

## **CHAPTER 1: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Inclusive education is currently a worldwide phenomenon and in forefront of education systems in different countries. Studies show that inclusive education is echoed worldwide. According to Naicker (1999:14) and Hornby (1999:152) countries worldwide have committed themselves to inclusive education during the World Conference on Education for All. It was during this conference that the Salamanca Statement, endorsed by 92 countries and 25 international organisations, came into being. During that conference, the following statement was clearly articulated which depicts real commitment to inclusive education (Naicker, (1999:14) “We the delegates of the World Conference on Special Needs Education representing ninety-two governments and twenty-five international organisations hereby affirm our commitment to Education for All, recognising the necessity and urgency of providing education for all children, youth and adults Framework of Action on Special Needs Education, that governments and organisations may be guided by the spirit of its provisions and recommendations.”

In 1996 the Department of National Education in South Africa commissioned the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) to look into all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training. A national conference was held with the focus on areas such as the development of inclusive society, the challenge of redress, the challenge of intersectoral collaboration and cooperative

governance, and the implementation policy. This led to the report on aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa, known as NCSNET/NCESS. The whole idea was to shape up inclusive education. Dyson and Forlin (1999:24) are of the opinion that inclusion has arisen from “a reconstruction of notions of disability, particularly conceptions of human rights discourse, taking into account little on medical, lay and charity discourses (Naicker, 1999:14).

The NCSNET/NCESS (1999:55) concluded that the “the separate systems of education which presently exist (“special” and “ordinary”) need to be integrated to provide one system which is able to recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the learner population”. This is in line with the code of practice for special educational needs (Hornby, 1999:152) that the needs of most children with special educational needs can be met within mainstream schools,” the SA Schools Act (1996:4) stipulating that a public School must admit learners and serve their education requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way, and the Education White Paper 6 (2001:17) which recognises and respects the differences among all learners and our Constitution (108 of 1996:8). Inclusive education involves all areas of education: adult education, Secondary school, Pre-primary schools and Primary schools. Inclusive education intends to minimise mainstreaming. The White Paper 6 (2001:17) gives a clear distinction between mainstreaming and inclusion as described in table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1 The distinction between mainstreaming or integration and inclusion

<b>'Mainstreaming' or integration</b>	<b>'Inclusion'</b>
Mainstreaming is about getting learners to 'fit into' a particular kind of system or integrating them into this existing system.	Inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences in all learners and their similarities, to build good relationships.
Mainstreaming is about giving some learners extra support so that they can 'fit in' or be integrated into 'normal' classroom routine. Learners are assessed by specialists who diagnose and prescribe technical interventions, such as the placement of learners in programmes.	Inclusion is about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole in order to meet the full range of learning needs. The focus is on teaching and learning actors, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be to the benefit of all learners.
Mainstreaming and integration focus on changes that need to take place in learners so they can 'fit in'. The focus is on the learner.	Inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. The focus is on adapting support systems available in the classroom.

Many teachers are not familiar with what inclusive education entails and this leads to different reactions and attitudes towards inclusion by teachers. Teachers also view OBE as a difficult approach which takes away teaching from them and allow learners to have more time in their learning.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **1.2.1 Background to the problem**

Learners enter schools from diverse family backgrounds with the hope to receive formal education. Unfortunately, “behind each classroom door lies a world of diversity” (Doorlag & Lewis, 1995:4), displayed by these learners. It is this diversity that gave ‘birth’ to the concept learners who experience barriers to learning and development because of diverse circumstances and reasons. These barriers should, however, be addressed and overcome to enable all learners to be included in the education system.

According to the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:55) “the separate systems of education which presently exist, (‘special’ and ‘general’) need to be integrated to provide one system which is able to recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the learner population”. This is a giant leap in the right direction. Hammeken (1995), Jenkinson (1997) Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998) and Kochhar and West (1996) view inclusion as the practice to educate all learners with and without disabilities in the same heterogeneous classroom settings. They all believe that all learners can do well irrespective of their disabilities. This implies that if learners who experience disabilities are educated with their peers in the least restrictive environment (LRE), labelling, stigmatisation and categorising of learners who experience disabilities will be eliminated. Their social and communication skills will be improved. Learning in the least restrictive environment encourages non-disabled learners to accept those who experience barriers and interact with them (Kenward, 1997, Hallahan, Hockenburg, McNergney & Trent, 1999, and Du Toit, 1991).

There are many factors which could play a role to make inclusive education successful. One such factor is a need for staff development. The National Department of Education and various provincial departments of education have over the past few years organised many opportunities for in-service training. Another way of developing staff is to empower the staff members. Teachers who are skilled in certain areas such as how to assist albino learners could for instance, run workshops with other schools to develop and inform other teachers. A professional person such as a psychologist or speech therapist can also be invited to train the members of the staff in as far as inclusive settings are concerned. Workshops can also be conducted in this regard whereby groups of teachers are assigned to deliberate on issues that may contribute to successful inclusion. Following Evans (Mudau,1998:23) “the majority of teachers would feel comfortable if allowed to make decisions, being involved in the creation of a productive and satisfying work environment, and helping to shape the way the work develops.”

It should be noted that sometimes there is a problem with in-service education programmes for teachers in South Africa. This could be due to the fact that those commissioned to train teachers do not know the weakness and the strengths of their audience (Eisner, 1993:60). Some of those commissioned to do training, do not always have an interest in what they have to do. Some of the teachers and principals even regard the in-service days as their special holidays. Sometimes teachers resent to have to attend in-service training during school holidays. The success of the in-service education programme will have to be researched.

For inclusive education to be a success, it is clear that all people involved including the district support teams and the school based

support teams should refrain from lip-service. A performance measurement should be established, and continuous progress reviews should be done by these support teams to ensure sustainability (Bews, Schraeder & Vosloo, 2002:52).

The success of inclusive education also depends on teachers who are prepared to work collaboratively. Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998:16) argue that “nothing has radically changed in most classrooms when the door is closed.” This implies that what happens in most closed classrooms is essentially a private affair (Mudau, 1998:22). It is this privacy that needs to be done away with, allowing parents, colleagues, principals and school education support teams to be involved in the education of learners. Each teacher needs to be seriously engaged in colleagueship.

Kochhar and West (1996:14) suggest the following with regard to colleagueship for inclusion to be a success:

- Two or more teachers with subject knowledge must have responsibility for planning and teaching.
- Team teaching requires a relationship of trust between two teachers.
- Teachers must have a common planning time each day.
- Teachers must share responsibility for success of all learners in the class.

From this it is clear that teachers will have to rely on one another and to collaborate to make a success of inclusion. By doing so they can learn and apply new skills, methods, strategies and activities to make a success of inclusion as well as Outcomes-Based-Education. A key factor to ensure that inclusion is a success in the classroom is the attitude of teachers and learners towards

inclusion. The positive attitudes of teachers towards one another and towards learners would make inclusion a success. It is imperative to indicate that one cannot talk about inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development without mentioning the inclusion of teachers, that is, general and special teachers, who should collaborate their skills and begin to work together in an inclusive setting. In the classroom both learners and teachers play a significant role in making inclusion a success. The positive attitudes of learners towards one another would make inclusion a success, while the negative attitudes could make learners, especially those with disabilities, to feel uncomfortable and therefore have their learning barred. Teachers would need to change their mindset and develop positive attitudes towards curriculum modification in order to make inclusion a success. Without the spirit of ubuntu and comprehensive expertise, inclusion would be difficult to implement.

The attitudes of parents, the primary educators of children, could also have an influence to make inclusive education a success. According to Salend (1998:29) parents have mixed feelings about inclusive education. Some parents of non-disabled learners believe that learners who experience disabilities will take time from their children. They argue that their children will not feel free to learn in the presence of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. Green and Shinn (Salend, 1998:29) express the concern of parents of learners who experience disabilities by stating that “placement in general education classrooms will result in a loss of the individualized education program available in the resource room to address the unique needs of their children.” They have no idea as to how effective teaching and learning would take place. Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998:20) hold the view that “today’s parents are feeling distressed over the state of

public education, overcrowding and lack of funding.” This creates a feeling of discomfort to some parents in as far as inclusive education is concerned.

Some parents feel comfortable about inclusive education. They argue and believe that inclusive programmes will prepare learners who experience barriers to learning and development to be independent. They also argue that learners will eventually be contributing members of the society. According to Salend (1998:29) some parents argue that being “segregated in special education programs makes their children feel isolated, unwanted and different.” Turnbull and Ruef (Salend 1998:30) indicate that inclusive education makes learners happier, more confident and extrovert.

It is vital to note that not all parents would welcome inclusion. Any paradigm shift takes time and this requires tolerance and understanding. Parents should be informed and be trained to have better understanding of inclusion. Hallahan and Kauffman (1994), Doorlag and Lewis (1995), Anastassiou, Gallagher and Kirk (1993) and Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998) are of the opinion that the inclusion process requires that learners be placed in the least restrictive environment.

This implies placing learners in their neighbourhood schools as would have happened, had they experienced no barriers to learning and development. The attitudes of other role players in the lives of learners such as peers, community leaders, guardians, sport trainers, etc, will not be discussed within the scope of this dissertation.

All the challenges of inclusion which were discussed make one wonder as to whether inclusive education in the Foundation Phase could be realised in an area such as the Sekhukhune Area, in the Limpopo Province, taking into account the large classes, language problems, unprepared human resources and access to the built environment.

### **1.2.2 Aim of the study**

According to Mamlin (1999:36) inclusion is strongly supported and advocated by several research groups and professional organisations. As discussed in the previous section it should, however, be noted that both parents and teachers do have mixed reactions about inclusion. Studies done by Salend (1998:29), Odom (2000:21), Levine, Marks and Schraeder (1993:315) and Hornby (1999:152) show positive feelings by parents with regard to the inclusive education settings. According to Odom (2000:21) parents identify benefits to their children, such as increased acceptance, opportunities to learn with peers, and availability of good developmental models. Some parents argue that the segregation brought about by special education programmes makes their children feel isolated, unwanted, and different (Salend, 1998:29). Turnbull and Ruef (Salend, 1998:30) highlight the happiness, confidence and extrovert behaviour displayed by children in inclusive settings. Parents who feel comfortable about inclusion argue and believe that inclusive programmes will prepare learners who experience barriers to learning and development to be independent (Radziewicz & Tiegerman-Farber, 1998:20). According to Levine et al (1999:316) parents argue that “good inclusion program today is preferable to a perfect inclusion program tomorrow.” Odom (2000:21) contends that the positive appraisal of parents appear to overshadow the negative appraisals.

Most overseas countries such as the United States, New Zealand, Scotland, Nederland, Norway, England, Australia, France, Germany and Denmark are in favour of inclusion in support of the UNESCO Salamanca World Statement on Special Needs Education (Parsons, 1999, Hornby, 1999, Black, Prater & Sileo, 2000, Moore, 1999). Research conducted by (Everington, Stevens, and Winters, (1999:332), Odom, (2000:21) and DeButtencourt, (1999:28) shows that the majority of general education teachers have positive attitudes toward inclusive education settings. They, however, registered their concerns as a lack of knowledge and skills, large classes, class size, lack of preparation time, administrative support and sufficient personnel (Everington et al, 1999:336). According to DeButtencourt (1999:28) general education teachers who emphasise the content area of the curriculum and those who are driven to cover the curriculum at a rapid pace, would view inclusion negatively. DeButtencourt (1999:33) shows that the majority (61%) of general teachers disagreed with the concept of mainstreaming while (50%) regarded mainstreaming beneficial for learners who experience mild disabilities. In a study done by Scruggs and Mastropieri (Hornby, 1999:155) on teachers' perceptions of inclusion, the major findings were as follows:

- 65 percent of teachers supported the general concept of inclusion
- 40 percent believed that inclusion is a realistic goal for most learners
- 54 percent of teachers reported that they were willing to teach learners who experience barriers to learning and development

- 33 percent of teachers believed that the inclusive classroom was the best place for learners who experience barriers to learning and development
- 28 percent believed that they had sufficient time available to implement inclusion
- 29 percent felt that they had sufficient expertise to deal with inclusion

South Africa supports inclusion as stated in the Salamanca World Statement on Special Needs Education (Education White Paper 6, 2001 & NCSNET/NCESS,1997). If inclusion will happen in all schools in South Africa, the Limpopo Province and the Sekhukhune area in particular need to be seen complying.

Like in most areas of the Limpopo Province, the four villages in the Sekhukhune area, namely, Strydkraal, Mohlaletse, Ga-Nkoana and Ga-Nchabeleng, where the empirical research was done, the conditions are not very conducive for schooling to take place, let alone inclusive education. The classroom generally accommodate large numbers which makes aisles for wheelchairs impossible. Classes also have no ramps for wheelchair users. Some of the classes are conducted under the trees exposing learners to both good and bad weather conditions. In some schools, classes are made of sisal poles, timber and planks. Makeshift classes have low roofs and are dark inside. The darkness is even unsuitable for those who suffer from albinism. Pit toilets are used in most schools. It is imperative to state that in some schools there are only two toilets mostly without compartments, one for boys and the other for girls. This compels some of the learners to relieve themselves behind shrubs. School toilets, particularly for boys, are dirty and in an unbearable state. Access to toilets are difficult

because the paths leading to the toilets are sandy and would be very difficult to use by those who wheel themselves.

The area is generally sandy and rocky, and the days are hot and dusty. The environment is generally without big vegetation. Acacia trees are mostly found in the area. Those who wheel themselves and those suffering from albinism, may find the place unbearable. Blind learners using folding canes may find it very difficult to trace their ways. Routes to the schools are generally bad and may stay for more than a year before they are being attended to.

The question arises: **What will the attitudes and reactions of Foundation Phase Teachers in the Sekhukhune Area, (Limpopo Province) be regarding inclusion?** The atmosphere of secrecy which prevails behind classroom doors, should also be taken into consideration when trying to answer this. It is not known whether teachers are aware of the inclusion stipulated in the Education White Paper 6 (2001). Neither is it clear what the attitudes of teachers regarding the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development are. **This dissertation is an attempt to determine Foundation Phase Teachers' attitudes, their knowledge of barriers to learning, team teaching, inclusion and collaboration.**

### **1.3 FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM**

It is a known fact that society treats learners who experience barriers to learning and development differently than those who do not have such problems. This is prevalent in all walks of life, school, the family, the church, peers, labour market and the community depict and elicit different attitudinal reaction toward

learners who experience barriers to learning and development. The problem that this study wishes to address is derived from the attitudes of teachers in general and specifically Foundation Phase teachers with regard to the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development in the mainstream education. This problem gives rise to the sub-problems of the study:

- Learners who experience barriers to learning and development are a heterogeneous group of learners. Do teachers know what barriers to learning are and do they know how to identify these learners? Do they know the South African policy with regard to barriers to learning and development? The questions are dealt with in chapter 2.
- Teachers have to know how to adapt the principles of outcomes-based-education to ensure that their classrooms are fit for inclusive education. Are teachers aware of the importance of collaborative teaching and cooperative learning in an inclusive setting? These concerns are dealt with in chapter 3.
- Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion and their knowledge thereof are important for inclusion to succeed. Chapter 4 discusses the research design employed to capture the teachers' attitudes on how they feel about inclusion and learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method used in this dissertation is the qualitative approach. According to Borg and Gall (1989:380) most writing devoted to qualitative approach emphasises participant

observation and in-depth interviews. The qualitative research method makes it possible to obtain first hand information.

The research was done in four villages in the Sekhukhune area, that is, Ga-Nchabeleng, Ga-Nkoana, Mohlaletse and Strydkraal. One teacher was selected from each of the eight schools which are representative of these villages. Attitudinal data was collected from female foundation phase teachers. Focus group and individual interviews were done to enhance intensive discussion on inclusion, collaboration and barriers to learning and development. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Biographical data on the age-group, gender, teaching experience in the foundation phase were collected. Pseudonyms were used to ensure confidentiality. To get access to schools, permission was obtained from the district education office and the school managers. A snowball technique was used, that is, either the manager of the school or a teacher had to recommend who to interview. A thorough literature study preceded the actual qualitative research.

## **1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

### **1.5.1 Mainstreaming**

Bursuck and Friend (1999), Doorlag and Lewis (1995:4) and Salend (1998:6) contend that **mainstreaming** is the process of educating learners who experience barriers to learning and development in the general classroom with their general peers. The issue at stake is to have a situation where all learners receive their education in the general education setting.

Doorlag and Lewis (1995:11) list the following as advantages of mainstreaming:

- Special learners remain with their peers
- They are segregated from normal activities of the school
- Labelling is discouraged
- Learners leave the room for special help, not to see the teacher for learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

According to Salend (1998:6) the primary responsibility for mainstreamed learners' academic programme rests with the general education teacher. This implies that the general education teacher should, through his/her expertise, identify learners who would need special attention in a certain instance. Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998:4) state in this regard that **mainstreaming** is a process that incorporates a continuum of learning steps for the learner who experiences barriers to learning and development. According to them, such learning steps should involve a series of educational programme changes that progressively approximate the general classroom experience and ultimately includes the general education classroom.

Salend (1998:6) explains **mainstreaming** as a dynamic, ongoing process that requires communication and sharing of information between general and special educators, community-based and district education support teams. The more educators, support personnel and families work together, the more effective the service will be. Parents could, for instance, not only provide information on the day-to-day activities or incidents that affect them their children, but could also provide information received from medical practitioners. This information would give the team a clear historical background of what the learner experienced prenatally, perinatally as well as postnatally. With this background

information at hand, an authentic and effective assistance learning programme can then be drawn up for the learner while the learner is in the regular classroom setting.

Doorlag and Lewis (1995:4) are of the opinion that learners are considered **mainstreamed** if they spend any part of the school day with regular class peers. When learners learn together, play together and share their ideas, they learn to understand and accept each other more easily. This eradicates labelling and stigmatisation of each other in their social interactions.

Salend (1998:6) puts forward the view that “the academic component of mainstreaming requires that the general education classroom environment be adapted to address the instructional needs of the mainstreamed student, while the social component requires that the mainstreamed student be assimilated socially into the class and accepted by peers.” This implies modifying the physical structure of the school, such as having ramps and wide aisles for the wheelchair users. Failing to realise such modification would imply that learners could be segregated within the same learning environment, which will perpetuate the labelling of learners with barriers to learning. When learners are socially assimilated, learning becomes enjoyable, for they regard each other as partners in learning.

From the above one could deduce that **mainstreaming** is the process by which learners who experience barriers to learning and development are educated in the general classroom together with their general peers and that a continuum of learning steps is incorporated in the mainstreaming programme. For the purpose of this dissertation **mainstreaming** would be considered as the merging together of learners with and without disabilities in the

same learning environment while segregating them at certain stages for identified individualised education programmes.

### **1.5.2 The regular classroom**

According to Doorlag and Lewis (1995:56) the **regular classroom** setting is the least restrictive of all educational placements. This presupposes that any learner who is currently not identified as a learner who experience barriers to learning and development spends his/her entire school day in the regular classroom setting. In the regular classroom, neither the learners nor the teachers receive special education service. Learners who experience barriers to learning and development begin their careers in the regular classroom settings (Doorlag & Lewis, 1995:56). Understandably so, because this is where most of them are identified and referred to different education settings.

From the above one would deduce that a **regular classroom** is a non-discriminatory education situation, and for the purpose of this dissertation, this definition would be considered as such.

### **1.5.3 The least restrictive environment (LRE)**

Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998:6) are of the opinion that the **least restrictive environment** is the mechanism by which the learner's individual needs are matched with an educational placement appropriate to meet the needs of the learner who experience barriers to learning and development. Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998), Alper, Schloss, Etscheidt and MacFarlane (1995) and Kochhar and West (1996) contend that special classes, separate schooling, or other several removals of

learners who experience barriers to learning and development from regular educational environment should occur only when the severity of the barriers is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aides and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

McDonnell, McLaughlin and Morison (1997:59) argue that **least restrictive environment** “is rooted in the belief that the approach will remove stigma from these students, enhance and normalise their social status, facilitate modelling of appropriate behaviour, provide a richer educational environment, be more flexible and cost-effective, and enhanced broader public acceptance of people with disabilities.” Their argument helps the community to accept and believe that people who experience disabilities as barriers to learning and development share equal dignity and equal human rights. They have the power to reason and can benefit the community in the best way possible. Socialising with people who experience barriers to learning and development creates feelings of comfort, establishes friendships, mutual respect and recognition of individual diversity among all people.

According to Doorlag and Lewis (1995:19) the **least restrictive environment** for learners who experience barriers is the appropriate placement closest to the mainstream education. This implies that only learners who experience barriers to learning and development who can benefit from it should be placed in the regular classroom (Radziewicz & Tiegerman-Farber 1998:8). Carr (Radziewicz & Tiegerman-Farber, 1998:8) argues that “the regular classroom is not the least restrictive environment for all children with disabilities.” This presupposes that not all learners who experience barriers to learning and development experience such

barriers in the same manner. The same applies to their progress. They cannot progress in exactly the same way.

McDonnell, McFarlane and Morison (1997:59) put forward the view that “the issue of **least restrictive environment** for these students is not whether they can access the general education classroom, but whether appropriate types and levels of support will be provided entirely in the general education classroom or partially in a specialised environment such as a resource room, pull-out program, special classroom, or separate school.”

If access to the general classroom is ignored, as stated in the previous paragraph, appropriate types and levels of support will be difficult to realise. It is incumbent that learners have access to their education environment before support is mentioned. The institution may have the necessary assistive devices, but if the learners have no access to the education environment, the support and assistive devices would remain dysfunctional. It is important for learners to have access to a challenging curriculum and high-quality instruction (McDonnell, McFarlane & Morison, 1997:60).

Borich and Tombari (1995:12) view **least restrictive environment** as a phenomenon referring to “the objective of mainstreaming the greatest degree of freedom, self-determination, dignity, and integrity of body, mind, and spirit for the individual while he/she participates in treatment or receives services.”

From the above one could deduce that **least restrictive environment** is a situation where learners who experience mild to moderate barriers to learning and development, can in the best way possible, benefit together with their age appropriate non-disabled peers. For the purpose of this dissertation **least**

**restrictive environment** will be considered as an education setting where both learners who experience mild and moderate barriers to learning and development and their age appropriate non-disabled peers benefit academically and socially.

#### **1.5.4 The regular education initiative (REI)**

Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998:11) are of the opinion that **regular education initiative** proposes that the regular classroom be the starting point for the provision of services to the learner who experiences barriers to learning and development. The idea behind the establishment of the regular education initiative was that if there are learners who experience barriers to learning and development, let them be identified in the regular classroom setting. The learner's barriers are first dealt with in the regular education classroom. Referrals would be reduced because the barriers experienced would, as far as possible, be addressed in the regular classroom setting.

Borich and Tombari (1995:509) contend that the **regular education initiative** is “a partnership between regular and special educator in which learners who experience barriers to learning and development would receive individualized services in the regular classroom without the requirements of labelling or special classifications.”

From the above one could deduce that a **regular education initiative** is the situation when learners who experience barriers to learning and development attend schooling without their teachers being aware of learning or behaviour difficulties. For the purpose of this dissertation **regular education initiative** would be considered as the general schooling by the majority of learners.

### **1.5.5 Special classes**

According to Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998:27) special classes are maintained for learners whose educational needs are best met within a self-contained unit with a teacher-to-pupil ratio of one teacher to 12 pupils. Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber also maintain teaching of learners in these classes by teachers who teach in special education. This clearly shows that the general education teacher would find it very difficult to cope with these learners without appropriate training.

Doorlag and Lewis (1995:59) put forward the view that learners who receive services in the **special class** placement option spend most part of their school day in the special classes and a portion of their time in the regular class. That means that both special and general education teachers share responsibility in assisting these learners. Both blind and non-disabled learners may, for instance, receive oral instruction together, but during written instruction the blind learner would be attended to by a specialist in Braille instruction. In most cases, general education teachers working with learners in this option, often have consultation services available to assist them in designing and implementing an appropriate instructional programme (Doorlag & Lewis, 1995:59).

From the above one could deduce that **special classes** are learning environments where educational needs for learners who experience barriers to learning and development are best met due to the availability of specialised skills. For the purpose of this dissertation **special classes** would be considered learning environments where learners who experience barriers to learning and development are best served by special education teachers.

### **1.5.6      Inclusion**

Alper, Schloss, Etscheidt and Mac Farlane (1995:6) and Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Faber (1998:12) maintain that **inclusion** is the practice of providing educational experiences for learners with and without disabilities in the regular classroom setting. Bursuck and Friend (1999:12) argue that **inclusion** represents “the belief that students with disabilities should be integrated into general education classrooms regardless of whether or not they can meet traditional curricular needs.” This implies that learners should be included in the regular classroom setting irrespective of whether they benefit from it or not. If this is the case, **inclusion** would be useless and destructive in the case of learners who experience barriers to learning and development since it is imperative that learners should benefit from being included.

