

**AN INVESTIGATION
OF
THE MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSION IN THE
FREE STATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge, contains no work submitted previously as a dissertation or thesis for any degree at any other university. I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation to the University of South Africa.

Signed

Full Names Mathopa

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late parents, my mother Celia Kenalemang and my father Ramogale Christian who unselfishly committed their life to my upbringing and well being.

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ACRONYMS

ACRONYM MEANING

DoE National Department of Education

ECD Early Childhood Development

FSDoE Free State Department of Education

LTSM Learning and Teaching Support Material

NCESS National Committee on Education Support Services

NCSNET National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

PWD Person with a Disability

SASA *The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996*

SGB School Governing Body

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CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

During the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June 1994, the following principles were adopted by the participants. They called upon and urged all governments to:

- "adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in ordinary schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise;

- develop demonstration projects and encourage exchange with countries which have experience with inclusive schools" (1994:10).

The suggestion was therefore that inclusive education should be adopted globally as a viable means to provide all learners with access to education opportunities. The principles underpinning this statement were accepted by many countries, including South Africa. As a philosophy, the concept of inclusion embraces the democratic values of liberty, equality and human rights and recognizes and accommodates diversity thereby respecting the rights of all members of the community. Ultimately, the vision of inclusion is the development of an inclusive society where all members participate optimally, and actively contributing in a democracy where respect for and appreciation of diversity are active values. It requires more than merely celebrating diversity, if there is to be genuine recognition of the ongoing active contribution of every member of society. For an education system to be inclusive it should therefore be inherently capable of meeting the diverse needs of every learner as effectively as possible within schools.(Engelbrecht & Green 2001:30)

Stainback and Stainback (1994:6) state that moving toward inclusive schools has several advantages over the traditional approaches that attempt to help learners with disabilities or disadvantages "fit into mainstream." One advantage is that everyone benefits from inclusive schools focusing on ways to develop supportive and caring school communities for all learners, rather than selected categories of learners.

Forlin (1998:21) states in this regard that the movements towards inclusive education rather than segregated education has resulted from considerable world-wide emphasis placed on the rights of all children, regardless of disability, to receive appropriate and equal educational opportunities.

Broadly speaking the development of specialised education in South Africa followed trends similar to those in most other countries. However, a distinguishing aspect in the history of South African specialised education is the extent of political and philosophical influence. This resulted in gross inequalities and inconsistencies in provision between the previous racially segregated government and provincial departments, as the apartheid era categorized and officially classified people in terms of race. Thus while education and support services were reasonably well developed in those departments serving Whites, Coloureds and Indians, they were grossly underdeveloped in departments serving Africans.

The South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 (1996:14) states that every learner has the right

- a. to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
- b. to a further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.

The Report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (1997:23-24) states that education in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Phase has been sadly neglected in South Africa, yet it remains critical to the early identification of learner needs and subsequent intervention to enable learners to sustain effective learning. Despite the fact that such identification of learners at risk is critical to the development of children with disabilities, they remain the most vulnerable and excluded from the education system. Other inequalities resulting from discrimination based on race and gender, as well as urban / rural disparities are starkly evident in this sector.

The Education White Paper 6 (2001:30) clearly states that all children and young people of school-going age must be accommodated in one education system. As an interim measure, a number of Free State primary schools will be designated and converted to full-service schools, beginning in those school districts that form part of the National Schools District Development Programme. This will be done in collaboration with the Provincial Department of Education. Eventually, at least one primary school will be designated and converted to a full-service school within each of the five school districts, taking into account the location of the special school's resource centre.

Accordingly, new curriculum and assessment initiatives will be required to focus on the inclusion of the full range of diverse learning needs. A key responsibility of the district support teams will be to provide curriculum, assessment and instructional support to public adult learning centres, schools and further education institutions in the form of illustrative learning programmes, learning support materials and assessment instruments (Education White Paper 6, 2001:32).

The question of the funding of programmes and materials immediately arises. "As far as funding is concerned in South Africa provision for special needs and support has many weaknesses and disparities. Many learners, particularly those who experience barriers to learning and development are not in schools.

Until very recently, very little has been done to redress past inequalities." (Report of NCSNET, 1997:32). The Free State primary schools are not an exception, as the funding for all special or specialised schools resides in the Sub-Directorate for Special Needs and is not part of the mainstream budget for ordinary public schools. Free State special schools are still regarded as a separate entity with its own budget and curriculum and its management is still centred in the Sub-Directorate for Special Needs.

Up to now the schools in the Free State have been separated on the basis of the abilities of learners. There are special schools such as Bartimea for the deaf, dumb and blind, Martie du Plessis for the physically disabled and Boitumelong for the intellectually impaired. These schools are not part of the ordinary public school system. The learners and educators in these schools are now perceived more positively than in the past when they were regarded as 'different' in terms of disabilities and abilities.

In his personal experience of fifteen years as a teacher at a special school for the intellectually impaired in the Free State, the author of this dissertation noticed that negative perceptions of learners with special needs are due to the school community not being well informed about their needs. Now that inclusion is in the pipeline most people will begin to perceive it positively and appreciate it as the means to bridge the gap between the differently challenged learners and the so-called abled learners. Teachers' attitudes also need to be transformed to accommodate different physical challenges among learners. "To recognise and respond to the diverse needs of all learners, the existing education system must be transformed from a system of separate education (isolating special education from regular education) to a single, integrated system." (Swart, E. et al. 2002:177).

The education White Paper 6, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001:12) states that inclusion is based on the principle that learning difficulties arise from issues or shortcomings in the education system rather than from the learners.

Regardless of this approach, White Paper 6 uses terms such as learners with special education needs and learners with mild to severe learning difficulties - still the language of the approach that learning disabilities stem from within the learner.

1.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR RESEARCH

The South African education entered a new era from 1994 when a democracy was declared. Associated with this socio-political shift has been an emphasis on important values such as equity, non-discrimination, liberty, respect and social justice which have provided the framework for the Constitution. These values are central to a socio-critical perspective which developed in education as a result of a sharp critique of society. Thus inclusive education in South Africa has its origin in a rights perspective informed by liberal, critical and progressive democratic thoughts (Kruger & Nel 2005:16)

Van der Westhuizen (1999:55) states, "management is a specific type of work in education which comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation, so as to allow formative education to take place." In terms of the efficient education management in a school, teaching and learning have to take place as effectively as possible. One other feature of effective management is that there must be authority in an education situation that derives from teachers and principals; this means that the management of both specialised and ordinary schools should be effective.

The author of this dissertation is of the opinion that if the South African school system can provide for the needs of all learners, implementing inclusion should not be insurmountable. For instance, school facilities should be made more user-friendly, making buildings accessible to different disabilities. The Consultative Paper No. 1 on Special Education (1999:9) states, "inclusion means the participation of people with disabilities in all daily activities at school, at work, at home and in our communities."

It is, therefore, essential that all schools in South Africa provide for inclusion. Consequently, a uniform curriculum should be implemented to provide all learners an equal opportunity and access to the curriculum experiences. The curriculum should also be flexible enough to accommodate all learners, irrespective of disability, e.g. blind learners who will not do the same subjects as learners with full sight.

Ainscow (1995:6) is of the opinion that inclusion, in the true sense of the word, is said to be less expensive than special schools or the traditional model of mainstreaming. Engelbrecht (1997:47) states, "The fiscal constraints which basically result from dividing the budget into different systems of schooling can be alleviated by implementing inclusive schooling which will utilise one budget, and therefore have a positive impact on our country's budget and proper management thereof."

Furthermore, if inclusion were to be introduced in South African schools, the system could ease the financial burden on the government; only one budget will be drawn up for one system of schooling, instead of the current two: one for ordinary public schools and the other for specialised schools.

1.3 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Inclusion and inclusive education

Inclusion can be defined as a process of recognizing and respecting the differences among all people and building on their similarities. Within inclusive education both learners and educators are supported in the education system and a full range of support services is provided to meet the learning needs of the learners. The focus is on teaching and learning, with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies, which will benefit all learners. Therefore inclusive education focuses on overcoming barriers in the education system that prevents it from meeting the diverse needs of all learners (Engelbrecht, 1999: 136). The interpretation of inclusion may have different

meanings to different people. Some think it is the placement of all learners under the same roof, and to others it means the placement of learners in the same school but different classes.

Learners with special educational needs

Traditionally policy makers and practitioners referred to learners who had "problems" of some kind, who experienced difficulties or were likely to experience difficulties with regular classrooms as those who had "special needs" and hence required specialized support (Howell 200:117)

Full Service Schools

Full service schools, colleges, further and higher education institutions are first and foremost mainstream education institutions which provide quality education to all learners and student through flexibly meeting the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner. They are institutions that endeavour to transform themselves, proactively addressing barriers to learning and increasing participation of their learners and educators. They strive to achieve access, equity, quality and social justice in education.

Management

Management per se involves a number of tasks that the manager should consider when managing an organization like a school, for example some tasks in managing an organization involve policy and decision making, and financial infrastructure and personnel management. There are also a number of activities involved in management such as planning, co-ordination, leading and control. (Badenhorst, 1996:9)

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem which this study addressed is a way in which inclusion in the Free

State primary schools might be managed. This issue gives rise to the following sub-problems that were deduced from the main problem of the study:

What is inclusion or inclusive education system?

How should inclusion be managed in the Free State primary schools?

Who should manage inclusion?

What are the ultimate benefits of inclusion to the school and the society?

The study proposed to investigate the management of inclusive education in the Republic of South Africa in general and primary schools in the Free State in particular. The study scrutinised the relevant literature in terms of inclusion so as to understand the concept in depth so as to come up with recommendations for the management thereof.

The role players inclusive education were also interviewed to determine their attitudes and perceptions about inclusion or inclusive education.

The study identified and discussed the research methodology that was used throughout the research process.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This research is geared towards making recommendations for the introduction and implementation in schools. It is also significant to:

Clarify and describe the concept of inclusion. Investigate the possibility of implementing inclusive schooling. Identify and describe strategies to implement inclusive schooling. Make recommendations on the implementations of inclusion in schools.

1.6 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

- The purpose of this research was to make recommendations for the transformation of the education system in our country.

- To abolish a segregated system of education in which learners with specialised education needs are barred from so-called "normal" public schools.
- The research proposed to recommend a system of education that is all-inclusive, where learners with different impairments and barriers attend the same school. What is ultimate of great significance is the management of the system.
- To improve the management of the Education system.

1.7 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS.

- The management of inclusion is a challenge in schools.
- The schools management teams have not been trained to manage inclusion in schools.
- There are no budgets for the management of inclusion in schools

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

Since this dissertation is of limited scope, it was impossible to research all aspects of inclusive education and school management and therefore only those aspects that relate to stakeholders in the school situation and factors that the school might be able to control or change are addressed.

Since the introduction of inclusion will be an innovation in South African primary schools, certain policies will have to change. As the researcher will not be involved in administrative policy making, it is therefore impracticable to state which policies or actions may be mandated.

The management of inclusion remains the responsibility of the National Department of Education (DoE) in terms of designing and implementing policies.

The researcher makes only beneficial recommendations on the possible introduction and management of an inclusive system.

The training of teachers to manage the system and continuous in-service training will be promulgated in acts and government policies; the researcher may only make a contribution in this regard.

Consideration or acceptance of the recommendations on education systems by the researcher rests entirely with policy and decision makers in government.

Since the researcher needed educators and learners during sampling, their prompt availability could not be guaranteed; some might have been apprehensive about interviews and would then not be available as required and expected.

Within the limited scope of this dissertation the researcher could not do research all over the country and therefore a school or schools served as the example.

1.9 RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

The qualitative method was employed in the research as statements were used to collect data. The collection of data was based on the following methods:

Literature study Interviews

1.9.1 Literature study

The researcher made a study of relevant documents such as newspapers, articles, minutes of meetings, relevant books, formal policy statements, dissertations and journals which could help to answer the research question. These pieces of information were analysed and used as additional information to answer the research question.

Literature for a review includes many types of sources such as professional journals, reports, scholarly books and monographs, Government documents, dissertations and electronic resources. Electronic resources are literature "published" on the Internet, a global network of computer databases. Some referred journals and conference proceedings are published only electronically. Literature may include empirical research, theoretical discussions and reviews of the status of knowledge, philosophical papers and methodological treatises (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:108-109).

1.9.2 Interviews

Interviews were based on purposeful sampling, i.e. searching for respondents who are information-rich, and would be able to supply rich and detailed information about what the researcher is investigating. Random sampling is not appropriate in this case as specific information is sought in the investigation.

The researcher interviewed educators and Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) officials to determine their perceptions and attitude towards inclusion in primary schools as they are regarded as key informants. They were interviewed because they have special knowledge and perceptions that are not available to the researcher.

The investigation was directed towards special schools as well as 'ordinary' schools in cities, towns and rural areas in South Africa with a focus on the Free State Primary schools (refer to Chapter 4).

1.9.3. Methodology

A qualitative research method was followed in the study. The following is discussed under research method:

1.9.3.1 Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:378), in purposeful sampling the researcher identifies "information-rich" participants as they are possibly knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investigation. A single school was selected for the purpose of this study.

1.9.3.2 Data collection

The researcher conducted semi-structured phenomenological interviews with individual educators from the school identified. The interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed. In addition, a field journal was kept for making observations. Relevant documents were also analysed.

1.9.3.3 Analysis of the data

Data was analysed to determine the how inclusion can be managed in the primary schools.

