worthwhile contribution as future members of the community (see par. 1.5.2 on "specific outcomes", chapter 1 in this regard).

In chapter 2, after the completion of chapter 1, which dealt with the "Orientation and statement of the problem", "The phenomenon of Inclusive Education", was discussed. By discussing the historical background of Inclusive Education, the contrast between the previous education system and the present day education system which fosters inclusive education, was highlighted. By considering the advantages and the disadvantages, it was clear that inclusive education has more advantages than disadvantages. In conclusion, a set of criteria which is characteristic of inclusive education was compiled. This set of criteria enables a principal or teacher or the researcher to establish whether inclusive education is practised or not. In chapter 3, the attitudes of teachers, parents and peers towards learners who experience barriers to learning, were discussed. It appears that attitudes of teachers cause learners experiencing barriers to learning to feel stigmatised, humiliated, rejected, excluded, worthless, alienated, not-being-cared for, as if they are a burden to others and not-accepted. This results in a negative self-image leading to the fact that these learners will, because of being labelled in the classroom by the teacher, not develop into responsible future members of the community. The practice of inclusive education in such an educational setting is impossible. The impact of parents' attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning, results in these learners becoming emotionally deprived, reserved, unproductive, uncertain, confused, not performing according to their abilities, aggressive, shy, secretive and anti-social as well as exhibiting a lack of norms and values. These feelings and a lack of norms and values are the result of parents who label, overprotect, physically and emotionally abuse them, and are authoritarian parents. The
reality of these negative attitudes act as a barrier to practising inclusive education. The impact of the attitudes of peers result in these learners feeling less accepted, less capable to perform academically according to their potential, being labelled according to their academic achievement, their behaviour and their able-bodiedness and being ignored, criticised and being irritating to others, because they belong to the group of learners experiencing barriers to learning. These feelings result in these learners not actualising their full potential. The impact of teachers, parents and peers’ attitudes is that learners experience themselves as being not good enough and not accepted when compared with peers (bad self-image) resulting in their not actualising their full potential.

In chapter 4, the qualitative investigation of the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area was discussed, focussing on the research design. In conclusion it was established that, according to the criteria set out in chapter 2, inclusive education is not practised at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area - mainly because teachers and communities are not empowered to practise and appreciate inclusive education as well as the fact that school buildings are not accessible to blind/shortsighted learners or learners in wheelchairs. The attitudes of teachers and parents impacting on the attitude of peers, will change if teachers, parents and peers are informed about the barriers that learners experience and how to deal with them.

In the following section, the short term and long term outcomes envisaged for the study will be compared with the recommendations to be made in this regard.

5.2 ENVISAGED OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research problem, as has been confirmed by the data obtained during interviews and questionnaires, namely that inclusive education is not practised at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, is triggered and maintained by the fact that:

- The diverse needs of learners are not met.
- Learners cannot actualise their full potential.
• The parents of learners are not involved as partners in the education of their children.

• Teachers are not empowered to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning.

• The new Education Policy in which inclusive education is embedded, is not fully implemented in schools.

• The self-image of learners is badly affected by the negative attitudes of teachers, parents and peers.

The envisaged general and specific outcomes of this study must underpin the above problems as well as the conclusions drawn from the empirical findings in order to make the necessary recommendations.

• The general outcomes of the study focus on:

   (i) the empowerment of teachers, parents and members of community in order to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning;

   (ii) the adjustment of the school policy on Special Needs Education, and

   (iii) the practice of inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area.

   (iv) the involvement of parents of learners with barriers to learning as partners in education.

These outcomes can be regarded as “results” relating to the following aspects of the research problem formulated namely: the satisfying of diverse needs of learners, the empowerment of teachers, the involvement of parents as partners, the actualisation of full potential, the negative self-image, the implementation of the new Education Policy. The aspects of the problem statement in turn, correlate with the research findings, eg. no policy on learners experiencing barriers to learning exists at schools.

• The specific outcomes of the study focus on:

   (i) the empowerment of teachers.
(ii) the sensitisation of teachers concerning learners with barriers to learning and the actualisation of their potential by making them aware of their impact on learners.

(iii) the treatment of all learners with human dignity and the encouragement of learners to treat one another with respect and mutual understanding.

(iv) the involvement of the parents of learners as partners in the education of their children.