Booth (Allan, 1999:14) maintains that **inclusion** should increase learners’ participation within the cultures and the curricular of mainstream schools and decrease exclusionary pressures. This implies that learners will benefit from inclusion and that they will establish rapport with each other. They learn to share ideas and recognise each other’s individual diversity. Mutual respect will also develop thereby enhancing a feeling of selfworth.

Allan (1999:14) puts forward the view that inclusive education is about responding to diversity, it is about listening to unfamiliar voices, being open, empowering all members and about celebrating difference in dignified ways. When learners are integrated, labelling and exclusionary pressures will be reduced. Friendships will be established and learners will learn to disagree in order to agree without criticising each other’s being.

Bursuck and Friend (1999:4) put a different vision of inclusion to the fore. They regard **inclusion** as the integration of as many learners who experience barriers to learning and development into the general education classes as possible. Their view is that not all learners can be included, since some might need constant care, which cannot be provided for in the regular classroom setting.

Hall (1997:129) defines **full inclusion** as “being a full member of an age-appropriate class in your local school/college doing the same lessons as others, with others, and it mattering if you are not there. Also you have friends who spend time with you outside schools/college plus others who care for you and work hard to ensure that you are fully included in the mainstream community life and use generic services along with other citizens.”

If a learner is age-appropriate to a class, acceptance easily follows. A Positive self-esteem and a positive self-concept are enhanced. Establishing rapport and the use of generic services make it possible for all learners to actualise their potentials. They also learn to accept each other's individual diversity.

Wade (2000:7) contends that **inclusive** education should represent a shift from a continuum of educational placements to a continuum of educational services, which implies the importance of educational services in inclusive settings. Learners will benefit if they have access to assistive technology devices, physical modifications, curriculum accessibility and an array of related services to meet their individual needs (Salend, 1998:6). Westwood (2001:5) is of the same opinion that inclusion is an education system that includes a large diversity of learners and provides differentiated education to serve this diversity.

As far as South Africa is concerned, the Education White Paper 6 (2001:17) indicates **inclusion** as the support to all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met.

From the above one would deduce that **inclusion** is the practice to educate age-appropriate learners with and without disabilities in the regular classroom settings with both special and general teachers taking responsibility. For the purpose of this dissertation, this definition will be used.

### **1.5.7 Learners**

According to Hornby (1995:671) a **learner** is a person who is gaining knowledge or skills. This seems to include people of different age groups. Some overseas countries use the term students. In South Africa, school going children were called pupils but now the term is no longer used. In South Africa the term **learner** indicates that learning has no age limit as compared to pupils and students which signify elementary and tertiary levels respectively.

The NCSNET/NCESS (1997:vii) indicates that the term **learner** refers to all learners, ranging from early childhood education through to adult education. The report also recommends that the terms “pupils” and “students” at school and higher education levels be replaced by the term learners.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 defines a **learner** as any person who receives education or is obliged to receive education. The Department of Education (1997:10) refers to **learners** as

“partners in the progress of their own development, and interest is engaged and maintained through the education cycle.

From the above one could deduce that the term **learner** refers to anybody who, irrespective of age, engages him/herself in acquiring knowledge and/or skills either through study, experience or practice. For the purpose of this dissertation **learners** will be considered to refer to those persons who engage themselves in acquiring knowledge and/or skills through study, experience or practice.

### **1.5.8 Foundation Phase**

This refers to Grades R to 3, and includes learners from six to nine years of age. The Foundation Phase is a four year phase, starting with Grade R, the reception year. The most important learning programmes in this phase, are, Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills. This dissertation will concentrate on teachers who teach learners in this phase.

### **1.5.9 Attitudes**

Hornby (1989::65) signifies attitudes towards somebody or something as the way of thinking or behaving. Attitudes can either be negative or positive.

Maxwell (1993:20) sees attitude as an inward feeling expressed by behaviour. He argues that an attitude can be seen without a word being said.

According to the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:15) discriminatory attitudes result from prejudice against people on the basis of race,

class, gender, culture, disability, religion, ability, sexual preference and other characteristics which manifest themselves as barriers to learning when such attitudes are directed to learners in the education system. As the report puts it, negative attitudes may manifest themselves in various ways which include, labelling learners due to negative associations between learners and the system, eg, 'drop out', placing learners in a particular environment because they are labelled as belonging to a category of learners for which a particular kind of educational placement does exist, negative attitudes and labelling resulting from fear and a lack of awareness about the particular needs of the learner or the potential barriers which they may face and negative attitudes resulting from fear of learners with disabilities.

From the above one could deduce that an attitude is an inward feeling expressed by either positive or negative behaviour.

## **1.6 PLAN OF STUDY**

The following plan will be followed:

### CHAPTER 2

In this chapter a review of literature on who the learners who experience barriers to learning and development are, the identification of these learners, as well as the South African policy regarding inclusion, will be dealt with.

### CHAPTER 3

This chapter focuses on inclusive education and the role collaborative teaching and cooperative learning play in an inclusive setting.

## **CHAPTER 4**

Chapter 4 focuses on an empirical study and the summary of research results.

## **CHAPTER 5**

In this chapter the research results are analysed.

## **CHAPTER 6**

Recommendations are made in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2: A PROFILE OF THE LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING IN AN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

If one reads through various documents, it seems as if every learner has barriers of some kind due to individual differences. Every learner will therefore occasionally need specific instruction to meet these diverse needs. According to McDonnell, McLaughlin & Morison (2000:68) some learners who experience barriers to learning are never taken out of the regular classroom settings, and some never get to see the inside of a school building. Choate (2001:18) shows that some learners need more specialised instruction than other learners do. This indicates clearly how diverse learners' needs are. From the light of the above, it is worthwhile to ask oneself who these learners are, what they look like, what they are (not) capable of doing and what their rights are.

It is clear from the literature that some authors and researchers use the terms "students with disability", "exceptional children", "learners with special educational needs" (LSEN) and "learners who experience barriers to learning" interchangeably to refer to the same learners.

Naicker (1999:12-14) highlights the harmful effects of the medical, charity and lay discourse as follows: The medical discourse is linked to disability. Learners are constructed as disabled and inadequate, and are excluded from mainstream. In the charity discourse, the recipients of education are viewed as in need of assistance, as objects of pity and eternally dependent on others. Naicker (1999:13) indicates that nothing is mentioned about

professionals such as therapists who benefit from this type of labelling. According to Naicker (1999:14) he lay discourse relates to prejudice, hate, ignorance, fear and paternalistic tendencies.

## **2.2 WHAT ARE BARRIERS TO LEARNING?**

Gallagher and Kirk (1993:6) UNISE (1998 Back page), Hallahan and Kauffman (1988:6) Mwamwenda (1998:433), Borich and Tombari (1995:519), Barnard, le Roux & Van Zyl (1993:1), Daniels and Vaughan (1999:49), Levine, Marks & Shraeder (1999:315) and the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:18) consider disability as one of the example of barriers to learning and development. They describe the following examples of disability:

- hearing impairment
- multiple disability
- visual impairment
- motor handicaps
- learning disability

In South Africa the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:18) puts forward the view that learning breakdown and exclusion occur when the learning needs of learners are not met as a result of barriers to learning and development. A learning disability may prevent learning to take place due to the lack of assistive technological devices.

According to Gallagher and Kirk (1993:6), UNISE (1998 back page), Hallahan and Kauffman (1998:6), Rizo and Suran (1983:6) and Barnard et al (1993:1) emotional disturbances can also be a barrier to learning. Sexual abuse and negative attitudes towards learners

by peers, teachers and the community are good examples of factors which could cause emotional disturbances. Consider a relationship of a learner who has been raped, particularly by her biological father, for instance, what happened in the Limpopo Province, where a police inspector had raped his two daughters for a period of 10 years (Musetha, 2001:1). The relationship of such a learner with peers, community, teachers and parents will be problematic. When a learner has been raped, learning breakdown occurs and there is a likelihood that the learner will dropout from school rather than complete schooling. The reason behind this is that peers, parents and irresponsible teachers would talk about this, just to provoke the abused. If on the one hand consideration is taken about the negative attitudes attributed to a learner who has been exposed to unforeseen life circumstances, like that which happened in Mozambique, where a child was born on a tree during the floods, a learner might find it difficult to cope. When mention is made of any floods that took place, the learner would be emotionally disturbed. If an irresponsible teacher would say, "I have no idea how learners born on trees would perform in class," the particular learner would be highly traumatised, isolated and marginalized. The best option for this learner, if without proper guidance, might be to drop out from school, and some may even consider committing suicide.

Beloin and Peterson (1999:18) list the following barriers to learning in poor urban and rural schools and communities:

- loss of hope
- limited fiscal resources
- high levels of drug abuse, gang involvement, crime and teenage pregnancy
- poor health care
- lack of transport

- high level of stress
- segregation
- many poorly qualified personnel
- inadequate learning environment
- negative attitudes towards learners

Beloin and Peterson (1999:18) also put forward the view that “these multiple problems that face neighbourhoods (crime, economic devastation) and schools (violence, class size, authoritarian and non-responsive administration, hunger, abuse) make inclusive education and whole schooling practices often seen as an unaffordable luxury.” These problems make universities, schools, media, and people in poor neighbourhoods to adopt a deficit mentality by which they are conditioned to see only their problems and deficits, rather than strengths and resources within themselves, their schools and their communities (Beloin & Peterson 1999: 19). This could surely cause extensive barriers to learning.

It goes without saying that if a learner is hopeless and conditioned to see only his/her problems and deficits, such a learner will keep on belittling him/herself and will be without ambitions. Learners need support to maximise whatever resources are at their disposal.

### **2.2.1 School related barriers**

A number of barriers to learning and development related to the school situation will be discussed.

- Barriers related to attitudes.

These are barriers related to beliefs, motivations and attitudes that different teachers have about educating learners who experience barriers in the general education classrooms. Wade (2000:83) points out that attitudes are affective responses associated with beliefs, and that is why the teachers' feelings and attitudes about working together will be based on what they know or expect to be likely the result of their behaviour or actions.

The author is of the opinion that if something is destroying our education today, it is the negative attitudes of both general and special teachers towards change, learners and even towards the way in which education is planned. If teachers have negative attitudes towards learners, learning breakdown will be at the order of the day. In most cases, change is hard to accept because what happens in the classroom is highly personal. Because of their negative attitudes, teachers resist change and do not even try to implement the basics set out in policy documents regarding inclusive settings. It is important for teachers to try to teach in the regular classroom settings and then come up with views on how to improve teaching in such settings.

- Organisational barriers

These barriers pertain to the different ways schools are structured and managed, how they define their goals, and how they design instruction (Kootchar & West, 1996:29). The organisational structure of a particular school may cause barriers to learning for some of the learners. Consideration by principals, teachers, school governance and learners should be taken seriously to make the school as accommodative and matter of fact as possible.

- Knowledge barriers

According to Kochhar and West (1996:30) knowledge barriers pertain to the differences in the knowledge and skills of various teachers about instructing learners who experience barriers to learning, support services, adapting curriculum and instruction, and structuring the classroom for optimal inclusion. Lack of knowledge, skills and a lack of awareness on the part of teachers may result in serious barriers to learning.

- Barriers to collaboration

Wade (2000:81) cites the following barriers to collaboration which may have adverse implications for the learner:

- Conceptual barriers

These consist of expectations of how things are done in the schools. This often reflects the culture which may actually impede learning to some of the learners. According to Wade (2000:82) “a common belief within a school culture is that students with disabilities do not belong in the mainstream of the school.” This is a serious barrier to learning and may result in learners not receiving the kind of education they expect.

- Pragmatic barriers

Pragmatic barriers are usually associated with systemic and logical factors within the school, such as, lack of time for implementation, consultation and collaboration. The fact that schools have been described as segmented, egg-crate institutions in which teachers are isolated, makes it difficult for teachers to

work together resulting in some learners experiencing barriers to learning in an integrated school (Wade, 2000:82).

- Professional barriers

Some major barriers to learning in the school situation are a lack of knowledge or discrepancies in the training of teachers. Wade (2000:84) notes that professionals are actually isolated by long-established professional behaviours and beliefs, and consequently they are reluctant to work together in the regular classroom settings. Wade (2000:84) notices that differences in professionals preparation programmes across disciplines can result in disproportionate knowledge and experience in collaboration. This creates a barrier for some of the learners in the regular classroom setting because the philosophical differences and lack of knowledge and skills to solve problems often limit the teachers' ability to participate fully in a collaborative partnership. Teachers' talents should be valued and utilised as resources to eliminate barriers to learning.

### **2.2.2 Influence of the family**

According to Black et al (2000:51) "increase numbers of single parents, blended, and latchkey families, as well as the erosion of extended family networks, affect the children and youth who are members of those families." Extended families are no longer interested in helping learners who are not their own. This is due to the economic status of the families and shifting responsibility to those who are expected to carry such responsibilities. This situation creates a barrier to those who find themselves in either inadequate parenting, or inadequate income and poverty. Families with members who are substance abusers, violent and child

abusing, cause barriers to learning to most learners. This also affects those who are not members of the family. A good example is that of an alcohol abuse who plays music the whole night disturbing almost every learner in all nearby families.

### **2.2.3      Autism**

O'Connell (1997:110) indicates autism as one of the barriers to learning and development. She lists the following criteria to identify autism:

- qualitative impairment in reciprocal social interaction, such as a marked lack of awareness of the existence or feelings of others
- qualitative impairment in verbal and nonverbal communication gestures, mime, or speech, and abnormal language form or content
- restricted repertoire of activities and interests such as preoccupation with parts of objects and an insistence on following routines

According to Simpson (Bullock, 1992:169) the following terms have been used to describe children and youth with autism. Such terms include, schizophrenia, psychosis, pervasive development disorder, emotional disturbance, and autism disorder. The term currently used for these learners is pervasive development disorder which encompasses qualitative impairments in reciprocal social interaction, communication and imaginative activity impairments and restricted range of interests and activities.

Following Kanner (Bullock, 1992:173) learners who experience autism have the following characteristics:

- Difficulty in relating

Learners have difficulty in establishing appropriate interpersonal rapport. They often lack interests in and responsiveness to others. The problems amounting to difficulty in relating are that learners avoid eye contact, isolated themselves socially, and avoid situations in which they may be accountable. Above all, as Kanner (Bullock, 1992:174) puts it, they normally have few friends.

- Speech and language problems

Menyuk (Bullock, 1992:174) identifies the following are speech and language problems:

- inability to acquire language and use a meaningful language system
- verbal and nonverbal communication deficits
- problems involving linguistic and non-linguistic rules

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (Bullock, 1992:174) highlights the following communication problems in learners who experience autism as a barrier to learning and development:

- immature but essentially normal grammatical structure
- delayed or immediate echolalia
- pronoun reversals
- inability to name objects
- inability to use abstract terms

- idiosyncratic utterances whose meaning is clear only to those who are familiar with the learner's past experience
- abnormal speech melody
- nonverbal communication is absent or minimal or if present, is socially inappropriate
- Delays and aberrations of development

Simpson (Bullock, 1992:175) lists the following characteristics of autistic learners:

They show cognitive deficits, they function at a below average intellectual level, they have limited problem solving potential, and they do experience fine and gross motor problems.

- Problems in reacting appropriately to environmental events

According to Simpson (Bullock, 1992:175) these learners react inappropriately to environmental events, and they often display noticeable self-stimulatory and repetitive body movements. Such learners are also said to show strong attachment to unusual objects, such as rocks. Simpson (Bullock, 1992:175) points out body rocking, hand and arm flapping, light filtering and finger waving, as the most self-stimulatory and repetitive body movements.

According to Siegel, Vukkilevic, Elliot and Kraemer (O'Connell, 1997:110) it is generally agreed that impaired social interaction is the hallmark for autism. Social isolation leads to learning breakdown in learning which will hamper the child to reach the expected in Language, Literacy and Communication.

The above discussion shows clearly that autism is one of the most serious barriers to learning and development. This suggests

extreme expertise of teaching in facilitating learning because the problem is not concentrated in one specific aspect, but in many of them. The teacher can be very perplexed preventing him/her from trying to come up with strategies to assist the learner.

#### **2.2.4      Communication and speech disorders**

According to Dowdy et al (1998:272) communication and speech disorders are also barriers to learning and development. They highlight the following communication disorders which could have an effect on communication and speech:

- Speech disorder, which is an impairment of voice, articulation of speech sounds and fluency. In their view, voice disorder is defined as the absence or abnormal production of voice quality, pitch, loudness, resonance, and/or duration. According to Dowdy et al (1998:272) articulation disorder is defined as abnormal speech sounds. McReynolds (Dowdy et al, 1998:273) describes the most common articulation errors as being, distortion (a sound is produced in an unfamiliar manner), substitutions (one sound is replaced by another), omissions (a sound is omitted from a word) and addition (an extra sound is inserted into a word).
- A language disorder, is defined as the impairment or deviant development of comprehension and/or use of spoken, written, and/or a symbol system (Dowdy et al, 1998) a deviant behaviour in either of them, a learning breakdown will occur. Some teachers speak in an inaudible fashion due to voice disorders. This results in learners failing to understand what the teacher is saying. In this way they fail to cope with the teacher. It is important for teachers to be considerate about their facilitation of learning to avoid learning breakdown.

Emerick and Haynes (Dowdy et al, 1998:271) maintain that a communication difference is considered a barrier when:

- the transmission or perception of the message is faulty
- the person has an economic disadvantage
- the person has a learning disadvantage
- the person has a social disadvantage
- the person's emotional growth is affected negatively

These imply that learners should be placed in environments where interpersonal relationship is conducive to learning, social and economic vantage thereby enhancing positive emotional growth amongst teachers, parents and learners themselves.

According to Taylor (O'Connell, 1997:348) the learner's communication can only be considered a language disorder if it deviates sufficiently from the norms, expectations, and definitions of the child's indigenous culture or language group, when judged by that indigenous language or culture group; if it operates outside the norms of acceptability set by that culture or language group; if it interferes with communication within the indigenous culture or language group, and if it draws attention to itself within indigenous culture or language group.

Battle and Grantham (O'Connell, 1997:360) quoting Mattes and Omark (1991) and Kayser (1990) hold the view that the following are observable communication behaviours that can be identified in learners with communication disorders:

- The learner rarely initiates verbal interactions or activities with peers or family members.

- The learner does not respond verbally when verbal interactions are initiated by peers or family members.
- The learner does not engage in dialogue or conversation with peers or family members outside the classroom.
- The learner uses of gestures rather than speech to communicate failures when peers do no understand.

Autism and communication problems are not very obvious that the learners have these impairments. Not many teachers know anything about this.

### **2.2.5      Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

According to Mercer (1992:427) Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can be a barrier to learning and development.

In South Africa, it is unfortunate that English is the medium of instruction in the education system. This suggests intensive studying using a language which is not a home language for many teachers and learners. It is worth noting that even when people are contesting for a teaching post in, for instance, Tshivenda or Sepedi, English is used. This explains why these languages are losing credibility. The Education White Paper 6 (2001) indicates that the learner should be taught in a language of his/her choice. That sounds great, but how practical is that? Will that choice apply in the labour market? The two questions suggest scrutiny of this language choice before implementation to avoid disaster at the end. Limited English Proficiency bars interpersonal relationship. Learners experiencing this barrier may find it difficult to partake in cooperative learning, and this could lead to negative labelling by peers.

Other barriers to learning and development will be discussed in section 2.4.

## **2.3 CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

The following are criteria that could be used to identify learners who experience barriers to learning:

### **2.3.1 Differentness**

Kirk and Gallagher (Du Toit, 1991: 23) define learners who experience barriers to learning as those who deviate from the average normal learner. Van Niekerk (Du Toit, 1991: 23) explains differentness as unique to a specific person and that differentness differs from what is accepted as passable, normal or ordinary. Du Toit (1991: 23) argues that a learner who experiences barriers to learning makes himself/herself known because he/she appears, act, or behaves differently from what is normally the case. This suggests that barriers to learning are within the learner. It is better to consider the barriers that would cause learning breakdown than to consider the learner him/herself. The learner could, for instance, be blind, or wheeling him/herself. Blindness and physical disability may not be barriers to learning. Inaccessibility to the built environment and lack of Braille material could be problems without which learning breakdown could cause barriers to arise. The barrier is created by the system.

Gallagher and Kirk (1993:6) indicate that in education, learners who have the same characteristics are grouped together for

instructional purposes. They put forward the following grouping for learners who experience barriers to learning:

- intellectual differences, which include learners who are intellectually superior and those who are slow to learn
- sensory differences, which encompass learners who are emotionally disturbed or socially maladjusted.
- multiple and severe handicapping conditions, including learners with combinations of impairments (cerebral palsy and mental retardation, deaf and blindness)
- physical differences including learners with non-sensory handicaps that impede mobility and physical vitality

### **2.3.2 Conspicuousness**

Du Toit (1991:24) argues that the learner may be different without being conspicuous. Many learners who experience barriers are, however, conspicuous. She indicates the following four areas of conspicuousness:

- social conspicuousness
- medical conspicuousness
- psychological conspicuousness
- pedagogical conspicuousness

It is, however, important to note that the learner who experiences barriers to learning is often conspicuous in the eyes of the diagnostician (Du Toit, 1991:24). Conspicuousness which is clearly visible and well understood by everyone irrespective of profession, generates an awareness to who the learners who experience barriers to learning are.

### **2.3.3 The nature of teaching**

Du Toit (1991:25) and Gallagher and Kirk (1993: 5) are of the opinion that the learners experience barriers to learning if it should be necessary to provide them with a modified form of teaching. In her deliberations, Du Toit puts forward the view that a regular curriculum is modified with regard to one or more of the following aspects:

- objectives
- content
- method of teaching
- expected rate of progress
- possible additional aid, e.g. remedial teacher, speech therapist, parental guidance

Bartel and Hammil (1995:269) raise the idea of error analysis of the learner's work. Modification of the regular teaching with regard to the above mentioned aspects will depend on the teacher's identification and analysis of the learner's errors. The learner's errors can be evidenced either in written work or in oral interviews (Bartel & Hammil, 1995:269). Not only does the error analysis help the teacher to determine the learners' level of understanding but it also helps to do some self introspection regarding the effectiveness of his/her instruction. In providing support, for the teacher to be empowered, the notion of staff development juts in.

The instructional strategies should definitely try to cater for all learners if effective learning is to be expected. For this to happen, learning programmes and examination-oriented teaching should be kept at a pause. Teaching in respect of the above makes learners who experience barriers to learning to be left behind with much

consideration to the mediocre and gifted learners. OBE does make provision for learners who experience barriers to learning and development because all learners are faced with the challenges of critical cross-field outcomes as set out by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) (2000:41). The challenges put forth are that each learner should in anyway possible, be able to:

- identify and solve problems
- work effectively with others
- organise and manage themselves
- collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information
- communicate effectively
- use Science and Technology effectively
- demonstrate an understanding of the world
- contribute to the full personal development

OBE could be the best approach to address barriers to learning and development provided it is well planned. The fact that OBE is learner centred and learner paced, bears testimony to this. Since five forms of assessment are, in for instance, used in Life Orientation, learners are exposed to exciting learning activities in action research and projects. It will only depend on the teacher planning of the activities considering the learners in the class. By varying the activities teachers can make learning an exciting and enjoyable experience. Without planning, the opposite is inevitable. Teachers need to facilitate learning in such a way that it exposes learners to learn holistically. Learners collaborate their knowledge through social interaction. Competition is largely eliminated since learners proceed at their own pace. Above all, the alternative assessment strategies are used which bear testimony that OBE

provides for learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

### **2.3.4 The discrepancy between the attained and attainable level of development and learning**

A learner who shows a clear discrepancy between his/her behaviour and/or school achievements and what he/she is really capable of based on his/her abilities, is an underachiever and requires special assistance (Du Toit, 1991:25). Rief and Heimburge (1996: 168) point out that learning disabilities create a gap between a learner's true capacity and his/her day to day productivity and performance. In their study, McDonnell et al (1997:74) found that a learner has severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one of the following areas:

- oral expression
- listening comprehension
- basic expression
- mathematics calculations
- mathematics reasoning

When considering the discrepancy between the attained and attainable levels of development and learning, the learner's level of cognitive development should not be overlooked as this may lead to unnecessary labelling. If there is a significant difference considering the learner's level of both physical, cognitive and fine motor development, the learner should then be regarded as being among those who experience barriers to learning and development, and for this reason, an individual education programme should be designed.

### **2.3.5 Intellectual abilities**

Rief and Heimburge (1996:185), Eby and Smutny (1990:4), Gallagher and Gallagher (1994:5) Rizzo and Suran (1983:6) and Doorlag and Lewis (1995:447) put forward the view that giftedness and talentedness fall under the umbrella of barriers to learning and they indicated that this is not accepted and approved by many. The reasons advanced are, firstly, that teachers and parents do not understand the needs of gifted and talented learners. Secondly, these learners are capable of doing well on their own. Thirdly, they need specialised programmes. Fourthly, teachers are unable to design programmes for these learners (Doorlag & Lewis, 1995:446).

