TEACHERS' TALK REGARDING INCLUSION:
A COMPARATIVE DISCURSIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Much research on the educators' perceptions of and attitudes towards inclusive education has been conducted both in South Africa and abroad. What is absent in this literature is an acknowledgement of the socially constructed nature of teachers' responses to inclusive education and its recipients. In this study, the talk of educators involved in piloting inclusive education is compared to that of educators who are not involved, in order to determine the discourses from which educators draw in their construction of inclusive education. It is a comparative study premised on the social constructionist perspective in which discourse analysis was employed. The sample was drawn from schools piloting inclusive education in the East London District of the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa and was compared with schools not involved in the pilot, but in the same area. Semi structured interviews were conducted with eight educators spread across two piloting and two non piloting schools. The analysis revealed significant similarities and quite minimal differences in the manner in which educators across the two settings construct their experiences of inclusive education. Even though the educators draw on the rights driven anti-discriminatory discourse, they still embrace the special needs/medical/expertise and charity discourses. These discourses construct disability around notions of disputed degrees of impairment, feared status and perceptions of disability as a personal issue rather than a public responsibility, and they undermine the status of people with a disability while supporting notions of dependency. In this article, I will argue that the historical legacy within which these discourses were originally constructed, will essentially continue unless there is a change in how diversity is viewed.

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of inclusive education in many countries and recently in South Africa, has generated much interest around the perceptions and attitudes of educators, particularly mainstream educators, towards inclusive education. This has resulted in quite a substantial body of research emerging in this field with researchers agreeing that the educator is crucial to the success of inclusive education. Generally, researchers argue that a school's philosophy and the attitude of the staff are key forces in determining the quality of inclusion. Against that background, Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher (2002) have postulated that it is essential to understand educators' perspectives and their attitudes towards inclusive education in order to accomplish and manage a meaningful transformation of the South African education system. What has been overlooked by contemporary researchers is an acknowledgement that educator' feelings, attitudes and sense of challenge will be constructed and restricted simultaneously by discourses available to them regarding inclusion. This article is an attempt to highlight this dichotomy. The aim is to identify the linguistic resources from which educators draw in order to construct inclusive education in particular ways. The focus is on the linguistic similarities and differences used to construct inclusive education. Premised from a social constructionist perspective, the study seeks to answer the

following question: What discourses do educators source when discussing inclusive education? How are these similar /different across the two settings (piloting and non-piloting schools)?

As a background to this study, I will present a brief introduction of developments around inclusive education in South Africa and introduce the reader to the Danish International Development Aid (DANIDA) pilot project on inclusive education in which the participants were involved. Using a social constructionist perspective as a lens from which educators' talk regarding inclusive education is viewed, background writings on social constructionism will be reviewed.

Discourse analysis methodology was applied in this study. Potter and Wetherell (1987) maintain that the goal of discourse analysis is to "clarify the linguistic resources used to make certain things happen" (p.171). The discourses emerging in the spoken language of a group of educators from two schools piloting inclusive education were interpreted and compared to discourses of the language of educators from two schools not involved in the pilot project. The analysis highlighted that the discourses educators use in constructing inclusive education, draw on the bifurcation of abnormal/normal and entrench a special needs-expertise nexus, that despite the anti-discriminatory discourse employed, will act against inclusive education.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Inclusive education in South Africa: A brief introduction

First steps

Positive steps towards the establishment of an Inclusive Education and Training system in South Africa were started in October 1996 when the Department of Education appointed the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of 'special needs and support services' in education and training in South Africa. In November 1997, these two bodies presented a joint report to the Minister of Education. This report highlighted the following controversial issues in the education system:
✓ a specialised education and support system that has predominantly been provided for a small percentage of learners with disabilities within 'special' schools and classes;
✓ a selective specialised education and support system that was provided on a racial basis, with the best human, physical and material resources reserved for whites;

✓ a high drop out rate among the black communities where most learners with disability had either fallen outside of the system or been 'mainstreamed by default';

✓ an inefficient curriculum and education system that have generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive numbers of drop-outs, push-outs, and failures;

✓ a serious neglect of 'special needs and support' in other levels or bands of education as compared to the schooling phase where some attention has been given (National Department of Education, 1997).

In the light of these issues, the two bodies, the NCSNET and the NECESS recommended that the South African Education and Training system should promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning. This, the Commission decided, would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they could develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society. This vision, the report asserts, would be guided, among other principles, by human rights and social justice for all learners; participation and social integration; equal access to a single, inclusive education system; access to the curriculum, equity and redress; community responsiveness; and cost-effectiveness (National Department of Education, 1997).

The key strategies required to achieve this included infusing 'special needs and support services' throughout the system, pursuing the holistic development of centres of learning to ensure a barrier-free physical environment and a supportive and inclusive psycho-social learning environment, developing a flexible curriculum to ensure access to all learners and promoting the rights and responsibilities of parents, educators and learners. This would ultimately lead to a realization of the dream - access to education for all learners.

Following a process of consultation with the public and other social partners, discussing the recommendations of the NCSNET and NCESS, the Department of Education finally produced the *Education White Paper 6 - Special Needs Education. Building an Inclusive Education and training system*.

White Paper 6

This document is preceded by and to a very large extent built on a number of documents and policies that include the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995); The South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996); the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy; (Ministerial Office of the Deputy President, 1997) all of which, as Engelbrecht (2004) observes, "have articulated the new goals of equity, redress, equality, efficiency and the right of all learners to equal access to the widest possible educational opportunities" (p.22). It places inclusive

educetion and its focus on addressing barriers to learning and participation at the core of education transformation. The Education Department's perception of what inclusive education is and a strategy for its implementation is spelt out in this White Paper. It recognizes that an inclusive education and training system can only be developed over the long term and that short to medium term activities must provide models for later system-wide application, as well as further clarity on the capital, material and human resource development, and consequently the funding requirements of building an inclusive education and training system.

In terms of this White Paper, inclusive education and training is about:

➤ Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that they need support.

➤ Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners

➤ Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, langauge, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases.

➤ Acknowledging that learning is broader than formal schooling and also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal settings and structures.

➤ Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methods, curricula and environment to meet the needs of all learners.

➤ Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curriculum of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning.

The plight of the learners, who have historically been termed 'learners with special education needs,' i.e. learners with disabilities and impairments, is highlighted in White Paper 6. The Department acknowledges that the vulnerability of these learners has increased, largely due to the historical nature and extent of the educational support provided. As such, White Paper 6 outlines key strategies and levers for establishing an inclusive education and training system. These include:

➤ The designation and phased conversion of approximately 500 out of 20,000 primary schools to full-service schools which will help to develop a model for later system-wide application.

➤ Within mainstream education, the general orientation and introduction of management, governing bodies and professional staff to the inclusion model, and the targeting of early identification of the range of diverse learning needs and intervention in the Foundation Phase.

➤ The establishment of district-based support teams (DBST's) to provide a coordinated professional support service that draws on expertise in further and higher education and local communities, targeting special schools and specialised settings, designated full-service and other primary schools and educational institutions.