1.10 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1 This chapter covers the problem statement and method of investigation.

Chapter 2 This chapter reviews national and international developments in special needs education and inclusion.

Chapter 3 In this chapter management and the management of inclusion are discussed.

Chapter 4 This chapter covers the research methodology.

Chapter 5 This chapter presents an analysis and discussion of the results.

Chapter 6 The final chapter sets out the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

INCLUSION - AN INTERNATIONAL AND A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter investigates the views, perceptions and attitudes of other countries in terms of inclusion. The introduction, implementation and policies pertaining to inclusion in other countries will be discussed so as to understand how other countries succeeded in implementing the system of inclusion in schools. The literature pertaining to inclusion will also be scrutinized so as to ultimately come up with well-informed recommendations.

The term "inclusion" has become something of a international and national buzzword. It can easily become a cliché, if individuals do not possess in depth understanding of its meaning and examine closely the underlying values it is based on. The making of inclusion into a buzzword is evident when reading policy documents, newspaper articles or listening to media statements. On the other hand, readers can become easily confused when confronted with the multiple definitions of inclusion offered in international literature. Inclusion has come to mean different things to different people, to such an extent that authors such as Dyson (2001) Florian 1998) and Meijer et al (1999) make us aware of the varieties of inclusion that exist in different international contexts. Kruger et al (2005:3)

Engelbrecht & Green (2001:30) state that "for inclusive education to become a value and not an add on or merely a practice, a reconstruction of the roles of the school, principal and educator is essential. Such a reconstruction needs to be directed towards establishing schools and local communities that accommodate all learners and are based on values and attitudes of respect for diversity, care sensitivity acceptance, belonging and community".

According to Taylor (2005: 216). The implementation of the special Education Law 1988 in Israel was given additional impetus in 1994, when a Circular by the Ministry of Education made it clear that the inclusion of all students with special needs is the preferred policy of the Ministry and that it should be practiced more rigorously than it had in the past. Most researchers agree that the most important condition for successful inclusion of student with special needs in the regular classroom is a change from negative to positive attitudes of regular school teachers towards students with special needs and their inclusion in the regular school and regular classroom. Another necessary condition for the successful implementation of inclusion is continuous support and assistance to teachers by other successful people as the school counsellor, the school principal, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, the school psychologist and so on.

2.2 DIFFERENT VIEWS ON INCLUSION

In recent years many declarations have been made by the international community through the United Nations and its specialised agencies, as well as through nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), to promote the right of persons with disabilities (PWDs) and other learning needs to an appropriate education. Most of these declarations and adoptions of policy proposals and practices exist in some industrialised, Western countries (also referred to as the North). European and North American countries have, since the 1960s, been vigorously pursuing the principles of integration and normalisation developed in the Scandinavian countries.

The interpretation of inclusion may have different meanings to different people. Some think it is the placement of all learners under the same roof, and to others it means the placement of learners in the same school but different classes. It is essential that the implementation and management of the system be carefully planned. How well the system can be established is something else, but over and above that, how well it can be implemented to meet the needs of all learners and to the benefit of all. Questions such as the following immediately come to mind:

Will any educator be able to teach and manage learners with different abilities?

What will be the attitude of educators regarding learners with special needs?

Will the other learners accept learners with special needs?

What will parents' perception of inclusion be?

Will the school community be comfortable with inclusion in their environment?

How will the inclusive system be managed?

Is infrastructure available?

Is finance available?

Kisanji (1998:65) re-emphasises the quest for inclusive education by the international community. This quest entailing the need for persons with disabilities to be placed in ordinary schools and receive the same education is long overdue. The international system of education has always been exclusive of people with disabilities and this does not augur well, as they have been perceived as 'different' as though not having capabilities equivalent to so-called normal persons.

Inclusive education goes beyond integrated placement in that it is meant to foster the full participation of people with disabilities (PWD) The Canadian association of Community Living (CALL) formerly the Canadian Association of the Mentally Retarded identifies three principles as critical for the PWDs true and full participation in all aspects of society, including education. These are the actualization of rights without discrimination (the citizenship principle) a sense of belonging, having friends and families through good times and bad (the Membership Principle) and the ability to chart the course of one's life (the self determination principle) (Ballard&Macdonald 1998:96)

In this regard, Forlin (1998:22) states that a major problem in determining the current status of implementing inclusive education in Australia and other countries is the different interpretations of the term, inclusion. Researchers and educators interpret inclusion in many anomalous ways; versions range along a continuum from full-time placement in the ordinary classroom to full-time placement in an education support class within a ordinary school. Obvious difficulties arise when attempting to generalise from research findings on the

degree to which inclusion is established in schools in general. This is exacerbated when few reports accurately clarify the type of inclusion model employed in various school surveys. Drawing any conclusions from research results on the current status of the implementation of the policy of inclusion must therefore be cautiously approached.

According to Stainback & Stainback (1994:4), inclusion refers not only to bringing into or including all learners in the same type and system of education, but also to bringing communities into the fold of education. This is important because in the past parents perceived their children's education to be the sole domain of educators. Their involvement was minimal, if at all, as their roles were not clearly specified in the policy as it is today. It would benefit learners if parents became an integral part of the introduction and implementation of inclusive education in schools throughout the process, as their role is vital. The community support during the process of implementation would ensure success, as inclusion should not only be in classroom, but also in the school community. Labelling learners as pariah would become a thing of the past.

Forlin (1998:21) states that the philosophy of inclusive education promotes the education of a child with a disability in an ordinary classroom with age appropriate peers. Wilton in Forlin (1998:21), suggests that inclusion is all about enlightenment; developing an awareness of the rights, aspirations and needs of those with disabilities, and of generally fostering goodwill towards them within the community, particularly among those who have traditionally had minimal or no contact with people with disabilities.

Inclusion, as stated by Forlin (1998), promotes the interaction and acceptance of differences among learners. Those with different abilities accept their peers and get to know them better than when they are separated and not attending the same schools.

The community also learns to know and appreciate the disabilities of other learners if they attend school together and play together as learners with different abilities. A negative attitude of the school community to learners with disabilities is eliminated as they begin to sympathise and accept all forms of disabilities.

Some authors are still sceptical about the introduction of inclusion in schools. It is perceived to be coercive to some parents and learners. O'Neil (1995:9) states, "... I agree that there are differences in the capacity of schools and teachers to deal with differences. There is no research showing that all students can be taught well in regular classrooms and ordinary schools. Reflexive placement decisions are bad practice and illegal, whether the reflex is to place children in regular classrooms or elsewhere. Trying to force everybody into the inclusive mould promises to be just as coercive as trying to force everybody into the mould of a special class or institution.

"There are wide differences in children's needs and the kinds of environments that can address those differences. Inclusion is going to be great for some kids and some parents will love it. The opposite is also true. I believe in giving some options to parents and kids. A continuum of placement option is sensible; it's also the law." O Neil (1995:10)

Written formulation for the protection of the interests of all children in Australia, regardless of disability, to equal education opportunities, is located in an array of Commonwealth, State and territorial statutes, ordinances, regulations and court decisions. Legislative variations are found in different states and territories, particularly in the area of policy, although a child's right to education has not been stated explicitly in any Australian Law (Ward, 1993:22). In Australia, legislation regarding education is contained in the educational Acts of individual states. While the Commonwealth has no specific legislative powers in state education, it does have an influence over education policy making owing to its responsibilities with regard to Appropriation Law. The outcomes of the recommendations contained in The American Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL94 - 142, USA, 1975) have had a major impact on policy development for the

education of children with a disability in Australian states and territories. Such statutes, ordinances and regulations could assist all countries throughout the world to put in place all management mechanisms for inclusion in schools as in Australia (Forlin, 1988:22).

In the USA, inclusion for all has an additional dimension because historically marginalized minorities have, for four decades contributed a disproportionately large proportion of the high incidence disability categories, which are based on clinical judgement.

This pattern has not been noted in the low-incidence categories, which are characterized by evidence of biologically based impairment. Because the inclusion movement began as a thrust to include student in the latter categories, the discourse on inclusion has been largely separate from that on minority over representation. Articles (2003), arguing for an alignment of these two discourses, called for inclusion to take into account the social and cultural histories that have resulted in culturally and linguistically diverse students having additional ability deficits superimposed onto their identities. Taylor (2005:217)

Perhaps the most important move towards change were the endeavours of educators and researchers to seek novel ways to address the educational needs of learners with disabilities. The social injustices of World War 11 era gave rise to a great concern for the social justice and social unity in the developing democratic practices within a wide range of countries. The human atrocities , such as research conducted by the Germans in respect of intelligence tests, genetics and other human issues in the concentration camps(Burden, 1995:76) were perhaps the biggest eye-openers during and after the World War 11 era ,which motivated a variety of countries to join forces to bring about social justice and cohesion.

Furthermore, the tightly ordered segregated and parallel school systems added to the concerns of society. The, social reformers enthusiastically sought to change society through the schools .In order to provide an equitable education for learners with special

educational needs, they sought to abandon the traditional separate, special school services.

Gaylord-Ross (1997:47) state that it was not until 1995 that the emergence in the United States of America of the 1975 education for All Handicapped Children Act(PL 94-142) renamed in 1990 as individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) that learners were ensured access to educational institutions and limited progress in regular schools emerged. According to Meijer et al (1994:127), similar events occurred in other countries. Probably the most innovative concept that of normalization emerged in Norway.

Canada followed the United States of America by instituting Bill 82 for the education of learners with special educational needs and New Zealand followed suit.(Ballard &Macdonald (1998:82).

The author of this dissertation is of the opinion that if other countries around the world would emulate what Australia is doing, they could implement and manage the system of inclusion in their schools with ease. It is very easy to introduce, implement, control and manage the system once it is legislated as in Australia. Inclusive education practices in Australia have developed from international legislation based on ensuring the rights of all children to receive an equitable education.

2.3 THE SALAMANCA STATEMENT

During June 1994 the renowned International Conference on Special Needs in Education and Inclusion took place in Salamanca, Spain. In preparing for the Salamanca Conference, UNESCO was able to build on the impetus and commitment created by Jomtien and the Education for All Policy, and to work toward ensuring that special needs issues were not minimised, but brought centre stage.

Similarly, UNESCO was able to take advantage of a number of other recent and

current major United Nations initiatives. These include the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981) and the subsequent Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992), the World Programme of Action in Favour of Disabled Persons (United Nations 1983), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Asian Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002) and the recent adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Disabled Persons. All these initiatives have educational implications. They all encourage a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral approach to the planning and delivery of services to enable disabled people of all ages to become full citizens of their societies.

In terms of the Salamanca Statement many countries desire inclusive education as they pronounced during the closure of the conference in Salamanca, Spain, on 10 June 1994, calling upon all governments and urging them to:

- Give the highest policy and budgetary priority to improve their education systems to enable them to include all children regardless of individual differences or difficulties.
- Address as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in ordinary schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.
- Develop demonstration projects and encourage exchanges with countries having experience with inclusive schools.
- Establish decentralised and participatory mechanisms for planning, monitoring and evaluating education provision for children and adults with special education needs (Salamanca Statement, 1994:10).

The concern raised at the Conference really manifested the debate around the issue of inclusion, whereby all learners would enjoy the same education opportunities. Obviously, affording all learners the same opportunities simply means that proper management mechanisms of the system must be put in place, otherwise it would be very difficult to introduce and implement inclusive education in schools.

2.4 THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM AND INCLUSION

In the past, the South African education system was based on a fragmented approach to special education for disabled learners; learners were labelled as learners with disabilities and those without disabilities. Many new policies on inclusion have been introduced since 1994, but unfortunately the system still refers to special school educators and ordinary public school educators. The fact of the matter is that the statistical outcomes of segregation is a life characterised by poverty, often culminating in institutions that no longer operate or are outrageously expensive and devastating to the human spirit. The inclusion option signifies the end of labelling, but not the end of the necessary support and services that must be provided in inclusive classrooms.

In South Africa, policies are being developed to regulate inclusion while gradually being introduced. Acts are being promulgated in terms of addressing the guidelines for the introduction, implementation and management of inclusion, such as:

- The White Paper on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa (1995)
- The South African Schools Act (1996)
- The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability strategy (1999)
- The National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training and the National Committee on Education and Support Services.
- The Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, building an inclusive education and training system. (2001)

All the above policy documents relate directly to the development and implementation of an inclusive education system.

Up to now schools in South Africa are still being segregated on the basis of learners' abilities. There are schools for the deaf, dumb and blind, schools for the intellectually impaired and physically disabled and ordinary schools. This type of a system is so problematic that some learners are advantaged and some

disadvantaged owing to barriers placed among them.

The Education White Paper 6 (2001:17) states, "The Ministry accepts that a broad range of learning needs exists among the learner population at any point in time, and that where these are not met, learners may fail to learn effectively or be excluded from the learning system. In this regard, different learning needs arise from a range of factors, including physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments, psycho-social disturbance, differences in intellectual ability, particular life experiences or socio-economic deprivation.

In accepting this approach, it is essential to acknowledge that the learners who are most vulnerable to barriers to learning and exclusion in South Africa are those who have historically been termed learners with special education needs, i.e. learners with disabilities and impairments. Their increased vulnerability has arisen largely because of the historical nature and extent of the education support provided."

