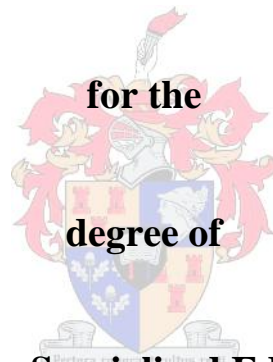# THE ATTITUDE OF EDUCATORS TOWARDS ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOLS WHERE LEARNERS WITH BARRIERS ARE INCLUDED: A CASE STUDY

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Assignment presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the

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SUPERVISOR: PROF. RONA NEWMARK

2009

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

....
Signature **Date**

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SUMMARY

Within the movement towards an inclusive society in South Africa, learners experiencing learning barriers are included in mainstream schools. With the inclusion of these learners, there seems to be a trend of learners repeating the same grade more than twice. There seems to be a problem with regard to assessment in classrooms where these learners are present, which could be related to teachers' skills and attitudes. This is a problem found in Venda, Limpopo Province in the Dzindi circuit. Learners experiencing learning barriers in this circuit are not assessed as prescribed by the assessment policy and the draft guideline for the implementation of inclusive education (second draft). The background of Venda rural communities has an influence on educators' attitudes towards assessment of these learners. This study investigates the attitudes of educators towards assessment of learners who have been enrolled in the three primary schools. The research was conducted at three primary schools in the Dzindi Circuit, Limpopo. A qualitative approach was used and the results of this study indicate that educators would prefer to assess non-disabled learners rather than learners with learning barriers. Educators feel that they are inadequately trained, and therefore do not possess the necessary knowledge and skills for assessing learners with barriers in their classroom. School-based in-service training should be introduced to prepare all qualified educators for this task. Specialized training should be introduced into every training program, aimed at training all prospective educators to manage the full range of barriers that they will encounter in their classrooms. The results also suggest that support teams should be in place and that the number of learners in mainstream classes be reduced so that better support can be provided.

OPSOMMING

As deel van die beweging na 'n inklusiewe gemeenskap in Suid-Afrika word leerders wat hindernisse tot leer ervaar in hoofstroomskole ingesluit. Met die insluiting van hierdie leerders blyk dit dat daar 'n tendens is dat leerders dieselfde graad meer as twee keer herhaal. Dit wil voorkom asof daar 'n probleem bestaan met betrekking tot assessering in klaskamers waar hierdie leerders hulle bevind, wat moontlik verband hou met die vaardighede en houdings van onderwysers. Hierdie probleem word ook in die Dzindi-kring in Venda, in die Limpopo-provinsie, ondervind. In hierdie kring word leerders wat hindernisse tot leer ervaar nie geassesseer soos voorgeskryf deur die assesseringsbeleid en die konsep-riglyn vir die implementering van inklusiewe onderwys (tweede konsep) nie. Die agtergrond van die landelike gemeenskappe van Venda beïnvloed onderwysers se houdings jeens assessering van leerders met leerhindernisse in hul klaskamers. Hierdie studie ondersoek die houdings van onderwysers jeens assessering in primêre skole wat leerders met leerhindernisse inskryf. Die navorsing is by drie primêre skole in die Dzindi-kring, Limpopo, gedoen. 'n Kwalitatiewe benadering is gevolg en die resultate van hierdie studie dui aan dat onderwysers sou verkies om nie-gestremde leerders eerder as leerders met leerhindernisse te assesseer. Onderwysers voel dat hulle nie voldoende opgelei is nie, en dat hulle dus nie oor die nodige kennis en vaardighede beskik om assessering in 'n inklusiewe klaskamer toe te pas nie. Skoolgebaseerde indiensopleiding behoort ingevoer te word om alle gekwalifiseerde onderwysers vir hierdie taak voor te berei. Gespesialiseerde opleiding behoort in elke opleidingsprogram ingevoer te word met die doel om alle voornemende onderwysers op te lei om die hele reeks hindernisse wat hulle in hul inklusiewe klaskamers sal teëkom te bestuur. Die resultate doen ook aan die hand dat ondersteuningspanne daargestel behoort te word en dat die aantal leerders in 'n inklusiewe klaskamer verminder behoort te word.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION AND STATEMENT
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1.1   INTRODUCTION

Since the adoption of White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, the National Department of Education (DoE) has introduced the policy of inclusion to ordinary public schools in South Africa. This means that learners with learning barriers now have a right to be included in mainstream schools or public ordinary schools. They are no longer only attending special schools. This presents a range of challenges that both learners and educators have to face, with one problem being that these learners are not progressing as they might have done in special schools. The rate of progress through the grades for learners with special educational needs in mainstream schools is an area of concern. These learners are spending longer than the four years in a particular phase as advocated by the DoE (Government Gazette, 2007:22), and are often spending more than two years in a particular grade. The decision for progression of learners is based on the assessment of those learners throughout the academic year.

Educators have generally not been trained to deliver the curriculum to classrooms where there are learners with different learning barriers. In the same way, educators may experience difficulty with the assessment of these learners. There seems to be a problem with regards to assessment in these classrooms where there are learners with learning barriers. This study intends to find out whether learners experiencing learning barriers are being assessed correctly and appropriately and whether educators are following appropriate methods of assessment.

1.2   CONTEXTUALISATION

The main objective of any education system, in a democratic society, is to provide quality education for all learners so that they will be able to meaningfully contribute and participate in society throughout their lives (DoE,, 1996:11). There have been significant changes in

educational governance in South Africa since 1994, which have stemmed from a democratic constitution. The South African schools act, act no 84 of 1996, provided the first framework for an inclusive education system through its affirmation of the right to equal access to basic and quality education for all learners on a non-discriminatory basis (DoE, 1999:19). The act prescribes that public schools, be schools which must include learners experiencing learning barriers. These learners are no longer legislated about in separate education acts. The schools' act, act no 84 of 1996 (DoE, 1999:20) requires the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for education to provide, where possible, education for learners experiencing learning barriers at ordinary schools and provide appropriate education support services for such learners (section 12(4)). The MEC for education is also required to take reasonable measures to ensure that the physical facilities at public schools are accessible to disabled learners (section 21(15) DoE, 1999:20).

By mainstreaming learners experiencing learning barriers, to ordinary schools, the policy of inclusion was being implemented, and at that time there were no facilities for the adequate inclusion of these mainstreamed learners to fulfil their potential. Schools were under-resourced and unprepared for these learners. Learners were being "dumped" and little was done to assist them. The problem of numbers and accommodation of these learners was also due to parents insisting in the promises of the constitution that states "… every child has the right to a basic education, including the right to adult basic education" (DoE, 1996:4).
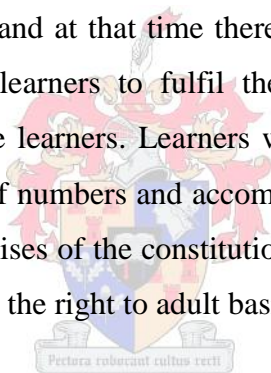
For the learners to be accommodated in schools the Department of Education phased in curriculum 2005 and Outcomes Based Education (OBE) from January 1998. Curriculum 2005 reflects a shift in the South African education system. In curriculum 2005 in the context of OBE, the emphasis is no longer on the content, but on the achievement of learning outcomes. Learners are also not compared to one another. In OBE each and every learner works according to his/her own pace. OBE is learner centered therefore every learner is expected to participate in the learning, teaching and assessment process at their own pace. The emphasis in OBE is on what the learner knows, understands and becomes (DoE, 1997:74).

By introducing OBE with Curriculum 2005, the Department of Education was also ensuring that learners experiencing learning barriers would not be disadvantaged when being assessed (World Education Forum, 2003 notes 6). The Department of Education stipulated the implementation of the inclusion policy which also ensures appropriate alternative assessment

methods for learners experiencing learning barriers. In an inclusive setting all learners are considered as being in need of learning support (DoE, 2001:7).

One of the objectives of WP6 is the establishment of inclusive public schools that should accommodate different styles and rates of learning and ensure quality education for all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangement, teaching strategies, resource used and partnership with their communities (UNESCO, 1994:12). Although the development of inclusive schools is a major challenge, regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes (UNESCO, 1994:IV). Poster and Kelly (1998:271) state that learners with learning barriers must be treated like their classmates. They must not be discriminated against due to the learning problems they are experiencing. When being assessed they must not be ignored because they demand more time during assessment (Schethman & Or, 1996:141).

Inclusive classrooms must provide a learning environment that is free from bias and respectful of the rights and needs of educators, learners and parents. According to Archer and Rossouw (in Engelbrecht, Green, Naiker, & Engelbrecht, 1999:97), promotion of equity and full potential of each and every learner requires the hand of a keenly observant educator who is consistently involved in a cycle of holistic assessment.

Sodak, Podel and Lehman (1998:481) argue that educators in inclusive classrooms may not really understand what inclusion means. In an effective educational system all learners are assessed on an ongoing basis in terms of their progress throughout the curriculum. The aim is to make it possible for educators to provide appropriate learning and teaching to a wide variety of learners. This means that educators and other professionals must have good information on their learners' characteristics, their difficulties and their needs. Educators also need to know how their learners differ from each other.

However, UNESCO (2001:60) indicates that it is not enough simply to be able to identify the level at which each learner is performing or to be able to list the particular difficulties which some may experience. Educators in inclusive classrooms have to know how effective their teaching is for different learners and what they need to do to enable each one to learn as well as possible. Assessment therefore should not focus only on the characteristics of the learner. It has to focus on the curriculum and how each learner can learn within that curriculum. In traditional special needs education, assessment has often been seen as a matter for specialists

such as medical and psychological personnel and for special educators. In his research, Chorost (1998:11), stated that educators commented that they could not assess learners with learning barriers because they feel inadequate, they lack skills for assessing them. The author explains that these educators are saying that they still need training on the matter of assessing learners with learning barriers. Poster and Kelly (1998:271) reported that some educators were concerned about the time taken in assessment of these learners as well as the additional time given to learners during the assessments. Educators feel that time concessions are given at the expense of other learners and their administrative tasks.

Davies and Green (1998:97) asserted that educators who hold negative attitudes do not welcome learners with learning barriers in regular classrooms. Attitude towards inclusion is closely tied to educators' feelings of competency and effectiveness in teaching learners experiencing learning barriers. Lack of knowledge and experience in dealing with exceptional learners also affects educators' attitudes when assessing those learners. Bayliss (1995:45) makes the point that until schools develop an understanding of why change is necessary, most educators will still perceive learners experiencing learning barriers as a problem to them.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

1.3.1 Assessment
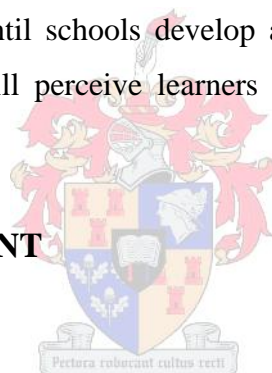
Educators need to have the skills in order to effectively carry out the processes of assessment with the ranges of learners in their classrooms. The development of inclusive education in public schools brings with it a number of changes in educational practice, which includes adjustment and different ways of assessing learners with different educational needs. These changes in assessment needs and methods have the potential of placing more pressure on educators. These changes may also have negative effects on the assessment of learners with educational barriers. Because of the new demands of a new curriculum and changes in assessment practices and policy, overburdened educators may develop negative attitudes towards assessment in general, and towards the assessment of learners with learning barriers. Educators, who feel incompetent and unsupported, may not be able to correctly assess learners with barriers to learning. If these learners are not appropriately assessed and supported, they may well repeat the same grade unnecessarily due to educator's attitudes

towards assessment. Knoff (1985:415) also refers to the problem of learners with barriers in regular classrooms not being adequately assessed. He reports that educators lack skills in assessing learners with learning barriers. Reviera (1994:121) concurs that a lack of assessment training is a major problem for educators where the inclusion of learners with barriers is mandatory. He also mentions that due to a lack of training and a lack of knowledge, educators often develop a negative attitude towards assessment of learners with barriers in their classes.

These are the kind of problems experienced in Venda, Limpopo Province at the Dzindi circuit. Learners experiencing learning barriers in this circuit are not assessed in the ways prescribed by the assessment policy and the guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education. The context of Venda's rural communities has an influence on educators' attitudes towards assessment in public schools where learners with barriers are becoming increasingly present. This study focuses mainly on schools with low academic status,, where learners with barriers have been included in the enrolment as a consequence of the National Department of Education's policy on inclusive education.

Learners with learning barriers in these classrooms are simply promoted, without authentic assessment, while others are being retained in one class for more than two years. Many of these learners are promoted due to their age, being unable to read or write. These particular concerns at schools in this circuit have prompted this research, about the attitude of educators towards assessment in classrooms where learners with barriers are present.

1.3.2   Learning Barriers

In School 1 there is a learner in grade 6 who has a hearing difficulty. There are also two other learners who were orphaned due to death caused by AIDS related diseases. These learners are being discriminated against due to the stigma attached to HIV/AIDS. They are often left unattended in the classroom.

In School 2 there are two learners who have albinism. One of the effects of albinism is poor eyesight. Because they are seen as different they are treated differently.

In School 3 there is an 18 year old learner who has a drug addiction. He often comes to school suffering from the effects of intoxication. In this school there are also two physically disabled learners, a boy and a girl who are both in grade 4. These two learners have

challenges with mobility. The boy also has a visual problem. There are also a group of grade 3 learners who are repeating the same grade for the fourth time.

1.4   THE RESEARCH QUESTION

My research question is mainly concerned with what is going on in classrooms during assessment time. What are the educators' attitudes towards assessment in these classes where learners with barriers have been enrolled? What are the factors that impact on the inadequate assessment by educators of learners with learning barriers?

1.5   AIM OF RESEARCH

This study intends to investigate the attitude of educators towards assessment of learners with barriers who have been enrolled in primary schools. The research will be done at three schools in the Dzindi Circuit, Limpopo Province. For ethical reasons the names of the schools will not be mentioned but indicated with numbers. These schools have had to enrol learners with learning barriers for a number of reasons; one being that the school is the only option for many learners situated in the rural area of the Dzindi Circuit.

1.6   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.6.1   Research design
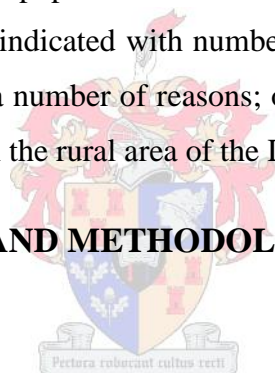
The research design is characterized by its qualitative, contextual, descriptive and exploratory nature. A qualitative approach was chosen since a holistic picture was required of the phenomenon within the context where it occurred (Miles & Huberman, 1994:6). This study is an attempt to capture data of the perceptions of the educators, from inside. Through the process of attentiveness there is also an attempt to explore the essence and fundamental substance of the phenomenon in order to gain a deeper understanding of the attitude of the educators (Miles & Huberman, 1994:6). The qualitative researcher is a primary instrument for data collection and analysis and goes to the people, the settings and the institutions to observe behaviour in its natural setting (Merriam, 1998:7-8).

