THE IMPLIMANTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION A SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my work and that I have not previously submitted it at any university.

MAKHAVHU T.S.   **April 2004**

SUMMARY

In South African schools teachers are currently being expected to make major changes in the way they understand teaching and learning in the process of adapting to an entirely new curriculum like Curriculum 2005 or Outcomes Based Education (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:70). Research asked the question about what the needs of teachers are towards support to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

A case study was conducted, the purpose being to inform support programmes for teachers. The target population included a selected primary school, the Mutondo Primary School in the Vuwani Area of the Limpopo Province. Participants included 20 voluntary teachers. A literature review was undertaken on the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. It indicated that teachers showed negative and positive attitudes towards inclusive education in schools. It also showed that that teachers needed support to facilitate positive change in their attitudes toward inclusion in South Africa. Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (1999:157) also emphasised that support was crucial for teachers as they felt that they did not have enough training in order to meet many challenges they come across.

The aims of the study was to identify the need for a support programme towards inclusive education for teachers in the Vuwani Area of the Limpopo Province, to provide information to teachers on the implementation of inclusive education and to evaluate the needs for a support programme on the implementation of inclusive education in this area.

Information was gathered at the hand of workshops with focus group interviews. The main themes that emerged from the data was the number of learners in a class, resources, the need for in-service training, a culture of respect and acceptance and a flexible curriculum. Findings suggested that a support programme could implement the policy of inclusive education more effectively when teachers' needs for training and support were being met.

OPSOMMING

In Suid-Afrika word dit tans van onderwysers verwag om groot veranderinge aan te bring in die wyse waarop hulle onderrig en leer om sodoende te kan aanpas by 'n nuwe kurrikulum soos Kurrikulum 2005 of Uitkomsgebasseerde Onderwys (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:70). Hierdie stuk navorsing vra die vraag oor die behoeftes van onderwysers ten opsigte ondersteuning om die implimentering van inklusiewe onderwys binne die Limpopo Provinsie van Suid-Afrika te fasiliteer.

'n Gevallestudie is onderneem met as doel om inligting te verskaf ten opsigte van 'n ondersteuningsprogram vir onderwysers. Die teikenbevolking het ingesluit 'n geselekteerde primêre skool in die Vuwani gebied van die Limpopo Provinsie, naamlik die Mutondo Primêre Skool. Deelnemers het 20 vrywillige onderwysers ingesluit. 'n Literatuurstudie is onderneem oor die implimentering van inklusiewe onderwys binne Suid-Afrika. Dit het getoon dat onderwysers beide positiewe en negatiewe houdings openbaar teenoor inklusiewe onderwys binne skole. Dit het verder aangetoon dat onderwysers ondersteuning benodig ten opsigte van die fasilitering van positiewe veranderings in hul houdings jeens inklusiewe onderwys in Suid-Afrika. Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker en Engelbrecht (1999:157) beklemtoon dat ondersteuning uiters belangrik is vir onderwysers aangesien hulle voel dat hulle nie genoegsame opleiding het om nuwe uitdagings aan te spreek nie.

Doelwitte binne hierdie studie het ingesluit die identifisering van die behoefte aan 'n ondersteuningsprogram vir onderwysers binne die Vuwani area van die Limpopo Provinsie, die deurgee van inligting aan onderwysers rakende inklusiewe onderwys en die evaluering van behoeftes vir 'n ondersteuningsprogram rakende die implimentering van inklusiewe onderwys in hierdie gebied.

Data is ingesamel aan die hand van werkswinkels met fokusgroeponderhoude. Die hooftemas wat uit die navorsing na vore getree het, was die aantal leerders binne klasse, hulpmiddele, die behoefte van indiensopleiding, 'n kultuur van respek en aanvaarding en laastens 'n buigsame kurrikulum. In kort is bevind dat 'n ondersteuningsprogram die implimentering van inklusiewe onderwys kan vergemaklik.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

In South African schools teachers are currently being expected to make major changes in the way they understand teaching and learning in the process of adapting to an entirely new curriculum such as Curriculum 2005 or Outcomes-Based Education (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:70). These authors emphasize that since teachers are the people who make learning possible, their own attitudes, beliefs, and feelings with regard to what is happening in the school and in the classroom are of crucial importance. They state that it is generally accepted that change is challenging and may be perceived as either a threat or an opportunity.

I assume that Inclusive Education is education in which there is no discrimination of learners, irrespective of their disabilities. Disabled learners must be included in the mainstream school. Some educators fear the inclusive education movement even before its implementation. Special education teachers fear that they may lose their jobs once they leave the resource room or other pullout classes (Porter & Kelly, 1998:20).

Davies and Green (1998:97) state that attitudes towards inclusion may be closely tied to teachers' feelings of competency and effectiveness in educating these children. Lack of knowledge and experience of learners with special educational needs cause feelings of fear. Some or many teachers still believe that learners with special needs are not their problem. They believe that special staff and programmes best serve exceptional children (Knoff, 1985:240). These educators are not convinced that children can learn together. They have been reluctant to bring students with disabilities into the educational mainstream without any pressure from above (Brady, Hunter & Campbell, 1997:240).

Many teachers are troubled by the fact that they have been compelled to follow policies in which they have no say and they fear failure because they have to abandon their old teaching strategies and experiment with new ones (Shechtman & Or, 1996:138). McCloskey and Quay (1987:426) maintain that negative attitudes towards mainstreaming may result from teachers' insecurity about their expertise. Vlachou and Barton (1994:107) aver that teachers are often forced to cope with the difficult situations they come across.

Rademacher, Wilhelm, Hildreth, Bridges and Cowart (1998:154) state that a lack of support exists for the general education teacher. Teachers need the time and the psychological space to re-examine their general understanding of teaching and learning. They may need support in order to be able to focus on the positive rather than the negative aspects of change. They further stress that teachers may need training in how to identify and address special educational needs. They need to develop a critical understanding of common stereotypes and prejudices related to disability and reflect on how these have influenced their own attitudes. Teachers need to be part of managing the change process rather than simply the recipients of new instructions.

According to Fields (1993:14), rural teachers for example, are expected to facilitate inclusion in the form of outcomes-based education (OBE) without access to the same level of support experienced by colleagues in large and less remote schools. The provision of advisory, consultative, and direct support services are either unavailable to remote schools or are so "infrequent as not to have any meaningful impact" as further emphasized by Field (1993:14).

Although there seems to be a lack of support, Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996:72) are of the opinion that support to teachers is vital. Teachers need systematic, intensive training, either as part of their certificate programme, as intensive and well-planned in-service, or as an ongoing process with consultants (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996:72). However, these authors state that there seems to be a lack of support. Lack of formal training in special needs and dealing with diversity should be addressed in pre-service training. Training should also acknowledge the specific needs for teachers. An important function of the Education Support Service is to act as a source of help and advice on how to address individual disabilities and difficulties in learning. This

support is most likely to take place through the establishment of Teacher Support Teams (TST) in school (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1997:240). Teachers' training will need to redress the previous educational disadvantage shown by excluding children with special needs and will need to prepare teachers to be able to cope with the changing role of teachers (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:7).

Training programmes could typically consist of seminars and conferences where teachers can gather more information (Knoff, 1985:419).

According to Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997:210) it is possible that teachers will be more positive towards inclusion after they have become more experienced and familiar with these practices. If schools can become engaged with students and if teachers have the necessary training and support, all students may ultimately be better served (Pearman, Barnhart, Huang & Mellblom, 1992:177).

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the context of the above, this study will focus on the following research problem:

What are the needs of teachers towards support to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education in the Limpopo Province of South Africa?

1.3   AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this study is two-fold:

- To provide information to teachers in the implementation of inclusive education at a school in the Limpopo Province; and

- To evaluate the need for support in the implementation of inclusive education at a school in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

1.4   RATIONALE AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

I was motivated to do this study on inclusive education because of its relevance in the Limpopo Province where many learners with special educational needs do not have access to any education. I was also motivated to do this study to help teachers to support each other. I found that many teachers are not capable of teaching learners

with Special Education Needs (LSEN). Therefore, I decided upon this study in order to support them, as I have some knowledge about Learners with Special Educational Needs.

1.5   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework, which forms part of the research design for this study, focuses on the social context of the participants. It relates to Eloff, Engelbrecht and Swart's (2002:72) understanding of a meta-approach in order to understand the realities of education in South Africa by including the social context and wider political and ethical efforts into the education arena.

Inclusion is more than the physical placement of learners with disabilities in mainstream classes. Furthermore, inclusion is the creation of a learning environment that will cater to the needs of all learners in the classroom (Eloff, Engelbrecht & Swart, 2002:79). Dyson (2001:1) however, identifies inclusion as placement, education-for-all, participation and social inclusion. In South Africa inclusive education has been a human rights issue on the road to creating a non-discriminating society.

1.5.1   Research methodology: case study

1.5.1.1   Research Methodology

This study was conducted by means of a case study. The purpose of this case study was to inform support programmes for teachers. It was necessary to understand the problems of teachers in a school situation.

The presentation and interpretation of the data

- **Aim**

The aim of the study was to identify the need for a support programme for primary school teachers from the Vuwani area in the Limpopo Province of South Africa with regard to inclusive education.

- **Literature Review**

A literature study was undertaken to explore the possible existing support programmes for Primary School teachers of the Vuwani Area in the Limpopo Province with regard to inclusive education. I have included a to illustrate the subject area and my understanding of the research problem (Silverman, 2000:126).

- **Participants**

The target population included primary school teachers under Region 3 from the Vuwani Area in the Limpopo Province.

A sample of 20 participants served as representation of the target population in the schools of the Limpopo Province under Region 3 in Vuwani Area. The sample population was selected by means of a non-probability sampling in the form of purposive sampling. According to Mouton (2001:166) it is necessary to select a sample on the basis of one's own knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of one's research aims. My sample was based on my judgement and the purpose of my study.

1.6   DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPTS

I conducted this study in special needs education to eventually support teachers in need of a support programme in order to implement inclusive education effectively in the Vuwani area in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. It is hoped that by empowering these teachers I will ultimately contribute to improving education practice in general.

1.6.1   Inclusive education

According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:19) inclusive education can be defined as a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners. Inclusion is defined as a shared value which promotes a single system of education dedicated to ensuring effective education for all citizens in an inclusive, changing and diverse society. Inclusion contradicts the practice of sending students somewhere else, in order to meet their needs. Donald *et al.* (1997:235) say that inclusion means that children with special needs should be educated together with others in the mainstream

wherever possible and with appropriate support. The Government Draft Education White Paper 6 (2001:17) stated that inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities and that it is also about supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met.

1.6.2   Support

According to the Collins Dictionary (1978:756), to support means to give courage or faith to; to help or to comfort. In my study, I decided upon a Teacher Support Team (TST) where teachers would support each other. Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (1999:129) state that through support, teachers make learning easier for learners by providing them with special material and special attention.

Hornby (2000:1204) further emphasized that "to support is to help or encourage somebody by showing that you agree with them. To support is to give or be ready to give help to somebody if they need it." I was motivated to do this study to help teachers to support each other

1.6.3   Programme

A programme is a sequence of operations to be performed in solving a problem, a plan or procedure (Collins, 1978:598).

1.6.4   Support programme

According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997:241) a support programme acts as a source of help and advice on how to address individual disabilities and difficulties in learning. These programmes are designed to help teachers with their problems to inclusive education.

1.6.5   Primary School

According to Hornby (2000:294) a primary school is a school for children between the ages of five and 11.

1.6.6　Educator

An educator is a teacher who teaches children in a school situation. An educator is anyone who educates learners in a school and whose duty is therefore to teach or educate people (Hornby, 2000:371).

1.7　STUDY PROGRAMME

In chapter two, which is introduced by sketching the past educational situation in South Africa, the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa will be discussed.

The chapter also deals with the three eras of South Africa's education system. The attitudes of educators towards inclusive education and the implementation of inclusive education within the context of the new policy were also highlighted.

In chapter three support programmes are described. The Teacher Support Team as a support programme is also discussed.

In chapter four the research methodology of this study is discussed. The context and sample selection of the study are explained. Issues such as the methods used for data collection and data analysis are discussed.

Chapter five consists of a discussion of the implementation of the study. This chapter includes information and guidelines for teachers in the implementation of inclusive education.

In chapter six the findings of the study are presented. Reflection on this study and recommendations for future research are also shared in this chapter.

1.8　SUMMARY

In this chapter, I introduced the study. The problem statement and aim of the study were discussed and I motivated the relevancy of my study. A brief overview of the research methodology used for this study was also discussed.

In chapter two a literature review on the implementation of inclusion in South Africa is presented.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of a literature review on the implementation of inclusion in South Africa. In chapter one it was indicated that educators show both negative and positive attitudes towards inclusive education in South African schools and that educators need support to facilitate positive change in their attitudes toward inclusion in South Africa. Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:157) emphasise that support is crucial for teachers as they feel that they do not have enough training in order to meet the many challenges they come across. It is important to take note that by the time this research report was complete, the policy documents used in the literature review were outdated, but due to time constraints it was not possible to include the latest documents in this study.

This chapter is structured as follows:

- South Africa's education system

- Attitudes of educators towards inclusive education

- The implementation of inclusive education within the context of the new policy.

2.2   THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

The era of apartheid education, the era of educational reformism and the democratic era will be discussed in this section.

2.2.1   The era of apartheid education (1948-1976)

Decker and Van Schalkwyk (1989:456) state that the National Party came into power in 1948 and introduced apartheid education, a system according to which racial group was to have a separate education system. In white education, the curriculum acquired a Christian National orientation, while Afrikaans and English schools were largely separated. The so-called Bantu Education became the responsibility of the Department of Native Affairs in terms of the Bantu Education Act of 1953. Decker and Van Schalkwyk (1989:456) point out that education was viewed as part of a plan of social development and as essential to the success of the policy of apartheid.