(These “outcomes” can be regarded as “results” relating to the following aspects of the research problem formulated namely: the diverse needs of learners are not met by teachers (and parents) who do not understand and are not sensitive to the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning; learners cannot actualise their full potential if the school system and significant other role-players in their life-world, because of negative attitudes, do not understand, support, encourage and treat them with respect. Their self-image is harmed in this way and the parents of learners are not involved as partners in the education of their children.

In Table 5.1 the summarised recommendations which match the research findings relating to the aspects of the problem formulation envisaged outcomes are illustrated.
Table 5.1: Comparison of aspects of the problem statement, envisaged outcomes, research findings and recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of problem formulation</th>
<th>Research findings</th>
<th>Envisaged general and specific outcomes</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The diverse needs of learners are not met.</td>
<td>• Empowerment with knowledge of teachers (parents, peers and community) <em>(general outcome)</em> and <em>(specific outcome)</em>.</td>
<td>• To run workshops, present talks at schools and in the community in order to empower teachers, parents and members of the community to understand and practise inclusive education in all its facets.</td>
<td>To run workshops, present talks at schools and in the community in order to empower teachers, parents and members of the community to understand and practise inclusive education in all its facets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learners cannot actualise their full potential.</td>
<td>• Making teachers, parents and peers aware of the impact of their attitudes on the feelings, thoughts, behaviour and academic performance of learners <em>(specific outcome)</em>.</td>
<td>To sensitisise (via workshops, talks, meetings, group sessions with peers), teachers, parents, peers and persons from the community concerning the impact of negative attitudes, characterised by labelling and discrimination, on learners experiencing barriers to learning.</td>
<td>To sensitisise (via workshops, talks, meetings, group sessions with peers), teachers, parents, peers and persons from the community concerning the impact of negative attitudes, characterised by labelling and discrimination, on learners experiencing barriers to learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Parents of learners are not involved. | Involve parents as partners in the education of their children (*specific and general outcomes*).  
To implement inclusive education which regards parent involvement as essential (*specific and general outcomes*). | To organise meetings with the leaders of the community as well as parents on how they can become involved in the education of children. |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Teachers are not empowered to understand and assist learners experiencing barriers to learning. | Sensitisation of teachers, parents and peers towards learners experiencing barriers to learning by making them aware of their impact on these learners (*specific outcome*).  
To treat all learners with dignity, respect, understanding and to teach learners to do the same towards one another (*specific outcome*).  
The practice of inclusive education in order to understand and assist learners more effectively (*general outcome*). | |
| The new Education Policy in which inclusive education is embedded, is not fully implemented in schools. | The adjustment of the school policy on Special Needs Education (*general outcome*).  
The practice of Inclusive Education (*general outcome*). | |
• The self-image of learners is badly affected by the attitudes of teachers, parents and peers.

• Making teachers, parents and peers aware of the impact of their attitudes on the feelings, thoughts, behaviour and academic performance of learners (specific outcome).

• The practice of inclusive education (general outcome).

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE STUDY

A critical reflection of the practice of inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area, as was addressed by this study, concludes that inclusive education is not practised in the above area. This component of the research problem will have to be addressed by empowering the teaching staff and principals at primary schools in the area as well as parents (and even other learners or peers) and members of the community, to understand

(i) factors that act as causative factors of barriers to learning

(ii) the impact of these factors on the learner in totality

(iii) in which way, within the frame of reference of the ecological systems theory, teaching staff, principals, parents and members of the community can eliminate barriers to learning

(iv) how to assist and support learners experiencing barriers to learning in order to actualise their full potential

(v) how to implement inclusive education in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area.

To understand implies that the teaching staff, principals, parents and members of the community must obtain knowledge on barriers to learning and the impact thereof on a learner in totality, as well as knowledge on inclusive education and especially the practice of inclusive education. Knowledge can be conveyed via the presentation of workshops,
talks, meetings with leaders of the community, group sessions in the classroom and focus group meetings with district officials. (See Table 5.1 on detailed recommendations).

After and whilst the teaching staff, principals, parents (and peers) and members of the community have been and are empowered with knowledge on barriers to learning and inclusive education, the negative attitudes being exhibited towards these learners can change to more positive attitudes, which will allow inclusive education to be practised to the fullest. Empowering these significant other role-players with knowledge will eliminate fears that teachers have experienced of not knowing how to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning (see “research findings” Chapter 4, par 4.5). Fears experienced by teachers cause them to experience themselves as not being in control of themselves and the teaching situation, finally resulting in negative attitudes towards these learners.

