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**THE EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF  
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SELECTED PIETERMARITZBURG  
SCHOOLS**

**by**

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*If a doctor, lawyer, or dentist had 40 people in his office at one time, all of whom had different needs, and some of whom didn't want to be there and were causing trouble, and the doctor, lawyer, or dentist - without assistance - had to treat them all with professional excellence for nine months, then he might have some conception of the classroom teacher's job. ~ Donald D. Quinn*

## **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I, Phindile Lungile Mayaba, hereby declare that this thesis, entitled: “The Educators’ Perceptions and Experiences of Inclusive Education in Selected Pietermaritzburg Schools” is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete referencing.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

*“A teacher affects eternity. He can never tell where his influence stops”*

*~ Henry Adams*

I dedicate this thesis to all the educators in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. The work you are doing, your dedication, and your passion do not go unnoticed. You are appreciated.

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## **ABSTRACT**

After the first democratic elections in 1994 the South African government was faced with the enormous challenge of blending a sophisticated First World education system for the minority with an underdeveloped Third World education system for the majority. The government committed itself to the principles of an inclusive education approach in order to provide equal quality education for all learners. The focus of the inclusive education will be to provide education for all learners (not only for the disabled) who for one or more reasons were discriminated against under the previous education policy.

The aim of this study was to investigate the educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented in Pietermaritzburg. The study also looked at the nature of concerns and attitudes held by these educators.

Both a literature and empirical study were executed. The quantitative and qualitative approaches were used and data were collected by semi-structures questionnaires administered to thirty educators from schools where inclusive education is being implemented. Quantitative data was analysed using the descriptive statistics. A thematic analysis technique was used to analyse qualitative data. The results were presented against the central themes that emerged and include: inclusive education is challenging by its very nature; negative attitude towards inclusive education and learners with barriers to learning; negative perception towards adapting the curriculum to learners with barriers to learning; availability / lack of resources and support needed in inclusive classrooms; areas of needs in working with learners with barriers to learning; and many learners' needs are not being met, while educators' workload and stress have increased.

A general sense of negativity was found with regard to the educators' perceptions and attitudes towards inclusive education. They indicated that they were not well prepared for inclusive education. Recommendations were made to facilitate improving the preparedness or readiness of the educators, for inclusive education in inclusive schools in the Pietermaritzburg area.

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM**

Education is a basic human right. This is proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed by the World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1994a). Education refers to the act or process of educating or being educated. The Random House Dictionary (cited in Heart of Wisdom, 2002) defines education as the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life.

In most societies, education implies attending school, learning or teaching, and focusing on knowledge and on the intellect. Schools are where people learn reading and writing, history and science, accounting and economics, and natural sciences so that they would be prepared intellectually for the mature life. The teaching and learning process implies imparting knowledge and processing information; acquiring knowledge and using information (Heart of Wisdom, 2002).

Education in South Africa has undergone major transitions. Prior the 1994 democratic elections, which gave birth to the new South Africa, education was organised on the basis of race and disability (Hay & Beyers, 2000). The educational policies that were developed promoted the interests of the apartheid government (Naicker, 2000). Schools that accommodated White disabled learners had many adequate resources, while schools for Black disabled learners had few resources if not none (Lockwood, 2003).

An investigation by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) Support Services in 1992 produced a report which provided guidelines for the first White Paper on Education and Training (NEPI, 1992), on issues regarding non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, a unitary system and redress of apartheid-related disparities. These issues also pertained to Special Needs Education. After the elections, apartheid and segregation were abolished in order to provide equal and quality education for all.

In 1995, the first White Paper on “Education and Training” issued by the national Department of Education (DoE) called for the establishment of a commission of inquiry into Special Needs Education issues (DoE, 1995). By 1996 the preliminary work in setting up the Commission was completed. From 1996 to 1997 the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) undertook its work. In 1997 their combined report was completed and they began with the task of writing up the recommendations into an education policy, which was released in 2001 as White Paper 6 on “Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System” (DoE, 1997; 2001b).

In 2003, the national Department of Education published a report, “Education Statistics in South Africa at a glance in 2001”, which estimates that there are 300 000 children in South Africa who are experiencing barriers to learning (DoE, 2001b; 2003a). This requires attention and the educators need to be trained adequately in order for them to render appropriate services to learners with barriers to learning.