It is true that barriers to learning are created by the system, but parents or guardians are also contributing significantly to segregating learners in South African education. Many parents of children with disabilities reject abnormality in their children to the extent that they hide them and do not want to take them to school as they feel embarrassed about having given birth to children with disabilities. In some cultures, giving birth to a child with a disability is regarded as an insult and a sin within a community, or a clan in particular. The author of this dissertation can bear witness to this. In 1998 he had to visit parents in a community who were concealing a child with an intellectual impairment and not allowing it to attend the neighbourhood school as they felt embarrassed. Only after lengthy discussions with the parents did they reluctantly allow the child to attend the nearest school.

Dekker and Lemmer (1993:32) state that one of the problems surrounding the issue of equality in education is the variety of ways in which the principle has been conceptualised. Equality in education is generally discussed in terms of equal education opportunities, in itself a complex and sometimes confusing

education goal. However, it may be argued that to attribute a single factor to define the concept is limiting. The concept is a complex one and refers to a range of concerns, one of which is the lack of inclusion in our education system.

According to the White Paper 6 (2001:17), learners who are more vulnerable to barriers are those who have been termed learners with special education needs. This results from the fact that they get little education support owing to the poor management of their education system.

The system of special and specialised education is in fact a cause for concern as it promotes segregation among schools instead of closing the gap in bringing together learners with different abilities. It would also seem that the paradigm is shifting, as the focus is now on special schools. In the near future ordinary schools will be losing support unless the system of inclusion is introduced to close the obvious barriers.

The Consultative Paper No. 1 on Special Education (August 30, 1999:1-2) states, "The Green Paper outlines how the education and training system must change to accommodate the full range of learning needs, including those previously categorised as 'special' and the mechanisms which will need to be put in place. Developing the capacity of the education and training system to respond to inclusion will primarily involve recognising, addressing and preventing learning difficulties and exclusion. Particular attention should be paid to achieving these objectives through a realistic and effective implementation process that moves responsibly towards the development of a system which accommodates and respects diversity. This process will require a phasing in of strategies that are directed at departmental, institutional and curriculum transformation.

"It will also require the participation of South African communities so that social exclusion and negative stereotyping can be eliminated. The process of transformation is long overdue in our education system as the question of diversity has long manifested itself in the system. The Department of Education and in particular the policy makers will have to transform the entire system to

make it more inclusive so that all learners are accommodated into one system irrespective of their backgrounds or capabilities. The curriculum should be planned and formulated in such a way that it is all-inclusive, and accommodated learners from different backgrounds and abilities. The present curriculum, i.e. Curriculum 2005, still leaves much to be desired as it does not provide for an inclusive system of education. Educators were told when it was formulated that it was going to be a refined product that will be all inclusive, but to our surprise, it still provides for segregation."

In essence, what is needed is a curriculum that will accommodate and provide for every learner, irrespective of abilities. The curriculum will have to be managed to meet its set goals and objectives; policies to support the curriculum in the management of inclusion must be put in place to enhance the quality of education that will be provided in the system.

According to the Education White Paper 6 (March 2001:24), the key policy change noted is the movement away from using segregation based on categories of disabilities. As an organisation principle for institutions, the emphasis is on supporting learners through full-service schools. For instance, the incorporation of learners with cognitive disabilities into full-service and ordinary schools is an improvement, and the development of strategies and interventions that will assist teachers to cope with a diversity of learning and teaching needs will ease any transitional difficulties. These proposals justify a more cost-effective and equitable system which will result not only in increased access for those previously excluded, but also in ensuring that individuals with barriers to learning are integrated into an inclusive and more cost-effective education and training system. The central features of the proposed inclusive education and training system, with its funding and other resource implications, are:

- the ultimate expansion of access to and provision of full-service schools.
- the training of educators in full-service schools;

- reinforced district-based education support service, including support for curriculum development and assessment, institutional development and quality improvement and assurance; and
- a national information, advocacy and mobilisation campaign. (Education White Paper 6, March 2001:24).

2.5 SYNTHESIS

The introduction, implementation and management of an inclusive system of education should be regarded as a process and not a goal to be achieved overnight. A number of factors have to be taken into consideration, such as funding and the provision of resources to support the system. The advantage of the system will be that only one budget will be drawn instead of two as at present for ordinary and special schools respectively.

The provision of resources will also be channelled into one system of schooling instead of two, and this will obviously be more cost effective. The management of the system will also be facilitated as all policies will relate to one system, enhancing the improvement of quality assurance.

Although very effective policies on inclusion have been developed in South Africa, the problem is their implementation. Education management is not fast tracking the process of implementation by training educators in implementing them. The schools are still segregated and the learners are still disadvantaged, particularly the disabled, as they are still attending separate schools.

The literature reviewed thus far indicates that the South African education system is still highly segregated in terms of learners who experience barriers to learning and development, and the realisation of inclusion remains an ideal. To develop the system of inclusion, policies will have to be formulated, acts promulgated and communities sensitised to the advantages of inclusion before putting it in place, so that, once introduced, its management can be properly streamlined.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined different views on inclusion. The views of various authors were scrutinized in terms of their perceptions and attitudes towards inclusion. The policies in terms of the introduction and implementations of inclusion in other countries around the world were looked into so as to look at the feasibility of introducing and managing the system in South Africa.

CHAPTER 3

THE MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will look into the management of inclusion and will briefly describe what management is all about. The various managerial aspects related to inclusion will be discussed to outline how inclusion can be managed.

Management may be seen as the execution of management tasks or activities such as planning, organising, leading and controlling. "Management is a complex activity and different authors use different schemes in order to explain it. One particular aspect or management task should not be generalised when viewing management from the one perspective, e.g. decision making. One could easily come to the conclusion that management is decision making. However, in doing so, one may lose sight of the balanced view of management." (Badenhorst, 1996:9).

Management per se involves a number of tasks that the manager should consider when managing an organisation like a school, for example. Some tasks in managing an organisation involve policy and decision making, and financial, infrastructure and personnel management. There are also a number of activities involved in management such as planning, co-ordination, leading and control.

If inclusion is to be successful and managed effectively, parental involvement is of paramount importance. Parental support should be elicited at all costs; teachers alone cannot fulfil education tasks. Parents must be engaged in all activities affecting their children in school. If educators and parents can collaborate and support one another, an eventual relationship of trust will enhance education in schools.

To manage education effectively and efficiently in our schools, proper systems must be put in place.

"Management can be defined as the methods employed to effectively perform the functional task of an organisation through the optimal use of all available resources, both material and human." (University of South Africa, B.Ed., 1997:4)

Deventer & Kruger (2003:75) identify four management tasks in education, viz: Planning: This includes setting a vision, mission, aims and outcomes, as well as problem solving, decision making and policy making.

Organising: This includes establishing an organisational structure, delegating and coordinating.

Leading and directing: This includes communication, motivation, conflict management and negotiation.

Controlling/evaluating: This includes assessment, taking corrective action, supervision and disciplinary measures.

It can thus be assumed that, without these management tasks, education cannot be properly managed. This applies equally to inclusion.

3.1.1 An Australian perspective on inclusive education

The researcher visited Australia in August 2003 for purposes of studying the operation of the system of inclusion in other countries. A number of schools were visited in two states, viz. New South Wales and Victoria. An aspect peculiar to Australia is the federal system of government whereby every state has its own system of education, although there are various similarities, such as compulsory education up to a certain age.

The management of inclusion in Australia is based on a number of factors such as policy, finances, infrastructure and human resources.

The core of the policy is equitable education for all children, based on a movement toward greater inclusion of learners with disabilities into ordinary schools. The most supportive action is that the federal government allocates adequate budgets for the management of inclusion in schools.

On a visit to a school in Sydney where inclusion is being implemented, the Narrabeen Sport High School, the principal was asked how learners access some facilities in double-storey buildings. She showed the ramps that are used by learners with physical disabilities.

Australian schools are constructed in such a way that they are accessible to every learner, disabled or abled. The federal departments of education decide on the establishment of facilities in schools. The sports facilities are so well equipped that all learners can access and make use of them without any obstacles. Based on the observations made in Australia, it is clear that South Africa still needs a vigorous transformation system in education to address all the inequalities in terms of accessibility of education to all (Mathopa, 2003).

3.1.2 The South African perspective on inclusive education

In South Africa, inclusion has not been implemented, hence the schools are still functioning according to the old system of education whereby abled and disabled learners still attend different schools.

The management of education in South Africa is still based on different curricula running parallel, one for learners with special education needs and one for the so-called abled learners. The schools are also separated on that basis. The special schools do not accommodate learners from the mainstream schools and the mainstream schools do not accommodate learners from special schools who are differently challenged. Although the training of educators is exactly the same, the special school educators receive further training for special needs when they assume duty to capacitate them in dealing with differently challenged learners, for example special training in sign language and Braille. This indicates that to

prepare all educators for inclusion, much spadework needs to be done in training.

The development of specialized education in South Africa followed trends similar to those in most other countries. However a distinguishing aspect in the history of South African specialized education is the extent of political and philosophical influence. This resulted in gross inequalities and inconsistencies in provision between the previous racially segregated government and provincial department, as apartheid era categorized and officially classified people in terms of race. Thus while education and support services were reasonably well developed in those departments serving whites, coloureds and Indians, they were grossly underdeveloped in departments serving Africans. This manifested itself in various ways resulting in highly specialized and costly provision of specialized education and support services for a limited number of learners namely mainly white and to a lesser extent Indian existing special schools were enlarged and new ones established and the majority of these schools were occupied by white learners. Therefore the majority of learners and specifically learners experiencing barriers to learning, were not only discriminated against along racial lines, but also by policy and legislation that separated "normal" learners in the mainstream from learners identified as having "special needs" and requiring education in a "special school"

3.2 MANAGERIAL ASPECTS RELATED TO INCLUSION

3.2.1 Policy making

Any organisation, be it a school or business undertaking, is established and operated with a specific objective in mind. For instance, in the case of a business undertaking the objective may be to provide a service with a profit motive. In the case of a school, the overall objective is educative teaching, but merely saying so is not enough. Definite steps must be taken to ensure that this objective is realised. The usual starting point in this process is policy making whereby management gives direction in terms of the objective to be achieved

Badenhorst, 1996:10).

Policy is normally regarded as the rules and regulations that give any organisation the direction to achieve its objectives. The school as an organisation can also not operate outside the parameters of policy; it must have clearly set objectives.

Based on the tremendous changes that are taking place in education, every school is bound to formulate its own policy. Inclusion is one of the challenges facing our education system today.

It is very important that when the system of inclusion is put in place, policies must have been formulated to give the system direction along very clear guidelines. According to Badenhorst (1996:10). It is necessary first to deal with the main source of school policy, namely departmental policy, if a school's policy is to be understood. The reason is that the school forms part of an education system in which the Department of Education plays a decisive role. To manage the system effectively and efficiently, the Department has to issue policy guidelines to enable schools to formulate their own policies aligned with Departmental policy so that inclusion can be managed in the most co-ordinated manner.

The various South African policies on inclusion were discussed in Section 2.3. In future, every school will have to design its own implementation plan based on these policies. The attitudes of the people involved in a school, the learners, educators and parents, will eventually be reflected in the policy of the school.

3.2.2 Human resource management

For the successful implementation of inclusion in our schools in South Africa, the priority should be to train educators to enable them to manage inclusion. Such trained educators should then be placed in schools where inclusion is being implemented and should be supported by regular in-service training to capacitate them further in the management of inclusion. The curriculum for training educators at universities should also be designed in such a way that it includes teaching in inclusive schools as a learning programme. This would prepare

prospective educators. Tertiary institutions should also incorporate inclusion in their curricula to prepare prospective educators for handling inclusion as well. Educators in the system should be re-skilled in inclusion so that they fit well in the system of inclusion.

Department officials form one sector in education that should not be neglected, but who should monitor the progress of the implementation of inclusion and give regular support to educators. Intensive training should be available for school management developers (formerly known as schools inspectors), as it could create a huge gap in the relationships among all professionals in the implementation of inclusion.

3.2.3 Funding

The Government should make adequate budgets available for the proper management of inclusion in schools. There is no way that schools can manage the system effectively if the budgets are inadequate. The schools will have to buy relevant learning and teaching support material (LTSM) such as books for all learners with different abilities. The transformation of classrooms will require further funds to meet the needs of all learners.

"It has been indicated that the management of a school's finances starts with scientific planning and that budgeting essentially is the application of the whole plan of action" (Van der Westhuizen, 1999:396). For any school to succeed in its activities, it has to budget properly. Management of school finances is one of the most important areas in school management. Although most of the management functions concerning finances are taken care of by the principal and/or governing body of the school, class teachers are

also closely involved with the financial matters of a school. Not only do they often handle money in the classroom, but they are also involved from time to time in planning and controlling certain aspects of the school's budget. Schools will require more money from parents and other sources.

As in Australia, learners in South Africa have to be assisted financially where necessary. Where parents cannot afford school fees, Government should assist such learners, not expel them. To some extent, Government should also subsidise their transport to and from school. Addressing the needs of learners with special needs will have further funding implications if, for instance, special equipment has to be bought or toilet facilities have to be altered. Funding is also essential for the provision of special equipment for learners with various impairments, such as wheelchairs for the physically impaired, hearing aids for the deaf and walking sticks and Braille equipment for the blind.

3.2.4 Infrastructure

Van der Westhuizen (1999:511) states that in planning and designing a school building, its purpose, namely to realise educational aims and objectives, should be considered. A school building should be planned with specific education needs in mind. Provision should be made for all educational activities which take place at a school and stimulating venues should be suitable for accommodating various groups of learners as well as for using various educational media."