According to Steyn (Decker & Lemmer, 1994:373) the policy of separate education was vigorously implemented after 1948 through various Education Acts. Provision was been made for five state departments of education, each with its own director:

- The Department of National Education – for general education policy

- The Department of Education and Training – for blacks

- The Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Assembly – for whites

- The Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Representatives – for coloureds

- The Department of Education and Culture, Administration: House of Delegates – for Indians.

Five education departments functioned in the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, the Cape Province and Natal. Although education in South Africa was meant to be separate, education as it existed did not offer equal opportunities to all South Africans. Inequalities were evident in the provision and distribution of various resources such as financial resources, and allocation of physical resources. The nature of learner-teacher ratios, high dropout rates among disadvantaged groups, poor quality of education and problems of access in education were also evident (Decker & Lemmer, 1994:50).

Squelch (Decker & Lemmer, 1994:51) further assert that inferior qualifications of black educators, overcrowded classrooms, understaffed schools and equipment shortages all contributed to growing inequalities. These factors could then limit the post-school opportunities for blacks. Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen (1996:314) also stress that there was a great shortage of fully trained-teachers and classrooms which resulted in overcrowded conditions. Physical amenities and resources were therefore inadequate.

According to Decker and Van Schalkwyk (1989:457) education during this era was perceived as being unequal, and resistance to it gradually escalated, culminating in the Soweto uprising in 1976 which led to the era of educational reformism.

2.2.2   The era of educational reformism (1976-1994)

Decker and Van Schalkwyk (1989:457) declare that "the Soweto schools uprising of 1976 was sparked by a ruling that Afrikaans should be given equal use together with English as the medium of instruction in African schools. The riots, which led to the deaths of more than 700 people, most of whom were learners, signalled a fundamental challenge to apartheid education and gave rise to an era of resistance unparalleled in the country's troubled history". Education was so seriously disrupted during this period that a whole generation of marginalised youth was created. The slogan "Liberation before education!" exhorted learners to obtain freedom first, and educational institutions became hotbeds of political activity (Decker & Van Schalkwyk, 1989:457).

Decker and Van Schalkwyk (1989:457) further indicate that the government responded by launching reform initiatives, such as providing more educational opportunities for Africans, phasing out disparities in financing, reforming the curriculum and training more qualified African educators.

Decker and Lemmer (1974:373) indicate that "these reforms were based on the philosophy of "separate but equal" and were not primarily aimed at transforming apartheid education. Internal resistance and external pressure, which gave rise to a series of states of emergency in the 1980's, eventually led to the crumbling of the apartheid order and to the democratization of the country". Within this context

Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen (1996:74) stress that the general curriculum needs to be transformed in order to include inclusion education.

2.2.3   The democratic era

According to Decker and Van Schalkwyk (1989:457) the democratic era commenced with the democratic election of April 1994 when a non-racial education system based on equality was instituted. The Minister of Education at that time, was Dr Sibusiso Bengu, introduced Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) which is relevant to Curriculum 2005.

Isaacman (1996:6) states that the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) is part of a new approach to education and training, which provides opportunities for learners to learn regardless of their age, circumstances, or the level of education and training. The Government Education White Paper 6 (2001:11) emphasizes that in building our education and training system, the South African constitution provides a special challenge by requiring that we give effect to the fundamental right to basic education for all South Africans. It states that everyone has the right to basic education, including basic education as set out in section 29 (1). Yet, changing the structure of education and training by introducing the NQF may not be enough to bring about the necessary transformation in education. In order to move from a system that teaches the content of a syllabus at the expense of skills, requires an entirely new approach to learning. Outcomes-Based Education may facilitate this process. Hornby (1999:2) argues that OBE shifts the emphasis from the educators to the learners. Where previously an educator was expected to ensure that students/pupils knew the contents of a syllabus, in OBE educators facilitate or guide learners to achieve outcomes, which incorporate knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes, and values.

According to Spady (1998:24) OBE means focusing and organising an education system around what is essential for all students to be able to succeed at the end of their learning experiences. Isaacman avers that outcomes are clear learning results that we want students to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences. Outcomes are actions and performances that reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas, and tools successfully. An outcome is anything that you can show that you know and can do (Isaacman, 1996:12).

Curriculum 2005 supports a professional approach to teaching. Educators are not restricted by a rigid syllabus that divides learning into sections that must be completed within a certain time. Instead, critical and specific outcomes provide long-term goals. Learning programmes are flexible and provide levels of competence. It is left to the educator to decide how and when learners should attempt different activities (Spady, 1998:24).

Government Education White Paper 6 (2001:20) indicates that the most important way of addressing barriers arising from the curriculum is to make sure that the process of learning and teaching is flexible enough to accommodate different learning needs and styles. It further stresses that the curriculum must be made more flexible across all bands of education so that it is accessible to all learners, irrespective of their learning.

Learning areas were changed from eight to six by incorporating two areas in six learning areas. There are seven critical outcomes. These outcomes were designed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and apply to all the learning areas. Learners should be able to successfully demonstrate their ability to:

- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral, written and/or presentation work;

- Identify and solve problems by using creative and critical thinking;

- Organise and manage themselves and their activities responsibly and effectively;

- Work effectively with others in a team, group, organization and community;

- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information;

- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others;

- Understand that the world is a set of related systems. This means that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation (Tiley & Goldstein, 1997:16).

Government Education White Paper 6 (2001:17) makes it clear that inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevents it from meeting the full range of learning needs. It stresses that inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities. Spady (1998:26) emphasizes that OBE is based on three key assumptions:

- All students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way.

- Successful learning promotes even more successful learning.

- Schools control the conditions that directly affect successful school learning.

In outcomes-based learning, what a learner understands, and his/her ability to use and transfer his/her knowledge, skill and understanding to different situations is important. Learners will be assessed on what they understand and what they can do, and receive the necessary credits. Previous learning experience may also be assessed and recognised, which could be very important for adult learners. This is called recognition of prior learning, as supported by Isaacman (1996:12).

Further emphasize that specific outcomes are the exact skills and information required in a particular situation or context (Isaacman, 1996:11). Specific outcomes are special skills, knowledge, attitudes, and understanding in a particular context, like a job or a school subject, or broader areas of experience, like community development (Isaacman, 1996:4).

I have found that OBE is similar to education for all as all people have different skills and prior knowledge. The Draft Education White Paper 6 (2001:6) says inclusive education allows education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all the learners.

2.2.3.1 *International transformation/movement Inclusive Education*

Burden, Gericke and Smit (1997:13) state that Education for All is part of the field of study of Special Educational Needs and is based on the latest international and national trends with regard to learners with special educational needs, viz. that ordinary schools should provide for all learners and also for those with special needs. Normal or mainstream education should therefore be an education for all. According

to Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen (1996:34) the term *integration* refers to the admission of the four racial groups into the same schools, and on the other hand, to the mainstreaming of children with special educational needs, that is the inclusion of all children into a unitary public education system.

According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:19) inclusive education can be defined as a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners. Schools should accommodate all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted learners, out of school youth and working learners, learners from remote or nomadic populations, learners from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and learners from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups (UNESCO, 1994:59).

At the 1990 World Conference of Education for all, held in Thailand, much emphasis was placed on inclusive education. The driving force for inclusive education was realised in the resolution that became to be known as the Salamanca Statement. On Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education, 92 countries and 25 international organizations endorsed this statement. The message was clearly articulated and supported by UNESCO (1994:9).

The delegates of the World Conference on Special Needs Education declared positively their commitment to Education for All, by recognising the necessity and urgency of providing education for children, youth and adults with special education needs within the regular education system, and further thereby endorsed the Framework of Action on Special needs Education, that governments and organizations may be guided by the spirit of its provisions and recommendations (UNESCO, 1994).

The resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 4 March 1994 (UN, 1994:15) also confirms this when it says,

> Education in mainstream schools presupposes the provision of interpreter and other appropriate support services. Adequate accessibility and support services designed to meet the needs of persons with different disabilities, should be provided.

At a national level, major changes were taking place as a result of the new democracy in South Africa. The South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD) called for the development of a single inclusive education system for South Africa. The central theme of the statement was clear (SAFCD, 1995:1):

> Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) have a right to an equal approach to education at all levels in a single inclusive education system that is answering to the different needs of all learners, ready to help/adjusting both different styles and rates of learning, as well as different languages, and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, technical strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities.

2.2.3.2   Transformation in Education in South Africa

With regard to education, the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996:16) is inclusive: Every person shall have the right to basic education and to equal access to educational institutions.

The Government Draft Education White Paper 5 (March 2000:6) asserted the following points.

> Our Constitution founded our democratic state and common citizenship on the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms (Section 1(a)). These values summon all of us to take up the responsibility and challenge of building a human and caring society not for the few but for all South Africans. In establishing an education and training system for the 21st century, we carry special responsibility to implement these values and to ensure that all learners, with and without disabilities, pursue their learning potential to the fullest.

Furthermore, the Government Draft Education White Paper 6 (2001:16) provides the framework within which education must be offered in this country. These include the following:

- the basic right to education, irrespective to race, class, gender religion or age

- open access to education the elimination of existing equalities in education

- a unitary educational system the total development of all pupils, including their academic and occupational development, as well as the meeting of their broad, psychological health and social needs.

All state and state-supported schools for LSEN will become public schools (White Paper 2, 1996: 2-10).

In building our education and training system, our Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) places a special burden on us by requiring that we give effect to the fundamental right to basic education for all South Africans. In Section 29(1), it commits us to this fundamental right, viz. "that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education, and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible".

This fundamental right to basic education is further developed in the Constitution in Section 9(2), which commits the state to the achievement of equality, and Section 9(3), (4) and (5), which commit the state to non-discrimination. These clauses are particularly important for protecting all learners whether disabled or not.

The government's obligation to provide basic education to all learners and its commitment to the central principles of the Constitution is also guided by the recognition that a new unified education and training system must be based on equity, on redressing past imbalances and on a progressive raising of the quality of education and training as stated in the Government White Paper 2 (1996:210).

The White Paper outlines how the education and training system must change to contribute to establishing a caring and humane society, to accommodate the full range of learning needs and the mechanisms that should be put in place.

The Government White Paper on Education (March 2000:15) emphasizes that the strengthening of education support services will reduce barriers to learning: "The Ministry believes that the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and training lies in a strengthened education support service."

The new tightened educational support service would have district-based support teams at its centre that include staff from provincial district, regional offices and from

special schools. The primary function of these district support teams would be to evaluate programmes, diagnose their strengths, and propose changes. Through supporting teaching, learning and management they would build the capacity of schools, early childhood and adult basic education and training centres, colleges and higher education institutions to identify and address serious learning difficulties and to accommodate a range of learning needs.

The Government White Paper on Education (March 2000:15) further states that:

> at institutional level, in general, further and higher education, we shall require institutions to establish institution-level support teams. The primary function of these teams will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support services. These services will support the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, educator, and institutional needs.

Where appropriate, these teams should be strengthened by expertise from the local community, district support teams and higher education institutions. District support teams will provide the full range of education support services such as professional development in curriculum and assessment to these institution-level support teams.

In collaboration with the Education Labour Relation Council, the Ministry would investigate how, within the principles of the post provisioning model, designated posts can be created in all or designated schools. Staff appointed in these posts can, as members of the district support team develop and co-ordinate school-based support for all educators (White Paper, March 2000:15).

It is further emphasised that the Ministry recognises that the success of our approach to prevent barriers to learning and the provision for the full range of different learning needs lies with our education managers and educator framework. Accordingly, and in collaboration with our provincial departments of education, the Ministry would, through the district teams, provide access for learners, suitable pre-service and in-service education and training and professional support services. The Ministry would also ensure that the norms and standards for the education and training of teachers, trainers and other development practitioners include the prevention of direct obstruction to learning and supply resources for the development of specialised

support such as life-skill, counselling and learning support (White Paper, March 2000:16).

The Department of Education would help provincial education departments to develop effective management information systems, financial management and curriculum development, and assessment structures. The core responsibilities of the provincial departments of education are to build institutional capability and to manage the introduction of the inclusive education and training system. As provided for in the Constitution, the Minister of Education would, on the principles of co-operative government, determine national policy, norms and standards for establishing the inclusive education and training system, and would together with the nine members of the Provincial Executive Councils responsible for education, oversee the starting of the foundations of the inclusive education and training system (White Paper, March 2000:16).

According to the Government Notice No. 16874 (DNE, 1995:2), the general terms of reference of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) were to advise the Minister of Education on the following matters:

- The training of personnel for specialised education and education support services; and;

- The implications of the policy of mainstreaming for general education and strategies for marketing the policy to communities.

This new policy of equal rights to education as stated by the Minister of Education, Prof Kader Asmal, in his policy document, entitled Tirisano, emphasized that the interest of children come first. Prof Asmal stressed the importance of OBE throughout.

In my view, OBE is already being practised in all schools in South Africa by all grades. Secondary schools have in fact already started implementing OBE. I assume that OBE is also similar to inclusive education as OBE emphasizes an outcome that is anything that you can show that you know and can do. In inclusive education, all children are included in the mainstream, irrespective of their disabilities. Inclusive

education emphasizes individual teaching and group work. According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:109) OBE focuses on intended "outputs" instead of traditional "teacher inputs".

In my opinion, OBE facilitates inclusive education. Teachers therefore need to shift from teacher-centred to a new learner-centred approach. Teachers should be encouraged to include learners with disabilities in their classes as the government has already stated in the White Paper 5 of March 2000 that special schools will be changed to resource centres where teachers would go to seek guidance and advice about the method of educating LSEN, as "many may initially resist the notion of inclusion" (Engelbrecht *et al.,* 1999:71).

