SUPPORTING PARENTS WITH THE PARADIGM SHIFT FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

BY

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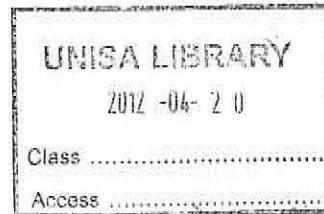POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

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BLOEMFONTEIN

DEDICATION

THIS

MINI-DISSERTATION

IS DEDICATED TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE:

- To my parents, father Motlohi and the late mother Mamohapi who laid the foundation for me, for their parentage and support from the beginning of my education until now.

- My beloved   partner, Mpolokeng, for her sympathetic, encouraging attitude and undying consistent support when I was discouraged during this study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DECLARATION

I, TEBOHO MACFARLANE MANAKA hereby declare that this research study, entitled:

SUPPORTING PARENTS WITH THE PARADIGM SHIFT FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

is my own work, all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this mini-dissertation was not previously submitted by me for a degree at any other university or institute

T. M. MANAKA

31 January 2003

ABSTRACT

Once the process of inclusive education and training system begun in South Africa in October 1996 with the appointment of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS), there were many anxieties and fears amongst parents about inclusion proposals. The White Paper 6: Building an inclusive education and training system (DoE, 2001:50) alerts us to the fact that there were strategic areas of change such as to establish partnerships with parents so that they can be armed with information, counselling and skills, participate more effectively in the planning and implementation of inclusion activities, and so that they can play a more active role in the learning and teaching of their children.

The purpose of this study is to support some of the NCSNET/NCESS strategic areas of change such as mobilising public support (e.g. parents) for inclusive education. The study focused mainly on the support of parents of learners without special educational needs (SEN) with a paradigm shift towards inclusive education. In addressing this, the study recognises the involvement of parents in the change process and support mechanisms around the point of a paradigm shift. The paradigm shift or mind-shift and support for parents of learners without SEN will be essential for the attainment and maintenance of an inclusive society and an inclusive education and training system.

In recognising the challenges faced by the parents of learners without SEN in the present involvement of parents within inclusive education, the researcher found it necessary to look into the aspect of paradigm shift and support for parents. The researcher decided to undertake this study in order to answer the posed questions namely:

- What is the status quo of parents of learners without SEN about inclusive education?
- How to ensure that parents of learners without SEN accept disability so as to realize a successful inclusive education?
- Why it is important for parents to support one another?
- What programmes will be put in place to help parents adapt to paradigm shift?

The literature study on the below mentioned issues were undertaken to support the aim of the study:
- The parents' attitude towards LSEN.
- Involvement of parents in inclusive education.
- Parents' support regarding inclusive education
- Lastly, parents-learner support for inclusive education.

The afore-mentioned literature study would be supplemented by the observation among educators-parents from selected schools, and parents of learners without SEN. The researcher used a qualitative interview survey with selected parents of learners without SEN who work at the organizations of people with disabilities, and a quantitative questionnaire survey.

From the data collected during this research study, the researcher critically analysed and interpreted the data. The researcher found that there are still fears and misunderstanding regarding the support of parents for inclusive education. In contrast with this, the data revealed that many parents do not understand inclusive education. In contrast with these, the data revealed that even if parents do not understand inclusive education, parents are more than willing and prepared to be given efficient education and support about inclusive education so that they can easily accept inclusive education. The researcher came to the conclusion that with the provision of support for parents, change/a paradigm shift will be effectively effected by parents for the success of inclusive education.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Many changes have been introduced in South Africa after democratisation in 1994. One of these changes was the transformation of the education system of the country (Rapuleng, 2002:1). In this regard, in October 1996, the Ministry of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (Department of National Education (DNE); 1997:3). These two bodies submitted a joint report in 1997, recommending that the dual system of education in South Africa with a "special education system" as well as an "ordinary education system" be changed to a single education system (Naicker, 1999:12). It was thus recommended that a single system of education for all learners, wherever possible and irrespective of learning barriers should be established.

Naicker (1999:12) alerts us to the fact that major and far-reaching groundwork to prepare for the change from special to inclusive education has been done. With reference to the literature study, it seems as if there has been a lack of consideration for parents of learners without special educational needs, and more emphasis has been put in learners with special educational needs (LSEN) and their parents. Hence, in order to counter these trends, and furthermore to progress the preparation regarding groundwork for inclusive education, the researcher focuses his study on parents of learners without special educational needs (SEN).

According to Naicker (1999:13) the implementation of an inclusive system of education requires a major reorganisation of South African education. This reorganisation entails the introduction of inclusive practises, as well as structural changes to education departments.

This is furthermore supported by Spady (1994:7), who refers to systematic changes in the:

- Entire system of thinking and behaviour in organizations,
- The functioning of major social and organisational functional entities,
- The roles and responsibilities people assume.

The above statement means that parents of learners without SEN should ensure a systemic paradigm shift regarding LSEN and disabilities, so as to realise a transformational inclusive education system.

One of the major challenges facing educationalists in South Africa with regard to the change from a segregated education model to an inclusive model revolves around paradigms and paradigm shifts (Naicker, 1999:45). This implies that not only educationalists are faced with challenges regarding inclusive education, but parents are also faced with the challenges with regard to the paradigm shift for inclusive education.

According to Burrel and Morgan (1979) as quoted in Naicker (1999:45), one's belief system, values and understanding of the world are located in a particular paradigm. Van Straaten (1981:249), however, indicates that a paradigm shift requires changing lenses. A paradigm shift brings about an entirely different world's view and a complete change of philosophy. This implies that the parents of learners without SEN should have a complete change of philosophy regarding LSEN towards inclusive education.

The DNE (2000:55) alerts us to the fact that the provision of support for parents should also be prioritised. The DNE (2000:55) further states that the development of a community-based support system will rely on the development and utilisation of all community resources, such as community-based organization, non-governmental organisations of the disabled and individuals such as health professionals and ordinary members of the community.

In order for inclusive education to materialise in the South African context, much work has to be done in creating a consciousness of the correct model, and making its implications for the practice known to the public. The NCSNET and NCESS (Doe, 1997a) as a result of constraints such as time and financial and human resources, could not reach all South Africans (Naicker, 1999:48). This research study will be conducted as an attempt to support parents of learners without SEN with the paradigm shift in order for inclusive education to materialise.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education of 1994 (UNESCO, 1994) and the **Consultative Paper no.1 on Special Education, First Steps of 1999** (DoE, 1999) affirm that Inclusive Education and Education for All has been an issue of concern. There has been a period of extensive investigation, review and public comment based on the joint recommendations of the NCSNET/NCESS that was appointed by the Ministry of Education after acknowledging the importance of providing an effective answer to the unsatisfactory educational experiences of learners with special educational needs, including those within the regular settings (DoE, 1997a:30).

As a result of the limited nature of the involvement and participation of parents in the past, **The South African School Act no. 84 of 1996 (section 24) and (section 23 (5))** in DoE (1996:46), requires the full participation of parents in the

without SEN may provide some kind of stimulation that would lay the foundations for subsequent social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth (Beveridge, 1993:94).

Consultative Paper No. 1 on Special Education, First Steps (DoE,1999) maintains that there should be a strong facilitation of home (parents)/school relations for the purpose of providing support. The change in mind and attitudes of parents of learners without SEN would assist in accepting the disability of children, helping parents of the LSEN to accept their children, and assist in promoting community awareness about inclusive education to maximise the potential role of volunteers. The principles of inclusion do not only apply to learners with disabilities or at risk, but to all learners (Stainback & Stainback, 1996:49). If parents of learners without SEN were not being integrated into the inclusive education system, it would mean that the seeds of social discontent and discrimination would be sowed.

A true inclusion or integration, including the parents of learners without SEN, will ensure a, caring and supportive society. This is supported by Stainback and Stainback (1996:11) where he declares that, if our societies and communities were going to be ethically, morally and legally just, inclusion would be a must. It is important that the history of the shift to inclusive education in South Africa and the work of the NCSNET/ NCESS be made known (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:12). The support of parents of learners without SEN would easily promote the advocacy campaign and the launching of information about inclusive education to other relevant stakeholders.

1.4   PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIMS

According to the researcher's experience, there is a lack of or a non-active involvement of parents of learners without SEN in activities of the disabled. The lack of or non-involvement of parents of learners without SEN could be caused

by negative attitudes they have about disability. **The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy of 1997** (DoE, 1997b) states that negative attitudes is continually reinforced. Disability is portrayed as a "problem" and people with disabilities are viewed as helpless and dependent.

Barton (1984:51) states that inclusive education is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end, namely establishing an inclusive society. As inclusive schooling involves all learners, irrespective of ability or disability, there should be a good deal of influence with regard to all learners' social development. The preceding statement means that parents of learners without SEN should be engaged in the following, namely:

- awareness regarding inclusive education;
- involvement in the paradigm shift processes to change their attitudes; and
- training and support on inclusive education.

Gordon (1975:297) draws attention to the fact that parents can be blamed for the troubles that young people appear to be causing in society or even at school. Parents, however, should be trained or supported on how to deal with children. Munn (1993:128) points out that we should address the continued stereotyping by parents of learners without SEN that LSEN are not educable and that they could not be integrated.

From the problem statement above, the following questions arise namely:

- What is the perspective of parents of learners without SEN on inclusive education?
- How can those parents of learners without SEN be assisted to accept disability so as to realise a successful inclusive education?
- Why is it important for parents to support one another?

- What programmes should be put into place to help parents to make a paradigm shift?

1.5 THE PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to research how inclusive education could be implemented to ensure:

- that parents of learners without SEN are trained; and
- how to support parents to make the paradigm shift from a negative attitude towards disability to that of accepting LSEN.

The secondary aims of this study, therefore are as follows namely to:

- make parents of LSEN learners aware of the fact that they should support their children on a mutual and emotional level;
- seek for answers on the question whether parents of LSEN learners are efficient stakeholders in the education of their children; and
- ensure that an effective network is established to form a partnership that would support, collaborate and co-operate with the parents.

1.6 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The NCSNET and NCESS R report was submitted to the Ministry of Education in 1997(Naicker, 1999:12). What emerges clearly from the NCSNET and NCESS process is the shift towards education for all (Naicker, 1999:50). To ensure that South African inclusive education becomes a reality, it is important to involve parents of learners without SEN as active stakeholders in the education of their children. The research study examines the paradigm shift and support for

inclusive education. The research, however, confines itself to the parents of learners without SEN.

The research study focuses on the parents of learners without SEN, who will be the target population of the study. A sample of 150 from three selected primary schools in the Bloemfontein area will be approached and issued with the questionnaires. The purpose of this would be to address the misconceptions about inclusive education by parents of learners without SEN, so to change parents' attitudes, and to support them regarding inclusive education. The two interviews (A1 and B2) will be conducted with parents of learners without SEN, but who work with people with disabilities. The purpose of the interviews would be to enable parents to support disabilities and to adapt programmes for parents of learners without SEN, in order to accept LSEN and to support inclusive education.

1.7   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations could be noted:

- Only primary schools were considered in the study, yet the system encompasses secondary schools too. The researcher nevertheless hopes that all levels of education would find the study useful.
- Rural schools were not catered for, only three town and township schools.
- Only two organizations for people with disabilities were accommodated.
- The data collection methods by means of the questionnaires focused only on parents of learners without SEN, rather than involving all the stakeholders in inclusive education (which includes parents of LSEN).

1.8   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Literature and empirical studies have been selected for this study. Empirical study in education is usually done by means of qualitative and quantitative methods. In this study the qualitative and quantitative research method will be applied in order to seek the answers to the problems listed in 1.4

To be able to reach the set aims, the qualitative mode as an empirical research design will be conducted by means of an interactive inquiring method (MacMillan and Schumacher (2001:193). This technique will enable the researcher to do an in-depth study using a face-to-face situation to collect the necessary data. The interviews (see 5.2.1) and distributions the questionnaires will be done with selected persons. The researcher will also be engaged in discussions with parents-educators regarding inclusive education. The target population (see1.6 and 2.1) will be aimed at parents of learners without SEN in an attempt to determine attitudes and then to suggest the success of inclusive education. The sampling (see 4.3) will be done randomly. Collecting data in this manner will assist the researcher to obtain basic information on how the parents' attitudes about inclusive education could be changed.

All respondents of interviews and questionnaires will participate on a voluntarily basis and will be handled confidentially. The analysis and interpretation of data will be based on objectivity (see 5.2.1 and 5.2.2).

1.9   OUTLINES OF THE CHAPTERS

Seeing that the aim of this study is to support parents of learners without SEN so to enable them to make a paradigm shift regarding inclusive education, the chapters of this study will be as follows:

Chapter One highlights the major characteristics of *orientation* towards inclusive education, and how the study will attempt to address support to and a paradigm shift by parents regarding inclusive education.

Chapter Two focuses on the *awareness programmes of parents on inclusive education*, and the paradigm shift that must be made. The complex challenge of the paradigm shift from " special" and " ordinary" education to inclusive education could be easily underestimated, therefore this chapter sets out to illuminate that shift.

Chapter Three discusses the *preparation of and support to parents regarding inclusive education*. It describes how to prepare parents to change their attitudes regarding inclusive education, and why parents need support for inclusive education.

Chapter Four deals with the *research methodology* and analysis, as well as the interpretation of the collected data.

Lastly, **Chapter Five** deals with *findings, summary, deduction and conclusion*, and recommendations from the findings.

1.10 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

For the purpose of the reader and the researcher, the following concepts need to be clarified:

Awareness programmes: This means raising of awareness of parents to understand what inclusive education entails. The emphasis is on human rights in education for parents, and on addressing discriminatory attitudes towards parents as a matter of priority through a coordinated, comprehensive communication campaign to ensure that parents are targeted for the raising of

awareness, advocacy and consultation. It also means that going in public to ensure that other expectations are accomplished (Read, 2000:58)

Inclusive education: Inclusive education can be defined as a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners (Naicker, 1999:53). Barton (1984:51) alerts us to the fact that inclusive education is not an end in itself, it is a means to an end, namely that of establishing an inclusive society.

Integrated system: This means to combine the presently existing "special" and "ordinary" schools into one system that is able to recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the learner population. Within this integrated system, a range of options for education provision and support services should be provided. An education system that reflects the attempts to place learners with special needs in the mainstream or regular education (Pijl, S.J. Meijer, J. W. and Hegarty, S, 1997:1)

LSEN: Learners with Special Educational Needs refers to group of learners with physical, sensory, intellectual or multiple impairments (NCSNET/NECESS in DoE,1997a:44)

Mainstreaming: Is about getting learners to "fit into" a particular kind of education system. It is the inclusion of special students in the general educational process where they are considered if they spend any part of the school day with regular class peers (Salend, 1990:10).

Paradigm shift: This is a radical change in the way in which one views the world. For example, parents have to make a mind-shift from special and ordinary schools to inclusive education. We may define as a radical in thought, perceptions and frame of reference (Van Rensburg, 2000:4)

Parents: Biological parents and/or guardians, who are responsible for the children's education with the aim of supporting the child's learning and

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development at home. This means parents can be responsible for the provision and supervision of education on the basis of a social contract between educational authorities and parents. Parents can effect partners only if professionals take notice of what they say and of how they express their needs, and treat the contribution as intrinsically important (Wolfendale, 1989:4).