Even before White Paper 6 was issued, some provinces, as Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff & Pettipher (2002) report, developed and implemented Provincial policies, thereby responding to the Constitutional provisions of Act 108 of 1996 and the joint report of the NCSNET and the NCESS. In addition, a pilot project for inclusive education, the 'Resource and Training Programme for Educator Development Project: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System' was launched in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and the North West. The project is commonly referred to as the DANIDA Inclusive Education Pilot Project or the DANIDA project.

DANIDA Inclusive Education Pilot Project.

This project was funded by the government of Denmark through Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) and introduced into three provinces in South Africa during 2001 and 2002. The provinces are the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu/Natal and the North West Province. The project was managed for the Department of Education by the Joint Education Trust (JET) and its overall objective was to support implementation of government policy on the development of an inclusive education and training system that would benefit learners experiencing barriers to learning and participation. The five components of the project are as follows: capacity building in the education departments at national, provincial and district level; educator development for building and sustaining an inclusive education system; pilot projects in the three districts; infrastructural development and action research.

In the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, 12 schools in the greater Easter London Area are currently participating in the project. These schools were selected by district officials on the basis of voluntary participation demonstrated by dedication and commitment. The focus of the development work in the pilot projects was on educator development at school level, materials development, and whole school development in order to make schools responsive to diversity, systems change in schools and education departments, curriculum access for all learners, and development of effective school management for inclusive schools. Institutions of higher learning were given the responsibility of developing a training curriculum and materials and of providing the training. They were to work in close collaboration with stakeholders involved in the pilot districts and school clusters to identify the needs for training and support, related to the specific learner population, their parents, communities and NGOs. Two special schools relatively close to the pilot were selected for strengthening so that they could be used as resource centres for the pilot schools. The professional staff at these schools would run training workshops for other educators in the district, providing particular expertise and support, especially professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction, as part of the district based support team.

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WHAT DANIDA DID FOR THE PILOT SCHOOLS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

Introducing the project

Representatives of DANIDA visited the individual schools participating in the project to introduce the pilot project on inclusive education. After briefing all the educators, they then invited them to identify barriers to inclusive education from within the school and the community. On the average, educators identified lack of security, inaccessibility of the school, clasrooms and toilets, the lack of skill required to deal with the Learners with Special Education Needs (LSEN) on the part of the educators and general poverty as major barriers. DANIDA then assisted the schools to overcome these barriers through the introduction of physical changes to the school, educator development and poverty aleviation projects.

Physical Changes

In an attempt to improve security and make the schools accessible to LSEN, DANIDA introduced certain changes to the pilot schools. These included security fencing and lockable gates, paving of grounds and the construction of ramps. In some schools, for an example, Shad Mashologu, which participated in this research, the school toilets were widened somewhat to allow accessibility for learners who use wheelchairs. Touch up renovations were also made to these schools, like fixing broken windows and malfunctioning electricity plugs.

Educator development

When the possibility of piloting inclusive education was introduced, educators in the would-be pilot sites raised their concerns regarding their (in)ability to deal with LSEN. DANIDA project took this up as one of its central concerns. In a collaborative effort between Rhodes University (East London) and Fort Hare Distance Education Project, all educators in the piloting schools received training in barriers to learning. The training started in June 2001 and finished in March 2002. Educators attended a three hour workshop once a month where they would share experiences and begin discussions on issues around inclusion. The course content included an introduction to inclusive education and the rationale behind this system; legislation and guidelines pertaining to the provision of an inclusive education system; specific disabilities; screening and identification of barriers to learning; models of approaching disability and basic counselling skills. In between workshops, they worked on materials and projects given to them during the monthly contact sessions. The work included reading, developing a portfolio, recording their reflections in a journal and carrying out action research tasks in their schools.

To support these educators, field advisors paid weekly visits to each school where they spent time discussing the action research carried out and clarifying matters of concern to the Educators. At the end of the term of training they received a certificate from Fort Hare University. In addition to this, DANIDA provided a bursary for two educators in each participating school to study inclusive education at the University of Pretoria.

Poverty alleviation

In order to overcome the poverty barrier, school vegetable gardens were started. A member of the community was appointed to man each garden for which seeds and seedlings were provided by DANIDA. When the vegetables were ready the parents and educators would take turns on what came to be known as feeding days, to prepare meals for the learners. These meals supplemented the bread and cooldrink provided by the Department of Education as part of the feeding scheme. Educators who were interviewed for this research believed that these meals helped lessen learner absenteeism.

Limitations of the project

Educators involved in this research agreed that the nine month period during which they had received training was too short and the course was very basic. They claimed that they were not really empowered . When they returned to their schools, they sometimes encountered problems , but unfortunately they did not receive any support from the Department of Education, in particular from the 'specialists' in the district education support centre.

EDUCATION AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In South Africa when talks about inclusion first began, the general public, including educators and parents, expressed anxiety and concerns (National Department of Education, 2001). Research has shown that these feelings, at least on the part of the educators, are not peculiar to South Africa.In the USA, studies revealed that general education teachers were not supportive of 'full inclusion' and educators, who had not participated in inclusive programmes, expressed very strong negative feelings about inclusion, feeling that decision-makers were out of touch with classroom realities (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000). Later research showed that as teachers became more involved in inclusive education, their attitudes changed (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000).

Research has indicated that educators often face a number of challenges pertaining to the inclusion of LSEN in the mainstream schools. These include feeling unprepared to teach Learners with Special

Education Needs (LSEN); lacking the skills in teaming and collaboration, which is imperative in inclusive classrooms (Daane, Berne-Smith and Latham, 2000; Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Clark, Dyson, Millward and Robson, 1999). Even while expressing a number of challenges, educators with active experience of inclusion had significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusion than those randomly selected.

The literature is unanimous about the importance of the educator for successful inclusion initiatives. Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker, & Engelbrecht (1999) believe that educators' beliefs, attitudes and feelings with regards to what is happening in the classroom is of crucial importance. This view is supported by Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden (2000), who maintain that mainstream educators should be receptive to the principles and demands of inclusion for it to be effective, and by Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff and Pettipher (2002) who have argued that for quality education to be achieved, educators need to be prepared and given the necessary support. An understanding of the educators' perspective and attitudes towards inclusive education is essential to the management and accomplishment of meaningful transformation in South Africa. In this study, I advance the argument that popular discourses around inclusive education will invariably influence the manner in which educators perceive it, or feel and talk about it. Their practices and sense of challenge regarding inclusive education will be constructed, and at the same time restricted, by the discourses available to them. In order to support the claim made above, I will take a closer look at the social constructionist perspective and the historical construction of disablement.

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The historical construction of disablement

Traditionally, conceptions of disability in South Africa and abroad were explained in terms of a deficit in the person. In other words, disabilities were constructed within the discourse of individualism. The education field was not exempt from this general perception of disability. Educational difficulties were explained in terms of learner deficit, which regarded some learners, as Engelbrecht (2004) has observed, "at best, disadvantaged and in need of individual fixing or at worst as deficient and therefore beyond support" (p. 21). This approach to disability has been widely described in literature as the medical deficit approach.