Moreover, inclusive education will be implemented by using collaborative teaching where teachers will collaborate with other teachers, parents and learners. Teachers will work in teacher support teams (TST) to help each other with information about the learner. They will form clusters to help one another.

Continuous assessment is the cornerstone of assessing OBE and inclusive education. Teachers assess the learner in the classroom as well as outside the classroom. Tiley and Goldstein (1997:9) emphasize that learners should be assessed in different ways - by the teacher, by other teachers who work with the class, and even through peer- and self-assessment. Learners should be assessed in a wide variety of circumstances when they arrive at school and when they leave in the classroom, while playing sport, eating lunch, in the playground and the toilet, while working alone, and in-groups. All these situations help the teacher to write a comprehensive profile of each child. This is called continuous assessment.

Garson (2000:4) in reporting what was said by Prof Kader Asmal, emphasized that teachers need more in-service training in their respective area of specialisation in order to be good evaluators to ensure that the outcomes of Curriculum 2005 are understood and implemented.

Russel (1998:11) supports Garson (2001:4) in indicating that it is morally wrong to introduce OBE when the basic and fundamental needs of primary education are so sorely lacking. Who will be responsible for its failure in the thousands of township

and rural schools in our country? Therefore in-service training needs to be done thoroughly in future.

All the above-mentioned will help the teacher to implement inclusive education successfully in South Africa.

2.3   ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Swart, Eloff, Engelbrecht, Pettipher, Oswald, Ackermann and Prozesky (2002:30) describe an attitude as something which comes from within a particular person. It shows different aspects of one's social or physical world. They further assert that attitudes show past experience, mould recent behaviour and provide vital functions for those who hold them.

According to the literature educators have varying attitudes towards inclusive education. Waldron (1992:10) indicates that educators with positive attitudes show the following qualities:

- They usually feel that many of their needs for professional competency and success are being met through their job situation. Colleagues and administrators treat them with respect and their work is considered important within the school and district.

- They feel that their colleagues in regular education support their work and are receptive to programmes for students with learning disabilities.

- They feel trained to do their job.

- They have fulfilling personal lives outside the school.

- They come to school satisfied with themselves, their personal lives, and importantly, their jobs.

In contrast, negative teachers experience the following concerning inclusive education (Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2001:214):

- They have inadequate knowledge, skills and need more training in order to implement inclusion effectively.

- They experience a lack of educational and teacher support.

- They feel that there is an inadequate provision of facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices.

It appears that few teachers have made the paradigm shift towards inclusion. Positive educators are the best to practise inclusive education, as it needs competent educators to meet learners' needs.

Problems and shortcomings experienced by educators are discussed in the following sections (2.3.1 – 2.3.7):

2.3.1 Resistance to change

As explained by Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:70) it is generally accepted that

> change is challenging and may be perceived as either a threat or an opportunity. Educators in South African schools are currently being expected to make major changes in the way they understand teaching and learning in the process of adapting to an entirely new curriculum.

According to McLeskey, Waldron, So, Swanson and Loveland (2001:108) teachers are not highly supportive of inclusion, and they are frequently greatly opposed to the changes used to implement inclusive school programmes. In addition, the majority of teachers often have strong, negative feelings about inclusion and feel that decision-makers are out of touch with classroom realities. This is supported by Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000:277).

In my opinion, educators with little experience of people with disabilities are likely to have negative attitudes towards inclusion. These educators need more experience in order to change their attitudes. They need training in how to identify and address learners with special educational needs. According to Kochhar, West and Taymans (2000:19) teachers feel unprepared. Many mainstream education teachers are fearful and feel unprepared to work with learners with educational needs in the mainstream.

Others fear inclusion because they have no knowledge of it. They resist the change can continue teaching along the old teacher-centred lines. Individual and group work teaching are still not practised. Even inside their classrooms, pupils still sit in straight

rows and not in groups. Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:70) stress that "teachers need the time and the psychological space to re-examine their general understanding of teaching and learning".

Furthermore, these teachers still have a stereotyped way of thinking and teaching. They don't want to change, even when the government wants them to change in their practice and thinking. Real change requires a long-term commitment to professional development. There is overwhelming evidence that teachers are important role-players in showing the quality of inclusion (Swart *et al.*, 2002:26) as they can play an important part in transforming schools. On the other hand, negative teachers may cause that no change occurs at all.

2.3.2 Lack of training

Edulaw (1998:7) indicates that inclusive classes are far more demanding and challenging, and they require committed educators who have the necessary skills and expert knowledge to provide appropriate teaching and learning experiences for all students. Educators with no training and/or experience in special education will find it difficult to cater for students with special needs.

For the purpose of this research it is argued that a teacher does not only need knowledge and skill, but also needs positive motivation as stated by Schechtman and Or (1996:137). A second relationship between attitudes and behaviour is therefore assumed as an important link. Therefore, lack of training could lead to a negative self-concept among educators. Poor training causes them to fear the unknown or to fear that they might lose their jobs, like the special school educators. These educators are not competent in their work. Most of them seem to be discouraged and they don't want to learn new things. I assume that they don't want to venture into new territory.

Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:70) maintain that "teachers may need support in order to be able to focus on the positive rather than the negative aspects of changes". Educators may be stuck in the old methods of teaching because they feel inferior. They don't bother to ask others who are knowledgeable to help them. They are unable to work in a team in order to help each other.

In the light of the above, the need for further training and continuous learning is clear. However, it shows that the existing in-service training does not always meet teachers' needs.

2.3.3   Inadequate knowledge, skills and training of teachers to implement inclusive education effectively

Swart *et al.* (2000:4-5) emphasize that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to address variety and teach students with special educational needs. It appears that they feel they are unable to manage variety. This often causes feelings of fear and hopelessness.

Furthermore, Swart *et al.* (2000:4-5) state that "misunderstandings and misperceptions of the concept inclusion appear to also limit teachers' successful implementation of inclusive education". Some teachers have stated that they possess no knowledge of official policy documents. However, limited knowledge of inclusive education was obtained from newspapers, pamphlets, educational programmes and informal discussions.

In light of the above, there seems to be a substantial need for further training and ongoing learning. However, it appears that the present system of in-service training does not always meet the teachers' needs. A negative attitude seems to exist towards in-service training.

In their study Swart *et al.* (2000:5) indicate that teachers expressed concerns about the relationship between outcomes-based education and inclusion and adapting the curriculum to satisfy the student with special educational needs. Donald *et al.* (1997:240) assert that interaction with Education Support Services personnel and actively requesting advice from workshops and in-service training will help in accommodating all children.

Educators may not be aware of inclusive education in their school as stated by Edulaw (1998:7). It states that

> advocates of inclusion argue that students with special needs improve their academic performance and social interaction in inclusive environments. While the human rights argument for inclusive

education is compelling, it is equally relevant to argue that if inclusive education is not implemented properly, the rights of students with special needs cannot be achieved in inclusive settings. Advocates of full inclusion argue that disabled children oppressed are loaded with an additional handicap when they are isolated from their nondisabled peers because they are refused the chance to develop the social and academic skills necessary to function in mainstream society.

According to Donald *et al.* (1997:239) educators who are positively motivated cope with unequal competition and a drop in standards. I assume that these educators can cope with any situation they encounter.

Educators without sufficient knowledge will not teach or educate learners effectively in their classrooms. In terms of their approach to teaching, they are in a rut and they stick to one method of teaching because they don't want to discover new things. They easily become bored with their work. Their learners irritate them and they show poor judgement when conflict situations occur. Donald *et al.* (1997:239) points out that educators with negative attitudes have a fear of not coping, suffer from work overload and experience a lack of training in special needs.

Petty and Saddler (1996:15) in Swart *et al.* (2002:18) refer to many studies showing the importance of teachers' attitudes for successful inclusion. They further maintain that a school's philosophy and the attitude of staff are important. They also emphasize that an understanding of teachers' perspectives and their attitudes towards inclusion and the changes in needs is important to the management and accomplishment of meaningful transformation in South African education.

2.3.4 Lack of consultation

Collaborative consultation is based on people working together to select and provide the most effective combination of expertise and a sense of "shared ownership" in a successful outcome (Waldron, 1992:105).

2.3.5 Inadequate provision of facilities, infrastructures and assertive devices

According to Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher (2000:6) the successful accommodation of students with special educational needs requires the necessary facilities, infrastructures and assertive devices, which they are of the opinion, presently lacking. At present basic services and resources, such as water, electricity

and toilet facilities are lacking. Another factor that has a negative impact is an unsafe and inaccessible built environment. These factors are directly related to poverty and unemployment.

According to White Paper 6 (2001:6) "the physical environment of most ordinary schools and learning settings is not barrier-free and even where this is the case, accessibility has not been planned".

2.3.6   Lack of governance

Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2000:5) emphasise that too often change in education has failed because not enough attention had been given to the current practices and needs of those who are expected to put it into effect. It shows that the empowerment of teachers is once again neglected in the South African policy on inclusive education. When implementing new policy, the teachers-pupil ratio and needs of insufficiently-trained teachers in South Africa deserve serious consideration when compared to those of developed countries (Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2000:6).

Beveridge (1995:108) recommends that the advisory educators would work with groups of schools, giving support on the identification of special educational needs and on appropriate methods to meet those needs, as well as providing advice on links with other professionals. That means those teachers with more knowledge (advisory or key teachers) will work with teachers from other schools who in they will be gaining support and skills in order to help others.

2.3.7   Lack of educational and teacher support

According to the Government Education Draft White Paper 6 (2001:7) inappropriate and inadequate support services may arise from different learning needs. A theme that relates strongly to insufficient and inadequate training is the perceived lack of educational and teacher support. Teachers have expressed the need for teacher support teams and support services to assist them with the students. Closely related to this is their acknowledgement of the importance of collaborative partnerships on implementing inclusive education. For this to be a reality, teachers require skills in collaboration that they presently perceive not to possess and use as stated by the researcher.

Swart, Engelbrecht and Eloff (2000:5) state that teachers with a negative attitude towards inclusive education show that they liked the present system of special education services and wanted it to continue. The teachers who possess a more positive attitude towards inclusive education and working together, identify teacher education and teacher support services as important for the effective use of inclusive education. However, support to these teachers remains limited to expert opinion and not necessarily collaboration (Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2000:5).

Idol (1993:275) stresses that in the in-service education literature there is also substantial support for using educators to instruct other educators. Research indicates that school-based and college-based in-service programmes were equally successful in improving educators' knowledge, but school-based programmes were slightly more successful in improving teaching skills.

According to Donald *et al.* (1997:239) support programmes will help all teachers equally, because they will be well equipped with knowledge and they will know what to do in their different classrooms. The acquired knowledge and skills will help them to teach with confidence. Those who are positively motivated will be free to work with LSEN. Such educators feel very proud of their work and they enjoy working with these learners. They want to venture into the world and they welcome any change they encounter. These educators feel positive about themselves and about their learners. They can share their knowledge with others and they are willing to accept any challenges they come across unlike those who are negatively motivated. Donald *et al.* (1997:239) stress the fact that positively motivated teachers cope with any competition and changes they come across.

Therefore I assume that those educators with a negative attitude towards inclusive education will show resistance to change. Those who resist change are the ones who lack knowledge and fear the unknown. Educators with negative attitudes fear that they will not cope and they are insecure because they lack the necessary skills (Donald *et al.*, 1997:239).

It is found that negative teachers don't want to venture into new things. They need more time to adjust to change. They are the ones who most need support programmes which should be conducted in the form of continuous in-service training, workshops,

seminars, collaborative work and team work, e.g. a teachers' support team. According to Swart *et al.* (2002:31) practising teachers are the way to the implementation of an inclusive system and they will need time, continuous support and in-service training.

It can therefore be assumed that educators who participate in support programmes will show a change of attitude towards inclusive education. They will become positively motivated, their performance will improve and they will be more knowledgeable on inclusive education.

An outcomes-based approach has the flexibility to accommodate inclusive practices. Many educators may initially resist the notion of inclusion without any support programmes. In outcomes-based learning, what you understand, and your ability to use and transfer your knowledge, skills, and understanding in different situations is important just as it is in inclusive education. Learners are assessed on what they understand and what they can do, and receive the necessary credits. Professionals know that skills, approaches, and knowledge change, but "They keep up to date by reading, discussing, debating and challenging all the test information about their work. They put the needs and interests of the learner first" (Teley & Goldstein, 1997:4).

Giangreco (1997:196) confirms that it is not unusual for educators to describe their initial reactions to inclusion with terms like "scared," "nervous," fearful," "angry," and "worried." They need support in order to change these reactions. Many such educators have volunteered to have the student with disability in the classroom but the teaching assistant will really be the person who is responsible for teaching the student. Although this is a general phenomenon, it is filled with difficulties and few successes.

> Teachers who transformed their approach to their students with disabilities recognised their lack of ownership for the child's education and then took actions to assume that ownership and responsibility. This often started with simply getting to know the student as a person, talking with them, playing with them, and teaching them (Giangreco, 1997:197).

2.4 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW POLICY

According to Hay *et al.* (2001:213) the development of inclusive classrooms is the strongest starting point from the human rights point of view issued in the education, if seen in global perspective. The Government White Paper 6 (2001:17) shows that different learning needs may arise because of:

- Negative attitudes to and stereotyping of differences

- An inflexible curriculum

- Inappropriate languages or language of learning and teaching

- Inappropriate communication

- Inaccessible and unsafe built environments

- Inappropriate and inadequate support services

- Inadequate policies and legislation

- The non-recognition and non-involvement of parents

- Inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and educators.