In South Africa the existing physical structure of schools is far from accommodating inclusion. Their physical structure is not user friendly to the physically impaired learners, as facilities such as ramps and suitable toilets are absent. The doors are too narrow to accommodate wheel chairs for the physically impaired.

To manage inclusion properly, our infrastructure must be accommodative to all types of impairments. For example, Braille for blind learners must be provided at all schools to facilitate access to buildings by the blind; double- or triple-storey

buildings must be provided with ramps for the physically challenged to facilitate movement and access to all buildings and classrooms. Otherwise schools must be built at ground level only.

In classrooms, seating must be spacious enough to allow even physically challenged learners to sit comfortably. Desks must be big enough to accommodate all disabilities. The classroom itself must be spacious enough to allow free movement, even for wheelchair-bound learners.

3.2.5 Parental involvement

Although only the word, parental, is used in this heading, in discussions it implies the concepts of guardian and caregiver as well.

Partnership in education is essential. The success of education management is vested entirely in the co-operation among parents and teachers. Hence today, in terms of SASA, parents have to play an active role in their children's education. The establishment of school governing bodies is in line with the Act that empowers parents to have a say in their children's education. Parental involvement has wide implications for education as they could assist teachers in various ways. "Neither the parents nor the teachers alone can fulfil the education task completely" (Badenhorst, 1996:109).

Education is a partnership and a joint effort. All problems that originate at school, such as disciplinary or financial problems, can only be effectively addressed and ultimately solved by the joint effort of teachers and parents.

3.2.5.1 The parents' role in their children's education

In the first instance it is important that parents take an active part in the formulation of school policy, particularly in matters relating to the code of conduct and its financial policies. According to Vandergrift & Greene (1992:57), parents may become involved in decision-making roles through advisory committees and

planning teams. This basically means that parents must be involved in all decisions taken by the school, e.g. assisting teachers to improve their children's performance by providing all the necessary resources to support learning, such as books, stationery, money and uniforms. The problem of discipline must be jointly solved by parents and teachers and parents must take an active role in maintaining discipline in a school.

3.2.5.2 Need for and value of parental involvement

Parental involvement in a school is vital. For example, for any school to have a viable financial position, parents need to assist the school in fund raising; problems relating to poor performance or discipline should be handled in partnership with parent committees.

(Badenhorst, 1996:114) states that working committees of parents may be established for:

Finances

Cultural projects

Sport

Transport

Liaison work

Nowadays the functions of school governing bodies clearly depict the need and value of parental involvement in education. All policies governing the school are part of its SGB's mandate. The general school performance is promoted by parents; they take such an active role in so many aspects that some even monitor the results every year and give positive rewards to well-performing teachers who produce the best results.

3.2.5.3 Reluctance to become involved

Some parents are reluctant to participate in school affairs or do not take a keen interest in their children's education. "Parents who are unsupportive and do not participate are obviously the most difficult to reach. In many cases, the reasons

stem from the fact that the parents' own problems take precedence over their child's education" (Vandergrift & Greene, 1992:58). In the writer's view, reluctance among parents is often caused by illiteracy.

They perceive the school as an area of literates where they are not welcome and cannot be accommodated. Poverty is a further cause of reluctance, as parents cannot afford all their children's school needs. Staying away from any school activity implies not being embarrassed when meeting teachers.

In some cases reluctance stems from ignorance, where parents simply do not understand the role they can play in their children's education. Most of them regard teachers as the ultimate force in their children's education. They believe that paying the school a visit would interfere in the teachers' duties.

The last group is the selfish one that says they are paying fees; why should they assist teachers who are getting salaries to educate their children. This is the group of the so-called ignorant elite who think they know better when they are, in fact, quite ignorant!

3.2.5.4 Advantages and disadvantages of parental involvement

Advantages:

Parents are part of decisions taken by the school and are bound to support them.

They start participating in their children's education.

They assist the school in maintaining discipline.

They promote their children's performance.

They support all projects embarked upon by the school, such as fund raising.

They take responsibility for the security of the school premises and facilities.

Disadvantages:

Parents will not know the teachers personally and will not co-operate with them. They will not take an active part in their children's education.

The acceptance of parents, guardians and caregivers in the management of inclusion should be pursued.

The role they can play will include, inter alia, financial support to the school, motivating their children and assisting educators in monitoring the academic progress of their children.

3.2.6 Communication

Communication is regarded as the vehicle for supervisory leadership. Education managers play key roles in building and maintaining effective organisational communication, since they interact with subordinates, peers, superiors and the community. Rue & Byars (1992:86) postulate, "Effective communication is a two-way process and information should therefore flow back and forth between the sender and the recipient."

This means that, in terms of the introduction and implementation of inclusion, all stakeholders must be taken on board. Educators, parents, learners and any interested parties such as non-governmental organisations must be embraced to gain their cooperation. If the process of inclusion is not well communicated to stakeholders, they will not buy in and the exercise would be futile.

Communication is a common experience that we all assume to know something about, but it is, in fact, quite a complex activity. Without communication, all we regard as human experience would cease to exist, for it is a vital component of all spheres of life. Management and organisations could not exist without communication. It is a common complaint within organisations that communication is unsatisfactory and needs improvement to accommodate even illiterate parents of children with disabilities (Bush & Burnham, 1999:245).

It is obvious that an organisation such as a school needs well-structured communication channels to interact with the community in all respects. If the school wants to manage all its systems properly, the involvement of all stakeholders is of paramount importance, as communication is one of the essential management tasks in an education system.

Most provincial departments of education are establishing strong communication links with the entire public for purposes of consultation and support. The Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) has a toll-free number that operates 24 hours a day so that members of the public can phone in at any time to advise the Department on a number of issues relating to its effective management. It is also used to help curb corruption among Department officials and other employees and on the misuse of property. This implies that communication is vital in the management of education.

In terms of inclusion, communication will play a vital role particularly between the school and the parents, especially those whose children have various impairments. The school will have to communicate regularly with such parents and vice versa in order to monitor the progress of learners and to maintain mutual support in educating learners in an inclusive situation.

3.3 MANAGEMENT OF INCLUSION

Inclusion is a novel concept in our education system; it has to be introduced, advocated and implemented in all South African schools. Certain mechanisms will, however, have to be put in place for the effective management of the system.

A number of components are required for the effective management of inclusion, particularly human resources. The principal, deputy principal, heads of department, educators and officials involved in the management of inclusion should be well prepared for their task. The learners in the system must also be prepared to accommodate one another, irrespective of the type of disability, so

that they become accepting, otherwise the process will be difficult to implement and may result in misunderstanding and frustration among the learners with different disabilities in the same school.

The management of inclusion in our education system would be very stressful if it is not properly reflected on.

For instance, learners could not easily accept one another in a situation where all abled and disabled attend the same school. Educators in the classroom would also find it stressful to face the challenge. It is therefore important that all involved in inclusion should be properly oriented and prepared to face whatever challenges. Parents should also be assisted to accept the challenge and to become involved.

Parents have a significant role to play during the introduction and implementation of inclusion. If their mindset does not favour inclusion, it will be a futile exercise. Learners too must also be prepared beforehand to accommodate inclusion and develop a positive attitude toward other learners, irrespective of their abilities. Parents and learners should begin to appreciate the importance of inclusion where all learners can study together without any obstacles. Above all, for successful inclusion, the attitude of all stakeholders should be transformed to achieve their positive conviction. Without the active support of parents, learners and educators, by the school management team (SMT) inclusion cannot be successfully achieved.

All SMT members and educators should also be involved in changing the attitudes of parents and learners. "In essence the teacher's task consists of teaching, helping, assisting and guiding learners toward certain learning outcomes. Thus, this task involves working with and through individual learners and groups to accomplish agreed learning outcomes" (Pretorius & Lemmer, 1998:55). The educator in a school is not only responsible for teaching, but is also part of the management of the school and the system of education.

3.4 CONCLUSION

The crux of the matter in introducing and implementing inclusion is efficient and effective management. The success of the system depends on proper management and the quality of the educators involved.

If the system of inclusion is not properly managed, chaos may be the order of the day in our schools and learners may lose focus in their work. Parents may tend to become rebellious about the system, defeating the object. Educators would not be properly motivated to implement and manage the system successfully in terms of planning, organising, leading and controlling. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the research methodology, which is the qualitative research. The various research method principles such as reliability and validity will be discussed. The qualitative research method will be discussed and the significance thereof will be explained. The data collection techniques will also be discussed.

Education in South Africa is still segregated in terms of the abilities of learners, the disabled and the so-called abled. According to the White Paper (2001:30), many learners experience barriers to learning or drop out primarily because of the inability of the system to recognise and accommodate the diverse range of learning needs, typically through inaccessible physical plans, curricula, assessment, learning materials and instructional methodologies. The approach advocated in the White Paper is fundamentally different from the traditional ones that assume that barriers to learning reside primarily within the learner and accordingly, learner support should take the form of specialist, typically medical interventions (White Paper 6:2001:30).

The national Department of Education in South Africa is the umbrella institution for the nine provincial departments of education. The Free State, one of the provinces, is divided into five education districts, and schools are distributed all over the province, irrespective of category.

The demarcation of Free State districts with their main centres are:

Lejweleputswa	Welkom, Virginia, Odendaalsrus
Motheo	Bloemfontein, Botshabelo, Thaba Nchu
Fezile Dabi	Kroonstad, Sasolburg, Frankfort

Xhariep Trompsburg, Edenburg. Springfontein
Thabo Mofutsanyana - Qwa Qwa, Bethlehem, Harrismith

All the small towns around the main centres form part of the district, with approximately 5 000 learners per district. There are 19 special schools in the entire Province and they cater for different disabilities such as the deaf and dumb, the blind, the intellectually impaired and the physically disabled. These schools still operate as so-called special schools admitting only learners with specific impairments.

4.2 RESEARCH METHOD PRINCIPLES

The term, methodology, refers to the way in which problems are approached and answers sought. In Social Sciences, the term applies to the way in which research is conducted. Assumptions, interests and purposes shape the selected methodology. When stripped to their essentials, debates on methodology are debates on assumptions and purposes, on theory and perspective (Taylor & Bogdan, 1997:3).

Ray Rist (in Taylor and Bogdan, 1977:79) points out that qualitative methodology, like quantitative methodology, is more than a set of data-gathering techniques. It is a way of approaching the empirical world. One of the basic principles of research methods is that a selected method must be valid and reliable. The research methodology used in the study is the qualitative method.

4.2.1 Reliability and validity

Reliability and validity are central issues in all scientific measurements. Both are concerned with the way in which concrete measures, or indicators, are developed for constructs. Reliability and validity are salient in social research because constructs in social theory are often ambiguous, diffuse and not directly observable. Perfect reliability and validity are virtually impossible to achieve; rather, they are ideals researchers strive for (Neuman 1997:138).

Any tool that is used in the research should be reliable and valid; if not, the research results will be nullified.

All researchers are geared towards reliable and valid research tools so that the findings of their research studies may be used to extend the knowledge already acquired or to develop new knowledge altogether.

4.2.1.1 Reliability

Reliability deals with an indicator's dependability. It means that the information provided by the indicator does not vary as a result of the characteristics of the indicator, instrument or measurement device itself. For example, if I get on my bathroom scale and read my weight, and I do so several times, I have a reliable scale if it gives me the same reading every time, assuming of course that I am not eating, drinking, changing clothing and so forth (Neuman, 1997:138).

In qualitative research, reliability refers to the quality of data. During data collection in qualitative research the quality of data is determined by the informant providing data during the interviews. Information-rich informants will always provide data of high quality as they are knowledgeable about the phenomenon under investigation. Any other individual who is not information-rich will not provide reliable information.

4.2.1.2 Validity

Validity is synonymous with truth. Sometimes the validity of an explanation is questioned because the researcher has clearly made no attempt to deal with contradiction. Sometimes the demands of journal editors for shorter articles and the word limits attached to university courses mean that the researcher is reluctantly led to use only significant examples (Silverman, 2001:175 - 176).

Any data gathered in research must be valid, otherwise the research results will not be recognised. In any setting in the field research the researcher will be looking for the most valid information and, if possible, with no element of speculation as this will be invalid. Many researchers are out to get information-rich subjects for purposes of validity as these subjects will provide all the necessary and valid information required for the study. That is why in qualitative research high quality information should be the aim of every researcher.

4.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:393) interactive qualitative research is an inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings (field research).

4.3.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research describes and analyses people's individual and collective social actions, beliefs, thoughts and perceptions. The researcher interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings people attach to them. Qualitative studies are important for theory generation, policy development, education practice improvement, illumination of social issues and action stimulus (McMillan and Schumacher 2001:393).

The research design for this study is qualitative. Research studies that are qualitative are designed to discover what can be learned about some phenomenon of interest, particularly social phenomena where people are participants (or internationally referred to subjects). Qualitative researchers develop a general focus of inquiry that helps to guide the discovery of what is to be known about some social phenomenon (Maykut & Morehouse 2000:44-45).

In qualitative research, participants or settings, such as schools or organisations, are carefully selected for inclusion, based on the possibility that each participant

or setting will expand the variability of the sample. In this research only information-rich subjects were selected from a school and the Free State Department of Education, as the researcher was looking for subjects with the wealth of information in the study under investigation.

According to Maykut & Morehouse (2000:45) qualitative researchers are interested in understanding people's experience in context. The natural setting is the place where the researcher is most likely to discover, or uncover, what is to be known about the phenomenon of interest. This characteristic of qualitative research in turn reflects the philosophic under-pinning of the alternate paradigm. Personal meaning is linked to context.