S. G. B.: This is an established committee. It means the school governing body comprises teachers, learners and **parents** and which is regarded as the highest decision making body on school activities. Governing bodies can play a very useful role in ensuring that the interests of the community are taken fully into account by the school (Creese & Earley, 1999:90).

Special education: Is a sector of the education system that accommodates learners on the basis of disability or who are at risk as a result of severe social, emotional, psychological or medical problems which require ongoing and intensive support and intervention. The teachers who work at a special education system should be trained to attend to different learners' different needs. It provides appropriate education support services to learners with disabilities or learning difficulties. This refers to needs which the individual person or the system may have which must be addressed in order to enable the system to respond to differences in the learner population, remove barriers to learning and promote effective learning among all learners (DoE, 1997a:45)

Support refers to appropriate, specialised training, guidelines and empowerment programmes for parents so that it becomes beacons of inclusive education system. This includes all human and other resources that help to develop education system so that it is responsive to the different needs of learners and the system (DoE, 1997a:42)

1.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter is an orientation for this research and hence focuses on the various aspects to be investigated in this study. The rationale behind the introduction of inclusive education by the Ministry of Education is firstly explained. The need for parents to make a paradigm shift and support would be explained. The research study investigates the parents' paradigm shift and support for inclusive education. The significance of the problem is emphasised by referring to the possible effects it could have on the change in mind and attitudes of parents of learners without SEN, as well as parents promoting and supporting inclusive education.

The research aim is subsequently formulated, which leads to the statement of a number of aims to be realised by means of this research study. On the basis of these aims, a number of research questions to be addressed by the findings of the research study are also formulated. A demarcation of the investigation also indicates that the targeted population is the parents of learners without SEN, and those two interviews with parents who work at organizations for people with disabilities, were conducted. It is indicated that this research study contains both characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research. The possible limitations of the research are discussed. An outline of chapters is provided and core concepts contained in the research study are finally explained.

The next chapter will involve a literature study on an awareness programme for and a paradigm shift by parents regarding inclusive education.

CHAPTER 2

PROMOTING PARENTS' AWARENESS TOWARDS A PARADIGM SHIFT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

O'Brien (1991:12) suggests that a school should become a place of welcome for both parents and children. Parents should be assisted by strengthening their barriers to dream and to work for inclusion despite many barriers, and to contribute to the making of an inclusive school. The involvement of the school and parents emphasise the impact of an inclusive ethos on the school community as a whole. When developing an inclusive ethos in mainstream schools, the impact on parents of both learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and mainstream school learners, needs to be considered.

The argument raised at Bockhold at the World Child Welfare Congress (WCWC) Seminar (1958:74-75), is that parents of learners without SEN are confronted with behaviour and occurrences which they do not expect and which they cannot understand and accept. Therefore interchange, discussions and co-operation between professionals and parents is of utmost importance. Parents should be aware of an inclusive education system. Dramatic changes for inclusion must begin with communities. It is here that basic attitudes should be developed through partnership and participation. If a goal is set to develop and build a unified country, we must endeavour to lay the foundation within the population that would share the responsibility and work towards a collaborative effort (UNESCO), 1994:15).

From the previous paragraphs the conclusion can be drawn that:

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Realising the goal of successful inclusive education is not the task of the Minister of Education and the school alone. It requires the co-operation of families (parents) and the mobilisation of the community and voluntary organizations as well as the support of the public at large (UNESCO, 1994:37).

Public (parents) awareness and advocacy on education and development for all, with particular emphasis on human rights in education, barriers to learning and development, diversity in the learner population, and discriminatory attitudes relating to disability should be pursued as a matter of priority through a co-ordinated communication campaign, The Interim Implementation Committee (I.I.C), National Council to Address Barriers to Learning and Development (NCABLD), 0SDP, provincial disability desks, the South African Human Research Council (SAHRC) and provincial departments of education should drive this campaign, ensuring that mainstream educators, **parents** and learners are targeted for awareness, advocacy and consultation (DoE, 1997a:146).

The rationale behind the awareness programmes such as media and public awareness campaigns should be to create a national consciousness and understanding regarding inclusive education, as well as parents' empowerment or capacity built within the context of supporting and strengthening parent organizations. Among other elements of inclusive education, the main one is to increase community responsibility for the provision, management and the supervision of education authorities and local community (parents), which defines the responsibilities and rights of both.

NCSNET/NCESS in (DoE, 1997a:62) reaffirms the above paragraph by stating that, through parents' awareness raising on inclusive education, partnerships between parents and other professional would be developed. This partnership should include recognition of the critical role played. By parents and their involvement in the planning, development, implementation and monitoring of inclusive education and support. The partnership should be facilitated through

processes such as training to empower parents to develop their capacity to participate in their children's education.

The Salamanca Statement on Special Need Education in UNESCO (1994:38) alerts us to the fact that the government should take a lead in promoting parental partnership by a statement of policy and legislation concerning parental rights. The "government should lead by example." Other stakeholders, such as special need specialist and remedial specialists, should directly educate educators and indirectly educate parents about inclusive education during parents' meetings at schools. In line with this, it is clear that the developments involved in the design and implementation of programmes intended to enhance the education of their children (UNESCO, 1994:11).

Consultative Paper No. 1 on Special Education (DoE, 1999) indicates that public (parent) awareness and acceptance of inclusion would be essential for the establishment of an inclusive society and an inclusive education and training system. It further states that, accordingly, the Ministry of Education will launch an information advocacy campaign to communicate the policy of inclusion, including the rights, responsibilities and obligations of parents. The preceding statement means that parents will, indeed, need to be made aware of and educated in order to accept inclusive education.

2.2.1 The need to make parents aware about inclusive education

Mittler and Sinason (1996:194) argue that the need and time for a better-informed and better-educated public (parents) about learning disabilities (inclusive education) has never been greater. Currently, the necessity to inform parents is an important outcome in its own right, but more significantly it is a step towards an involved (inclusive) community. Mittler and Sinason (1996:194) say that the quality of life for people with learning disabilities living in community settings, is enhanced by having a circle of acquaintances and friends. Mittler and

Sinason (1996:194) indicate that survey findings and experiences from various demonstration projects have shown that there are people (parents) from the community who are willing to share their lives in some small way with learners who have learning disabilities. The public, however, does not get invited. Parents should be made aware of or invited to activities taking place within the inclusive education system.

According to Mittler and Sinason (1996:194), there is a growing recognition that ordinary men and women (parents) are capable of promoting a better quality of service to individuals than established service agencies can do. Parents' expertise, skills and experience to deal with different types of children with disabilities should be made use of effectively and efficiently. It is necessary to focus on the raising of awareness and involvement of parents.

2.2.2 The aims of awareness raising

As mentioned previously, it is of the utmost importance that parents should be made aware of the following:

- Changes and the reasons for the change;

- For the functioning of the new system of education, it is important to involve parents in debates on all issues regarding inclusive education, and also to reassure all citizens that basic education will provide quality teaching and will meet the needs of all learners;

- The Department of Education's framework on policy will help parents to define their purposes in terms of addressing the needs of all learners;

- Opportunities where parents can communicate their beliefs and goals.

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Beattie (1985:5) summarises the work of a number of recent theorists on parent participation and awareness raising programmes, and puts the focus on:

Responsiveness: participation should improve governmental output by increasing flows of information (awareness raising) and enabling a more flexible response to needs, including parent needs.

Legitimacy: participation should make governmental output more acceptable to the governed (i.e. parents)

Personal development: individuals would only achieve their full moral and intellectual development if they have some responsibility regarding matters, which affect them.

Overcoming alienation: participation should bring individuals together, thus enabling them to understand the collective purposes of society more clearly.

Gargiulo (1985:112), however, places the focus on parents' awareness raising regarding inclusive education on the following:

- Involvement of parents in all aspects of decision-making. Parents as spokes-persons for children are able to make valuable contributions when they are considered legitimate, full-fledged team members.
- Information should be openly shared with the parents. Emotionally laden labels should be avoided at all. Parents should be encouraged to ask question about and seek explanation on material they find confusing.
- Plans, goals and objectives, as well as parents' rights and duties, should be realistic and flexible.
- Community resources and services should be exploited.

- Professionals should be sensitive to and honest about the limitation of their own knowledge and abilities. Parents need to be advised on the handling of information that they are given.
- Educating communities (parents) is a process rather than an event. This means that there should be continuous programmes of raising awareness.
- The goal should be to build inclusive settings, rather than to give information. Parents should not only be made aware of inclusive education. They also need a continuous support and evaluation of what has been introduced to them.

Sallies (1989:31) underline the importance of a high level of involvement or participation in schools, for awareness of all the factors contributes towards a successful school (i.e. Inclusive school). This high level of involvement and participation urges parents not to distance themselves from school activities, because - through them - awareness raising is being promoted to other parents.

2.2.3 Policy objectives and how to raise awareness

To respond to the question set in the introduction, namely "how then to set about the task of raising awareness?" the following: the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy of 1997 (DoE, 1997b) can be used:

Awareness raising: As human rights and developmental issues, and the implications pursuing the social model of disability.

Media awareness: The development of disability awareness programmes aimed at journalists and the public broadcaster.

Public visibility: There should be an increased visibility of people with disabilities in the media.

Public media: The public plays a central role in the way society constructs images and beliefs, and should therefore be utilised as key mechanism in changing attitudes (paradigm shift).

According to Macleod (1989:31), many parents are ignorant on the issue of inclusive education, but they should be made aware through the following:

- Written communication, presentations (meetings) and personal talks with educators.
- SGB Workshops to be conducted efficiently.
- Information to be adequate and clear.
- Handouts without jargon.
- The golden rule should be "keep it as simple and direct as possible."

Despite the ignorance of parents, they have a responsibility to be part of the raising awareness programmes.

2.2.4 Responsibilities of parents due to awareness raising

The NCSNET/ NCESS Report (DoE, 1997a:62) addresses the practical implications of awareness raising to parents and refer to the following:

- Parents would be aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding the education of their children, and would be equipped to assert their rights and to fulfil their responsibilities.
- The critical role of parents in the education and development of learners would be recognised.
- Parents of all learners would be centrally involved in the support services for special educational needs.
- Parents would be involved in assessment processes aimed at identifying particular needs and programmes for learners experiencing barriers to

learning and development. This would occur within the context of a centre-of-learning based team. They would play a central role in deciding on the most appropriate education for and support required by their children, and would assist in the development and execution of programmes (i.e. cascading of information/ aimed at addressing the attitudes about inclusive education).

- Parents would be involved in the teaching and support process (e.g. teacher - aides/volunteers), where appropriate and possible.

The awareness raising on inclusive education amongst parents would be beneficial to parents, as they would be enlightened and educated regarding inclusive education. Therefore, the raising of awareness amongst parents regarding inclusive education should seriously be taken into consideration.

2.2.5 Advantages and disadvantages of awareness raising among parents

If parents participate in awareness programmes, McConkey (1985:129) states that parents would surely benefit from the situation. Despite advantages due to the participation of parents or their involvement, there would still be some disadvantages that must be overcome during the awareness raising programmes.

2.2.5.1 *Advantages of awareness raising*

The main advantages of awareness raising programmes to parents, according to by McConkey (1985:129), are as follows:

- The raising of awareness would be attainable in a short time, in days rather than months. This would be good for parents' morale and would help to convince them that they could influence and improve their children's behaviour.

- The raising of awareness would put focus on lifelong teaching.
- More people could be informed about raising awareness regarding inclusive education, especially when the goal has been stated correctly. It becomes easier for parents to share information with other members of the family, relatives, friends and neighbours.
- The distribution of awareness of inclusive education could be enormous, varying from parents who may be extremely knowledgeable, for example, to psychologists, remedial specialist, socio-pedagogue, etc.

At the WCWC Seminar (1958:42) the following opinion emerged, namely that, if parents refrain from awareness raising, the following as mentioned in 2.2.5.2 could take place:

2.2.5.2 *Disadvantages of awareness raising*

The disadvantages of raising awareness refer to the following two aspects, namely:

- **Communication of information**
  Where abundant information is available, but not evenly distributed, poor communication might be the cause. Communication implies the dissemination of available knowledge.

- **Efficacy of information given**
  Even in cases where parents have been given information, results do not always seem to be effective. This means that the aim is not only to provide information or awareness, but rather to ensure that parents would practise what they have been taught about inclusive education.

For awareness raising regarding inclusive education to achieve its goal, a total paradigm shift is necessary.

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2.3 A PARADIGM SHIFT

According to the previous paragraph, it is evident that there is a need for change. It seems that such a change could be materialised if a paradigm shift occurs.

Raising awareness among parents does not necessarily imply that the objectives of inclusive education are being realised. As UNESCO (1994:35) states, inclusive education and education for all is a "Challenge and Vision"; after having raised awareness, the challenge confronting inclusive education is that of bringing about a change of mind by parents in such a way that their negative attitudes are being changed to positive attitudes regarding disabilities. Awareness raising and positive attitudes would enable them to understand and accept inclusive education.

A paradigm shift is a move from one paradigm to another; a new mind- set; and/or a new way of thinking. Changing to something you are not used to is always a difficult task, so parents should be willing and committed to change and accept disabilities.

2.3.1 Definition of paradigm shift

The term "paradigm" is another word for pattern. Pattern forming is part of the way we attempt to make meaning from our experiences (Jacobs in Rapuleng, 2002:24).

Naicker (1999:92) explains "paradigm" as a framework for identifying, explaining and solving problems. In a large sense, the term has come to signify an all-encompassing framework for understanding and interpreting the world and all one's experiences. Generally, people understand the world according to the way in which they have been taught or trained, thus becoming grounded or located in a particular paradigm.

From the paragraph above it seems that parents need to identify with inclusive education so that they could understand and interpret it accordingly, as they would be located at a particular paradigm regarding inclusive education.

2.3.2 Rationale behind a paradigm shift by parents

The Consultative Paper No. 1 states the question "Why is change essential?" Naicker (1999:66) attempts to answer the question and suggests that, in order for something to materialise, there has to be a:

"... Move from one paradigm to another, from one way of looking at something to a new way. A move to a new mind-set, a new attitude, a new way of thinking..."

This quote above applies to inclusive education; because parents will have to make a new mindset, change their attitudes and beliefs about learners with disabilities.

Naicker (1999:67) states that paradigms include not only different ways of seeing and evaluating judgements but also crucially, practices. The statement above means those parents should stop being judgemental towards people or learners with disabilities or special educational needs. A shift from special education to inclusive education is extremely complex. Particular assumptions, theories, models and practices had underpinned special education. In order to move towards inclusive education, parents would have to understand the old and new assumptions, theories and practices to avoid repeating the old within the framework. The preceding statement means that parents will have to appropriately look into what had underpinned special education that leads them to have negative attitudes towards disabilities. The White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (DoE, 1997b), states that negative attitudes are continually being reinforced. Disability is portrayed as a problem and people or learners with disabilities are seen as helpless and dependent.

Naicker (1999:67) calls for an inclusive environment and suggests that an inclusive learning environment promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners, that is, there is a need for support from home; as we usually say 'Charity begins at Home.' It becomes clear that, if parents could bring about changes at their children, this radical change to inclusive education would be achieved. If parents were not being integrated into the education of their children in the inclusive education system, the seed for social discontent and discrimination would be sowed.

It is therefore seems that the rationale behind the paradigm shift is therefore to bring about change.