According to the White Paper 6 (2001:15), in an inclusive education system a wider spread of educational support services will be created in line with what learners with disabilities require. Therefore learners who need low-intensity support will receive this in ordinary schools and those needing moderate support will get this in a full service school, while special schools will support those learners who need high-intensity educational support. Transformation and change must therefore focus on the full range of education and training services (White Paper 6, 2001:26). It is further specified that "special schools and settings will be converted to resource centres and integrated into district support teams so that they can provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighbourhood schools" (Government Education White Paper 6, 2002:29).

Specifically admission policies will be changed in order that learners who can be included outside of special schools and specialised settings can be accommodated within designated full-service or other schools settings. Simultaneously, the Ministry will collaborate with the Ministries of Health and Social Development to design and implement early identification, assessment and education programmes for learners with disabilities in the age group 0-9 years (White Paper 6, 2001:27).

The new policy as set out in the Government Education White Paper 6 (2001:24) confirmed that every South African would have the fundamental right to basic education and to equal access to educational institutions without discrimination. However, this fundamental right to basic education is further developed in section 9(2) of the Constitution, which commits the state to the achievement of equality, and in section 9(3), (4) and (5), which commits the state to non-discrimination. These clauses are particularly important for protecting all learners, whether disabled or not (White Paper 6, 2001:11).

2.5   CONCLUSION

Although studies continue to show that educators are interested in becoming involved in their learners' schooling, some may fail to be actively involved, due to the lack of knowledge and skills. Therefore it is necessary for the educators to undergo some training in order to be equipped with knowledge and skills on how to become involved in their learners' education. The training can be in the form of seminars, clusters, workshops, and in-service training.

CHAPTER 3

A SUPPORT PROGRAMME
FOR TEACHERS

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I indicated the three eras, namely the era of apartheid education (1948-1976), the era of educational reformism (1976-1994), and the democratic era, which started after the April 1994 election. I also mentioned the attitudes of educators towards the implementation of inclusive education, which leads to the support programme.

In this chapter a support programme for educators will be discussed. This programme could facilitate support for educators towards dealing with challenges in inclusive education. In Limpopo Province, teachers are supported by means of workshops and clusters where they can help each other in accepting new challenges that they encounter.

3.2   WHAT IS A SUPPORT PROGRAMME?

To support means to help or to strengthen (Hornby, 1974:869). According to Hornby (1974:666) a programme is a plan of what is to be done. Therefore, a support programme is a plan used to help or strengthen educators to do their work more effectively.

Kochhar, West and Taymans (2000:1102) emphasize that support in this context is special services that are rendered to teachers and students with disabilities, beyond their educational programme. McCotter (2001:693) sees support as the way in which people (teachers) encourage and assist each other.

According to Collins (1978:756) "to support means to give courage or faith to; help or comfort". The Collins Dictionary (1978:598) defines a program *(sic)* as a plan or procedure. A programme includes all the activities offered at a camp or school.

I assume that a support programme is devised to help educators with their problems in inclusive education. A support programme is an aid for educators to help them to transform to new changes in education. Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:159) state that teacher support teams focus on empowering teachers to develop preventative and promotive strategies.

Following is a description of a support programme, namely the Teacher Support Team.

3.3   TEACHER SUPPORT TEAM (TST)

Kochhar *et al.* (2000:111) suggest that a Teacher Support Team is a circle of friends in an action planning team. It is a form of group support. In my view a Teacher Support Team (TST) is a group of teachers working together in order to tackle a particular problem together by sharing ideas and helping each other.

In the second Draft of the Department of Education (2002:116) a TST is described as an "internal" support team within institutions like early childhood centres, schools, colleges, adult learning centres and higher education institutions.

According to Chalfant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989:50) "a Teacher Support Team is a school-based problem-solving unit used to assist teachers in generating intervention strategies". Hall, Campher, Smit, Oswald and Engelbrecht (1999:21) support Chalfant and Van Dusen Pysh by they maintaining that a TST focuses on empowering teachers to develop preventative and promotive strategies within in the health-promoting school framework. A TST will help educators to overcome the problems they encounter when educating learners. Through consultation teachers are empowered to succeed in the classroom.

According to Campher (1997:49) a TST can be described as a group of people, each of whom has special expertise; each of whom is responsible for making particular decisions; who together hold a common purpose; who meet together to talk, and

strengthen knowledge, from which plans are made, actions directed and future decisions influenced.

Daniels (2000:174) states that teachers can collaborate and support one another in many different ways, both formally and informally, within the classroom and outside it.

Daniels (2000:174) also sees a TST as a form of intervention which needs to rectify the socio-cultural schooling setting through the development of a culture of collaborative peer problem-solving. In this way, TST's aim is to show the capacity of the school to respond to different student populations. It is thus an intervention which seeks to rectify the setting in order to shown collective thinking. The development of teamwork can also be of help in supporting staff, provided that such teams engender feelings of confidence and mutual trust (UNESCO, 1994:74).

3.3.1 The members of a TST

According to Chalfant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989:50) a team usually consists of the staff members of a school representing various grades and levels or disciplines who assist other teachers The classroom teacher requesting assistance serves as a fourth equal member of a team. Team membership may differ according to their composition and the teacher's need. Some teams include principals, special education personnel and parents.

Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:160) support the above statement when asserting that the TST is composed of teachers in the school who act as the core support team and, where appropriate, includes parents and learners. Preferably, the co-ordinator of this team should be a teacher with training and/or experience in working with learners with difficulties. This team functions as a permanent structure in the school setting, but involves different teachers, parents, and learners themselves and the role they have to play in the process of providing support to learners.

The Government Education White Paper (2002:118-119) states that a TST should include members of the school community who can best fulfil the functions of the team. It further emphasises that the following should be included in a TST: specialised educators in counselling, guidance and support; voluntary teachers from

the school; teachers in the school management team; expert teachers from the staff; non-educators (parents) and learner representatives at senior level.

Donald *et al.* (1997:26) agree with to the above statement by saying that a TST would normally consist of the principal and a small group of teachers and other key people (from within the school and outside) who would meet on a regular basis.

According to Campher (1997:49) the concept of a TST rests on the following five assumptions:

- The regular classroom teacher can help a child with learning problems in many situations.

- In other more difficult situations the classroom teacher can, with some assistance, help a child with learning or behaviour problems.

- It is better for the child when his class teacher actively works with him, than having another teacher allocated to assist him.

- There is considerable knowledge and talent among teachers.

- Teachers can solve more problems when working together than by working alone.

Retief and Heimburge (1996:222) emphasized that a team must have some basic components that allow members to work together as a team players, such as:

- supportive and open sharing environment where ideas and teaching styles are respected and appreciated;

- members who have the ability to listen carefully to each other's needs and wants, and who can offer constructive criticism and praise;

- teachers who have interests, talents and personalities that complement each other;

- common goals for students and teachers; and

- reasonable standards and expectations of students and team members.

It should be remembered that teaming development, whether in the elementary or middle school, is ongoing. Each day, week, and month is new and becomes an adventure. New ideas can be implemented, modified or revised when necessary.

3.3.2 Goals of the TST

Kochhar *et al.* (2000:123) avert that the goal of the TST is to share ideas, knowledge and techniques among teachers. The main goal of the TST is to prevent and solve learner and teacher problems through collaboration that is problem-solving orientated. This entails obtaining more efficient and effective delivery of special help to children by placing the initiative for action in the hand of classroom teachers (Campher, 1997:52).

According to Donald *et al.* (1997:26) the purpose would be to discuss special needs and problems referred by teachers in the school and to come up with ideas for individual intervention as well as general developmental and preventative action. Campher (1997:52) maintains that this can be achieved by:

- showing the needs of the school through the needs analysis. This will define the size, nature, and context of the intervention target;

- enriching and supporting classroom teachers to serve students with learning and behavioural problems more effectively by utilising the resources of the staff and consulting the multidisciplinary team;

- encouraging classroom teachers to share their experiences, consult with one another and benefit from one another's experiences and areas of speciality; and

- showing preventative good teaching strategies, through improvement of school management, teacher/parent/student attitudes, and teaching methodology through staff training.

3.3.3 The function of a TST

According to the Government Education White Paper 6 (2002:117) the core function of a TST is to support the teaching and learning process. The Government Education

White Paper 6 (2001:29) states that the primary function of the team will be to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support service.

The function of the TST is to help teachers cope with children who are having learning or behavioural problems, to assist teachers to obtain swift action on referrals and to obtain follow-up from special education personnel (Campher, 1997:51). Moreover, the processes of consultation and collaboration are highlighted in the functioning of a TST. According to Idol (1988:48) that the characteristics of consultation are that it is:

- **indirect** in that the special education teacher does not provide the instructional service to the student;

- **collaborative** in that all individuals involved in the process are assumed to have expertise to contribute and responsibility to share instructional outcomes;

- **voluntary** in that all parties are willing participants in the process; and

- **problem-solving orientated** in that the goal of consultation is to prevent or resolve student problems.

Retief and Heimberge (1996:222) state that in order for a team to function successfully from the start, all members must embrace the philosophy that:

- teaming will make their teaching more effective,

- teaming will improve the individual growth and development of the students; and

- teaming will better meet the needs of both teachers and students.

Retief and Heimberge (1996:222) also believe that teachers should seek assistance from team members who are practising improvement. It means that each team member will ask guidance from another in order to gain more knowledge. This will help teachers to improve their teaching styles.

A TST functions successfully when support is based on an indirect method. The TST provides a forum where classroom teachers can meet and engage in a positive, productive, collaborative, problem-solving process to help students indirectly, that is

through teacher consultation. For a TST to function successfully, this team should be teacher oriented, and should serve as a support group to help teachers cope with a range of issues. The empowerment of teachers is an underlying assumption of teacher assistance teams (Chalfant & Van Dusen Pysh, 1989:50).

Effective teaching, and in particular effective consultation, is viewed as being not only an artful science requiring skills in the art of facilitating human communication, but also as a body of knowledge to be utilized in the teaching/learning process and in to problem-solving (Idol & West, 1987:474).

3.3.4   Characteristics of an effective TST

According to Bradley, King-Sears and Tessiers-Switlick (1997:105) effective teacher support teams should:

- be committed to a common vision;

- accomplish change and improvement in task completion;

- share all viewpoints and make decisions;

- recognise that members' opinions are important;

- accept individual differences, needs, concerns and expectations;

- focus the responsibilities for success on all members;

- encourage individual freedom of expression;

- use the unique talents and abilities of each member;

- face problems and make modifications; and

- handle conflict in a productive fashion.

3.3.5   The establishment of a TST

The establishment of a tool for the demanding task of offering educational alternatives that truly reinforce least restrictive placement and that can facilitate and support the

transition of the South African education system to a new educational vision, needs a degree of staff commitment and flexible operational procedures which can be adapted to every school's unique situation (Chalfant, Van Dusen Pysh & Moultrie, 1979:88).

According to Campher (1997:53) and supported by Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:160), a school which is interested in establishing a TST must address the following six questions:

Who is the target population?

Checklists are useful to help teachers identify and refer children in need of special help.

Who is responsible for referral to the team?

Referrals can be made by a parent, the children themselves, or any staff member.

Who should serve on the team?

There are no hard and fast rules other than that the team members should be interested in helping other teachers and learners. Chalfant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989:51) showed that the teachers seem to prefer to invite specials only when necessary. They prefer the team to consist of teachers only.

Who should co-ordinate the team?

The team co-ordinator should be committed to the concept, be willing to co-ordinate the efforts of the team, follow-up team decisions and have the ability to lead groups (Chalfant *et al.*, 1979:50).

How should the team operate?

Chalfant and Psyh (1989:54) suggest that teams should develop their own operating procedures and that teams be encouraged to network with each other in a collaborative manner.

How effective is the team?

The effectiveness of the TST must be evaluated.

Once the team members have been determined, they should receive some training designed to enable the participants to understand the TST concept and to gain small group collaboration experience in the accuracy of describing, analysing, and conceptualizing students needs and classroom problems, communication principles for interviewing, selecting and writing realistic intervention goals, conducting problem-solving meetings, brainstorming strategies, procedures for measuring intervention effectively and in planning an orientation process about the TST concept for teachers in their schools (Chalfant & Van Dusen Pysh, 1989:51).

Chalfant and Pysh (1989:56) showed that there are six major factors that contribute to team effectiveness:

- Principal support and attitude: making time available for teachers to meet on a regular basis, continuous encouragement, and reinforcement of team efforts and successes by the principal.

- Team procedures, attributes and performance: Success lies in planning. It may take three to four years for a team to become an integral, accepted and effective part of a building system.

- Training of team members: Ongoing training and technical assistance provide teams with fresh perspective and contribute to team longevity. Once established, school-based teams can provide as a practical and continuous in-service process which is far more effective than a single workshop.

- Networking: Teams are more effective and lasting if they had support in the first few years.

- Evaluation: Evaluation of team effectiveness is crucial.

3.3.6   Stages of the TST's problem-solving process

According to Porter and Stone (1997) as cited by Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:161), the stages of the team problem-solving process include the following:

Stage 1: The appointed team co-ordinator states the reason for the meeting and explains the process to be followed when dealing with the problem.

Stage 2: The referring teacher makes a brief statement about the problem.

Stage 3: Team members ask the referring teacher the necessary questions to clear up any uncertainties they may have as to exactly what the problem is or what the circumstances are.

Stages 2 and 3 permit team members to focus on defining the parameters of the problems for the teacher. Team members may ask for some specific examples.

Stage 4: Once the problem has been clearly defined and analysed, a range of possible interviews must be generated. A round table brainstorming session is held to generate suggestions from team members as to how the problem may be solved. Brief practical statements are encouraged and are directed to the facilitator. The referring teacher does not interact with others at this stage.