All the different aspects of inclusive education (see chapter 2 on the criteria on inclusion, par 2.3), for example changes to be made to the policy document on inclusion, adjusting the curriculum, changing the school buildings to be more learner friendly by providing for wheelchairs and visually impaired learners, can be implemented as teaching staff, principals, parents, governing bodies and members of the community, try to meet the diverse needs of learners, after they have been empowered with knowledge on barriers to learning and inclusive education. This factor can be enhanced by the teachers’ eventual positive attitudes resulting in a desire to practise inclusive education (see research findings, Chapter 4, par 4.5 in this regard).

As teachers are influential role models for learners and parents and members of the community, teachers and principals must portray dedication to their jobs. To be dedicated, a teacher needs to enjoy job satisfaction - thus factors impacting negatively on teacher job satisfaction, must be attended to, eg. the learner/teacher ratio, access to equipment, books, teaching aids, the opportunity to stay informed via regular in-service-training sessions and merit payments which enhance the motivational level of teachers.
Regarding future research it is recommended that a study is completed on negative and positive factors impacting on teacher job satisfaction or dissatisfaction at primary schools at the Thohoyandou area. If the teacher doesn't experience job satisfaction, the teacher cannot act as a role model to learners, parents and persons from the community. This implies that inclusive education will not practised at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, as the teacher's negative attitudes and example will eliminate this possibility.

Implementation of the above recommendations will be time-consuming as well as expensive. Unfortunately these recommendations will have to be put into practise as “quality education: for all learners at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, will only be possible if these matters are addressed. Schools, communities and parents should declare themselves as willing to participate in the concerted efforts needed to allow each Primary School learner in the Thohoyandou area, to actualise his or her full potential.

5.4 THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

The selected schools were not a sufficient representation as other pilot schools in the Thohoyandou area were not involved. The questionnaires were sent only to the pilot primary schools in the Tshinane circuit as one of the circuits in a rural area.

The questionnaires were not sufficiently clear to all participants. There was still a need to clarify the questions as the respondents were not familiar with the concepts of inclusive education. This was confirmed when follow up unstructured interviews were conducted. Respondents were in need of more clarification of some concepts.

While the teachers were in agreement that the implementation of inclusive education is important in Thohoyandou area, there was concern about government financing for inclusive education which needs the further research.
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The critical reflection of the study led to the motivation, encouragement, greater sensitivity and better understanding among the participants (the teachers) in recognising the necessity to practise inclusive education in the Thohoyandou area. Historically many learners have had no access to the school learning environment. These learners, such as those with social, emotional, behavioural, intellectual, and physical challenges, and those from disadvantaged and/or marginalised groups, should have the opportunity to enjoy growing and developing with their peers.

Substantial preparation and the motivation to gather the data through school visits, warm and friendly interaction with the educators, attentiveness, careful examination of the responses, and critical analysis were significant components of this study. Gathering much of the data was quite taxing and even emotionally demanding.

This highlights the importance of knowledgeable teachers, who are generally willing to make commitments and interact positively during interviews. The teachers' attitude towards the practice of inclusive education was marked by a sincere desire for the implementation of inclusive education in their area.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that:

- Training programmes for the teachers, parents and peers should be implemented in order to create a positive inclusive learning environment in the Thohoyandou area.
- Teachers should have a clear understanding of the concepts of inclusive education and its practice, as it will assist them in coping with learners who have barriers to learning and development.
- Schools in the Thohoyandou area should have a policy for incorporating learners with barriers to learning and development.
- School ramps, toilets, playground facilities in the Thohoyandou area should cater for learners including the physically disabled.
158

• The study reflects the presence of learners with emotional and behavioural challenges, lack of parental recognition, partial hearing and eye-sight, and learners who do not participate adequately in school activities. The practice of inclusive education at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area is recommended by the researcher of this study.

• In order to implement the practice of inclusive education in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area it is recommended that schools first provide safe, accessible, and adequate classrooms and building structures, training programmes for educators and parents, and special education coordinators who will recruit specialists for the assessment of special needs learners.