2.3.3 Factors that impeded the paradigm shift

2.3.3.1 *Sudden transformation*

The Ministry of Education in SA initiated the transformational process immediately after the advent of the new democracy in 1994. Rapid change is often accompanied by problems and this was evident in parents' ignorance and lack of support towards the new setting of inclusive education (Naicker, 1999:68).

The rapid implementation of the transformation plan was however accompanied by problems, amongst others, the lack of support.

2.3.3.2 *Underestimation of the difficulties of shifting paradigms*

Schlebush (1998:69) alerts the reader to the fact that many workshops, seminars and forums were conducted with the assumption that a paradigm shift could be handled as a simple issue. Naicker (1999:70) alerts us to the fact that the issue of paradigm and paradigm shifts requires urgent and serious attention, which means that parents should be attended to urgently regarding their paradigm on inclusive education.

2.3.3.3 Lack of education and support

For a paradigm shift to be made easily, parents are in need of awareness on inclusive education. Most importantly, continuous support to parents should be emphasised. The advocates of Inclusive education as professionals should clearly state Inclusive educations goals and objectives. It becomes evident that much work has to go into creating a consciousness around the rights model and making its implications for practice public knowledge (Naicker, 1999:48).

2.3.3.4 Parents as change agents for a paradigm shift

The Salamanca Statement on Special Need Education (UNESCO, 1994) states that parents should be included in a partnership between parents and professionals. Parents' involvement as partners in inclusive education can be efficient so that they are on-board regarding various inclusive education activities with other parents.

Barton (1988:65) defines a change agent as a person who facilitates planned change and planned innovations, namely catalyst, solution giver, resource link and process helper. The roles of catalyst, solution-giver, resource-link and process-helper will be discussed as change agents:

Catalyst: Most of the time people do not want change. For that reason a few change agents are needed to overcome this inertia. They do not necessarily have the answers, but they are dissatisfied.

Parents by making their dissatisfaction known and upsetting the status quo, parents energize the problem-solving process and get things started, therefore parents should use education they get from awareness raising campaigns about inclusive education so as to effect change.

Solution giver: Being an effective solution giver involves more that having only a solution. One has to know enough about the solution to help the client to adapt it to his needs. Parents are seen as the ones that provide a solution for their children's needs at home. These children can be with SEN and without SEN.

Resource link: A large part of successful change is **exchange**. Hence problem-solving is in a large part of a matter of matching resources in one person or group with the needs in another. Yet most of us have difficulty in asking for help and in giving help. For inclusive education parents would be regarded as the main resource link between their children and educators and other professionals. McConkey (1985:19) states that children must be losing out. Optimal results for inclusive education are often achieved when parents and professionals work together for the betterment of learners (Gargiulo, 1985:5).

Process helper: The process helper can provide valuable assistance in showing the client how to:
- Recognize and define needs.
- Diagnose problems and set objectives.
- Acquire relevant resources.
- Select and create solutions.
- Adapt and install solutions.
- Evaluate solutions to determine if they are satisfying his needs.

The literature review has overemphasised that parents are relevant and most needed stakeholders in the process of inclusive education. Parents' involvement means that, through education, they would be expected to be the helpers in the process of changing the mind and attitudes of other parents about inclusive education. Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994:37) emphasises this by indicating that the goal of successful inclusive education is not the task of the Ministries of Education and school alone (UNESCO, 1994:37).

2.3.4 The realities of change for parents

Whether a designated member takes the change agent role or not, there needs to be a clear understanding of some of the factors relating to change and innovations by parents. Esland (1972:68) indicates four major factors that militate against change if they have not been articulated and addressed at the outset, namely that change:

- involves social interaction;
- is a process;
- disturbs the status quo; and
- is subject to individual perception.

According to Barton (1988:69), change is a threat to most participants and frequently presenting more barriers than opportunities to those involved.

Barton (1988:69) also indicates that change involves social interaction and that change must alter the balance in a relationship. This implies that parents should more readily accept what they are being told. Barton (1988:69) also refers to the fact that the social interaction of parents should foster trust and confidence amongst parents themselves. A paradigm shift would be effected more easily by a person known to parents, or those who share a personal relationship would have a greater effect on parents towards a paradigm shift.

Change is a process and change disturbs the status quo:very few innovations simply involve the substitution of one set of materials, methods or procedures for another, as a paradigm shift brings about a new way or a mindset. A paradigm shift is thus a process and a "challenge." To enable parents to accept change, change cannot be treated in a harsh way or with the aim of completing the process. Parents should therefore be supported so that they would be able to adapt and cope with change. For inclusive education, the status quo regarding

special and mainstream education should be compromised by parents (Barton, 1988:68).

Change is subject to individual perceptions. A group of people involved in change will bring to the process not only different value systems which are possibly easier to deal with but also different perspectives and even understandings of the initiative. In return this creates different expectations. Different perspectives and expectations will influence the manner of how parents would be involved during awareness raising campaigns. The awareness raising programmes aim at clarifying all that parents seem to differ with. Parents should share the common objectives, goals and vision about inclusive education (Barton, 1988:69).

Leo Tolstoy, as quoted in Gargiulo (1985:123), states: "Everybody thinks of changing humanity and nobody thinks of changing himself ."

The preceding quotation means that the first step to change parents towards inclusive education is that parents should be willing and prepared to make a change. It is believed that change comes from within.

2.3.5 Paradigms and its implications for parents

Parents should know that there are different paradigms and these paradigms, according to Skrtic (1991:70), refer to the following four paradigms:

- Radical Humanist.
- Interpretivist.
- Radical Structuralist.
- Functionalist.

The definitions of the various paradigms mentioned provide more light on the issue. The following information has been extracted from Skrtic (1991:70-73).

2.3.5.1 *Functionalist paradigm*

Social scientists dealing with this paradigm believe that the ones involved could be objective and understand realities through observation without being participants in processes. They are of the opinion that their stance is neutral and is therefore not influenced by their own interests and positions. Consequently they believe that education is neutral.

Burrel and Morgan (1979:71) argue that the functionalist theory is characterised by an effort to explain the status quo. Functionalist's paradigm is concerned with the effective regulation and control of social affairs. The fundamental aim is to account for the persistence and survival of existing social forms. Functionalism is therefore concerned with evolutionary change, as opposed to radical change. It is fundamentally concerned with prediction and control. Functionalism cannot contribute to such interrogation and change as are necessary and sufficient in a fast changing world.

2.3.5.2 *Interpretivist paradigm*

Social scientists of this persuasion are concerned with understanding the social construction of reality, as well as the way people create and share meaning. According to Burrel and Morgan (1979:72), the interpretive paradigm is informed by a concern to understand the world as it is, and to understand the fundamental nature of the social world at the level of subjective experience. Practitioners' standpoint on interpretivist paradigm is cohesive, ordered and integrated. The interpretive theorist attempts to understand reality. It is not an attempt to address and rectify the conflict, domination and contradictions that are essential characteristics of inclusive education.

2.3.5.3 *Radical humanist paradigm*

Social scientists working in this paradigm emphasise the importance of transcending the limitations of existing structures, which they view as distorting true human consciousness. The major concern for theorists approaching the humanist paradigm is the release from the constraints which existing social arrangements place upon human development (Burrel and Morgan, 1979:72). They seek to change the social world in modes of cognition and consciousness, but are not concerned with structural conflict. They believe that human beings can transcend the fetters which tie them.

2.3.5.4 *Radical structuralist paradigm*

These theorists, like the radical humanists, advocate change and are committed to a non-racist, non-sexist and non-disability society. Whereas radical humanists are concerned with ideological structures and individual consciousness, radical structuralists focus their critique on material structures and are concerned with the consciousness of social groups constituted in terms of class, such as race and gender. Burrel and Morgan (1979:73) define radical structuralism as follows:

From the standpoint of radical structuralism, change in society almost inevitably involves a transformation of structures, which, they given favourable circumstances do not fall, or change of their own accord. Structures that are seen as being changed generate conflicts of such intensity that the status quo is necessarily disrupted or forms a part of and is replaced by radically different social forms.

Radical structuralism, like radical humanism, is concerned with changing consciousness, but seeks a sociology of radical change which supports the view that change in society must be accompanied by change in the structures of society. Burrel and Morgan (1979:73) state that the structures change first and foremost, which results in the status quo being disrupted. The intention is to

effect change in structures and consciousness that is consistent with democracy and education for all, free from discrimination.

The researcher can conclude by saying that the inclusive education practitioners should consider all the different paradigms, so that they know which ones would be more suitable to be used for the parents' awareness raising. The researcher recommends the functional paradigm and the radical structuralist paradigm to be appropriate to be used for parents, as both paradigms advocate change.

2.4 CHALLENGES THAT FACE PARENTS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

It has become apparent that one of the major challenges facing parents with regard to the move from a segregated education model to an inclusive model revolves around paradigms, paradigm shift and raising of awareness.

According to Burrel and Morgan (1979:45), "... to be located in a particular paradigm is to view the world in a particular way", in other words, parents' belief system, values and understanding of information they acquire during the awareness raising campaign. This information has a direct bearing on how a paradigm shift could be suggested and sustained.

Naicker (1999:46) alerts us to the fact that it has become evident during the intensive debates in meetings of the commission and workshops held for the public that in order to move from a segregated model to an inclusive model, there has to be a shift in paradigms. For example, one of the major contestations that surfaced in the meetings and workshops referred to above was the concern for terminology. The debates in meetings of the commission means that little or no contestations will be experienced during a paradigm shifts when parents are given appropriate information during awareness raising regarding inclusive education.

Naicker (1999:47) states that the true nature and extent of change (a paradigm shift) will require thinking and where practice becomes apparent as the debates are unfolded. This will happen during the awareness raising.

Parents tend to have a better understanding and acceptance of inclusive education during such mentioned debates. The debates enable parents to change as well as cope with a paradigm shift (Naicker, 1999:50).

2.5 SIMILARITIES BETWEEN AWARENESS RAISING AND A PARADIGM SHIFT

The table below indicates the similarities between the awareness raising programme and a paradigm shift (Fairclough, 1992:64).

Table 1: Similarities between awareness raising and a paradigm shift

Awareness Raising	Paradigm Shift
1. Need a process rather than an event.	1. It takes a process to change people's mindsets, etc.
2. Deals with understanding of facts before parent accept them.	2. Parents should understand and accept facts before Change takes place.
3. Network of parents and other stakeholders is established, e.g. seminars, workshops, etc.	3. Parents have to meet other stakeholders so as to be easily aligned with other participants to effect change.
4. Promote parents personal development.	4. Change for the better brings about development and transformation.
5. Implementation of acquired information should be based on objectivity.	5. Parents should be objective when making shifts.

Source: Fairclough (1992:64)

From the above table the researcher could conclude that both the awareness raising and paradigm shift need the inclusive education practitioners' patience and persistence in order to ensure that inclusive education becomes a success.

2.6   CLASSIFICATION OF DISCOURSES

Naicker (1999:47) describes the following discourses of parents, namely, a medical discourse, a charity discourse and a lay discourse to a human rights discourse.

2.6.1 Medical discourse

According to this discourse, impairment is linked with disability. For example, in schools for the "physically disabled," students are constructed as disabled and the disability is conceived as an objective attribute of the students, not a social construct by the community. Such a person is excluded from mainstream social life. This exclusion could result in the construction of people as inadequate human beings who are unfit. All this does not comply with the policies and principles of inclusion. Through awareness raising parents will be able to adapt to change so that this isolation could be addressed.

2.6.2 A charity discourse

In many cases recipients of special education are seen as in need of assistance, as objects of pity and always dependent on others. Awareness programmes for parents about inclusive education will ensure that parents do not see learners or people with disabilities as helpless and dependent. This is also supported by the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability (DoE, 1997b), which states that negative attitudes are continually reinforced, and disability is portrayed as a "problem, and people with disabilities are viewed as helpless and dependent. This labelling is promoted by ignorance or the stereotypes of parents because of

lack of or no awareness raising regarding inclusive education activities. Parents should not see learners of SEN as objects of "pity" but as learners who can support other learners in an inclusive education setting.

2.6.3 Lay discourse

This discourse relates to prejudice, hate, ignorance, fear and even paternalistic tendencies. Much of this has to do with the isolation of people who deviate from normal appearances, usually by uninformed members of the public. (This has more to share with a charity discourse.)

2.6.4 A human rights discourse

This discourse is committed to extending full citizenship to all people. Parents as citizens are entitled to information (awareness raising) on their children's education regarding inclusive education.

The approach fits comfortably with one of the major themes of the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994:17), which argues that:

> ...Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all, moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost effectiveness of the entire education system.

As mentioned previously (see 2.5), discourse to ensure that parents are involved, a co-ordinated structure for awareness raising should be in place.

For inclusive education for parents to materialise, much work has to go into creating a consciousness (awareness raising) around the issue of why the paradigm shift is vital.

2.7 THE CO-ORDINATING STRUCTURE FOR AWARENESS RAISING

Naicker (1999:49) points out that it is important for policy development, and its implications for the practice, and is clearly articulated to the national and provincial Department of Education. Structural changes further illustrate that, for the work of the NCSNET/NCESS to move from rhetoric to reality, there is a need for a representative national co-ordinating structure that monitors transformation to inclusion. The national co-ordinating structure should interpret the recommendations of the NCSNET and NCESS and formulate broad guidelines for all provincial departments. This structure should also monitor the implementation of inclusive education in all provinces and provide support with regard to the clarification of policy issues where necessary (Naicker 1999:49-50). In addition to the preceding statements, it is imperative that the provincial departments of education have their districts structures so that awareness raising programmes could be realised at ease. The district structures School Governing Bodies (SGB'S) should have a direct involvement as representatives of other parents.

Figure 2.1. Organogram for dissemination of information (awareness raising) from National Department of Education to parents

```
┌─────────────────┐
│    National     │
└─────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌─────────────────┐
│    Provinces    │
└─────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌─────────────────┐
│    Districts    │
└─────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌─────────────────┐
│   Schools/SGB   │
└─────────────────┘
         │
         ▼
┌─────────────────┐
│    Parents      │
└─────────────────┘
```
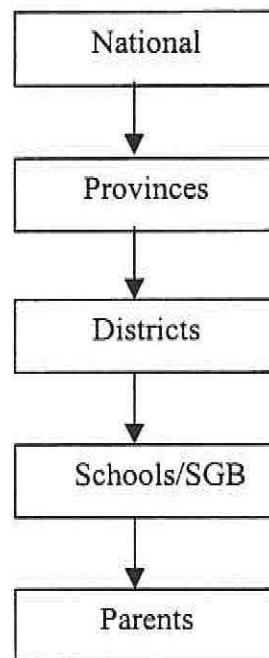
From Figure 2.1 it is clear that awareness raising programmes for inclusive education should first start at the Department of National Education (DoE, 1997b) before parents could be informed about inclusive education. This figure alerts us to the fact that parents are also stakeholders in the education of their children and therefore the educational structures should take parents into account regarding awareness raising about inclusive education.

2.8   CONCLUSION

Whilst the NCSNET and NCESS and the Integrated National Disability Strategy document are advanced at national level, provinces will have to develop an organogram and advocacy programmes for parents regarding the inclusive education. This will prepare parents to be prepared for change. It is found that parents are ready to became efficient stakeholders in the education of their children, as well as to take part in raising awareness regarding inclusive education.