As mentioned by Merriam (1998:7) the product of qualitative research is richly descriptive. Words rather than numbers have been used to convey what the researcher has learned about

the phenomenon. The sample selection is non-random and purposeful. The criteria for selecting the participants were:

- that the educators had to be teaching a class of learners where learners with learning barriers are present;

- the educators had to have learners in their classes who have been retained for more than one year; and

- the educators must be willing to discuss their difficulties with assessment.

The researcher will spend nine months, a substantial amount of time, in the natural setting of the study. The sessions will be of intense contact with the participants, as advised by Merriam (1998:8), in their classrooms while teaching and assessing.

Through the use of detailed, rich description of actions, meaning and feelings of the experience will be recorded and contextualised (Denzim & Lincoln, 1994:104). The description and analysis of the phenomenon will be useful to present information on the educators' attitudes towards assessment, as little research has been conducted on this topic. Descriptions of the process events also provide a measure of interpretation (Denzim & Lincoln, 1994:101). Interpretation thus leads to the giving of meaning to experiences in order to understand them (Denzim & Lincoln, 1994:108).
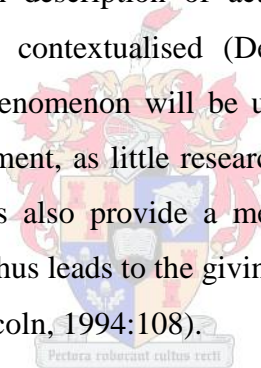
The researcher has chosen an interpretive paradigm as framework for the study. Ontologically an interpretive paradigm stresses the influence of social, political, cultural, economical, ethnic, gender and disability values in the construction of reality (Mertens, 1998:20).

1.6.2   Methodology

For the purpose of this study, a case study method was used. A case study may be described as a thick description of a single unit (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:280). Qualitative methods such as interviews, observation and document reviews were used to conduct the on-site study. Mertens (1998:20) stresses that interviews and observations can be a useful means to gather meaningful information about the topic.

1.6.2.1   Data collection methods

- *Observations*

Observation has been described as a process whereby the researcher brings together reality with the theoretical hypotheses (Mouton & Marais in Fourie, 1997:36). In this study both direct and participatory observations will be conducted (Yin, 1994:36). Detailed field notes of direct, formal observations in the classroom will be kept. The researcher will be in the classroom and will participate in the very activity being observed, analysed and written about (Guy, Edgley, Arafat & Allen in Fourie, 1997:36). The observation will be done and will be used in conjunction with the interviews and document analyses to substantiate the findings (Merriam, 1998:96).

- *Semi-Structured interviews*

An interview is described as a conversation between two or more people in which the interviewee elicits information from the respondent. The main purpose of the interview is to obtain specific information. Merriam (1998:72) says that "by using interviews the researcher wants to find out what is in and on someone else's mind". The interview will include questions aimed at eliciting educators' attitudes towards assessment of learners with learning barriers in their classes. Semi-structured questions will be used and answers will be recorded.

The purpose of these interviews is to qualitatively explore some areas of concern in detail: the area of assessment. The research will be conducted in primary schools in Region 3, called the Vhembe region. This region is one of the most underdeveloped rural areas in the Limpopo Province. They are situated in the Dzindi Circuit. They are inclusive, by default. These schools are not inclusive by design as they do not fulfil most of the criteria for inclusive schools (UNESCO, 1994:59). When interviewing, Merriam (1998:75) insists that the researcher attempts to minimize distortions by "being neutral and non judgmental, refraining from arguing and being a good reflective listener".

- *Review of documents*

The documents reviewed are the administrative documents of the educators, assessment tasks given to learners, the learners' work and learner portfolios and profiles. Circulars on inclusion and assessment were also reviewed.

1.7   CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

1.7.1   Inclusive Schools

Inclusive schools are those that are intentionally geared towards the recognition and appropriate response to the diverse needs of the learner population. The inclusive classroom symbolizes a single system of education that embraces all learners at all levels of abilities, underpinned by a philosophy that all children belong and can learn in regular schools and classrooms (Rossouw, 1999:27).

1.7.2   Assessment

According to The Draft Assessment Policy in General Education and Training Phase Grade R - Abet (1998:8), assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the learners "learning". The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on the learners' achievement and progress and set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning, being continuous and cyclical. It involves four steps, namely: generating and collecting evidence of achievement, evaluating the evidence against the outcomes, recording the findings of the evaluation and improving the process of learning and teaching.

1.7.3   Outcomes-based education
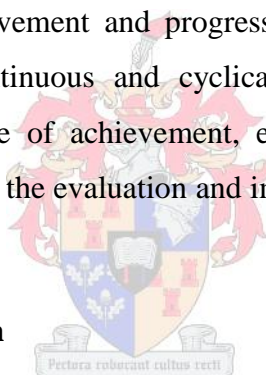
The Department of Education (2000:2) stresses that OBE is a learner centred, result-oriented approach to education. Outcomes based education rests on the notion that all learners need to and should achieve their full potential. There is the recognition that achievement of their full potential is different for different learners, but towards the achievement of specified outcomes (DoE, 2000:2). This implies that what learners are to learn is clearly defined. Each learner's needs are accommodated through multiple teaching, learning strategies and assessment tools. Each learner is provided with the time and assistance to realize his/her potential (Spady, 1994:15).

1.7.4   Attitudes

An "attitude" typically shows a psychological state of mind that predisposes a person to action (D'A Lonzo, Giordano & Cross, 1996:30). McCown (2000:3) refers to attitude as "a

personal feeling or belief that influences someone's tendency to act in a particular way. It is an integral representation of various aspects of social or physical world".

1.7.5   Learners with Learning Barriers

Learners with learning barriers refer to learners who experience difficulty in learning. These difficulties may be caused by disabilities, poverty or minority status or any factor that hinders learners from learning optimally (Engelbrecht et al., 1999; UNESCO, 2001).

1.8   ARRANGEMENT OF CHAPTERS

The chapters in this thesis will be arranged as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the study by stating the problem, clarifying the research question and briefly describing the research design. The main concepts relating to the study are also clarified.

In chapter 2, literature on inclusive education, assessment and educators' attitudes towards assessment is reviewed.

In Chapter 3 the research design and methodology is discussed. It is shown how the research was designed and which methods were used to collect, analyse and interpret the data.

The analysis and interpretation of data is dealt with in chapter 4. Chapter 5 will present findings as well as the recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

According to Merriam (1998:49), literature means "the theoretical or conceptual writing in an area". Designing a study is not a linear process of reading the literature, identifying the theoretical framework and then writing the problem statement. Rather, the process is highly interactive. The researchers' questions take him/her to the literature and then send him/her back to working anew at the phenomenon of interest. In essence, the researcher carries on a dialogue with previous studies and work on the area of interest (Merriam, 1998:50).

Literature is reviewed in order to:

- Provide contributions to the knowledge base.

- Demonstrate how the present study advances, refines or revises what has already been done.

Knowledge, previous studies and writings on a topic offers a point of reference for discussing the contribution the current study will make to advance the knowledge base in an area (Merriam, 1998:51). In addition to the above, Bruce (in Lourens, 2001:7) mentions that the process of literature review involves the researcher exploring the literature to establish the status quo, formulate a problem and find ideas for his/her research.

In this chapter the main issues to be reviewed are inclusive education, assessment and educators' attitudes towards assessment in inclusive classroom.

2.2   INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The word inclusion comes from the word "include" which means being part of something or part of a whole. The opposite of "include" is " exclude" which means to keep out, prohibit or reject (UNESCO, 2001:20). The terms "inclusion" and "exclusion" help us to understand the growing movement towards inclusive education.

When inclusion is applied in education it also means that the schools with an inclusive orientation are effectively combating discriminatory attitudes. Inclusive schools are welcoming communities, where all learners, regardless of their status, ability or potential are welcome. These schools are building an inclusive society and aim to achieve education for all (Engelbrecht et al., 1999:9). Inclusive education implies a specific attitude towards the norms and criteria used by society to determine whether a person is a worthy human being. It is characterized by a warm and welcoming attitude. In inclusion everyone is accepted unconditionally. Inclusive education starts from the belief that the right to education is a basic human right and this is the foundation for a more just society (UNESCO, 2001:15).

Inclusion is a basic universal human right that needs to be extended to all learners. It provides a variety of opportunities for every individual to learn and develop. All members of an inclusive centre of learning believe that each leaner is able to learn. Therefore these educators take responsibility for the learning of all their learners. Inclusive education is about "enabling schools to serve all children" (UNESCO, 1994:iii). In others words inclusion means creating schools which welcome all children, regardless of their characteristics, disadvantages or difficulties. Inclusive education also means setting schools in the wider context of the education system - both formal or informal - which ensures that the needs of diverse learners can be met effectively (UNESCO, 2001:16).

The well-being of all learners, especially disabled and disadvantaged individuals, is strongly emphasized. The aim of inclusion is to accommodate all learners in regular centres of learning. All learners have a right and the dignity to achieve their full potential within an integrated society. It means that diversity and the right of each learner are recognized and respected. An inclusive centre of learning includes all members of the learner community and promotes inter-dependence as a value. This development of an inclusive philosophy in schools raises crucial questions about the changes necessary for schools to become fully inclusive (Engelbrecht et al., 1999:10). This movement towards inclusion represents much more than just the physical placement of learners with difficulties in mainstream classrooms.

2.2.1 Inclusive Education Policy and the White Paper 6 in South Africa

The adoption of the Constitution by the Constitutional Assembly in May 1996 has brought about major changes in South Africa. One of the most profound changes is that the constitution recognizes basic human rights for all citizens for the first time in South African

history. The South African Constitution (act 108 of 1996) founded the democratic state offering equal citizenship based on the values of human dignity.

The constitution provided a special challenge to education in the commitment to uphold the fundamental right to basic education for all South Africans. Section 29(1) commits them to this fundamental right viz. that everyone has the right to a basic education including adult basic education. This fundamental right to basic education was further developed in the constitution in section 9(3), (4) and (5), which commits the state to non-discrimination. Section 9(3) states that "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on or more grounds, including race, gender, pregnancy, marital status ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, birth, culture, language and birth" (DoE, 2001:11).

Section 9(3) protects learners who experience barriers to learning and development from being discriminated against. This protection is of particular importance to learners with disabilities, as many of them have been excluded from educational provision in the past. The constitution therefore not only makes provision for basic education, but also for equal educational provision for all learners. In other words, all learners, whatever their needs, disabilities or differences, have a right to receive equal provision of education. A clear commitment to correcting the inequities of the past and creating equal opportunities for all has therefore been made through the new legislation and policy on education (World Education Forum 2000, paragraph 6).

Education White Paper 6 of 2001 on special needs education (WP6) outlines the government's intentions for dealing with the education of learners with special educational needs. This was in keeping with the broader inclusionary agenda of the government. The WP6, besides presenting data that reflects disparities in the educational service provision for people with disabilities; also concludes that in the past the government was unable to adequately accommodate the educational needs of disabled learners (DoE, 2001).

WP6 (DoE, 2001), reflects the government's commitment to an inclusive education system based on the following principles:

- An acknowledgement that all children can learn and that all children are in need of support;

- An acceptance of and respect for the fact that all learners are different in some ways;

- A commitment to meet the needs of all learners;

- An acknowledgement of and a respect for the differences in learners in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, language, HIV status, disability and class; and

- The need to maximise the participation of all learners in the curricula and culture of institutions and to uncover the barriers to learning.

Essentially WP6 (DoE, 2001) symbolises the significant advances made by the government in its commitment to providing education to all learners, disabled or not. It represents a radical shift in how education provision is thought about, and is in keeping with the human rights principles and practices. The disabilities or barriers that learners experience are not thought of as being only the problem of the individual learners, but the WP6 (DoE, 2001) acknowledges that some barriers may be created by the education system and society. This means that the government has a responsibility to adjust these systems so that no learner is excluded. For example, where stairways are built at new schools there must be wheelchair ramps erected to facilitate the movement of persons using wheelchairs. There is also an acknowledgement that "some learners may require more intensive and specialised forms of support to be able to develop to their full potential" (DoE, 2001:16). To ordinary educators this would refer to providing resources and school infrastructure necessary to deliver the curriculum to learners with learning barriers.

2.2.2 Inclusive schools and classrooms

An inclusive classroom symbolizes a single system of education that embraces all learners at all levels of ability whatever their culture, language, learning styles or personalities. It provides a learning environment that is free of bias and is respectful of the rights and needs of educators, learners and parents in a free and democratic society (Rossouw in Engelbrecht et al., 1999:97).

The needs of some learners require special accommodation in the classrooms. According to McCown (1995:153) these learners may be impaired by a learning disability, emotional or behavioural disorders, communication disorders, hearing loss, visual impairment, physical disabilities or they could be gifted. Such learners require special instruction and services to

reach their full potential. All these learners are to be included in regular classrooms and the instruction must be designed to meet the needs of each exceptional learner. UNESCO (1994:59) states that schools should accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This includes disabled and gifted learners, street children and working learners as well as learners from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups. Inclusive classrooms are described by Stainback, Stainback and Jackson (1990) as having the following characteristics:

- A philosophy that all children belong and can learn in regular schools and classrooms;

- Classroom rules reflect fair and equal treatment and respect for all learners;

- A curriculum that is adapted for each child;

- Services and support available within the classroom;

- Buildings and physical support within the school and classrooms; and

- Empowerment of learners towards problem-solving, support for each other and making their own decisions.

Janzen, Wilgosh and McDonald (1996:15) add that the promotion of the understanding of individual differences and flexibility is also important for an inclusive classroom.

UNESCO (1994:5) also argues that inclusive schools have many advantages to society in that they:

- are the most effective ways of removing discrimination;

- create warm and welcoming communities;

- develop inclusive societies;

- make education possible, for all;

- provide effective education to the majority of learners and; and

- operate in a cost-effective way.

Inclusive education emphasizes unity and equality, recognises diversity, supports people to develop their abilities, and defocuses on disabilities. Inclusive schools have the potential to focus on and address people's needs and not their problems; to promote the inclusion of all people into society, therefore everybody becomes part of normal life. The philosophy underlying inclusion claims that all learners, including those with barriers to learning and development, form part of normal society, having a right to quality education.

2.3   WHAT IS ASSESSMENT

The word "assessment" comes from the Latin word "assidere" meaning to sit beside. Sitting besides someone suggests a close relationship and a shared experience. Assessment is described by most researchers as a process by which information concerning learners' qualities, characteristics and environment is systematically gathered, described and analysed (Engelbrecht, 1997:8).

The national Policy on Assessment (2000:5) defines "assessment" as the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement, as measured against nationally agreed outcomes for a particular phase of learning". It involves four steps, namely:

- Generating and collecting evidence of achievement;

- Evaluating this evidence against set outcomes;

- Recording the findings of this evaluation and using the information to assist the learner's development; and

- Improving the process of learning and teaching, using the information from the first three steps.