Stage 5: The co-ordinator and the referring teacher discuss the suggested strategies with the team, but the ultimate selection of strategies rests within the referring teacher.

Stage 6: A plan to follow up on the ideas or strategies that have been selected by the referring teacher is established. All aspects of the plan should be put in writing, at least in outline form, so that each team member involved has a clear idea of his or her responsibilities. The written plan also serves as a record to facilitate accountability.

Stage 7: The co-ordinator thanks team members and ensures that all participants leave the meeting feeling that something constructive will come from it.

3.3.7   The training of the TST

Teams need to be trained. Without proper training, teams seem to be inefficient and ineffective. Training should be directed toward understanding the team concept and providing hands-on experience in the following:

- analyzing and conceptualizing problems;

- establishing intervention goals;

- generating practical intervention plans;

- communicating effectively; and

- managing team meetings (Chalfant & Van Dusen Pysh, 1989:57).

More so, support is enhanced when meetings are conducted in an efficient and organised manner, and reinforced with systematic follow-up procedures. Ongoing training and technical assistance provide teams with fresh perspectives and contribute to team longevity. Once established, school-based teams can serve as a practical and continuous in-service process, which is far more effective than a single workshop (Chalfant & Van Dusen Pysh, 1989:57).

According to Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:160) the commitment of the whole staff is a prerequisite for an effective team approach. Furthermore, started that roles should be clarified in order to reduce doubt and confusion among teachers.

3.3.8   Benefits of working in the TST

Working in teams has benefits for the TST, the individual and the school as a whole. According to Squelch and Lemmer (1994:70) the benefits listed below are the result of substantial research:

- People who have learnt to support and trust one another share information instead of keeping it to themselves.

- Resources, special talents and strengths are shared instead of hoarded.

- Pitfalls threatening people who work in isolation are avoided or uncovered by teamwork.

- Better-qualified decisions are made.

- The morale is higher when people work together.

- Excellence results from teamwork and everyone wants the team to look good.

3.3.9   Procedures of a TST

Care must be taken in establishing efficient team procedures. Teachers and teams will not support a process they see as wasting their time. Team meetings should not take more than 30 to 45 minutes. Agendas should be clearly shown, discussion should be to the point, and only the essential paperwork should be needed. Team procedures should not be a burden to teachers, or teams will not be used. And finally, teams that meet weekly at a regularly scheduled time are accepted as part of the school system more readily than teams that meet on a special case (Chalfant & Van Dusen Pysh, 1989:57).

3.3.10   Networking of a TST

According to Chalfant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989:57) teams are more effective and likely to continue in the long term if they have a support system during the first few years. This support can take many forms. One large district may host meetings monthly in which team leaders discuss and resolve issues.

They further states that some districts appoint someone as a district-wide TST co-ordinator who can provide technical assistance and support for teams. Other school districts have developed newsletters or in-service opportunities. The specific form of support system is not as critical as its existence and availability to team members (Chalfant & Van Dusen Pysh, 1989:57).

3.3.11   Administrative support of a TST

The need for strong administrative support was mentioned consistently. Foremost was the need to have the principal officer showing support openly for the team by making time available for teachers to meet on a regular basis. The principal's attitude must be positive all the time. The principal must be the one who positively reinforces and creates incentives for those participating. Furthermore, the success of a TST rests in planning. Therefore a building, district, or state must have a carefully designed long-term plan to effectively implement building-level teams (Chalfant & Van Dusen Pysh, 1989:56).

3.3.12   Evaluation of a TST

The evaluation of team effectiveness is crucial. According to Chalfant and Van Dusen Pysh (1989:57) the following questions should be asked:

Is the process effective in helping teachers and students? If so, how? Is it cost effective?

Once, the above-mentioned questions have been answered satisfactorily, a TST's evaluation has been done properly.

3.4   CONCLUSION

In this chapter I described a Teachers' Support Team programme in detail. The membership, goals, functions, successful running and characteristics of an effective TST were discussed. The steps for the establishment of a TST, its training, its benefits, its procedures, its networking, its administrative support, and its evaluation were also discussed in greater detail to help teachers in forming their own Teachers' Support Teams. In the next chapter I shall discuss the research methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research process for my study will be discussed.

This discussion will include the context of the research, the research design, the problem and purpose of the study, methods for data collection, data analysis, and the study implementation. The issue of validity and reliability as well as ethical considerations will also briefly be discussed.

Mouton (2001:270) asserts that in qualitative research, the researcher is seen as the "main instrument" in the research process. Mouton further avers that "a qualitative research focuses on the process rather than the outcome. Qualitative research focuses on the in-depth descriptions and understanding of actions and events. Research is done in the natural settings of social actors." This study is done in a school setting and is focused on the process of interviewing and its outcomes.

4.2   THE RESEARCH DESIGN

In describing the research, Mouton (2001:74) defines research design as a plan or blueprint of how the researchers intends conducting the research, while Bogden and Biklen (1998:49) view it as a reflection of the researcher's plans of how he/she is going to proceed with the research.

4.2.1   Context of the Research

Creswell (1994:2) says that "straightforward, uncomplicated thoughts yield sound research. Human behaviour and action never occur in isolation, they always occur within a specific context." This is supported by Miles and Huberman (1994:10) who believe that each context has a unique situation consisting of a particular time, geographical setting and social and historical situation - all of which impact on both the participant and the observer.

Choosing a site is a negotiation process to obtain freedom of access to a site that is suitable for the research problems and feasible for the researcher's resources of time, mobility, and skills (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:432).

The site chosen for this study was the Vuwani District in Region 3 in the far North of the Limpopo Province in South Africa. This study was carried out within the rural area in a primary school, which starts from Grade R and continues to Grade 7. There are 800 learners and 20 teachers at this school.

The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:40. Learners at the primary school, with or without learning difficulties, are housed at the same school in an inclusive classroom setting. Most of the learners come from Tshisaulu and Duthuni. Most of the parents and learners come from poor socio-economic conditions and most of the learners' parents are unemployed. The school is in the process of implementing inclusive education and participants showed that they were uncertain of what was expected of them.

I went to the school principal to ask permission before I gave her the application letters. The principal and I talked and advised each other on what route to follow when conducting an interview with teachers and discussing a support programme.

The principal of the primary school advised me to come after 1 October (after normal school hours) to conduct interviews with teachers.

I wrote a letter addressed to the principal of the school. I also wrote two additional letters; one was addressed to the Dzindi Circuit Manager and another to the Vuwani Area Manager asking for permission to interview and workshop teachers in their vicinity. I gave those letters to my principal who handed them to the circuit manager, and the circuit manager in turn passed them onto the Vuwani Area Manager.

I waited for the letters to reach the circuit and the area offices. I then went there to clarify my request personally. I explained to the Area Manager and the Circuit Manager how I would conduct my workshop after school during observation hours. After that discussion, they gave me permission to go ahead as planned. They wrote a letter that would serve as my permission to conduct an interview with the primary school teachers. When all the formalities had been completed, I initiated the study.

In my opinion, a lack of governance in the Limpopo Province contributed to the high rate of failures in this region as educators were not competent because they were poorly trained. Poor governance in this province also contributed to the high rate of school leavers (dropout rate). As already mentioned and emphasized by Swart *et al.* (2000:6) basic services and resources are presently lacking in our government educational system.

The Limpopo Province education structure has its own way of supporting teachers when dealing with diversity in school. In this province, teachers are supported by the course manager by means of workshops wherein teachers are supported in adapting to new teaching methods. After having attended these workshops, teachers are encouraged to form their own clusters with colleagues from neighbouring schools, so that the challenges that arise can be are tackled and discussed in a collaborative manner.

4.2.2   The problem and purpose of the research

4.2.2.1   The problem

According to Merriam (1998:56) "a problem in the conventional sense is a matter involving doubt, uncertainty, or difficulty. A problem is anything that confuses and challenges the mind to make belief and values questionable". A person with a problem usually seeks a solution, some clarification, or a decision. Mouton (2001:48) states that the problem statement is formulated as specific research question or hypotheses.

As explained in chapter two (2.3.1) with reference to Engelbrecht *et al.* (1999:70), educators in South African schools are currently being expected to make major changes in the way in which they understand teaching and learning in the process of adapting to an entirely new curriculum.

South Africa, as a democratic country, needs to change its policies in order to redress the imbalances of the past. There must be enough support programmes for teachers to equip them with more knowledge and new skills.

As discussed in chapter three, one way of supporting teachers is by means of Teacher Support Teams.

The question that is posed in this study is: *What are the needs of teachers towards support to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education in the Limpopo Province of South Africa?*

4.2.2.2   *The Purpose of the research*

Maxwell (1996:14) defines the purpose as the motives, desires and goals that one may have in conducting a study, which may be personal, practical or for the sake of research. The purpose of this study conducted at a primary school from Vuwani District in Region 3 in the Limpopo Province is to provide information to the educators in the implementation of inclusive education in future. It is furthermore hoped that the study will reveal the needs of teachers towards a support programme in the implementation of inclusive education in the Vuwani Area in Region 3 in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

4.2.3   Research methodology

According to Mouton (2001:270) qualitative research is the study of human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves. It is a broad methodological approach to the study of social actions. Maxwell (1996:65) is of the opinion that qualitative research methods are the methods used in handling qualitative research, while Mason (1996:36) states that in qualitative research a method shows more than data collection. The method determines the length of my research. A case study was conducted where the specific primary school constituted the case. Mouton (2001:149) indicates that case studies "are usually qualitative in nature" and they aim to "provide an in-depth description" of the issue at hand. Miles and Huberman (1994:147) stress four parameters that need to be followed by research: the setting, the actors, the events and the process. The setting for the research was Mutondo primary school in the Vuwani Area of the Limpopo Province and the participants were the teachers. The events included interviewing the teachers about the needs of a support programme in order to implement inclusive education. The process included both teachers and learners.

4.2.3.1   Participants

According to Mouton (2000:132) sampling is similar to selection. In everyday life, we talk of sampling when we refer to the process of selecting things or objects when it is impossible to have knowledge from a larger collection of things/objects.

According to Mouton (2001:164) sampling in qualitative research is the process of selecting observation. Merriam (1998:60) points out that sampling in field research includes the selection of the research site, time, people and events.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994:64) stress that "qualitative researchers build a sample with the primary goal of gaining deep understanding of some phenomenon experienced by a carefully selected group of people".

According to Huysamen (1994:8) a "population (sample) incorporates the whole collection of cases (or units) whereby conclusion is made".

The sample of this study comprises of educators of inclusive education (Outcomes-Based Education) from Region 3 in the Vuwani District in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. They are the educators of Mutondo Primary School.

Huysamen (1994:47, 48) states that the size of the population should be kept in mind when the size of the sample is chosen. In choosing sample size, I also kept in mind that the number of participants for whom usable data would eventually be found, might be much smaller than the number which was drawn originally.

As mentioned in chapter one, the sampling method I used, was "non-probability sampling" in the form of "purposive sampling" as described by Mouton (2001:166), namely that sometimes it is suitable for one to choose one's sample on the basis of one's knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of one's research aims: in short, based on one's judgement and the purpose of the study. I used those teachers who where willing to participate in that particular school. Sampling was used in the form of "non-probability sampling". The nature of the sample, including the participants' different age groups, different qualifications, different teaching grades, and different experiences is presented in Table 5.1.

I chose the specific school, because teachers there were in need of a support programme in order to implement inclusive education effectively and with ease. The teachers from the specific primary school had experienced problems concerning the implementation of inclusive education in their school. Some teachers from Limpopo Province had both negative and positive perceptions about inclusive education in their school.

Neuman (2002:196) emphasizes that non-probability sampling is used to show the size of the sample in advance and have limited knowledge of the larger group from which the sample was taken. According to Huysamen (1994:44) the advantage of non-probability sampling is that it is less complicated and more economical (in terms of time and financial expenses) than the probability sample. "Non-probability samples may be especially useful in situations where you cannot select the kinds of probability samples used in large-scale social surveys" (Mouton, 2001:166).

The sample population of this study consisted of 20 teachers of the Mutondo Primary School, from the Vuwani District in the Limpopo Province. Focus group interviews were held at the school to gather data. The teachers had an average of 20 years teaching experience. They had little knowledge of inclusive education.

All participants of the focus group interviews were reassured that their names would not be disclosed in the research findings. Field notes would be kept in a safe place after the information had been examined and the research had been completed. A pseudonym was used for the school and the participants were given numbers in this study to protect the participants' privacy. This is in agreement with Mouton's (2001:523) statement that the clearest concern in the protection of the subjects' interests and well-being is the protection of their identity. Mouton (2001:523) further emphasizes that "a respondent may be considered anonymous when the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given respondent".

4.3   METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

According to Merriam (1998:134), "data collection in a case study is a recursive, interactive process in which engaging in one strategy incorporates or may lead to subsequent sources of data". The researcher can collect data by talking both formally

and informally with people, observing what is going on from the case and, examining documents and materials that are part of the context (Merriam, 1998:137).

I chose the specific primary school because teachers at that school were in need of a support programme in order to implement inclusive education effectively and with ease. Teachers from the primary school had problems concerning the implementation of inclusive education in their school.

An instrument is a technique used for data collection Azaliah College (1998:98). For the purpose of this study, a variety of methods were used to collect data, namely a literature review, focus group interviews, and field notes.

4.3.1 The literature review

The literature review formed an important component of the research process. Merriam (1998:55) defines the literature review as "a narrative essay that integrates, synthesizes, and critiques the important thinking and research on a particular topic. Most literature reviews are organized according to particular themes found in the literature reviewed."