• In-service training extending up to three years should be provided so that teachers gain adequate knowledge of and interest towards learners with barriers to learning and development.

• The teacher: learner ratio should be revised so as to give teachers in the Thohoyandou area opportunities to deal with learners with barriers to learning and development as individuals.

• The experienced teacher needs much extrinsic motivation, and perhaps even a salary increase.

• The school curriculum at the Thohoyandou area should be designed in such a way that it responds to the diverse needs of all learners, ensuring access for learners with multiple disabilities and learners who are taught by means of a second language.

• Teachers at the Thohoyandou area should be influential role models for those learners who do not have barriers to learning and development. The teachers must encourage all learners to play and work together.

• Workshops should be implemented promoting the importance of teachers, parents, and peers to get involved and develop on positive attitudes toward learners with barriers to learning and development.
5.6 CONCLUSION

By critically reflecting on the practice of inclusive education at primary schools in the Thohoyandou area, the immediate need for inclusive education to be practised in this area was highlighted. If the present situation of more and more learners failing and becoming drop-outs, continues (even in primary schools) no quality education can be promised to any learner at any of these primary schools in the Thohoyandou area. Therefore the educational planners’ envisaged vision and mission as reflected in the new Education Policy (NCSNET Document 1997:1,4,5,11,41-46) will not be realised in the classrooms of primary schools in the Thohoyandou area. The quotation by Goethe expresses this succinctly:

"Treat people as if they were
what they ought to be
and you help them become
what they are capable of being".

Goethe (in Ellison 1993:10)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Naicker, S.M. 1996. *Inclusive education from rhetoric to reality*. Department of Educational Psychology. University of Western Cape.


Ware, J. 1996. Creating a responsive environment for people with profound and multiple learning difficulties. London: David Fulton Publisher Ltd.


TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Mrs. M.G. Sidoge is a registered Masters Degree student at the University of South Africa. The title of her thesis is: "The Practice of Inclusive Education in the Primary School": a critical reflection".

Mrs. M.G. Sidoge is trying to acquire by implementing questionnaires, the level of knowledge of teachers on inclusive education and especially how inclusive education is practised in primary schools in the Thohoyandou area. After the completion of this study Mrs. Sidoge is planning to run In-Service Workshops in order to train teachers to know more about inclusive education and especially how to implement inclusive education on a day-to-day basis in the classroom. Inclusive education is one of the main points of departure of the new Education Policy as stipulated in the NCSNET document (1997) and it is expected of every school to implement it accordingly.

We would thus appreciate it very much if you can complete the questionnaire to assist Mrs. M.G. Sidoge in her research. We’ll also appreciate it very much if you, seeing that we have explained to you the meaningfulness of the research project, give us your honest opinions - without your assistance a lot of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning will be suffering because then we’ll not be able to contribute to quality education. We appreciate the fact that you are prepared to complete the questionnaire and to allow Mrs. M.G. Sidoge to interview you as well.

Kind regards,

(Mrs) F.H. Weeks
THE PRACTICE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AT PRIMARY SCHOOL LEVEL: A CRITICAL REFLECTION

Please complete the following details:

1.1 NAME OF SCHOOL: .................................................................

1.2 PRESENT POSITION AT SCHOOL:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JUNIOR TEACHER</th>
<th>SENIOR TEACHER</th>
<th>HEAD OF DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>PRINCIPAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.3 TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0 - 3 YEARS</th>
<th>4 - 7 YEARS</th>
<th>8 - 11 YEARS</th>
<th>11+ YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.4 ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS:

..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................
..............................................................................................................

1.5 LEARNING AREAS BEING TAUGHT:

- Life orientation (Life skills) ...........................................................
- Human and Social Sciences .............................................................
• Technology
• Science
• Numeracy
• Literacy and communication
• Arts and Culture
• Economics

1.6 HOME LANGUAGE:

1.7 NUMBER OF LEARNERS IN THE CLASSROOM:

| 1 - 30 | 30 - 50 | 50 - 80 | 80 - 100 |

1.8 MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION:

1.9 GRADE(S) BEING TAUGHT:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
SECTION A: The practise of inclusive education

In this section the researcher wants to determine the teacher’s (facilitator’s) knowledge of “inclusive education” and how it is practised in the mainstream education.