According to them, learners capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievements and/ or potential ability in any of the following areas:

- general intellectual ability
- specific academic aptitude
- creative or productive thinking
- leadership ability
- visual and performing arts
- psychomotor ability

Giftedness and talentedness should be seen as open channels for learning rather than as barriers to learning. Based on the above areas in which they can demonstrate their achievements, these learners have a wide range of learning capabilities. They can in fact do as much as they can sometimes even without the resources. In the opinion of the author, the teacher's limited

expertise in identifying learners and failure to provide the necessary support that these learners need, together with limited resources, can be regarded as barriers to learning for the gifted and talented learners. These are the learners who may progress significantly and also challenging the instructional strategies if exposed to well resourced schools.

### **2.3.6 Attention deficit disorder (ADD)**

Learners with attention deficit disorder have difficulty concentrating on tasks, focusing attention and completing their work. Learners are easily distracted and their attention moves from one idea or interest to another. ADD affects learners in many ways, e.g. emotionally or socially. Learners with disorders may even produce work which is sloppy and carelessly performed (Lerner 1993:47). Lerner (1993:47) and Mercer (1992:73) describe two terms which could be used in referring to this order, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attention deficit without hyperactivity (ADD/wH). The two terms differentiate learners who are hyperactive from those who are not.

Rief and Heimburge (1996:175) and Mercer (1992:74) give a list of actions which could be symptoms of hyperactivity-impulsivity:

- fidgets with hands or feet, or squirms in seat
- inability to remain seated for certain periods of time when this is expected
- runs about or climbs excessively in inappropriate situations
- has difficulty playing quietly
- is constantly on the go as if ‘driven by a motor’

- talks excessively
- often blurts out answers to questions
- interrupts others
- has difficulty following through instruction from others
- has difficulty sustaining attention to task or play activities
- often shifts from one uncompleted activity to another
- often intrudes or interrupts on others
- often does not seem to listen to what is being said to him/her
- often loses things necessary for tasks or activities as school or at home

Learners with ADD either with or without hyperactivity should be regarded as attention seeking. The teacher's expertise in providing relevant instructional strategies and designing activities that will keep the learner to their breast will play a significant role in narrowing down these disorders. It is important for teachers to make learners aware of their potentials and the school's endeavour to develop their potential.

Learners who display this disorder need constant attention. These disorders can be kept in check through monitoring these learners and by giving them challenging tasks. Unfortunately these learners are easily labelled.

## **2.4 THE SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY ON LEARNERS WHO EXPERIENCE BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

In South Africa education policy governing the lives of learners who experience barriers to learning and development follows a new approach to the whole idea of special needs. The policy is in line with international trends. The policy emanated from the recommendations on all aspects made in the NCSNET/NCESS (1997) joint report which came into being after intervention by the Minister of Education with the view to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa. The policy entails a much wider concept of special needs compared to the old medical/clinical approach. In the past, learners experienced barriers to learning, either intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic barriers are directly related to the learner's biological composition, such as deafness, blindness, mental challenges, which complicate the learner's education to such an extent that the learner and his parents require educational guidance. Extrinsic barriers are barriers associated with the environment or the circumstances in which the learner grows up, for instance, poor socio-economic conditions (du Toit, 1991:29-30), would be referred to remedial teachers even though they would be assisted in the regular classroom settings. Others, for instance, those who wheel themselves, would be referred to special schools. This would result in an unfair institutionalisation. The framework indicates the placement of district support teams who would serve as itinerants.

The Education White Paper 6 (2001:7) as well as the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:12) discuss among other things, the following barriers that may lead to learning breakdown:

### **2.4.1 Socio-economic barriers**

The NCSNET/NCESS (1997:12) holds the view that “effective learning is fundamentally influenced by the availability of additional resources to meet the needs of the society.” Centres of learning and other facilities to meet the educational needs of the population are inadequate in South Africa. This causes a serious breakdown in learning which generates criminality in the country. Socio-economic barriers may also manifest themselves in the following ways:

#### *2.4.1.1 Lack of access to basic services*

Adverse economic conditions make it difficult, if not impossible, for communities to make educational provision accessible to learners. Learners are unable to reach the centre of learning because transport facilities are unavailable to them. Roads are poorly developed and maintained making centres of learning inaccessible, particularly to those who wheel themselves. It is imperative to indicate that although transport systems exist they are in inaccessible to learners who wheel themselves, and this has detrimental consequences to learners.

Commuters also tend to have negative attitudes towards those with disabilities.

Problems to access clinics can also hinder the learning process. Regular medical treatment is imperative to certain learners with chronic illness. If clinics are not situated near learning centres, or

are unable to supply medication (as is the case in most of our clinics countrywide), they cause the learners to drop out of school in order to be hospitalised in a facility where services can be provided to support learning during the period of treatment (NCSNET/NCESS, 1997:13).

According to the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:13) lack of early intervention facilities and services may lead to the learner increased impairment and decrease the learners' capacity to learn. This causes the learner to lose hope and subsequently his/her ambitions fade. It is imperative to have the necessary expertise in early intervention facilities. It is difficult to train staff to perform welfare and communication service due to low socio-economic factors. A good example to illustrate this is the insufficient of Sign Language interpreters in the public service.

Learners with barriers to learning therefore have difficulty to function in schools, communities, churches and the labour market, They will find it difficult to, for instance, testify in a court of law.

#### *2.4.1.2 Poverty and underdevelopment*

Poverty is the inability of families to meet their basic needs such as nutrition and shelter (NCSNET/NCESS, 1997:13). It is mainly caused by unemployment, and in most cases, is the cause of other problems such as family violence. Malnutrition leads to lack of concentration. It is difficult for a learner to engage in effective learning on a hungry stomach. This adversely affects the emotional behaviour to such an extent that learning becomes a laborious activity. When the breadwinner is unemployed, or is poorly paid, the learner is likely to drop out of school to look for

jobs elsewhere. Many teenagers, girls in particular, engage in commercialising sex to earn a living.

Poorly resourced communities are characterised by limited educational facilities, large classes, inadequately trained staff and inadequate teaching and learning material. It is difficult for learning to take place effectively within large classes as well as proper interaction between the teacher and teacher and learners. Staff who are inadequately trained will not teach effectively. If teaching staff do not have the skills and knowledge to utilise various teaching strategies and assertive technological devices their teaching will be useless. Learning material should be made available and teachers should improvise on their day-to-day preparations. Without these, effective teaching and learning will not be sustainable.

Poverty and disability in combination increase a learner's risk to be excluded from the education system. The NCSNET/NCESS (1997:13) puts forward the view that such children are also excluded from the labour market. Their skills and knowledge are neglected as they do not have opportunities to perform duties such as operating till machines, computers, switchboard and other secretarial duties. Sometimes these learners are not given the opportunity to go to school (Education White Paper 6, 2001:22)

#### **2.4.2 Attitudes**

The report of the NCSNESS/NCESS (1997:15) argue that "negative and harmful attitudes towards difference in our society remain a critical barrier to learning and development." Negative and harmful attitudes manifest themselves in different ways which may include negative labels and discriminatory attitudes. The learner

can be labelled a dropout, repeater, a slow learner, mentally retarded, naughty or a bully, without any attempts to help such a learner.

The NCSNET/NCESS (1997:15) holds the view that “sometimes learners are placed in a particular environment merely because they are labelled as belonging to a category of learners for which a particular kind of educational placement exists”. There is a need for all South Africans to change their mind set in this regard. Every learner should be accepted as such and as a human being revering human dignity. It is incumbent that negative stereotypes and advocacy of unconditional acceptance of all learners as human beings are propagated (Education White Paper 6, 200:33). The education system should strive to place the learner through appropriate assessment of the educational needs of the learner or what is required by the system to meet these needs (NCSNET/NCESS, 1997:15). Consideration should be made of the necessary assistive devices, physical accessibility, instead of focusing on negative labels.

According to the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:15) negative attitude and labelling may be driven by fear from lack of awareness about the particular needs of learners or potential barriers which they face. No wonder that learners who are HIV positive are excluded from attending school with peers. The misconceptions associated with the disease drive people crazy. It is amazing to find that even parents and teachers have these misconceptions. Who should make learners aware of this disease? In the opinion of the author, teachers should as they spend most of their time with them. Parents cannot be exempted in this regard.

The author is also of the opinion that, the whole question of attitudes creates serious problems mostly to those directly infected and their parents. Negative attitudes towards children with disabilities cause parents to hide their children from the public eye. These negative attitudes can compel affluent parents to take their child to faraway institutions while a similar institution with all the necessary facilities is available nearby. This is done to prevent friends from undermining the family. It is amazing, though imperative to indicate that for the poor families, the same child (child with disability) could be used as a source of income. The child can only be given clean clothes during pay day but without access to his/her money. It is important to focus on the barriers themselves, which underscores labelling and marginalizing rather than focussing on the learner per se.

### **2.4.3 Inflexible Curriculum**

The NCSNET/NCESS (1997:16) and the Education White Paper 6 (2001:19) maintain that “one of the most serious barriers to learning and development can be found within the curriculum itself and relates primarily to the inflexible nature of the curriculum. The following are singled out as the key components of the curriculum that may cause barriers to leaning and development:

- the pace and style of teaching which may limit the initiative and involvement of learners with high levels of ability
- what is taught may limit the learner’s knowledge base or fail to develop the intellectual and emotional capacities of the learners
- the way the classroom is managed and organised
- the material and equipments used

- language and communication
- how learning is assessed

The inflexible curriculum is detrimental to the learning and development of learners. the pace at which teaching is facilitated may disadvantage both slow and learners with high levels of ability. What I have experienced is that teachers are mostly concerned about the average learners at the expense of the two groups of learners mentioned above. When this happens, schooling becomes a boring place and learners may opt for other alternatives.

The style of teaching may also lead to confusion. Different approaches are understood and used differently. When I look at the OBE approach critically, I realise that even learners who experience barriers to learning are accommodated in that they are allowed to proceed on their own pace. What amazes me is that most teachers equate OBE with group work. It is worth noting that not all learning activities can be effective through group work. There are learners who are introverts who may do extremely well when they work individually. This suggests that teaching style should be varied to address the diverse needs of learners.

Language and communication is also a very important aspect arising from an inflexible curriculum. In most cases, teaching and learning in South Africa, takes place through either a second language or to a greater extent, a third language. Most learners in rural areas hear English for the first time when they enter school. The situation becomes worse when English is prescribed as a medium of instruction. Schools do this for a good course. They try to prepare learners for the global labour market. Unfortunately, in doing this, they leave a number of learners

behind. It is worthwhile to indicate that even some teachers with limited English proficiency do struggle in this regard.

The joint report (NCSNET/NCESS, 1997:170) also shows that the general unavailability of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) aggravates the barriers. This results in learners totally excluded from learning and development experiences.

The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997:34) points out that Special Language System and Augmentative and Alternative Communication refer to any mode of communication used by people who cannot use a spoken or sign language, and this could include Braille, touch and Bliss symbols. The White Paper also suggests interpreter services including Sign Language interpreters, lip speakers, note takers and communication facilitators.

I am of the opinion that for all these to be a success, there is a need for teachers to be trained in all these modes of communication. Pre-service training should also be undertaken by teachers-in-the-making. It is important for teachers to know each learner and design the best strategies possible for effective teaching and learning. Strategies should be designed irrespective of how large classes are. Large classes will prevail for as long as there are no new appointments for new teachers. We therefore, cannot wait for small classes in order to consider individual attention, because should we do that, the majority of our learners would be seen roaming streets, and this could undoubtedly precipitate criminal acts.

#### **2.4.4 Inaccessible and unsafe built environment**

According to the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:17) the vast majority of centres of learning are physically inaccessible to a large number of learners, societies and teachers.

The White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997:30) highlights the following barriers in the build environment:

- structural barriers which include, flight or stairs, inaccessible toilet and bathrooms, high kerb stone and uneven pavements.
- Inaccessible service points, like bank and shop counters, public telephones and ATMs
- Inaccessible entrance due to security system, including turnstile.
- Poor town planning, for instance, school and clinic positioned at high point in town, narrow pavements areas, lack of demarcated special parking bays.
- Poor interior design, including fixed seats in restaurants, clustered rooms.

These barriers in built environments, can become serious barriers to learning and development causing a breakdown in learning and exclusion. Physical structure modification could be accommodative to all learners. The modification of physical structure should not only be geared to learning centres, but to all various sectors. It should be remembered that these learners would not end up with their lives in learning centres. They will, in one way or other, be exposed to the labour market.

## **2.4.5 Inappropriate and inadequate provision of supportive services**

The NCSNET/NCESS (1997:17) joint report makes the following observations about the inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services:

- The nature of the services is focused on problems on the learner rather than in the system where the barriers exist, e.g. poor teaching strategies
- The nature of intervention may lead to a learner being removed from a learning centre rather than addressing the problems which exist in that learning environment
- Needy learners may not have access to individualised intervention
- Inadequacy or unequal distribution of service which does not exist may further disadvantage the learners
- Lack of awareness, service provision which is fragmented and inappropriate to a context which it takes place
- The nature of human resource development of both educators who provide service to learners and their families may be problematic
- Demoralisation and fear of dealing with a diverse range of needs

It is evident from the above that the inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services will be to the disadvantage of the learners because the system and those responsible for the provision of services concentrate more on the intrinsic barriers to learners ignoring their lack of expertise with regard to assistance which is needed. A skills audit could be conducted to determine the extent of expertise teachers have in rendering assistance. This

could be followed up with teacher training programmes in the form of workshops to give teachers the necessary skills.

The colleges of education which are still operational could also skill teachers-in-the-making, instil cultural values and teach them not to discriminate against any learner. It is pointless to talk without mentioning the skilling of teachers. Teachers are the vehicles to education reform and they therefore need training. That is, they should be trained to develop empathy to all learners. Without empathetic resonance and a feeling of self worth and ownership in the training process teachers may remain empty vessels which just carry on making the loudest noise justified by sympathy.

#### **2.4.6 Lack relevant legislation and policy**

According to the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:18) the policy and legislation which govern the education system and regulate society do facilitate the existence of barriers either directly or indirectly. When the legislation fails to protect learners from any type of discrimination, it directly contributes to the existence or maintenance of such discrimination.

Fortunately, the South African Policy on learners who experience barriers to learning and development has come up with a framework for establishing an inclusive education and training system that will take into cognisance all learners with or without disabilities (Education White Paper 6, 2001:24). The framework highlights the following aspects on the forefront:

- All learners have the potential to learn and they all need support.

- Learners experiencing barriers to learning can be identified early.
- Specialised setting be upgraded to enable learners to receive high-quality service.

The South African policy on learners who experience barriers to learning and development sounds very excellent, but as long as what really happens in the classroom remains hidden, change will not take place no matter how good the framework is. Unfortunately this policy document is known to very few teachers countrywide in general and Limpopo Province in particular. In the area in which this study was conducted, one doubts if there is any elementary or secondary school teacher in possession of the document. Even the district offices do not have a single copy of the document. It may sound ridiculous but it is a fact that this is the current situation. No training is taking place to help teachers accept, identify and render assistance to learners who experience barriers to learning and development. The framework should be followed by action so that teachers can form an intrinsic understanding among themselves.

#### **2.4.7 Lack of parental recognition and involvement**

The NCSNET/NCESS (1997:18) maintains that where parents guardians or caregivers are not given recognition or their participation is not facilitated and encouraged, effective learning is threatened or hindered. Parental involvement in the education of all children is very important. Parents, particularly in the black community, still think that to be called to a school means that their child has done something wrong. There is a need to gradually rake them into the system because they are a valuable source of information since they know their children from birth. Once the

failures and/or progress of learners are shared with the parents, they will develop a sense of responsibility in the education of their children. They will be willing to assist their children with schoolwork, pay for their educational tours and inform the school of what their children do after school hours.

#### **2.4.8 Disability (also termed impairment)**

This is the area which is given more attention as if it is the only problem causing barriers to learning. According to the NCSNET/NCESS (1997:18) learning breakdown and exclusion occurs when their particular needs are not met due to barriers in the learning environment. The report indicates the following examples of disability (NCSNET/NCESS,1997:18):

- schizophrenia
- severe autism
- severe intellectual disability
- multiple disability
- hearing impairment
- visual impairment
- physical disability

If a learner has a barrier to learning, positive attitudes by teachers and other members of society are imperative. Not all forms of disability cause barriers. If one wheels oneself in a wheelchair, that does not mean that one cannot actualise one's potential. It also does not imply an inability to operate computers, to do clerical work or to, for instance, take finger prints at the Department of Home Affairs. According to the latest viewpoints the barrier is not because of the learner's impairment but because of the environment or system which does not provide support for

learners. All that is important is empathetic resonance and to develop a positive attitude towards learners who have barriers to learning. This should be enhanced by revering human dignity and the will to interact with them as fellow human beings.

#### **2.4.9 Lack of human resource development strategies**

The NCSNET/NCESS (1999:19) is of the opinion that the development of teachers, service providers and other human resource is often fragmented and unsustainable. This is generated by a lack of commitment, irresponsibility, lack of interest and undeveloped human resource. The unfortunate situation is when the service provider lacks commitment even though he/she was part of the planning process. It is devastating to find the service provider leaving the participants on their own and without direction for other duties during the scheduled time for instance, during a workshop. This creates a feeling of insecurity, uncertainty, low self esteem and lack of innovation on the part of the participants. These may lead to learning breakdown in the classroom situation. It is important to develop the teachers in a best way possible to curb learning breakdown. Above all, strategies should be developed to equip teachers so that they can be in a position to identify and render assistance to learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

It is evident from the above deliberations that learners who experience barriers to learning, like anybody else, need respect, security, love and to be cherished. They also need attention to realise their potentials. They can learn and interact with their peers and society. They should have the opportunity to develop

their potential to the fullest. They can contribute to the development of a country.

#### **2.4.10            The influence of HIV/AIDS**

HIV/AIDS as an extrinsic barrier should be addressed as well. Principals of schools, teachers, school governance and everybody involved in education, should consider the role of human rights in this regard. The policy clearly states that no learner should be discriminated against on the basis of being HIV positive. These learners should be respected and be assisted as such. According to the Department of Education and the Department of Health (2002:10) “learners with HIV/AIDS may not be denied admission nor continued attendance at the learning institution and should attend classes for as long as they are able to function effectively.” This implies that everyone needs to learn to cope with these learners. They need support, care, guidance and education, like anyone else. This might require more than the mere knowledge of the various barriers to learning and development.

### **2.5 CONCLUSION**

The Constitution of our country indicates that every learner has the right to education. It is incumbent that we, in South Africa, like in any other country accommodate diversity in our communities. This will enable each individual to contribute to society in a unique manner. For this reason, diversity should be celebrated. If we all had the same personalities, the country would be the most boring place ever seen.

Labelling, emotional disturbances, lack of expertise in pedagogy, cause learning breakdown. South Africans need to address

barriers to learning rather than addressing those who experience barriers to learning and development. The only way to address this is to share ideas, help each other to develop skills, knowledge, values and attitudes. This will enable us to eliminate attitudinal, knowledge and organisational barriers. Learning how to learn and to recognise individual diversity will bar us from jumping to conclusion about others. This will instead, make us open-minded towards the opinion of others and learn effectively.

In the next chapter, inclusive classroom and the role of collaborative teaching and cooperative learning will be discussed.

## **CHAPTER 3: INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM: COLLABORATIVE TEACHING AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Outcomes-based-education forces teachers to change the methods, strategies and activities which they use in their classrooms. It also forces teachers to collaborate more with their colleagues and to share knowledge, skills and experiences. For all these to happen, change of mindset and managing attitudes is imperative for teachers.

Inclusive classrooms compel teachers to do exactly the same things as above. Inclusive classrooms also compel teachers to engage in collaborative teaching and cooperative learning. These allow teachers to share their expertise, experiences, knowledge and skills. Inclusive classroom practices also make mention of full-service schools, in other words, schools that are equipped and supported to provide for the full range of learning needs of all learners. Resource centres, namely, schools that can help learners' special needs, such as the assistance to learners with visual impairments (Education White Paper 6, 2001:21-22). It is, however, important to note that full-service schools are not available as yet. Not all schools do have special schools nearby to serve as resource centres. Since we talk inclusion, teachers are bound to engage learners in cooperative learning. Be that it may, the intentions are highly commendable, as this would eventually enhance inclusive classrooms. Collaborative teaching and cooperative learning would influence the attitudes of teachers with regard to the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

It must be noted that inclusion does not only mean bringing learners of diverse needs in inclusive settings, but also bringing diverse teachers' expertise for inclusion to run smoothly. Welch and Sheridan (Wade 2000:72) see collaboration as "to co-labor or to work with." It is important for the team to collaborate, the rationale being to provide a holistic and comprehensive support to learner in inclusive settings. A holistic approach requires bringing in diverse perspectives of the problem and striving together for solution.

Collaboration can be best achieved when preceded by respecting each other's level of expertise. According to Cutis and Cutis (Wade 2000:72) "when all partners share responsibility, the range and diversity of expertise available will be greatly enhanced." Wade (2000:21) contends that collaboration involves the idea of partnership among teaching staff members, who work together as equal, pooling their expertise in content knowledge, facilitating learning and child development for the benefit of all learners. This implies developing a clear mission statement about inclusion. The school should have a common goal as a team, and value what the other parties, including parents, have to offer.

Wade (2000:73) holds the view that inclusion cannot be as effective as expected unless teachers, specialists, parents and learners combine their efforts and resources. The combination of resources and efforts builds up one's strengths and creates a feeling of belonging to the team. It also enhances respect of each other's individual diversity. Although not all adults are comfortable with another adult in their teaching sites (Hammeken 1995:25), trust will develop as comfort levels of collaboration increase. Bauer and Shea (1999:86) see collaboration as an essential and effective

service to learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

### **3.2 WHO SHOULD COLLABORATE?**

Surely, when one talks of collaboration, one refers to two or more people and/or stakeholders working together as a team. In this context, this means working together as members of the learning support teams. These are teams whose composition is based on the needs of the learner population. The composition of learning support teams may be two fold.

Firstly, this can include parents who have expertise not based on qualification and professional categories. This composition focuses mainly on a community-based approach to education support and classroom. According to Rief and Heimburge (1996:230) this encourages sharing responsibility with parents in the learning process. They also encourage the establishment of a lending library whereby books, audiotapes, and videocassettes on several topics of concern for parents of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. This will motivate parents in their endeavour to lend a helping hand in the learning process. Bauer and Shea (1999:89) express the collaboration of general and special education teachers, parents, aides, principal, social workers, nurses, counsellors, and school psychologists.

Secondly, the support teams, namely, teams whose primary responsibilities are to provide curriculum support, assessment and instructional support in the form of illustrative programmes, learner support material and equipment, assessment instruments and professional support for educators at special schools/resource centres and full-service institutions (Education White Paper 6,

2001:49) may be composed of specialists and educators currently employed in the Department of Education at Circuit, District and Provincial levels. This includes:

- Psychologists, therapists, learning support teachers, and special needs specialists.
- Curriculum specialists providing generic support to teachers.
- Institutional/management development specialists who provide support to site of learning.
- Administrative experts who provide administrative and financial management support to education institutions.

In view of the author, collaboration of their expertise could make inclusion a success. There will be no one shifting responsibility to the other. Learners will belong to teachers, specialists, parents and interested stakeholders. In this dissertation, special attention will be paid to the attitudes of Foundation Phase teachers.

### **3.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATIVE TEACHING IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS**

Inclusive setting involves bringing together learners with diverse needs. It is these needs that need to be catered for in order for learners to realise and actualise their potentials to the fullest. For these to happen, a pool of expertise should be drawn from professionals, parents, caregivers and learners to assist learners who need special assistance.

Barnes (1999:233) states that when expertise is brought together, collaborative ownership develops. Partners share in the risks, successes and responsibilities. The shared risk taking addresses

the needs of both the learners and the teachers. When partnership is truly practiced, a deep sense of trust and professional respect for one another evolves. Through partnership, a diversity of ideas generates strengths and a source of growth. Barnes (1999:234) stresses impassioned discussions generated by collaboration, which leads to growth in understanding about learning, about the special needs of learners and about each other as partners. Above all, collaboration suggests that partners should share planning responsibilities for all classroom activities and that each partner feels responsible for all the learners.

Mar and Sall (1999:204) express a feeling of togetherness stimulated by partnership in education provision and believe that learners feel the same as well. The authors also emphasise collaboration with whoever is responsible and believe that such collaboration would evoke organizing both informal and formal meetings. In their view, informational resources such as videotapes, books, and articles regarding inclusion would be made accessible through the collaboration team.

Kagan (1999:52) is of the opinion that collaboration evokes responsibility and leadership. Once there is collaboration, someone must take the lead. This does not necessarily mean being the sole decision maker, but that one assumes the responsibility of facilitating to ensure sustainability of inclusion. Kagan (1999:52) stresses the fact that for any collaboration to be a success, the success of a single individual should imply the success of others as well. This presupposes that the programme does not belong to a single person, but to all. In her article on leadership, Kagan (1999:52) points out that collaboration generates collective ideas of governance, values, purpose and vision. She puts forward the view of total quality management (TQM), which stresses the importance

of fostering an atmosphere of openness, respect, and shared problem solving among the collaborative team. It is incumbent to note that although one partner in the collaborative team may rise to the prominence in a given situation, such prominence is temporary and non-threatening to collaborative participation (Kagan, 1994:53). It is worth noting that partners in the collaborative team should have experience and knowledge necessary to identify obstacles of success and they should be able to suggest solutions, and for this reason, they should be empowered to do so.