According to Merriam (1998:51) the literature review can prove how the present study shows, improves, or changes what is already known. A literature review gives the foundation for contributing to the knowledge base. Its purpose is to provide a basis and a background for the study. The aim of the literature review is to give a set of explanatory concepts (Silverman, 1993:1).

A literature review was conducted in Chapters 2 and 3 as part of the detailed discussion of the needs of a support programme for teachers.

4.3.2 Focus group interviews

Folch-Lyon and Trost (1991:444) define a focus group session as a discussion composed by a small number of people, under the guidance of a moderator (the researcher). During the focus group session the six to 12 participants talk about topics that are special to the investigation. Mouton (2001:292) recommends that the researcher should choose between 8 and 12 respondents and set them up in a circle. The researcher would then manage the focus group interview by going around in the

circle, ensuring that everyone speaks. This would ensure that the individual responses of all the members of the group are obtained.

Mouton (2001:292) emphasizes that focus groups interviews are used to procure information that one would, otherwise not be able to access. This is where people get together and create meaning among themselves. Folch-Lyon and Trost (1991:444) illustrate the focus group discussion in the following manner:

> The discussion is the basis from which information is obtained. Others, including the moderator conduct it as an open conversation in which each participant may comment, ask questions of other participants, or respond to comments. Interaction among the correspondents is encouraged to stimulate in-depth discussion at various topics.

Folch-Lyon and Trost (1991:444) further assert that the participants (teachers) in the focus group are called experts in the area under inquiry, thus the format is usually in the form of an open discussion where the comments, replies/answers, and interaction among members of a group and the facilitator are encouraged. In this study my role was that of a facilitator or moderator and I introduced the topic in the form of a question in order to encourage the participation of all members.

The focus group sessions for this research project were conducted with 20 teachers. The sessions were held in two sessions on one occasion at the primary school. It was observed that the following questions were asked during the focus group interviews:

- What is your understanding of the concept *inclusive education*?

- What is your role in implementing inclusive education in your school?

- How do you deal with problems that arise?

- What changes have occurred as a result of the implementation of *inclusive education*?

- What are the needs in your school?

- Do all teachers need a support programme in order to implement inclusive education in their classrooms?

- What skills do you think will enable you to be effective?

- What conditions would be required in order to implement *inclusive education*?

- How have you managed to deal with the changes?

The way questions were presented depended on the responses of participants. Some of the questions were a follow-up on what participants said. The participants were allowed to talk with minimum interruption

4.3.3 Field notes

Field notes are written accounts, made during the focus group discussion or shortly thereafter and recorded word for word. According to Merriam (1998:106), field notes include the following:

- verbal descriptions of the setting, the people, the activities;

- direct quotations or at least the substance of what the people said;

- the observer's comments which can include the researcher's feelings, reactions, hunches, initial interpretations, and working hypotheses.

These field notes were extended after the discussions with reflections on my questions, feelings, initial interpretations, and uncertainties. According to Merriam (1998:105), field notes form a supportive source of data, need to be analyzed, and are useful for later data interpretation. In this study, field notes were used throughout the project and also used as background data.

4.4 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Bogden and Biklen (1998:57), as well as Merriam (1998:160), define data analysis as an action of orderly examining, searching and arranging the answers, field notes and other materials to increase the researcher's my own understanding of them and enabling the researcher to present what he/she has discovered to others. This is the way in which I analysed the participants' responses.

Miles and Huberman (1994:10) suggest that "data analysis is a process of selection, sharpening, sorting, focusing, discarding and organizing in order to make sense out of the data, integrate the data, draw conclusions and verify the data." In this study the data analysis facilitated the process of producing a conclusion.

Merriam (1998:162) and Cresswell (1998:142) state that in the qualitative research, the researcher learns by doing. In this study the aim of the data analysis was to find meaningful shared themes in different people's descriptions of common experiences, as indicated by Barrit (Leedy, 1997:162). Qualitative data analysis is a process consisting of the following three phases: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10). These three processes are in constant interaction and are interwoven before, during, and after data collection. That is why both Miles and Huberman (1994:119) and Merriam (1998:163) refer to qualitative data analysis as a continuous interactive enterprise.

4.4.1   Data reduction

The identification of themes is part of data reduction which occurs throughout a project. It is described as the process of obtaining, selecting, writing, simplifying, interpreting and transforming data from its transcribed raw data form, through to information that can be applied in the field (Miles & Huberman, 1994:10). Data reduction is part of the analysis of data, whereby the researcher "sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified" (Miles & Huberman, 1994:11).

In the context of the above description of data reduction, I analyzed my data by sorting out the responses I received from the respondents. I compared the responses from different teachers until I found the obvious themes. I deduced my data from what was transcribed from teachers' responses. Display of the themes and respondence is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1:   A display of respondence to emerged themes

Themes that emerged	Example of respondence
1. Number of learners in a class	T4, T7, etc.
2. Resources	T11, T12, T13, T15, T16, T18, etc
3. Need for in-service training	T11, T13, T16, T17, etc
4. Culture of respect and acceptance	T2, T4, T5, T8, T10, etc
5. Flexible curriculum	T11, T16, T17, T18 (All of them)

Accordingly, the transcribed data were repeatedly read. Units of meaning were identified and discussed. Maykut and Morehouse (1994:128) call the process of identifying units of meaning "utilizing of data". Categories of meaning were arrived at through grouping those units that had the same meaning and assigning a word or phrase that reflected the essence of the unit's meaning written beneath, while the location of the data was indicated in the margin of the transcript (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:129). These labels were reviewed and more abstract categories or emerging themes arrived at through further analysis.

The themes that emerged from the data analysis were presented as semantic units and categories as in Table 4.2 below.

Schumacher and McMillan (1993:479) maintain that: "qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organizing the data into categories and identifying patterns (relations) among the categories". I found that data would be analysed by analysing all participants' responses from interviews, whereas interviews would be analysed by reading all the findings written from the responses. The categories as determined in this study, are analysed as follows (see Table 4.2):

Table 4.2: An example of data analysis from the teachers' focus group interviews

Semantic units	Categories
Motivating teachers about the process of inclusion	Attitude change
Inclusion of all learners with special needs into mainstream	Placement
Accepting one another unconditionally	Importance of mutual acceptance in inclusion
Learners with disabilities will be ridiculed by other learners.	Concern about peer reaction
Provide educators with skills and knowledge of providing support.	Capacity building
For us as teachers to be effective, we are going to need on-going training.	In-service training/professional development is essential.
To be trained on how to work with learners with different abilities.	Training need that incorporates learners who have mixed abilities
I give individual support but in severe cases.	Direct intervention
Numbers of learner should be reduced in class.	Small classes are important.
Give guidelines to teachers initially on what to do with learners in class.	Capacity building
Learners with disabilities will not get enough attention.	Limitation of individualised attention.

In this study, I found my semantic units from an example of data analysis from the focus group interview with teachers of Mutondo Primary School. The connections between categories and themes were sought out and indicated. Categories and themes were interwoven in the following manner (see Table 4.3 table below).

Table 4.3:   An example of an interrelationship between themes and categories

Themes	Categories
Numbers of learners in a class	Small classes are important.
Physical resources	Capacity building
Need for in-service training	In-service training/professional development is essential.
Flexible curriculum	Placement
Create a culture of respect and acceptance for diversity among teachers.	Importance of mutual acceptance in inclusion.

All of the above inter-relationships between themes and categories emerged from the response given by the participants as in 5.3.1.1 (Appendix C).

4.4.2   Data display

According to Miles and Huberman (1994:11) data display is an organized, compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion-drawing and action. In this study, data display entailed presenting the data and derived it in a partially ordered as well as conceptually ordered form (see Table 6.2). For example, "partially ordered" means that I followed an order when writing this study, like when writing what I scribbled in Table 5 and all the responses from the participants in 5.4.1.1. This order may be half done or done in full as in Appendix C.

4.4.3   Conclusion - drawing and verification

Maykut and Morehouse (1994:158) state that "the derived themes or patterns must be prioritized according to their importance in contributing to the focus of inquiry and quotations that best illustrate the selected themes must be identified from the data". These guidelines were adhered to in this research. The report that emerged comprised an account of the patterns or themes that emerged together with the excerpts from the data that illustrate them.

4.5   VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In this study the researcher needed to ensure that the study reflected credibility. Merriam (1998:198) emphasizes that "all research is concerned with is producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner". Furthermore, "validity and reliability can be approached through paying attention to the study's idea and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented" (Merriam, 1998:199-200). Mason (1996:145) avers that qualitative data is judged through validating data and accuracy of method (reliability). Validity refers to the credibility of a description and interpretation (Maxwell, 1996:87) or what Leedy (1997: 168) calls trustworthiness in qualitative research.

By validity I mean truth, as expressed by Silverman (2000:175): "validity means truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers". He further emphasizes that "reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observers on different occasions".

Mouton (2000:144) asks the question: "Will the same methods used by different researchers in different venues give the same results?" When I speak of reliability I assume that different researchers in different places must use one method and it must give the same results.

Merriam (1998:199) state that "there is no single commonly accepted standard for judging or ensuring the reliability and validity of qualitative research". The types of validity that were used in this study were: internal validity, external validity and reliability.

4.5.1   Internal Validity

Merriam (1998: 201) avers that:

> internal validity deals with the question of how research hinges on the meaning of reality. Further points out that reality is what we choose not to question at the moment and the leading cause of stress amongst those in touch with it. Is the researcher observing and measuring what she is observing and measuring?

4.5.2   Reliability

Huysamen (1998:117) states that, for reliability to be established when we measure a particular thing by means of a particular instrument, it should give the same results irrespective of by whom it is measures, when it is measured, and which particular version of it is applied.

4.5.3   External validity

External validity is concerned with the generalization of the conclusions reached through observation of a sample to the universe (Leedy, 1997:41). Merriam (1998:207), on the other hand, assets that "external validity is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations".

Merriam (1998:20) further states that the intent of qualitative research is not to generalize findings, but to form a unique interpretation of events.

Mouton (2001:270) asserts that in qualitative research the researcher is seen as the "main instrument" in the research process. Mouton further states that "a qualitative research focuses on the process rather than the outcome. Qualitative research focuses on the in-depth descriptions and understanding of actions and events. Research is done in the natural settings of social actors." In this study, I was in the process of understanding together with my respondents. In this study I was the one who was steering the interviews by asking questions.

4.6   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Most authors who discuss qualitative research design address the importance of ethical considerations (Cresswell, 1994:165). First and foremost, I have an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values, and desires of the participants. The methods employed to control the ethical standards of this study are discussed briefly in the following manner:

4.6.1   Confidentiality and anonymity

According to Mouton (2001:523) a participant may be considered unknown when the researcher cannot identify a given response with a given participant. This means that

in an interview survey, respondent (participant) can never be considered to be unknown, since an interviewer collects the information from a known respondent. Mouton states that in a confidential study, the researcher can identify a given person's responses but essentially promises not to do so publicly. In an interview survey, for example, the researcher would be in a position to make public the report received from a certain respondent, but the respondent is assured that this will not be done.

All participants of the focus group interviews were reassured that their names would not be disclosed in the research findings. Field notes would be kept in a safe place after the information had been examined and the research completed. A pseudonym was used for the school and participants were given numbers in this study to protect their privacy. Participants were given numbers like T1 or T8 as in 5.3.1.1 (Appendix C).

4.6.2   Voluntary participation

According to Mouton (2001:251) voluntary participation is important as it brings no harm to the people under study. The participants were reassured that they would not be forced to participate. The research objectives were articulated verbally so that they could clearly understand how the data would be used. From the onset of the focus group interview, the procedure, time requirements, and type of participation expected were explained.

4.6.3   Feedback

The participants in the focus group and the headmaster of the school concerned were ensured that the findings of the study would be shared with them on conclusion of the study. This was also part of the validation process.

4.7   CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter research design, research methods, validity, and reliability of study have been described. In conclusion, ethical considerations were discussed. In Chapter 5, presentation, analysis, and discussion of data and findings of the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER 5

STUDY IMPLEMENTION AND FINDINGS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on the implementation and findings of the study. I shall begin by briefly clarifying the research problem. The methods employed in the data analysis will be discussed, with examples and extracts from the analysis. The process of analysis into semantic units and categories is demonstrated. This chapter concludes by mentioning themes that emerged from the analysis.

5.2   THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

As already discussed in Chapter 4, the data for this research were derived from two focus groups, namely with the teachers of a specific primary school. The focus group interviews were attended voluntarily and in both cases the fact that the data were to be used for research purposes was stressed. The context of the study was described in Chapter 4 (refer to section 4.2.1).

5.2.1   The Teachers

All the teachers resided in the rural areas. As already mentioned in Chapter 4 in the sample 4.2.3.1, there were 20 participants. The teachers' teaching experience and qualifications varied (see table 5.1 below).

Table 5.1:   Teacher's Qualifications and Experiences

Teachers	Qualifications	Experience	Teaching-Grades
Teacher 1	PTC, BA, BEd (Bachelor of Education)	21 years	7
Teacher 2	PTC (Primary Teacher's course)	23 years	7
Teacher 3	SPTD (Senior Primary Teacher's Diploma	11 years	7
Teacher 4	PTC, HED (Higher Education) Diploma)	24 years	5
Teacher 5	PTC	25 years	5
Teacher 6	PTC	23 years	5
Teacher 7	PTC	20 years	4
Teacher 8	PTC	21 years	4
Teacher 9	PTC	20 years	4
Teacher 10	PTC	19 years	3
Teacher 11	PTD (Primary Teacher's Diploma)	18 years	3
Teacher 12	PTC	20 years	2
Teacher 13	PTD, HED	17 years	2
Teacher 14	SPTD, BA (Bachelor of Arts)	18 years	6
Teacher 15	PTC	20 years	6
Teacher 16	SPTD, BA, Bed	15 years	6
Teacher 17	JPTD, BA, Bed	18 years	1
Teacher 18	PTC	19 years	1
Teacher 19	PTC	22 years	R
Teacher 20	JPTD (Junior Primary Diploma) Management Diploma	13 years	R

5.3   STUDY IMPLEMENTATION

My implementation of this study was done in the way that I have already indicated in Chapter 4 (4.2.3).