In **medical discourse,** impairment is linked with disability and as such, the disability is perceived as an objective attribute, not a social construct, a natural and irremediable characteristic of the person. This immediately results, as Naicker (2001) has observed, in the construction of people as inadequate human

beings who are unfit to be included in mainstream economic and social life. In terms of this model, a process of assessment, diagnosis, prognosis and intervention becomes necessary to identify and manage the disability. The medical discourse is traditionally associated with institutionalization, differentiation, exclusion, regulation, dehumanization and special education practice (Van Rooyen, Le Grange and Newmark, 2002).

In addition to the medical model Fulcher (1989, cited in Bourk 2000) talks of the charity, lay and rights discourses. The **charity discourse** involves benevolent humanitarianism, in which the recipients of Special Education are viewed as in need of assistance, as objects of pity, personally tragic, low achievers by ideal standards and eternal children, who are permanently dependent on others and at times in need of institutional care. People in authority (mainly non-disabled persons) are always the decision makers. The voice of disabled persons is totally erased from the production of knowledge central to disability. A **lay discourse** relates to prejudice, hate, ignorance, fear and even paternalistic tendencies. Much of this has to do with the isolation of people who deviate from normal physical appearances. Naicker (2000) suggests that in order to shift paradigms, a rethinking is required around one's consciousness and perception of disability, race, class and gender. He recommends a move from an understanding of disability that is shaped by the lay discourse, to an understanding underpinned by a **rights discourse** based on democratic foundations, that every person is valuable in his or her own right and should be afforded equal opportunities to develop to his or her full potential. The rights discourse is committed to extending full citizenship to all people. In addition to equal opportunities, the rights discourse stresses self reliance and independence. Oliver (1996, cited in Naicker 2000) argues that the rights model moves away from the pathological assumption individual deficit theory and institutional discrimination.

Pearsall (1999, cited by Van Rooyen, Le Grange and Newmark, 2002) speaks of **the special needs discourse,** that is, particular educational requirements resulting from learning difficulties, physical disability, or emotional and behavioural difficulties. This discourse is deliberated upon later in this article.

Within the education system in South Africa during the apartheid era, the medical deficit approach has led to doubtful identification criteria, direct support service delivery only to a few advantaged schools and communities, and the exclusion of environmentally and economically disadvantaged learners who have an equal right to effective support. Inevitably, such an a-contextual and individualistic approach has ignored systemic factors and the influence of broader socio-economic factors in the generation and perpetuation of ineffective support for learners who present with behavioural and emotional problems, disabilities and learning difficulties.

The conceptual framework that located disabilities somewhere inside the skin of an individual, like for instance the assumption that learning disabilities are a pathology residing in the heads of individual students, has been criticized and challenged in various quarters. Emerging now is a strong movement towards introducing an alternative perspective - social constructionism - that locates the notions of the 'normal/abnormal' and 'ability/disability' in social contexts. In order to understand the social history of disability and the social contexts that both enable and disable, as opposed to the traditional medical approach, I would like first to give a brief exposé of social constructionism in general.

The social constructionist perspective

The emergence of the second cognitive revolution in the social sciences has brought with it a new paradigm which challenges the taken-for-granted view that each individual possesses a mind, an internal organ of thought that mediates between the individual and the world out there and that the individual's mind has principles of operation of its own, owing nothing to history or society. This new paradigm, known as social constructionism (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Gee, 1992) has carried with it a shift in focus from an individual and his or her inner life and the perception that language is a direct reflection of what goes on in a person's mind. It has now shifted focus to a means of constructing the social world or versions of it. These constructions are based on the linguistic resources avail.ble in a society which its members acquire with time (Hyrkstedt & Kajala, 1998).

Social constructionism does not believe in innate discoverable psychological essences like personalities, cognitions or even emotions. Taking this argument further, Burr (1995) provides the following brief key elements of social constructionism that she later refers to as the four broad social constructionist tenets, namely: a critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge; historical and cultural specificity; the view that knowledge is sustained by processes; and that knowledge and social action go together.

Of critical significance here is the **historical and cultural specificity of social constructionism** which, Burr (1995) maintains, emphasizes that our common understanding of the world, the categories and concepts we use, are historically and culturally specific. The categories and concepts the educators involved in the DANIDA project employ in their understanding of inclusive education are influenced by where and when in the world they live. Those categories and concepts are seen as products of culture and history and are dependent on the particular social and economic arrangements prevailing in that culture at that time, its artifacts. Finally Burr (1995) cautions against the assumption that our ways of understanding are necessarily any better than other ways.

Social constructionism is opposed to the naively objective reality out there which can be directly perceived. This does not mean that social constructionism denies reality, but that reality is socially constructed. In other words, people interact with one another to construct, modify and maintain what their society holds to be true, real and meaningful. Within this paradigm, meanings are produced by a process of reflexivity (Freedman & Combs,1996) and people are treated as though their thoughts, feelings and experiences are the products of systems of meaning that exist at a social rather than an individual level. This paradigm therefore rejects the false opposition where explanations are either determined from within the individual or within social structures and focuses instead, on interactions between people and on social practices.

Another characteristic feature of Social constructionism is that the human-life world is fundamentally constituted in language and that language should therefore be the object of study. Language is not treated as if it is neutral and transparent or as a route to underlying realities. Rather it helps to construct reality. It is not a peripheral matter, but is central to the way we view the world (Burr, 1995). Constructionism is concerned with broader patterns of social meaning encoded in language (Gergen, 1999; Freedman & Combs,1996; Terre Blanche & Kelly 1999). A discourse is a system with broader patterns of social meaning encoded in language that forms the object of study in social constructionist and poststructuralist research.

In conclusion, the social constructionist perspective has influenced thinking in research around the construction of disabilities, among other things. While in the past, an individualistic approach was followed in explaining the existence of disabling conditions, the social constructionist paradigm has enabled researchers to seriously consider the role of the social context in constructing disabilities. In the following section I will explore, with the support of available literature in this subject, how social contexts enable and disable individuals and in particular, how the education system enables some while simultaneously constructing the other as 'disabled'.

Inclusion and social constructionism

The social construction of special education needs

The term 'need' is slippery and quite problematic as the debate around it testifies. Monette (1984, cited in Macleod, Masilela, Sehayek, Tollman, Molomane and Homer, 1996) distinguishes between four types of needs, namely, basic human, normative, comparative and felt needs. Monette describes normative needs as the gap between what exists and the desirable situation. These are usually identified by experts using

standardized instruments in an assessment procedure. This kind of normalization underpins the concept of special needs, which result from the construction of learning difficulties, physical disability, or emotional and behavioral difficulties against the framework of 'the normal'. Thus, the particular educational requirements are treatments or interventions related to labels of difficulty and disability applied through a process of assessment and diagnosis. Clough (1999, cited in Van Rooyen et.al., 2002) emphasizes the link between special needs and normative assessment when he notes that special educational needs are not noticed in a vacuum, but that they appear against a background of normal ability and performance which gives them relief. Further controversy around the notion of special education needs is highlighted by Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000) when they refer to special education needs as a catch phrase for all categories of learners who do not fit into the system which defines the normal. Booth (1999) argues that the special needs discourse focuses attention on the difficulties experienced by some learners while deflecting attention from those experienced by others, as well as developments in school cultures, policies, curricula and teaching approaches that would minimize educational difficulties for all.