To achieve the collaboration approach broadly and intensely, Kagan (1994:53) list five recommendations:

- Recognition of the fact that collaborative teaching has limitations

This takes more time, more money and demands the refinement of skills often taken for granted, that is, communication.

- A need to establish diverse opportunities for in-service and pre-service collaborative training

Training in this regard should focus on skills, which include, amongst other things, negotiation, problem solving, consensus building, and the values collaborative teachers must bring to their work. Kagan (1994:53) suggest that the “durable fellowship institutes, mentor training programs, and policy internship should be created” to sustain networking opportunities.

- It must be ensured that resources are allocated to enable the enhanced participation of members in all facets of collaborative reaching.

- Recognition of the diverse pathways of collaborative teaching
- Collaborative teaching should accommodate multiple alternatives in terms of strategies, content and assessment.

- Recognition that although partners are not perfect, they have something quite profound and special to share.

For collaboration to be successful and sustainable, it is absolutely necessary that caregivers, parents, professionals, and communities share knowledge, responsibility and leadership. In her article on leadership, Kagan (1994:54) emphasises that “other institutions in our society, business, government, schools, welfare offices, health agencies, would do well to better understand and credit our profession, perhaps ultimately imbuing their work with the fundamental democratic and humane commitments that have long characterized early childhood.” Should that happen as Kagan suggests, collaboration would not only be seen to exist in the class, but in all walks of life. This could make everyone in the society a happy person.

Following Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998:116) the collaboration team should consider the following:

- The development of a mission statement for parents, education practitioners, and administrators inside and outside the school setting.
- A time line for pragmatic development that includes community update on progress.
- Collaborative teams that will be established within the school will accomplish change.

- The process of revolving differences in philosophy, beliefs and ultimately conflicts.

In my view, collaboration suggests tolerance in a team, working together and sharing ideas openly without criticising anyone in the team. To be in a team one should be a good listener. That means one has to listen beyond the spoken words. One has to analyse what has been said, relate to what has been previously said and the impetus it brings to the discussion.

### **3.4 THE KEY FEATURES OF COLLABORATION**

Following Choate (2000:452) “teachers, specialists and administrators are more inclined to work collaboratively when they believe that – with enough knowledge and commitment – even the most challenging problems can be solved.” This implies holding certain beliefs and values that presuppose benefiting learners through collaborative teaching. It is incumbent to indicate effective collaborators are confident of their own expertise and view others as equally competent in their respective roles (Choate, 2000:452). When everyone is confident, willingness to share expertise, perspectives, resources, active participation in decision-making and accountability, emerge.

The following key features for effective collaboration could be distinguished:

#### **3.4.1 common goals**

The entire process of collaboration is driven by goal commitment amongst partners. This implies working together with a generic

goal in mind. When people have common goals, the premise is, they plan together, perform together, learn to listen to each other's opinion and avoid jumping to conclusions. As partners, members will keep on assessing their performances by reviewing as to how much implementation, how well implementation has been done and how differently the implementation has occurred (Hall, 1997:31). Thus common goals need to be taken into consideration.

### **3.4.2 Interdependence And Parity**

To avoid the process of collaboration to "wobble," individual members should be ready to share responsibility towards a common goal. The team members should share the weight of meeting a mutually defined goal. The attainment of such a goal should benefit the learners in inclusive education settings. Collaboration requires, as Wade (2000:75) maintains, parity. That means that each member is an equal contributor throughout the entire collaboration process. It must be clear that individuals do not have equal levels of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and expertise. This implies that even if they will be required to operate on equal basis, their degrees of contributions will differ. This could result in dominance by certain individuals at certain stages and situations. The dominance would, however, be regarded as temporary. Members should regard themselves as interdependent partners who share their expertise to assist learners in their endeavour to actualise their potentials to the fullest.

Interdependence recognises that all benefit from each other's gains and are hurt by each other's failings. According to Vermette (1998:14) each individual learner must be held accountable for his/her mastery of the subject, hence a feeling that success for anyone is tied directly to the successes of others.

### **3.4.3 Interactive exchange of resources**

Wade (2000:75) states that collaboration reinforces the extension of the circle of ideas and contacts.

The more one is ready to share ideas, the more one gets to know more people better. Contacts and sharing of ideas make it possible for one to know the situation under which one operates. Members will understand learners far better when relying on their own expertise and experiences. The author maintains that collaboration solves sharing tangibles, such as materials, personnel and funding as well as intangibles, such as a risk, and ideas to meet common goal.

### **3.4.4 Decision making**

For collaboration to be successful, members of the team should take informed decisions on what to do. They also need to have a common well-defined goal. Decision-making involves problem solving and communication skills. Partners will have to agree in order to disagree and vice versa. Tolerance and respect for one another should be the order of the day, or else one would find some members of the team pulling out. Rief and Heimburge (1996:230) state that decision-making would stem from the site stakeholders, which include certificated staff, classified staff, parents and administrators. The site governance teams include those responsible for curriculum, programmes (assistance) budget, discipline policies, staffing, assessment and parental involvement. The collaborative site governance team, which is empowered, feels that they have a voice in decision-making affecting their school. This makes the team to own the process and to share successes

and failures. They do not become spectators to what really happens to their school. Learners could regard themselves as unique individuals contributing to the development of the school and society. They too learn to negotiate, take informed decisions, and respect each other and leadership skills.

### **3.4.5 Problem solving skills**

When partners share problem solving skills they enjoy their experience in this regard. They learn to solve problems in various forms. Yoyanthy and Friend (Wade, 2000:76) identify five common stages of problem solving:

- Problem identification, whereby a situation is identified and factors that contribute to the problem are reviewed.
- Generating possible solutions, whereby strategies to achieve the objective or goal are collectively brainstormed.
- Deciding on a plan of action, whereby the selection process is conducted through discussion and consensus
- Implementation of the strategic plan accomplished by following the responsibilities outlined in the action plan.
- Assessing the outcome of the actions taken.

Problem solving skill solving skills are therefore important in influencing the attitudes of teachers positively in that they will learn to share and accommodate one another.

### **3.4.6 Communication skills**

In simple terms, communication involves sending and receiving both verbal and non-verbal messages. Welch (Wade 2000:78) sees the correct interpretation of message as a key to communication.

He suggest using the acronym CAPS as a simple way to monitor one's communication. In his deliberation, CAPS stand for:

- Clarifying, used to gain more information about a situation through the use of open-ended questions
- Attending, which involve looking at the speaker and making appropriate eye contact
- Paraphrasing, making an attempt to understand what speaker intended by using different words or phrases to represent the gist of what was just said
- Summarising, which involves stating the themes and conclusions that have been drawn to make sure everyone understands.

In the view of the author, communication is a thread tying all partners together. Through communication, partners make informed decisions. Through communication, partners learn to be opened-minded towards the opinion of others. It is through communication either verbal or non-verbal or both one gets to know each other better. In this way the attitudes of teachers do change positively in that they start realising that each one of them can make a contribution irrespective of barriers.

### **3.5 FORMS OF COLLABORATION**

#### **3.5.1 Cooperative teaching**

This approach is also referred to as co-teaching. According to Aefsky (1995:28) and Bauer and Shea (1999:90) cooperative teaching refers to a situation when general and special teachers work collaboratively to jointly facilitate learning in an inclusive environments. This implies that the two teachers mentioned above

will simultaneously be present in the inclusive setting, maintaining shared responsibilities for instruction. Bauer and Shea (1999:91) argue that cooperative teaching practices involves planning, providing and evaluating instruction. According to them evaluation can take the form completion of assignments, earning daily points, turning in home work, completion of projects, and participating in group activities as evaluative activities.

In their view, White and White (Bauer & Shea 1999:91) the responsibility of both teachers is involved in co-teaching. They put forward the view that one teacher should not be regarded as the helper. The emphasis in cooperative teaching is based on performance assessments of the skills and strengths of individual teacher. This presupposes concentration on what teacher can do best.

Bauer and Shea (1999:90) express the view that the majority of general teachers are knowledgeable in the curriculum, the scope and sequence of the curriculum and are able to manage large groups of learners, while special education teachers have expertise in targeting the areas within a curriculum, analysing and adapting instruction materials and strategies, developing individual assistance programme and handling small group and individual behaviour management interventions. The collaboration of the above skills results in the culmination of best co-expertise in the facilitation of learning. This makes learning an existing activity. It also makes learners to share the knowledge, experience and frustrations at an early stage.

Bauer and Shea (1999:90) and Bradley and Switlick (1997:121) identify the following variations of cooperative teaching:

### *3.5.1.1 Complementary instruction*

In this approach the general teacher maintains primary responsibility for teaching the specific content area, while the special teacher provides instruction in specific learning strategies such as summarising, memory strategies, and organisation skills to all learners (Bradley & Switlick, 1997:121). According to Bauer and Shea (1999:90) the general teacher may provide instruction through lectures, discussions, field-trips, and in-class activities, while the special teacher provides units of instruction on paying attention, taking notes, and finding the main idea in a lesson.

According to Bauer & Shea (1999:93) cooperative teaching has been reported to make teaching enjoyable, stimulating and encouraging. This is because teachers attempt new teaching strategies. Although concern such as ownership, teaching space, roles, philosophical differences, and language usage could be raised, teachers can ultimately learn to blend their skills in areas of expertise. They can also learn to take risks, respect and trust each other's professionalism, and experiment with new teaching strategies.

According to Choate (2000:456) co-teaching foster a greater sense of shared responsibility for educating heterogeneous group of learners, includes communication among general and special education staff members, enlarges participant's teaching repertoires and enables teachers to establish rewarding social and professional relationships with other colleagues. Above all, cooperative teaching encourages ongoing support, collaborative problem solving, and professional development of all the collaborators.

In the author's view, this approach minimises the burden of large classes and attention is given to address diverse learner needs. Complementary instruction also accommodates outcomes-based education in that it allows learners to proceed on their pace assisted by one of the teachers. This makes learning enjoyable. Learners paced and learner centeredness can really take their true form. This approach can be applied in the South African context in that learners and educators will learn to work together as a team. Learners who are easily distracted from their work also be assisted when applying this approach.

### *3.5.1.2 Team teaching*

Bradley and Switlick (1997:121) quote Ira Singer, defining team teaching as "an arrangement whereby two or more teachers, with or without aides, cooperatively plan, instruct and evaluate one or more class groups in an appropriate instructional space so as to take advantage of the special competencies of the team members."

Aefsky (1995:42), Bursuck and Friend (1999), Radziewicz and Tiegerman-Farber (1998) and Wade (2000) express team teaching as a situation when two teachers plan and deliver lesson together. In so doing, they share responsibility for teaching all learners in inclusive setting. In her deliberations, Aefsky shows that teachers can take turns. One teacher can be an instructor or the class could be split into two groups. When this is done, one teacher could work with a few learners requiring more help. In this instance, the other teacher would instruct the rest of the class.

According to Bauer and Shea (1996:90) teachers practising this approach rotate responsibilities. One teacher assumes primary responsibilities for specific types of instruction or portions of the

curriculum. They indicate a situation when one teacher introduces new vocabulary words to the whole class while the other teacher completes the lesson as one of the best examples of team teaching.

Rief and Heimburge (1996:222) contend that for team teaching to function successfully from the start all members must embrace the philosophy that teaming will, make teaching more effective, improve the individual growth and development of learners, and better meet the needs of both teaching and learners.

Rief and Heimburge (1996:222) put forward the notion that when beginning to form workable teaching teams, a balance between expertises should be maintained. This presupposes seeking for complementing teaching styles and temperaments. They maintain (1996:222) flexibility, good communication skills, professionalism, desire to work well with others, a team player, humour, and respect for other's similarities and differences as team efforts to be instilled in each member.

Rief and Heimburge (1996:222) highlight some basic components that allow members to work together as team players. Such components include, among others, a supportive and open sharing environment where ideas and teaching styles are respected and appreciated, members who have the ability to listen carefully to each other's needs and wants, and who can offer constructive criticism and praise, teachers who have interests, talents and personalities that complement each other, common goals for learners and teachers, and reasonable standards and expectations for learners and team members.

Above all, they pronounce team development as an ongoing process, of which every day, week, and month is new and become

an adventure. This brings to the fore that new ideas can be implemented, modified, or revised if and when inclusive education is to run successfully.

Aefsky (1995:42) maintains, “team teaching and shared planning time allow teachers to develop collective standards of practice.” When team teaching is practiced, the roles of teachers will have to be redefined based on their expertise, their approach to problems, training, attitudes and their purposes.

According to Wade (2000:87) sees team-teaching reduces the teacher-pupils ration in the classroom, individualising instruction for learners who experience barriers to learning is more feasible with two teachers, allows teachers an opportunity to develop their own professional skills by learning from each other, teachers broaden their perspective and understanding of their partner’s roles, responsibilities and expertise.

According to Choate (2000:456) and Bursuck and Friend (1999:83) co-teaching can also take the following forms:

- Parallel teaching, whereby the class is divided into groups, with both teachers teaching the same content.
- Station teaching, which focuses on specific piece of the curriculum.
- Alternative teaching, whereby the general teacher instructs the majority of learners with the special teacher teaching learners who require curricular modification.
- Supplementary teaching, whereby the general teacher is primarily responsible for teaching specific subject matter while

his/her collaborator gives learners additional content-related assistance.

- Shadow teaching, in this case, the special teacher works directly with one or two targeted learners on academics, while his/her partner takes charge of the specific subject matter
- One teach/one assist. This is situation whereby one teach/one assess, one teach/ one demonstrate, one teach/ one review, one teach./ one observe (Choate, 2000:457).

The author is of the opinion that team teaching requires openness, unbiasedness and willingness to share. It does not require buying favours from learners. This is a situation where you find a teacher boasting in front of learners regarding his/her success and being able to “make” learners pass. This kind of behaviour can really destroy the whole process of collaboration. Teachers may feel belittled and would, as a result, withdrawn their contributions, leaving everything to the one who can “make” learners pass. Although this may not be easy, it may be used in South African schools though.

### *3.5.1.3 Supportive learning activities*

Bauer and Shea (1999:90) and Bradley and Switlick (1997:121) agree that in supportive learning activities the general teacher maintains responsibilities for delivering the essential content of the curriculum to the class. During this process, the special teacher will be developing and implementing curriculum to the class. During this process, the special teacher will be developing and implementing related supplementary activities aimed at enriching the specific content presented by the general teacher.

Vaughan, Schumm and Arguelles (Bauer & Shea 1999:91) identified the following practices that teachers implement when engage with cooperative teaching:

- Teaching on purpose, whereby a timeframe is given to a lesson for individual learners, pairs of learners or even a small group of learners.
- Two teachers teaching the same content to heterogeneous groups, that is, two teachers facilitating the same activity
- One teacher re-teaching previously presented content and the other teaching alternative information.
- Multiple groups model, which focuses mainly on learning enters or learning group, with teachers engaged with monitors progress, instructing mini lessons, or instructing one group of learners
- Two teachers teaching one group the same content

This may sound tautological and could be very time-consuming. The fact of the matter is that learners learn the same content from two different perspectives. It must be noted that two teachers may not facilitate an activity in exactly the same way as his/her partner. Some teachers may have a speech deficiency, such as stuttering, while others move at slower or faster paces than what is required by some of the learners. Some of the learners may understand how an activity should go either during the first or second presentation. This is just to mention a few on how teachers can manifest their differentness. It is, however important to note that the approach may not be practical in most of our South African schools given the situation which we have, that is, overcrowding, lack of human resources and regarding teaching as a private matter which happens behind closed doors.

### **3.5.2 Collaborative Consultation**

The advent of collaboration brings on the fore the art of communication. Bauer and Shea (1999:91) and Rief and Heimburge (1996:222) see communication as the most essential tool in cooperative teaching. This implies communicating partner's needs and feelings. Through communication, partners understand each other's perspectives and experiences with regard to their teaching expertise. Through communication, partners share a development approach and provide a nurturing environment for learner in an inclusive setting (Aefsky 1995:46). Learners have diverse needs which should be accommodated in order to actualise each one's potential.

In their study, Bauer & Shea (1999:91) "found that a dialogue journal was a useful tool in which teachers recorded, communicated, and reflected on their concern, hopes perspectives and experience." When partners communicate their concerns and frustration freely, the programme will be more fruitful than when there is communication breakdown coupled with gossips. A dialogue journal would help communicating what happens each day, week, and each month and the improvement of each teacher's expertise based on self-introspection and reflection. Collaboration makes teachers to venture almost daily due to diverse learner and teacher needs.

Bauer and Shea (1999:96) maintain that the language used during consultation should be as free of professional jargon as possible. It must be understood that every learning area has its own terminology. Collaborators should use the language easily understood by all learners. Collaboration consultation should be

based on three levels of role release, and should be as clear and matter of fact as possible. In their view, role release refers to a situation when all members of the team share general information regarding their individual expertise, duties and responsibilities, each team member teaches the other team members to make specific teaching decision within their own areas of expertise, and team members share skills specific to their areas of expertise.

In their study, Lyon and Lyon (Bauer & Shea 1999:96) suggest that expertise is shared to help other collaboration team members to provide direct services related to their unique areas of expertise. Their example in explaining role release, that is, a situation whereby “the occupational therapist with the teacher, provides a variety of materials and information, and allows the teacher to determine when the students need a soft-grip or hard-grip writing instruments, unlined paper, or fat or thin pencil (Bauer & Shea, 1999:97)” is worth noting.

According to Pugach and Johnson (Bauer & Shea, 1999:97) the following active listening skills offering support, that is, communicate to a colleague showing that you are there to listen and to help, using general non-threatening opening, e.g. : “Would you like to talk” rather than “What are you angry about?” reflecting or restating the key information from the sender in order to gain greater clarity in the message, stating the implied, or verbalising what you understand to be the underlying message being sent, requesting clarification, remaining silent, or avoiding the need to speak because no one else is speaking or communicating more information, placing events in context, and summarising, that is, providing individuals with an opportunity to review key point and agree on what was said or to disagree or revise the content and

making public the action that everyone is to take can facilitate effective collaboration consultation.

Carpenter, Musy and King-Sears (1997:329) put family communication that is frequent and positive into perspective. Not only should experts communicate, parents, guardians and caregivers of all learners should be brought into the picture because they are valuable sources of information regarding their children's strengths and weaknesses in a non-school settings. Some parents are aware of the strategies for dealing with their children's challenging behaviours. Such strategies can be communicated to the teachers. Parents can go to an extent of providing teachers with key persons who may serve as resources to learner recognition ceremonies, informal home visit, home visits by home-school liaison specialists, school visits by family members and learners' families. This could positively change the teachers' attitudes and begin to share learners' problems and successes with parents. This would enhance effective learning in our South African schools.

Craig (Radziewicz & Tiegerman-Farber (1986:67) takes note of the following communicative competency skills such as being willing to listen to others, being supportive of someone else's ideas, being receptive to input, managing differences of opinion and conflict, accepting and integrating the suggestions of others, expressing opinions and ideas without criticism, acknowledging and using the ideas of others, and being flexible, should be considered during collaboration team building and the sustainability thereof.

For team-teaching to take place effectively, communication interchange, honesty, and open discussion become primary factors in contributing to the success of the working relationship. Aefsky

(1995:50) sums up by indicating that positive communication between parents and teachers, special and general educators, and administration is the backbone of achieving a flow of accurate information.

The author is of the opinion that collaborative consultation would influence the attitudes of teachers positively in that they will enable learners to communicate their experiences, frustrations and their knowledge. In this way they will learn to accommodate one another's views. They will also learn to communicate positively with parents, guardians and caregivers. This will generate a willingness to accommodate all learners without any form of discrimination.

### **3.5.3 Intervention teams**

Wade (2000:90) is of the opinion that intervention teams consist of educators who meet periodically to discuss the behavioural or academic process of the learner who is not yet receiving special education service. A team would be composed of three to four classroom teachers. To be part of a team, one should be good a listener. Communication should be enhanced. Gossip should be avoided at all costs. Respect for one another and each other's level of expertise should be seriously considered. Biasness, short temper and the inability to control to one's emotions can ruin the whole process. It is incumbent to indicate that if intervention teams are properly run, they could contribute to changing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion.

### **3.6 COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS**

Bradley and Graves (1997:37) see cooperative learning as a technique that facilitate instruction in heterogeneous groups and that it reflects a learning centred classroom. The Department of Health (1999:33) endorses the definition by Cohen who referred to cooperative learning as “learners working together in a group small enough that everyone can participate on a collective task that has been clearly defined, and without direct immediate supervision of the teacher.” According to Bradley and Graves (1997:369) the success of an individual in cooperative learning hinges on the contribution of each individual team member as they strive towards a shared goal. In cooperative learning, individual uniqueness is highly respected and valued. Putnam (Bradley Graves, 1997:369) contends “the weakest group that one could assemble would be one whose members were all alike, with the same perspectives, strengths, and limitations.” This presupposes that diversity enriches the learning process, both for teachers and learners. It also discourages the tendency to always group learners according to ability. The diverse learner population stimulates the teachers’ thinking on how to meet such needs.

According to Bradley and Graves (1997:371) learners who experience mild barriers to learning and development instructed through cooperative learning showed improvements in areas such as, social acceptance, development of friends, positive attitudes toward mathematics, and teacher behaviour.

In their study, they found that learners who experience moderate to severe barriers to learning and development who participated in cooperative learning showed an increase in their marks in areas such as, social interaction, verbal interaction, personal interaction,

as well as academic achievement. When learners interact with one another and their teachers, chances are that they may begin to change their attitudes positively despite barriers being present. This could even contribute to attitudinal change by teachers realising that all can learn and benefit from each other.

### **3.7 ELEMENTS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING**

Bradley and Graves (1997:380), Aronson and Patnoe (1997:21), Vermette (1998:19), Verduin (1996:45) and Lyman and Foyle (1990:19) site the following elements to all cooperative learning:

Firstly, positive interdependency, whereby group norms for working together are established. Every member perceives that the success of the individual member is contingent on the support of the other group members. Complementary roles are assigned to group members. Group rewards are structured. Information and/or material is divided among the learners.

Secondly, face-to-face interaction, which demands learners to give and receive explanations, exchange ideas, examine views and knowledge of others and to process information in a way that produces serendipitous results.

Thirdly, individual accountability, whereby no group member takes a free ride. Every member is accountable and is required to demonstrate his/her mastery of the material. Bradley and Graves (1997:381) maintain “each member of the team is assessed on individual learning and must meet established (sometimes individualised) criteria for acceptance performance.”

Fourthly, acquisition of interpersonal and social skills, which is linked to academic achievement and cognitive development. According to Bradley and Graves (1997:381) teachers must identify, define, teach and provide learners with multiple opportunities to practice new skills and receive feedback on their performance.

Fifthly, group processing, of which learners need to encourage themselves in an ongoing reflection on the effectiveness of group functioning. They also learn to make collective decisions about what to do to improve learning and enhance group process.

When well-facilitated, cooperative teaching could be enjoyable. Learners will then feel co-partners in the learning process. Learners learn to accept each other unconditionally. Learners also develop the passion to assist those in need, for instance, helping a learner in a wheelchair to the cloakroom thereby enhancing inclusive education.

### **3.8 ATTITUDINAL CHANGE DUE TO COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRUCTURES**

The following cooperative learning structures identified by Bradley and Graves (1997:373) can enhance teachers positive behaviour in their classrooms.

#### **3.8.1 Numbered heads**

This is a cooperative learning structure whereby learners take turns and share responsibility. In their deliberation Bradley and Graves (1997:373) and Slavin (1983:29) outline specific roles given to the group members which include:

- the go-for, whose responsibility it is to get the material for the group
- the reader, who reads the directions for the task
- the recorder, whose responsibility it is to record the group's observation/data
- the facilitator, whose responsibility it is to keep everyone on task.

Following Bradley and Grave (1997:373) “roles are flexible and can change periodically.” This structure helps learners to share responsibility and to get to know each other well.

### **3.8.2 Class building**

Learners something avoid a particular learner because of certain circumstances such as having different skin colours, behaviour, speech or the way the learner dresses, the type of meals he/she always has and even the family the learner comes from. Through class building, learners are accorded the opportunity to interact. The interaction offers them the opportunity to see differences, which make them uncover similarities. In this way learners develop caring and supportive relationships because they now see themselves as unique individuals.

### **3.8.3 Vanity plates**

Bradley and Grave (1997:374) express the notion of providing each learner with a sheet of oak tag cut to the dimension of an automobile license plate. Learners are encouraged to use letters, numbers, symbols and pictures to create their personal plates which contain important information about themselves. The

information is then shared with classmates. Bradley and Graves argue that vanity plating is an activity in which most learners can participate with or without peer support. After presentation by the learners, plates are displayed in the classroom for everyone to enjoy.