5.4   METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The methods of data analysis have already been described in detail in Chapter 4 (section 3.4). The data from both focus groups were analysed. The process of data analysis involved data reduction and data display. The following is a description of the process of data analysis.

5.4.1   The process of data analysis and reduction

An example of transcribed data from a focus group interview is given below. The respondents involved are indicated by means of the following transcription codes.

Transcription Codes

Code	Meaning
R	Researcher (me)
T1, 2, 3 etc	Teacher 1, Teacher 2, etc.

5.4.1.1   An example of data analysis from the focus group interview: Teachers

What follows is an example of the transcribed raw data from the focus group interview with teachers and their answers, as well as an example of analysis of the raw data into semantic units and categories. Teacher 1 to Teacher 10 compose group 1 and teacher 11 to teacher 20 compose Group 2.

GROUP 1

R: *What is your understanding of the concept of Inclusive Education?*

T1:   According to me, inclusive education means teaching all learners unconditionally in one school irrespective of their disabilities.

T5:   I am not sure whether I can teach all learners with different disabilities in one class (T6 agrees).

T4:   Maybe to clarify, I think it means accommodating children from the same neighbourhood in the same school irrespective of their disabilities (T1 agrees). In my views, teaching outcomes-based education is the same as teaching in an inclusive manner (T3 nods).

T8:   My problem is that learners with disabilities may be ridiculed by others (T10 nods).

T9:   Just to emphasize what teacher 8 has said, I think it is unfair for other learners without disabilities to be accommodated in the same class because they are working at a different pace.

T2:   Yes, my illustration is also concerned about the fact that they may not be able to get enough attention from their teacher as one learner needs Braille and others need sign language (the group agrees).

T7:   For teachers to give more attention to all learners, we must reduce the teacher pupil-ratio.

T8:   (T0, T4 and T1): I thought you liked the idea of inclusive education.

T4.   I have nothing against it in my view but I think that as long as we have these large numbers of learners in a class it is going to be difficult to meet the needs of all learners. Individualisation will not be done effectively without reducing teacher-pupil ratio.

R: *What conditions would be required in order to implement inclusive education effectively?*

T16:   In my view, I think we teachers need specialised training to educate those learners in the same classroom. All learners must undergo training in order to accept those with disabilities.

T17:   To add on that, this kind of education needs specialised training (the group nods). You cannot just take any ordinary teacher and throw him/her in a class

and expect him/her to teach them as he/she will expect this learner (disabled) to behave like an ordinary child, whereas, hearing and sight disabilities need a specially trained teacher to read Braille and speak sign language to them.

T13:   My concern is that even access to the school would be a problem, for example, a child on the wheelchair (facilities) stairs - no ramps.

T15:   To me, I cannot teach without resources and facilities (all agree).

T11:   Just to add to what teacher 15 and 13 have said, I think it is the responsibilities of the government to train, workshop and support teachers in order to implement inclusive education effectively

T19:   Learners with disabilities are not meant for us to teach them, they must go to special schools to be taught well with trained teachers for them.

T14:   I don't think these learners should go to a different school like Tshilidzini (school for disabled children) and when they go to their different schools then we are discriminating against them. They should attend school near their homes.

T18:   They must have a sense of belonging.

T20:   Tshilidzini special school itself is not right because it is a segregatory school. These children see themselves as outcasts.

T12:   It does not mean that we do not like children with disabilities, but just like what T11, 13, and 15 have explained, what is important is that we have no relevant facilities and teachers are not trained on how to teach them but we welcome the idea of inclusive education because we would like them to play together so that they can get used to each other.

The raw data transcribed above were then analysed into semantic units and categories as illustrated below in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2:   **An example of data analysis from the teachers' focus group interviews**

Semantic unit	Category
Inclusion of all learners with special needs into mainstream	Placement
Accepting one another unconditionally	Importance of mutual acceptance in inclusion
Learners with disabilities will be ridiculed by other learners	Concern about peer reaction
Provide educators with skills and knowledge of providing support	Capacity building
For us as teachers to be effective, we are going to need on-going training	In-service training/professional development is essential.
To be trained on how to work with learners with different abilities	Training need that incorporates learners who have mixed abilities
I do individual teaching but in severe cases	Direct intervention
Numbers of learners should be reduced in class.	Small classes are important.
Give guidelines to teachers initially what to do with learners in class.	Capacity building
Learners with disabilities will not get enough attention.	Limitation of individualised attention

The presentation of these tables is a method of data display. Data displays are used by researchers to assemble organised information into an immediately accessible, compact form so that the analyst can see what is happening (Miles & Huberman, 1994:11). Miles and Huberman (1994:93) also illustrate that analysts are instructed to "hand craft" appropriate data displays for their own study.

5.5   THE MAIN THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA SOURCES

The following table illustrates the main themes that emerged from the data sources when the categories were reduced. Each theme will be discussed individually.

Table 5.3: **A display of respondents to emerged themes**

Themes that emerged	Examples of respondents
1. Number of learners in a class	T4, T7, etc.
2. Resources	T11, T12, T13, T15, T16, T18, etc
3. Need for in-service training	T11, T13, T16, T17, etc
4. Culture of respect and acceptance	T2, T4, T5, T8, T10, etc
5. Flexible curriculum	T11, T16, T17, T18 (All of them)

A display of the respondents that emphasised the emergence of the main themes in their responses is displayed in table 5.4:

Table 5.4: **Main Themes that Emerged**

Focus group with teachers
1. Numbers of learners in a class
2. Physical resources
3. Need for in-service training
4. Create a culture of respect and acceptance for diversity, especially among teachers.
5. Flexible curriculum

I assume that the above-mentioned themes are the main themes that emerged because theme 1 was emphasised by more than two teachers, whereas themes 2, 3, 4 and 5 were mentioned (emphasised) by more than four teachers in their responses during the interview. That is why I deduced from the responses that they were the main themes.

5.5.1 Numbers of learners in a class

The concern of an acceptable teacher-pupil ratio was also raised. Teachers felt that there were too many learners, teachers would not be able to give proper attention to the learners' needs. Teachers complained about the redeployment process and said that were understaffed because there were no replacements for the redeployed teachers,

promoted teachers and those who had passed away. Teachers felt that having to cope with normal day-to-day problems in these large classes was nearly more than they were able to do. Teachers also felt that learners with disabilities demanded much more attention.

According to Ainscow (1992:10) the ratio of learners to a teacher should be such as to enable teachers to give proper attention to the needs of each learner. Teachers should also develop and receive further training in teaching practices, for example, cooperative learning and buddy systems in order to deal with the large numbers.

5.5.2   Physical resources

Teachers were concerned about problems in the physical environment which might prevent some learners from enjoying equal opportunities with other learners such as stairs, inaccessible toilets, etc. The respondents felt that the department should renovate all schools in order to suit/accommodate all learners irrespective of their disabilities.

In responsible inclusion programmes, successful inclusion requires considerable resources (Vaughn & Schumn, 1995:266). The NCSNET/NCESS report (DNE, 1997) emphasizes that all schools must become accessible to learners with disabilities in terms of building requirements.

In my view, lack of resources will lead to poor teaching. In rural schools, resources are poorly developed and there are no buildings to accommodate learners with disabilities because of poverty.

5.5.3   Need for In-Service Training

Although teachers felt that they lacked skills, the whole group supported inclusive education and they felt that they needed in-service training to be better developed in inclusive practices. Most of the participants in the focus group did not understand what was expected from them and teachers felt that they did not have the knowledge and skills to educate all learners with disabilities.

There should be competent and well-trained teachers as there are learners with mild to moderate disabilities found in all regular classes. Teachers should be trained at all

levels to meet these learners' needs (Skuy & Partington, 1990:182). Therefore the teachers felt that they needed skills and more knowledge which would enable them to cope with the barriers that occurred. On-going in-service training was regarded as important. They felt that more teachers needed TSTs to support them in their work. They needed positive support to enhance their self-esteem, as I have already mentioned in Chapter 3.

I would suggest that educators may feel uncomfortable and may not trust their own skills. They fear the unknown that is why they don't want to venture into a new world which is full of technological changes. They fear that they could lose their jobs, more especially those from special schools. Others fear that parents might think that they know more than the educators do.

I would assume that educators who lack training should undergo continuous in-service training. In-service programmes for underqualified educators are an example of service programmes aimed at redressing the discriminating imbalances of the past. A lack of knowledge seems to disempower the educators.

I would suggest that educators who are well-equipped with knowledge of inclusive education will perform differently from those who do not have any knowledge or those who have not heard about inclusive education. Knowledgeable educators who are well-equipped with more knowledge of inclusive education will be capable of offering good service to the learners and to the community as a whole. They can venture easily into the changing world because knowledge is power and they will not fear anybody whom they might encounter. Teachers have to be sensitive when supporting the learners with special educational needs, not only to the particular needs of individual learners, but also to their own attitudes and feelings (Engelbrecht *et al.,* 1999:71).

I assume that knowledgeable teachers are able to adjust more easily to the changing world without any fear of the unknown. They face challenges with greater confidence because they are positively motivated and have greater self-esteem than those who are uninformed.

5.5.4   Create a culture of respect and acceptance for diversity especially among learners

The sentiments of the teachers have been shown in different studies such as that of Idol (1997:392) who states that other learners in the class where inclusion is taking place must be educated about the barriers faced by the included learner in a healthy, positive and nurturing way. Unless learners learn otherwise, they are naturally kind and they can be incredibly supportive of one another under firm, positive and strong teacher leadership. Involving learners, as peer helpers for learners with disabilities is a very effective strategy (Van Dyke, Stalling & Colley, 1995:478). Teachers will need to model strategies for learners and allow them to be involved in problem-solving sessions. Learners should learn how to interact, respect and empathize with others. Peer assistance and support can help non-disabled learners to build and maintain good relationships with their disabled peers.

Ainscow (1992:3) supports this viewpoint by stating that peers should be part of each group assisting these learners. They should work in collaboration with one another.

5.5.5   Flexible curriculum

As teachers emphasized that the current curriculum does not accommodate the diverse needs of all learners in the classroom, it is clear that a flexible curriculum and mechanisms to address problems concerning learning and development should be available. In developing an inclusive school curriculum transformation should be addressed in order to ensure that the different needs of all learners are met and catered for. All aspects of the curriculum need to be developed to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Curriculum 2005 provides a flexible framework to incorporate the diverse needs of all learners.

Ainscow (1992:3-8) points out that the pre-conditions for implementing the policy of inclusion are to consider curricula and subject content that are totally different and that meet the needs of each individual learner in a very specific manner. They also state that care should be taken not to emphasize individual disabilities or special needs, but to look at the class as a whole in a total context. However, a very important

part of implementing inclusion is to allow each learner to participate actively at his/her own level and to meet individualized goals in an overlapping curriculum (Van Dyke, Stallings & Colley, 1995:478).

How I arrived at these themes is discussed below in Chapter 6 (see table 6.2).

5.6   SUMMARY

In this chapter, I illustrated the method of data collection and data analysis, and I discussed the implementation of the study. I also discussed the method of data analysis together with examples and categories with their semantic units. In conclusion, I mentioned and discussed themes that had emerged from the data collection.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, final comments are made about the study. I also mention the implications for further research, make recommendations, and describe the limitations of the study.

6.2   THE MAIN THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA SOURCES

I selected the main themes from what the respondents said and wrote them in a short format. This has been explained in Chapter 5 (see 5.54).

The following table illustrates the main themes that emerged from the data sources when the categories were reduced. Each theme will be discussed individually.

Table 6.1:   Main themes that emerged

Focus Group with Teachers
1.   Numbers of learners in a class
2.   Physical Resources
3.   Need for in-service training
4.   Create a culture of respect and acceptance for diversity especially among teachers
5.   Flexible Curriculum

I assume that the above mentioned themes are the main themes that emerged because theme No 1 was emphasised by more than two teachers, whereas themes No 2, 3, 4 and 5 were mentioned (emphasised) by more than four teachers in their responses from interview.

6.2.1   Numbers of learners in a class

The concern of teacher pupil ratio was also raised. Teachers felt that if the learners are too many in numbers, teachers won't be able to give proper attention to the learners' needs. Teachers were complaining about the redeployment process and they said they were understaffed because there is no replacement for the redeployed teachers, promoted teachers and those who passed away. Teachers felt that having to cope with normal day to day problems in these large classes, was nearly more than they were able to do. Teachers also felt that learners with disabilities demanded much more attention.

According to Ainscow (1992:10) the ratio of learners to a teacher should be such as to enable teachers to give proper attention to the needs of each learner. Teachers should also develop and be trained in teaching practices, for example, cooperative learning, buddy systems in order to deal with the large numbers.

6.2.2   Physical Resources

Teachers were concerned about problems in the environment, which might prevent some learners from enjoying equal opportunities with other learners such as stairs, inaccessible toilets, etc. The respondents felt that the department should renovate all schools in order to suit/accommodate all learners irrespective of their disabilities.

In responsible inclusion programs, successful inclusion requires considerable resources as supported by Voughn and Schumn (1995:266). The NCSNET/NCESS report (DNE, 1997) illustrates that all schools must become accessible in terms of building requirement to learners with disabilities.