In this study, the educators expressed concern about the lack of expertise. Their perception of learners with disabilities as needing expert intervention inevitably forces these educators to undermine their own training and therefore ability to cope with the needs of these learners.

The social construction of disability

The extent to which disabilities are socially derived or simply a consequence of culturally neutral medical conditions has been an object of interest in contemporary research. Researchers in the field concur to a certain extent, that, no natural or normal body exists outside of, or prior to, cultural constructions, Dudley-Marling, 2004) and that disability is socially constructed. This claim includes the recognition that disability is not a static, ahistoric notion and, therefore, that disability is dependent for its meaning on the socio-historical and political contexts in which it appears. It also asserts that the organization of social contexts enables some while disabling others, who must negotiate those contexts (Shogun, 1998). Siminski (2003) argues that the norms of social participation are very crucial in determining disabilities and impairments.

While the existence of an impairment in the body is readily acknowledged and the existing impairment is recognized as the description of the physical body (Oliver 1996, in Siminski 2003), it is argued that the disability has nothing to do with the body and that it is a consequence of the failure of the social organization to take into account the differing needs of disabled people and to remove the barriers they encounter. Siminski (2003) postulates that disability is social, in that it is totally a product of social

meaning and is thus reducible to attitudes. Disabilities, and not impairments, could be eliminated by changing the physical and attitudinal structures of society. This position presents disability as a failure of society to accommodate its citizens.

The social construction of learning disabilities

The term 'learning disabilities', first made its appearance in the USA in the 1960's and its precursors are traced by Sigmon (1987, cited by Macleod 1998) to the child movement, medical work on aphasia, brain damage and alexia; remediation and the development of the concept of the slow learner. As literacy standards were raised in the USA, those children, who scored low in a reading achievement test, were personally blamed and they were described in terms of a number of different categories, including slow learner, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, culturally deprived and learning disabled (Sleeter, cited in Macleod 1998).

The same pattern leading, to the emergence of the concept of learning disabilities in the USA, has been observed in research in South Africa as well. Provision was made for English and Afrikaans learners to be assessed, diagnosed, assisted and remediated through a system that included remedial schools among other resources. Nothing was in place for black children who were legally prohibited from accessing facilities designed 'for Whites only'. Research conducted in this country, Macleod (1998) reports, has revealed that this arrangement led to a situation in which white urban educators accounted for learning difficulties in their classes in terms of learning disabilities and emotional disturbances, while black rural educators did so in terms of hunger and malnutrition. The interesting question is whether learning disabilities existed only among the white communities and the answer is provided by a conclusion made by Kibria (1995 cited in Macleod 1998) that it does occur in all cultures when children are exposed to formal education. The implication here is that learning disability is not a reality separate from the educational, historical, economic and social context. Naicker (2000) locates the construction of learning disabilities within the general education system, which he maintains is examination driven, and which rewards the ability to absorb information in a structured, curriculum-centred fashion.

RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

The research question

This study seeks to produce a rich description of educators' discursive accounts of inclusive education. It is a comparative study that seeks to identify linguistic similarities and differences in the way educators

involved in the pilot project and those who are not, express themselves with regards to inclusive education. This study seeks answers to the following questions:

1.   What discourses do educators draw from in discussing inclusive education?
2.   How are these similar /different across the two settings (piloting and non-piloting schools)

Methodology

This is a qualitative comparative study using discourse analysis as the methodology. Researchers approach discourse analytic work in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, psychoanalytic, social constructionist, ethnomethodological, semiotic and post-structuralist variations (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Macleod, 2002). What is also interesting in work done using discourse analysis is, firstly, the reluctance to provide a watertight definition of discourse and, secondly, variations in the manner in which researchers describe discourse. This is indicated in the following brief exposition.

Describing a discourse

Potter & Wetherell (1987) use the term 'discourse' to cover all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds with the intention of clarifying the linguistic resources that are employed to make things happen. Burr (1995) opts for examples, illustrations and analogies that, when put together, present a meaning for discourse and as such settles for "a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements... that in some way together produce a particular version of events" (p.48). Differentiating between "discourse "and a "conceptual scheme", Davies & Harré (1990) perceive discourse as "a multi-faceted public process through which meanings are progressively and dynamically achieved" (p.46). Taking the discussion on discourse further, Parker (1992) maintains that discourses categorise the social world, they bring phenomena into sight. He argues that " discourses allow us to see things that are not really there and that once an object has been elaborated in a discourse it is difficult not to refer to it as if it were real" (p. 5). Discourses, Parker (1992) asserts, provide frameworks for debating the value of one way of talking about reality over others.Discourses are coherent (Parker 1992), can compete with each other or create distinct and incompatible versions of reality (Davies & Harré, 1990).

Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is the analysis of all forms of spoken interaction, formal and informal, and written texts of all kinds with the intention of clarifying the linguistic resources employed to make things happen (Potter and Wetherell 1987). With its roots in linguistics, literary studies, and anthropology, discourse

analysis is both methodology and a method. Potter and Wetherell (1987) particularly locate discourse analysis in speech-act-theory, ethnomethodology and semiotics. The value of discourse analysis lies in its ability to challenge current dominant ways of understanding or viewing the objects of study and in the process opening up space for alternative reflections that could lead to change. It shows, as Levett, (1989, cited in Macleod, 1995) observes, how daily language usage on study reveals slippages of understanding and subjectivity.

Parker (1992) suggests seven initial and three more auxiliary criteria that deal with different levels of discourse analysis and these are mentioned briefly as follows: a discourse is realized in text; a discourse is about objects; a discourse contains subjects; a discourse is a coherent system of meanings; a discourse refers to other discourses; a discourse reflects on its own way of speaking; a discourse is historically located; discourses support institutions; discourses reproduce power relations and discourses have ideological effects.

 As a poststructuralist and social constructionist 'approach' to educational research developing within the postmodern line of thought, discourse analysis does not describe and explain the world. Neither does it make any claim to the truth. It is a multifaceted public process through which meanings are progressively and dynamically achieved (Davies & Harré 1990). It is a reflexive process that is directed at change and progress.

One feature that is common in the various approaches to discourse analysis is that participants' texts are approached in their own right and not as a medium for hidden meanings (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Discourse analysis involves the careful reading of texts with the intention of discerning patterns of meaning, contradictions and inconsistencies. It is an approach that identifies and names language processes people use to constitute their own understanding of personal and social phenomena. These processes are related to the production of or challenge to the distribution of power between social groups and within institutions. Discourse analysis proceeds on the assumption that these processes are not static, fixed and orderly, but rather fragmented, inconsistent and contradictory. It pays attention to detail in language and to the wider social picture.