### **3.8.4 Line ups**

In this structure, the teacher may ask learners to line up based on the month and day of their birthdays. It could be suggested that the learner born closest to the 1<sup>st</sup> of January will be the first person in the line and the person born closest to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December be at the other end, with all other learners in the chronological order in between. According to Bradley and Graves (1997:374) one half of the line steps forward and turns towards the other half of the line assuming that learners face each other. The pairs can then share their views based on the specific activity given by the teacher. Sharing of views will be based on the time frame in accordance with the age and maturity of the learners. Bradley and Graves (1997:375) express the feeling that “curriculum-related material can also be used for discussion such as an option about a character in a novel or play, the meaning of multi-definition words, or sentiments about a controversial political figure.” Learners can also line on a scale of 1 to 5 or 1 to 10 and then share their views based on a given task.

### **3.8.5 Corners**

Corners allow learners to make choices based on the given four alternatives designated by the teacher. Learners may be requested to choose their best seasons of the year, or choose the best author from the four whose short stories they have studied. Having made their choices, they then move to the designate corners of

discussion. In this way, they learn to know those with similar preferences. They also learn to appreciate for their differences (Bradley & Graves, 1007:375). According to Bradley and Graves (1997:375) it is important to note that “the social and academic dynamic in the classroom will determine the frequency and type of class building to be done.”

### **3.8.6 Team building**

In this case, work-oriented activities may result in the forming of smaller groups of learners who would work cooperatively. Team building generates the establishment and maintenance of relationship of trust and mutual support that will facilitate the completion of the task (Bradley & Graves, 1997:375).

### **3.8.7 Round Robin/Round Table**

According to Bradley and Graves (1997:376) Round Robin is an all-purpose technique which provides a quick and easy way of organising informal opportunities for learners to get to know their team mates. They site an example of a situation whereby learners, in a clockwise fashion take turns sharing information about themselves based on a specific topic and time frame. say, two minutes. Learners may talk about their favourite television programme, book, weekend leisure activities, fast food restaurant or even a movie. Bradley and Graves (1997:376) maintain that teams begin to recognise their superficial commonalities and will therefore develop an interest in sharing their career interests, the significance of their names, personal heroes and heroines, and individual interest and strengths.

### **3.8.8 Three-way interview**

In this approach, teams of four or six are subdivided into pairs who interview each other. The information learned from the partner is shared within the whole team. Learners learn to listen attentively as they will be required to report on what their partners have said. The success of this approach hinges on giving learners a specific activity and a specified amount of time based on the learners' age, maturity and familiarity with the structure (Bradley & Graves 1997:376) .

In the author's view through these structures, learners feel as partners in the learning process. They develop a positive self-concept and esteem. These activities give learners the opportunity to concentrate on the contributions made by each learner and not on the barriers. It should be clear that activities would be such that accessibility to the built environment and the learning site as a whole is taken into consideration so as to accommodate all learners in these activities. In the South African context this would have a negative connotations in some of the schools while in others the practice would be fantastic due to minimal learner population. It may also mean unlocking other learners' potential by allowing them an opportunity to share their ideas with peers.

## **3.9 COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES**

Aronson and Patnoe (1997:18), Slavin (1983:23) and Vermette (1998:19) site the following strategies used by many in cooperative learning:

### **3.9.1 Student Team Achievement Divisions (STAD)**

When using this strategy, the teacher facilitates an activity. Learners meet in four or five member teams helping one another to master a set of worksheets on an activity. According to Slavin (1983:24), “the teams are made up of high, average and low performing students, boys and girls, and students from different racial or ethnic backgrounds, so that each team is like a microcosm of the entire class.” To enable these teams to work effectively, the teacher introduces new material for learners to work on problems, either one at a time or in pairs, or take turns quizzing each other. Learners may also discuss the problem as a group or use whatever means they wish to master the material (Slavin, 1983:24).

### **3.9.2 Team-Games-Tournament (TGT)**

In TGT (Aronson and Patnoe, 1997), competition takes place at tournament tables consisting of three learners each. High performers compete against each other. During these tournaments, learners try to help one another to learn the material.

### **3.9.3 Team Assisted Individualisation (TAI)**

This strategy is applied after learners have been placed in the appropriate units by means of diagnostic tests (Slavin 1983:25). Slavin (1983:25) maintains that each learner works through a set of programmed mathematics units at his or her own pace. Reading instruction sheets, breaking the skills into sub-skills and assessing whether the skills have been mastered, is the standard procedure. In the final analysis, the learners do take a test.

### **3.9.4 Jigsaw (JIG)**

According to Aronson and Patnoe (1997:20) learners become experts in one aspect of the activity. They then meet in expert groups and help others in their group to learn the material. In a situation where a biography has been broken into different facets, expert groups may deal with either early life or first accomplishments or major setbacks or later life or world events during other lifetime. The reading of aspects chosen by each expert group will finally connect to the whole biography thereby enhancing cooperative learning.

### **3.9.5 Learning Together (LT)**

In this strategy, successful group learning depends on the following components (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997:21, Vermette, 1998:19):

- face-to face interaction
- positive interdependence
- individual accountability
- the development of interpersonal/group skills
- 

### **3.9.6 Group Investigation (GI)**

This combines independent, Pair and group work. It offers a group reward for individual achievement, for this to take place. Learners may be engaged in a project or action research, which would need

group effort. The group effort will rely on individual understanding and the will to cooperate.

### **3.9.7 Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC)**

In this strategy, groups work together to identify the main ideas in the given text, writing drafts, concentrating on vocabulary and spelling (Aronson & Patnoe, 1997:20).

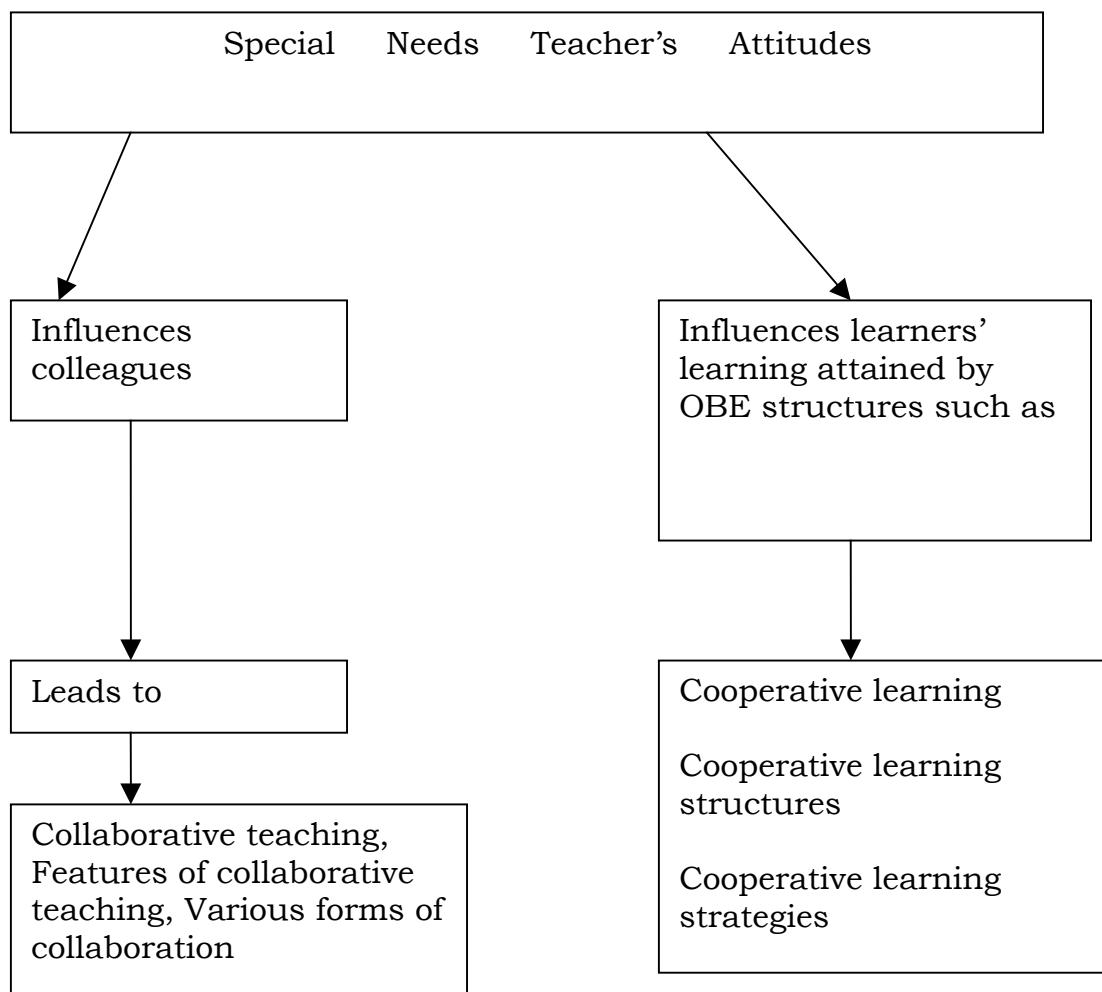
In the view of the author, the above-mentioned strategies can generate effective learning and teaching provided teachers are skilled in those areas. These strategies accommodate the OBE approach in that learners are grouped in manageable groups and are motivated to participate. There is room for learner's centeredness and learners' pace. Through these strategies, learners can negotiate meanings; can be challenged in meeting the critical cross-fields. They learn to challenge each other's views in the smaller populations. Communication skills develop and they learn to listen to each other's viewpoints.

## **3.10 CONCLUSION**

Cooperative teaching and learning enable teachers and learners learn to get to know one another. Collaboration of expertise, knowledge, values, skills and attitudes enhance inclusion. The collaborators and learners develop mutual trust, respect and recognition of individual diversity. When each teacher has the features of collaborative teaching and a sense of collaborative consultation, inclusion would run smoothly. The successful use of the cooperative learning strategies, which open doors for outcomes based education, coupled with different forms of collaboration, is

the key to the celebration of diversity. When each teacher has knowledge of collaborative teaching and a sense of collaborative consultation, inclusion should run smoothly. This means that roles and mindset change because people influence one another. Consider the following diagrammatic representation:

Figure 1: Graphic representation of collaboration and cooperative learning



The teacher's attitude can influence other staff members and learners either positively or negatively. Taking the positive influence into consideration, when this happens, teachers may develop an attitude to work together as a team. Working together

will in turn generate colleagueship. Learners will also learn cooperatively irrespective of barriers experienced by some of them. The school population will therefore realise that each member has a role to play in the school and also in the community. When the positive attitudes towards inclusion begin to gel, teachers would then begin to look for strategies, which would make inclusion an enjoyable system of education. To do all these, they would consider approaches such as collaborative teaching, features of collaborative teaching, forms of cooperative learning. For all these to happen, the attitudes of teachers should change positively and be managed day by day.

The empirical study, which is to be dealt with in the next chapter, will determine the effectiveness of and feasibility of all these endeavours. Changing and managing attitudes by teachers is of the utmost importance in this regard and would enhance capacity building amongst teachers.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In any research study, a research design is of the utmost importance. Guy, Edgley, Arafat and Allen (1987:92) define a research design as the plan of procedures for data collection and analysis that are undertaken to evaluate a theoretical perspective. In their view, this is an attempt to evaluate a proposed answer to research questions in an organised fashion. According to Leedy (1993:125) research design involves planning, visualising of data and the employment of this data in the research project as a whole. Leedy sees research design as a matter of thinking, imagining and thinking some more. In his view, questions such as what are the data needed, where are the data located, how will the data be secured, how will the data be interpreted, should be answered to bring any research and planning into clear focus. Leedy (1993:123) sums up by pronouncing the design as a plan for the study, which provides the overall framework for collecting data.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:91) regard research design as the strategy of attack to the central research problem providing the procedures that the researcher will follow, the data that the researcher will collect, and the data analyses that the researcher will conduct. They mention identification of resources, the procedures to be followed and data right from the early stage of planning a research project as the key to effective and efficient research. They, however, warn against wasting effort by going off half-prepared with a vague and procedures in mind.

According to Mouton and Marais ( 1990:32) a research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in

a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. In their view, the need for design and planning is most evident when errors and inaccuracies have to be eliminated. According to them the aim of research design is to plan and structure a given research project in such a way that the eventual validity of the research findings is maximised.

The research design provides an overview of what types of methods can be used and why such methods are used. The method and data collection used in this study will be discussed in the next section. As stated before the research will be based on the following research question: **What are the attitudes of Foundation Phase teachers with regard to the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development in an education system?**

## **4.2 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to Mouton and Marais (1990:16) research methodology is defined as a study of a research process in all its broadness and complexity, the various methods and techniques that are employed, the rationale that underlies the use of such methods, the limitations of each technique, the role of assumptions and presuppositions in selecting methods and techniques, the influence of methodological preferences on the types of data analysis employed and the subsequent interpretations of findings. They distinguish three general methodological approaches, namely

- *quantitative approach*, (data collection is statistical, mathematical, and interpretive)
- *qualitative approach*, (data collection is through questionnaires, interviews, and documents)

- *the participatory action approach*, (inferences are done through inductive, deductive or retroductive methods)

This study follows a *qualitative inquiry*, which gives the researcher the opportunity to enter into the person's experiences (Patton, 1990:278). When entering into another person's experiences, one gets different responses regarding particular aspects of concern in a study. According to Leedy (1993:141) creative scholarship takes this potpourri of responses and from them synthesises the real problem underlying the actual problem of research. He outlines the following features of qualitative research: qualitative studies tend to be field focus, it considers the self as an instrument; it is interpretive in nature, qualitative research displays the use of expressive language and the presence of voice in the text, it pays attention to particulars, and it pertains to the criteria for judging their success. It becomes believable because of its coherence, insight and instrumental utility.

According to Neuman (2000:126) qualitative researchers emphasise the human factor and intimate first hand knowledge of the research setting. Researchers avoid distancing themselves from the people or events they study. Doing this allows the researcher to take advantage of personal insight, feelings and human perspectives to understand social life more fully. Neuman (2000: 123) puts forward the characteristic of a qualitative inquiry as follows: qualitative studies capture and discover meaning once the researcher becomes immersed in the data, concepts are in the form of themes, motifs, generalisations, and taxonomies, measures are created in an ad hoc manner and are often specific to the individual setting or researcher, data are in the form of words and images from documents, observations, and transcripts, theory can be causal or non causal and is often inductive, research

procedures are particular, and replication is very rare, and analysis proceeds by extracting them or generalisations from evidence and organising data to present a coherent, consistent picture.

Bryman and Burgess (1999:x) see qualitative research as a strategy for social research, which ultimately displays the interpretation of social phenomena based on the reflections given by respondents, the reflections of natural settings of data collection and generating theory instead of testing it.

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984:5) “qualitative methodology refers in the broadest sense to research that produces descriptive data: peoples’ own methodology as the one which creates opportunities for researchers to identify with their respondents in order to understand how they see things. This generates a situation whereby everything is regarded as if happening for the first time in the researcher’s life, hence, nothing is taken for granted.

The researcher follows a qualitative inquiry in order to gain access to the respondents’ feelings and experiences. The main aim in following this inquiry will be to understand Foundation Phase teachers’ point of view regarding the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. The research included eight schools around the four villages of the Sekhukhune area, that is, Ga-Nchabeleng, Ga-Nkoana, Mohlaletse and Strydkraal. The study focused on eight grade one females teachers. The study follows an ethnographic research design characterised by gaining access to a site through a gatekeeper, engaging in participant observation and interviews (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:151). The research paradigm in which this study

takes place, is that of interviewing respondents, which allow the researcher to understand Foundation Phase teachers' attitude to the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning. The interviews allow a shared interaction (Durrheim, 1999:36).

#### **4.2.1 Choosing sites of research**

According to Neuman (2000:352) a site is the context in which events or activities occur. Sites can either be open and public or closed and private, with some of them, for instance, schools, prisons, hospitals, restricted to the public by laws and regulations. Some of the sites access, as put forward by Neuman (2000:352), are restricted by legal and political barriers. Neuman puts forward richness of data, unfamiliarity and suitability as the most relevant factors in choosing a field research site. The reason why grade one teachers from the above mentioned villages were selected is because all education reform undertaken in South Africa up to now has started at this grade. These types of reform are sometimes referred to as pilot studies, and rarely reach grade seven. The following tried approaches, that is, English Through Activity, Maple, New Day by Day English Course, Primary Education Upgrading Programme, and the current Outcomes Based Education, bear testimony to this. The researcher wishes to engage with teachers of grade one learners hoping to get useful data due to their experiences. Grade one is a suitable level as inclusion could, most probably, start here. The researcher wishes to understand the attitudes of Foundation Phase teachers with regard to inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

#### **4.2.2 Clearing the way**

Neuman (2000:352) is of the opinion that a gatekeeper is someone within the formal or informal authority who controls access to a site. It is imperative to note that the study will be undertaken in rural public schools. These schools are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education in general and the District Education Offices in particular.

According to Bailey (1994:249) the observer will be dealing with strangers. For this reason, a strategy to reach these people is imperative. Bailey advocates securing informants through a middleman. He defines a middleman as a person who knows both the researcher and the potential informant and who can introduce the former to the latter. He also puts forward the notion of producing a letter of identification, which articulates good reasons for conducting a research.

Singleton, et al (1988:335) state that if the setting is a formal organisation, the researcher should seek permission from gatekeepers. This is to avoid being questioned by those in charge in case they see you loitering in their premises, but to seek cooperation from them. Singleton et al propagate obtaining permission through a friend who will express confidence about the researcher, or by getting one's foot in the door if there is an unknown person in the organisation. According to Singleton et al (1984:336) it is important to have informants as keys to open doors in the community. They, however, warn that one cannot always be certain as to how well the key informant in a strange group may be. They advance snowball sampling as a basic approach to obtain access to private settings. According to them, some successful strategies regarding this approach include,

checking with friends to see if they can arrange personal introductions, involving oneself in the community, going to agencies that serve the community such as churches, day-care centres and neighbourhood centres. Singleton et al (1988:270) highlight that gaining access to respondents involves gaining official permission or endorsement. In their view, a letter to gain official permission is imperative in this regard, stating the general purpose of the study, its importance, the organisation sponsoring it (if any), and time frame of the study.

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984:20) participant observers usually gain access to organisations by requesting permission from gatekeepers. They put the view that when conducting studies in public and semi-public venues (bars, restaurants, pool halls, etc) you do not have to negotiate for access with gatekeepers. They, however, warn observers to develop strategies to interact with informants. Taylor and Bogdan (1984:25) also highlight what to consider when with gatekeepers and informants. They warn that one's own approach to be truthful, but vague and imprecise. They indicate that it is unwise to give details concerning one's research and precision with which notes will be taken. They also warn that one should anticipate the objections and should have one's responses ready.

In order to bargain for access, the author wrote a letter to the District Education Office which had selected schools under its jurisdiction to get access to the schools. The response from the District Education Office will serve the purpose as advocated by Bailey above. At the schools, the objective of the study was highlighted to persuade the principals and the informants to cooperate. The researcher identified himself, showed how the findings may benefit the community, explained how the sample

was drawn, assured confidentiality, and promised to send respondents a summary of the study's findings. Principals of schools served as middlemen. A purposive sampling technique was applied based on the experience of Foundation Phase teachers (Babbie, 1989:204). Principals were requested to recommend and encourage the potential informants based on experience in facilitating learning in grade one classes. Above all, access was negotiated with the respondents to avoid a situation whereby permission was granted but respondents were unavailable. To sum up, Neuman (2000:353) uses a catch all phrase, that is, "entering a field site requires having a flexible strategy or plan of action, negotiating access and relations with members, and deciding how much to disclose about the research to field members or gatekeepers."

#### **4.2.3 Approaches to collect data**

According to Borg and Gall (1989:380) most writing devoted to qualitative approach emphasises participant observation and in-depth interviews. Through qualitative research methods, first hand information could be learnt. LeCompte, Millroy and Preissle (1992:762) are of the opinion that data collection itself will involve appropriate (to the question) use of the standard interviewing, and document review supplement by other appropriate methods such as surveys, and focus groups. They advocate for a qualitative evaluator's data collection system to include field notes, a regular procedure for writing, labelling, as in date, time, place, focus, a process for tracking and noting research bias, the qualitative evaluator must conduct preliminary analyses early and often, and evaluators must have multiple sources of evidence regarding any claim of regularity, discrepancy, or other pattern constellation (LeCompte et al, 1992:762).

#### *4.2.3.1 Participant observation*

This allows the researcher to immerse him/herself in a social context with his/her respondents, with the aim of unfolding how they see the world from their point of view (Burgess & Buryman, 1999:xvii). Singleton et al (1988:108) see observation as an instrument to provide direct and generally unequivocal evidence of overt behaviour and also as an instrument to measure subjective experiences such as feelings and attitudes.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:158) argue that the researcher may make observations either as a relative outsider or as a participant observer. They put to the fore flexibility as the primary advantage of conducting observations. They, however, sight the following as the major disadvantages: altering by researchers what people say and do and how significant events unfold, written notes are often insufficient to capture the richness of what one is observing, audiotapes and videotapes not completely dependable, background noises make tape-recorded conversations partially audible and, the video camera only captures events happening in a particular direction. According to them, the presence of tape recorders and video cameras may make participants uncomfortable.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:158) put forward the following suggestions when observation is part of a qualitative study. Firstly, they encourage researchers to identify the particular methods that work best for them. Secondly, researchers should have someone to introduce them to people they are watching. At this point, researchers are urged to briefly describe their study and get the informants' consent. Thirdly, as they observe, researchers should remain relatively quiet and inconspicuous, but be friendly to

anyone who approaches them. Fourthly, if they take notes, researchers should consider dividing each page of their notebooks into two columns. This is done to make the informants feel comfortable and participate with understanding of what is taking place. Most importantly, this is done to prevent loosing the information.

According to Bailey (1994:252) notes taken by the researcher during the course of ethnographic research are called field notes. He advocates that details should be recorded as soon and as fully as possible after events have occurred. He recommends that researchers should record the notes as quickly as possible after observation. The researcher should discipline him/herself to write notes quickly and reconcile him/herself to the fact that although it may seem ironic, recording of field notes can be expected to take as long as is spent in actual observation. Dictating rather than writing is acceptable if one can afford it but writing has the advantage of stimulating thought. Typing field notes is preferable to handwriting because it is easier to read, and it is advisable to make at least two copies of field notes. Bailey (1994:253) maintains that field notes should contain a day-to-day report of what happened. This entails what is happening, when it happens, and to whom it is happening. It also entails what is being said, who is saying it, to whom it is said and what changes are occurring in the physical environments. He highlights reasons for an observer to record his feelings as the observer is not only a researcher but also his/her own research subject. This will enable the researcher to analyse his/her own emotions and reactions for purposes of bias.

According to Bailey (1994:248) the following are the major steps in observation:

- Deciding on the goals of the study
- Deciding on the group for subjects to be observed
- Gaining entry to the group
- Establishing rapport with the subjects being studied
- Conducting the study, observing and recording field notes over a period of time
- Dealing with a crisis that occurs
- Exit from the observational study
- Analysing the data
- Writing a report presenting the findings as the major steps in observation

In this study the researcher visited eight primary schools observing a number of things before embarking on interviews. The observation entailed, among other things, how learners and teachers arrive at school, how teachers talk to learners, how learners are addressed at assemblies (if any), the state of their toilets, their classes, learning support material, and how language is used. All these were observed with the researcher taking the shadowing state. This is a state when a researcher as a participant, feeling out the situation, coming on slow, playing it by ears, and learning the ropes (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984:32). In order for participation to be a success, observation need to be recorded. Taylor and Bogdan (1984:34) indicate self-doubt, frustrations, and uncertainty as characteristics of novices in field research. They however, confirm the disappearance of these as the study progresses. They also warn of observers who overstay settings. They maintain that rapport will be established based on communications, having people to open up, being seen as a good person, and sharing the world.

#### *4.2.3.2 Interviewing*

Poggenpoel (2003:146) indicates the three phases of an interview, namely:

- the preparatory phase,
- the interview phase, and
- the post interview phase.

##### **(a) The preparatory phase**

Before embarking on interviews, the researcher selected schools from Greater Sekhukhune District Education Office. Having done that, the author identified people who have the necessary information and are ready to participate. A snowball technique was used, that is, either the principal, a head of the department or the senior teacher or the subject specialist recommended to the researcher who to interview. Pre-interviews, that is, an informal interview establishing readiness by respondents to partake, was conducted before the researcher officially began to engage respondents with the interviews. The researcher then made appointments to meet the respondents at venues that were convenient and comfortable to them. The venues chosen were free from any distractions to avoid interferences with the tape recording.

##### **(b) The interview phase**

Platton (1990:278) puts forward the view that interviewing is an endeavour to find out what is within the respondent's mind. In that

way, one tries to access the respondent's feelings, thoughts and intentions that cannot be observed.