In my view, lack of resources will lead to poor teaching. In rural schools, resources are poorly developed and no building to accommodate learners because of poverty

6.2.3   Need for In-Service Training

Although teachers felt that they lacked skills, the whole group supported inclusive education and they felt that they needed in-service training to be more developed in inclusive practices. Most of the participants in the focus group did not understand

what was expected from them and teachers did not feel that they have the knowledge and skill to educate all learners with disabilities.

There should be competent and well-trained teachers as there is learners with mild to moderate disabilities found in all regular classes (schools), teachers should be trained at all levels to meet these learner needs (Skuy & Partington, 1990:182). Therefore teachers felt that they needed skills and more knowledge enabling them to cope with the barriers that occurs. On-going in-service training is regarded as important. Thus more teachers need TST to support them when doing their work. They need positive support to enhance their self-esteem as I have already mentioned in Chapter 3.

Personally I would suggest that, educators may feel uncomfortable and may not trust their own skills. They fear the unknown that is why they don't want to venture into new world which is full of technological changes. They fear to loose their jobs, more especially those form special schools. Others fear the parents thinking that parents know more than they do.

To my opinion educators who lack training should undergo continuous in-service training. In-service programmes for underqualified educators are an example of service programmes aimed at redressing the discriminating imbalances of the past. Little knowledge seems to disempower the educators.

In my view, educators are well equipped with knowledge of inclusive education will perform differently than those who does not have any knowledge or those who have not heard about inclusive education. Knowledgeable educators who are well equipped with more knowledge of inclusive education will be offering good service to the learner and to the community as a whole. They can venture easily into the changing world because knowledge is power and they will not fear anybody who will come across their way. Teachers have to be sensitive when supporting the inclusion of learners with special educational needs, not only to the particular needs of individual learners, but also to their own attitudes and feelings (Engelbrecht *et al.,* 1999:71).

To my point they can argue on their findings easily rather than those who does not have more knowledge about the subject. They can be adopted easily in the changing world without any fear of the unknown. They do things with more confidence because they are positively motivated and have positive self-esteem towards themselves.

6.2.4   Create a culture of respect and acceptance for diversity especially among learners

The teachers were also concerned about the necessity of acceptance and respect for all learners. The fears about how the learners will react to each other will occur especially because of different types of disabilities. This was reflected in statement made by teachers such as ..." (learners with disabilities will be ridiculed by other learners)". However, they felt that peers should be workshopped and moulded on how to accept these learners.

These sentiments have been shown in different studies such as that of Idol (1997:392) who echoes that other learners in the class where inclusion is taking place must be educated about the barriers faced by the included learner in a healthy, positive and nurturing way. Unless learners learn otherwise, they are naturally kind and they can be incredibly supportive of one another under firm, positive and strong teacher leadership. Involving learners, as peer helpers for learners with disabilities is a very effective strategy as stated by Van Dyke, Stalling and Colley (1995:478). Teachers will need to model strategies for learners and allow them to be involved in problem-solving sessions. Learners should learn how to interact, respect and empathy with others. Peer assistance and support can help non-disabled learners to build and maintain good relationships with their disabled peers.

Ainscow also supports by emphasising/stating that peers should be part of each group assisting these learners. They should work in collaboration to one another.

6.2.5   Flexible Curriculum

As teachers emphasised that the current curriculum does not accommodate for the diverse needs of all learners in the classroom, a flexible curriculum and mechanisms to address problems to learning and development should be available. Developing an inclusive school incorporate curriculum transformation in order to ensure that the different needs of all learners are met and catered for. All aspects of the curriculum need to be developed to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

Curriculum 2005 provides a flexible framework to incorporate the diverse needs of all learners.

The policy of inclusion is to consider the curricula and subject content that is totally different and that meets the needs of each individual learner in a very specific manner. They also state that care should be taken not to emphasise individual disabilities or special needs, but to look at the class as a whole in a total context. However, a very important part is to allow each learner to participate actively at his/her own level and to meet individualized goals in an overlapping curriculum (Van Dyke, Stallings & Colley, 1995:478).

6.3   CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

As in response to the central research question, namely as follows: *What are the perceptions and needs of inclusive education in the Limpopo Province of South Africa?* Findings to this study suggest that a support programme for teachers can expedite the implementation of the policy of inclusion when teachers' needs for training and support are met. The conclusions that can be drawn from the study are the following:

Neither of the focus interview groups have any objection to inclusion but both groups felt that they needed more knowledge, skills, and resources in order to implement inclusion more successfully. In addition, the emotional needs of teachers with or without barriers to learning should be considered during this process. As the teacher-pupil ratio is a major concern, the participants suggested that inclusion would only be possible if the size of the class could be reduced. They further suggested that the need for a flexible curriculum in order to meet the needs of all learners should be catered for or taken into consideration.

6.4   IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The implications of the findings are divided into two categories, viz.: implications for current theory and practice, and implications for further research.

6.4.1   Implications for current theory and practice

In this study I found that inclusion in South Africa is a fairly new phenomenon, and there is still a need to articulate relevant theory within the South African context. Therefore, in South Africa, we learn about inclusion from the experiences of the

international world in order to rectify the barriers to learning and development. Education for all is a crucial part of the overall social, political and economic transformation that the country is experiencing.

6.4.2   Implication for further research

It is important that further research should describe the following:

1. The experience of teachers in the implementation of inclusion.

2. Educational practices that foster inclusive education.

6.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations cover two aspects of the study, namely the teacher support programme and areas in which the support programme can facilitate change.

6.5.1   Recommendations regarding the teacher support programme

It is of vital importance to support teachers in their increasingly demanding roles. Many teachers feel that they do not have enough training and support to meet many of the challenges they encounter in their classes. Teachers need to change their attitudes by sharing ideas, knowledge, skills, experiences and expertise. They can share by working in a collaborative relationship with each other. Teacher support programmes in the form of Teacher Support Teams help them to solve problems by sharing ideas with each other. The development of collaborative relationships among teachers facilitates that expertise may be shared and this is crucial to the success in meeting the different/diverse needs of all learners in inclusive education settings.

Educators must guide learners from the known to the unknown by acting as facilitators. Without knowledge, educators cannot survive in the changing world. Educators need to be well-equipped with recent knowledge and information so that they may be well-informed. To change their negative attitudes, they need more training in the form of continuous in-service training such as that offered at the Ramaano Mmbulaheni Training Centre in the Vuwani Area of the Limpopo Province. At this institution upgrading of teachers is done and seminars are presented in order to assist educators in working collaboratively with others as a team.

6.5.2   Areas in which a support programme can facilitate change

A support programme can facilitate change by bringing all teachers together to work as a team. Teacher Support Teams help the teachers to be kind to each other, to accept one another, to work collaboratively with others, and to share ideas with one another (cf. Chapter 3). Most importantly a TST facilitates working in teams and values diversity (refer to section 3).

6.6   SUMMARY

In this study, chapter 1 is the introduction and orientation where I showed how my study would be composed. Chapter 2 of this study revealed how inclusive education was practised in South Africa. Support programmes were discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 dealt with my methodological approach, while Chapter 5 explained how the data were analysed and interpreted. Finally, Chapter 6 covered the findings, conclusions, implications, recommendations, limitations and my reflection on the study.

6.7   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is vital for every researcher to mention any limitations that may raise questions regarding the credibility of the study. In this study, an important limitation taken into account is that it was based on a very small sample of respondents, which cannot be generalized.

Lastly, limitations of time and financial resources necessitated limited data collection.

6.8   MY REFLECTIONS

On reflecting on the study, I came to the conclusion that if the Limpopo Education Department were to regard my research as valuable, they would implement inclusive education more effectively in future.

Teachers will mostly benefit from this study. This study will open the minds of parents to bring their learners with special educational needs into the mainstream education.

6.9   FINAL COMMENTS

The findings of the analysed data were interpreted and discussed in this chapter. The themes were discussed and recommendations and implications were made. Possible areas of further research were suggested and the limitations of the study were stated.

The conclusion drawn from this study is that the teacher support programme can help teachers to implement inclusive education more effectively when their needs for training and support are being met.

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ANNEXURE A

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A GROUP INTERVIEW

I am presently engaged in a study entitled *The Implementation of Inclusive Education: A Support Programme for Teachers* as part of fulfilling the requirements for my studies.

I hereby request you to allow me to involve teachers of Mutende Primary School in your district in group interviews of approximately one hour duration, starting from 13h00 and continuing up to 14h00. Contents of the interview will remain confidential and individual participants will not be identified by name.

Should you have any further questions or require further information you can contact me at P.O. Box 2465, THOHOYANDOU, 0950 or phone **083 9439 171.** You may also contact my supervisor, Dr R Newmark at Stellenbosch University, telephone **082 440 0726.**

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and support.

THANYANI SELINAH MAKHAVHU

DATE:

ANNEXURE B

THE INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

In my bid to carry out a study, *The Implementation of Inclusive Education: A Support Programme for Teachers*, ideas, perceptions, and reports have to be amassed from teachers. Your district has been identified as one of the districts that can provide valuable information.

An invitation is therefore extended to you to participate in group interviews of approximately an hour's duration. The decision to participate is completely voluntary. All contents of the interview will be held in strict confidence. Individuals will not be identified by name. All raw data will be held by the interviewer and will not be distributed to any other unauthorized individual.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and support.

....
Interviewer's Signature   **Participant's Signature**

....
Date   **Date**

ANNEXURE C

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW
WITH TEACHERS

R: *What is your understanding of the concept of inclusive education?*

T1:   According to me, inclusive education means teaching all learners unconditionally in one school irrespective of their disabilities.

T5:   I am not sure whether I can teach all learners with different disabilities in one class (T6 agrees).

T4.   Maybe to clarify, I think it means accommodating children from the same neighbourhood in the same school irrespective of their disabilities (T1 agrees). In my views, teaching outcomes-based education is the same as teaching in an inclusive manner (T3 nods).

T8:   My problem is that learners with disabilities may be ridiculed by others (T10 nods).

T9:   Just to emphasize what teacher 8 has said, I think it is unfair for other learners without disabilities to be accommodated in the same class because they are working at a different pace.

T2:   Yes, my illustration is also concerned about the fact that they may not be able to get enough attention from their teacher as one learner needs braille and others need sign language (the group agrees).

T7:   For teachers to give more attention to all learners, we must reduce the teacher pupil ratio.

T8: (T0, T4 and T1): I thought you liked the idea of inclusive education.

T4. I have nothing against it in my view but I think that as long as we have these large numbers of learners in a class it is going to be difficult to meet the needs of all learners. Individualisation will not be done effectively without reducing teacher-pupil ratio.

R: *What conditions would be required in order to implement inclusive education effectively?*

T16: In my view, I think we teachers need specialised training to educate those learners in the same classroom. All learners must undergo training in order to accept those with disabilities.

T17: To add on that, this kind of education needs specialised training (the group nods). You cannot just take any ordinary teacher and throw him/her in a class and expect him/her to teach them as he/she will expect this learner (disabled) to behave like an ordinary child, whereas, hearing and sight disabilities need a specially trained teacher to read Braille and speak sign language to them.

T13: My concern is that even access to the school would be a problem, for example, a child on the wheelchair (facilities) stairs / no ramps.

T15: To me, I cannot teach without resources and facilities (all agree).

T11: Just to add to what teacher 15 and 13 have said, I think it is the responsibilities of the government to train, workshop and support teachers in order to implement inclusive education effectively.

T19: Learners with disabilities are not meant for us to teach them, they must go to special schools to be taught well with trained teachers for them.

T14: I don't think these learners should go to a different school like Tshilidzini (school for disabled children) and when they go to their different schools then we are discriminating against them. They should attend school near their homes.

T18: They must have a sense of belonging.

T20: Tshilidzini special school itself is not right because it is a segregatory school. These children see themselves as outcasts.

T12: It does not mean that we do not like children with disabilities, but just like what T11, 13, and 15 have explained, what is important is that we have no relevant facilities and teachers are not trained on how to teach them but we welcome the idea of inclusive education because we would like them to play together so that they can get used to each other.

R: *What is your role in implementing inclusion in your school?*

T4: According to me, my role is to help other teachers to implement inclusion in their classrooms.

T2: I think my role is to co-ordinate other teachers and learners to accept one another unconditionally.

T5: My role is to intervene between teachers and learners where necessary.

T8: I agree with all the above-mentioned.

T10: I amend the above-mentioned things (group nods their heads).

R: *What are the needs in your school?*

T18: I think we need in-depth knowledge to read braille and to understand sign language (all nod their heads).

T20: To me, I think we need specialised teachers who can help us in educating learners with disabilities (T12 agrees).

T16: We are lacking facilities. Our government should renovate the school in order to accommodate all learners.

T11: I agree with what T18 and T16 have mentioned (all agree).

R: *What skill do you think will enable you to be effective?*

T3: I think on-going training is a necessity (the group agrees).

T6. I am not sure, (looking a bit hesitant). I think we need communication skills (T9 agrees) as we will be educating other teachers.

T1: To add on what T6 has just said, I feel we must also have the knowledge that will help us to evaluate our programmes whether they are working or not.

T5: Teamwork is important according to my view because we must learn how to share knowledge, experiences, skills and expertise (T7 nods).

T10: To me, I think we must have listening, speaking, writing and intervention (teaching) skills (the group agrees).

ANNEXTURE D

Table 4.2:   **An example of an interrelationship between themes and categories**

Themes	Category
Numbers of learners in a class	Small classes are important
Physical resources	Capacity building
Need for in-service training	In-service training/professional development is essential
Flexible curriculum	Placement
Create a culture of respect and acceptance of diversity among teachers	Importance of mutual acceptance in inclusion