In as much as change is subject to parents' individual perceptions, parents should not be subjective when dealing with disabilities or LSEN, but should rather treat matters with objectivity. To be able to challenge realities of change, a paradigm shift and its implications should be articulated at the outset during awareness raising campaigns. The understanding of both old and new assumptions, theories and practices should be achieved through awareness raising campaigns.

As it has been overemphasised that both a paradigm shift and awareness raising command a process, not an event, parents should not be exposed to a rapid change for inclusive education, as this will need a proper paradigm shift. Advocates of paradigm shift should not underestimate the understanding and acceptance of change, as it seems that many parents are still ignorant.

From the literature it seems that there is a lack of information about inclusive education for parents; therefore awareness raising campaigns should, with high priority, be put into place. Information to parents regarding inclusive education will promote parents participation and enable them to make wise and informed decisions.

The literature, however, also indicates that the active participation of parents is essential. Parents' awareness raising make clear that the aim of inclusion is not only to educate neither special nor regular schools, but also to maintain them in their families and communities. An inclusive educational system recognises that parents and the community have a real contribution to make towards learners' learning, and that they have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER 3

EDUCATION PREPARATION AND SUPPORT FOR PARENTS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

3.1 RATIONALE

Working with parents is more often preached than practiced (McConkey, 1985:13).

As indicated in Chapter one, that preparation for support for parents is of the utmost importance, this chapter discusses the preparation and support for parents regarding inclusive education.

McConkey, (1985:13) indicates that "The means then to advance humane learning, and the reformation of schools, is to elaborate certain treaties and to put them that they may be made use of by all." The first of these treaties should be a discovery of the defects and of the disorders in the teaching and education of children, with the intimation of the remedies thereof, and of the manner of applying the same into the disease, which should be done briefly and substantially. The second should be a direction for parents, namely how to implant into their children the seeds of virtue and to beget in them a disposition towards learning.

Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:1) are in line with the above statement to clarify the point that as "South Africa is in the throes of massive transformation, political, social and economic development the reformation of schools, in particular, for inclusive education the preparation and continuous support for parents is vital.

Gascoigne (1996:1) agrees with the above statement that, when it comes to inclusive education, the participation of parents is rather more profound.

Hegarty (1993:88) states that it seems, as for inclusive education, support for learners and resources (i.e. assistive devices) receive more emphasis. Lerner (1985:152) supports Hegarty and also implies that parents are forgotten elements in the entire complex of education. It also seems as if more focus is put on parents of LSEN.

Parent preparation is the process of preparing them to work with students who have mild learning, behavioural or physical disabilities (Blackhurst, 1981:313). The objective of preparing parents of learners without SEN is to ensure that these parents support parents of LSEN and other parents for inclusive education (Wang et al., 1991:215).

Lacey and Lomas (1993:11) describe support as various groups of people offering advice and skills to aid the integration, and general education of children with learning disabilities These groups of people refer to people such as different specialists offering advice and skills to prepare and support parents of learners without SEN and to enable parents to form part of the group who will be assisting in the implementation of inclusive education.

From the discussions in the previous paragraphs, the researcher draws the conclusion that different authors have different views on the necessity of and on how support should be conducted. These points will be addressed in the paragraph to follow.

3.2   PARENTS PREPARATION

Seemingly parents are the neglected elements in the education system. Tertiary Education Commission in Ward and Tikunoff (1979:1), recommend that a formal

preparation programme should be designed, primarily to impart the skills and knowledge required to enable parents to become effective practicing parents in inclusive education. It seems as if, through formal preparation programmes, parents will be able to take part in inclusive education activities. As mentioned in 2.3.2 about paradigm shift, the prime task in preparing parents is to change their attitudes or mind-sets from negative to positive.

Lerner (1985:151) states very clearly that, during the preparation process, it is important to clarify the responsibilities of all persons (including parents, learners and educators) involved in order to avoid both conflicts and gaps in functions. For inclusive education to be successful, parents should therefore be informed on their responsibilities and limitations. Preparation will be realised if the professionals maintain planning. Westhood (1997:207) identifies the key function that should be carried out as:

- Prescription and planning.
- Preparing and processing.
- Training and preparation.
- Encouraging and praising.

Wolfendale (1992:209), however, is of the opinion that parents are not necessarily natural teachers. Without some initial guidance (preparation and support) concerning the implementation of strategies for working with children, these make the involvement and participation in inclusive education more difficult. Ignorance makes parents to reject it. Preparation can therefore support parents to adapt and accept inclusive education and/or dealing with LSEN. Parents should be supplied with matters concerning the goals and how to prepare when working with learners with SEN.

3.2.1 Goals set during parent preparation

Parents' preparations attempt to prevent and alleviate the negative attitudes of both parents and their children. Parents' preparation will attempt to enlighten them on issues of inclusive education and to increase their awareness about disabilities and their role during the implementation of coping strategies. Preparing parents improve their interpersonal communication and problem-solving skills and enhance their self-esteem.

Lang (1988:1) summarises the general goals that the professionals should consider when preparing parents, as follows; namely that parents should:

- be supported to develop awareness about inclusive education;
- be helped to understand the basics of inclusive education;
- modify and expand their parenting style for learners without SEN regarding inclusive education;
- explore, recognize, and discuss their feelings, attitudes, and concerns, to develop and expand their awareness, insight and perspectives, and to improve their own expertise as human beings (i.e. parents of all learners);
- be assisted to take constructive and positive action towards their growth regarding disabilities for inclusive education.

3.2.2 Assessing parents for inclusive education

Inclusive education means a new beginning for parents of learners without SEN, because they will deal with learners from both special and regular schools to new inclusive setting of education. To be able to reach this goal, parents should be prepared and assessed.

Salend (1990:80) identifies a four-step plan to assess parents involved in the preparation programme as follows:

- Environmental assessment.
- Intervention and preparation assessment.
- General assessment.
- Evaluation assessment.

The assessment is also advisable for professionals to use for parents' preparation regarding inclusive education.

Environment assessment: This involves determining the content of the training programme for parents. The identified skills will facilitate success in the parents' preparation for implementing inclusive education.

Intervention and preparation: The objectives identified in the environment assessment are taught to parents using a variety of instructional strategies.

Generalization and evaluation: After parents have learnt the skills through preparation for inclusive education, they should promote and evaluate the use of the skills in the community settings.

The assessment seems that if parents have the necessary identified skills, they could be prepared to implement inclusive education, which will bring about a change towards learners with disabilities.

3.3   ATTITUDES TOWARDS INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Studies have indicated that people have mixed feelings about learners with and without disabilities. Salend (1990:136) indicates that some studies suggest that non-disabled people view learners with disabilities positively. The majority of studies indicate that non-disabled people demonstrate negative attitudes towards learners with disabilities. Salend (1990:136) states that these unfavourable attitudes can have a negative impact on the goals of inclusive education and

school achievement. Parents of learners without SEN can be part of these people who view disability as a problem; therefore these parents need to change their attitudes regarding inclusive education.

From 3.3, therefore there is a need to discuss how to prepare parents to change their attitudes.

3.3.1 Preparing parents to change their attitudes regarding disabilities

Salend (1990:137) suggested that, before employing an attitude change strategy to parents, preparation of changing parents' attitudes should include an assessment on parents' attitudes towards disabilities, as well as their understanding of and knowledge about inclusive education (see 3.2.2.). If the assessment reveals that parents have acceptable attitudes towards inclusive education, there should be an implementation of activities that would modify attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. If the assessment, however, indicates that the disabled learners will be isolated or segregated by parents of learners without SEN, training programmes to prepare parents of these learners without SEN should be implemented. Gathered from the information that has been displayed, it seem that one should concentrate on both the negative and positive attitudes of parents.

3.3.2 Parent training

In preparing parents for inclusive education, parents will need training to perform a variety of roles in the inclusive educational process. Salend (1990:208) has identified the following guidelines in setting up a parents' training programme, namely:

- *Who should be involved?*
- *What should be the content of the training programme?*
- *When will training take place?*

45

- *Where will the training occur?*
- *How do you train parents?*

In the discussion to follow it is the intention of the writer to search for answers to the questions set by Salend (1990).

To answer the question "W*ho should be trained*?" Salend (1990:208) indicates that, in most cases, programmes train the mothers. In the light of the mothers entering the world of work, it is however suggested that both parents should be part of the training programme for inclusive education.

To answer the question "What is the content?" refers to the content of a training programme that should focus on parents' needs (Salend, 1990:210). The researcher suggests that the content should also focus on the principles of inclusive education regarding parents' roles (see 5.6.1).

Generally, training should provide parents with skills to interact with professionals serving in the inclusive education and to provide counselling to provide emotional support to parents of LSEN and LSEN themselves.

Training can focus on providing information on the etiology and needs of the various disabilities, dispelling myths and misconceptions about disabilities, discussing ways of interacting with and assisting the learners with special educational needs (LSEN) and their families, and understanding human services. Training should also address the concerns of parents of learners without SEN should they have a child born with a disability. All this may enable the parents to accept learning disabilities so as to ensure that inclusive education is implemented at ease.

To answer the question "When should the training take place?" The required frequency of training will depend on the parents' needs and teachers' time.

However, according to Salend (1990:211), parents training should be ongoing, as should be the evaluation of the training.

To answer the question "Where should training take place?", the following can be said: Training can occur in a home or at school. Home-based training, which occurs in the parents' natural environment, can promote the maintenance and generalization of skills obtained. Home-based training programmes are especially appropriate for parents who have difficulty attending school meetings due to transportation problems, work schedules and other inconveniences. School-based training allows parents to be trained as a group, which make the sharing of information and experiences with parents easier. Additionally, school-based programmes provide parents with the opportunity to meet and interact with a wide variety of professionals (Salend, 1990:211). The place where the training will be conducted needs planning as it involves the availability of both the human support and material resources.

To answer the question "How should training take place?", educators can use a variety of strategies to train parents, including lecture, group discussions, role-playing, simulation and presentation by service providers and other parents (Salend, 1990:211).

Salend (1990:212) identified the following traits in selecting parents to serve as trainers, namely:

- Do parents respect and trust individuals?
- Does the individual have the time and skills to communicate and work with other parents?
- Does the individual possess the necessary skills to facilitate group interactions?

- Does the individual have a good understanding of special education (inclusive education), school policies, school curriculum, teaching strategies and services within the local community?
- Has the individual completed any training to serve as a trainer of other parents?
- Will the individual seek assistance when he/she confronts a problem that he/she cannot solve? (Salend 1990:212).

From the above it becomes clear that some parents do not meet the criteria mentioned and others have the potential to be trained as trainers to help other parents. Parents however need to go through training and the first step could be by means of observing (see 3.3.3).

3.3.3 Parental observation and preparation

A manner in which the training of parents could take place is by allowing, according to Salend (1990:212), parents to observe in the classroom. Observation allows parents to see and understand different aspects of the school (i.e. inclusive education) environment.

McLoughlin and Lewis (1986:208) state that this experience can help provide parents with the necessary background information for discussing school-related concerns with educators. Preparing parents for inclusive education will be an easy task if a parent has gathered background information in an inclusive schools setting.

According to the literature McLoughlin and Lewis (1986:208), observation by parents should be conducted in the following way, namely that:
- educators should structure the observation to ensure that parents are provided with meaningful information; and

- parents should be given permission by the schools' authorities to observe in the schools.

Parents should be prepared for the observation by reviewing ways to enter the inclusive classroom in an unobstructive manner

Before the observation, parents and teachers should discuss the purpose of the observation and the unique aspects of the educational setting (i.e. inclusive classroom). After the observation, there should be feedback from parents to teachers. Observation by parents can bring about the effective preparation for parents regarding inclusive education, as well as its acceptance by parents and its implementation.

3.4   ORGANIZATION TO PREPARE PARENTS

Lang (1988:5) alerts us to the fact that the counsellor must be extremely sensitive to the disposition of administrators and the parents whom he or she wishes to motivate. This means that organising a parent preparation requires some motivational strategies and the co-operation of other professionals.

3.5   PREPARING TO IMPLEMENT STEPS

The steps before implementation emphasize review, rehearse and revise (Carkhuff, 1993:185). It is suggested that parents should be taken through these steps.   Reviewing insures the inclusiveness of the steps. Rehearsing helps to find the problem involved in implementing the steps. Revising emphasizes the final change in the programme. These steps prepare parents for the implementation of the programme and are necessary if we wish to succeed.

Figure 3.1. Carkhuff's steps to implement preparation.
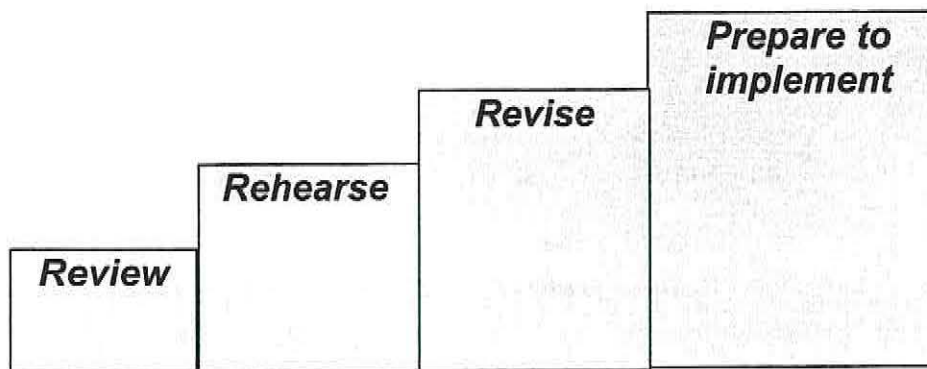
Source: Carkhuff (1993:86).

3.6   SUPPORT FOR PARENTS TOWARDS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

After parents have been prepared by means of awareness raising for inclusive education, the next step would be support to implement a paradigm shift. This, however, must be done with the necessary support. Lovey (1988:108) underlines this, for he poses the question: "How effective support be defined?"   This question is critical in the sense that, for the successful implementation of inclusive education, there should be effective support to parents of learners without SEN.

3.6.1   Effective support

To be able to ensure effective support, Lovey (1988:119) suggests that there should be a code of practice that enables parents to practise inclusive education properly. Lovey (1988:119) further states that for support to be more effective a code of practice should be drawn up, that would serve as a practical guide to both the professional and the governing bodies (i.e. parents) of all schools. It is important that all those who are concerned with inclusive education, in any way, have access to a copy of a code of practice.

The code of practice for parents' support should align itself with the principles of inclusive education and "education for all", such as combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building inclusive society and achieving true education for all (UNESCO, 1994).

As it has been mentioned that parents need support. The question to be answered is "why is support necessary?"

It is believed that the code of practice would ensure that professionals would easily implement parents' support programmes. Professionals will be relying on something that parents can refer to; parents will know their roles and responsibilities whilst they are being supported.

3.6.2 Why parents need support for inclusive education

Chinkanda (1987:1) re-emphasises this by saying that, dealing with LSEN (inclusive education), could be a very demanding undertaking for any one person. Parents need to have adequate internal resources, but also require external support in order to cope with inclusive education.

There is a believe that, if parents do not get the necessary support regarding inclusive education, they might be apprehensive about becoming involved in issues that deal with learning disabilities. This might be caused by the attitudes they possess. That is why a paradigm shift should be improved by the support to parents. Merrill (1983:26), in Dowling and Osborne (1994:30) states that, at first, parents may be reluctant to participate in the activities of the inclusive education, and this might be caused by negative contact with the schools in the past, as well as the negative attitudes they had about the disabilities.