1. Please indicate with a cross (X) in the space provided next to the appropriate answer, what the concept “inclusive education” implies.

| Inclusive education requires that the teachers assist the entire spectrum of learners | YES | NO |
| This assistance is planned purposefully and it actualises each learner’s unique potential | | |
| Inclusive education attends to any form of learning that might be required in order to enable learners to benefit from the teaching situation | | |
| This assistance, takes into consideration all learner’s needs in the same school and the same classroom into consideration | | |
| Inclusive education creates an environment within which learners can respect one another and value one another as fellow human beings | | |
| This is education, which is free from discrimination and segregation, and which provides quality education for all | | |

2. What does the concept “barriers to learning and development” imply?
3. Do you think that inclusive education should provide opportunities for teaching of learners with barriers for learning and development?

[ ] YES  [ ] NO

4. Please substantiate your answer (question 3).

5. Choose the incorrect statement by making a cross (X) in the space provided in order to indicate what inclusive education promotes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shyness, fearfulness and embarrassment cause barriers to learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All learners have equal opportunities to actualise their full potential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual assistance is provided in the learning situation, tailormade to match personal barriers being experienced</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal, education and life skills empower learners to become responsible, future members of the community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual acceptance and respect, characterise the learning environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. In your opinion, are there any learners who experience barriers to learning in your classroom? Please, indicate your answer in the space provided.

   [ ] YES  [ ] NO

   Explain your answer in the space provided.

   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................

7. Name the three most important causes of barriers to learning that learners in your school experience.

   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................
   ...........................................................................................................................................

8. An inclusive education policy promotes "quality education for all ..." Answer the following questions relating to the above statement by filling in the appropriate answer in the space provided.

   8.1 Do you know of any existing policy on inclusive education in your school? Please, indicate your answer in the space provided.

   [ ] YES  [ ] NO
Explain your answer in the space provided.

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

8.2 Does your school policy include a strategy of how learners experiencing barriers to learning can be assisted?

[ ] YES  [ ] NO

8.3 If you have answered “yes” to question 8.2, please explain in what way learners experiencing barriers to learning, can be assisted at your school.

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

9.1 Should a school environment provide adequate physical conditions and learning materials for all learners?

[ ] YES  [ ] NO
9.2 Indicate by a cross (X) which of the following could cause barriers to learning at your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door handles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School ramps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desk arrangement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of teaching aids for instance, overhead projector or Braille</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of school entrance/other entrances and exits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this section, the researcher wants to determine if teachers or educators are practising inclusive education effectively in their school environment. Different aspects of the practice of inclusive education, will be highlighted.