METHODS

Sample selection

Because in discourse analysis one is interested in language rather than the people generating it and because the size need not be large in order to yield the required results, four mainstream schools, Shad

Mashologu, and Londolozani Primary Schools and Eric Mntonga, and Philemon Ngcelwane High Schools in Mdantsane were chosen to participate in this study.

All schools are from the historically black education sector. Two of these schools, namely Shad Mashologu Primary school and Eric Mntonga High School are currently participating in the DANIDA pilot project on inclusion while the other two, Londolozani Primary School and Philemon Ngcelwane High School are not. An attempt was made to match the piloting and non piloting schools in terms of resource base and size. The two high schools are approximately the same size in terms of staff and learner numbers as is the case with the two primary schools. The following table gives a glimpse of the schools' contexts:-

INFORMATION ON SCHOOLS AND CONTEXT (as per 10th day survey 2002)	PRIMARY SCHOOLS		HIGH SCHOOLS	
	Shad Mashologu (Piloting)	Londolozani (Not Piloting)	Eric Mntonga (Piloting)	Ngcelwane (Not Piloting)
Principal	1	1	1	1
Deputy Principal	1	0	1	1
Senior Educators	2	4	2	3
Educators Level 1	9	7	21	19
Enrolment	367	308	743	733
Learner Educator ratio	28.23	25.66	29.96	34.90
Learner classroom ratio	30.58	28.33	35.67	48.87
Classrooms	12	12	21	15
Water availability	Tap	Tap	Tap	Tap
Toilet Type	Main sewer	Flush system	Main sewer	Flush system
Building conditions	Needs paint	Needs paint and minor repairs	Needs paint	Needs paint and minor repairs
Per Capita income in area	R444	R331.58	R488	R548`

Source: EMIS - 10th day survey 2002 – Eastern Cape Department of Education

Ethical Issues

In order to facilitate the participants giving their fully informed consent, all the necessary information pertaining to the research including the nature, purpose and usefulness, procedures, confidentiality and the

protection of anonymity and the voluntary nature of participation in the project, was given. This exercise was carried out with each participant rather than just what Kelly (1999) refers to as "gatekeepers" (p380).

Data Collection

A detailed schedule setting out questions to be asked, was constructed in advance. Semi structured probes followed the talk with the interviewees. The major thrusts of the questions included the educators' understanding of inclusive education, their experiences of inclusive education, the difficulties they have encountered, successes they have had, what they would like to see happening, who should be doing what and what they see as their role in inclusive education.

The adequacy of this schedule was assessed through a pilot interview carried out at Dalukukhanya Primary school in Mdantsane. Dalukukhanya is a primary school participating in the DANIDA Pilot Project on Inclusive Education. This interview was transcribed, and the necessary modifications to the interview schedule were made before the proper research was conducted.

The original plan was to collect data by means of structured interviews with two educators – the principal and one class teacher with an (LSEN) in his or her classroom in the piloting schools and his/her counterpart in the non-piloting schools, from each of the participating schools. It was possible to do this with all the participants except with the Principal of Philemon Ngcelwane High school, who was unable to avail herself due to other obligations as Principal of the school. For the purpose of this research, the Deputy Principal was interviewed.

In all schools participating in the study, there is a variety of learners who could be categorized as LSEN eg. those who are partially sighted, the physically challenged, the mildly mentally challenged, those who are deaf, AIDS orphans, as well as rape and sexual abuse survivors.

Data analysis

Potter & Wetherell (1987) refer to discourse analysis as fundamentally an interpretative exercise which offers up readings of text for scrutiny. Its goal is to reach an understanding of the text and present it in such a way that the reader can assess this interpretation. Proponents and users of this framework for analysis agree that it does not follow a set of procedures as does other research methods in social psychology.

The methods of data analysis suggested by Potter and Wetherell (1987) formed the basis of analysis in this study . The specific steps and process employed follow.

Before the collected data was analysed, it was first transcribed. The process of transcription involved listening to and typing, taped interviews in order to present the collected information in a manner that would facilitate its interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994, cited in Forman & McCormick, 1995). During this process, careful attention was paid to the meanings conveyed by the educators and how these meanings were formulated. The following transcription conventions were used:

- // to indicate a point at which overlapping, or simultaneous, speech begins.
- /to indicate a break in the in the voicing of sound
- numbers in round brackets indicate pauses, timed to tenths of seconds, while the symbol (.) represents a pause which is hearable but too short to measure
- : to signal elongations of the previous sound (the more the colons, the longer the elongation)
- Underlining to show added emphasis
- arrows to show intonation e.g upward ↑ and downward↓ arrows preceding marked rises and falls of intonation (pitch)
- - to indicate an abrupt stop
- · the raised dot in front of the string ·hhhmhh indicates an audible intake of breath
- >< mark changes in the rate of speech e.g when the speech suddenly become slower or faster than the surrounding speech.

After freezing the discourse into transcripts, the data was divided into two groups according to the two original groups of sources. The first group comprised participants from the piloting schools namely, Shad Mashologu Primary School and Eric Mntonga High School and the second group comprised participants from the non piloting schools namely, Londolozani Primary School and Philemon Ngcelwane High School. This division is characteristic of a comparative study in which talk by the educators from the piloting schools is compared to talk by the educators in the non-piloting schools.

In an attempt to squeeze the unwieldy body of discourse into manageable chunks (Potter and Wetherell, 1987) starting with the transcripts of the interviews with educators from non participating schools, the interview transcripts were read several times. This was done to allow familiarization with the text and immersion in the material. During that process, emergent themes were noted, recorded down and then numbered. Each interview transcript was then broken down into smaller paragraphs, sentences and words and labeled according to the emergent themes. These emergent themes were categorized according to their relation to the research question of interest, namely the resources from which educators draw to construct inclusive education in particular ways. Similar pieces of information were grouped together into

a body of instances (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). A similar process was repeated for the non piloting schools.

This coding process was followed by the analysis proper, which Potter and Wetherell (1987) refer to as the process of searching for patterns and forming hypotheses about the functions fulfilled by what the people are saying and the effects thereof. The emerging linguistic similarities and differences across the two groups – piloting and non-piloting schools – were noted.

During the first phase of analysis proper, I looked at the patterns that emerged from the talk of, firstly by those educators who were involved in the pilot schools and secondly by the educators not involved in the pilot project. This was done in order to note the differences in either form or content, of the accounts and to identify features shared by these accounts. Potter & Wetherell (1987) refer to these as variabilities and consistencies. During the second phase, I looked at how these functions and effects were formed and what linguistic evidence was apparent. The purpose was to establish how these accounts merge into discourses first within and then across these interviews. A narrative of analysis was then created and supported with relevant extracts from the text and this is presented in the following section.