Lang (1988:xii) emphasises that, because the child's first encounter with the world is through its parents, it is necessary for the parents to be aware of any perceived negative influence that their own parenting may have had that might have endangered the healthy development of their child. Inclusive education involves both learners without SEN and LSEN; therefore the negative influences the learners without SEN may have from their parents may cause damage to inclusive education. It is therefore important that the support to parents should be also be passed on to their children, so that the children could also support their schoolmates, namely those of LSEN. Counsellors, psychologists and other professionals should make their services known to parents and establish adequate and appropriate opportunities for parental growth and understanding.

Parents are critical members of the school's social context (Paul, *et al.,* 1977:20). Since inclusive education is a school's social matter, parents have the right to be involved in and supported regarding educational activities. The Salamanca Statement in Special Needs Education, 1994, states that the education of children with special educational needs is a shared task of parents and professionals in inclusive schooling.

As a result of this, nurturing and empathic support of parents to their non-LSEN children could ultimately achieve a deeper understanding of themselves and others (Lang, 1988:xvii). A positive attitude from the support parents had could promote social integration at schools between LSEN and learners without SEN. Parents need support in order to assume the role of parents involved in their children's education.

3.6.3 Parents' advocacy through support

In many cases parents have learned either through trial- and- error or systematic training, which are both regarded as valuable sources of information on affective as well as cognitive aspects. (Paul, *et al.,* 1977:22).

Parents who have access to information regarding inclusive education, need continuous support so that they could also promote their advocacy.

Parents of both LSEN and learners without special educational needs usually are outsiders with regard to the development of friendships and social relationships between their children and others (Paul, *et al.*, 1977:39).

To foster a good relationship between learners themselves, parents of learners without SEN have a vital role to play in influencing their children so that they could support their LSEN. Paul further states that parents might have opportunities in the neighbourhoods to encourage informal contacts between LSEN and neighbours. These relationships could lead to citizen advocacy relationships. Parents can help neighbours understand LSEN and inclusive education, so that they will be able to respond to inclusive education in a positive fashion (Paul, *et al.*, 1977:40). The success of parents and citizen advocacy regarding inclusive education depends primarily on the support parents of learners without SEN may receive-through the supportive partnership with professionals.

The rationale for parents to encourage citizen advocacy in the neighbourhood, is "buddy" systems that develop during and after-school hours (Paul, *et al.*, 1977:40). This might become beneficial in an educational setting in the sense that, during the school hours, educators will be involved with both LSEN and learners without SEN, so that they could support one another. While after the school hours, parents of learners without SEN will be involved with their children by trying to support and teach them to accept LSEN. Parents of learners without SEN can also make home visits to LSEN in an attempt to assist them and their parents with emotional support, etc.

The gains in social adjustment that occur through positive interpersonal relationships have tremendous benefit for the overall development of inclusive education (Paul, *et al.*, 1977:40). Parents of learners without SEN are required to be part of the effort for support.

3.7 PARENTS AND PROFESSIONALS

According to McConkey (1985:19), professionals involved during SEN are referred to as people or stakeholders such as educators, psychologists, therapists, socio-pedagogue, who will work together with parents with the objective of supporting parents in an inclusive education setting.

McConkey (1985:19) argues that children learn more when parents, teachers, and/or therapists work together. He further says that, if professionals are not working with parents, children would be losing out.

McConkey (1985:35) summarises advice for professionals to follow when supporting parents, as follows:

- Avoid uniformity and welcome diversity. – This means that professionals should not be more confident when dealing with parents than when they are dealing with children. Parents' opinions should be welcomed.

- Be prepared to listen, observe and negotiate. –There should be mutual respect between the parents and professionals. The success of any relationship lies in mutual respect (McConkey, 1985:37).

- Consult the parents at least as often as they would wish to consult a professional. – There should be continuous support from the professionals to the parents. Professionals should be proactive in consulting the parents, instead of being reactive when the parents need support.

- Be open about your feelings so that the parents can be open about theirs. – for parents to be supported at ease, exchange of knowledge from both the parents and the professionals would be required. This could be achieved if both parties are open about their feelings regarding inclusive education. Knowledge requires something more than the receipt and acceptance of true information (McConkey, 1985:42).

- Always ask why and answer why. – Professionals should always answer the question of why to have support for inclusive education for parents of learners without SEN. The above statement suggest that it seems as if parents would also have difficulties in accepting inclusive education for LSEN, therefore professionals should also ask parents why they do not accept LSEN. This would enable them to realise during the support programmes that there is nothing wrong with LSEN; they would be going through the necessary paradigm shift.

Harris (1975:40) indicates that one way of supporting parents is to encourage positive attitudes of educators towards parents. For parents to enjoy the support from the educators in an inclusive education setting, it is always proper for educators to make a paradigm shift regarding their negative attitudes towards parents if this is not realised. Educators could pretend to be supporting parents regarding inclusive education, or they will be parents' ineffective and inefficient support.

Gargiulo (1985:4) states that parents are capable of making valuable contributions and their involvement with professionals is important for the development of the handicapped person, LSEN, in inclusive education.

This reveals the notion that parents' capability could bring about successful inclusive education; they only need to be supported. Mittler and McConachie

(1983:47) state that the support from professionals to parents reinforce the parents' abilities to raise a child better. This child could be both an LSEN outside the home, or their own children without SEN.

Therapists know that, without a partnership with parents, children are unlikely to make effective progress (Solity & Bickler, 1994:179). This means that parents should be supported as much as possible to be informed about inclusive education.

3.8 PEER SUPPORT

Jones and Chartton (1996:92) refer to peer support as instances where parents are directly involved in organising and delivering experiences to help maximise some aspect of their peers' functioning. One of the goals of parents' support is to ensure that other parents are brought on board regarding inclusive education. The support for parents would enable them to be directly involved in the activities of inclusive education.

It is not only the recipients of this support who would benefit; peer providers of this support could also gain (Jones & Chartton, 1996:92).

3.9 PARENT ROLES

Parent involvement in preparation and support programmes will cast them in many roles regarding inclusive education. Singer and Irvin (1989:222) summarise the parents' roles as follows:

3.9.1 Parents as advocates

In the past, parents were cast in the passive, non-participative role of children with special needs (inclusive education) (Singer & Irvin, 1989:222). With the advent of advocacy groups for inclusive education, parents should remain an important asset for advocacy. This advocacy will assist them in developing other parents and stakeholder at a local and community level.

3.9.2 Parents as learners and interventionists

The role of parents as learners will be organised by professionals. Specialised information to topics about inclusive education will be given to them.

Teaching parents skills that enable them to become more effective change agents, appears to be most frequent strategy for parent involvement (Singer & Irvin, 1989:222). Through the support programmes, parents could also serve as primary interventionists for their children at home.

3.9.3 Parents as recipients of specialized services

Participation of parents in specialized services regarding inclusive education offers them opportunities for dealing with LSEN and their parents in an inclusive setting of education. The parents' specialized services should meet parents' interests, needs and concerns.

Specialized services offer opportunities for sharing reactions to the child's disability, and developing successful coping mechanisms (Singer & Irvin, 1989:232).

3.9.4 Parents as decision-makers

Parents are often cast, willingly or not, into the role of decision-makers (Singer & Irvin, 1989:223). The preparation and support programmes will ensure that parents become effective decision makers pertaining to inclusive education matters.

The South Africa Schools Act, Act No. 4 of 1996 (section 24) and (section 23(5) (DoE, 1996) requires that the governing bodies of ordinary schools which provide education to learners with special education needs, where reasonably practicable, co-opt a person or parents with expertise regarding the special education needs of learners.

3.10   STUMBLING-BLOCKS FOR PARENT SUPPORT

Since the implementation of SEN it seems that, according to research, parents have experienced the following problems in their process to get involved:

- Lack of management training
  Effective support service organization and delivery can be achieved in various ways with heads of service demonstrating vastly different methods of management to achieve this (Lacey & Lomas, 1993:33). This means that all the personnel in the management level of special needs and support services directorate, including the professionals, should be offered an adequate training that would ensure that they pass the relevant and effective education, preparation and support to parents. Lacey and Lomas (1993:33) emphasise that it is more difficult for parents to be trained if heads or professionals have received inadequate training.

- Horses for courses

  Lacey and Lomas (1993:5) explain these, as there are several heads of services that find themselves in the leading role through the same type of unplanned service growth. This serves as a barrier to those who train. For inclusive education preparation and support programmes for parents, professionals should plan their training sessions, knowing who is to deliver a specific course for a specific specialization.

- Non- existent or inadequate job description

  A clear job description adds to job security and confidence, whereas a vague one could easily be misinterpreted (Lacey & Lomas, 1993:37). There should be a job description for both parents and professionals, as it would assist them in what they should do or not do.

- Lack of clear line management structures

  Some support services do not have a head of service and many support staff in schools do not have a representative on the senior management team (Lacey & Lomas, 1993:37). This statement means that parents will also be unsure about the line management structure, and this confusion could be equally stressful to parents as to those professionals within the school setting. Parents should be represented in structures such as school governing bodies or volunteer parents who have the interest of LSEN and inclusive education at heart.

- Lack of information to parents

  Support services could frequently be overlooked when circulars about inclusive education from educational authorities to schools are not be made accessible to parents through governing bodies or parents' meetings. Lacey and Lomas (1993:39) indicate that information transmitted to parents should be without jargon, as using jargon or specialist's terminology could cause confusion and stress to others without

doing anything to enhance credibility. For parents to be well prepared and supported regarding inclusive education, they need lots and lots of adequate information about the matter.

- Team unawareness and isolation

    It seems as if parents do not view themselves as being members of a team. If educators and professionals were reluctant to be members of a team that includes parents, it would be difficult for parents to be effectively supported. Parents should not be isolated from other team members. As inclusive education will be dealing with a multi-disciplinary team, parents should form part of such a team.

- Lack of general finance and resources.

    In order to offer support to parents, support services in turn need to be supported (Lacey & Lomas, 1993:58). There should be budgets for all activities to be undertaken with the aim of supporting parents for inclusive education.

- Personal characteristics and qualities

    There are some loners in all the support services who find it difficult to work with others (Lacey & Lomas, 1993:51). Parents would have to be able to work with children and other parents. Lacey and Lomas (1993:51) view that people who are not naturally 'team people', could be counselled and supported so that they become team members. It is suggested that support staff (i.e. parents) need four characteristics, which could make them effective members of a collaborative team (Lacey & Lomas, 1993:51):

    - *Skills.*
    - *Knowledge.*
    - *Experience.*
    - *'Innate qualities.'*

Skills can be developed through training and support. Knowledge and experience can be gained with time. While the fourth characteristic, which is termed an 'innate quality,' is something which not all people possess and yet it is vital for effective team membership. This innate quality can be defined as the ability to work with others and to be aware of the value of contributions others can make towards a situation (Lacey & Lomas, 1993:51). It is true that for Inclusive education, parents should have certain skills. With the necessary knowledge and experience, they will be gaining that with time.

- Lack of communication skills

  In order to work effectively with parents, there have to be agreed objectives. When problems arise there must be an open forum where parents can discuss any difficulties experienced. Parents should also have some communication skills such as sign language skills, non-verbal communication skills, etc, as they would be involved with various kinds of learners in inclusive schools.

  Lacey and Lomas (1993:53) state that communication should increase where there are problems, so that solutions could be found.

  Thomas (1992:54) explored the need to reduce misunderstandings and tension when parents are involved with the professionals, they are as follows:
  - *Consultation skills.*
  - *Counselling skills.*
  - *Negotiation skills.*

- Lack of time

  Lacey and Lomas (1993:60) identify this as a stumbling-block that creates a major problem for parents. Whenever parents are invited to support groups, they might invariably state the following situation:

"There just isn't enough time, for example, we are working, transport problem, and so on."

"How can we support all the children and their parents when there are only 24 hours in a day?"

"I haven't got time to get involved in this new education setting."
"When can I make time to visit the school or professionals to have discussions with them?"

From the discussed above it became clear that if stumbling blocks, such as lack of time, can be removed it could bring about adequate preparation and support opportunities. Everybody involved should make time for such programmes. Both parents and professionals in inclusive education need time management courses, as well as other relevant courses related to inclusive education.

3.11   CONCLUSION

For the successful and smooth running of an inclusive education setting It is appropriate that, even though most parents might accept the disabilities, parents as stakeholders in the education of their children should be involved in preparation and support programmes. The researcher supports the notion that it is important to provide parents with sufficient knowledge and skills. This knowledge and skills would also equip them with personal characteristics and qualities that are needed for inclusive education.

The parents participation through the parents' representation in parent's structures, such as school governing bodies and advocacy groups, parents would easily access the information and education they need for their preparation

programmes. Handouts should be handed out to parents to attend these programmes knowing.

The perception of educational authorities to assume that parents have come to terms with inclusive education is not correct, if parents have not been prepared. Gascoigne 1996:11 (see 3.2) states that is seems as if most parents do accept the child's disability.

Professionals should be encouraged to undertake what they have been assigned to do. Mutual respect between parents and professionals who will be undertaking the preparation and support programmes seems to be necessary. The support of parents will also rely on the preparation of parents.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Educational practices provides the data, the subject matter, which form the problems of inquiring ... A constant flow of less formal reports on special school affairs and results is needed ... It seems to me that the contribution that might come from classroom teachers is a comparatively neglected field, or to change the metaphor, an almost unworked mine (John Dewey. 1929 in McKernan, 1996:219).

According to McKernan (1996:219), the analytical function of research is crucial in terms of making sound inferences and judgements, which lead to improved practice and understanding. This implies that the findings of this research will assist in realising an understanding the support parents need towards inclusive education.

The research attempts to investigate the support of parents of learners without SEN with a paradigm shift regarding inclusive education.

As mentioned in Chapter one (see 1.8), literature and empirical studies have been selected for this study. Chapter four deals with the method used for this research and the results of the empirical study.

Mertens (1997:174) recommends that researchers should describe their methodology in detail, since there is no one correct method for conducting

qualitative research. This means that both the qualitative and quantitative research can be used simultaneously. Therefore the research study is based on both the qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering. This chapter is an attempt to the in-depth investigation of the aims set in Chapter one (see 1.4 and 1.5)

Now that the researcher has collected data, the question could be asked, " *What do you do next*"? (McKernan, 1996:219). This chapter discusses the data analysis strategies and how the researcher plans to handle the data in terms of processing of data, data coding and entry of accuracy checks.

4.2   Definitions and explanation of research methods

Methodology- a part of the overall plan- structures the specific procedures about what or who will supply the data, how the data will be obtained and how data will be analysed (Hopkins, 1980:158). It is important to explain research methods that are applicable for this research purpose.   In this study a literature review, as well as an empirical study, will be concluded. Information obtained by means of an empirical study can be dealt with by means of a quantitative and a qualitative method.

4.2.1   Empirical study

Brown and Dowling (1998:9) suggested that the researcher couldn't approach a field or setting without some preconceptions about the nature of that setting therefore the researcher enters this study with some preconceptions about parents of learners without SEN regarding inclusive education. Empirical setting means the local region of experience about which the researcher wants to make claims and the observed position (Brown & Dowling; 1998:10).