In the course of his research, the researcher interviewed subjects for the purpose of understanding more about inclusion and how it can be managed. The educators in a special school and Department officials were interviewed to obtain more information about their experiences in dealing with learners with impairments and to determine their attitudes to and perception of inclusion in schools.

Qualitative research is exploratory by nature and in this study an attempt was made to gain insight into what the implications of inclusion in schools are and how the system can be properly managed. The exploratory nature of the research will enable the researcher not only to share in the understanding and perceptions of educators and officials as participants in the study, but to explore and construct knowledge on how they structure and give meaning to this aspect of their daily lives. To explore the management of inclusion, the researcher probed the perceptions and attitudes of research subjects.

4.3.2 Significance and justification for using qualitative research.

Qualitative research employing a case study design also contributed to policy formulation, implementation and modification. Some studies focus on the informal process of policy formulation or implementation in different settings with diverse cultural values to explain public policy outcomes. Qualitative research can analyze community economic and political influential perceptions of an issue, the attitudes of policy makers towards a proposed policy and views of those who implement policy. These studies frequently identify issues that suggest the need to modify statutes or regulations and help policy makers anticipate future issues (McMillan and Schumacher 2001; 400)

4.3.3 Characteristics of qualitative research

- Captures and discovers meaning once the researcher becomes immersed in the data. " Concepts are in the form of themes, motifs, generalizations, taxonomies.
- Measures are created in an *ad hoc* manner and are often specific to individual setting or researcher.
- Data are verbalized from documents.
- Theory may be casual and is often inductive.
- Research and replications is very rare.
- Analysis proceeds by extracting themes or generalisations from the evidence and organising data to present coherent picture.

4.4 FIELD RESEARCH

Field research is based on naturalism, which is also used to study other phenomena (e.g. oceans, animals, plants). Naturalism involves observing ordinary events in natural settings, not in contrived, invented or researcher-created settings. Research occurs in the field and outside the safe settings of an office, laboratory or classroom. Reiss (in Neuman 1992:45), argues that a researcher's direct observation of events in natural settings is central to the

status of Sociology as a science, and that this status is threatened if Sociology turns away from naturalism.

When conducting field work, the researcher has to consider certain measures, such as ethics. Ethical principles in qualitative research are similar to those for quantitative research. Ethical guidelines include, but are not limited to, informed consent, deception, confidentiality, anonymity, harm to subjects' privacy and others.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:420) postulate that qualitative researchers need to be sensitive to ethical principles because of their research topic, face-to-face interactive data collection, an emergent design and reciprocity with participants. Criteria for research design involve not only the selection of information-rich informants and efficient research strategies, but also adherence to research ethics.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative research depends on three methods of data collection, viz.:

- Literature study
- Interviews
- Observation

In this study one data collection technique was used, i.e. interviews, as the researcher went into the field to listen to the subjects' opinions on the problem under investigation.

To understand complicated problems such as how people deal with a poor self-image or why healthcare costs are increasing so much, researchers must be able to explore the topic with their interviewees. To learn about the ways people lived through historical events such as wars, embargoes, rapid inflation or depression, or how they adapted to downward social mobility, researchers have to let the subjects describe their experiences in their own terms (Rubin & Rubin, 1995:17).

To determine the attitudes and perceptions of people towards inclusion the researcher has to interview the role players and stakeholders in education.

4.5.1 Interviews

An interview is a face-to-face relationship between the interviewer and the subject with the purpose of getting more information about the topic in question. This is the field work undertaken by the researcher to collect the most appropriate data to answer the problem under investigation.

Taylor and Bogdan (1997:87-88) state that when most people hear the term, interviewing, they think of structured research tools such as attitude surveys, opinion polls and questionnaires. These interviews are typically administered to a large group of respondents or subjects. People may be asked to rate their feelings along a scale, select the most appropriate answer from among forced-choice responses or respond to a predetermined set of open-ended questions in their own words. Although these research approaches differ in many respects, they all adopt a standardised format: the researcher has the questions and the research subject has the answers. In fact, in most structured interviewing, each subject is supposed to be asked identically worded questions to assure comparable findings. The interviewer serves as a cheerful data collector; the role involves getting people to relax enough to fully answer the predefined series of questions.

In this study only information-rich subjects were selected. The researcher identified information-rich subjects among the educators and particularly the school management team members such as the principal, deputy principal and heads of departments at a school in the Free State province that caters for special needs education. The Department officials who are responsible for special education will also be identified and interviewed as they have a wealth of knowledge pertaining to special needs and how inclusion can be implemented and managed in our schools.

4.5.1 The advantages of interviews

According to Bailey (1989:174), the following are advantages of interviews:

Flexibility: One major advantage of the interview is its flexibility, interviews can probe for more specific answers and can repeat a question when the response indicates that the respondent misunderstood.

Question order: The interviewer has control over question order and can ensure respondents do not answer the questions out of order or in any other way thwart the structure of the questionnaire.

Spontaneity: The interviewer can read spontaneous answers. The respondent does not have the chance to retract his or her first answer and write another, as is possible with a mailed questionnaire. Spontaneous answers may be more informative and less non-formative than answers about which the subject has had time to think.

The following statements and questions were set during the interviews:

Tell me about your perception of inclusion.

Tell me about your attitude towards inclusion.

How can inclusion be properly managed in our schools?

How will educators manage learners with special education needs?

What will the attitude of the educators be?

What will the attitude of other learners be?

What will the attitude of parents be?

Will the school have the necessary infrastructure to manage inclusion?

4.5.3 Observation

Observation was used to investigate and clarify the research context. The aim was to observe and record ongoing events and behaviour of the participants in relation to the research questions, without attempting to change these events or behaviour. In the context of this dissertation, the researcher observed the manner in which participants from different environments, that is the school and the Department, collaborate in the research setting.

According to Bailey (1989:239) the observational method is the primary technique for collecting data on non-verbal behaviour. Although observation most commonly involves sight or visual data collection, it could also include data collection via the other senses, such as hearing, touch or smell. Use of the observational method does not preclude simultaneous use of other data-gathering techniques. Observations are often conducted as a preliminary to surveys, and may also be conducted jointly with document study or experimentation.

Observational notes will give an account of what happened while the theoretical notes will form the researcher's conscious, systematic attempt to derive meaning from the observational notes on reflection. The methodological notes create the audit trail of the methodological process followed in collecting the data while in the field. These notes allow the researcher to give a more informed description of the working relationships among educators.

4.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

In preparation for the research, a letter of consent was written and sent to the target school to secure permission from the principal to interview his personnel (refer to Appendix A). After receiving the authorisation from the principal, the interview process started.

According to McMillan & Schumacher (1993:157) research design refers to a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer the research question. The design shows which individuals would be studied and when, where and under which circumstances they would be studied. The goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are judged to be credible.

Credibility and validity are critical in any research. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:157) credibility refers to the extent to which the results approximate reality and are judged to be trustworthy and reasonable, whereas validity means the degree to which scientific explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world. Since the aim of this research involves the management of inclusion in primary schools in South Africa, the research design should be based on these two scientific aspects, i.e. credibility and validity to authenticate the results.

4.7 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

There are nineteen special schools in the Free State with two hundred and sixty five educators across the province. The target school for this research was Bartimea School in Thaba Nchu with the total number of twenty-six educators including the school management team. The officials from the Department of education responsible for the special schools also formed part of the sample.

The selection of the sample was based on the knowledge in terms of exposure to the special schools for children who are differently challenged. The experience of educators was also taken into consideration based on the number of years they taught at a special school as this was perceived to be an advantaged as they were more knowledgeable than new educators. The departmental officials had a better exposure as they first taught at special schools before they were promoted.

4.7.1 Realisation of sampling

The research was conducted in a primary school for special needs education with 10 out of 26 full-time educators and among Department officials in the Sub-Directorate for Special Needs in the FSDoE. The researcher entered the research setting (the school and the Sub-Directorate) in September 2003.

Following a preliminary week of introductions, the researcher interacted with a number of school management team members and educators and finally interviewed officials and educators who volunteered to participate in the investigation.

A pilot study was first conducted in terms of the comprehension of interview questions before the actual interviews were conducted with three participants selected from the sample. The three participants were the deputy principal, one head of department and one educator. The three were interviewed separately to measure their understanding of interview questions.

All the eight questions prepared for the interview were asked and the deputy principal and head of department had no problem responding to the questions but the educator struggled with the first two questions. The two questions were:

- How do you perceive inclusion?
- What is your attitude towards inclusion?

The two questions were then rephrased to:

- Tell me about your perception of inclusion.
- Tell me about your attitude towards inclusion.

The educator understood them better and responded elaborately and the questions were left like that.

Every respondent interviewed was selected purposely, i.e. on the basis that the respondent was information-rich and was able to inform the investigation adequately. After an extended period of about six weeks, when data appeared to be saturated, i.e. revealed no new information, a total of twelve respondents were interviewed, namely four educators the principal, two deputy principals and heads of departments and two Department officials. All the interviews were tape-recorded and each interview lasted about 45 minutes. The learners were not interviewed as they are not part of a school management team.

The interview process was uniform with exactly the same questions asked and with probing once as a follow-up. The major focus of the interview was the management of inclusion in schools. Although there was no emphasis on gender and race, it turned out that eight of the respondents were women and four were men. The respondents were Jane, Pulane, Neo, Meisie, Sello, Mary, Tau, Lerato and Kidi, Tumi, Billy and Dillo (all pseudonyms). The races of the respondents varied among different ethnic groups, but they cannot be revealed for fear of jeopardising the anonymity and confidentiality as undertaken.

All twelve respondents varied in their number of years' experience in special needs education. The most experienced were the Department officials as they were educators in special schools before being promoted to supervise and guide such schools. Of the four educators, two had worked in such schools for more than twenty years, one for more than ten years and the last had only worked in a special school for two years. Only one of the educators had never worked in ordinary public schools before moving to special schools. All the school management teams members had worked in special school for more than twenty years. The Department officials had the most experience as they had started teaching at ordinary public schools, then moved to special schools and were finally promoted to the Department Head Office to service special schools.

4.7.2 The sample

The subjects who contributed to this study were divided into three categories as described in Chapter 4, Section 4.5.2. Brief summaries of these groups are as follows:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Group 1 | Two Department officials who taught at ordinary public schools, then went taught at special schools and were finally promoted to Head Office as supervisors of special schools. |
| Group 2 | Four educators in special school, two who worked for more than twenty years and those who worked for more than twenty years. The experience of educators will contribute to their responses to interview questions. |
| Group 3 | The principal, two deputy principals and three heads of heads of departments. |

The methodology of this research incorporates issues related to research ethics and trustworthiness, sampling, data and processing, and literature control. These will be elaborated on in the sections below.

4.7.3 Research ethics: ethical measures

McMillan & Schumacher (2001:421) postulate that most ethical situations require researchers to determine situational priorities, which frequently involve discussions with participants. In obtaining permission to enter the field, most researchers give assurances of confidentiality and anonymity and describe the intended use of the data. Because of the research strategies employed, of physical or psychological issues seldom arise.

Ethical principles have guided this research from the beginning. The researcher

undertakes to consider the following ethical measures throughout the study.

4.7.4 Prior to commencement of the study

4.7.4.1 Informed consent

Many researchers view informed consent as a dialogue. Every new participant in the study was informed of the purpose and assured about confidentiality and anonymity. Informing participants took place in a manner that encouraged free choice in participation.

The time required for participation and the non-interfering, non-judgemental research role was explained. Usually interview times and places are selected by the informants. Because researchers attempt to establish trusting relationships, they need to plan how to handle the dialogue (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:421).

The participants in this study are adults who have the capacity to give informed consent directly. Participants' informed consent was formally requested after all the issues related to such consent had been explained. This means that participants were informed in a language of their choice of, inter alia, the potential risks that they might be exposed to and their right to participate or not.

Issues related to the study such as its goal, procedures of investigation and possible advantages or disadvantages were shared with them. The researcher's bona fides were communicated to them, verbally and in writing prior to the commencement of the study.

4.7.4.2 Voluntary participation

The assumption behind informed consent is that, given sufficient information on which to base a decision, the participants' consent to participate is free and voluntary. Informed consent further implies that the research participants should

not be coerced in any way to participate in the study. Their participation in this study would be strictly voluntary, with the freedom to withdraw at any time. This was explained to them before the research began. No State institution or body with such affiliation or influence sponsored the research, so there would be no financial remuneration or incentive for participation (De VosetaL 1998:27).

4.7.4.3 Protection from harm

It is the responsibility of the researcher to protect participants from physical and emotional harm of whatever nature. Choosing the site for an interview plays a significant role as the researcher will not choose any place with potential physical harm, but will look for an environment conducive to education such as the school office, staff-room or a classroom that is physically safe. Protection from emotional harm is the main concern in this research, particularly in view of the study under investigation. Every possible step was taken to assess the extent to which participation in this investigation might be stressful to participants relative to their normal, daily activities. Questions would be structured in such a way that they are neither personal, nor stressful to the interviewees (De VosetaL, 1998:25).

4.7.5 During the study

4.7.5.1 Relationship with participants

Relationships with participants is a major research issue to be resolved in qualitative research. (Bailey, 1989:179) postulates that a secondary relationship is usually functional rather than emotional. The interaction engaged in it is for a purpose, often a single purpose. The interaction is likely to be polite and courteous but restrained, and formal rather than intimate. Rather than acting in terms of the whole personality, the two participants utilise only a single facet of the personality. This implies that the onus is on the researcher to establish and maintain a relationship with participants that is most appropriate to produce valid research. Throughout this study the researcher would ensure that a relationship of trust is maintained with participants and that the initial rapport established during the preparatory stage would be sustained.