According to Guy, Allen, Arafat & Edgley (1987:244) in a face-to-face interview, a researcher contacts respondents personally to answer the researcher's questions. In this phase, questions will be asked and answered orally. Guy et al (1987:245) highlight the following advantages of face-to-face interviews. Firstly, they argue that the researcher can clarify questions that seem confusing or that may be misinterpreted by informants. Such clarifications help in preserving data. Secondly, the interview typically produces a higher response rate than does the mailed questionnaires. Their argument in this regard is that turning someone down face-to-face is more difficult than throwing away a printed-paper with a number of questions on it. Thirdly, the presence of the researcher usually serves to decrease the number of "don't know" and "no answer" responses. Should the informant respond in a way that is not so informative, probing by the researcher would prompt the informant to seek for answers the informant may have. Their fourth argument is that the researcher can observe while the interview is taking place.

Guy et al (1987:245) also mention several disadvantages of face-to-face interviews. Firstly, they put the view that face-to-face interviews are time consuming. They also argue that interviewers have not been trained. Secondly, they state that interviews are costly in time and resources. Thirdly, they show that each interview is likely to cost an average of three hour's labour at minimum wage rates, which includes time in contacting and scheduling and rescheduling interviews, travel time and an hour or more to complete the interview. They, however, argue that "a brisk, short, well-planned interview has a better chance of succeeding than a long, rambling one does." (Guy et al, 1987:245). When the

interview is long, there is a likelihood of getting interrupted. Guy et al (1987:246) provide the following tips for interviews:

- The researcher should try to establish a friendly relationship with the respondents.
- The interview should be conducted in a comfortable, private place to avoid interruptions.
- The interview should be kept on the subject as required by the interview schedule.
- Sensitive issues should be introduced late in the interview.
- The researcher should avoid giving the respondent the idea that he/she can help to solve the problem.
- Recording the interview should be limited to what is agreeable to the respondents.
- At the end of the interview, the researcher should thank the respondents for donating time and effort to his/her research project.

According to Neuman (2000:274) the interview is a short term, secondary social action between two strangers with the explicit purpose of one person obtaining specific information from the other. He lists the stages of an interview as firstly, the introductory and entry stage. This is a situation when the researcher gets in the door, shows authorisation, reassures and secures cooperation from the respondents. Secondly, follows a stage of interviewing and recording answers. In this stage, the researcher can also listen carefully, write legibly and must record what is said verbatim without correcting grammar or slang. The third stage is that of probing. Neuman (2000:277) argues that a probe is a neutral request to clarify an ambiguous answer, to complete an incomplete answer or to obtain a relevant response.

According to Bailey (1994:189) neutral probes include, repeating the question in case the respondent appears not to understand the question, repeating the answer in case the researcher is not certain that he/she understood the respondent's answer correctly. The researcher may also probe by indicating understanding and interest. Pausing can also be used in that the researcher pauses and says nothing if the response is incomplete, or the researcher can apply a neutral question or comment. The fourth stage is the exit, whereby the researcher thanks the respondent and leaves. After having left, the researcher goes to a quiet, private place to edit the work and record the other details, including personal feelings.

Singleton et al (1988:273) list three rules for the interview. Firstly, they argue that the researcher should at all times be courteous, tactful and non-judgemental. This implies that the researcher should not argue or debate anything that is said. They put the researcher's primary function as that of learning what the respondent believes about what has been asked. Secondly, they speak of how the researcher should be dressed. In the view, the researcher should dress according to the neighbourhood in which he/she is working. Bailey (1994:184) argues that the researcher should dress in a manner fairly similar to that of his/her respondent or else he will have difficulty getting good cooperation and responses from poorer respondents and will have similar problems with richer respondents if he/she is poorly dressed. Singleton et al put the third rule as that of confidentiality. They argue that incidents that occurred and information gathered should be kept as confidential and matter of fact as possible.

Singleton et al (1988:274) and Bailey (1994:187) put forward the procedures in conducting an interview. These include, initiating the interview, putting the respondents at ease, being businesslike, keeping the interview situation as private as possible, avoiding stereotyping, asking every question in its proper sequence, and speaking slowly in a clearly understood, well-modulated voice.

Leedy (1993:195) proposes the following steps in order to ensure a successful interview as a technique to gather data. The steps are, setting up the interview well in advance, sending the agenda questions to the respondents, preparing copies of questions for the respondents, and sending the section of the report to the respondents.

It will be the obligation of the researcher to create an environment favourable for conversation and to thank the respondents for their willingness to take part. Eight teachers will be interviewed individually, followed by one focus group of the same eight teachers. Individual respondents were given a form fill out with their personal detail which contained their experiences in the foundation phase, age-group, gender and qualifications. The interview was done to enhance intensive discussions on inclusion, collaboration, and learners who experience barriers to learning and development. Data on attitudes and opinions were collected. An interview guide was drawn up to assist with the types of open-ended questions that were asked.

The following questions were asked during the interview:

- Who do you think are the learners who experience barriers to learning and development in your school? (The term barriers to learning was explained to teachers)

- How do you feel about the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development?
- What is your view regarding collaborative teaching in inclusive settings?
- What is your view regarding cooperative learning in inclusive settings?
- What role can an OBE approach play in inclusive settings?

For both the individual and focus group interviews, Poggenpoel's advice (2003:146), namely that the researcher ensures that the tape recorder works, that extra batteries are available and that there are enough audiotapes, is very important and should be taken into consideration to avoid disappointments. Respondents were provided with cards that have questions on them. Respondents responded in either English or Sepedi (respondents' home language). Pseudonyms were used for respondents and their schools to ensure confidentiality. During interviews, a tape recorder was used to ensure the accurate recording of data, even though Taylor and Bogdan (1984:57) show that some respondents are reluctant to give information while being recorded. Respondents' concerns about this were addressed.

### **(c) The post interview phase**

As propagated by Poggenpoel (2003:147), the researcher should take down notes on the observation made during the interview. The notes should contain the researcher's personal experiences, observation made prior the interviews, comments on methods followed in conducting the interview, positive aspects and any other discrepancies.

After having done all that, all the interviews were transcribed. A verbatim transcription was done without correcting the grammar or slang where English is used. Where Sepedi was used, transcription was done in English. Words and sentences that relate to the topic of the researcher will be underlined. Direct quotations by respondents will be used to support each theme, category and subcategory. In appendix A a copy of a verbatim transcription of one of the interviews is provided.

## **4.2 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the research design and the various components of the research methodology were discussed I depth. In the next chapter the transcribed interviews will be analysed. Based on the analyses conclusions will be made in chapter six.

## **CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The empirical research of this study focused on Foundation Phase teachers in a rural area. Foundation Phase teachers are specifically chosen due to the fact that they work intensively with learners. They also know their learners very well despite the large classes in some cases. Due to a lack of expertise some of them have in identifying the different needs learner may have, learners with special needs are often left in the regular settings. This leads to inclusion by default, whereby learners are included without receiving the necessary support that they need. This situation, either intentionally or unintentionally, has an impact on Foundation Phase teachers. This situation is hardly prevalent in higher grades.

The specific rural area was chosen because all barriers to learning as described in the NCSNET and the Education White Paper 6 do prevail in this area. Such barriers are, among others, poverty, low socio-economic conditions, teenage pregnancy, risk behaviour and a lack of human resource development. All conditions described in chapter 4 were met to make this study a success. Table 1 below shows the summary of the biographical data of teachers interviewed.

## **5.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF TEACHERS INTERVIEWED**

**TABLE 1: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF TEACHERS  
INTERVIEWED**

Teacher	Teaching experience	Grade taught	Teaching experience in grade 1	Age according to age groups	No of learners	Qualifications	Gender
1	24 years	R & 1	3 YEARS	35-45	58	PTC	Female
2	17 years	1	5 YEARS	35-45	57	PTC	Female
3	23 years	1	12 YEARS	35-45	45	HED/SED/ PTC	Female
4	24 years	1	18 YEARS	45 +	62	HED/SENIOR CERTIFICTE	Female
5	17 years	1	10 YEARS	35-45	40	PTD	Female
6	23 years	1	4 YEARS	45 +	56	PTC	Female
7	16 years	1	3 YEARS	28-35	33	PTC/SENIOR CERTIFICATE	Female
8	21 years	1	10 YEARS	45 +	30	PTC	Female

Table 1: Bibliographical data of teachers interviewed

PTC = Primary Teachers Certificate

HED= Higher Education Diploma

SED = Secondary Education Diploma

PTD =Primary Teachers Diploma

From the above table it is clear that the teachers have many years of teaching experience including experience in teaching grade one. They also have large classes and all of them have a teaching qualification.

### **5.3 ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

During the interviews five questions were posed to the teachers. In 5.3.1 – 5.3.5 an analysis of the teachers' answers is provided. Appendix A contains a verbatim transcription of teacher number 3's interview.

#### **5.3.1 QUESTION 1: Who do you think are the learners who experience barriers to learning and development?**

Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 mentioned learners with physical disabilities and hearing impairment as the ones who experience barriers to learning and development. Teachers 1 to 5 also mentioned learners with visual impairment as the other group experiencing barriers to learning and development.

Teachers 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 also put forward learners with learning difficulties to add to those who experience barriers to learning and development. Teachers 1, 4, 5 and 8 bring to the picture learners with bad behaviour. Teachers 4 and 5 added learners with speech deficiency to those who experience barriers to learning and development, while teachers 4 and 7 consider teenage pregnancy and those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Teachers 4 and 5 add learners with family problems, while teachers 7 and 8 added orphans and learners from poor families. Teachers 2 and 7 mentioned learners with dumbness while teachers 6 and 7 mentioned underage and homelessness respectively.

From this, one can deduce that teachers lack knowledge of all barriers as advocated by the latest policy document in South Africa. It stands to reason that they regard only factors within the learners as the only barriers to learning and development. They do not have knowledge of all barriers as stated in the Education White Paper 6. Neither do they seem to know the contents of the NCSNET and the Education White Paper 6. However, the barriers mentioned by teachers in this inquiry do show similarity to those revealed in the literature study (cf 2.2).

### **5.3.2 QUESTION 2: How do you feel about the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development?**

Teachers 1, 4, 6 and 8 have negative feelings about the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. They provided the following reasons to support their feelings:

Teacher 1 is of the opinion that learners who experience barriers to learning have different problems, and each of them would need special treatment to meet his/her needs. The teacher feels that those who use wheelchairs will have no problems because they are normal and are mentally fine (not mentally handicapped). She does not agree with the inclusion of those who, among others, experience blindness and deafness as barriers to learning and development.

Teacher 4 feels that if learners who experience barriers to learning and development are integrated in the regular classroom, they will not feel comfortable and their education will not proceed properly. Teacher 4 argues that “when you teach them you will find that those with disabilities catch up slowly. I do not think integration

will do them good. The fact that some learners cannot hear, others cannot see, while others cannot walk, pose problems. When instructed, say, to stand up, they will remain where they are. This makes them feel uncomfortable. The learner may be fine mentally, but unable to take orders from the teacher. "Normal" learners will laugh at those using wheelchairs. The young ones will gossip about him/her and this will make the learner feel uncomfortable when he/she uses the wheelchair while others run on their feet."

Some learners will need special attention when doing certain things. "If the teacher does not know how to talk to a deaf person, it will not be possible to be taught together." Teacher 4 argues that teaching blind learners will be a big problem because when learners get to their classes, their teacher will first have to explain what is to happen. A feeling of uncertainty is expressed with reference to inclusion of HIV infected and affected learners. Teacher 4 states that she underwent training to teach gifted, slow and mediocre learners.

Teacher 6 mentions the lack of expertise as a cause for concern. This teacher is concerned about the training received to cater for normal learners and not about those with disabilities. "For those ones, a specialist is needed. I do have one (one learner who experiences barriers to learning and development) in my class. There s no progress and I do not know how to help him." With expertise available, teacher 6 will have no problem.

Teacher 8 indicates that restless learners will cause problems. They may, for instance, hide the crutches of other learners. Deaf learners need specialists to cater for their needs. They do not need to be included in the regular classroom. Learners with blindness will need specialists as well. "If they can come here where there is

no expertise, it could be a problem. Teacher 8 argues that an expert who knows how to deal with them should guide these learners. Non-disabled learners might stare at those in wheelchairs, indicating /pointing to them that they can't walk, although their problem would be minimal because they can see, hear and read. Wheelchairs have no access to the classes. Learners will need caregivers to help them. Toilets are not accessible as well. "You (the researcher) know the type of buildings accessible for these learners, not where you descend and ascend all the time. Teacher 8 had no problem with learners who experience dwarfism and albinism.

It can be deduced that these negative feelings and attitudes of the four teachers could lead to negativism in inclusive classrooms. Their negativism can enhance and perpetuate secrecy behind closed classroom doors. They however, emphasised teacher training. This concern is also shown in the literature study (cf 3.3). Positive attitudes towards teacher training could influence their attitudes towards inclusive classrooms.

Teachers 2, 3, 5 and 7 see inclusion as a step in the right direction. They furnish the following reasons:

Teacher 2 argues that "it helps. If a learner is with them, he sees what they do." Learners with albinism can hear and see and have no problems. Learners with similar problems should be grouped together. Learners with deafness should be taught in a special way. Teachers need to be trained to assist these learners. Learners will be grouped together according to their abilities. Deaf learners will, for instance, be grouped together.

Teacher 3 is of the opinion that learners must be accepted, respected and loved. This will make them accept themselves, and feel that they are the same as other learners. "I think they are mentally fine, it is just that they lack certain body parts." Teachers need not discriminate against learners. They need guidance in a humanly manner. They need to be praised to feel comfortable. Expert teachers are a necessity. We need to learn to communicate with deaf learners. We learn from others how to handle them, speak to them, and to teach them how to write.

Teacher 5 feels that talking to those with visual impairment will go smoothly. They will sing with them, play with them, and coach them. The problem will be when it comes to writing. Teacher 5 indicates that "the other learners will be able to read and write but those with visual impairments won't do that because they use their things which go "twa----twa---twa"

(imitating the Braille type writer) so that they can read by means of their hands. Schools should be supplied with learning support material. Each school should have a specialist teacher so that parents can send their children to school, even in rural areas. Learners should be told that they are like everybody else. Ramps will be needed. Learners will befriend one another. Learners will not be rejected by their families. They can even befriend their counterparts. Love will develop among learners. They will play games together.

Teacher 7 argues that inclusion will generate mutual respect among learners. Learners will know how to handle persons with disabilities. They will grow up knowing that a person with a disability is a human being and is complete. They learn to play together. It is only that something is lacking. 'I have a learner who is paralysed in one side of the body. Learners sharpen his pencil

him, because they know him. They open a book on his behalf. They really commit themselves because they know Taki (false name) can only use one hand.” They begin to respect him because he is like them. Teachers need to be trained. When inclusion takes place, schools need to be modified for wheelchairs to gain access. Chalkboards should be lowered to be accessible to wheelchair users and those who experience dwarfism. Classes must be built to accommodate all these learners. When learners with blindness are taught to use Braille, teachers will learn as well. They will also learn to use Sign Language. Inclusion will bar parents from taking their children to faraway institutions. The parents and the school will take care of the learners. Hyperactive learners would be assigned duties to assist those with disabilities.

It can be deduced that the positive feelings and attitudes portrayed by these four teachers could lead to positive attitudes of other teachers as well. Their positiveness could propel collaborative teaching and cooperative learning in the classroom. They could also influence learners to work together, love one another and revere each other’s dignity. This would therefore generate the establishment of rapport among teachers and learners. In this way the positive attitudes of teachers would be enhanced , thereby making inclusion a reality. Their influence in changing and managing attitudes would be a route to celebrate diversity. The literature study done in this research shows teacher training as one of the mechanisms to back up those with positive attitudes towards inclusion. It is without doubt that this training could also influence the attitudes of those teachers who display negativism towards inclusion ( cf 3.3).

Although teacher 2 has a positive attitude, her view on grouping learners with deafness homogeneously could have an adverse effect

on the attitudes of other teachers. On the contrary, this could make the job of a Sign Language specialist simple because he/she could be facing to a particular group of learners, unlike having to interpret to more than one group.

It can also be deduced that because they mentioned very few of the barriers to learning and development in answering question 1, some teachers may have negative attitudes towards the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning other than those they had mentioned. There are those who corroborate with literature review (cf 1.5.6) and those who register their concerns regarding expertise (cf 2.4.9). For teachers who do not know any of the barriers to learning, inclusion may not be welcome because they would not be having any clue of what is talked about. They may not even think of the level of intensity of the barriers which would in turn determine the level of support to the learners.

### **5.3.3 QUESTION 3: What is your opinion regarding collaborative teaching in inclusive settings?**

Teacher 1 does not think collaborative teaching will work. The teacher indicates that there will be chaos, not all learners will hear the teacher, time will not allow two teachers to work together. “It won’t be fine when I talk and the other teacher translates, normal learners will look at the other teacher translating, they won’t listen, and it won’t be alright.”

Teachers 2 to 8 have positive feelings regarding collaborative teaching. They cite the following reasons:

Teacher 2 shows that Sign Language would not be known to those learners who need it. Their peers should know Sign Language (SL) as well. Both blind and sighted learners should know Braille. This

would encourage learners to write letters to one another. People would read each other's books. If well planned, few problems would be experienced. The teacher prefers to work with a SL specialist followed by a Braille one due to the nature of problems experienced in her school. Teacher 3 believes that:

- teachers will help each other.
- one teaches while the other monitors.
- general teachers facilitate activities.
- one teaches while the other helps learners to pay attention.

Teacher 4 feels that teachers will help one another. Since there are many learners in classes, one would teach while the other keeps discipline and helps learners to pay attention. The teacher suggests that there be training of teachers, say, two teachers per school, for inclusion to be a success.

Teacher 5 indicates that human beings are the same, and if she were the government, she would make it a point that there be collaborative teaching in schools. In her view, it would help the community to disclose if their children have disabilities. Parents would bring their children to school rather than queuing at Home Affairs for grants.

Teacher 6 argues that specialists could help teachers to help these learners.. Teachers will be knowledgeable, they will be able to help even when the specialist is not at work. Teachers will know their work. Teacher 6 indicates , "if someone is absent, you won't panic on how to help learners other than those of your specialisation. You will be able to concentrate on both sides, and parents would realise what the benefits are of bringing their children to our school."

Teacher 7 puts forward the view that, teachers will gain something. By bringing expertise together, great things can be realised, and learners will benefit. The teacher prefers to work with a specialist in physical disability due to the large number of learners experiencing physical disability as a barrier to learning and development. Although teacher 8 has a positive feeling about inclusion, she has the following views:

- Specialists deal with learners for whom we do not have expertise.
- We proceed with normal learners and there will be progress.
- We will know where to take problematic learners.
- Sign Language specialists will deal with the deaf while general teachers deal with other learners, ensuring that time is not wasted.
- Groups will be in the same class with each teacher with his/her group in a particular place.
- Learners can be taught in the same classroom if there is no other accommodation.

From the above, one deduces that teachers have positive attitudes towards collaborative teaching. By collaborating skills, teaching strategies, experiences and knowledge the positive attitudes of teachers could be enhanced with regard to inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. The positive attitudes of specialist teachers in sharing their expertise with general teachers would breed positive attitudes towards working together, thereby making inclusive education and inclusive classrooms a success. The proper training of teachers and their

positive attitude to inclusion will help to contribute to the success of inclusive education.

When OBE was introduced, diverse feelings emerged. This was due to a lack of training and expertise. With training in place, some began to develop positive attitudes towards OBE. The same would apply to inclusive education. It is important to note that the success of inclusion in any area, will depend on the success of teachers in that area in changing their mindset towards it. Positive attitudes of teachers will enhance collaboration. Teachers will plan together and determine what to teach in the inclusive classroom. They will also evaluate the current curriculum and determine how it can be modified. It stands to reason that teachers would first collaborate their skills, experience, expertise and knowledge before could start bringing learners of diverse needs on board. In this way, teachers' positive attitudes will have positive influence on the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. Collaboration is a route to enhance understanding about learning (cf 3.3).

The negative feelings of some teachers, teacher 1 for instance, would create problems amongst teachers themselves. According to teacher 1, "there would be chaos, not all learners will hear the teacher, time will not allow two teachers to work together." From this one can further deduce that some teachers may not feel comfortable to teach in the presence of other teachers. They may not even want to plan jointly and share ideas with others on how to make inclusion a success. Their negative attitudes could have detrimental and adverse effects on inclusion. They may even begin to look down upon other teachers who are willing to collaborate. This may do no good to inclusive practices. In some instances, teachers feel that there will be different groups of learners in the

same class each with their teachers proceeding with their own tasks. One may deduce that there are those teachers who feel that learners will be included in the same school but not in the same classroom settings. This would impact negatively on inclusion. It should also be noted that collaborative teaching could be time consuming and expensive (cf 3.3). With careful planning and maximising resources, this could be drastically reduced.

#### **5.3.4        QUESTION 4:    What is your view regarding cooperative learning in inclusive settings?**

Teachers 1 to 8 consider this to be good practice. Teacher 1 shows that this will enable learners to get to know one another's behaviour, and they will learn something from one another. Apart from good practice, teacher 1 also sees this as a good opportunity for those who are inclined to bullying because they would have their victims closely. This is bad practice and could be changed and managed by teachers in inclusive classrooms.

Teacher 2 argues that although there would be problems, learners will benefit because they will have to work in groups. Relationships will be established.

Teacher 3 and 4 view this as a pathway for learners to accept one another. The teachers show that if experts are available, it will not be a problem to have learners together. Teacher 4 adds that there could be great development in the community because learners could learn Braille as well.

Teacher 5 maintains that learners will agree and work together as a team. They will love each other, and when given the same topic for discussion they can work in small groups.

Teacher 6 argues that there will be progress because children will share ideas, while teacher 7 is of the opinion that every learner will benefit from cooperative learning. Teacher 8 points out that learners will help one another.

From the above, one could deduce that teachers have positive attitudes towards cooperative learning which could enhance the principles of OBE, namely learner centredness, learning alongside peers and working at the learner's pace. Above all, this would make inclusion a great success in that learners would learn together irrespective of disabilities. With their positive attitudes towards working together, the school would almost resemble a home where all kinds of children stay together. This could influence learners in different ways (cf 3.6). One can further deduce that rapport would be established. Such friendship would positively influence the attitudes of parents, guardians and caregivers towards the inclusion of their children in the regular classrooms. All these could influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive classrooms.

### **5.3.5 QUESTION 5: What role can OBE approach play in inclusive education?**

Teachers 1 to 8 feel that an OBE approach would play a significant role in inclusive settings. Teacher 1 shows that OBE allows learners to learn on their own. Learners are grouped on the basis of their abilities to avoid boredom. She indicates that the learner's attention is kept alive when grouped in this way. In her view, learners in the same group would proceed at the same pace. According to her, OBE enables learners to work together. The completion of the syllabi is not important in OBE.

Teacher 2 indicates that learners concentrate on what they are capable of doing without discrimination taking place. The learner is helped on the basis of his/her potential. Learners are grouped together socially so that good learners ones could encourage those with difficulties. She also pronounces that the completion of the syllabi is not important. It is important that the next teacher in the next grade should be informed about the progress of the learner and how far the learner has progressed in completing the syllabi. The teacher emphasises Tirisano (Working together) in planning among teachers.

Teacher 3 argues that OBE could enhance self-confidence in learners with disabilities. Self-trust could develop among learners. Learners will correct one another's mistakes without realising it. She indicates that "even when the learner makes mistakes, we don't show that he/she has done a mistake. I then ask those still raising their hands, then the learner is not shouted at because he/she did not answer correctly. The teacher makes the learner feel that he/she has got it as well." The teacher is extremely impressed by the fact that "the learner looks for things by himself, he looks for information." Teacher 3 indicates that the completion of the syllabi is not important in OBE. She hates teachers who push "empty" learners to the next grades. She believes in that if a teacher has done something, learners should be able to say something about it.

Teacher 4 states that teachers should be trained in OBE. According to her, OBE needs learners who understand. "It does not need slow learners who would remain behind when others are far ahead." In her view, the slow learners would need a Breakthrough (an approach whereby sounds in a word are taught

first), and they will have to be re-taught after having dealt with the other learners. Teacher 4 does not know anything about child-centredness. She argues that the grouping of learners should depend on teaching and the scores given. OBE encourages inclusive education. The completion of the syllabi is not important in OBE.

Teacher 5 sees OBE as helpful in that it allows learners to do things on their own. Learners work in groups and they investigate things together. She considers OBE as a style of teaching without drill work. The teacher explains what he/she expects of learners to do. Learners dominate their learning and they get motivated. The learners unlock their potential. With regard to learner pace, she indicates that "you may assume that they are slow, but you will be surprised as time goes on. He/she will be grouped with highly gifted ones while at first you thought the learner was slow." Teacher 5 puts forward the view that the completion of the syllabi was important in the olden days. In the OBE approach, the highly gifted learners would finish but you need to help slow learners politely. You don't need to push them even though they did not understand. You need to take them step-by-step to allow them to get something." She however, shows that OBE needs teachers to work. She argues that OBE is still a problem in most of the schools. In her opinion, creativity is needed in OBE.