Brown and Dowling (1998:20) further state that the empirical setting should be selected on the basis of the empirical quality research and the extent to which the research attempts to make its justifications and observations. This statement means that the empirical results of this study will be based on what the researcher had noticed during the preliminary observations from parents of learners without SEN regarding their reactions towards learners with SEN.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:2) indicate that the best-known representatives of qualitative research are participant observation and in-depth interviewing. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:384) affirm this by saying certain kinds of research could best be answered by observing how people act or how things look. This means that the researcher, by watching people (parents) of learners without SEN and hearing educators (parents) at mainstream schools talking about inclusive education has started a participant-observation study.

4.2.1.1. *Qualitative research*

In this instance the researcher undertakes an extensive literature review or library search on the support of parents of learners without Special Educational Needs (SEN) for Inclusive Education. The descriptive method of observations, interviews and questionnaires has been used for data gathering. During the descriptive research the researcher used observational techniques such as the survey - both interview and questionnaire - to gather data (Hopkins, 1980:177).

4.2.1.1.1 *Aims of qualitative research*

As mentioned in 4.2.1 (see Hopkins, 1980:159), it becomes clear that a qualitative research method is more appropriate. Stainback and Stainback (1988:175) maintain that, in a qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument for data collection. The researcher will interact actively with the subject for data collection, and will decide which questions to ask in a

questionnaire and interview process regarding the support of parents for a paradigm shift for inclusive education.

Because of its naturalistic approach, the researcher chose qualitative research. Mertens (1997:159) reaffirms this statement by saying that qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving interpretive and naturalistic approach to its subject. The researcher will be able to study the subject in its natural settings.

4.2.1.1.2   Characteristics of qualitative research

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:29 – 32) define the five features of qualitative research as follows:

- *Qualitative research has the natural setting, as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument.* This means that the researcher enters and spends considerable time in schools, families, neighbourhoods and other locales, learning about how to support parents with the paradigm shift for inclusive education. Bogdan and Biklen (1992:30) further state that the qualitative researcher goes to the particular setting under study, because of the context concerned. In this instance, the researcher is concerned about the parents of learners without SEN as his particular setting.

- *Qualitative research is descriptive.* The data collected are in the form of words. The researcher uses written words for data collection and analysis and in disseminating the findings. The researcher's data include interview transcripts, memos, field notes and other official records.

- *Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply outcomes or products.* Bogdan and Biklen (1992:31) state that the qualitative strategies have suggested how the expectations are translated into daily activities, procedures and interactions. The researcher should

do the study in a process and the quality of work formed from this research should be functional in inclusive education.

- *Qualitative researchers tend to analyse their data inductively.* The process of data analysis is like a funnel, opens at the beginning and is more directed and specific at the end; that is why there is a sample used for the purpose of the research; and the data will be mainly focused on parents of learners without SEN.

- *"Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.* Bogdan and Biklen (1992:32) explain that qualitative researchers are concerned with participants' perspectives. The researcher focuses part of his work on participant perspectives about supporting the participant (parents) towards a paradigm shift for inclusive education. The researcher is concerned with making sure that he captures parents' perspectives accurately.

4.2.1.2 *Quantitative research*

In a quantitative study, the data will be collected by the study of designated objects or subjects (Hopkins, 1980:159). Hopkins (1980:178) maintains that, since numbers provide exactness in reporting, data collection procedures are best organised to allow efficient quantification. The researcher will also highlight the issue of numbers used in collecting data, for example, 150 questionnaires were distributed to collect data.

4.2.1.2.1 *Aims of quantitative research*

The researcher uses also quantitative research because whilst doing the qualitative research, other quantitative data often come to the fore. At times the qualitative researcher finds it useful to generate his or her own numerical data

(Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:147). The researcher uses quantitative research because qualitative data can have conventional uses (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:147). This suggests trends in an empirical setting for such numbers of participants, as well as the empirical results.

4.2.1.2.2 *Characteristics of quantitative research*

Quantitative data are often included in qualitative writing in the form of descriptive statistics (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:148). The researcher will use certain statistics.

Qualitative researchers are adamant about not taking quantitative data at face value (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:148). The researcher will make social processes during interviews and observation in the collection of numerical data.

Quantitative research is used to provide exactness in data collection and reporting. This is emphasised in paragraph 4.2.2 (see Hopkins, 1980:178).

4.2.2 Literature study

The aim of the literature study was to gain information on the specific topic and to find the essential information on the topic. The research was conducted accordingly, as indicated in Chapters two and three. Information obtained from the literature supported the theoretical framework from which the empirical study was conducted, planned, evaluated and performed to obtain the necessary information. The literature study was conducted as follows:

A thorough, well-planned systematic organised approached was followed to obtain information from secondary, as well as primary sources. From the literature, problem questions were posed and deductions were made.

An analysis from the title puts the focus on support paradigm shift, whilst on the literature study the focus was therefore on:

- Parent's support.
- Paradigm shift.
- Awareness raising.
- Inclusive education.

4.3 SAMPLING

In most research, it is just not feasible to collect data from every individual in a setting or population (Mertens, 1997:253). Hopkins (1980:159) emphasises this by saying that, since no research outcomes could be based on a set of total information, most empirical research requires sampling. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:79) further state that one of the most important steps in the research process is to select the sample of individuals who will participate (be observed or questioned) as part of the study.

The research will subject itself to parents of learners without SEN from the three primary schools located in Mangaung, Heidedal and Bloemfontein. Parents will be the target population with the aim to change their attitudes regarding inclusive education. The researcher will use the random-purposive sample of 150 parents from these schools to fill in the questionnaires, and two interviews with parents - members of organizations for people with disabilities. Only a portion of parents of learners without SEN will be observed. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:402) clearly indicate that no researcher could observe every move and hear every utterance made by every individual in the group being observed. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:380) state that qualitative researchers go directly to the particular setting in which they are interested to observe and collect data. Faenkel and Wallen (1993:383) further mention that this type of sample is a purposive sample.

4.4 Data collection

Mertens (1997:286) explains that the purpose of data collection is to learn something about people or things. The researcher should therefore learn something about how to support parents of learners without SEN with making the paradigm shift for inclusive education. Hence, the purpose of this data collection for this study is to look at questions raised in Chapter one (see 1.4).

For the purpose of this study, the data collection has been an ongoing process. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:383) state that data are not collected at the "end" of the study. Rather, the collection of data in a qualitative research study is an ongoing process.

4.4.1 Research tools

Three research tools were used throughout the research study namely: observations, interviews and questionnaires.

4.4.1.1 *Observation*

In this research study the researcher became an observer while he continually observed people (parents) of learners without SEN. The purpose of this observation was to observe on how these parents treat LSEN and how they view parents' support for inclusive education.

Fraenkel and Wallen (1993:384) state that observing how people act or how things look could best do certain kinds of research.

Van Dalen (1979:39) alerts us to the fact that observation is fundamental in research, for it produces one of the basic elements of science. Van Dalen further says that observing is an activity that research workers engage in throughout the

several stages of their investigations by utilising their senses of hearing, sight, touch and taste. They gather facts - empirical data - that help them locate a problem and construct theoretical solutions for it (Van Dalen, 1979:39).

The justification of observation, according to MacMillan and Schumacher (2001:273), is threefold, namely:

- The researcher does not need to worry about the limitations of self-report bias, social desirability or response set.

- The information is not limited to what can be recalled accurately.

- The behaviour can be recorded as it occurs naturally.

It is, however, difficult to record complex behaviours accurately (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2001:73).

The research observation was mainly used to record the parents' behavioural patterns, inter alia, such as:
- Attitudes.
- Feelings.
- Level of anxiety and fears.
- Level of support.

(a)   Styles of observation: participant and non-participant

McKernan (1996:61) identifies two styles of observation, namely participant and non-participant. They are as follows:
- **Participant observation**
  In participant observation the researcher is a normal member of the group-this would seem axiomatic for action research work- and he or she joins

the activities, events, behaviours and culture of the group wholeheartedly. Although the true identity and role of the researcher may not be fully known to the group, this does not rule out cases where it is (McKernan, 1996:61).

- **Non-participant observation.**

In non-participant observation, the researcher is unobstructive and does not engage in the roles and work of the group as a group member, but remains aloof and distanced from the action. The researcher is more concerned with participants' behaviour than with gaining meaning through personal participation. The focus is on valid recording of behaviours, using an unobstructive strategy of data collection so as not to interfere with the natural sequence of events; care is taken not to disturb the ethos and culture of the setting by instructive activity (McKernan, 1996:61). Smith and Geoffrey (1968:42) further indicate that non-participant observation is increasingly being used in educational anthropological studies.

For the purpose of this research study, the researcher ended-up using both styles of observation. For example, participant observation, with parent-educators during discussions about inclusive education and LSEN (see 1.8). The non-participant observation was mainly used with the parents, namely to observe how they behave towards LSEN or people with disabilities.

(b)   Advantages and disadvantages of observation

McKernan (1996:61-62) identifies both the advantages and disadvantages of observation as follows:

Advantages of observation studies:

Observation has certain decided advantages as a research technique:

- Naturalistic enquiry: The study takes place in the 'natural' environment of the participants rather than an 'artificial' or contrived laboratory reconstruction.
- Time sampling: Unlike the survey research, the observation can take as much time as is required to gain a representative sample of behaviour-ensuring that trends and behaviours are representative.
- Non-verbal behaviour: The observer can make notes on non-verbal behaviour, like facial and body movement and gestures, which are not available to the sample survey research.

Disadvantages of observation studies:

The following are the disadvantages of observation as research technique:
- Data are difficult to quantify: Unstructured modes of observation rely heavily on description rather than measurement and counting procedures. It is often difficult to impose a coding frame on massive amounts of qualitative data.
- Small size of population observed: The fact that a group or individual is the focus of the observation may permit discussion of results only in relation to the case studied.
- Generalizability: This is related to point 2 above; since cases studies are small, it is impossible to generalize the results to larger populations.

- Reactivity: With an observer present in situation, a reactive effect may be introduced into the setting that distorts behaviour and produces unnatural results.

(c) **Quality in observational research**

Mertens (1997:320-321) suggests the following ideas for enhancing the validity and reliability of observational data:

- Use multiple observers or teams, diverse in age and gender, if possible.
- Cross-check observational findings with other researchers and eliminate inaccurate interpretation.
- Search for negative cases to test emergent propositions.
- Describe the research findings in such a way that the reader can 'see' and 'feel' what it was like.
- Address reliability by making observations in various settings, at various times of the day, days of the week, and months of the year (Mertens, 1997:320).

The researcher cross-checked observational findings, before recommendations could be made.

(d) **Conditions necessary for observation**

Since observation is essential in scientific inquiry, one should learn how to establish the conditions within themselves and their working enviroment that will enable them to obtain reliable facts with maximum efficiency (Van Dalen, 1997:40). Van Dalen (1997:42) identifies the four factors for observation as follows: attention, sensation, perception, and conception.

- Attention

Attention is a necessary condition for successful observation. This condition is characterized by a mental set or a state of alertness that an individual assumes so as to sense or perceive selected events (Van Dalen, 1997:40).

Learning to pay attention is an important part of observational training. By cultivating a deep interest in a particular point of view when engaged in research, you can motivate yourself to observe a specific segment of phenomena with an active, inquiring mind (Van Dalen, 1997:40). The researcher concentrated on the segment of parents' behaviour towards LSEN and people with disabilities for inclusive education. The researcher's sample was small enough to be encompassed for the purpose of the study. Van Dalen (1997:41) alerts us to the fact that, when engaged in research, one would want to direct his attention toward phenomena that are small enough to be encompassed and are sufficiently stable, constant and manageable so that others can view them at the same time or check them at the a later date.

- Sensation

Van Dalen (1997:41) indicates that one become aware of the world through senses, or their extension, by appropriate "sensing apparatus." For the purposed of this research study the researcher used the senses of hearing and sight.

To obtain clear, undistorted, normal signals from phenomena, the researcher can take the following precautions, according to Van Dalen (1997:42):
- Remove any cues that might cause subjects to alter their behaviour.

- Eliminate competing sensory stimuli.
- Place yourself in the most favourable vantage point for observations.
- Employ specially devised instruments to extend the range and clarity of observation.

- Perception

Van Dalen (1997:42) defines perception as the art of linking what is sensed with some past experience to give the sensation meaning. Van Dalen (1997:43) further says observation is more than experiencing sensation. Observation is sensation plus perception.

The researcher had a certain perception about the parents of learners without SEN towards LSEN or people with disability.

The researcher's perception was that parents of learners without SEN will find it difficult to change and to support inclusive education

- Conception

Van Dalen (1997:43) alerts us to the fact that an investigator cannot rely exclusively on attention, sensation and perception to observe and gain reliable knowledge about phenomena. On some occasions, one encounters similarities in diverse phenomena for one's current perception. If these similarities appear to give a meaningful insight into some differentiating characteristics of reality, a researcher may construct and define an imaginative concept.

The researcher used the concepts gained from the parents of learners without SEN for the re-observation to ensure that he saw facts.

4.4.1.2   *Interviews*

McKernan (1996:128) indicates that one of the most effective modes of gathering data in an inquiry is through the interview method.

The interviews were semi-structured, open-ended too and were conducted on the identified population, namely parents of learners without SEN, but who work at organization of people with disabilities. The purpose of this interview was to get information to be utilised for other parents of learners without SEN to enable them to support learners with SEN and their parents in inclusive education. Isaac (1978:96) states that, with the structured interview, the interviewer follows a well-defined structure resembling the format of an objective questionnaire, allowing clarification and elaboration within narrow limits.

According to Johnson (1994:44), successful interviews are usually characterised by the following qualities:

- Consistency through the application of standardised stimulus to the respondent.
- Interviewees who have very little knowledge of the research in question.
- The interviewers who make contact with the respondent and briefly explain the purpose of the research enquiry.
- An interviewer's ability to persuade the respondent to participate in the enquiry by being interviewed.
- The interviewer who has the ability to work through an interview schedule using a standardised language (Johnson, 1994:44).

According to Borg and Gall (1989:401), a standardised interview has the following characteristics:

- It poses a question in a language that is clear and meaningful to the topic.

- It does not contain leading questions. These questions can only become relevant in cases where they contain deliberate assumptions designed to provoke reactions to the topics.
- The interviewer should talk less than the respondent to ensure maximal collection of the information.
- A conversational mode similar to everyday conversation should be prioritised to elicit trust and a relaxed atmosphere.

Interview questions in this research were formulated in a simple and straightforward language. Leading questions were avoided at all cost. The questions were also designed to address the topic that the researcher investigated (see 5.2.1).

Predetermined but open questions were used in order to ensure that factually precise information be obtained from the interviewees. The questions aimed at the exposition of the parents' support and paradigm shift for inclusive education, as well as how to ensure that parents of learners without SEN accept and adapt to LSEN.

Interviewing rules for qualitative researchers

Borg and Gall (1989:401) identify the following rules for the qualitative research:
- Frame the same question in different time dimensions.
- Pose questions in language that is clear and meaningful to the subject.
- Avoid leading questions. However, in some cases a leading question may be asked that contains a deliberate assumption designed to provoke a subject reaction.
- Ask questions that contain only a single idea.
- Use open-ended questions, as they elicit richer qualitative responses.

- Effective probing is necessary to produce more complete information. Probes can be used for getting further elaboration, explanation, clarification and completion of detail.
- Save complex or controversial questions.

The researcher used Borg and Gall's (1989), rules such as to pose questions in clear language, ask questions that contain only a single idea and saved controversial questions.