The above reiterates what was stated in the Draft Assessment Policy (1998:160) that the central purpose of assessment is to provide information on learner achievement and progress and to set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning. Fordham (1998:160) mentions that assessment might take the form of formal or less formal observation of progress by either learner or tutor or both.

Mariotti and Homan (1997:1) state the meaning of assessment in the following way: assessment is the systematic process of gathering information about learners. It is ongoing in all classrooms for all learners throughout the school year. Its results may identify learners who need a more intensive examination of their strengths and abilities. They emphasize the idea that assessment must be viewed not as a teaching act but as an integral part of teaching.

Pahad (1997:5) distinguishes three main phases involved in assessment:

- the learner must complete the set of assessment tasks (written, oral, practical tasks, more extended projects and performance tasks such as music exam or drawing tasks);

- the evidence of the learner's performance must be collected and evaluated against the agreed standards by assessor i.e. educator, tutor, peer, supervisor, moderator etc; and

- the outcomes of this evaluation must be recorded. The learner then gets a credit for the level of competence shown.

Assessment makes it possible for educators and schools to provide responses to a wide diversity of learners. It assists educators to plan for learners' diversity so that they become more responsive to the different needs of different learners. Early assessment of emerging difficulties is essential so that early intervention can take place that can minimise the problem (UNESCO, 2001:55). Assessment should lead to instructional action, where the information gathered during the assessment is used to plan for better learning and teaching (Valencia, 1997:75).

Generally speaking, international assessment practices up till the late 1980's focused mainly on formal assessment, relying heavily on norm-referenced or standardized tests that compare an individual's performance to that of a normative or a representative peer group. During this time the assessment enterprise became so technically complex that educators lost focus of their role in the process. Assessment strategies disregarded what educators already knew about their learners. Formal assessment became increasingly unpopular and controversial (Burden, 1996; Hallahan & Kauffman, 1994; Knegler & Skuy, 1996; McCown, Driscoll & Roop, 1996).

This rigidity of the traditional system of classroom evaluation often cost learners with learning barriers, a year of their lives where they have to repeat the same grade (Archer in Engelbrecht, 1997:03).

For assessment to improve, it should expect learning diversity in ways of understanding and should suggest action educators can take to improve the educational development of their learners and the quality of teaching (McCown et al., 1996).

There are many views of assessment in current literature, with a strong case being made for new methods of gathering information about learners. It can also be referred to as a new attitude towards assessment. Such an attitude would be "kinder" than standardized testing. Assessment is done in order to meet the needs of learners. Assessment needs to be seen as a process where all information about a learner is collected and analyzed. The evidence is evaluated against specific outcomes. The results of assessment are recorded and enable educators and other persons to meet the needs of the particular learner. This is done in a systematic way and is an on-going process.

2.4   A NEW APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT

For more than two decades, there has been growing dissatisfaction worldwide with the traditional forms of assessment, particularly with intelligence testing and also the pass/fail evaluation systems used in schools (Engelbrecht et al., 1999:103). The inflexibility of the traditional system of classroom evaluation too often costs the slow and disabled learners a year of their lives in repeating the same grade and the same syllabus. It was time for a radical change in the form of assessment used and for the transformation of the whole system.

The new approach to assessment replaces the old traditional system where scores were the decisive factor in passing or failing. The new approach encompasses wide - ranging styles of flexible assessment with intimate links to the curriculum and the outcomes.

The new approach to assessment is rooted in the ecosystemic model and has clear constructivist features. Changing views on assessment brought a move towards new assessment strategies with the goal of making assessment more integral to teaching and learning, not just as a means of monitoring or auditing learner performance by educators or psychologists. It is multi-dimensional, dynamic and holistic in scope and requires that every educator becomes a skilled assessor. The ecosystemic model of assessment requires the

interactive relationship of the different systems (e.g. home, school and wider social spheres) in which learners function. Systemic assessment is an important factor of the new approach to assessment, which affects everyone, but especially learners with special educational needs (Engelbrecht, 1997).

The new approach to assessment also focuses on learner behaviour. They monitor the progress learners make in employing their knowledge to deal with different tasks (Engelbrecht et al., 1999:104). Learners are not compared with other learners, rather they are assessed in terms of their prior accomplishments and how they have developed as active meaning makers.

It is however interesting to note, that the changed views on assessment are in accordance with the Latin meaning of assessment. According to Baron and Byrne (1991:306) assessment can legitimately be seen as the manifestation of a system's educational value; the new move towards a human right and empowerment perspective with the new assessment strategies has provided a multi-dimensional picture of assessment.

This new approach focuses on "What does the learner already know? How does he learn? What strategies does he utilize in problem solving? How much more efficient is he/she now that she/he was last term? The flexible nature of a constructive philosophy encourages a dynamic process of information gathering (Engebrecht et al., 1999:104).
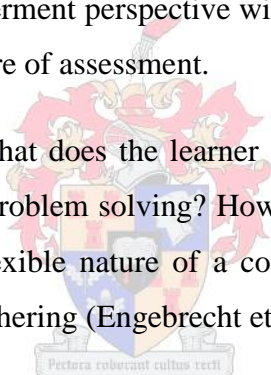
Learners are viewed as participants in the process of gathering information on their behaviour. Its positive emphases are important in encouraging and empowering learners. It offers scope for good educators to work as actively and positively as possible (Engebrecht et al., 1999:105).

2.5   RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA ON ASSESSMENT
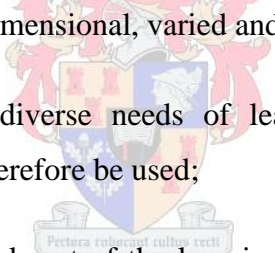
In South Africa there is a movement away from traditional assessment strategies, generally, and for learners with special educational needs specifically, towards more authentic assessment. The term authentic assessment is defined by the DoE (2007:1) as "assessment that aims to assess knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in context that closely resembles actual situations in which that knowledge and those skills, values and attitudes are used".

The following factors depict authentic assessment:

- emphasising the performance of the learner, thereby assessing not only what a learner knows, but also what the learner can do;

- using direct methods of assessment;

- incorporating a high degree of realism; in order

- to reflect realistic situations, activities for which there are no single correct answers, may be included and may be continuous over time (Jones, 1995:101-112).

Section 3(4)(1) of the national education policy act 1996 (No. 27 of 1996) has been developed in response to a need to phase in assessment practices that are compatible with OBE (GET BAND, 2000). Special aspects of the assessment of learners with special educational needs have been incorporated in this document.

The National Policy on Assessment document (DoE, 2007:5) stipulates that assessment should:

- Authentic, continuous, multi-dimensional, varied and balanced;

- Take into consideration the diverse needs of learners and their context. Various assessment strategies should therefore be used;

- Be used as an on-going integral part of the learning and teaching process. This means that assessment should be used to inform and evaluate teaching and learning;

- Be accurate, objective, valid, fair, manageable and time-efficient;

- Take many forms, gather information from several contexts, and include a range of competencies and uses;

- Be free from bias and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and abilities;

- Be criterion-referenced; and

- Transparent.

According to Engelbrecht (1997:59-61) assessment now focuses on achievement in terms of pre-determined outcomes. The emphasis is on continuous, formative assessment without

ignoring the need for summative assessment. The value of self-assessment and peer assessment is reflected in the policy, as stipulated in the RNCS document (DoE, 2003:40) "peer assessment helps both the learners whose work is being assessed and the learners who are doing the assessment. The sharing of the criteria for assessment empowers learners to evaluate their own and others' performances."

Policy on assessment makes sufficient provision for the recognition of prior learning. Assessment should be approached in terms of all possible dimensions, with recording and reporting done accordingly. Cumulative records should accompany learners throughout their educational years, and should reflect both academic achievement and the holistic development of the person. Assessment also thus monitors and evaluates the system as far as input process and outcomes are concerned (Engelbrecht, 1997:61).

The practice of continuous assessment (CASS) as one of the principles of the new outcomes based education model, implies a shift from decisions based on the results of a single test or examination to the ongoing formative assessment of the learner, which is associated with feedback to monitor the strength and weaknesses of learners' performance. The CASS is defined by the DoE (2007:8) as "an assessment model that encourages the integration of assessment into teaching and development of learners through ongoing feedback. It is a model of assessment that is used to determine a learner's achievement during the course of a grade, provide information that is used to support the learner's development, and enable improvements to be made to the learning and teaching process". Continuous assessment (CASS) is an ongoing, every day process that finds out what a learner knows, understands, values and can do. It is considered the best model to assess outcomes of learning throughout and to enable improvement to be made in the learning and teaching process. CASS makes teaching, learning and assessment part of the same process.

Kramer (1999:39) states that with CASS, we are moving from a cycle of "teach, test, teach, test" to the following:

- Gathering a wider range of evidence of learning that can be used for assessment;

- providing different and varied opportunities to gather evidence; and

- spreading and intervening assessment activities through the learning process rather than to leave all assessment to the end of the process.

The strength and success of a CASS based model rests on the professionalism and ability of a highly skilled teaching and training core, who understand and are able to apply sound educational principles (Engelbrecht, 1997). The shift is away from formal tests such as IQ tests, standardized tests, only once per term or annual tests. OBE encourages the use of a range of assessment methods that include informal assessment methods.

A variety of assessment strategies are recommended:

- tests;

- interviews;

- questionnaires;

- structured questions;

- case studies;

- demonstrations;

- projects;

- role plays;

- simulations;

- oral / aural responses; and

- observation and self-reporting (DoE, 2003:17).
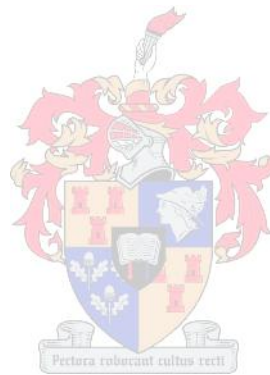
2.6   FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

The assessment process is central to learning and teaching in the OBE model of education and must be fully used to inform teaching and learning. The two distinct but over-lapping elements, formative and summative assessment form a coherent whole to provide a multi dimensional view of the learners and of the system in which they have to learn. The roles the two forms play are different and complementary but it is their integration, which gives us a holistic picture of the progress of the learner. Although the DoE distinguishes between four types of assessments – baseline, diagnostic, formative and summative – baseline is an

example of a summative assessment and diagnostic is an example of a formative type of assessment. For the purposes of this study the four types of assessment as the DoE (2003:38) sets out will be discussed.

2.6.1   Formative assessment

This is an ongoing process of information gathering over time. It is done throughout the year. It builds up a system of feedback and feed-forward which forms and shapes the appropriate learning experiences to the optional benefit of learners (Rossouw in Engelbrecht et al., 1999:110). It is an integral part of the learning-teaching cycles. It guides decision-making direction for changing, adapting or formulating particular aspects of curriculum.

Formative assessment encourages a diagnostic dimension, which enables educational support for learners in a inclusive classroom. Assessment in the inclusive classroom is thus a continuous process of information gathering to:

- Indicate the learners' degree of progress towards demonstrating competence in desired outcomes;

- Highlights individual strengths and achievement, as well as supporting diagnosis of any special needs;

- Indicate ways in which learning might be enhanced for the class and for particular learners; and

- Provide feedback about ways in which the lessons learned, be transferred to other areas (Torrance, 1996:8).

2.6.2   Summative assessment

Summative assessment is usually applied as a final judgment on a learning unit. It is a summing up of all the results of prior assessment and guides future planning for development. It is necessary for awarding of certificates. Summative assessments are usually conducted and recorded more formally than those of formative assessment (Rossouw in Engelbrecht, 1999:111).

2.6.3 Baseline assessment

The DoE prescribes that baseline assessment be carried out at the start of a grade or at the start of a new phase in the GET band. The aim of the baseline assessment is to establish what the learner already knows and can do. The recording process is usually informal.

2.6.4 Diagnostic

This type of assessment is useful in the support programme or intervention effort for learners who have barriers to learning. The diagnostic assessment process assists in the identification of learning difficulties and in identifying aspects of the Learning Programmes that the learner might have difficulty with. Diagnostic assessment measures are important in planning for effective support for learners who have barriers to learning.

2.7 ASSESSMENT RECORDING

The movement to a different way of assessment that is in line with OBE principles, meant that the way in which assessment is recorded will also have to change. Continuous assessment and the different strategies recommended by the DoE mean that the administrative aspect of recording and reporting needs to be planned for. The frequency of assessment in the CASS model requires more time and more effort on the part of the educators.
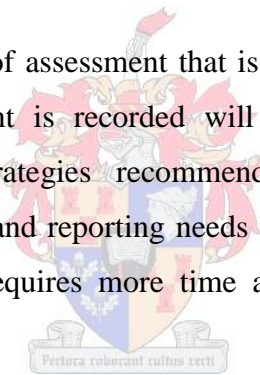
The DoE (2005:7-26) stipulates the detailed process of recording and reporting on assessment. In terms of the broader general guidelines, the purpose of reporting on assessment is defined as:

- providing learners with regular feedback on development;

- informing parents/guardians on the progress of the individual learner;

- giving information to schools and districts or regional offices on current level of performance of learners; and

- basing decisions of progression and promotion of learners from grade to grade.

2.8   RATIONALE FOR ASSESSMENT IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

The Northern Province Education Department (2000:09) states that learners who are likely to experience barriers to learning and development should be identified early, assessed and provided with support.

In an effective education system, all learners are assessed in an on-going basis in terms of their progress through the curriculum. The aim is to make it possible for educators to provide responses to a wide diversity of learners. This means that educators and other professionals have to have good information on their learners' needs and characteristics and attainments. In particular, educators need to know how their learners differ from each other (Lewis & Doorlag, 1995:57).

However, it is not enough simply to be able to identify the level at which each learner is performing, or to be able to list the particular difficulties or disabilities which some may experience. Educators in inclusive systems also need to know how effective their teaching is for different learners and what they need to do to enable each one to learn as well as possible. Assessment, therefore, should not focus only on the characteristics and attainments of the learner. It also has to focus on the curriculum and how each learner can learn within that curriculum (Lewis & Doorlag, 1995:58).

Educators, therefore, will need to have the skills to carry out meaningful assessments of their learners. Within the policy of inclusive education in South Africa, there is the reality of learners with barriers being present in mainstream classes. The school may be the nearest school or the parent may insist on their right to enrol their children in the nearest school in the neighbourhood.

The situation of learners with barriers having the right to be enrolled in mainstream schools brings with it specific challenges for educators in mainstream schools. Curriculum delivery and curriculum assessment are the main areas of challenge. Educational policy and OBE advocate that assessment should identify educational, emotional, medical/physical needs and ascertain the intensity of services and support needed by learners. Although this means that educators will need to work with special education educators, psychologists, social workers and medical professionals that they can use their specialist assessments for education

purposes, their most important partners will be colleagues, parents and the learners themselves.