Rationale for using Discourse Analysis

Research has indicated that educators in inclusive schools have to construct the meaning of inclusion for themselves as part of an overall cultural transformation of their schools (Clark, Dyson, Millward and Robson, 1999). In the research project under discussion, focus is on the resources that the educators draw on to construct inclusive education in particular ways. Using a discourse analysis approach, the intention is to produce a rich description of educators' discursive accounts of inclusive education rather than examinining their attitudes. The value of using this approach in this study lies in the fact that the manner in which the educators construct language about inclusion tends to be a more accurate reflection than the interview method that focuses on content only, and in which educators may tend to provide politically correct answers. This approach enables them rather to construct their realities about inclusive education as they live them.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In this section I will present the data as follows:

a.   A summary of the linguistic similarities /differences between the piloting and non-piloting schools

b.   A discussion of the discourses the participants draw on to construct inclusive education across the two settings.

Linguistic similarities and differences between schools

My observation is that the language used by educators involved in the pilot project is not significantly different from the language used by the educators not involved. Examples of these similarities are indicated in the manner educators talk about each of the following:

Understanding/Definition of Inclusive education

All educators interviewed across both settings i.e the piloting and non piloting schools seemed to share a similar understanding that inclusive education is about putting an end to the discrimination of learners on the grounds of disability. The following extracts from both settings attest to that understanding.

Extracts from piloting schools

Extract 1

"... getting rid of those schools which were called (.1) special schools and (.) including those learners who were being discriminated from (.1) other learners and include them within the same school. That is it's more like mainstreaming."

Extract 2

"Inclusive Education is a type of education that does not- eh (.) discriminate against a learner because of his disability ↑whether it is mental or (.1) physical"

Extract 3

"It is aimed at providing learners with eh:: opportunities to be accommodated in mainstream schools rather than to be sent to special schools. ..because we we did not want to discriminate against them"

Extracts from non-piloting schools

Extract 4

"the learners with physical disabilities who have been:: eh discriminated so they are going to be amongst those who are not (.2) physically (.3) they are going to be based with other learners who are not physically disabled."

Extract 5

*"I should think it ha::s eh something to do with th::e (.1) question of integrating learners
with disabilities into the mainstream sort of- type of education"*

Purpose of inclusive education

The whole child-centred humanist view was embraced by educators across the two settings. They seemed
to agree that inclusive education was child centred and had been introduced for the benefit of the child,
although in some cases the participants included the educator, parent, community and the government as
beneficiaries. The following extracts reveal that view:

Non-piloting schools

Extract 6

*"I think it is both the learner and the parent – in this way the child learns a lot of things now that she is
here. Things she did not know. He benefits and the parent benefits too(.2) in the sense that while the child
had been kept in doors before- (.) at school we even teach them skills so the child who has always been
sitting at home idle because the parent does not have money to take him where he could learn these skills,-
the parent now observes changes.*

Extract 7

*Quite obviously the first beneficiary is the person himself,- but there are kick backs because the other
person on the other side would also benefit by getting to know that person as well. I am referring to the
learner because the opportunity to be in a mainstream education provides him an opportunity to be
exposed to other learners↑ who are able bodied.(.2)So the question of inequality is cut out."*

Extract 8

"Everybody is going to benefit (.) learners, educators and the government is going to benefit."

Extract 9

"The interest is solely for the interest of the child, for the benefit of the child."

Piloting schools

Extract 10

*"I think the child should benefit (1. The child should be <u>at</u> the centre of everything. For me- I think the
child should be at the centre of everything."*

Extract 11

*"E::h as far as I think- in my opinion, the Department of Education in their thought system they have the
child in mind,"*

Extract 12

"I think eh to me (.) its not only beneficial to the learner who's disabled it is also beneficial to learners and educators in the school in that they get a- a- an understanding of what it means to have a disability and to be part of of that group and also it's beneficial to the parents because some of of these learners who have disabilities stay close to the school but previously(.) because these schools were not open to all learners- they had to send these learners to faraway schools."

Critical issues including structures and practices in inclusive education

All educators who responded to this issue talked about ramps to accommodate learners in wheelchairs as a critical issue in an inclusive education system. It would seem as if the educators in non piloting school are mainly concerned with physical disabilities while the educators in the piloting school did not necessarily confine themselves to any specific category when talking about disabled learners. However, all educators seemed to regard 'ramps 'of great importance in making schools even more inclusive. The following extracts bear evidence to that:

Non Piloting schools

Extract 13

"Well eh::h if perhaps you are talking about documentation- eh I do not think at this stage
we do have such documentation, but in terms of physical renovations, that is definitely
accommodated because now (.1) if you observe ramps are being constructed. That would
enable a person who is totally unable to:: to walk and is using a wheel chair to access all
the rooms in the school."

Extract 14

'The very first thing is for us to talk to children and explain the process to them so that they don't just see changes like structural changes where we remove steps and build ramps and all such changes (.) because we need those changes in view of the fact that some of these disabled learners are on wheelchairs- do you understand?

Piloting Schools

Extract 15

'Ja (.) as you can see there are ramps-, the grounds of the school have been improved in order to make sure that it is is accessible for learners who have got wheelchairs"

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Extract 16

"I'm actually referring to eh- we've got for instance paths- footpaths where our learner, you know, walk on, when they are going to class and some of these have got stairs and all that and those eh paths wouldn't be suitable for a learner type who's using a wheelchairs and all that stuff we need to have ramps (.) those are the structural changes I'm talking about and toilets should be:: (.2) constructed to accommodate wheelchairs.

Support needs

Once more there did not seem to be any difference of opinion when it came to the support they needed or would need in an inclusive education system. Educators in both schools piloting inclusive education, and those not, felt strongly that they needed support, which varied from personal training and teacher aid to equipment and expert support.

Piloting schools

Extract 17

Ja at this point in time I would not say that we are fully equipped in terms of dealing with these learners.(.2) There are some gaps here and there you know- > like we don't have some of the skills you know....<

Extract 18

"we need equipment to ease the workload ...in an inclusive education(.2) I wish there could be a teacher aid or a lot of equipment which would be another aid to the teacher so that the work becomes manageable ... it could help us if the government could try and provide us with aids,"

Extract 19

Training, supervision monitoring and support is for me very important

Extract 20

OK eh I think as support we need (.3) eh I think we need more equipment. Eh I- Inclusive education requires a lot of equipment...↑I feel we need more than we are getting right now"

Non-piloting schools

Extract 21

Since now it's in the policy and they have been taken away for a long time now from the mainstream I should think there will be a - we will need assistance. Training. Because they have been: taken away for a

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long time now and now as I can see they are not (.) there is some who are to be in our school in the wheelchairs (5)

Extract 22

"Like I am saying educators need to be taught how to use the resources because they are different, do you understand that they are not the same? Resources for disabled learners are different from resources for normal children. So we don't know how - teachers do not know how to use these resources so that is why workshops are necessary so that they get assistance from those who already know."

The special needs – expertise binary is evident here as educators in both settings undermine their professional expertise because of what they perceive to be 'challenging' and even 'scary' and which forces them to assume roles for which they were never trained, for instance to act as 'nurses'.

Piloting schools

Extract 23

"Otherwise if you notice, we are teachers, in the classroom, we are nurses in the classroom and we are fulltime teachers in the classroom, having learners who have disabilities , all of whom need your attention for you to make better people out of them."