Teacher 6 views OBE as an approach which gives learners the opportunity to display their talents. Learners with disabilities do better when this approach is followed. The feature of learner centredness in OBE enables teachers to get to know the real person. She argues that OBE, unlike Breakthrough, is an approach which allows learners to display their talents through activities. Social grouping unlike in Breakthrough is preferred to

OBE. In her view, if learners “are grouped according to talents, you find that in one group fire is burning (i.e. things will progress), but if grouped socially, the one would help the other.” Ability grouping is problematic. If learners learn cooperatively, there should not be discrimination on the basis of disabilities.

Teacher 7 highlights that learner pace is very important. She shows that she will not proceed and leave learners behind. She puts forward the view that “I would take their paces into consideration. Did they understand me? Are they able to demonstrate? If they did not understand, I would re-teach them.” She further indicates that OBE uses with grouping depending on the activities. Learners and not the teachers do a lot of work. She shows that teachers are getting there in as far as the implementation of OBE is concerned. In her view, teachers don’t have enough expertise “because if you say you know OBE, you must be able to use the four strategies for assessment.” Such strategies include observation, recording, checklist and writing skills. The completion of the syllabi is not important in OBE.

Teacher 8 feels that OBE encourages learners to help one another. Learners learn in groups arranged socially. Ability grouping is sometimes done in pursuit to “establish how best can we help them.” Teacher 8 argues that learners in wheelchairs or crutches, as well as blind and sighted learners can be grouped together. In her opinion, this is socialisation, and this is needed for learners to feel at home. Teacher 8 further argues that learners are given more time so that teachers could identify learners’ creativeness and talents. Learner pace should be given attention. Learners should not be pressurised to have to cope. She indicates that learners should not be promoted to the next grade unnecessarily. For learners who could not make it, parents need to be informed about

the fact they may be retained. She indicates that OBE needs hard working teachers. Teacher 8 feels that OBE specialists should be available for OBE to influence inclusive education.

From the above one could deduce that the positive attitudes of teachers regarding OBE could also influence their positive attitudes towards inclusive classrooms. The fact that learners concentrate on what they do without discrimination confirms the fact that all learners can learn alongside their peers. Consideration of all learners' potentials could influence the attitudes of teachers in considering all learners irrespective of barriers to learning and development.

Self-confidence and self-trust displayed by learners could influence teachers to change their attitudes, behaviour, instructional strategies and the curricula in order to consider diverse learner needs. Cooperative learning based on activities shows maximum participation by learners. This could mean that teachers would have to plan their activities well in advance to cater for all learners in the regular classroom settings. This implies that activities would be flexible for learning to be enjoyable.

When learners do things on their own (without the help of a teacher) and investigate things together, channels of communication among teachers and learners would be opened. In this way, teachers could develop positive attitudes to inclusive classrooms. This suggests that teachers could acknowledge and respect differences in learners. When learners in wheelchairs, on crutches, blind learners and sighted learners are grouped together, communication using Braille, assistive devices and other communicative strategies could, for instance, be enhanced. This could also encourage teachers to learn these communicative

strategies, and enhance their attitudes towards inclusive education. It is imperative to indicate that through the responses of the teachers, the aims of the study, namely, to determine the attitude of Foundation Phase teachers towards the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning, their knowledge of barriers to learning, team teaching, inclusion and collaborative teaching (cf 1.2.2, p11), have been achieved.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter contains an in-depth discussion of the interviews which were conducted with eight Foundation Phase teachers.

Recommendations of the research results based on the outcomes of the interviews will be made in the next chapter. This will entail as to who should do what in order to make success of inclusion.

## **CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study covers a number of issues relating to the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. The study covers the following:

Chapter 1 states the statement of the problem and gives overview of the research. This chapter, gives a background to the problem, states the aims of the study, formulates the problem, gives the research methodology and clarifies the concepts.

Chapter 2 gives a profile of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. Chapter 3 looks at collaborative teaching and cooperative learning, in other words who should collaborate their skills, attitudes, expertise and knowledge. It also deals with the key features of collaboration, forms of collaboration and elements of cooperative learning. Chapter 4 concentrates on research design, research methodology and data collection. Chapter 5 analyses the research results. The study reveals that teachers lack knowledge of barriers to learning as advocated in the latest policy document, namely, the Education White Paper 6. Some teachers have negative attitudes towards inclusion. With regard to collaboration, some teachers feel that there will be chaos and that time constrains will not allow two teachers to work together at the same time. Teachers have positive attitudes towards cooperative learning. Generally, teachers are positive that the OBE approach could influence teachers positively towards inclusion. The research was exciting and participants enjoyed their involvement. The researcher collected a lot of data in good faith. The ethics of research was strictly followed. The research was a

wake-up call to teachers because it highlighted the prevalence of all kinds of barriers to learning. This study could motivate all who are interested in education, particularly those in urban areas because it teaches them something new, such as the involvement of chiefs and headmen and women in the development of education in their villages. Generally, one concludes that teachers are positive towards inclusion, especially enhanced by teacher training.

The study contributes to the expansion of new knowledge in that teachers become aware of inclusion and how learners who experience barriers to learning could contribute to the communities.

The research results have generated some important recommendations. All the recommendations stem from the attitudes of Foundation Phase teachers to the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. The recommendations focus on each of the five questions asked during the interviews.

## **6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.2.1 Recommendations concerning who teachers think are the learners who experience barriers to learning and development**

The research revealed that these teachers only had knowledge of a few barriers to learning and development. They lack the necessary knowledge to identify intrinsic as well as extrinsic barriers to learning.

It is important to note that knowledge of barriers to learning alone is not enough. Teachers should have *positive* attitudes towards the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. A lack of knowledge concerning barriers to learning could generate *negative* attitudes if teachers were to encounter learners who experience barriers to learning and development which are unfamiliar to them.

It is therefore recommended that the teachers who were part of the research project and teachers in general should receive training so that they will have sufficient knowledge of all intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to learning as explained in the Education White Paper 6 (cf 5.3.1). The training could consist of, amongst other things, knowledge about the influence of poverty and underdevelopment, attitudes and a flexible curriculum(cf 2.4).

Teachers should also be encouraged to find out more about barriers to learning and development in order to influence their positive attitudes towards inclusion and to keep them abreast of new policies and developments in special needs education. Because of their physical isolation it is especially important for teachers in the rural areas to have access to information on special needs education. It is thus recommended that a newsletter which contains information on special needs education, as well as curriculum adaptations be compiled and sent to all teachers on a regular basis. Furthering their studies at different institutions of higher learning would empower teachers in this regard. Knowledge of a variety of barriers to learning could influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive classrooms.

#### **6.2.2 Recommendations concerning how teachers feel about the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development**

The negative feelings and attitudes of some teachers could lead to negative attitudes in inclusive classrooms (cf 5.3.2). It is imperative that the teachers who were interviewed and teachers in general should change their attitudes and their hearts towards the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. A change of heart could help in that it could make learners more acceptable, more respected and loved. The positive attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning development could enhance self-acceptance, and make learners feel that they are the same as other learners. It is recommended that training of teachers by the DoE in communication, and teaching practice could precipitate change of attitudes and change of heart (cf 2.4.3).

The influence of HIV/AIDS, a barrier causing a learning breakdown for many learners, for instance, on the South African school system, is felt in many schools because HIV affects everyone. It is hoped that teachers are aware of the way in which the virus spreads. Teacher training is imperative to strengthen this knowledge. This could eventually influence the attitudes of teachers towards accepting learners infected and affected by this pandemic. It is extremely important to stress that change of hearts and attitudes could enhance teachers with regard to inclusion as an educational reconstruction, school reform and social change.

The negative attitudes towards learners with deafness, blindness, HIV infected and affected or who experience any other form of barriers to learning, could impact adversely in the inclusive classrooms. It is a myth to indicate that learners with disabilities proceed or catch up slowly. These learners like anyone else, do have expertise. Their expertise could influence the attitudes of

teachers towards inclusive classrooms. Teachers need to change their mindset and give a new education system a try before they could say anything negative about it.

It is therefore recommended that the Department of Health be engaged in teacher training in as far as HIV/AIDS is concerned. Such training could enhance empathy in teachers regarding the HIV infected and the affected learners in schools because currently teachers, as shown in this research project, are uncertain regarding the inclusion of HIV infected and affected learners (cf 5.3.2).

### **6.2.3 Recommendations concerning what the teachers' views are regarding collaborative teaching in inclusive settings**

By collaborating skills, teaching strategies, experiences and knowledge teachers' positive attitudes with regard to inclusion could be enhanced. The positive attitudes of special teachers in sharing their expertise with general teachers could well breed positive attitudes among teachers towards working together, thereby making inclusive classrooms a success. When both teachers and learners learn for instance Braille and Sign Language, exclusionary pressures, and belittling of learners who experience barriers to learning because of a visual or hearing impairment could be eradicated. Friendships could be established and positive attitudes could be enhanced. When teachers and learners are able to communicate verbally, in writing, by using sign language as well as using alternative communication strategies, their attitudes could be positively influenced.

It is recommended that teachers from various schools and with different expertise be given the opportunity to collaborate on a regular basis. Even teachers in the same school should collaborate

as far as their skills, knowledge, attitudes and expertise are concerned to develop and empower themselves. This could enhance their positive attitudes towards collaborative teaching (cf 5.3.3). Teachers with many years of experience have many years of expertise as well. They could be afforded the opportunity to share these experiences and expertise with young novice teachers. Teachers with less experience often use new methods, skills and ideas received in their recent training. They could, on their part, update teachers trained during earlier years regarding the new innovations in the teaching fraternity.

It is envisaged that teachers from special schools would in the future serve as itinerant teachers. The DoE has recently asked interested persons to formulate a working plan for the training of teachers from special schools in order to train their colleagues in mainstream schools. Training and sharing their experiences and expertise with general teachers would enhance collaborative teaching and inclusion in South African schools.

The utterance of statements such as “there will be chaos, not all learners will hear the teacher, time will not allow two teachers to work together,” signifies negative attitudes towards collaborative teaching. This negative approach portrays that there are those teachers who may not feel comfortable to teach in the presence of other teachers. Their negative attitudes could have detrimental and adverse effects on inclusion.

It is recommended that teachers in the envisaged full-service schools train teachers in ordinary schools on how to collaborate skills, attitudes, values, expertise and experience. Joint planning of activities and sharing responsibility could help teachers change and manage their positive attitudes towards inclusion (cf 3.3).

#### **6.2.4 Recommendations concerning the teachers' views regarding cooperative learning in inclusive settings**

It is clear that teachers with positive attitudes towards cooperative learning could influence colleagues towards the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development. Their positive approach to this could enhance the principles of OBE, which include learner-centredness, learning along with peers, and learner-paced instruction. Learners could learn together effectively irrespective of barriers. This would encourage team work. For all these to happen, teachers should plan together and when working in groups, group members should rotate, taking on different roles (cf 3.8.1). Learners could get to know and cooperate with learners who experience barriers to learning and development. This could enhance mutual acceptance of one another by learners.

Cooperative learning is an effective pathway for learners to learn to accept one another. When special and general teachers collaborate effectively, cooperative learning is enhanced and vice versa. This in turn could enhance the positive attitudes of teachers towards inclusive classrooms. Both teachers and learners could establish rapport which in turn could generate their positive attitudes.

With regard to cooperative learning in inclusive settings, it is recommended that teachers encourage learners to learn together irrespective of barriers. Cooperative learning breaks down the learning barriers between learners from all walks of life and all learners would benefit from it (cf 5.3.4).

### **6.2.5 Recommendations concerning the role that an OBE approach can play in inclusive education**

The teachers involved in the research project feel that the OBE approach could enhance inclusion in that learners' potential is taken into consideration without discrimination (cf 5.3.5). Cooperative learning based on activities shows maximum participation.

The positive attitudes of teachers towards OBE could enhance inclusion. Self-confidence and self-trust which develop in learners could positively influence the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive classrooms. Learner-paced tuition and learner-centredness do not set boundaries for learners. This could make inclusion more acceptable than is expected. When learners concentrate on what they do without discrimination, it confirms that all learners can learn alongside their peers. This could influence the teachers' attitudes in planning together, co-teaching, and developing a sense of mutual ownership of inclusively. It is recommended that the training of teachers in as far as OBE is concerned, be intensified in the area and to other parts of South Africa to enhance positive attitudes towards it and towards inclusion. The OBE approach and inclusive classrooms could create lifelong learners.

### **6.2.6 General recommendations with regard to the area where the research was conducted**

The physical area where the research was conducted is characterised by large classes (cf 5.2. Table 1), and an inaccessible built environment which is characterised by sandy conditions (cf

Chapter 5). It is recommended that the DoE should build classes that are accessible to all learners. Ramps for wheelchairs should be installed at old buildings. For every newly built building in the schools, that is, new classes and/or offices, ramps should be included. Toilets should be built at levels accessible to all learners. Existing classrooms in the area should be renovated where necessary in order to ensure that they are safe for human to use. To accommodate learners with dwarfism in the area, the DoE should lower the chalkboards so that these learners can take part in all activities involving writing on chalkboards (cf 5.3.2). Smaller chairs and tables should be provided for them.

The sandy conditions in the area is a natural barrier for learners who wheel themselves because it is difficult for them to get to school. It is recommended that schools in partnership with other stakeholders should seek to find donors so that schoolyards could be paved. The Department of Transport should tar the main streets in the area to increase mobility of learners who wheel themselves and to reduce dust. To accommodate learners who experience albinism as a barrier, the Department of Health should provide “strong” skin ointment to protect their skin from cracking. More clinics should be built to enhance accessibility of medical provisioning to all needy learners.

Teachers appreciate working collaboratively (cf 6.2.3). Through collaboration of skills, expertise, knowledge and experience, teachers could feel at ease even though a team member is for one reason or the other absent from work. It is recommended that the DoE in the area engages teachers in envisaged resource centres and full-service schools in training teachers in acquiring skills and knowledge in, for instance, Braille, Sign Language and alternative

augmentative communication. With careful planning and maximising resources, collaborative teaching could be a success.

The Department of Water Affairs should provide boreholes to each of the needy schools in the area for learners to have running water on their school premises.

Local headmen/women should work with schools to influence the attitudes of their teachers and their community towards inclusive classrooms. The training of teachers could help remove the negative labels associated with learners who experience barriers to learning and development, thereby enhancing the teachers' positive attitudes. This could help our country to accept all people as part of the global market irrespective of barriers. The positive attitudes of teachers, the schools, the provinces and the country at large could help to realise the abilities all of South Africans have.

#### **6.2.7 General recommendations with regard to the South African situation**

Schools in South Africa are characterised by large classes and some learners are being taught outdoors. It is recommended that for schools like those used in the research as well as those with worse facilities, sufficient new classes should be built with modern facilities, for instance, flush toilets, electricity, ramps.

Generally, the DoE should advocate inclusion more aggressively. Education White Paper 6 should be distributed to all schools in the area to influence teachers' attitudes. Teachers should be encouraged to read and understand the contents of Education White Paper 6 and other relevant documents on inclusion to enhance their positive attitudes. Education and Health and Welfare

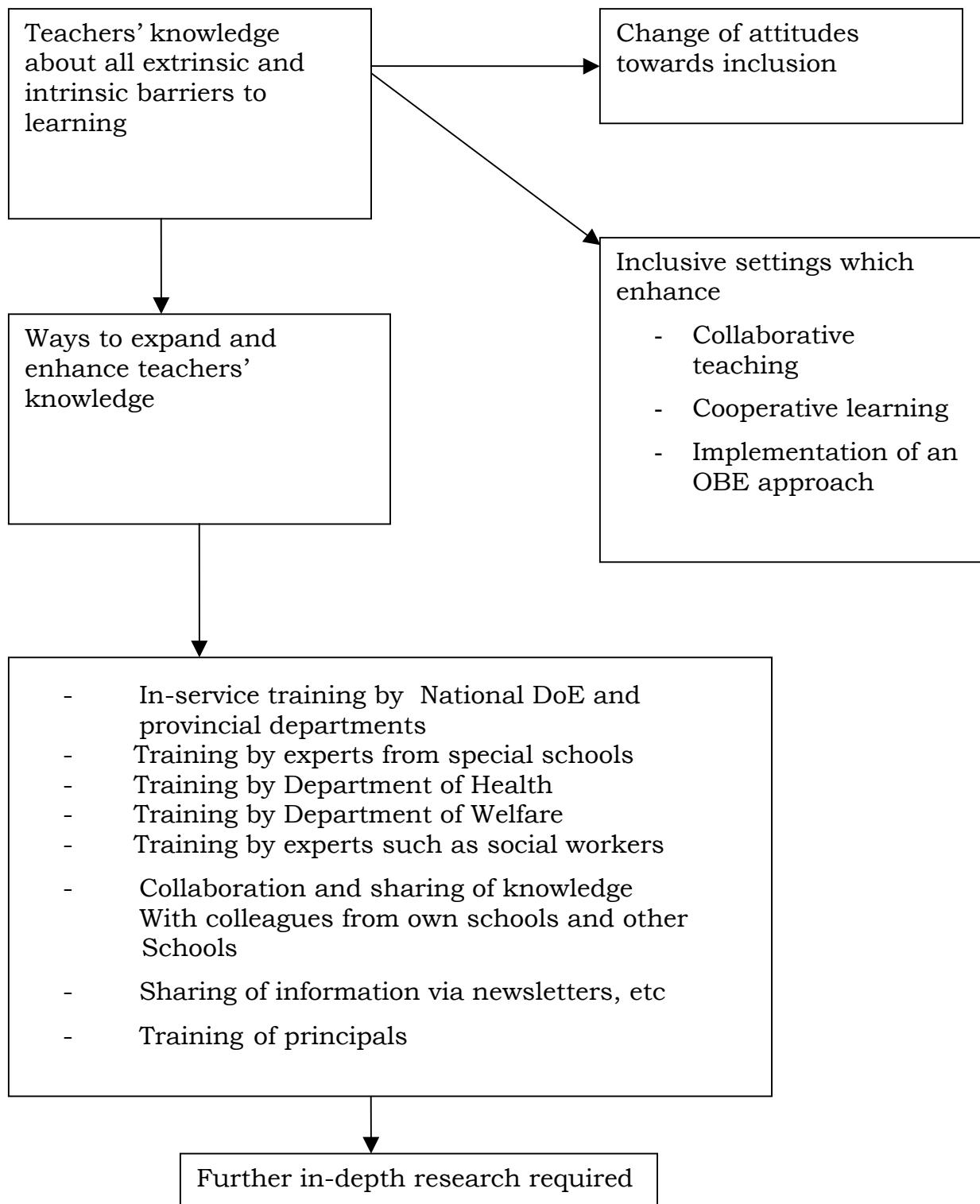
Departments should bring orphans and vulnerable children to the attention of teachers in order to increase their knowledge of barriers to learning. Committees spearheaded by the DoE should include people from different sectors to facilitate inclusion in local schools. Provincial coordinators in inclusion should monitor district support teams to ensure the success of inclusion. Provincial coordinators in inclusion should conduct a provincial teacher-skills audit to determine the available capacity and also to determine the level of training needed in the province. The DoE should collaborate with South African Broadcasting Cooperation (SABC) to include learners who experience barriers to learning and development in television programmes. The researcher believes that visibility could have a positive influence on the attitudes of teachers as well as the general public.

Principals are the gatekeepers of their schools. They should be afforded the opportunity to implement any new changes in an education system. To avoid secrecy behind closed classroom doors (cf 1.2.1), it is recommended that principals be trained in order to develop a sense of ownership in the implementation of change and to have full understanding of what is expected of teachers. This should be applied and could enhance teachers' attitudes towards inclusion to a great extent.

During the course of this study, the author became aware of areas concerning attitudes towards inclusion which need further research. Some of the areas were mentioned in this study, but require further in-depth research. Teacher training, collaborative teaching and cooperative learning in South Africa need to be investigated further. The attitudes of teachers towards inclusion could play a major role in changing and managing attitudes, thereby making it a success. The DoE should intensify its advocacy

on inclusion. The DoE in partnership with SABC should increase visibility of learners who experience barriers to learning and development on television. The following diagram summarises the whole process.

Figure 2: A diagrammatic summary of inclusion



### **6.3 CONCLUSION**

The attitudes of teachers play a primary role in the successful implementation of new approaches in education. This is because they are the people who work directly with learners in their daily classroom routines. For this reason, teachers should be brought to the board whenever new implementation is needed. The successful implementation of inclusion will depend on winning the teachers' attitudes.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **TRANSCRIPTION OF RESEARCH INTERVIEWS**

#### **INTERVIEWS WITH TEACHER NO 3**

##### **ENGLISH & N. SOTHO USED**

###### **QUESTION 1**

R: Who do you think are the learners who experience barriers to learning and development?

T3: According to my thought, I think the disabled learners, especially the ones on the wheelchair needs ramps to move around easily at school where there is too much sandy soil or loose soil there must be pavement as this will help them to go around or to move freely, and them according to the short-sighted learners, I think they are not able to read properly, can also go wrong, wrongly in spelling as they cannot see the word properly

R: May be before you get to those who are short-sighted and even to the disabled people-

T3: N—

R: Eh, are you referring to only those who use wheelchairs as the ones who perhaps could be called learners who experience barriers to learning and development in as far as physical disability is concerned?

T3: No, eh---the, the, the, the, the ones who are using the crunches---

R: N-hm.

T3: are also have a problem when coming to sandy soil and also the veranda that do not have the ramps

R: That's right

T3: To get the, the, their classrooms

R: That's right

T3: N—

R: You were just elaborating on those who are short sighted. Can you tell me more about that?

T3: Eh-, I think, eh—according to the, the short sighted, I remember they will not be able to see far away from them, so as to make them easy to see, may be at the chalkboard, you must bring them along the chalkboard. So, maybe they can do something, eh--, eh---, so another thing they have is the problem in hearing, they are unable to hear the educator because he is far away from them especially in overcrowded classes. So I think they cannot hear and they make mistakes.

R: N-N-

T3: Because of hearing problems---

R: That's right

T3: I think is all about that the reason why—

R: As far as learners who experience barriers to learning and development, you referred to the blind learners---

T3: Yes

R: You referred to the disabled learners—

T3: Yes

R: Yu referred to those who are---

T3: Short-sighted

R: Short-sighted and then you also referred to those who are deaf

T3: Yes

R: Are there no other learners who experience barriers to learning and development?

T3: I think the, the, the, the learners, the time, and time takers

R: Right

T3: They also have problems in learning because they do things slowly

R: That's right

T3: so they need time, they a time takers because they need time to, to, to drill something that you want them to known, they need time

R: yes

T3: 50,I think the slow learners also cause problems

R: that's right can we say the gifted learners also experience barriers to learners to learning and development.

T3: I think the gifted learners may not, may not take time to, and may not have some problems----

R: N—

T3: because when you said you we are going to do this, they follow the instructions----

R: N—

T3: You can make some guidance here and there----

R: That's right

T3: to guide them

R: Yes

T3: rather than the slow learners, you must lead them

R: N—

T3: I don't know if I answered you

R: Oh! Yes, all the answers are all right

T3: (Giggle)

R: (giggle)

T3: (Continues giggling)

R: Yeah, now let's get to number two

T3:Okay

## **QUESTION 2**

R: How do you feel about the inclusion of learners who experience barriers to learning and development in inclusive settings?

T3: According to this, eh---these learners must be accepted and be respected if they love them, as they are our children, we must accept them---

R: N--

T3: but we like them (clears throat), be free these disable learners,  
be free-

R: N—

T3: and feel that they are the same as that who are normal

R: N-N

T3: they must be free

R: How can this freedom be generated?

T3: The teacher must not eh---, the teacher must not--- (clear  
throat) N—I don't know what to say (turning to N. Sotho) he must  
not discriminate---

R: That's right

T3: Against them

R: Yes

T3: So that they can accept themselves if he (teacher) could  
indicate that they have got something missing, the learner will  
begin to shy away.

R: Yes

T3: (Turning to English). So if you handle them properly, they will  
accept themselves and feel that they are the same as other  
learners---

R: Yes

T3: Because I think this are mentally ok

R: Yes

T3: like us,---

R: Yes

T3: is just that they lack a certain body part

R: Yes

T3: So, mentally I understand that we might be equal

R: N

T3: N- Now the teacher must accept them

R: Yes

T3: They will also accept them selves, do not discriminate against them

R: Yes. Yu mentioned respect---

T3: N-

R: How can we make them see that we respect them?

T3: Indiscrimination will make them feel that they are acceptable—

R: N-

T3: If he has done a mistake---

R: Yes

T3: do not shout at him---

R: Yes

T3: Guide him in a humanly manner

R: Yes

T3: I believe that the learner will accept himself---

R: N-N-N

T3: He feels that he is also a human being like other children

R: N- and you also spoke of love---

T3: Yes

R: How should we display his love as teachers, now that they are not our biological children?