2.9   ASSESSMENT IN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Assessment in inclusive classrooms integrates all aspects of both formative and summative factors. To be broadly inclusive it must be part of teaching and learning. Educators need to develop a conscious habit of reflecting on and interpreting everything that facilitates learning for each learner in the classroom.

According to Hanekom (1999:3-4), assessment in an inclusive classroom focuses on the educator as primary assessor, with the support of other school personnel, learners and parents. Gibbs (1994:175) mentions that it is the educators who teach the concepts and skills, prepare learners for assessment, give feedback to learners and parents and move learners on in the appropriate direction. To limit the role of educators in assessment would be the ultimate misconstrual of the process of teaching and learning (Gibbs, 1994:176). Other specialists, where available, could provide a supportive, consultative and training function.

Assessment should begin with what educators already know about learners. It should be an integral part of teaching and learning, and educators should not have preconceptions about the nature of a problem. Assessment strategies should be user-friendly and formulated clearly. Assessment strategies can serve as an excellent example of how to provide educators with information on assessment. There should be maximum devolution of responsibility for assessment from specialists to educators, parents and learners (Gibbs, 1994:176).

There will have to be efficient training and retraining by support service personnel, as well as training institutions, which should be responsible for training in an ongoing, integrated fashion.

To support educators within the school, the establishment of informal discussion groups, for interested educators would be a good option. More formal structures in and outside the school should include a educator trained in the needs and assessment of learners with special educational needs, advisory visiting educators, therapists, parents and other professionals.

2.9.1   The purpose of assessment

There is a distinct difference between the purpose of assessment in the past and current assessment purposes within the context of OBE.

Traditional assessment

In the past, assessment within the South African education system was basically done to:

- identify characteristics of learners;

- classify learners according to these characteristics;

- decide on the placement of these learners in a particular school, class or group within the classroom;

- evaluate the progress of these learners; and

- predict their future academic and non- academic need (Hoy & Gregg 1994:34).

These points lead to the idea that the information obtained during assessment was basically used for the purpose of placement, instruction and for reporting to learners, parents and other professionals. The purpose of assessment in an inclusive classroom differs from the traditional purposes.
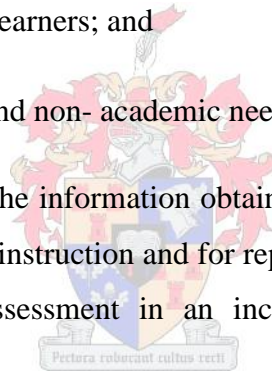
The continuous assessment model assists learners in the learning process by:

- gathering data to assist in the formulation of a well structured programme of learning experience to achieve the desired learning outcomes,

- verifying a diagnosis of strength and/or needs in order to justify the formulation of an accelerated or remedial programme;

- providing guidance for learning experiences which stimulate and motivate lifelong learning;

- stimulating self-evaluation and promoting the reflective process; and

- providing opportunities for learners to gain access to the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values specified in the national curriculum policy.

Assessment should assist the educator in providing appropriate learning experiences for learners in that it should:

- Serve as a tool for continual improvement of teaching and learning;

- Provide information on learner's needs;

- Offer guidelines for enriching or adapting the curriculum for specific learner;

- Support decision making; and

- Promote evaluation and reflection.

In assisting others concerned with education and training assessment should:

- Provide feedback and feed-forward for parents;

- Provide information for colleagues on the site of learning; and

- Provide information to policy makers for the continuous improvement of the whole system of education so that the policy of inclusion can prosper (Valencia, 1997:106).

All of the above basically works toward the improvement of the learning and development of learners. The focus is thus mainly on the performance of the learners and the progress made towards the achievement of specific outcomes. Any barriers that prevent this from happening must be addressed. However, assessment also puts the focus on the effectiveness of the learning environment, including the educator's interaction with the learner. In other words, as educators assess learners, they assess their teaching practice at the same time.

A challenge for OBE is the development of ways of including learners with disabilities in assessment and accountability systems. Large numbers of learners with disabilities are in danger of being excluded from assessment.

The DoE (2002:150) states that the educational environment should be free from discrimination on grounds of barriers, and asserts that assessment should be varied to meet the needs of a learner experiencing barriers. The purpose of variation is to meet the support

needs of the learner, rather than requiring them to accept practices developed with other circumstances in mind. This principle is central to policy making and practices on alternative assessment methods. The national DoE speaks of assessment that does not hinder or advantage a learner, and specifically emphasises the assessment needs of learners with barriers to learning.

2.9.2 Alternative methods of assessment

2.9.2.1 *What are alternative methods of assessment*

Alternative methods of assessment are assessments that relate to any adaptation of the standard form of assessment, which is put in place to address barriers experienced by some learners, during assessment processes (DoE, 2002:151; Ysseldyk & Olsen, 1999:179). It is thus when the educator has tailored the assessment to suit the needs of the learners.

2.9.2.2 *Principles of alternative methods of assessment*

The DoE (2002) drafted the following principles of alternative assessment:

- The standard of assessment should never be compromised, nor should the learner ever be given an unfair advantage over his/her peers. Therefore, the same academic requirements and standards should be applied to all learners;

- Alternative methods of assessment are designed to equalize opportunities for all learners by addressing barriers which they might be experiencing, without giving them additional advantage; and

- Learners in need of alternative methods should be identified early, in order to put in place the necessary mechanisms. They will then be accustomed to the assessment method concerned before they are externally assessed (DoE, 2002:152).

According to the draft guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education (second draft) the following are specific methods of alternative assessment:

2.9.2.3   Sensory Barriers

2.9.2.3.1   Visual barriers

These are where certain eye conditions become a significant barrier to scholastic progress. In these cases an ordinary print is problematic and this condition may be corrected with the help of spectacles or contact lenses. However, it should be known that learners who experience visual barriers might need different types of adaptations.

The following are considered alternative methods of assessment for learners who experience visual barriers:

- Braille: assessment tasks should be made available in Braille, and candidates can respond in Braille or typing;

- Enlarged or bolded text: assessment tasks can be prepared manually or electronically and preferably on egg yellow paper;

- Tape aid: candidates who experience visual barriers and who cannot read Braille should receive the assessment task on cassette or in other audio forms. They should receive the printed assessment task as well as the audio recording;

- Reading tempo should be suitable for the age of the candidate;

- Mark allocations and activity question numbers must be read out clearly;

- Extension cables and adapters must be provided in the assessment room;

- Headphones are permissible in order to avoid disturbance;

- Candidate should have a set of batteries in case of a power failure;

- Dictaphone: here the assessment task is read to the candidate or he/she listens to a tape recorder or reads the task himself and records the answers on a Dictaphone, this must be done in a separate venue;

- Additional time: all candidates who experience visual barriers should receive additional time up to 30 minutes per hour if needed; and

- it is also essential to limit illustrations e.g. diagrams in Natural Sciences. In instances where drawing is required, a candidate can be allowed to respond through description. An alternative question can additionally be set by the educator or examiner. The task must be read to the candidate to verify that the content and the print match (DoE, 2002).

2.9.2.3.2 *Deafness and hard of hearing*

Following the second draft guidelines for the implementation of inclusive education, the following must be adhered to when assessing the hard of hearing learners:

- video recording: the task questions are recorded on video by means of sign language or the spoken word (lip-reading). The video may be rewound. A person who is conversant in sign language interprets the responses and writes them down. This person thus acts as an interpreter and scribe; and

- additional time: all hard of hearing should receive additional time to a maximum allocation of 30 minutes per hour if necessary.

In the case of learners who are hard of hearing, depending on the extent of hearing loss, communication is through hearing aids, lip reading and cued speech. These learners may have an inability to access information delivered orally e.g. assessment instruction or when clarifying assessment questions. These learners may have difficulties in English because it is a second language. The following are considered alternative methods of assessment:

- Facing learner and speaking clearly;

- Producing all instructions in writing;

- Making a hearing system or induction loop available;

- An answering alternative could be allowed through additional time, a dictionary, and a personal computer with spelling and grammar checkers;

- The physical environment must be prepared in terms of access to power points for equipment; and adequate space for equipment or specific personnel; and

- All these strategies may also require additional time (DoE, 2002).

2.9.2.3.3   Physical barriers

Alternative assessment methods are necessary for learners who experience physical barriers to learning. These learners typically have difficulty in physical movement.

The following are considered alternative methods of assessment:

- Scribe: if possible, the scribe and the learner should be familiar with each other and the learner should not be expected to use several different scribes during successive assessment;

- Recording: learners who do not have the physical ability to write or type must be allowed to record answers;

- Additional time: all learners who experience physical barriers should have the option of receiving additional time if necessary and rest break if fatigue occurs; and

- Additional time is also intended to compensate for the time taken up by physical adjustments and slowness in organization and output activities (DoE, 2002).

2.9.2.3.4   Learning disabilities

The following are considered by the draft guidelines of inclusion as the alternative methods of assessing learners with learning disability:

Functional difficulty: Accessing information that is in a written/print form.

Questioning alternatives:

- Reader;

- Oral by examiner;

- Audio-taped question tasks;

- Personal computer with voice synthesizer; and

- Additional time (DoE, 2002).

Functional difficulty: expressing own knowledge in a written form: particular difficulty with spelling and grammar.

Answering alternatives include the following:

- Scribe;

- Oral answers to audiotape or Dictaphone;

- Personal computer with spelling and grammar checkers, dictionaries, the sources;

- Special equipment (spell master or spell checks);

- Multiple choice and short answer questions in preference to long answer questions; and

- Additional time (DoE, 2002).

Functional difficulty: numbers and numerical concepts

Answering alternatives include the following:

- Use a calculator or computer;

- Oral answers to the examiner; and

- Additional time (DoE, 2002).

Other considerations are also indicated:

Physical environment

- It must be accessible to power points for equipment; and

- Have adequate space for equipment and specific personnel.

Separate assessment/venues

- If a learner is easily distracted by the movement and noise of others; and

- Due to noise when using equipment or specific personnel (DoE, 2002).

These methods need to be followed when assessing learners with different learning barriers. The methods describe the accommodations that are needed when assessing learners with specific barriers to learning. Although they are practical and logical there are certain constraints that may be faced. Rural schools are generally over enrolled and under resourced. The related costs as well as the physical space may not be available. Little mention is made of the attitude of the educators who are involved with the assessment of the learners with barriers.

2.10 EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS ASSESSMENT IN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

An "attitude" typically shows a psychological state of mind that predisposes a person to action (D'A Lonzo, Giordano & Cross, 1996:30). McCown (2000:3) refers to "attitude" as a personal feeling or belief that influences someone's tendency to act in a particular way. It is an internal representation of various aspects of social or physical world. Some of the factors that affect attitudes of educators are:

- demographics (e.g. age, gender, level of education);

- environment (e.g. access to support services, class taught and ratio);

- experience (e.g. exposure to special education needs); and

- training (Larrivee & Cook, 1991:27).

The attitude of educators towards assessment in an inclusive classroom is one of the most important factors impacting the success of OBE and inclusive education (Janzen, Wilgosh & McDonald, 1996:201). The successful implementation of inclusive assessment will be aided or hindered by the competence and the attitude of the professional staff at schools (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996:57). It is important to identify the doubts, concerns and resistance towards assessment in order to design interventions that will motivate and equip educators to make adaptations to accommodate individual differences.

2.10.1 Educators' attitudes toward the need of a clear definition of assessment in an inclusive setting

A review of the literature on educators' attitudes towards assessment in an inclusive classroom shows that some educators have positive attitudes towards assessment. In research done by Peter Afflerbach (1995:622) educators reported that assessment is something that permeates every school day. Assessment teaches educators not only what learners have learned and are learning, but also what they are ready to learn. They further responded by saying that information gained through assessment drives their instructional decisions. Long and short term planning is based on this information and the lesson content is also determined by assessment.

Assessments prove to be most productive when learners are assessed as an integral part of the learning process. The process of assessment and the product of assessment are of equal importance. Classroom educators formulate assessment based on what is meaningful for them and their learners. Assessment should be used as a teaching tool to benefit the unique individual within the classroom.

Wilcox (1998:294) reports that an English educator has changed her attitude on assessment and stated that "a positive attitude in an inclusive classroom is important for educators and for learners. Positive feedback encourages learners to take the next step in their learning. If we think of assessment as part of their scaffolding to get us to the next level, it lessens our fears and increases our confidence". Wilcox (1998) further states that attitudes towards assessment have been difficult to change, especially since nearly all of us, as educators, consider ourselves as experts when it comes to assessing.

Some educators with negative attitudes towards assessing learners with learning barriers feel that they are obliged to implement policies about which they were not consulted. They are expected to just implement policies that were debated and accepted without their input.

Furthermore, educators often do not have a clear understanding of the nature of the changes they must implement and often lack adequate time to prepare for the implementation (Botha, Gravett & Swart, 2000).

Vaugh, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher and Saumell (1996:271) interviewed educators who were currently participating in inclusion. Many educators lack the confidence in their own abilities

to teach and assess learners with diverse needs. The educators were also very concerned about the "normal" learner in their classrooms. The general sentiment appears to be that the regular learners in the system would be neglected, due to the educators' time and efforts consumed by learners with barriers in the classroom.

According to the researcher's point of view educators are willing to assess learners with barriers in regular classrooms, but feel that it would be beneficial for the learners with barriers to be placed in their own classrooms in order to be assisted or assessed at their own pace or speed without disturbing other classmates.

2.10.2 Educators' perceptions towards accommodation

In Britain all educators surveyed reported that disruptions have occurred to normal classroom practice because learners experiencing learning barriers are placed in the same class with their peers. They felt that standard assessment tasks were totally unmanageable (Macroff, 1999:463). Learners with disabilities have thus been excluded in assessments or they have not been appropriately assessed. A large percentage of their exclusion is attributed to vague guidelines about their participation in assessment, use of accommodations and the reporting of results. The unavailability of accommodation and the lack of willingness to provide for them have led to their alienation from adequate assessment. Educators explained this exclusion with excuses like "we have never done this before. We simply don't have the means to provide that accommodation" (Elliot, Thurlow & Ysseldyke, 1996:207). They need to be familiar with the assessment system's rules concerning special needs learners. They (educators) also need to know how to apply the rules for particular learners (Stecher & Baron, 1997:12). Educators are also uncertain about how they should treat learners experiencing learning barriers during assessment.

2.10.3 Lack of training

Knoff (1985:415) reported that regular educators lack skills or confidence in helping exceptional children. They appear to feel relatively less positioned when faced with learners with learning problems. Sodak et al. (1998:481) found that in New York, regular education educators felt least aware of the special education law and the responsibilities mandated to them by those laws. Other studies have found that educators' attitudes towards assessing learners in inclusive classrooms appear to vary with their perceptions of the specific

disability, as well as their belief about the demands that learners instructional and management needs will place on them (Sodak et al., 1998:481).