The South African Department of Education (DoE) has a vision that all people in the country would have access to lifelong education and training opportunities, which will in turn contribute toward improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society (DoE, 2003b). Education is perceived as a tool that would ensure a bright future for the South African population and the country itself. Obtaining this education has not been easy for certain populations within the country, but that has been changing gradually since 1994.

## **1.2 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Rather than being a marginal theme on how some learners can be integrated in regular education, inclusive education is an approach that looks into how to transform education systems in order to remove the barriers that prevent learners from participating fully in education. These barriers may be linked to ethnicity, gender, social status, poverty, disability, etc. In some contexts certain ethnic minorities face discrimination in the classroom; in other contexts poverty might make it difficult for a family to afford sending their children to school (Barton, 2003b).



The South African Department of Education has discarded the use of a dual system of education, which was composed of mainstream education and special education. Instead, it has provided for a single system of education that is inclusive of everyone, creating opportunities for all learners, including those with special needs or disabilities. This is done by adopting an inclusive education model which fosters personal, intellectual, emotional and social development of all learners, according to need (KZN - DoE, 2001).

In South Africa, the concern that has been raised is that most educators in mainstream schools have not received any training in special education, which would prepare them for inclusive education. Also, within the South African context, inequalities resulting from apartheid and economic deprivation have had a significant impact on the provision of education for learners traditionally seen as having special education needs (Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996). Some of the challenges that educators are faced with are a movement to accommodate diverse groups in the country. Many educators who were trained under the old traditional or conventional system, which was teacher-centred, have to adapt their teaching style to the new outcomes-based system, where learner participation is encouraged (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002).

In their investigation, Engelbrecht *et al.* (2000) revealed that overall, the most stressful issues for educators regarding the implementation of inclusive education related to educators' perceived professional self-competence, administrative issues and those related to the behaviour of learners. In addition, limited contact with parents as well as the parents' perceived lack of understanding of learner's capabilities and long-term prognosis, inadequate pre-service or in-service training and the reduced ability to teach other learners effectively also proved to be stressful.

Engelbrecht *et al.*, (2000) state that unlike Australia, United Kingdom and other countries, research investigating educators' experience in South Africa with respect to inclusive education is very limited. It is for this reason that the researcher decided to embark on this study to investigate educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in selected Pietermaritzburg schools.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research addressed the following questions:

In selected Pietermaritzburg Schools:

1. What are the educators' perceived positive aspects (strengths) and negative aspects (weaknesses) of inclusive education?
2. What are the educators' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of inclusive education?
3. What are the educators' perceived challenges and barriers associated with the implementation of inclusive education?
4. What is the perceived impact of inclusive education on educators and the learners?

### **1.4 METHODOLOGY**

The researcher follows both a qualitative and quantitative inquiry in order to gain the participants' perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of inclusive education.

#### **1.4.1 AIM AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

The research aimed to investigate the educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented in the Pietermaritzburg area. The aim is to find out also the positive aspects of inclusive education as perceived by the selected educators. The research also aims to inform the principals and the management of the schools of the problematic areas that the educators might bring to the surface. The research aims to find out from the educators what the implications of inclusive education are for themselves and the learners. The researcher also seeks to make recommendations to address the difficulties identified.

The rationale for conducting this study is to understand the educators' day-to-day experiences of implementing inclusive education in the Pietermaritzburg area. This would help advise the government on what is happening as it has invested money on the inclusive education and training system. Recent research has been conducted in other

countries and some provinces in South Africa. For instance, Paulse (2005) conducted a study in Western Cape investigating sources of occupational stress for educators, with specific reference to the inclusive education model. This study found that a lack of appropriate professional training, specifically where teachers are required to implement new practices with inadequate ongoing training in order to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse population, is a particular source of stress (Paulse, 2005).

Findings from other research show that there could be positive aspects as well as challenges facing educators involved in inclusive education. A study conducted by So (2005) in Macao found that educators have great enthusiasm toward inclusive education and are optimistic that their classes have learners who need special training. He goes on to say that when educators come across any problems in teaching inclusive learners, they make use of their spare time to read relevant books and to ask specialists for advice so as to increase their knowledge in the field and in order to do their best in inclusive education (So, 2005). Van Zyl (2002) found that younger educators experience lower levels of stress due to the absence of family responsibilities, while older educators are more likely to experience higher levels of stress due to the fact that they are less mobile and more loyal to the profession that they have chosen. The rationale behind the current study is to find out whether the educators working in schools where inclusive education is being implemented in Pietermaritzburg experience any challenges in the daily implementation of inclusive education.