4.7.5.1 Anonymity and confidentiality

In general, there is a strong feeling among field workers that settings and participants should not be identifiable in print. Researchers use imaginary locations and disguise features of settings in such a way that they appear similar to several possible sites. (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:421).

Strict confidentiality and participants' anonymity would be maintained in this study, even if the findings were published. This was formally communicated to participants. To achieve this, the names and addresses of data sources will not be published and every attempt will be made to group the data collected so that personal characteristics or traceable details of participants will remain anonymous. The location where the study will be conducted will not be identified by name. Participants' responses will not be labelled except to the extent needed to discuss the results. A tape recorder will be used with the participants' consent.

4.7.5.2 Harm, caring and fairness

Many researchers argue for "committed relativism" or "reasonableness" in a particular situation. Although ethical guidelines exist, the difficulty is in the application. Researchers need to identify potential ethical dilemmas and resolve them. Open discussions and negotiation usually promote "fairness" to the persons and to the research inquiry. (McMillan and Schumacher, 1993:423).

In his research the researcher would try to be fair and reasonable by all means. Open discussions would be held with all participants before the interviews commenced, so as not to violate the personality of participants. The interview questions would be structured in such a way that they could not cause anyone harm.

4.7.6 After the study has been completed

4.7.6.1 Debriefing

Debriefing sessions would be conducted after the study as part of a strategy in this research to allow the researcher and participants to work through their experience during the investigation and its aftermath. This in the true sense, is the reflection on what had been obtained during the interview sessions; the researcher together with the participants would rectify all misconceptions or any misrepresentations.

4.8 CONCLUSION

In terms of research methodology, a number of factors were taken into account, such as the principles of reliability and validity. These two principles are the cornerstones of all research methods because, if the method of research is not reliable, the entire effort would be invalidated (Taylor & Bogdan 1997:3) state, "when stripped to their essentials, debates over methodology are debates over assumptions and purpose, over theory and perspective."

The stated principles in research methodology, viz. reliability and validity, also play a significant role in both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In his research the researcher applied the qualitative research methodology based on the reliability and validity of all the information gathered. The next chapter focuses on the analysis and summary of the results.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the research design, methods and data collection techniques are discussed. This chapter focuses on the analysis and discussion of the results in terms of the methods and data collection techniques used. The results are combined and discussed in terms of the interviews conducted among Department officials dealing with special needs schools as well as educators in special schools. The aim of the results is to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 4.

To reiterate, the basic objective of the research is to determine how inclusion can be managed in our schools. Before the results are presented, a brief review of the realisation of the sampling is necessary.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

From the results obtained, it is clear that the perceptions and experience of Department officials and educators of inclusion are not the same. Different attitudes to inclusion are also apparent in the groups of educators who taught for more than twenty years and the group that taught for less than twenty years.

In terms of the data analysis, the results obtained were organised into categories and sub-categories where appropriate. According to McMillan and Schumacher (1993:479), "qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories and patterns emerging from the data, rather than being imposed on the data prior to data collection."

According to the categories and sub-categories into which the results were organised the following outline will be used in this chapter:

5.3 BARRIERS

Barriers to the management of inclusion:

- Communication
- Policy
- Infrastructure
- Barriers to relationships among Educators, parents and learners

5.3.1 Barriers to the management of inclusion

Barriers refer to invisible rules, situations or problems that prevent learners with different abilities from attending the same school. With respect to barriers, two sub-categories are arranged from the data obtained, namely:

- Barriers to the management of inclusion
- Barriers to the relationship

Although barriers are perceived to be the cause of segregation among learners with different abilities, Group 1 in this study emphasised that inclusion can be manageable as long as educators are prepared to face the challenge. In Group 1, Respondent 2 shared her experience, "I am very confident that inclusion can be manageable as I have worked with progressive inclusion where it was first a pilot, gradually including learners. Later a few more schools were targeted and then others.

"The other type I worked in is full inclusion where the separate facilities, such as language classes, special classes and special schools were closed and all learners were

placed in ordinary classes. However though, when those learners were placed in the school they were not prepared and the educators were also not prepared and encountered quite a number of problems."

In terms of the management of inclusion, one of the priorities is the development of human resources (refer to Chapter 3). As our present educator corps is not well trained for inclusion, re-training is very important for them to be ready and prepared to accommodate inclusion. Moreover, our training institutions for educators, such as colleges and universities, must transform their curricula so that educators are trained toward inclusion. Prospective teachers must be prepared to face the challenges brought about by inclusion so as to handle it in their schools.

Judging by the views of all the respondents, it may be deduced that their attitudes and perceptions to inclusion differ. The Free State Department of Education officials are very positive about inclusion and they perceive it to be the most appropriate system of bringing learners with different abilities together in the same learning environment.

The attitudes and perceptions among educators also differ; those with more than twenty years' teaching experience in a special school do not see the potential of inclusion in schools. It is unacceptable to them to bring learners with different abilities into the same school. They anticipate the humiliation of disabled learners; they are over-protective toward disabled learners whom they profess to know better than other learners.

Educators with less than twenty years' teaching experience seem to be somewhat confused. They are uncertain of how inclusion is going to work. They asked probing questions about the system; they actually wanted to know more. Sometimes they were sceptical or showed some understanding, but they were hesitant about the implementation of inclusion. The researcher is of the opinion that if they are properly orientated, they could make a valuable contribution to inclusion, unlike their counterparts.

Group 1 of the Department officials was positive that the barriers to the management of inclusion could be overcome, whereas Groups 5, 2 and 3 of the educators did not anticipate any possibility of managing inclusion successfully in our schools. However, three important barriers in the management of inclusion have emerged from an analysis of the results obtained in this study. They are:

- Communication
- Policy
- Infrastructure

5.3.1.1 Communication

Communication emerged as a prominent problem among the respondents in terms of the management of inclusion in schools. Both groups, i.e. the educators, management team and Department officials, were highly concerned about communication among learners with impairments such as the blind, deaf and dumb.

Concern about communication among learners with and without impairments is captured well in the reflections of one of the educators,

"...how on earth do you get learners with different abilities communicating with ease, when some of them do not even understand sign language? I personally do not see the possibility of implementing and managing the system of inclusion. For example, how will the blind learner communicate with the deaf and dumb? The one uses Braille and the other sign language; how do you expect them to communicate?" (Respondent 1).

An educator who worked at a special school for less than five years commented,

"Before I came here I taught at an ordinary public school and we still experienced communication problems with the so-called abled learners.

particularly with foreign languages, how much more so with disabled learners? I don't think they will make it" (Respondent 2).

These comments reflect the educators' preference for a segregated system of education. Riches (in Bush and West-Burnham, 1994:245) points out that communication, although a common experience, is quite a complex activity.

5.3.1.2 Policy

Another barrier related to the management of inclusion was the issue of policy. This was cited frequently by respondents, although their perceptions differed. One group of educators raised the issue in relation to the unavailability of guidelines on the management of inclusion. The Department officials were very positive about policies as they were engaged in the formulation of policy guidelines for the implementation and management of inclusion. One official explained,

"... At the moment the Department, in particular our Sub-directorate of Special Needs Education, is in the process of finalising policies on the management of inclusion in our schools in the Free State. Policies are geared towards primary schools first, as this is the target at the moment, and later on as the process unfolds, the secondary schools will be taken on board. This must be regarded as a process but not as a goal to be achieved overnight" (Respondent 3).

On the other hand, one educator felt that the system of inclusion must be stalled until such time as all policies are in place. She remarked,

"The best way to introduce and manage inclusion in our schools is to have all policies finalised first, then implementation and then management of the system. How do you implement such a cumbersome system without policies being in place? Who is to guide the process of convincing the community that the system will work? I think you must go back to the drawing board and rethink your thoughts. I am very sceptical

about your ideas and I foresee a disaster" (Respondent 4).

It is evident from the above remarks that educators are very sceptical about the introduction and management of inclusion in schools. They are not even convinced that the policies that are being formulated will be successful. What the research has highlighted so far, regarding the views of educators and Department officials, is that it is clear that officials are very positive about and supportive of the implementation and management of inclusion. In contrast, teachers appear to be very pessimistic about inclusion. They are very negative and do not foresee any possibility of managing inclusion in schools because they are still apprehensive about the unknown. During the interviews one of the respondents went as far as asking the researcher whether the system of inclusion was introduced specifically to drive away old educators who would not cope!

5.3.1.3 Infrastructure

Van der Westhuizen (1999:498) postulates, "Because children differ from one another in capability, aptitude and interest, every child makes unique demands on the teacher, the educational activities and the physical facilities. It is necessary to pay attention to the needs of learners in planning the physical facilities. The learning capacity of learners is enhanced by a stimulating, interesting and pleasant milieu."

The core challenge during the interviews revolved around the suitability of the infrastructure. The educators listed many examples of unsuitable facilities that could not accommodate inclusion, whereas Department officials were convinced that most physical facilities, particularly the buildings, could easily be converted to accommodate inclusion. One Department official explained,

"... To manage inclusion efficiently, the school buildings can be converted to accommodate learners with different abilities. The doors can be made wider to accommodate wheelchairs, the desks can be made bigger for physically disabled

learners. If the buildings are higher than ground floor they can be provided with ramps for easy movement of learners with disabilities. Which implies that all new buildings must be at ground level only" (Respondent 5).

By contrast, educators were dispirited. To them, the whole system is a pipedream. They contended that the present infrastructure was a hazard to disabled learners. One educator remarked,

"If you want to manage inclusion properly, then it means all present school buildings must be demolished and new ones erected"
(Respondent 6).

The situation described by Respondent 5 indicates that with a positive attitude to the system of inclusion, much can be achieved and the system may be effectively managed with proper planning. All that he suggested is not difficult to achieve, given that Government operates on long-term budgets. It would be easier to manage the system with available budgets over a period of time. It therefore indicates that Department officials are optimistic about the management of the system, whereas the educators are very pessimistic. The educators are, in fact, anticipating a lot of work and stress if the system of inclusion is put into place.

It is evident that if educators are not adequately supported by the community and all the stakeholders involved in education, it will be fairly difficult to implement inclusion successfully. If parents have a reluctant attitude to inclusion and do not own the process, the entire operation would be futile. Inclusion deserves the support of the school community as a whole.

Based on the interviews, it may be reasonably assumed that some educators and parents still need much orientation on the system of inclusion. It is also apparent that people are not so much negative towards inclusion, as ignorant about it. They should be provided with the relevant information on inclusion.

5.3.2 Barriers to relationships

For inclusion to be successfully managed, parental involvement is vital. Without their support, inclusion cannot be successfully managed. In the first instance, parents must be prepared to take their disabled children to school and the school community should be prepared to co-operate with educators in incorporating disabled children into the school system. One of the challenges that schools are facing is that parents conceal children with disabilities. In Section 2.3, it is stated that many parents of children with disabilities are over-sympathetic toward their children, to the extent that they hide them and do not want to take them to school, feeling embarrassed at having given birth to them.

"... How do you possibly talk about inclusion when we are still struggling to motivate parents to send their children to a special school? How much more so if you tell them about inclusion? Don't you think that will make the situation worse?" (Respondent 7).

If the parents still display a negative attitude to inclusion, it will be extremely difficult to manage the system of inclusive education. The involvement of all stakeholders in inclusion, including parents, NGOs, business and the broad community, is of paramount importance.

A major concern raised by school management team was that they do not enjoy adequate support from the stakeholders mentioned. In some instances they are also perceived to be disabled, like the learners they are teaching. One deputy principal from Group 3 was highly de-motivated about the relationship with stakeholders and remarked,

"I think I'm going to leave special schools and go to ordinary public schools. Teaching in special schools is a frustration because everybody looks down at you. One day I was looking for a donation from a certain company and the owner asked me where I was teaching. When I told him at a deaf and dumb school, he said I could not talk properly, like those

learners. Is this not enough embarrassment?" (Respondent 8).

Another aspect that emerged during the interviews was parents' and the broad community's attitude to inclusion. Meijer et al. (1997:150) state, "Inclusion in education should be part of an encompassing development in society in which the concept of handicap and the position of people with special needs are changing."

During the interviews, the educators and school management team expressed their concern about parents and indicated that the majority of parents with disabled children are too protective. They indicated that some parents even have a problem sending their children to special schools; it would become worse with ordinary schools providing for inclusion. One head of department said,

"If parents hide their children with disabilities and prevent them from attending schools for special needs, how much more so with schools that cater for inclusion? I doubt if any of those parents will allow their children to attend a school with the so-called abled learners. Parents are sceptical about inclusive education as they suspect that their children will be victimised and put at a disadvantage. They will not allow their children to become the laughing stock at such schools that cater for inclusion" (Respondent 10).

This suggests that if the school management team's concerns about parents' attitudes is something to go by, parents' mindsets first have to be transformed - essential if inclusion is to be successfully implemented. This support does not apply only to parents who have disabled children, but to all other parents. The attitude of parents without disabled children is that their children's progress at school will be compromised. As one put it,

"There is also a concern from parents of children without disabilities, as they don't understand how their children will progress when they sit in the same classroom with an intellectually impaired child. How long will they be taught one lesson so that both understand it the same way?" (Respondent 4).