Several authors have reported that some educators, who are trained and experienced in portfolio use, have highly positive attitude towards assessment (Calfee & Perfume, 1993:321; John & Leirsburg, 1993:269). They further reported that even educators who are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the portfolio, might recognize some potential problems and have concerns about their use (Reviera, 1994:121).

Lack of training seems to be a major problem in assessing learners with learning barriers. Most educators have been trained without any specific training in the teaching and assessment of learners with barriers to learning. Traditionally, the training of educators does not include any theory or practice in the provision of education to learners with barriers to learning or special educational needs of learners. This type of training was done as an option chosen by educators who wished to specialise in the area of remedial education.

There is the perception that the Education Department is forcing educators to include disabled learners and learners with other barriers to learning in regular classrooms without offering the educators the necessary support.

2.10.4 Educators' attitudes towards time

Macroff (1999:463) asks: "At a time when educators are demanding more time to teach, who will buy into assessment programs that require such a vast amount of time to be diverted from instruction?" This means that inclusive assessment in the regular classroom is time-consuming. Poster and Kelly (1998:271) say that dealing with learners experiencing learning barriers in regular classrooms needs time. Time spent on working out strategies of assessment that will actually work for that particular child in that classroom can make all the differences between success and failure. The authors further argue that major disruptions have occurred to regular classroom practice, and half of those surveyed felt that the standard assessment tasks (SATs) were totally unmanageable. Many learners with special needs do not progress through curriculum at the same rate as the other learners. Furthermore, learners with special needs do not necessarily benefit from the same special type of instruction as other learners and this makes the way they are assessed very problematic (Mastropien & Scruggs, 1997:208). Scherchman and Or (1996:141) stress the idea that educators who have

special needs children in their classrooms, feel that they spend additional hours of preparation, at the expense of the time that should be devoting to the rest of the class.

2.10.5 Educators' feelings of powerlessness

Hawthorn (1986:254) and Myles and Simpson (1989:321) report that educators are being troubled by the fact that they have been compelled to follow policies in which they have no say. Educators have to abandon their old teaching and assessing strategies, which are outdated, and experiment with new ones. This can be an anxiety-evoking experience. Vlachou and Barton (1994) also reported that educators are seeing themselves as being de-professionalized.

Educators' frustration and dilemmas were also attributed to the effort being taken up with new assessment. Vaugh et al. (1996:274) surveyed the attitude of educators in the USA to inclusion and assessment. He found that the majority of educators felt that discussions were being held by administrators, who do not work in classrooms and who are not aware of the consequences of the implementation of assessment policies. Many educators felt powerless because they believed that school administrators were unlikely to consider the needs or interests of educators when making policy decisions about inclusion. Several researchers have found that administrators are more optimistic about the success of inclusive assessment than class educators, who have more personal responsibilities toward learners experiencing learning barriers (Horne, 1983:231; Houck & Roger, 1994:261). Educators need to be part of discussions and decision-making, especially when it comes to the decisions that will affect them in the classroom.

2.10.6 Educators' concerns about the effect of pupil educator ratio

Class size is one of the most frequently mentioned obstacles to the success of assessment (Christie, 1999:13). Stecher and Barron (1997:21) mention that 92.1% of educators surveyed felt that inclusive classrooms should not have more than 20 pupils, because assessment in these classrooms adds new responsibilities without permitting educators to reduce existing demands.

2.10.7 Educators' view on the cost of equipment of assessment

Hymes, Chafin and Gonder (1991) say that the cost-effectiveness of nationally standardized tests is a major boom to most local school districts. The new assessments are far more expensive, especially the assessment requirements for disabled learners. Walter (1997:42) and Eisner (1999:263) support the idea that bringing changes in assessment is not a small, simple and easy task.

2.10.8 Educators' perception on the need for adequate support

Because regular classroom educators are not trained in special education, they need outside support to help them effectively assess included learners (Charost, 1998:11). Charost (1998) further mentioned that changes towards inclusive education placed educators under great pressure and however hard they worked or however creative they were, the inevitable consequences were feelings of frustration and disappointment. The demands of systematic assessment and record keeping, combined with a conscientious approach to their work and the availability of support services contribute to educators' attitudes to assessment and are therefore important to the success of it (Rodden-Nord, Shinn & Good, 1992:261; Silver, 1991:25). In a recent study in the USA, educators felt that additional resources, particularly extra personnel, are vital to the success of inclusion and stressed the importance of communication between professional team members dealing with the learners experiencing learning barriers (Vaugh et al., 1996).

Werts, Wolery, Snyder, Caldwell and Salisbury (1996:20), when analyzing results of their research, found that three areas of support are vital, namely:

- Training that is responsive to the individual needs of educators;

- Consultation from a team of professionals who have varying types of expertise; and

- Additional in-class support for classroom duties and responsibilities. In addition, educators need administrative support, smaller classes, materials and extra time for planning and consultation (Christie, 1999:12).

When assessment in an inclusive classroom fails in the USA, the major reasons given are inadequate preparations, training and support. Three other major complaints were educator

burn-out, lack of basic life skills training and parents who are angry because they do not feel that their children are being assessed the way they were used to, by maximizing their learning potential (Irmsher, 1995:2). Educators are concerned about the effectiveness of professional development. Some educators prefer being shown, rather than told what to do. They prefer having trainers come to their classroom and demonstrate for them. Other educators prefer it when trainers observe in their classroom and provide feedback based on their observations. Some educators are also interested in becoming involved in training as providers of services beyond their classroom responsibilities (Stecher & Barron, 1997:19). Educators must also be shown how to teach in new ways that promote learning of new content.

2.10.9 Educators' attitudes towards inclusion and learners experiencing learning barriers

Inclusion is not a disability issue. It has been brought to the forefront of public awareness by the presence and needs of learners with disability. It is an education equity and quality issue for all learners because when done well, it has the potential to benefit learners with a full range of characteristics (Giangreco, 1997:194).

Recent research on the attitude of school personnel (educators) who have children with disabilities in their classrooms indicates significant differences regarding some of the most basic issues pertaining to inclusive education. One of the general education classroom educators studied by Giangreco (1997:196) considers himself/herself primarily responsible for educating learners experiencing learning barriers who are placed in the class. The educator mentioned that "it is uncommon for him as a class educator to describe their reaction to inclusion with terms like "scared, nervous apprehensive angry and warned". Knoff (1985:415) supported these ideas by saying that "regular education educators are without skills necessary to help exceptional children, and he felt that special education adequately provides for exceptional children's academic needs, and should be unchanged". Knoff (1985) further emphasized the idea, by noting that regular class educators will be unwilling to accept learners with barriers into their classrooms.

Davies and Green (1998:97) undertook research on the mainstream educators' attitudes to the mainstreaming of learners experiencing learning barriers in a primary classroom. They reported that educators in ordinary classrooms generally expressed negative attitudes towards

inclusion, which may be closely tied to the educators' feeling of competency and effectiveness in educating these learners. By saying that educators are lacking knowledge and experience in working with learners experiencing learning barriers, also affects their attitudes. The research findings indicated that attitudes vary according to the disability of the learner.

In their paper Swart, Engelbrecht, Eliot and Pettipher (2000:4) reported that educators are of the opinion that they do not possess adequate knowledge and skills to address diversity and teach learners with special educational needs. They appear to feel unable to manage diversity. This often results in feelings of fear and that these learners are just dumped in the classroom and yet they need to be assessed on what they know at their own pace of studying.

The policy document on assessment states that the process of assessing learners with special needs, including gifted and talented learners, should follow the same principles outlined in the policy. Educators should, within the guidelines of the education support services, play a central role in the assessment and special education-support personnel should be called upon, to assist. Furthermore, misunderstandings and misperceptions of the concept of inclusion appear to also limit educators' successful implementation of inclusive education (Diebold & Van Eschenback, 1991).

In light of the above the need for further training and ongoing learning is clear. However, it appears that the present role of in-service training does not always meet the educators' needs. There appears to be a negative attitude towards in-service training and it does not always bring about the desired change.

2.11 SUMMARY

In the past, highly qualified personnel from the educational support services did the assessment of learners with special educational needs. The results of the assessment enabled them to classify learners and to place them in a suitable learning environment.

Currently, the aim of assessment is to enable educators, parents and other person's concerned to meet the needs of the learners concerned. Assessment has now become the responsibility of the educator in particular. It has become clear that the aim and purpose of assessment has changed quite drastically. Assessment is no longer done so that learners can be placed in a

suitable environment. The segregation of learners with barriers to learning and development is no longer acceptable.

The findings from literature on assessment and educators' attitudes towards assessment in inclusive classrooms was discussed. In the next chapter the research methodology will be discussed.
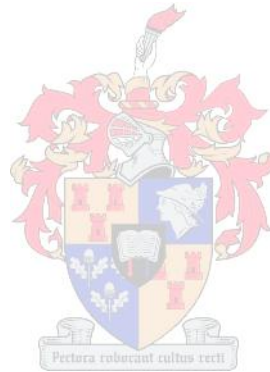
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHODS

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research design of the study will be discussed including the research methodology, data collection methods and data analysis. It will also be shown how the research design was structured to verify reliability of the research findings.

3.2   RESEARCH DESIGN

As discussed in chapter one, the research design is characterized by its qualitative, contextual, descriptive, explorative and interpretative nature and a case study method was used. According to Merriam (1998:13) the thick description of a case study means that as full a description as possible is given of the incident or entity being investigated. Adelman, Jenkins and Kemmis (1996:3) note that "Case study research always involves 'the study of an instance in action".
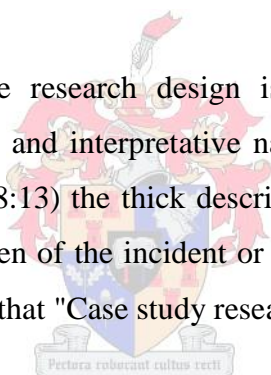
3.3   RESEARCH PROBLEM

Learners experiencing barriers to learning and development are included in mainstream schools as these are often the nearest schools. These learners are to be assessed like other learners, using alternative methods of assessment in the classroom where they have been placed. The problem is that these learners are repeating the same grade more than twice. This research intends to investigate the educator's view or attitude towards assessment in an inclusive classroom in the Dzindi Circuit. The research question is "What is the attitude of educators towards assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning who have been placed in their classrooms."

3.4   RESEARCH AIMS AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This study intends to investigate the attitude of educators towards the assessment of learners experiencing barriers to learning in three schools in the Dzindi Circuit Region 3, Limpopo province.

3.5   PARTICIPANTS

A sample is a strategically and systematically identified group of people or events that meet the criterion of representation for a particular study (Merriam & Simpson, 1995:57). Mouton (1996:134) describes the research population as a collection or set of elements of various kinds. This population can include a population of:

- Individual human beings;

- Organizations;

- Institutions;

- Collectives;

- Social activities or events;

- Cultural objects; or

- Interventions
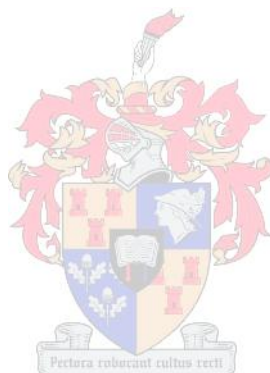
The group of participants in qualitative research, as mentioned by Merriam (1998:8), is usually small, non-random and purposeful. A convenience sampling method was used to identify the learners and the educators. Convenience sampling is a sampling method where a researcher includes any case which happens to cross the researcher's path and has something to do with the phenomenon, until the desired number is obtained (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:169). Hamel et al. (1993:43) stated that to select the case carefully it should meet certain criteria. In this research the following are the criteria set by the researcher for this study:

- Primary School educators in the Dzindi Circuit; and

- Classrooms where learners with barriers to learning are in the regular classroom.

The following are the schools that were identified for the research. Their names will not be mentioned for ethical purposes.

SCHOOL 1

School one is in a rural area. To reach it one needs to cross a big river. This school has few, fairly built classrooms. There are three standard classrooms and the rest are shacks (classrooms built from wood). School 1 has classes from reception grade (Gr. R) to Grade seven. There are 780 learners and 16 educators. At this school, learners do not have enough chairs and tables. In some classes learners sit on the floor. School 1 is built on ground level and is surrounded by a fence of small trees. At this school there is a hearing-impaired learner and another learner whose parents have died of an AIDS related disease.

SCHOOL 2

This school is found in a remote rural area. At this school there are 680 learners and 15 educators. The buildings at this school are shacks. There is only one building made of mud bricks, and this building is used as an office. The shacks used here are very old and dilapidated. When learners are in the classroom they can see through the walls. Some educators have no classroom. When it is not raining they go out to teach under a big tree. The school is near a big road that leads to a village. At this school there are two learners who have specific barriers to learning; the one is in Grade 4 and the other one in Grade 6. There are also other learners who need special attention when doing assessments.

SCHOOL 3

This school is situated not far from the main road to the main town of Venda. It is in the valley were the slope is steep. It is well built, enough classrooms with suitable flushing toilets. But from one block to the next one there are ascending and descending steps. When it rains the soil is very slippery. Educators cannot reach the place by car in rainy weather. They leave their cars at the chief's kraal and reach the school by foot. This school has 618 learners and 13 educators and is surrounded by bushes. It has a modern fence and a safety gate, is electrified and has two taps for water. At this school there are two physically disabled learners, a boy and a girl who are both in Grade 4. The boy's leg is paralyzed. He is also partially sighted.

There is also a Grade 7 learner who is 18 years old with a drug addiction.

In Grade 3 there is a group of six learners, two girls and four boys who are repeating the same grade for the fourth time. Their ages range from 14 to 16 years.

The following educators served as the participants in this research. Names will not be mentioned and they are referred to as educators A, B, and C.

TABLE 3.1

	EDUCATOR A	**EDUCATOR B**	**EDUCATOR C**
SCHOOL NO	1	2	3
AGE	44	58	25
EXPERIENCE	12	35	05
QUALIFICATION	Primary Educator's Diploma	Primary Educator's Certificate	BEd degree
SEX	MALE	MALE	MALE

3.6   METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected from a variety of sources. The process involved three methods namely:

- interviewing;

- observation; and

- documentation (Yin, 1989:91).

Patton (1990:244) pointed out that "multiple" sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective. By using a combination of observations, interviews and document analysis, the researcher is able to use different data sources, to validate and cross-check findings. I used these methods since interviews are usually followed or are integrated with participant observation. Educators were interviewed and observed and documents were analyzed.

3.6.1   Semi-structured interview

As mentioned by Merriam (1998:72) and by Huysamen (1993:172) an interview is a conversation between two people in which the researcher elicits information from the respondent. The main purpose is to obtain specific information. The researcher uses interviews in order to find out what is on someone else's mind.

In an interview an interviewer may feel lost in a sea of divergent viewpoints and seemingly unconnected pieces of information (Merriam, 1998:75). Care was taken with the interviewer and respondent interaction. The respondents were able to express their thoughts, feelings, opinions and their perspective on the topic, as the researcher adopted a stance that is non-judgmental, sensitive and respectful of the respondents (Merriam, 1998:87).