Non Piloting schools

Extract 24

"The idea of having disabled children among (.2) normal children who do not have problems physically is:: (.4) quite scary (.) it frightens us because we are not used to it because right from the beginning learners with disabilities were kept separately in their own schools (.2)"

I wish to conclude this section by stating that the manner in which educators in the piloting schools talk about inclusive education is no different from the manner in which their colleagues in the non piloting school talk about it. The linguistic resources they use are the same even though the activities are different or supposed to be, in the sense that the DANIDA pilot schools are expected to celebrate diversity. This lack of difference in the educators talk was a very interesting observation in that, rather than painting a picture of an atmosphere in which diversity is celebrated, the linguistic resources the educators draw on give one the impression that disabled learners continue to be excluded even within the inclusive settings.

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Dominant discourses/ The linguistic resources recurrently used by educators

The anti-discrimination discourse

It would appear that the anti-discrimination discourse is the driving force behind the commitment to inclusive education. In explaining their understanding of inclusive education and what it meant for them, educators talk of moving away from "discriminating learners according to disabilities". These feelings, which are evident across the two settings, are reflected in the following statements:

Piloting schools

Extract 1
"Eh to me inclusive education mea::ns eh (.2) it means getting rid of those schools which were called special schools and including those learners who were being discriminated from other learners and include them within the same school."

Extract 2
"it's more like admitting- eh admitting some of the learners who are from special school without discriminating against any form of whatever- you know, that's what for me inclusive education means . Its moving   away from discriminating learners according to disabilities or whatever that makes them different from other learners"

Extract 3
"another role is to make sure that no child is being discriminated against irrespective of any need that child has got."

Extract 4
"...So my   understanding is that inclusive education is a type of education that does not discriminate against a learner because of his disability"

Non-piloting

Extract 5
"The learners who:: have been- the learners with physical disabilities who have been:: eh discriminated so they are going to be amongst...

Extract 6
"because (.) for me (.) I have always questioned the idea of discriminating between children (.)simple because of their disabilities because in our culture, even from the very word go a disabled person is not

discriminated against in our culture, it has never really occurred. So my understanding is that that Inclusive Education is a type of education that does not discriminate against a learner because of his disability"

This anti-discrimination discourse is closely linked to the rights discourse which, as Naicker (1999, cited by van Rooyen et.al., 2002) observes, is premised on the principle that everyone should be given the opportunity to develop to his her own potential irrespective of disability, among other things. The participants in this study drew on the rights discourse to support the view that the children should not be discriminated against because of disabilities. This is evident in the following extracts from the piloting schools:

Extract 7

"there is a shift towards a democratic South Africa and the children are- they have rights now. "

Extract 8

" they have introduced this type of education so that every child (.1) because it is the right of every child to learn.

Extract 9

" Eh inclusive education means- eh mainly its giving the learners a right to learn, more especially the disabled and its helping them to feel as that they are part of the community"

Even though the educators talk about their opposition to discrimination, it does not mean that a movement away from seeing people as inherently disabled is adopted. The disability/difficulty remains as is indicated in Extracts 2, 4, 6 and 7 above. Here, the historical construction of disability, that the disability is located within an individual and explained in terms of a deficit, is upheld. In talking about inclusive education within the anti-discrimination discourse, educators maintain that the learners will be included, irrespective of their disabilities. In other words, as they move along from 'special schools', learners continue to carry 'their disabilities', the very reason for being placed in those schools in the first place. The assumption is that even in an inclusive education setting, these learners continue to be excluded. This exclusion is premised in the language the educators use which construct them as 'the other' whose 'disability' *"makes them different from other learners" (Extract 2),* 'different' from the constructed 'norm', as inherently disabled with no consideration being given to the barriers provided by the system. The disability is his/her own. This construction is drawn from the normative assumption that does not recognize other ways of being and instead, regards that which deviates from the 'accepted' norm as a deficit.

The consequences of anti-discrimination, for both the piloting and non piloting educators, are brought forth in the following extracts:

Piloting schools

Extract 10

"Otherwise if you notice, we are educators, in the classroom, we are nurses in the classroom (1) and we are fulltime educators in the classroom,"

Extract 11

" – eh after accepting the project- as we went we felt let us not take this as a – of course ↑it is a challenge, but we felt (.) let us not take it negatively you know (.)so …"

Non-piloting schools

Extract 12

"The idea of having disabled children among (.2) normal children who do not have problems physically is :: (4) quite scary (.) it frightens us because we are not used to it because right from the beginning learners with disabilities were kept separately in their own schools (.2)"

Extract 13

"No I think it's a challenge, it's a challenge since I know nothing about it,"

The words the educators use to construct the consequences of inclusion include the following: nurses, scary and challenges. As a consequence of inclusion the educators have to assume the role of nurses in the classroom. The assumption is that learners, who are included, need medical attention that other learners would not require, among other things.

The special needs discourse

This discourse, Booth (1999) maintains, deskills educators by encouraging them to think that many learners need specialist teaching. Van Rooyen et al (2002) sums this up by maintaining that special needs is the medical discourse dressed in words other than pathology, disorder or disability. Using terms and phrases like 'coping/not coping'; 'barriers to learning'; 'safety and safety needs', educators in inclusive education construct inclusive education in terms of the special needs discourse. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997) cited in Van Rooyen et al., (2002) speak of an inclusive system in which appropriate facilities, resources and specialized help, where needed, will be available in the mainstream and the curriculum will be flexible enough to accommodate special needs. It seems as if educators are wary of the

'included' learner's inability to cope in normal school and given the status quo around facilities and resources in the province, it looks like the educators' concern is bordering on anxiety. The following extracts illustrate this point:

Piloting schools

Extract 14

...it it depends on if the learner will be able to to to to to to (.) I do not know, to function within eh our school. There are some gaps here and there you know, like we don't have some of the skills you know. We have children here who are sexually abused. Sometimes we have children who are experiencing poverty you know ↑We didn't know that the learners [laughs] ↑we didn't know that we did have peop- learners with special needs.

Extract 15

But ↑ it depends on the extent of the disability, because we may have physically disabled pupils coming to learn, there is no problem, but when it comes to psy-ch-ological problems I start having a problem . If he can cope with our curriculum there is no problem.

Educators here are drawing on the disabling special needs discourse which believes that the system is working and any breakdown in learning is caused by learner deficits. They do not talk of the system's ability to accommodate the learners, but instead in schools piloting inclusive education, the success of that venture will depend on the learner's ability to function within the school. The special needs discourse constructs the educators as helpless in the face of learners whose 'disabilities' stall the learning process. The educators are constructed as helpless in the teaching situation unless some other help is made available to them. The special needs discourse dovetails nicely with the discourse on expertise, which focuses on providing for 'special needs'.