T3: Eh---Maybe you give him a question, when he answers it, praise the learner, let the learners cheer him up---

R: N-

T3: So that he would feel comfortable---

R: Yes

T3: that he is accepted---

R: Yes

T3: others love him

R: YES

T3: I think when you are cheering them up, they feel free

R: Yes

T3: In the class, but not only the disabled ones, all the learners in class

R: That's right

T3: I think so

R: N-Now you indicated that we need to love them, respect them, so that they can feel as part and parcel of the community. Who should be brought in the same classroom?

T3: Just repeat

R: In terms of learners, who should be brought in the same classroom/?

T3: Eh---the teacher, I think the teacher should--- (turning to N. Sotho); the teacher should handle these learners with great care

R: N--

T3: They should not get out of hand

R: Yes

T3: You bring them closer to you

R: Yes

T3: You may tell them stories to make them laugh, you can laugh with them, you can play with them

R: N-

T3: You may find that you organise a short drama in the class

R: Yes

T3: Do not discriminate against them

R: Yes

T3: Let them be there and be part of the little drama, I ---

R: Drama, okay---

T3: I understand that they will also see that they are important as well---

R: Yes

T3: They can play with other learners while on wheelchairs

R: So, what kind of dramas can they play?

T3: You find us talking about HIV/AIDS---

R: N—

T3: and then you prepare a short drama

R: N—

T3: Children dramatise and realise that when it is mentioned that there is this type of disease, how should they prevent it.

R: N—

T3: Then you tell them what to do; you need to have one partner, or use condoms

R: Yes

T3: So that we can defeat this disease, because we realise that this pandemic is here in full swing

R: Yes

T3: Make a small drama in the class

R: Yes

T3: Maybe something is broadcast over the radio

R: Yes

T3: and the radio says something---

R: Yes

T3: after completion, you make learners dramatise the incident dealt with

R: Yes

T3: The learners are then able to learn through activities

R: Yes. If we can allow learners to dramatise---

T3: Yes

R: Even learners on wheelchairs can do it

T3: Yes

R: You make me respond in this way

T3: (Laughing with courage)

R: (Laughing as well). Do you think we can bring the blind and non-blind wheelchairs and crunch users, slow learners and gifted ones in the inclusive classroom settings?

T3: If there were teachers for disabled, or for blind learners---

R: Yes

T3: If that were the case, it would help us because we do not know-

--

R: No—

T3: because we do have these children---

R: Yes

T3: but you find that those who speak to him know the learner

R: Yes

T3: You find that we can't speak to him because he is deaf

R: Yes

T3: You find that we cannot communicate with him

R: Yes

T3: Now you find that if the learner is close to you, he does not enjoy because he can't communicate with you, when you laugh, you make him angry as if you are laughing at him.

R: Yes

T3: Then we would be able to talk to them and no longer a burden to us. Some left alone and can only communicate with their relative

R: Yes

T3: I think this could help the community

R: Yes

T3: Yes, so that we could help the communicate with them, and how do they writer based on methods used to help them

R: Yes

T3: Yes, we will learn from others on how to handle them---

R: That's right

T3: How do they handle them, how do they speak to them, how do they speak to them, and how do they make them write

R: Yes

T3: We will also be able to do that.

R: You spoke of "difowa", who are these learners?

T3: These are deaf learners

R: Yes

T3: Yes, learners who experience hearing impairment

R: Yes

T3: So, you will find that when talking to this learner---

R: Yes

T3: When talking you needs to raise your voice, and when they respond, they do so softly

R: Yes

T3: Sometimes when you talk, and laugh, they fail to understand what you say, they think you are laughing at them

R: N-

T3: So if we could have teachers with expertise and include these learners---

R: Yes

T3: We could also learn

R: So if he thinks you are laughing at him, how does he react to you?

T3: He sometimes becomes very angry; sometimes he fights and may even withdraw and go away from you.

R: Yes

T3: Without having heard what you said, but if you can tell him that you are talking about this or that, that is why you saw us laughing, he may sometimes calm down.

R: Yes. We do find gifted, slow and average learners on wheelchairs

T3: Yes

R: How would you feel if they are included in our regular classroom settings?

T3: If the government could help us---

R: Yes

T3: This could be possible because we do have these learners

R: Yes

T3: They don't belong to a particular village

R: Yes

T3: Each village do have learners of this nature

R: Yes

T3: Now that the government is unable to help and build us schools and make inclusion of learners and teachers---

R: Yes

T3: Now the government builds school of these learners separately--

--

R: Yes

T3: Then we take these learners to special school

R: Yes

T3: If government would build accessible schools

R: Yes

T3: We would be able to know these learners and their method of communication and how to treat them

R: Yes, and this would make life to be real

T3: Yes, because we meet them in their families

R: Yes, you are making a point that these learners do not have a separate community of their own some where in the mountains

T3: Yes

R: The way in which schools are built---

T3: Yes

R: Appears to make one feels that they have their own community separate from us

T3: Yes

R: So you spoke about heavy sand---

T3: Yes

R: Would this bar inclusion?

T3: If the government would help, inclusion would be a possibility because they would try to pave

R: Yes

T3: Schools

R: Yes

T3: So that when learners come---

R: Yes

T: Would be able to walk on the pavement

R: Yes

T3: and then they would also pave the paths to the toilets so that learners would walk freely

R: Yes

T3: Because due to sand---

R: Yes, wheelchairs will not be able to move freely

R: Yes

T3: Because the sand, making it difficult to move, will trap the wheelchair and when trying to push him, this will also cause problems, and when he needs to go to the class, he will need people to carry him because he won't do it on his own

R: Yes

T3: So if they can build us these things and we then get used to that, and know that people such as these need this, and they travel in this fashion---

R: Yes

T3: I think things would be okay

R: Yes, should inclusion be referred to learners only?

T3: No, it should not be referred to learners only, parents should be included

R: Yes, in which way?

T3: Let me say the whole village, the whole community should help one another

R: Yes

T3: Because if it is only the school, it will be learners and teachers who are involved

R: Yes

T3: We may leave a lot of things out---

R: Yes

T3: Because of lack of knowledge

R: Yes

T3: That's why the inception of SGB's helps us because they will inform us about the problems in the community, and we become aware of that.

R: Yes

T3: May be we could be able to do something

R: Yes

T3: If we can be together without discriminating, being together and helping one another.

R: Yes. What do you think the implication could be if others are let out?

T3: If it is only the school without the involvement of the parents---

R: N—

T3: We may experience problems when it comes to paying school fund

R: Yes

T3: Learners need to undergo educational tours

R: Yes

T3: Where are we going to get money if parents are not involved?

R: Yes

T3: We are able to call the community and tell them we would like to take learners for a trip

R: Yes

T3: It could be Durban or Pretoria Zoo

R: Yes

T3: Then we tell the parents and once they are happy they pay for their children

R: Yes. What could be the implication of inclusion without the involvement of the community?

T3: It won't be good

R: Yes

T3: It won't be good if we leave them out of the picture, and it is only we here inside

R: Yes

T3: If we experience problems we would have no one to turn to---

R: Yes

T3: because we would then be held accountable, and is just the government and ourselves

R: Yes

T3:

And the government takes time to respond

R: Yes

T3: If the community is nearby, we are able to help one another, let me say we plan to build toilets for learners---

R: Yes

T3: If the government is still delaying, we are able to collect money-

--

R: Yes

T3: like learners are crowded in the classes

R: Yes

T: and find that the government delays and learners are under the tree; you can't even hang pictures---

R: Yes

T3: For learning to be effective, like you see pictures hanging like these (on the wall)

R: Yes

T3: So we call the community

R: Yes

T3: and suggest for every house to contribute R50.00

R: Yes

T3: and collect that money and build two small classrooms

R: Yes

T3: Thinking that waiting for someone would cause delays

R: Yes

T3: Had we been organized, these would be development

R: Yes, what is the importance of inclusion?

T3: It is of great importance because (clears throat) to be isolated things become impossible

R: Yes

T3: You do not share with anyone; you just tell yourself that you are going to do this or that. You don't even notice the mistakes because you just say you want to make this and in this fashion

R: Yes

T3: You are unable to see that at the end this leg would be bent or somehow

R: Yes

T3: But if you are with others, you share ideas, and help each other, and you are able to evaluate yourself

R: Yes

T3: To this extent, this is very important

R: Yes

T3: Yes

R: What kind of relationship can be established between schools in as far as inclusion is concerned?

T3: If we were not to discriminate against each other---

R: Yes

T3: If we do something great and the other schools see it---

R: Yes

T3: They should not be jealous about it, we should encourage each other to go on

R: Yes

T3: The thing is people are themselves a problem

R: Yes

T3: If you were successful you only need praise

R: Yes

T3: You don't want to share with someone

R: Yes

T3: What inspires me is that if this could go on

R: Yes

T: 3: that we do have some clusters---

R: Yes

T3: So that when we plan, we don't only find ourselves in the school

R: Yes

T3: And find that nearby schools are also involved and have scheduled dates in place

R: Yes

T3: Whereby we say during this date, this should happen

R: Yes

T3: and then we the Foundation Phase teachers meet and share ideas regarding say " My Family"---

R: Yes

T3: That, here this should be done and have the same plan to an extent that when you (DOE Official) visit the schools you find that our plans are the same, we are doing the same things, and when we do " Plants" we meet again and do the same thing.

R: Yes

T3: This should be a good thing in that we have taught learners about plants, we may differ in facilitation our lessons but our plans would be the same

R: Yes

T3: Yes, when these learners go to the next school they have experience in having learnt something

R: Yes

T3: Then these learners have something that they know

R: Yes

T3: If possible, even secondary schools should meet so that there be continuity and known that we are one big family

R: Yes. How can networking encourage inclusion?

T3: (Pause) even if the government could say something and find that we teachers do not accept, the government would talk but to no avail

R: Yes

T3: But if we are together like when called to workshops---

R: Yes

T3: then they tell us on how to plan

R: Yes

T3: If we don't undermine what they say

R: Yes

T3: Arguing what is it that we can't do alone, not realising our mistakes

R: Yes

T3: Without any one to help, we then teach these mistakes to the learners

R: Yes

T3: But if we could be together---

R: Yes

T3: We would assist one another, and once you realise that your mistakes have been done away with due to mutual involvement and sharing—

R: Yes

T3: You would unlikely wish to do something alone

R: Yes

T3: You would always wish to work as a team

R: Yes

T3: Then somebody would say, “ You did well but here you should not have done this”, then I would be able to rectify my mistakes

R: Which shows that collaboration begins to gel

T3: Yes, we build each other

R: Yes. In your views, at which level should inclusion start?

T3: (Pause). This should begin from Grade R for learners to get to know and get used to one another. I think this would be a good thing provided there are real professionals

R: Yes

T3: This would then continue, this means learners should know one another from early ages

R: Yes

T3: Yes, this would build good relationships because our families do have disabled children

R: Yes

T3: We would therefore refrain from hiding disabled learners, as is the case currently

R: Are they hidden?

T3: We hide them so that they may not be seen. You find that the child has six fingers or six toes in one of his hands or legs

R: Yes

T3: The child tries to hide this hand to avoid laughter by another children

R: Yes

T3: But if this child is well placed he would accept himself and would not hide anything

R: Yes

T3: Even by the time he would realise that other learners have five fingers in each hand

R: Yes

T3: he would understand that, that is the way he has been, because he has been accepted, he also accept himself. The one who has been hidden, is laughter at when seen for the first time

R: Yes

T3: But when we were growing, these ideas were troublesome, but as time went on you begin to realise that his was not deliberately done

R: Yes

T3: Now if we can begin this inclusion from lowers level, I don't think there would be a problem

R: There would be no problem

T3: There would be no problem; the problem would be that we don't have teachers in this regard who could guide us

R: Yes

T3: Even placing them separately---

R: Yes, if expert teachers were to be brought to guide you, which are of expertise would you like to first work with?

T3: When looking at our area---

R: Yes

T3: We don't seem to have them

R: Yes

T3: They are in other areas

R: Yes

T3: If they can bring teachers from other areas to our area---

R: Yes

T3: They may be able to help us; to an extent that no one says that he can't handle a particulars learner

R: Yes

T3: We help each other to help these learners well.

R: Yes. If they would say today we are bringing you expect teachers from first areas, who would you choose to first work with?

T3: I don't understand clearly

R: You don't understand—(Cassette Stops)

R: If for instance, specialists in SL Braille, and learning disabilities, are requested to help you—

T3: Yes

R: Whom would you choose to first work with?

T3: Eh—as I said before, that learners of these nature are taken to special schools

R: Yes

T3: I would like to have learning disability specialist

R: Yes, why?

T3: Because those are the ones we have

R: N-

T3: Thereafter SL specialist would follow

R: N-

T3: Specialists following in that manner until we have them all

R: Nhm

T3: In my coming to this school---

R: Yes

T3: I found that a scripture would be read as assembly---

R: Yes

T3: and learners ordered to pray

R: Yes

T3: And that was i

R: Yes

T3: While in my former school we were cautioned we need not just read ay scripture which is above the learners' comprehension

R: Yes

T3: Choose a scripture which would commensurate the level of the learners

R: Yes

T: After reading the scripture explain to the learners what the bible says in that scripture

R: Yes

T3: On my arrival here, I found that this was not done

R: Yes

T3: I then continued doing what I learn from my former school

R: Yes

T3: I was even nicknamed “ Mzalwane”

R: Yes

T3: While I was not

R: Yes

T3: As time went on, they started joining me

R: Yes

T3: Reading the scripture and explaining

R: Yes. Lets get to the next question

T3: Yes

### **QUESTION 3**

R: What is your opinion regarding collaborative teaching in inclusive setting?

T3: Collaborative teaching is very fruitful and every learner participate actively---

R: Yes

T3: and also learn to accept others as they are

R: Yes

T3: Learners share ideas in their groups and there is a spirit of competition amongst them

R: Yes. How fruitful can collaborative teaching be?

T3: I think if they are in groups and be given tasks---

R: Yes

T3: and work in that way the learner does not regard himself in class, but in-group

R: Yes

T3: Then they are able to participate concentrating on what they are doing

R: Yes

T3: Forgetting about the rest of the learners unless if he has finished his work. I think this is better than different method that is used.

R: Yes

T3: Because when they are in-group they concentrate on their task and finish and are proud to beat the other groups

R: Yes

T3: When they have finishes; one of the group members is requested to report to the class.

R: Yes. I am looking at collaborative teaching, whereby general and special teachers teach in the same class at the same time

T3: My understanding is that as teaches we will help each other in that set up

R: Yes

T3: When one is talking to learners, the other would be monitoring the groups checking whether learners are doing things the correct way. Maybe it is in English, the other one is for Geography and then you keep the learners to the attention of what is being done, indicating its importance

R: Yes

T3: In this way, teachers would be helping one another

R: Yes. If you may take two teachers, say a Braille specialist and the general teacher

T3: Yes

R: How can these teachers help each other?

T3: Having two teachers?

R: Yes

T3: But children---

R: Blind and non-blind

T3: Two teachers, this one knows the general method and does not know special method

R: Yes, the other knows special method

T3: I think the general could be facilitating, while the special teacher moves around helping these learners

R: Yes. Why do you think the general teacher should be facilitating?

T3: He does not know how to cater for the blind

R: Yes

T3: When they write, when they read, they use their own way of writing

R: Yes

T3: When he is facilitating, the special teacher would be helping, indicating we are here and this should be done this way.

R: Yes

T3: This won't be a serious problem,

R: They will be able to hear the general teacher because their problem is not hearing but blindness

T3: (Laughing, showing happiness)

R: What could the implications of collaborative teaching be to learners and teachers?

T3: It makes learners feel that they are competing

R: Yes

T3: But you do not need to tell the group it is better than the other

R: Yes

T3: They would say mum loves those ones, meneer loves these ones

R: Yes

T3: He does not care about us

R: Yes

T3: So if you keep on praising them, they regard all their activities as if they are playing

R: Yes

T3: While they are gathering something with teachers guiding each other. At the end I would have gained something from a colleague

R: Yes. You spoke of praising learners. When should learners be praised?

T3: If you have given them work, say, written work, they have written and you have marked, having finished, particularly with the grade ones—

T3: because sometimes the learners writ and finish so that I could start working, and then encourage those who write illegibly

R: Yes

T3: They do write but can't leave spaces, he can't write words correctly

R: Yes

T3: Then I guide them

R: Which means you are going to praise only those who did well

T3: Yes, thinking that I will be giving them courage, so that they could try, but I want totally leave the other learners

R: Yes

T3: Telling them you tried, but you can still do better than this

R: Yes

T3: So that he does not find himself out of the picture

R: Yes

T3: Yes, you tried, but as for this one, you wrote neatly, if you can do like this, you will be doing very well

R: Yes

T3: Encouraging them to improve their handwriting

R: To have good handwriting

T3: Yes

R: Let's go to the next question

## **QUESTION 4**

R: What is your view regarding cooperative learning in inclusive setting?

T3: N- this one, the learners accept one another---

R: Yes

T3: and get used to others with friends and always help them to overcome those with friends

R: Yes

T3: The teacher can identify the skills of the learners

R: For which weaknesses do you think learners can help each other to overcome?

T3: When I spoke of this, I sought of the situation when the learner has written something meaningful but mixed up. So you advice him that words should have spaces between them or handwriting should be in this way

R: Yes

T3: Maybe when writing he leaves out letters, you find that he omits S's or a's.

R: Yes. Do you think it would be possible for SL, crunch, wheelchair users, blind, slow, gifted learners to learn cooperatively?

T3: When integrate/

R: Yes

T3: (Long pause) The problem could be when they do not have expert teachers

R: Yes

T3: But if expert teachers are available, maybe it won't be a problem

R: It won't be a problem

T3: Yes

R: How?

T3: It won't be a problem because these will be someone to guide them

R: Yes

T3: Those who are blind, deaf etc. will be having someone to guide them

R: Yes

T3: In my understanding, this would be all right

R: How would cooperative learning be if we could bring the blind, gifted and wheelchair users together?

T3: Isn't it that those who are blind, can't see but can hear? Those who wheel themselves are unable to walk but can hear? And them it is those who are gifted?

R: Yes

T3: They are complete, they are able, they can see, they are complete.

R: Yes

T3: A blind learner will do what he has been told, because he hears what he has been told

R: Yes

T3: I don't think there will be a problem in integrating them. They can proceed.

R: They can proceed. What can inclusion bring to their lives?

T3: They will understand that they are different, that they are human beings and that they are the same. We differ due to barriers, but their minds are the same

R: Yes

T3: If they are together, they will accept themselves

R: Yes. What is it that can make it difficult for the slow learner to cope when with others mentioned above?

T3: The problem is that they will leave him behind, because they understand things quickly. He is still going to struggle as to what is meant by that, while others proceed faster than him. That would cause a problem, but he would feel as if he is like them.

R: Yes

T3: But if he could find himself in the same level with others, even though others uses wheelchairs, others blind, they would accept that they are the same

R: "We are human beings"

T3: "We are human beings" we are living, we help each other

R: What can cooperative learning build in their lives, both at home, at church, in town and elsewhere?

T3: Children accept themselves as human beings, and they are proud of what they are. They accept that "I am disabled, I was born like that"

R: Yes

T3: When you look at the TV, you find them showing those on wheelchairs playing different sports. They are able to play netball; they are able to play soccer. They are able to contest for beauty pageants.

R: Yes

T3: They accept themselves

R: When seeing those learners on TV, how encouraged are you in as for as inclusion of these learners in the regular classroom is concerned?

T3: I am so impressed and I wish things like those could be available in our village. The problem in our villages is that there are no recreation facilities.

R: They are not available

T3: it is god in townships because they can go to those facilities and play

R: Yes

T: Now here, when can you take such a person to play?

R: Yes

T3: If the government could do this for us, even here in the rural communities, we would be able to do a lot with those people, is just that, hey! When I look at them, they do a lot and I am impressed. Even when they play basketball, you find this person running on a wheelchair as if he has forgotten he is on a wheelchair---

R: You see

T3: as if he is going to fall down and he won't, he is used to

R: When they play like that they signify cooperation

T3: Yes

R: They won't play if they do cooperate, without understanding of what they are doing.

T3: No

R: And once they play like that---

T3: That shows that there is acceptance, which you spoke about

R: They learn to accept one another, and this acceptance becomes very strong. Now working at the acceptance displayed on TV, how can this help teachers and everybody in general to do the same?

T3: Our people have a problem. We do not accept another. "I wish to be better than the others"

R: Yes

T3: That's how I like that as a person. So most of the things take time to come our way

R: They take time

T3: Because we, ourselves, we do not want to integrate. You find us working together, but having three to four groups, some here, and others there.

R: In the same school-----

T3: In the same school

R: and we need inclusion whereas we do not accept one another

T2: No-No

R: Now working at that situation, do you think such people can encourage others to be together in inclusion?

T3: They won't because they are not together

R: Yes

T3: But I like where I am, separation is not there

R: Is not there

T3: You wont find it, because if you ask someone to call somebody, is just okay. Even if I go reluctantly, it does not show

R: It doesn't show

T3: It doesn't show, even when requested to do something, I do call my colleagues and go together. We were sent a circular to choose boys and girls who could play soccer

R: Yes

T3: Even though the person doesn't want, we come together and choose such learners to participate

R: That's right. How many are you?

T3: We are 17, two have been brought recently

R: Lets get to the next question

## **QUESTION 5**

R: What role can OBE approach play in inclusive settings?

T3: N- here, N- this will help the disadvantaged learners to gain self-confidence and feel accepted

R: N-hm

T3: (Long Pause) I feel it that way

R: How does OBE make learners feel self-confidence?

T3: The learners trust himself, because he is not afraid of anyone when talking. He talks and then ends, it incites me because you don't shout the learner saying, "this is incorrect"

R: Yes

T3: Even when the learner makes mistakes we don't show that he has done a mistake. I then ask those still raising their hands up, then the learner is not shouted out that he did not answer correctly; he feels that he got it as well.

R: Yes

T3: Another thing that removes shyness, is to keep on praising him, indicating," you have done well, let someone helps. Let me hear your response, so that learner gets encouraged," "I did well"

R: Yes OBE is learner centred. What is your view on that?

T3: Eh----it, it, let me say you don't just come from somewhere and tell these learners when I talk air transport, I talk of aeroplane, I talk of helicopter, I talk of this and that.

R: Yes

T3: You may come with a picture and ask learners to give their ideas. When the learner sees something, he sees even that you may not have recognise as a teacher

R: Yeah

T3: and tells he sees this or that, and when you look at that you find that the learner has brought and outstanding ideas. If you were to tell him, you would have denied him, some information

R: Yes

T3: It incites me because the learner looks for things by himself. He looks for information

R: The other issue regarding OBE is that's it is learner paced. What is your view on that?

T3: The learner works according to his pace he does not proceed according to the teacher's pace, because if that was the case, I would say today I want to talk about air transport and I would deliberate on it and finish, so that the following day I could proceed, and would perhaps treat water transport

R: Yes

T3: So with OBE, the learner proceed step by step, according to his performance, if you realise that he did not arrive at that point, you don't make him proceed without having dealt with the previous work correctly.

R: Yes

T3: The learner proceeds well until you realise that he has done the work correctly. You assess him to make sure about this

R: Yes

T3: Previously, you would know that if "I teach about this, I teach about it and complete" it is mine, whether or not the learner understood you, proceed covering the syllabus

R: What are your view regarding learner paced, and learner centred and the notion of syllabus completion?

T3: (Pause) In my view, if I have done my work and the year ends before finishing my work, what I do, I take my work and give it to the next teacher, and show him that with these I did up to this end.

R: Yes

T3: This wasn't done, making sure that what I have done is done well and learners understood me. I show the next teacher that this was not done, and the next teacher will then treat the work, which was not done, even though I understand that he still has his current duty that must be done.

R: Yes

T3: What impresses me is that in OBE you do not rush for the sake of the syllabus. What is need is that the learners should be able to relate to that which has been done

R: Yes. How would you advice a teacher who feels he would just push the syllabus and push the learners to the next class hiding what was not done?

T3: I dislike that kind of a person because those children, ---he has done the work. I don't deny that. He has completed his work but when you go to learners, they are empty headed. They do not have anything. You may take them to their previous class

R: Yes

T3: But if he is not a naughty and arguing person, we may sit down and show him that we need not rush the syllabus. We need to go well. Knowing that if I have done water transport the truth is if someone could ask them, they would say something because they would have understood

R: Yes

T3: Unlike pushing for the syllabus to an extent that when you ask the learner to write "Ngwana" (baby) the learner is unable to.

R: Yes

T3: When I say transport, you find the learner complicating them, because he knows, telling about air, land and water transport. Which means that even though is knows about that, both are the modes of transport, but they are classified in this way

R: Yes

T3: They go like this, so if he does not argue, we may talk.

R : Thank you for your time.

T3: You are welcome.

R: Thank you.