Notes were taken during the interview to record interview data (Merriam, 1998:87). The interviews were also recorded on audiotape cassettes and transcribed for data analysis. According to Merriam (1998:84) the plausibility of the respondent's information was compared in an attempt to minimize distortion or exaggerations. See Appendix A for questions asked.

3.6.2   Observation

Observation has been described as a process whereby the researcher brings together reality with his/her assumptions (Mouton & Marais, 1990:166). The researcher conducted both direct and participant observation. Notes were kept during observation. Guy, Edgley, Arafat and Allen (1997:36) describe participant observation as a researcher entering a setting he/she wants to study, and actually participating in the very scene he/she is observing, analyzing and writing about. The researcher wrote a letter to the DoE in the region, asking for permission to conduct the study in all three schools. The observation table was drawn and the researcher visited the schools according to the time stipulated by the DoE (See Appendix B).

I personally entered the classroom setting I wanted to study. In the classroom I was both actor and audience at the same time. Sometimes I helped the educator in assessing the learners. By doing so I could personally witness the problems encountered by the educators while assessing learners experiencing learning barriers. I also had time to just sit down in the classroom and observe the lesson and its assessment. When helping with the assessment I saw to it that the research process was not disturbed (Fourie, 1997:36). I also acted as a

facilitator in the educator's learning process by providing some guidelines on how assessment can be done, and encouraging and supporting educators to continue their professional learning and recommending that by furthering their studies they could gain more knowledge about inclusive education and assessment.

3.6.3   Documentation

Merriam (1998:104) refers to documents as ready-made sources of data accessible to the investigator. I collected all the circulars concerned with inclusion and assessment. Circulars were studied and data recorded as well as the documentation relating to the assessment and recording of assessment.

3.7   RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The research proceeded as follows:

A letter was written to the DoE at circuit level to ask for permission to do research at the three schools (See appendix C for a sample of the application letter).

Prior to the study a review of suitable literature was undertaken to provide the theoretical framework and clarity for the research question, the interpretation and the conclusion (Merriam, 1993:154).
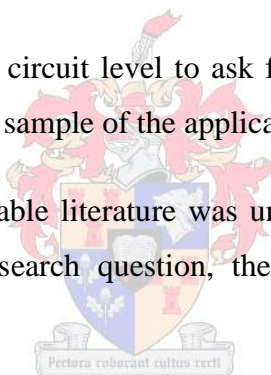
From the theoretical framework the research problem was formulated. The research was then designed adopting a qualitative approach that is descriptive, contextual and explanatory (Merriam, 1993:155).

Sampling was done and the research was implemented. This included on site observation, visits to schools to interview participants and analyses of documents. The constant comparative method was used to analyze data (Merriam, 1995:191) and is explained further on.

The data was collected and transcribed in Venda and translated to English. This was done because educators felt that if they use English (their second language), they will not be able to give their views as comfortably. This is because of their uncertainty with the language and it was important that they felt comfortable when giving their responses.

After consolidating data, the data was verified and the interpretation was done. Conclusions and recommendations were also made. A list of data is presented.

3.8   DATA ANALYSIS

According to Merriam (1998:121) data analysis is the process of making sense of the data and the process of making meaning.

The constant comparative method was used to analyze the data. The basic strategies of this method are to constantly compare. I began with the particular incident from an interview, observation and documents and compared them with each other and other instances. Comparisons are constantly made within and between levels of conceptualization until a theme emerges.

Miles and Huberman (1994:69) mentioned that interpretation must be done by looking for the relationship among categories (Merriam, 1998:171) and noting patterns to see 'what goes with what' (Miles & Huberman, 1994:245) (See Appendix D).

3.9   DATA VERIFICATION

To maintain the trustworthiness of the study, the data was verified according to the criteria in Lincoln and Guba's 1985 model (Cited in Fourie, 1997:40). These criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were appropriate constructs for testing the trustworthiness of the qualitative study. Qualitative studies are evaluated using the alternative criteria of internal validity, reliability and objectivity (Miles & Huberman, 1994:277).

Credibility was used to determine the truth-value of the study. Credibility establishes the truth of the findings based on the research design, informants and context (Krefting, 1991 in Fourie, 1997:40).

The credibility of the research findings was improved by using multiple data sources. Sources of data used to form the database included semi-structured interviews, observations and documentation. By using multiple data sources, it allows for the confirmation of the findings in a triangulation procedure (Merriam, 1993:169). Each source of data is a different line of sight directed towards the same point. By combining different lines of sight a more

substantive picture of reality is obtained (Fourie, 1997:40). The triangulated data sources were assessed against one another to cross check the data and interpretation. By conducting interviews with different educators the themes that emerged were confirmed.

The data interpretation was taken back to the participants and they were asked if the themes were plausible (Miles & Huberman, 1994:275). This was done continually throughout the study, as the themes were emerging. Member checks contributed to the credibility of the study. Through this the richness of the data was enhanced (Miles & Huberman, 1994:279).

Transferability was the second criterion used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. It refers to the applicability of the research to other contexts and settings. The characteristics of the learners, the school contexts and the processes were described fully enough to permit adequate comparison with other cases.

In qualitative research the transferability of the research findings is not as much the responsibility of the original researcher as that of the researcher who wishes to apply the findings to another situation (Fourie, 1997:41). The responsibility of the researcher lies in providing a rich, dense description, which will allow enough information to use in drawing comparisons (Kreffting, 1991:216 as cited by Fourie, 1997:41).

Validity is generally regarded as credibility of procedures. An audit trail, describing in detail how data was collected, decisions made and the categories or themes derived, are important indicators for credibility (Merriam, 1993:172). In this study a detailed description was given of the way data was collected and analysed. The data collected is also maintained and made available to other researchers who may wish to study the original data. This audit trail allows the readers to follow the research process (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:146). A clearly defined audit trial of data collection, analysis and interpretation therefore contributed to the dependability of this study.

The confirmability of qualitative research is also found in the neutrality of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). Fourie (1997) said that if the credibility and dependability precaution are narrowly applied, the requirements of the confirmability criterion are also met. Thus the methodological qualities of the case determine its confirmable value (Hamel et al., 1993:37). The study's methods and procedures are described in detail, providing the audit trail and then leading to the conclusions.

3.10   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Written consent was obtained from the school managers and the circuit manager to conduct the research at the schools. Verbal consent was obtained from the participants and they were informed of the outcomes of the research. I maintained a supportive, counselling and facilitating role for the participants in their process of assessing learners with barriers to learning. In order to maintain and ensure the anonymity of the participants, no identifiable indicators were used in the study.

3.11   SUMMARY

The theoretical foundation for the research methodology was discussed in this chapter. The qualitative research design and case study research format allowed for the study of educators' attitudes and to identify themes as they arose. The data collection methods, data analysis, consolidation, data verification were also discussed. It was shown how the trustworthiness of the data was verified according to the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. The interpretation of the data is presented in the next chapter.
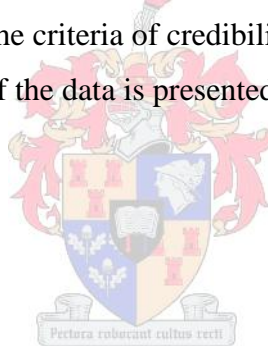
CHAPTER 4

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

A discussion about the methods used to obtain the relevant data for this study was done in the previous chapter. In this chapter the implementation of the study is discussed.

4.2   IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

As a qualitative researcher I first wrote a letter to the DoE asking for permission to undertake the study in the Dzindi circuit. After receiving permission, I went to the three schools to make an arrangement as to when I could come do the research.

In the meantime I conducted a literature study in order to find out what other researchers found on issues of assessment in classrooms where learners with learning barriers are included in mainstream classes.
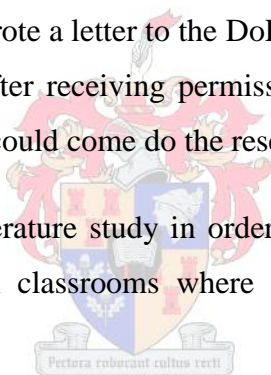
I then started conducting the research in the three schools. I made an on-site observation in order to observe the real classroom situation myself. I entered the real classroom situation and observed the context. I then interviewed the educators who were teaching in these classes.

I consulted the documents issued by the department about how assessments of learners who have barriers to learning needed to be done. I did this to see what was expected from the educators by the department, and to establish whether the educators had signed the documents to indicate that they had studied it.

From the data collected, I then had enough information to compare and find emerging themes.

The following themes were identified as a result of the process of data analysis:

- TRAINING;

- SUPPORT SERVICES;

- CLASSROOM ORGANISATION;

- PARTICIPATION IN POLICY MAKING; and

- FACILITIES AND SPECIAL DEVICES.

A. TRAINING

Training seemed to be the major problem with all interviewed educators. They are saying that they lack knowledge on how to assess learners experiencing learning barriers in their classrooms. This is seen by the following responses:

EDUCATOR A: "The department should have started by training educators first and then implement its policy. We are not trained and we do not know how to assess these learners."

EDUCATOR B: "I need to be trained again because it is long since I have been trained. The department must provide in-service training; maybe after being trained my attitude towards these learners will change."

EDUCATOR C: "The department should have started by training educators on inclusion regardless of whether we have those learners or not. These should have been done two to three years before the implementation of the policy."

When asking them about their knowledge on how to assess these learners they again stressed that they need training by saying:

EDUCATOR A: "To tell the truth I know nothing about how to assess learners with learning barriers."

EDUCATOR B: "Is long I have been trained. I am now having 35 years of experience has not been trained about how to assess them."

EDUCATOR C: "I have done inclusion when I was doing remedial courses but that was only a theory. When it comes to practical I do not know how to start. I need further training."

When comparing their responses I found that there were common themes emerging. These comparisons led me to tentative categories: lack of knowledge due to a lack of training, hence the theme 'training' emerging.

Due to lack of training, educators have little interest in doing assessments with learners experiencing learning barriers. They are not interested in helping them due to lack of knowledge. This is supported by the following responses made by the educators when asked about their need of clarification on how to assess those learners. Educators responded by saying:

EDUCATOR A: "Yes, that is what I want because presently I am just bushing [beating] around the bush without knowing exactly what to do."

EDUCATOR B: "I do not have a clear understanding of assessment in an inclusive classroom. I request a concrete definition of assessment in an inclusive classroom that can be operationalised."

EDUCATOR C: "I am really willing to assess learners with learning barriers in my classroom, but due to lack of clear definition on how to do it I am not knowing how to do it."

B.   SUPPORT SERVICES

With regard to support services, the educators are not satisfied. They are saying that:

EDUCATOR A: "The department has implemented the policy of inclusion while it was not ready to support educators and schools. No district support team is functional at this circuit. It is said to be existing because the policy is stating that it ought to be there."

EDUCATOR B: "I am really frustrated by the little support because we were expecting to find some personnel from other departments to come and help us."

EDUCATOR C: "Adequate support services from the department need to be there. We ought to be working with psychologists to help us, but instead we are receiving no help at all."

When I visited the circuit to ask about support teams, the circuit manager responded by saying that the District support team is available but has not yet started to do its work. When asked about Educator Support Teams (TST) and School based Assessment Teams (SAT), the

educators responded by showing that they have no knowledge about that. All three educators seemed not to have these teams present at their respective schools. Their responses were:

EDUCATOR A: "I know nothing about educator support teams."

EDUCATOR B: "That is new to me. I do not know what you mean."

EDUCATOR C: "It's new to me. Maybe my principal knows about that."

C. CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

Educators are not satisfied with the way their classrooms are organized. Schools in rural areas have many learners without enough classrooms. Educators have many learners in one classroom. The issue of educator-pupil ratio is very crucial. In their responses the educators showed that they have many learners which make them unable to assess those learners accurately. These were shown by the following responses:

EDUCATOR A: "The problem we are experiencing is that our classrooms are overflowing, with too many learners in one class. One is unable to assess or implement the principle of individuality because of a large number of learners."

EDUCATOR B: "The department must reduce educator-pupil ratio. We are having a large number of learners and this is one of the contributing factors of not assessing learners with learning barriers. We are unable to organize the classroom the way we ought to."

EDUCATOR C: "Assessment in an inclusive classroom adds new responsibilities. You have to look after one child for a very long period. Educator-pupil ratio needs to be small especially to educators with learner who are experiencing learning barriers in their classrooms."

These educators also raised the concern that assessment in an inclusive classroom is time-consuming. Learners with learning barriers need to have additional time for assessment.

These are their responses:

EDUCATOR A: "These learners are like a burden to us. They need extra minutes as per policy. They are being assessed at the expense of others. I am no longer working according to my usual speed."

EDUCATOR B: "These learners need to be on their own. They must have their classroom. They must be separated from other, because they need extra time when assessed."

EDUCATOR C: "These learners need to be taught without others, and being in a small group because they need long time in order to be assessed accurately."

D. PARTICIPATION IN POLICYMAKING

With regards to participation in policy making, the educators responded that they need to be involved in making policies. The department must not just see them as "tools" or "stones". In this democratic country, decision-making must be from the bottom up. The policy makers must contact educators through relevant structures. The department must first hear their views on inclusion before implementation. Educators need to be part of decision making in things that they will be engaged in. The following were their responses on the matter:

EDUCATOR A: "We need to be consulted before the implementation of the policy. We need to be part of decision making."

EDUCATOR B: "The department must consult us first before the implementation of the policy. It must stop to make decisions for us, because those policies are not going to be implemented by them."

EDUCATOR C: He also supported involvement by saying that. "We need to be consulted first and be part of decision makers when policies are made."

E. FACILITIES AND SPECIAL DEVICES

Lack of facilities and special devices are some of the factors that are contributing to ineffective assessment in classrooms. The facilities and special devices they have at their schools do not satisfy educators. Some schools have no classrooms and it is very difficult to teach and assess learners with learning barriers in these circumstances. Some learners need special devices that will help them to learn and be assessed easily, but schools are so poor that they cannot afford to buy these devices. Educators responded by saying that:

EDUCATOR A: "These learners are just dumped here by the department, because we do not have conducive classrooms and these learners need special devices which we cannot afford to buy, because our schools do not have enough money."

EDUCATOR B: "I do not have a real class. I am teaching in a shack. The department ought to build suitable classrooms for these children's sake because they need to be cared for."

EDUCATOR C: "Special devices are very expensive. Our school cannot afford to buy them out of school fund. We need special devices to help these children. Sometimes it will be simpler to assess these learners if they have helping tools."

Educator A is in need of facilities and special devices to help learners. Educator B and Educator C are also in need of devices. They therefore share similar problems such as the need of adequate facilities and special devices. They showed that without facilities they couldn't support the learners adequately.