1. Inclusive education implies that the *curriculum needs* must be flexible in order to respond to the needs of all learners experiencing barriers to learning. Please indicate with a cross (X) in the space provided below, if your *curriculum* includes the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life-skills education, which focuses on vocational skills, guidance counselling and practical areas, eg. needlework</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A response to the full range of diverse needs especially in your area ensuring access for deaf-mute individuals, learners with multiple disability, and learners who are taught by means of a second language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of learners in order to determine their specific potential and assistance-strategies to be implemented, are undertaken</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The curriculum is based on the Outcomes-based Education (OBE) system, which also caters for the diverse needs of learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special educational needs co-ordinators are available to teachers, parents and learners in order to ensure effective assistance and understanding of the needs experienced by learners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. *A holistic institutional development approach* (i.e., an approach, which involves developing of all aspects of the centre of learning as an environment where learning and development can take place) should be adopted, to ensure that inclusive and supportive learning environments are developed and adopted. Indicate with a cross (X) in the space provided below, if the following aspects of a holistic development strategy are implemented in your school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and management (for instance, governing body and school management team) are empowered and equipped to facilitate the development of a culture of learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School policy (for instance, mission statements, aims and objectives) includes the essence of inclusive education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning (for instance, school programmes) is anti-discriminatory and democratic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development (for instance, flexible life-skills education, curriculum plans and an evaluation procedure of the school) ensures that the diverse needs of learners are being adequately addressed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive parents, teachers, learners and community involvement, who provide an effective and inclusive teaching and learning process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Indicate with a cross (X) whether the following aspects of *inclusive learning environment* are created in your school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training programmes for teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language development programme for learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund raising programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-involvement programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment and consultative sessions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical facilities made accessible to all learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Certain emotional needs are usually to be found to be common amongst the diversity of learners with barriers to learning and development. Please indicate which of the following emotional needs are provided by your school. Mark your answer with a cross (X).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A feeling of acceptance and belonging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful participation in classroom activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect and understanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of self-actualisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of praise and recognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual relationships of friendship and support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. To facilitate inclusion and a sense of belonging for all learners, the educator should identify the learners' participation in learning activities, extramural activities and on the playground. The following determines such a profile at your school. Mark with a cross (X).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are all the learners included in classroom activities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are learners experiencing barriers to learning included in the activities on the playground?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are learners experiencing barriers to learning accepted during their team-assisted instructions, group work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are learners experiencing barriers to learning allowed to interact or interrupt group work progress?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are learners experiencing barriers to learning excluded from extramural activities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Inclusive education implies that the teacher will be sensitive towards the special needs and problems of learners with barriers to learning. Indicate with a cross (X) your attitude towards the following matters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are you dedicated to work with the following learners who experience barriers to learning: emotionally deprived learners, behavioural problems, disabled, hostile and rebellious learners?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do learners with barriers to learning whom you may face (for instance, who are HIV positive) make you feel insecure and not in control of your situation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you label learners with barriers to learning and development (for instance, an &quot;underachiever&quot;)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you encourage and motivate a learner experiencing barriers to learning, to actualise his or her full potential?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you spend more time after school hours, rendering assistance to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you motivated to work with learners who experience barriers to learning on account of external, personal factors such as increments, et cetera?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you prepared to collaborate with other teachers in order to understand and assist the learners experiencing barriers to learning more effectively?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there any teacher who has been appointed as the educational coordinator in your school?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you empowered with knowledge on how to assist and understand learners experiencing barriers to learning and development?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you personally implement and practise inclusive education in the classroom?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

UNSTRUCTURED FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW

1. According to your answer in section A(1-7), it seems there are difficulties in answering the questions. Why?

...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................

2. Can you explain freely, using your own words, what the concept of inclusive education is? What does "learners with barriers to learning and development" imply?

...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................

3. Can you identify learners with barriers to learning and development in your classroom, as you have shown that there are learners who do not achieve their maximum potentials?

...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
...................................................................................................................................................
4. It seems you do not have policy on inclusive education in your school, why?

5. How do you assist learners with barriers to learning and development in your area?

6. At question 9.2 where you indicated the opportunities that learners with disabilities and special needs can enjoy along with their able bodied peers. Do the school ramps, toilets, desk arrangements at your school provide for a learner in a wheelchair or with a learner with a sight impairment?
7. Do you know of any barriers which you think can hinder the practice of inclusive education in your area?

........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................

8. In what way do you think illiterate parents, governing bodies and the management team can benefit from workshops on inclusive education?

........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................

9. Are the teachers ready to deal with learners with barriers to learning and development?

........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................................................
10. After looking at the questionnaires do you see the importance of practising inclusive education in your primary school?

11. Because of the questionnaires, are you as a principal, heads of departments, senior teacher or junior teacher ready to implement inclusive education, create a policy on inclusive education and practise a holistic development in your school?
APPENDIX C

GUIDELINES BASED ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATIONAL ACT OF 1996

- A code of practice giving detailed practical guidance to schools on how to identify, assess, record, meet and review special educational needs.
- A limit of 26 weeks to complete, for identifying and assessing special needs and where appropriate issuing a statement on how those needs will be met.
- Parents of learners with statement are able to say which school they prefer their learners to attend.
- The school named on a learner's statement of special educational needs must accept the learner.
- Local education agencies (LEA) have to carry out specific procedures when reviewing statement.
- An extension of parents' rights of appeal against local education agencies (LEA)'s decisions and assessments and statements with an independent special Educational Needs Tribunal to hear those appeals.
- Duties on school to draw up, publish and report on their special Education Needs (CSIE Report, 1996:10,3).
- Be educated alongside other learners in ordinary schools where appropriate and taking into account the wishes of their parents.
- Have the greatest possible access to a broad and balanced education which includes National Curriculum.
- Not be denied admission to an ordinary school (this is the practice of inclusive education) on any grounds including disabilities, language, learning difficulties or pregnancy and therefore a step towards inclusive education.