The expert discourse

Participants across both settings expressed a deep concern about their inability to meet the needs of these learners whom they perceive to be in need of specialized expertise. These concerns are evident in the following expressions:

Piloting schools

Extract 16

"... we were not trained to deal with learners who needed , who need some specialty,
– we did not have the expertise –"

Extract 17

" during the time this thing was introduced eh ↑we- as educators started off like ↓ 'how are we going to do this thing? (.1) Where are we going to get certain things? These children need time' "

Extract 18

" (.)we have- we are not specialized- we are not specialists in in certain fields. "

Non-piloting schools

Extract 19

"We were afraid- and saying 'how are we going to deal with these learners with disabilities and they are from a special school, how were they handled in the special school? Are we going to cope (.) in dealing with these learners?' "

Extract 20

"In the first place I was never trained to deal with those kinds of children"

Educators talk of training, time, knowledge and specialization required in order to deal with these learners. The picture that is painted is one where the individual has a deficit, and therefore has special needs that require expert training and knowledge.

Couched in the words the educators use in expressing these concerns is a tendency to construct the 'included' learners as abnormal, while simultaneously constructing the other learners as 'normal'. Once more the normal/abnormal binary rears its head in the educator's construction of inclusive education.

Piloting schools

Extract 21

" – like we were trained to work with those kids who were called the normal ... "

Non piloting schools

Extract 22

"Like I am saying (.2) educators need to be <u>taught</u> how to use the resources because (.1) they are different (.1) do you understand that they are not the same? ↓Resources for disabled learners are different from resources for normal children.

Extract 23

"we ha- no not first, first we were- we- I was afraid thinking now how am I going to handle these learners now(.) since they are from a special school and and then they are coming to us (.1) how are we going to?- we were having a negative attitude towards teaching them."

Extract 24

About inclusive education.- ↑This inclusive education fills us with a lot of fear in the first place(.1) The idea of having disabled children among (.2) normal children who do not have problems physically is :: (.4) quite scary (.) <u>it frightens</u> us because we are not used to it, because ↑right from the beginning learners with disabilities were kept separately (.) in their own schools (.2)

The fear of not being able to cope with disabled learners due to lack of expertise seems to be a cause for concern among the educators who emphasize 'the need to be taught' and are concerned about how they are 'going to handle' the disabled learner. The extent of their concern is indicated by their use of words like 'afraid', 'frightened' and 'scary' as shown in the preceding extracts. This concern and the concomitant fears around having these 'children' in the classroom, centre around the abnormal, the problematic. It also presents the normal/abnormal binary which classifies individuals according to the presence of observable biological processes (the pathological model) or in terms of variance, above or below the population eman (the statistical model). 'These learners' are once again constructed as a problem that requires in-depth learning (from educators) and understanding to tackle.

The charity discourse

Participants in this study also revealed concern about their perceived obligation to 'help' the 'disabled' learners in an inclusive education system. The manner in which they talk of their role in this regard had the effect of constructing 'these learners' as objects of pity that are eternally dependent on others. The following extracts support this view:

Piloting schools

Extract 25

"You look at the strategies that you can use in helping that particular kid, you would go home unable to sleep thinking "what can I do to help this kid, what can I do "and really you did not know what to do.

Extract 26

" his counterparts who are not disabled pose a problem because they move faster and yet you have this particular one whom you wan to help reach a certain level."

Extract 27

"unable to sleep thinking 'what can I do to help this kid, what can I do' "

Extracts 28

"I guess it was a result of wanting to help the learner and yet you have this particular one whom you want to help reach a certain level"

Naicker (1999 cited by Van Rooyen et al., 2002), refers to this as **charity discourse** in which the recipients of Special Education are viewed as in need of assistance. Similar to the medical and lay discourses, the charity discourse describes disability in terms of impairment, a condition that is to be feared. The condition is perceived as a personal issue for which the public is not responsible. The educators in schools piloting inclusive education seemed to draw in the main from this particular discourse and this is reflected in the repeated use of wanting 'to help' as indicated in extracts 24 to 27 above. The situation is different in non piloting schools where there is a variance in instances where educators interviewed counter the charity discourse or actions based on a discourse of charity. Their view is that the disabled person does not necessarily need to be helped, but assisted when necessary. This view emanates from the non piloting schools and is based on the educators' own personal experiences of themselves and relatives. These views are exposed in the following extracts:

Non Piloting

Extract 29

"it will be a window of opportunity if only the so called normal people to know what is happening in that world. But I think it takes some readiness with them as well to, to to sort of play a positive role or a proactive role in helping people, not necessarily   to help but to offer assistance where it is required."
(The speaker here is limping with one leg shorter than the other and is using a special shoe)

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"*like we have in our family, we have a cousin who is physically disabled then when she tries to do something I go and help and find out that she does not like it. she wants to be treated as a normal person so we have that feeling that (you feel) you always have to assist even unnecessarily, according to her She doesn't like it and she tells because she is a straight forward person "no I can manage on my own".*

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CONCLUSION

The introduction of the pilot project on inclusive education, the DANIDA project, heralded a new era in the history of South African education, one in which the Department of Education committed itself to provide educational opportunities to those learners who had been deprived of this opportunity because of an education and training system which could not accommodate their diverse needs. This new system meant that such learners would be afforded an equal opportunity to access education alongside their peers in the same classroom. For this system to be successful, the attitudes and perspectives of educators are of critical significance. Arguably, the constructions they make of inclusive education and its recipients will determine the shape inclusive education will take in South Africa.

The use of discourse analysis techniques in this study enabled the researcher to understand the educators' view of inclusive education which became evident through their use of language which leaned towards, the medical /special needs/charity discourses. This finding is similar to Fulcher's (1989 cited by Bourk 2000) findings where the medical and charity discourses have socially constructed disabled people and have placed an emphasis on dependency on experts rather than independency and self-determination. These discourses, which undermine the status of people with a disability, actually perpetuate exclusion within inclusion because they emphasise an individual problematic dependence on others in contrast to rights-based, models which emphasise collective rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

I have noted that the anti-discriminatory discourse seems to be the driving force behind inclusive education. This is a politically correct discourse as it places all people on an equal footing. However, it maintains the ability/disability binary, which includes the normative standard against which others are measured, the system into which the disabled are included.

In this article, I assert that it would seem that exclusion still exists in the very schools purported to be piloting inclusive education. Much of this exclusion is premised in the language the educators in piloting schools use to construct inclusive education, which is similar to language used by educators in non piloting schools. This lack of difference in language use throughout all the schools of study suggests that there is very little change, if any at all. It seems the focus is still on the individual and very little attention, if any, is paid to the system, by which is meant, not only the physical environment, but also the curriculum, the educational philosophy, the school and educational procedures and policies, the location of the school and the school/community interface. This kind of talk, which focuses on the individual, perpetuates the exclusion of those pathologized. As a result, therefore, it is doubtful whether the education system does indeed cater for diversity.

The discourses used by educators draw on the bifurcation of abnormal/normal and entrench a special needs expertise nexus (and this may be the reason why there are so few differences between the piloting and non piloting schools in terms of the discourses deployed). This has the effect of acting against an inclusive education system, despite the anti-discriminatory discourse deployed.

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