Training, Support Services, Classroom Organization, Participation in Policy making and Facilities and Special devices are the themes found from educators responses. The following are the findings from my observations in the classroom settings. The themes are:

- TRAINING;

- CLASSROOM ORGANISATION;

- LACK OF FACILITIES; and

- SUPPORT SERVICES.
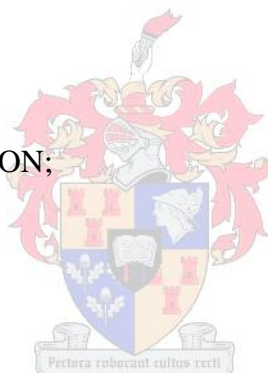
A. TRAINING

Due to lack of training, educators seem not to be interested in assessing learners experiencing learning barriers. They also lack knowledge on how to deal with these learners. Some of the participants tried to assess the learners, but due to a lack of training they were not successful. This following data emerged from the data analysis:

In School 1 Educator A

The educator left the learners unattended during assessment time. He gave them work and went to stand outside the classroom. When it's time to assess, he usually assesses those learners without barriers and leaves those with learning barriers unattended. The learners, who have no parents, as they are orphaned through AIDS, were usually ignored when being assessed. It was also found that educators at this school do not read circulars from the

Department, which are about inclusion and assessment. They just sign the documents without reading them, because they have little interest in the content.

Due to lack of knowledge and interest, they sometimes act harshly towards learners with learning barriers, and learners become so confused that they do not know exactly what is going on, how to please their educator and what is acceptable. One day I heard a educator saying the following: "What do you think you are. I am not going to spend the whole hour helping you. After all I am not trained to teach learners like you". Educators are not interested because they are not trained. If trained, the training could facilitate an attitude change and interest, which would better equip the educator to deal with learners with learning barriers.

In School 2 Educator B

Like educators in School 1, educators at this school were not interested in studying circulars from the department. They just read and sign. But at this school the educators are willing to help learners with learning barriers, but they also lack knowledge on how to assess them. The educator spent more time with a partially sighted learner, but did not know exactly how to help the child, for example, the child's table is at the back of the classroom. The classroom is made out of wood (a shack). Sunrays easily pass through the wood sections and make a sharp reflection on the board. The reflection made, makes it impossible for a learner to see clearly what is written on the board. The educator would then complain that the child was not paying attention to what he was telling him to do. The educator had little knowledge about barriers to learning and needs to be trained on how and where to locate those learners in the classroom. They also need to know how to assess the learners in an inclusive classroom.

School 3 Educator C

In this school, the educators showed lack of interest in and knowledge of assessing learners with learning barriers. This was evident by the following:

Learner's books were unmarked.

When marking the attendance register, the specific child is always marked absent even when he is present. When I asked the educator why he was doing this, the educator said it was

because they no longer wanted the learner there. They wanted him to leave the school because he is a problem to them.

During summative assessment, learners who are experiencing learning barriers were not attended to properly. The educator just gave them examination scripts and sat down without considering that there are learners who cannot see well, who will need some explanation of what is expected from them. This attitude shown by the educator is probably, once again, due to lack of information, knowledge and training. Educators need information and training in order to understand that learners with learning barrier should be treated fairly.

B.   CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

With regard to classroom organization, educators are somehow prepared to help learners with learning barriers but they cannot do it well because of overcrowding in their classrooms.

In School 2 Educator B

The educator took more time trying to help the learners but the problem was that some learners remain unattended for more than 45 minutes. At this school one educator has approximately 50 learners in his classroom. Classroom organization is a big problem to him. He is even unable to make groups for groupwork because there is not enough space.
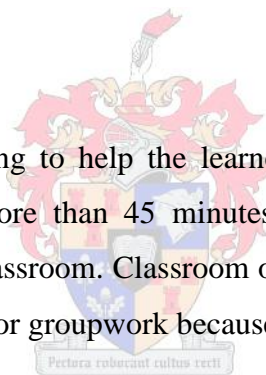
In School 3 Educator C

This educator is experiencing similar problems. At this school there are well-built classrooms, but the huge numbers of learners makes it difficult for the educator. The educator always grumbles that he is being overloaded by working with learners experiencing learning barriers, because they need extra time and that there are many of them in his class. Due to overcrowding, the educator said that he is unable to move freely between the lines in order to apply the principle of individuality which will cater for those with learning barriers.
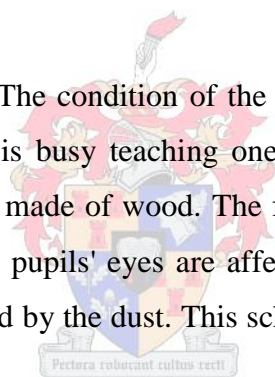
School 1 Educator A

At this school there are not enough buildings. Sometimes they are forced to go and teach under a tree, especially on hot days. It is very difficult to do assessments in these conditions.

C.   LACK OF FACILITIES

When observing Educator C in School 3 I found that there were not enough facilities for assessing learners with learning barriers. A partially sighted learner was not supported by any special device that could help him see. The learner always struggled to read a question paper and did not have anyone to help him. There is also a Grade 4 learner who is physically disabled. The boy cannot walk well. This school is situated on a steep slope. The boy comes to school on foot because there is no transport provided for him, and the parents cannot afford to hire a taxi or a bus. The boy always comes to school dirty because on his way to school he will fall and roll in the dirt a few times. He does this nearly every day except on the days when one of the educators finds him on the way and gives him a lift. When trying to play with others, he easily falls down. The boy clearly needs a walker to help him balance his body and transport to take him to and from school.

In School 2 Educator B

There are no suitable classrooms. The condition of the school is not conducive to learning and teaching. When the educator is busy teaching one hears a learner screaming "snake, snake" because the classrooms are made of wood. The floor of the classroom is covered in dust, and during the windy season pupils' eyes are affected by the dust. The learners with albinism's eyes are severely affected by the dust. This school is in need of better buildings in order to be conducive to learning.

School 1 also needs buildings. There are not enough classrooms.

D.   SUPPORT SERVICES

Support services are needed in these schools. I observed that in all the schools there were no educator support teams and there were no school assessment teams. At the district level the support team is available but not functional. The district manager consulted, showed that they have not yet started to support schools.

Schools need personnel from the health department and psychologists who will teach and workshop educators on how to cope with learners who have barriers to learning.

From the circulars studied, the following were my findings:

- in circular no 21 of 2001 the district assured that it will train educators on how to assess in an inclusive setting but they failed to do as they promised; and

- the circulars, especially the circular on staff establishment and provisioning, support the idea that learners with learning barriers add more responsibility by weighing them more than their normal peers. This means that the department is aware that teaching and assessing learners with learning barriers is more time consuming.

As mentioned by educators, the department is demanding that each and every school manager admits learners with learning barriers in public schools. The department also stresses that educators must not just leave learners not assessed, they must be assessed like their peers. The only difference being that they must be given extra time to be assessed fairly. Those learners must be assessed accordingly and progress to the next grade.

4.3   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

After considering data from the interviews, observations and documents the following were the main themes that emerged from the study:

- educators are in need of training. Responses from interviews showed that educators are lacking training. Due to lack of training they lose interest in learners with learning barriers. The same was found in observations and when studying documents;

- educators are not satisfied about the organization in their classrooms. There are too many learners per educator and educators are not able to work easily with those learners because when they try to assess them they do that at the expense of other learners;

- support services are needed to help those educators when assessing learners with learning barriers. Personnel from other departments must be involved in helping educators with how to deal with these learners. Personnel like psychologists, physiotherapists and nurses;

- policy makers must consider the voices of educators when making their policies. Educators need to be part of decision making. They are usually left behind but they are the ones who are forced to implement these policies. This makes them feel powerless and they easily develop negative attitudes towards the results of those policies; and

- facilities and special devices are needed in schools. They play the most important role when assessing learners. Buildings and special devices are needed to help these learners.

4.4   SUMMARY

In this chapter the implementation of the study was given. Different responses from different sources were studied to find their relationship. From different data collected many categories were found. Many of these categories were related. From these related categories different themes were derived. In the following chapter a brief summary of every chapter, discussions of the findings, recommendations and suggestions for further research will be shared.
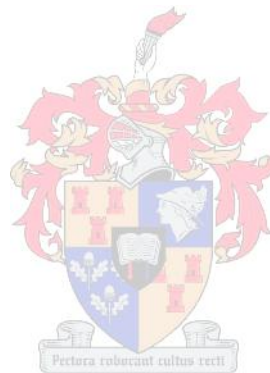
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This study forms part of a process of ongoing challenges concerning the attitude of educators towards assessment in inclusive classrooms. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a broad overview of the thesis and some of the findings of the research conducted in three primary schools in the Dzindi Circuit.

The topics indicated below are discussed in this chapter:

- brief summary of the chapters;

- discussions of the findings;

- summary of the findings;

- recommendations;

- suggestions for further research;

- limitations of the study; and

- summary and conclusion.

5.2   SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 provided the motivation for the study and a description of the problem. It outlined the aim of the study; the methodology used and clarified certain concepts used in this study.

Assessment, like any other part of teaching, needs to be part of the educational process. By assessing learners the educators will be able to know whether the learners understand what is being taught or not. On the other hand the Department needs to ensure that their policy is being implemented and learners are being assessed according to the guidelines they provide.

Chapter 2 identified the attitude of educators towards assessment in a classroom where learners with barriers to learning are included in mainstream classes.

The research design and methods of data collection were explained in detail in Chapter 3. The data analysis and data verification methods were also shared in this chapter.

Chapter 4 centred on the way the study was implemented. The responses were clustered in order to find the relationship between responses from different sources of data collection. The themes that emerged were discussed.

Chapter 5 contains an overview and the findings of the attitude of educators towards assessment of learners with barriers to learning included in mainstream classrooms.

5.3   DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

In this study several issues were explored to determine the attitude of educators at Dzindi Circuit towards assessing learners with barriers to learning.

The study revealed that there is an overwhelming recognition of and emphasis on the need to provide training. The training provided must train every educator to assess learners with learning barriers. Respondents believed that without training the education of learners with learning barriers would not be met in mainstream classrooms. Similar studies have also found that educators acknowledged the need for retraining of educators to assess learners with learning barriers (Knoff, 1985:415; Sodak, Podel & Lehman, 1996:41).

Participants are also of the opinion that the Education Department must train educators before the implementation of its policies. By training educators, it is likely that their attitude will change and they will have the necessary skill for assessing learners with learning barriers. These findings are of concern as researchers elsewhere have found the same i.e. training is necessary both to provide educators with the necessary skills as well as to foster positive attitudes towards assessment in an inclusive classroom (Rodden-Nord et al., 1992; Silver, 1991; Werts et al., 1996). Davies and Green (1998:97) undertook research on educators' attitudes towards learners with learning barriers and they found that educators generally express negative attitudes towards assessing these learners, because they feel incompetent and not effective in assessing these learners. Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloit and Pettipher (2000:4) reported in their findings that educators were lacking adequate knowledge

and skills to assess learners with learning barriers in their classrooms. The findings by Swart et al. (2000) relate to the findings of this study.

Most of the respondents in this study expressed the belief that to assess learners with learning barriers, needs more time. Educators are really affected by the time they spend on assessment. The classroom organization is not seen as good enough to enable effective assessment. Researchers elsewhere have shown that most educators feel that assessment of learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms is time consuming (Macroff, 1999; Poster & Kelly, 1998). They said that when educators are demanding more time to teach, they will buy into assessment programmes that require such a vast amount of time to be directed from instruction. Supporting the findings of the disrupted classroom organization Maestropieri and Scruggs (1997:208) stated that learners with learning barriers do not benefit from the instruction in the inclusive classroom and that major disruptions occurred to normal classroom practices and educators feel that assessment is totally unmanageable.

The respondents in this study believed that assessment in their classrooms added more work and that it is difficult to assess these learners together with the other learners in their class. This finding is consistent with the findings of Diebold and von Eschenback (1991), and Scruggs and Maestropieri (1996). They suggested that classrooms that include learners with learning barriers should not have more than twenty learners, because learners with learning barriers are weighted more than other learners and their assessment adds new responsibilities without permitting educators to have a smaller educator-pupil ratio. This is consistent with the findings of Stecher and Baron (1997:21).

Respondents in this study expressed the view that there is a lack of adequate support services from the DoE and the Department of Health. They are of the opinion that personnel from these departments should be used to help them when assessing learners with learning barriers. This finding is similar to the findings by Werts et al. (1996:20) which stated that three areas of support are vital, namely:

- training;

- consultation from a team of professionals who have varying types of expertise; and

- additional in-class support for day-to-day carrying out of class duties and responsibilities.

Significantly, the results of this study indicate that educators need to be part of policy making (Werts et al., 1996). They need to participate in decision-making when policies are formulated. By implementing the policy without educators being part of it, it is likely to result in the policy not being implemented correctly. Educators feel powerless and de-professionalised. This is also supported by Hawthorne (1986) and Myles and Simpson (1989). The department is more concerned about the success of assessment than class educators who have more personal responsibilities for learners with learning barriers (Horne, 1983:251; Houck & Roger, 1994:261).

Lack of facilities and special devices is another major problem in teaching and assessing learners with learning barriers in mainstream classes. Schools do not have enough money to build adequate classrooms and to buy special devices for learners. There is a lack of funding though they do receive funds from norms and standard to support the school's poverty, but the funding is far from sufficient. This finding is similar to the findings by Vaughn et al. (1996).

5.4   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The results of this study indicate that educators would prefer to assess non-disabled learners rather than assessing learners with learning barriers. Educators feel that they are inadequately trained and therefore they do not possess the necessary knowledge and skills for assessing learners with barriers to learning in their mainstream classes. School-based in-service training should be introduced to prepare all qualified educators for this task. Specialized training should be introduced into every educator training programme so that all prospective educators are able to manage the full range of barriers that they will encounter in their classrooms.

The results also suggest that support teams should be available and the number of learners in inclusive classrooms reduced. In classes where learners with learning barriers are included, the number of learners should be reduced to allow enough time and attention spent in teaching and assessing these learners. There needs to be a budget that will allow for structural changes to school buildings and adequate resources and specialized staff to ensure
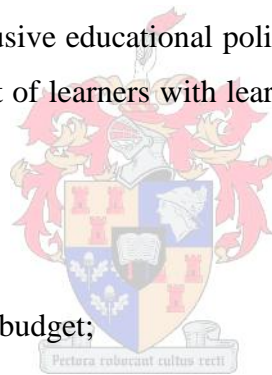
that learners with learning barriers in mainstream schools are given quality education and sound assessment is done.

The results further suggest that policy makers must involve educators when drawing up their policies, because educators are ultimately responsible for implementing those policies. Monetary allocations to schools that include learners with special educational needs also need to increase in order for schools to purchase special devices and resources needed to support these learners. The infrastructures of the schools also need upgrading so that learners with physical needs can be accommodated.

Respondents in this research support the social acceptance of pupils with learning barriers, but they feel that their current situation where learners with special needs are just included without departmental support might not be what they were hoping for.