4.4.1.3 *Questionnaires*

The 150 questionnaires were divided equally between three schools for parents of learners without SEN. This would help to obtain basic information on how the research might change the parents' attitudes about inclusive education. The aim of the closed question was to investigate the parents' feeling about the knowledge and acceptance regarding inclusive education. The completion of questionnaires was based on anonymous participation.

(a)   Advantages of questionnaires

Johnson (1994:37) believes that questionnaires can provide the researcher with essential information, because the respondents complete them without being disturbed by anybody. If the questionnaire is to be successful, the designer ought to have the ability to think clearly and to ask plain questions in simple language and unambiguous terms. The respondents would thus find the questionnaire relevant to his/her knowledge and this could stimulate him/her to try all the questions without any hesitation.

MacMillan and Schumacher (2001:257) also argue that accurate and reliable outcomes can be gained from questionnaires. This argument is based on anonymity in terms of the respondents. Respondents do not write their names on

the questionnaires and this gives them the freedom to express their feelings freely.

As a data collection instrument, the questionnaire is easy to administer and provides direct responses of both factual and attitudinal information. The questions written down must be very carefully phrased and the purpose of each should be clear (McKernan, 1996:125). The researcher's questionnaire was also made easy to be administered and questions were also written down in clear language.

(b)   Qualities of questionnaires

According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2001:258) questions or statements used in questionnaires must possess the following qualities:

- They must be clear to enable all respondents to interpret them in the same way.
- They should avoid double-barrels; otherwise they would contain more than one idea and become ambiguous.
- Competent respondents in the topics investigated must be selected to ensure the attainment of reliable and accurate information.
- Relevant questions will address the investigated issues satisfactorily.
- Questions should be short and simple, otherwise the respondents might be unwilling to try and understand them.
- Negative items could easily be misinterpreted.
- Biased items might encourage particular responses at the expense of others.

Only relevant questions to the research subject were included in the questionnaire form.

(c) Disadvantages of questionnaires

Some disadvantages of questionnaire method are as follows:
- It is difficult to get a list of good questions together.
- Analysis is time consuming.
- Response rates are often low due to fear or lack of anonymity.
- Some respondents do not answer honestly.

Borg and Gall (1989:427) alert us to the fact that many of the questionnaires that are received by principals, superintendents and their educators appear to have been thrown together by the graduate students during the school's short break between lunch and two o' clock class. They further state that this type of questionnaires has led many school administrators to develop negative attitudes about the questionnaire as a research approach.

(d) Questionnaire format

Borg and Gall (1989:431) identify the rules below for a questionnaire's format:
- Make the questionnaire attractive.
- Organise and lay out questions so that the questionnaire is as easy as possible to complete.
- Number the questionnaire items and pages.
- Include brief, clear instruction printed, in bold type.
- Organise the questionnaire in a logical sequence.
- When moving to a new topic, include a transitional sentence to help respondents switch their trains of thought.
- Begin with a few interesting but not threatening items.
- Do not put important items at the end of a long questionnaire.
- Put threatening or difficult questions near the end of the questionnaire.

4.5   FIELD OF RESEARCH

As this research study targets the parents of learners, the researcher had to gain permission from the Free State Education Department, so as to visit the schools (see appendices 1). Hopkins (1980:178) emphasises this by saying that, in most cases, permission to conduct the study must be obtained properly from administrative officials. Mertens (1997:177) re-emphasised that before data are collected, the researcher must follow appropriate procedures to gain permission from the gatekeepers.

To do a field research, the researcher had to choose the observation-empirical research design by means of an interactive inquiring method. The researcher took field-notes from the interviewees' responses, and the field questionnaires were distributed. It is emphasised in Chapter one (see 1.5) that, to be able to reach the aims set, the qualitative study should be made as an empirical research design and conducted by means of an interactive inquiring method (MacMillan and Schumacher, 2001:193).

4.6   METHODS OF ENQUIRY

Two methods of enquiry were fully exploited in the research study, namely qualitative and quantitative methods.

4.6.1 Qualitative enquiry

According to Johnson (1994:7), interview and observation research are mainly qualitative in nature. The researcher, therefore, mainly deals with the complexities of human behaviour. In-depth investigations were thus being made to investigate the attitudes of parents of learners without SEN regarding inclusive education. The study further looks into how these parents be involved in inclusive education activities, so that they could easily understand, accept and support it.

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Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990:445) are in favour of this method, as it possesses the ability to depict, to a reasonably adequate degree, the complex pattern of what is being investigated so that one who has not experienced it, can understand it..

Rapuleng (2002:80) alerts us to the fact that it is not possible to express non-quantifiable data in the form of percentage or numbers. Thus Tesch (1990:55) adds that qualitative data include words, pictures, drawings, printings, photographs, films, videotapes, films, music and sound tracks. The myths and beliefs that only the quantifiable phenomena can be measured are dispelled.

In this research study tools such as interviews and observations were used to ensure that even the small and non-quantifiable details are being clarified beyond any doubt. The interviews were conducted with two parents of learners without SEN, from various organizations of people with disabilities. Six questions were formulated for this purpose (see 5.2.1). A thorough observation was also done during the course of the research study. The observation focused on parents of learners without SEN with an attempt to investigate their attitudes regarding people with disabilities, for example, LSEN.

4.6.2   Quantitative enquiry

Quantitative research produces numbers as data (Crossley and Vulliamy, 1997:4), and these data are in most cases gathered through the use of questionnaires (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993:352). It is difficult for the educators to rely on one method in their quest to try to understand the education problems (Eichelberger, 1989:101). Eichelberger (1989:101) indicates that quantitative research is the best technique to be used to gather objective data, for example speedometer readings. Nonetheless, Eichelberger (1989:102) also points out that quantitative methods can be subjective in the sense that it ignores the interpretations and concerns of meaning in the situation. Rapuleng (2002:81)

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states that the argument that the whole is more than simply the sum of the individual part is totally neglected. Thus Eichelberger (1989:220) argues that the data and its associated summaries indicate the extent to which the theories or beliefs on which the research is based, describe the situation studied accurately.

Quantitative inquiry can be either experimental or non-experimental (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2001:31). The researcher selected the non-experimental mode of study. Data was collected by means of a survey that was done in the form of a questionnaire. The data that are gathered are usually used to describe characteristics of a group of the population (MacMillan & Schumacher, 2001:304). This researched information, gathered through quantitative inquiry, was used to analyse the attitudes of the identified population. The attitudes of parents (population) was analysed in the context of inclusive education, support and paradigm shift.

Miles and Huberman (1984:23) recommend the interactive implementation of the qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure maximal attainment of the desired outcomes. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods of research (see 1.8).

4.7   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present that what you have discovered, to others (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:153). This means that, as the researcher has worked with data, he has to decide what to tell people after discovering what is important, and what he has learned.

The researcher will mention literature review when discussing the discovered data. The data analysis will be based on data being collected. Both the

quantitative and qualitative data analysis will be utilised. As mentioned in Chapter one (see 1.8), the data analysis and interpretation will be based on objectivity.

4.7.1   Approaches to data analysis

The analytic task, interpreting and making sense of the collected material, appears monumental when one is involved in a first research project (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:153). The analysis of data seems complicated to first time researchers. The researcher will learn to handle analysis of data. As the qualitative researcher, the researcher will analyse data as it is collected. For quantitave analysis, the researcher will also analyse data in terms of certain statistics at the end of the data collection.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992:154) suggest ways to help researchers to make analysis an ongoing part of data collection, as follows:

- **Force yourself to make decisions that narrow the study.** This means that, at first, the researcher has to widely collect data that is related to the research topic. There should be a research focus, based both on what is feasible to do and what is of interest to the study.

- **Force yourself to make decisions concerning the type of study you want to accomplish.** Here the researcher has already decided to use qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

- **Develop analytic questions.** This will help the researcher to organize data collected as he proceeds with the data re-collection for data analysis.

- **Plan data collection session in light of what you find in previous observation.** In light of what the researcher finds when he periodically

review his field notes, he plans to pursue specific leads in his next data-collection session.

- **Write any "observer's comments" about ideas you generate.** This means that the researcher has to have field notes, observer's comments, as they are necessary for referrals.

- **Write memos to you about what you are learning.** This will help the researcher to make a formative data analysis.

4.7.2 Practices in data analysis

McKernan (1996:219) mentions that analysis is not a separate stage in research work- it begins with the practical deliberation that accompanies the pre-fieldwork stage and continues as one collects information and writes the research report. This implies that data analysis is informed by the research work and data that have been collected. The researcher has used the following practices in data analysis:

- During the course of the study, while the researcher was in the field, the researcher reflected on relations, impressions and commonalities from the questionnaires, observations and interview responses. According to Tesch (1990) in Mertens (1997:350), the researcher analyses the logic and the correspondence of data to initial impressions in the field. Tesch further says that the researcher should periodically, throughout the study, carefully and thoroughly studies all the data, seeking similarities, differences, correspondences, categories, themes, concepts and ideas.

- The data analysis process began with reading all the collected data from the questionnaires and interview notes, then dividing the data into smaller, more meaningful units.

- The categories were used for data analysis. For example, a researcher starts with a category called "support for parents" and later category called "paradigm shift" (see 5.3.1). According to Mertens (1997:351), the categories are flexible and more modified as further data analysis occurs.

The table below indicates how the categories were used for the data analysis.

Table 2: Categories for data analysis

Category	Description	Questions
Category 1	Support	1, 2, 3, 4
Category 2	Paradigm Shift	5, 6, 7
Category 3	Peer support of parents	8, 9
Category 4	Closed questions	10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
Category 5	Open ended questions	16, 17

4.7.3 Stages of data analysis

Now that the fieldwork has been completed, the data analysis could commence. This data analysis was based on the support of parents who made the paradigm shift for inclusive education. McKernan (1996:221) identifies at least four stages of analysis they are as follows:

Processing of data

(a)   Editing data: The researcher checks whether he has all that questionnaires and interviews scheduled. The researcher further checked that he is interpreting each response uniformly. McKernan (1996:223) maintains that every item should be treated with the same criteria of interpretation.

(b)   Coding: McKernan (1996:223) explains that, when one is involved in processing data which will be put into quantifiable form later, it is useful to

assign codes to the responses to help with the analysis. The purpose of coding is to classify evidence and place the data into neat categories so that patterns could be established coherently. The researcher used a coding frame, which outlines questions asked. Responses to the item are also assigned codes. The researcher's codes are as follows (see 1.6):

A1: Interview with the first parent from O.D.P

B2: Interview with the second parent from O.D.P.

Mapping data: The researcher will map the data by noting the frequency of recurrence of issues responded by the participants from both the interviews and questionnaires. McKernan (1996:225) claims that mapping the data is important to get some purchase on the frequency of occurrence of specific units.

Interpretation of data: McKernan (1996:226) alerts us to the fact that when one moves beyond description and tries to make some statement about what various responses mean, and to suggest relationships among data, then one is conducting an interpretation of data. This means that several findings will emerge through the interpretation and analysis of data. The researcher mainly relies on the notes compiled during the interviews, observations and questionnaires.

4.8   PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

After the analysis has been completed, the researcher must assemble the major findings and present them to others (McKernan, 1996:227). This implies that this will be the subject of the final chapter, and the main findings of the research study will be presented. The recommendations of the researcher will pay paramount attention to the parents of learners without SEN for supporting them with the paradigm shift for inclusive education.

4.9 CONCLUSION

The researcher, as an instrument in a qualitative and quantitative approach will collect data by using observation, interviews and questionnaires. The questions to be asked are decided by the researcher based on the research study context, with the aim of answering question raised in Chapter one (see 1.4). The researcher's area of inquiry is the parent of learners without SEN.

Mertens (1997:176) states that the researcher must be open to a change of focus of what is dictated by the data emerging from the field experience. The researcher should therefore be flexible in terms of the fieldwork research during data collection with the focus on the support of parents without SEN.

The researcher has to make plans to enter the field in the least descriptive manner (Mertens, 1997:178), which indicates that arrangements have to be made with all the participants in the field in which the research is to be conducted. Appointments for interviews must be scheduled, questionnaire collection data be set and observation be made at the nil or least descriptive manner.

The researcher must present a logically conceived statement of the data, not only for the use in the study, but also for dissemination of conclusions to the profession also see Hopkins (1980:309).

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, SUMMARY DEDUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Mertens (1997:359) alerts us to the fact that, in both quantitative and qualitative studies, the researcher should tie the results back to the purpose of the study and to the literature in the discussions section of the report. Furthermore, findings should be based on data, and caution should be exercised in recommendations for practice. This implies that the researcher attempts to answer the problems stated in Chapter one (see 1.4). Qualitative researchers often end up with a mountain of data that needs to be reduced to some manageable form so that others would be able and willing to read it (Mertens, 1997:359). This implies that, from the data collected, the researcher will make a summarised deduction.

This chapter reveals the findings of this study that was based on the data collected. The findings in this chapter will be a reflection of support to parents and parents' paradigm shift towards inclusive education. Finally, recommendations are made with the intention to support parents and to emphasise the importance of a paradigm shift towards inclusive education.

5.2 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONDENTS

This research study examines support to and a possible paradigm shift by parents of learners without SEN towards inclusive education. From the

preliminary study of the survey, it is evident that parents of learners without SEN need support, especially to make a paradigm shift towards inclusive education.

Data collected from two semi-structured interviews (see 4.4.1.2 and 5.3.2) with parents (belonging to organizations of people with disabilities) of learners without SEN; and from 135 questionnaires (see 4.4.1.3 and 5.3.1) returned, have been combined to be used for the findings and interpretation of data.

5.2.1 Interview respondents

5.2.1.1 *The respondents' attitudes towards the interview*
(a) Respondent A
The respondent was positive about the interview; hence, she indicated that she was pleased that at least someone has addressed the issue of inclusive education.

(b) Respondent B
This respondent had a welcoming approach and attitude towards the researcher and also manifested a positive attitude towards the interview. It was further indicated by the respondent that other studies regarding the issue of inclusive education should be undertaken.

5.2.1.2 *The respondents' point of view regarding awareness of inclusive education*
(a) Respondent A
The respondent's responses were as follows:

- "There is lack of information in the community on inclusive education;
- The Ministry of Education is not doing enough to educate schools about inclusive education; and

- The organization of people with disabilities should be part of these advocacy programmes."

(b) Respondent B

The respondent suggested that there should be more programmes put into place that will ensure that people become well informed about inclusive education. She further indicated that people should not be informed for the sake of informing them; rather, the information that they are being given, should be efficient so that they could understand inclusive education.

5.2.1.3. *The respondents' values regarding involvement of people without disabilities or SEN*

(a) *Respondent A*

The respondent expressed the following:

"Nothing impresses me about seeing people taking part in disabilities activities. For example, by volunteering their services and expertise for the development of one nation without discrimination."

(c) *Respondent B*

- "It makes one very excited to see that other people still care;
- The involvement of people without disabilities in the disability activities strengthens our programmes; and
- These people should provide assistance where needed."

5.2.2 Questionnaire respondents

The questionnaires were distributed at three schools (see 4.4.1.3), and the responses were as follows:

5.2.2.1 *Respondent 1*

At receiving the questionnaires, the principal of the school explained that parents of his school might not be able to complete the questionnaires because of the following:

"Lack of information regarding the research study.
Misinterpretation and misunderstanding of concepts used in the questionnaires.
Lack of time to fill out the questionnaires.
Involvement with family, school and work matters.
Unwillingness to be part of the study."