Duhaney et al. (2000:1) suggest, "Parents also can be instrumental in the success of inclusionary placements for their children. They can collaborate with school district personnel and community members to create and support inclusive educational programmes. Parents should be offered insight into their children's abilities and needs, they should communicate regularly with educators, share information about inclusive educational programmes with others and encourage others to support inclusion programmes."

It is vitally important that communities be orientated toward inclusion so that they take ownership of the system. Only then can inclusion be successful. If the community understands what inclusion is all about, they will begin to appreciate and support it, making implementation easier and successful. In most cases, a negative attitude to inclusion is created by ignorance and results in suspicion. Parents will always suspect that their children will be abused and humiliated.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

In terms of the research aim it can be concluded that if the recommendations made are considered, inclusion is possible in South Africa particularly in the Free State Primary Schools. The research assumptions state clearly that once the budgets can be availed, there will be no problem in implementing inclusion.

From the responses of the three groups of respondents it became clear that teaching experience correlated with attitude. Group 1, Department officials, was very positive about the implementation and management of inclusion. Groups 2 and 3 displayed the same uneasy attitude to inclusion; educators and school management team members have not been properly trained, infrastructure is not user-friendly, budgets are not available and learner support material is not geared to inclusion.

Generally, the feeling of all respondents revolved around proper management mechanisms for the implementation of inclusion. The greater focus of all respondents during the interview was on this question,

How can inclusion be properly managed in our schools?

Although individual responses differed, the researcher realised that concerns about management were at the core of the responses. Even Department officials raised concerns about management. As one official said,

"Are the budgets available to manage inclusion? Because I doubt if the system will work without adequate finances. You should remember that proper planning must be done beforehand to manage all systems."

Based on interviewees' responses, it may be stated that inclusion is possible as long as all management systems, such as proper infrastructure, educator training, finances and relevant teaching and learning support materials are in place and parents are involved in the process.

5.5 SUMMARY/ CONCLUSION

In terms of the interviews conducted it appears the understanding of the respondents pertaining to inclusion is not the same in particular among the educators. The common feature, however, amongst all the respondents is that they see the need for inclusion although some are confused on how it can be implemented.

The need for parental involvement was also highlighted, as the concern was some parents are still ashamed to send their physically challenged children to special schools. Their involvement in the system of inclusion would therefore be of paramount importance. The role that the Government should play was also viewed as very important particularly in terms of budget. The next chapter will deal with the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the summary, conclusions and recommendations about the whole study. The summary will give an overview of what the study was all about and methodologies that were applied. The conclusions will sum up the entire study and look at how inclusion is implemented in other countries and what challenges are there in South Africa. The recommendations will come up with the proposals for the introduction and implementation of inclusion particularly in the Free State Schools.

The entire South African education system is undergoing transformation. It is evident that provinces have a vital role to play in transforming and aligning their policies with the national norms and standards. The effective management of all systems is critical in the transformation of education, so that whatever changes are effected should be under control. If all learners are to be brought under one roof to learn and be taught together, mechanisms must be put in place to manage those systems as efficiently and effectively as possible.

6.2 SUMMARY

It is evident from the literature and education policies that the researcher scrutinised that inclusion is long overdue. In terms of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, The Bill of Rights states that "Everyone has the right:

To a basic education, including adult basic education; and to further education which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible."

This implies that every South African child and adult, irrespective of disability, must have the same access to education. The Bill of Rights in the Constitution does not provide for any form of segregation among learners and the type of education they should receive. This implies that the Constitution is violated by having different categories of schools in South Africa. No mention is made of special schools in the Constitution -implying that all learners have to attend the same schools.

The mainstream schools in the Free State are still not accommodating learners with special needs or those who are physically challenged.

According to Ballard (1999:67), "The students' accounts reveal their attempts to challenge the kinds of identities and experiences that are constructed for them within formal school regimes and the informal discourses of teachers and students. These efforts are described by Foucault as technologies of the self that are transgressive and involve not direct confrontation, but rather a playful struggle, against those who attempt to label them as either disabled or normal, or restrict their participation within mainstream classrooms."

The students themselves are now fighting for their rights as they do not want to be labelled any longer. According to them, the question of being marginalised in schools is a transgression and violation of their rights to education. They also regard their restriction to participate in mainstream classrooms as a transgression as they are being forced into a system that is not their own. It is obvious that learners must be allowed to express themselves in various ways in education settings. Restrictions and boundaries placed on learners in terms of their education needs should be abolished. The question of marginalising learners today on the basis of their abilities or disabilities is outdated; all learners must be allowed to attend mainstream schools as freely as they possibly can.

Many authors support inclusion in schools. Stainback and Stainback (1994:6) state that, "Moving towards inclusive schools has several advantages over continuing with traditional approaches that attempt to help students with disabilities or disadvantages (fit into mainstream). One advantage is that everyone benefits from inclusive schools' focusing on ways to develop supportive and caring school communities for all students, rather than selected categories of students."

Forlin (1998:21) states in this regard that the movement toward inclusive rather than segregated education has resulted from considerable world-wide emphasis being placed on the rights of all children, regardless of disability, to receive appropriate and equal education opportunities.

It is evident from the two authors, Stainback and Stainback, that inclusion has more advantages than a segregated system of education in that all learners benefit equally from all education opportunities, whether they be learning and teaching support material, budgets or facilities, no learner may be disadvantaged in inclusion. Internationally inclusion is regarded as one system of education that embraces all learners and affirms each one of them, as they are all exposed to equal opportunities.

Different policies are being formulated in South Africa right now and the national Department of Education is in regular consultation with all stakeholders to map out plans for the introduction of inclusion in schools. Since 1996, white papers on special education have been produced in preparation for inclusion. In 2001, White Paper 6 was finalised stating that, "Accordingly, new curriculum and assessment initiatives will be required to focus on the inclusion of the full range of diverse learning needs."

Commissions have been instituted with the sole purpose of investigating the possibility of inclusion, after a thorough research into the present education system and focusing on the future. The report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (1997:23-24) state, "Education at the Early Childhood Development Phase has been sadly neglected in South Africa, yet it remains critical to the early identification of learner needs and intervention to enable learners to sustain effective learning. Despite the fact that such identification of learners at risk is critical to the development of children with disabilities, they remain vulnerable and excluded from the education system."

All these policies and commissions have one major objective - the establishment of an inclusive system of education. Looking into the possibility of establishing this system, the researcher is convinced that the management of inclusion is an important factor that must be taken into account, as it will be critical to the success of inclusion. It is further important

to think about the management mechanisms that are to be put in place for sustaining an effective, inclusive system of education.

Educators must be prepared to handle the challenges that will crop up during the introduction and implementation of inclusion. Budgets must be readily available, parents must be well orientated and learners must be properly sensitised.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.3.1 The Free State Department of Education

Based on the responses captured during research, it is recommended that the Free State Department of Education should design the curriculum in such a way that it is all-inclusive. Schools must no longer be categorised in terms of learners' abilities and disabilities. The nineteen special schools in the Province should be incorporated into mainstream education and allowed to accommodate any learner - with or without a disability. All primary schools in the Province should adopt an open admission policy to admit any learner and to stop marginalising some learners based on their abilities. In cases where learners are severely impaired, a special class should be created for such an impairment but on the premises of the same school, without any bias of whatever nature or segregation of whatever form.

6.3.2 The Sub-Directorate for Special Needs

All policies currently formulated by the Sub-Directorate should be geared towards inclusion. All officials should undergo training in inclusion so that, when they visit schools, they would be capacitated to assist and guide educators to be aligned with the envisaged transformation toward inclusion. The curricula of special schools should be designed in such a way that they are all-inclusive and not be designed specifically for special schools. The Sub-Directorate should prepare all special schools for the process of incorporation into mainstream schools.

6.3.3 Educator training institutions

Higher education institutions that train educators should design their programmes in such a way that prospective educators are trained for inclusive schools as well. There should be courses specifically designed for inclusive education so that, on completion of their training, novice teachers can easily slot into the system of inclusion. This should apply specifically to universities that have a faculty of education or department of educator training.

6.3.4 Parents

The school governing bodies of all primary schools in the Free State should attend workshops to sensitise them to the process of inclusion, so that they are empowered to assist in managing the process of inclusion. The school governing bodies, in turn, should conduct general meetings with all parents to sensitise them to the process of inclusion. During parent evenings, the principals should also workshop the school community to solicit their support for management when inclusion is implemented. Parents should be conscientised about the need for and significance of inclusion in schools, so that they buy into the idea and consequently take ownership of the system.

6.3.5 The principal's role

The role of principal in the implementation and management of inclusion should be to ensure that inclusion is accepted by the school community and the learners in their schools. As the leader of the school the principal should motivate parents and learners to understand and accept inclusion. The school policy should emphasise inclusion, and the building must be made user friendly for all learners.

6.3.6 The classroom teacher's role

A significant factor in successful inclusion is that educators themselves accept inclusion so that they can motivate their learners to accept one another's diversity in the same school and classroom. The question of diversity among learners should be emphasised so that they start accepting one another as human beings, irrespective of disability. Educators should become agents of change by setting the example of accepting the diversity of learners in the same school and classroom. Educators should advocate inclusion throughout the school and community and within Department systems, such as policy formulation.

6.3.6 Further research

Continuous research has to be done to determine the proper management of inclusion once the system is in place. The implications of inclusion have to be assessed to determine whether schools, communities and, ultimately, the learners, are benefiting. Research on the production of suitable learning and teaching support material must be tackled comprehensively so that appropriate materials become available.

The suitability of infrastructure needs to be audited so that no learner or educator is disadvantaged during the introduction and implementation of inclusion in Free State primary schools.

Finally, management systems must be thoroughly researched to establish the most appropriate mechanisms.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Deductions from the whole study are summarised as follows:

This conclusion covers the entire study and in terms of the aim of the research in chapter 1 (1.4) the research sought to give an overview of the study.

As the purpose of the research was to make recommendations for the transformation of the education system, it is evident from the interviews conducted that inclusion is a necessity in our country. But of great importance is that when it is introduced the management system must be put in place so that the entire system becomes a success. The policies, human resource, infrastructure, learning and teaching support material (LTSM) should all be in place to take the process forward.

Although there are limitations in the introduction of inclusion such as the management which is the responsibility of the traditional Department of Education (DoE), some progress can still be achieved. The training of educators as well can stall the process as some funding will be required in that direction.

In reality, inclusion is a process and not an objective that can be achieved overnight. For any provincial department to implement inclusion successfully, all management systems must first be put in place, including human and financial resources and suitable infrastructure to accommodate various abilities and disabilities. The provision of suitable learning and teaching support material is of paramount importance if the system is to operate effectively and achieve the best results. To this end, proper management structures must be instituted.

According to Van der Westhuizen (1999:55), management is a specific type of work in education which comprises those regulative tasks or actions that allow formative education to take place, executed by a person or body in authority in a specific field or area of regulation.

Many foreign countries have already started implementing inclusion, and very sound policies have already been formulated, such as those in Australia. It will therefore not be difficult for the Free State (and South Africa) to introduce inclusion in primary schools as it can emulate the way the provinces in such countries are operating and managing the system. Transformation in education is inevitable, as education is a dynamic process undergoing continuous change. Inclusion should therefore be accepted as an inevitable form of change.

On the basis of the research conducted through interviews, the researcher concludes that the introduction of inclusion is long overdue in the Free State primary school system. However, educators need to be well prepared to handle the challenges confidently. Workshops and in-service training will have to be conducted regularly.

APPENDIX A LETTERS OF CONSENT

Consent to participate as a respondent in the
Research Project

I hereby authorise Mr MH Mathopa, student at the University of South Africa, to involve me in the study, The management of inclusion in Free State primary schools. This study is designed to explore factors related to the introduction and management of inclusion in Free State primary schools and to determine the perceptions and attitudes of educators to inclusion.

I understand that I have been asked to participate because I am an educator at the school and I command valuable information that can properly inform the investigation. I understand that if I am a participant, I will be asked questions in an interview that will probably not take longer than sixty minutes. Mr Mathopa will come to my school to interview me only once and, if necessary, follow up for clarification. I understand that there will be one question to start the interview and subsequent questions will only emerge as we proceed. The interview will be tape-recorded and my permission is granted. This procedure has been explained to me by Mr Mathopa himself.

I understand that the study described above will not impose undue pressure on me, but some of the probing questions may seek personal information. Beyond that, no risk to my health will result from my participation. I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from this research at any time without prejudice or penalty. I have been informed that my identity will not be disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law. I understand that the name of my school will not be identified in any way.

I understand that I will not receive any cash benefits from being involved in this study but I will have access to the findings. If the study design or use of data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that Mr MH Mathopa may be reached at 082 802 3097, and will answer any query I may have about the study.

Participant's
signature

Date

Witness

Date

To: The Principal
Bartimea School

From: MH Mathopa

Topic: Request to utilise Bartimea School as a research site for a project
towards a
Master's degree

I am a graduate student enrolled at the University of South Africa. I am required to conduct a research study as part of the programme. I hereby request permission to utilise your facility and enlist the co-operation of your educators during the data collection process for this project. My study deals with The management of inclusion in Free State primary schools.

Interviews, document analysis and observations will be utilised to collect data. Each interview is anticipated to take sixty minutes, with mutually convenient dates arranged.

It is understood that no educator will be coerced into participation and the participating educator may withdraw from the study at any time. Educators' responses will be totally anonymous and the school will not be identified in any way. Copies of the final project will be available to the school upon request.