Assessment in inclusive classroom results from the policy of inclusion. Factors that militate against the implementation of inclusive educational policies in South Africa are the same as those that are hindering assessment of learners with learning barriers in an inclusive setting. Those factors are:

- The large pupil-educator ratio;

- Extremely limited educational budget;

- The grave lack of support services; and

- The relative paucity of number of appropriate trained educators (Jenkins et al., 1990; Lewis & Doorlag, 1995; Miller, 1990; Rodden-Nord et al., 1992; Silver, 1991; Snell, 1991; Vaughn et al., 1996; Ville et al., 1996).

Policy makers should be cautioned against implementing educational experiments of placing learners with learning barriers in an inclusive setting before the establishment of upgraded alternatives. On the basis of the results of this study it seems that educators in Limpopo Province are not adequately trained to assume the responsibilities of teaching and assessing learners with learning barriers. They are currently reluctant to do as stipulated by the assessment policy of assessing learners with learning barriers. While the inclusive education policy may offer learners with learning barriers physical access to equal educational setting,

without extensive, appropriate support services, it cannot promise that all learners will benefit from the system.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In South Africa inclusion is a countrywide phenomenon but each province controls its own educational matters. At this point in time, assessment of learners with special needs is not yet correctly implemented in schools at Dzindi Circuit Limpopo Province. Therefore I recommend the following:

- Educator training should be conducted with all educators; both educators and school managers should attend inclusion workshops or seminars;

- The training of educators should commence as soon as possible because of the urgency for learners and educators in those schools;

- The DoE should allocate more funds so that schools can accommodate these learners and also buy special devices and resources;

- The DoE should work hand in hand with the Department of Health to provide schools with adequate services;

- The number of learners in a classroom must be reduced so that better classroom organization is possible. Too many learners per educator contribute to inadequate assessment practices;

- Additional personnel from the department should be allowed to assist educators in their classrooms. District support teams must become functional to support educators who have no choice, but to include learners with learning barriers in their classes;

- There must be involvement of educators in decision making especially when it comes to the decisions that need implementation by educators; and

- Specialized training on assessment in inclusive classrooms must be part of educator training programmes.

5.6 SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The sample was drawn from Dzindi Circuit schools around Vuwani. Only three mainstream schools that included learners with learning barriers were used as a sample. Further research could include respondents from the whole of the Vhembe District (formerly known as Region 3). Black pupils are the majority in our region, although there are former model C schools with inclusive classrooms. The model C schools were not included in this research. This study was confined largely to the black population group. Further research could sample more schools in Region 3 and could include learners from all population groups.

This research has shown that training is necessary to provide educators with the necessary skills as well as to foster positive attitudes towards assessment of learners with learning barriers. It would be interesting to do a pre-test and post-test comparison of the attitude of educators before and after their training exposure of how to assess in a classroom where learners with special educational needs are included.

5.7 LIMITATION OF THIS STUDY

During observation some educators refused to be observed, mentioning that they would not be able to do their work effectively. Therefore I was unable to observe all classrooms.

Some respondents suggested that it would be better for them to use their mother tongue because English is their second language. They were unable to express themselves fully through the medium of English. That means I had to translate what they were saying to English and that has the danger of distorting the meaning.

The case study was limited and I had limited access to a library and technical services. I struggled with access to professional editing.

5.8 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The ministry of education accepts that a broad range of learning needs exists among the learner population at any point in time. These needs arise because of negative attitudes, inaccessible and unsafe building environments, and inappropriate and inadequate support services, inadequate policies and legislation, the non-recognition and non-involvement of other stakeholders and inadequately and inappropriately trained managers and educators. The

inclusive education movement is driven by a concern for equality of educational provision for all learners and a desire to enhance the quality of life of learners with learning barriers and the extent of their full participation in the community. Learners with learning barriers must be treated like any other person in each and every sphere of their lives. Educators can contribute to the inclusive philosophy and make the inclusive policies a reality if they are supported with appropriate training to change their attitudes and develop their skills. In this way they will become more effective educators and effective assessments can take place when learners with learning barriers are part of their classes.
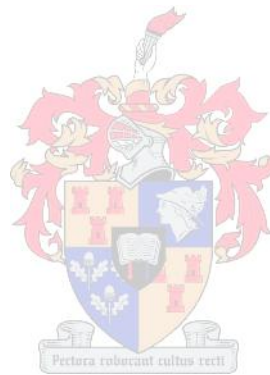
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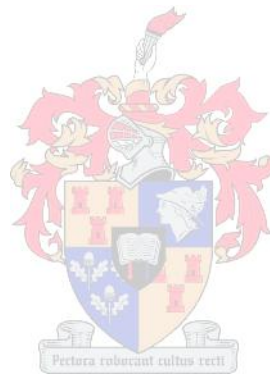
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Questions to be asked when doing interviews to all educators concerned at the school to be studied:

1) How do you feel when assessing LSEN in your classroom?

2) Do you have any knowledge on how to assess LSEN?

3) Are you really accommodating LSEN in your classroom? What are the effects of accommodating LSEN with other learners who are not disabled?

4) Do LSEN really benefit when they are being taught using the same type of methods as other learners?

5) The department of Education has implemented this policy of inclusion, what are your feelings about that?

6) Your classroom seems to be having learners? how are coping with it when you assess learners, especially now when you are having LSEN?

7) LSEN you have need special devices, e.g. you have partially sighted and a hearing impaired, how are you going to help them without those equipments?

8) The department of education in our province has just implemented this policy (Inclusion), is there any support you are receiving from the department to help you on how to assess LSEN.

9) What is your view on inclusion?

10) What is your attitude toward LSEN?

11) Do you want or need any clarification on how assessment is done with LSEN in inclusive classroom. If yes, elaborate.

APPENDIX B

P.O BOX 497
LEVUBU
0929
13- 05- 2003

The Area Manager
Dzindi Circuit
Private Bag x1406
Lwamondo
0985

Dear Sir

APPLICATION FOR DOING RESEARCH

The above matter refers.

I (Mrs Maluma Takalani Rejoice) a student at the University of Stellenbosch am hereby applying to do research at some of the schools in your circuit. My research's topic is:

The attitude of educators towards assessment in Inclusive Classrooms

Hoping that my application will be considered

Yours truly,

Mrs Maluma T.R

APPENDIX C

TRANSLATED INTERVIEWS AT SCHOOL 1, 2, 3 ALL COMBINED

Responses of questions asked

Q1. How do you feel when assessing LSEN in your classroom.

EDUCATOR A: I do not have any problem with assessment itself, my problem comes now when the department of education wants me to assess normal learners together with LSEN who are supposed to be at special schools. Really these learners are giving us a big problem because I am no longer working according to my speed, the speed I am used to from the day I started teaching.

EDUCATOR B: This department is undermining educators .It is forcing educators to implement policies about which we were not consulted. We have just received circulars stating that LSEN must be admitted to over schools but they did not consult us before. How can a person feel free to do things he was not parting of when decision was taken?

EDUCATOR C: I do not know what to say. I am taking assessment as it is. If they do not cope with others, they will remain in the same class until they cope. These learners are a burden to us.

Q2: Knowledge on how to assess LSEN.

EDUCATOR A: To tell the truth I know nothing about LSEN and how to assess them.

EDUCATOR B: Is long I have been trained. I am now having 35 YEARS IN TEACHING. They did not train us about that.

EDUCATOR C: I have done inclusion when I was doing remedial courses but that was a theory, when it comes to practical I do not know how to start. I need further training

Q3: Accommodating LSEN and the effects of such accommodation

EDUCATOR A: My biggest problem was that even thou accommodated I do not have knowledge on how to treat them.

EDUCATOR B: I do not have problem with that if the department is going to our school with reliable facilities otherwise they will be wasting learner's time.

EDUCATOR C: Yes LSEN must be accommodated but the problem is that in some schools they do not have places to accommodate them. We are better here thou not rich our school is well built and they can walk easily. The other thing is that LSEN we are having here are not so bad.

Q4: Do LSEN benefit when taught with others.

EDUCATOR A: May be they are benefiting but according to my point of view we are wasting their time because truly saying we are not assessing them.

EDUCATOR B: We are just keeping them for department's sake. No benefit.

EDUCATOR C: There is no benefit at all because they are only dumped at our school. It would be better if they were at special school. To assess them takes a lot of time

Q5 and Q8: Department's policy they respond by saying:

EDUCATOR A: Is long I have been saying that I need to be trained first and then work with these learners. Adequate support from the department is needed.

EDUCATOR B: I myself need to be trained because as you see is long I have been trained. The department must make a point of in-service training may be that will change attitude toward s these learners and their assessment. We are also not having classrooms. These learners need tender care, they must be taught in good environment. Just imagine, I am teaching under a tree as you see ,our school is next to the main road, the learner who is having hearing impaired b has trouble of not hearing because cars will be passing and trucks making big noise in such a way that he no longer grasp even a little thing I was saying. As I have already mentioned the department must give us support in form of facilities and health personnel.

EDUCATOR C: The department should have started by training on inclusion regardless on whether they have LSEN in their classroom or not. This should have been done two years before the implementation of their policy to make sure that each and every educator is well equipped on how to deal with LSEN and how to assess them. Our department has just implemented this policy and we are not receiving any support from them. We need to be trained and be given an adequate support by the department of education working together with the department of health.

Q6: Class size and assessment of LSEN

EDUCATOR A: Assessment in inclusive classroom adds new responsibility. You look after one child for a very long time otherwise if you just assess them without considering LSEN will be left behind. So educator pupil ratio need to be small.

It would be better if the department when implementing this policy reduce educator: pupil ratio because our classrooms are overflowing. There are too many learners.

EDUCATOR C: That is one of the biggest problem we have. LSEN needs time and when you are assessing more than 50 learners in your class together with LSEN you will feel very tired and become bored. Class size must be very small more especially because LSEN weight is bigger. To be able to assess them we must have educator small pupil ratio.

Q7: The need for special devices

TEACER A: If the department can provide one it can be good but on our own we cannot afford. They are expensive.

EDUCATOR B: We have no money in our school that can buy those facilities.

EDUCATOR C: Special devices are very expensive we neither cannot afford to buy them.

Q9: Views on inclusion

EDUCATOR A: It is good because learners will be attending school near their homes but the problem is that I do not have enough knowledge on how to work with them.

EDUCATOR B: We do not have knowledge and skills on how to deal with diversity in our classroom.

EDUCATOR C: Inclusion is a new thing. It needs people who know about it. We do not have knowledge and experience of working with these learners.

Q10: Need of clarification on how to assess LSEN

EDUCATOR A: Yes that is what I want because presently I am just bushing around the bush without exactly knowing what to do.

EDUCATOR B: I do not have clear understanding of assessment in inclusive classroom. I request a concrete definition of assessment in inclusive classroom that can be operationalised.

EDUCATOR C: I really willing to assess LSEN in my classroom but due to lack of a clear definition on how to do it. I am not knowing how to do it.

These are the transcriptions from the cassettes. The cassette was recorded in the mother tongue and the researcher translated that in English because educator interviewed were afraid to express themselves in English which is not their mother tongue.

APPENDIX D

OBSERVATION SHEET

EDUCATOR A SCHOOL 1

At this school learners are left unattended during assessment time. Learners who are not attended are mostly those who are experiencing barriers e.g. a learner whose parents died of AIDS. When the learner is in need of he1p the educator ignores him.

One time a educator acted harshly to learners experiencing barriers to such an extent that the learner became confused. I heard a educator one-day saying that: Who do you think you are, I am not going to spend the whole hour helping you alone. If you not understand what I am saying go too special School.

Educators at this school do not study circulars, which are about learners with barriers and assessment they just sign and return the circulars to the office. You often hear them asking each other the content of the circular. The other one will read its headline and they said: We will just sign, not interested, we are neither nurses nor psychologists.

EDUCATOR B SCHOOL 2

The educator seems to have no knowledge on how to work with learners experiencing barriers in learning. The poor sighted learners are placed at the back of the classroom. Because the classroom is a shack there is lots of sun reflection in the class which makes it hard for these learners to see what is written on the board, even to read clearly and see clearly when they write in their books.

The educator is really ready to help learners with learning barriers but the problem is that it took him almost an hour to fully help one disabled child.

At this school educators also have the tendency of not reading circulars. Educators at this school responded to circular by just signing and saying that the department is just wasting its stationery. There is nothing we can do if we are not trained.
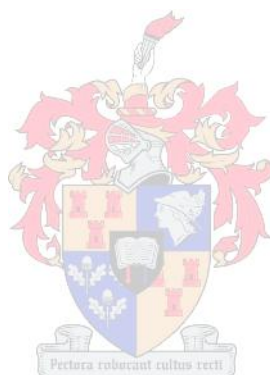
The learning environment at this school is not conducive to learning. Learners have no chairs and tables to use. They are also in need of well built classrooms for better education to take place.

EDUCATOR C SCHOOL 3

The learner's book is unmarked. When marking register the educator always marks the learner who is "addicted" absent. One often hears the educator saying that I will not mark him and I will leave him as he is, he will end up dropping out. After all he is too big and older than the other learners. Let's not mark his work. The learner is now arrested. He failed to write final examination because of being arrested.

The educator always grumbles about the work they have. They seem to not be interested in the policy of Inclusion. They say that the policy puts a heavy duty on them because it needs these learners to be given extra time for assessments. We are doing that at the expense of other learners.

During summative assessment the educator at this school just dished out examination scripts to learners without explaining to them. The learner who is partially sighted will struggle to read what is written on the paper because there is no one to read for him. This educator has the idea that because the department is insisting that they be taught with others they must give them special devices to read with. The children end up failing that grade.

OBSERVATIONS COMPARED

OBSERVED	CATEGORIES	THEMES
Educator A School 1 Learners left unattended during assessment	UNINTERESTED	1. TRAINING 2. PARTICIPATION IN POLICY MAKING 3. CLASSROOM ORGANISATION 4. LACK OF FACILITIES
Educators very harsh to learners experiencing barriers to learning grumbling about time	TIME CONSUMING	
Educators not studying circulars which are about inclusion and assessment	NOT INTERESTED	
Educator B School 2 No knowledge on how to treat learners with barriers to learning. Puts partially sighted learner at the back of the classroom	LACK OF KNOWLEDGE	
Assessment taking almost one hour on one learner	TAKES TOO LONG	
Circulars not studied, educators just sign.	LACK OF INTEREST	
No building facilities, learners are taught in shack and under trees.	SUPPORT NEEDED IN A FORM OF BUILDINGS	
Educator C School 3 Learners are too demanding and need more time.	MORE TIME NEEDED	
Educator bored i.e uninterested, resisting change	LACK OF INTEREST	
Learner's work unattended	LACK OF EXPERIENCE	
Better facilities needed	LACK OF FACILITIES	
Sees learners as burden, they give too much work to educators.	TOO MUCH WORK	
No adequate training	TRAINING NEEDED	