5.2.2.2 *Respondent 2*

The principal showed a negative attitude when requested by the researcher to distribute the questionnaires to parents through their children. The principal had to be persuaded by the researcher that he should allow the study to take place amongst parents of his school. The researcher showed the letter of research permission to the principal. The principal responded as follows:

"These parents would not answer this questions because of the language used in the questionnaire.
Parents might not know and understand the research study."

5.2.2.3 *Respondent 3*

The principal was reluctant to take the questionnaires after he had realised that the study was about inclusive education. He indicated the following:

"Why don't you go to the special schools?
Your cut-off date is too soon.
How do you expect parents to get the questionnaires?"

5.3 RESULTS AND FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The results of the study, gained from responses during observations, interviews and questionnaires, are addressing the problem stated (see 1.4), namely:

- What is the status quo of parents of learners without SEN about inclusive education?
- How to ensure those parents of learners without SEN accept disability so as to realise a successful inclusive education?
- Why is it important for parents to support one another?
- What programmes should be put into place to help parents adapt to a paradigm shift?

5.3.1 Questionnaire

From the 150 distributed questionnaires, a response of 135 (90%) was obtained after follow-up visits to participants that had not responded to a set cut-off date. The categories of the questions from the questionnaire are as follows:

Category 1: Questions that deal with the "support" for parents for inclusive education (questions 1- 4)

Table 3. Support for parents for inclusive education (See category 1)

Category 1	Questions	Yes	No
Question 1	Do you know what Inclusive Education is?	50	85
Question 2	If you are aware of Inclusive Education and its importance, will you support it?	130	5
Question 3	Do you think that parents of learners without SEN should be trained and educated about the disabilities?	130	5
Question 4	Do you think that parents of learners without SEN should be supported for Inclusive Education?	125	10

85 questionnaires (63%) suggested that parents do not know what inclusive education is. Only 50 (37%) of parents knew what inclusive education is. Although the majority did not know about inclusive education, parents explained that, if they could be trained and educated about inclusive education, they would be more than willing to learn and to support inclusive education. Parents emphasized that they should be made aware and trained so that they could support both LSEN and their parents (see 1.3). It became evident from the review of the literature on inclusive education that parents need support in order to accept and support inclusive education (see 4.2.2). As it has been said (see1.1), it must be re-emphasised that parents need to be trained or supported on how to deal with children (Gordon, 1975:297).

Category 2: Question that deals with the "paradigm shift" of parents towards inclusive education (question 5-7)

Table 4. Paradigm shift of parents to inclusive education (see category 2)

Category 2	Questions	Yes	No
Question 5	Do parents of learners without SEN have a negative attitude towards the Disabled?	100	35
Question 6	Can parents of learners without SEN change their attitudes towards the disabled if they are supported?	120	-
Question 7	Will the new mind-set of parents of learners without SEN guarantee their involvement in Inclusive Education?	110	25

120 questionnaires (89%) of the respondents suggested that parents of learners without SEN would definitely make a mind shift/ paradigm shift, having a positive attitude towards the LSEN, should they be provided with knowledge and trained and supported regarding inclusive education (see 1.5 and 2.1). The remaining 15 (11%) did not respond to the question on the making of a paradigm shift by parents. Macbeth in Munn (1993:17) alerts us to the fact that there is a need for a

paradigm shift. In the light of what has been said in the literature review, Warger and Pugash's (1996:298) viewpoint that a shift also has to occur in how parents collaborate and get integrated can be referred to.

Category 3: Questions that deal with peer support of parents regarding LSEN for inclusive education (question 8-9)

Table 5 : Peer support of parents regarding LSEN for Inclusive Education (see category 3)

Category 3	Questions	Yes	No
Question 8	Can parents of learners without SEN support parents of LSEN and their children?	125	10
Question 9	Is a lack of education and support for parents of learners without SEN regarding the disabled a problem for inclusive education?	99	36

125 (93%) of the respondents supported the notion for peer support of parents for the success of inclusive education (see 1.4 and 3.3.2). The literature study has revealed that because all learners will be part of inclusive education, parents should support one another. For example, one of the participants said: "parents should love their neighbours the way Jesus had loved us." In this regard, it is re-emphasised that it is not only the recipients of this support who benefit, peer provide of this support can derive gains (Jones & Chartton, 1996:92).

Category 4: Fixed response (closed) questions

The response to this fixed response questions were as follows (questions 10-15):

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Question 10: *Parents of the learners without S.E.N, have a role in inclusive education*

From the 135 respondents, only five (4%) were uncertain about the question, and 130 (96%) indicated that they agreed that parents of the learners without SEN have a role to play in inclusive education. According to the South African Schools' Act of 1996, section 23(5) and section 24 (see 1.1 and 1.5) all parents are required to have a full participation in the education of their children. The researcher concludes that, since inclusive education is not only for LSEN, but for all the learners, parents of learners without SEN have a role in inclusive education (see 1.5).
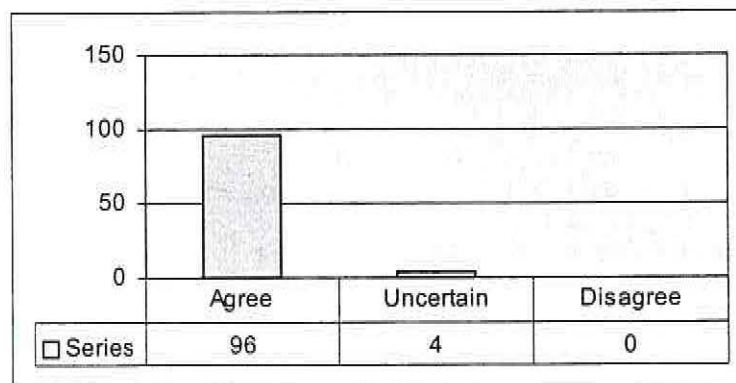

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
☐ Series	96	4	0

Figure 5.1: Question 10

Question 11: *Parents of learners without SEN should be supported regarding inclusive education*

All 135 (100%) participants agreed to this question. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994:137) states that parents need support and encouragement. This implies that parents need support in order to assume the role of a parent in an inclusive setting.
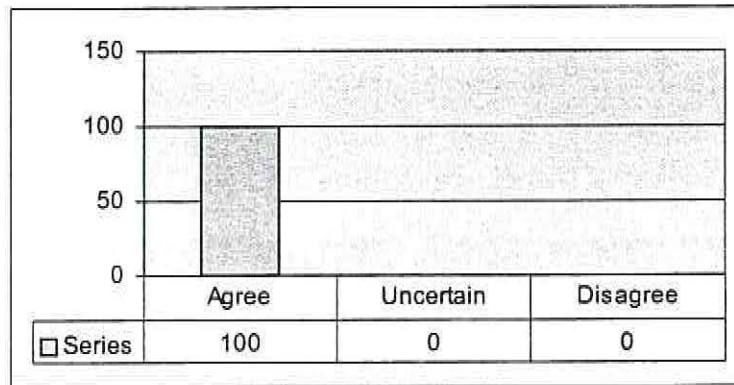
Figure 5.2 : Question 11

Question 12: *Parents of learners without SEN should accept disabilities*

All 135 (100%) participants agreed to this question. From the researcher's point of view all people can accept LSEN. In this respect, it should be emphasized that parents need to be engaged in the inclusive education activities. Parent's active involvement will foster an understating and acceptance of disabilities (see 2.3).
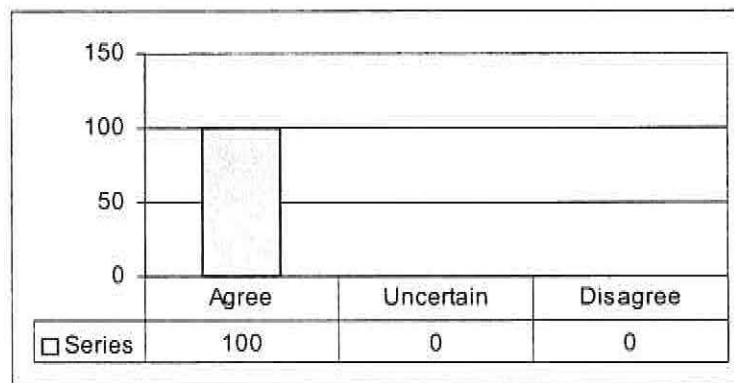

Figure 5.3: Question 12

Question 13: *Parents of learners without SEN should make a paradigm shift about LSEN*

Of the 135 respondents, 128 (95%) agreed that there should be a paradigm shift made by parents of learners without SEN; 6(4%) were uncertain, whilst one (1%) disagreed that parents of learners without SEN should make a paradigm shift. Parents should be prepared for, and supported through the process of making a paradigm shift regarding LSEN, as indicated in 2.3.2, as DEC in Naicker (1999:66) suggests a move from one paradigm to another, from one way of looking at something to a new away, a move to a new mind-set, new attitudes, a new way of thinking. The researcher concluded that parents' new supported paradigm shift will bring about the realizing of an inclusive education (see 1.4 and 2.3).
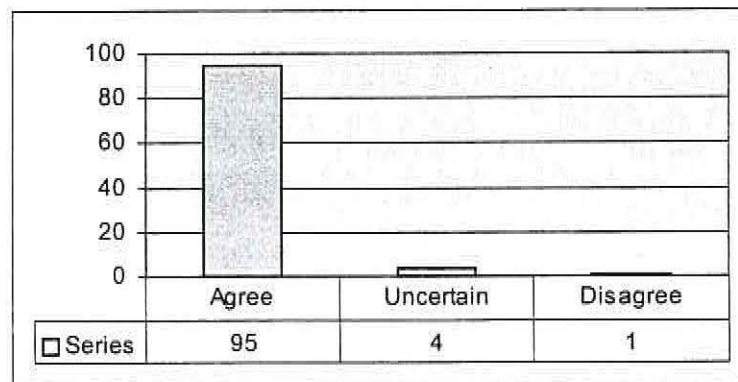

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
☐ Series	95	4	1

Figure 5.4: Question 13

Question 14: *Parents of learners without SEN should be involved in the supported service of inclusive education*

From the 135 questionnaires, 133 (99%) of the participants agreed to the question; only two (1%) disagreed (see 2.2.4). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for the Action on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994:31) alerts us to the fact that provision of support services is of paramount importance

for the success of inclusive policies. The Salamanca statement further states that the support services should include non – educational services as well. This implies that parents with various specialties, for example, psychologists, therapists, etc, should be encouraged to be involved in support services on a voluntary basis ("Letsema"), irrespective of their children's educational needs.
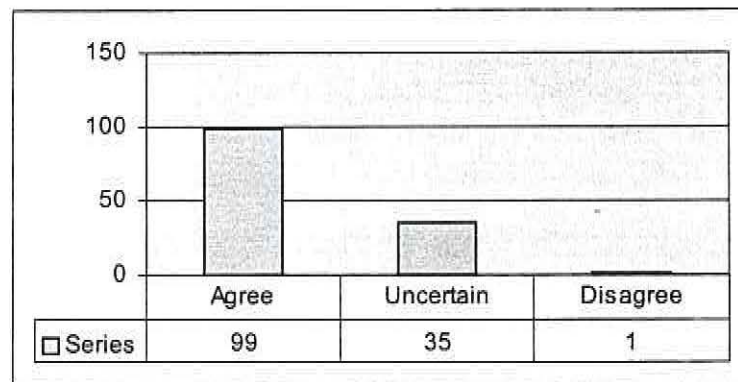

	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
□ Series	99	35	1

Figure 5.5: Question 14

Question 15: *Parents of learners without SEN should be prepared for LSEN in order to accept inclusive education*

All 135 (100%) participants agreed to this question. It is once again emphasized, see 3.2 that a formal preparation programme should be designed to impart the required skills and knowledge to enable parents to become effective practicing parents in inclusive education. Parents further indicated that the content of preparation and training programmes should be based on inclusive education (see 3.2.2).There should be an adequate and efficient preparation, rather than forcing inclusive education on parents.
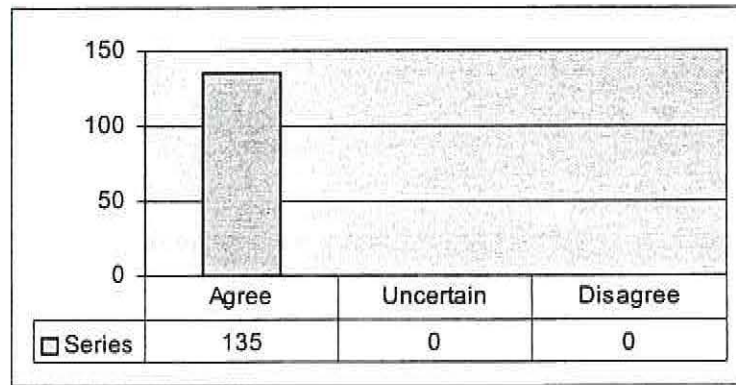
	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree
☐ Series	135	0	0

Figure 5.6: Question 15

Category 5: Open-ended (free) questions

These questions (16-17) were posed to give the respondents freedom to answer. Questions 16 and 17 deals with participants' comments and general opinions regarding supporting parents with the paradigm shift for inclusive education. (see appendices B.)

The general opinion of the participants was that of support for inclusive education and support for parents' paradigm shift. The opinion was reflected in statements such as:

"We are living in the era of change; education must not be separated, all learners should be grouped under one roof; and if we are divided our lives are also going to be divided. We have to learn to accept one another and build one strong nation without discrimination" (participant 1); and " This cannot be done overnight, a lot of training and advocacy about LSEN and inclusive education should be done; special meeting and workshops should be held to educate the parents comprehensively about inclusive education" (participant 2).

To: ....
....
....

From: Manaka. T. M. (Mr.)
(M Ed student)

SUBJECT: APPOINTMENT FOR AN INTERVIEW: RESEARCH

In order to meet the requirements for an M Ed degree I need to conduct a
research project. The topic of the project is: **Supporting Parents with
the Paradigm Shift for Inclusive Education.** Would you arrange an
interview for me with one parent to find out how learners with different
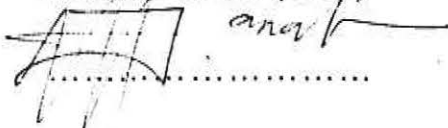special needs are supported?

Details of the appointment:

Venue: ....

Date: ....

Time:........................

If you need any further information please contact me at 0824120430.

Thank you for your help

Yours faithfully

Manaka. T. M. (Mr.)
....

<u>To</u>: The School Principal

....

<u>From</u>: Manaka. T. M (Mr.)
(M Ed student)

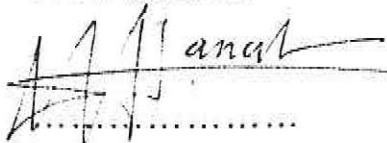## SUBJECT: REQUEST TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH PROJECT.

Would you please grant permission for me to conduct a research project at your school? I need to do this research to meet the requirements for a M Ed degree. **My topic is Supporting Parents with the Paradigm Shift for Inclusive Education**. I wish to hand out 20 questionnaires to parents of learners without Special Educational Needs and have 1 interview with a parent- educator.

If you need any further information please contact me at 0824120430.

Your approval will be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

T. M. Manaka