Thank you for your co-
operation. Yours sincerely

MH Mathopa

Consent of school to participate.

Principal

Date

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW

Respondent 3

Key: I - INTERVIEWER R - RESPONDENT

[I] Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. As you know, my field of interest is inclusion. Now, having worked with disabled learners in special schools, I should like to know more about your experiences in working with disabled learners and start by asking you this question. Can you tell me about your perception of inclusion?

I think that inclusion will be a very exciting but a very challenging concept to implement in South Africa. Specifically, since UNESCO has changed its definition of learners with special education needs and recommended inclusion, obviously it will be a very beneficial concept to implement in South Africa. If you look at the broader definition that was formulated and established in the early part of 1995, you will find that inclusion er ...er... no, learners with special education needs would be given access to their local schools. This includes the following:

Those with difficulty in school, whether temporary or permanent

Lacking interest and motivation

Only able to complete two or three years of primary education

Forced to repeat a grade

Forced to work

Learners living on the streets

Learners living too far away from the school

Victims of severe poverty

Victims of war and armed conflict

Learners suffering from continual behavioural, physical, emotional and sexual abuse

Or those simply not attending school, for whatever reason.

If you look at all those learners, it is typical of the South African population because prior to 1994, i.e. prior to the adoption of democracy, all these learners had no access to school. If you look in terms of inclusion, it means that all these learners must be put back into the classroom. But, if you look at including these learners, you have to look at initiatives in how to accommodate them in the classroom. In turn this means that all learners must have access to an education programme. One of the issues that is very clearly stated can be found in our Constitution, Education White Papers, the Integrated National Disability Strategy and several other education documents on inclusion.

We have to target all these children so that they can enjoy the right to a quality education and that means that we have to accommodate all these learners in the classroom. I feel that it is only right that we should provide them with an education as they have the same rights as the other learners. Prior to 1994, only a small part of the population in South Africa had access to very privileged and very modern education facilities and material. It is time that we should allow every learner to have access to these assets that only a small part of the population had.

I: Do you think inclusion will work in our schools?

R: Inclusion will only work if we use a collaborative approach. When I talk about a collaborative approach, I mean we have to solicit stakeholders that will assist us to address the needs of these learners. If we look at the broader definition, we are looking at children that live on the streets, with emotional problems, living in poverty, children that have been sexually abused, physically abused. We cannot teach a child in school that is hungry and has not had food for days, or with sexually abusive problems. Those are the types of learners that our stakeholders need to assist and assist the community in providing a better environment for the children, whether it is in school or the community, so that they can learn and develop like any other human being. It will only work if we use a collaborative approach with a variety of stakeholders that would target the

areas or the extrinsic factors of the child's life that impacts on the child's learning and development. It will also be cost effective if we approach it that way because each stakeholder has its own finances or budget to assist education and these learners in whatever problems they encounter.

I: Do you think learners with different abilities will cope in inclusive education?

R: First of all we have to look at preparing those learners for the classroom. Some of them have not seen the inside of a school, some of them have dropped out of school, some of them are older learners, and we have to prepare them for the challenge of either coming to or back to the classroom and entering a regular classroom. We need to prepare the learners, as they have to adjust to the classroom environment. We have to find ways and programmes Working programmes for these learners in the context of the outcomes-based curriculum where the learners can be successful in their learning. If we do not do this, the learners are never going to cope. We can also use outside agencies to assist these learners in adapting to the classroom environment. If the learners have trouble with the work and take it home for homework, we also have to assist the parents, and get some training for the parents in how to assist these learners. If indeed these parents have had no formal education, we can also assist them with ABET programmes so that they can become literate and knowledgeable and be equipped to assist their children. We need to engage in building partnerships with stakeholders that will assist us.

I: What about educators, do you think they will also cope in inclusion?

R: This is going to be our biggest challenge. To date, many educators have a negative attitude about inclusion. They think that they are not equipped and feel overwhelmed. They also need to be prepared for inclusion and trained to deal with learners with behavioural, emotional and academic problems. On top of that they have to learn how to develop learning material that will assist the learners in the classroom. This is the biggest problem for the education department. We

need to develop a good training programme that will equip the educators. Not only must the educators be trained, but also the administrative personnel. There are good questions like how am I going to run my school and develop alternative disciplinary procedures to accommodate learners with special education needs such as those with severe behavioural problems or a physical disability, etc.?

[I:] also feel that the educators need preparation for an inclusive education system. That will come from training, advocacy programmes, setting up a strategic plan for the school and an operational plan annually. Review the operational plan every three months to identify the shortcomings of the inclusive education programme and address them. We need to work as a team at schools. We cannot do it alone as everyone at the school is involved in the inclusive education programme. Only this way will we succeed.

[I:] Do you think our infrastructure is suitable for inclusion?

[R] Presently, we are working on the infrastructure. There are some structures such as wider doors, toilets that have to be adjusted, seating accommodation in the classroom ... all those types of infrastructure must still be addressed to make the school accessible for all learners. What about the blind child? His seating must be accommodated which means that the classroom organisation must change. What about the child that is physically disabled and uses a wheelchair? This means that the doors must be made wider. We also have to change the desks and adjust the height of the tables. Those are the types of things that we need to do, but we also have to look at whether we are going to do it throughout the province or one school at a time. That is imperative as it is costly. Thus, we need to look at our stakeholders that would assist us in sharing the financial costs of building the infrastructures of schools. If we get these infrastructures in place, half of the battle is won for the learners to cope within a classroom situation. The other half is looking at assistive devices for the learners. This is where the Department of Health can assist us. What about the learner who is deaf? This is where the outside agencies can assist us with training our

educators in sign language. Or learners that are hard of hearing. What about the phonic ear that the educator has to use to amplify the sound for the learner? All this needs training and to be put in place. We do not have the money to do all this. But we can succeed with the collaborative approach with stakeholders, not just different departments but also different agencies and the corporate world. Agencies such as Disabled People of South Africa, the Association for People with Disabilities, DEAFSA, DICAG and the Council for the Blind. All these agencies can be very beneficial in assisting the children's learning and development. We must provide an environment where the child can and will succeed.

I: Tell me now about your attitude toward inclusion.

R: I am very confident that with this type of set-up it will work. I have worked with progressive inclusion where it was a pilot first and included learners slowly. Later a few more schools were targeted and then others. The other type I worked in is full inclusion where the separate facilities such as language classes, special classes, special schools were all closed and the learners were placed in the regular class. However though, when these learners were placed in the schools, they were not prepared and the educators were not prepared and encountered quite a number of problems. We need to do full planning first. If we don't, we can put ourselves into a situation for litigation. The parents can throw the law at us and demand that the learner be placed in a regular class with a quality education programme. Therefore, we can get into a lot of legal problems if we do not provide adequately for the learners. Therefore, we have to have a planned course of direction we will follow. Also, the learner must enjoy his/her learning.

I: What do you think in that situation the attitude of educators towards inclusion will be?

R: I think the major problem for the attitudes of educators is that they feel helpless, unprepared and it makes it difficult for them to accept these

learners. They feel resentful but it is only because they are either un- or under-qualified to deal with such learners. This is also because about 80% of our educators in the old system were not exposed to the very modern teaching strategies and ways to deal with learners with special education needs. They also did not have the privilege to train further or access courses, whereas our white colleagues had full access to these privileges. They enjoyed this and had access to modern and beautiful international programmes. The majority of our educators do not have that training to assist the learners. I think that is also a source of the attitude problems amongst teachers. We also need to train and assist the teachers in developing materials, train them in modification strategies for learners with special education needs and manage their diverse needs in their classrooms. Then I feel that educators will be happy to go ahead.

I: And what about learners? Do you think their attitudes will be right when they all get into one classroom with the so-called abled learners?

R: You know, the learners are probably more comfortable than the educators. Some learners may have difficulty. Children are different. Some adapt easily, others not. We need to educate all learners. Learners can sometimes be very mean to others. We need to build a society where we view each other with diversity and different needs. We all function at different levels. It is how to deal with these needs and different levels. We need to assist the educators in understanding this. We all have different capacities. We need to accept each other with our shortcomings, no matter what. Once we get this message across to all learners, our battle is won. We will then see each other as a society with diverse needs.

What about the parents of the disabled children? Do you think they will definitely have a positive attitude to exposing their children to the so-called abled or normal learners and attending the same school?

R: In my experience, I feel that there are very practical ways in which to deal with this. There are some parents who will complain that the educator is

taking time away from their children when she/he has to spend time with the more challenged learners. What you do, is get all the parents together and do some advocacy. Preach, we are human beings first and all have diverse needs. There is no need to embarrass anybody. We need to accept each other for what we are. We also need to engage all parents in the setting up of programmes for the learners. If a child is more needy than the other, we can involve the parent in setting up programmes that would assist the learner in being successful. Perhaps it is not the parent of the child but another parent. I know that there are many parents sitting at home that would be very willing to assist the educator. They are dying to do something. Engage them in doing something positive. They can also sit down and plan with the educator. The advocacy programme must promote the acceptance of everyone for what they are.

The first thing you have to do, is get some advocacy programmes on what an inclusive education programme is. Once we have got the attention of the parents, the learners, the educators and the principal and understand that every person has a right to an education, we have to get them to understand that we have to form a union. We want them to enjoy and participate. First of all we have to plan. We need to find a vision and mission statement for the school. Who are going to be our stakeholders that will assist us in the community? There are lots of businesses, etc. There may be a university available to assist. We must tap into every resource in the community. Find out what are the needs. What are the needs of our school, our learners and the educators/personnel. This is a baseline assessment.

Then we do an analysis of the assessment. With inclusion, our priority should be to provide learners with access to schools. We have to look at our administration, our infrastructure, our transport. Does the learner live too far from the school? Do we have transport? Is there a bus? Can the bus accommodate learners with disabilities? All those issues we need to address. Now we have to look at how we are going to approach it and then look at how we are going to do this. Perhaps we should start with the infrastructure or perhaps transport. But, either way we will have a lot of projects. Look at all the barriers to learners. Then

we as the educators must conduct training. Now we look at the curriculum. Is the material suitable for the learners? How do we modify it for the learners? We cannot touch the curriculum because the outcomes must be the same. We need to modify activities, classroom structure, teaching strategies and modify other strategies to address the learner's learning and development. The child must have access to the curriculum. Are the words too hard in the activity, are the words too difficult for the child, are the activities too difficult for the learner, are the activities too many for the learners? These are some of the issues that need to be modified. Children with fine motor difficulties need modifications in their programme, but, as long as they can show you they have achieved the outcome, they show mastering.

This is where we have to start in providing access to the curriculum for the learners.

Yah, now, according to your experience, how can inclusion be properly managed in our schools?

[R:] In the first instance the Department must put policies in place for the proper management of inclusion in our schools. There must be guidelines to principals, educators and parents that clearly spell out the entire progress of inclusion to allay all fears and build co-operation among all stakeholders. Secondly the infrastructure in schools must be user friendly to all the various forms of disabilities so that they are accessible to all. Buildings in particular must not go high but remain on the ground level, but if they are built in storeys, they must be provided with ramps for purposes of accessibility. Thirdly government must make funds available to provide all learner support material and administration infrastructure. Learners must be provided with books, pens, writing materials and charts. Physically disabled learners must be provided with the equipment to assist in mobility, such as wheelchairs. The schools must be provided with all equipment such as computers, telephones and faxes.

I: Yah. Somewhere along the way you mentioned the question of learner support material, that is the books. How do you think these books should be structured?

R: For the learner who has visual problems the books can be in Braille. For the learner that has other problems, take the material and develop it so that the learner can have access to the curriculum according to the needs of the learner. We look at the same topic or theme as the class for the learner. One unitary curriculum. They do everything the same as the other learners except the developed material will be modified so the child has access to the curriculum.

I: Yah. Don't you think the question of finances will also come to the fore in terms of inclusion?

R: This is exactly why I said we need to collaborate with other stakeholders. Each one will play a role within the education of the learners. For example, in a small town we had fifty learners seen by the Department of Health. Out of fifty learners, twenty-nine of them had medical problems. There is a reason why they are not concentrating and achieving. They are sick. Secondly, I think the learners' ears and eyes must be tested. There again we need the Department of Health for assistance. We have the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Agriculture that can assist both the learners and the community in raising the standards of living. They can grow their own gardens, etc. At least when the children go home they will have food from their gardens, and we can also have a school growing its own food. We can use this project at school to develop a unit in curriculum link. The child is actively involved and the end product can be used as food at school. All the departments and agencies can assist in alleviating the financial costs of education.

I: What role do you think the Department will play in terms of budgets for

the management of inclusion?

R: I think they have a critical role where they can assist us with the infrastructure. In building new schools they will have to include the new developments in the infrastructure so that the barriers are eliminated. Something else they can do is form partnerships with education so that we can make schools accessible for all learners. There are also funds from our Human Resource Development Directorate that can assist us in providing funds for training. We can also ask the Curriculum Directorate and the universities to assist us in making modifications for the learners. Then we would not have to buy commercialised material to assist these learners.

We can also utilise what we have in the community so that the curriculum is relevant to the learners' experiences. For example, the fire station. The learners can walk to the local fire station or the community fireman can come and do a presentation for the learners. If you do something on insects, the little kids love to catch bugs. Take them for a walk and catch bugs to observe and you can develop a whole unit around those bugs. You can integrate other learning areas in the bug unit such as Maths. How many legs does my insect have? How many legs does a locust have? Those are the types of things we can do.

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