#### **1.4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The use of an appropriate research design will ensure that the actual research is conducted in a methodical manner, and that accurate and relevant information regarding educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented in Pietermaritzburg is obtained. The researcher planned and structured the study in a manner that would assist in obtaining evidence to answer research questions. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches.

#### **1.4.2.1 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The researcher went through the process of evaluating the relevant literature, theories, and formulated research questions. This began with the researcher collecting the data based on the research questions. The researcher then applied descriptive statistics in order to analyse the data.

#### **1.4.2.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**

Bisschoff and Sayed (1999, p. 312) state that a qualitative study can be regarded as “an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural setting”. The researcher conducted the study both in a quantitative and in an open-ended way, and then developed explanations that are based on the researcher’s interpretations of what was observed.

#### **1.4.3 SAMPLING**

Sampling refers to “the element of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study, which is studied in an effort to understand the population from which it was drawn” (Strydom & de Vos, 1998, p. 191). The intended population for this study were 30 educators serving under the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, in Pietermaritzburg. These educators were selected from 3 schools where inclusive education is being implemented. These educators were selected because they have similar backgrounds and experiences with regard to the daily implementation of inclusive education in their schools.

#### **1.4.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT AND METHOD**

The participants were handed a 5-point Likert Scale questionnaire, which aimed to elicit their perceptions and experiences of inclusive education. The questionnaire also had open-ended sections where the participants could write about their experiences and views about inclusive education and the implementation thereof. Ethical issues were explained to the participants.

#### **1.4.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

The quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The statistical tests yielded frequencies and descriptive statistics. The participants' responses were viewed against their gender, age, and years of teaching experience. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. The researcher searched for themes that emerged as being important to the study. The researcher identified themes through careful reading and re-reading of the data; and recognised patterns within the data, where emerging themes became the categories for analysis.

#### **1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS/CONCEPTS**

It is important for the researcher and the readers to have a clear understanding of the principal terms/concepts which will be utilised throughout this study. Thus, the key terms and concepts used in this study and those related to the study are explained in the following paragraphs.

**Experiences:** The term 'experiences' refers to events or series of events participated in or lived through (Heart of Wisdom, 2002).

**Perceptions:** The term 'perceptions' refers to the act or faculty of apprehending by means of the senses or of the mind, cognition, and understanding. It is the process of acquiring, interpreting, selecting, and organizing sensory information (Heart of Wisdom, 2002).

**Educator:** The term 'educator' refers to any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an education institution or assists in rendering education services or education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department (Dictionary of South African Education and Training, 2000). According to the Department of Education (1997a), an educator is a person whose work involves educating others at all levels of education, in any type of education and training context, including formal and informal.

**Special Needs:** The term ‘special needs’ in education refers to needs or priorities which the individual person or system may have, which must be addressed to ensure effective learning (DoE, 1997a).

**Barriers to learning and development:** The term ‘barriers to learning and development’ will be discussed in Chapter 2 in detail.

**Learners:** The term ‘learners’ refers to any person ranging from the phase of early childhood development to the phase of adult education, who is involved in any kind of formal or non-formal education and training activity or any person who receives or is obliged to receive education (Dictionary of South African Education and Training, 2000).

**Learners with Disabilities:** The term ‘learners with disabilities’ refers to a particular group of learners with physical, sensory, intellectual or multiple impairments (DoE, 2001b).

**Learners with barriers to learning:** The term ‘learners with barriers to learning’ refers to those learners with impairments and those categorised as having special educational needs and/or experiencing barriers to learning such as socio-economic conditions, attitudes, inflexible curriculum, language skills and communication, inaccessible and unsafe building environments, and so forth (DoE, 2001b).

**Curriculum:** The curriculum is defined as everything that influences the learners, from the educators and their work programmes, right down to the environment in which teaching and learning takes place (DoE, 1997a).

**School:** A school is defined as a place or institution where education is received, especially primary or secondary education (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1996).

**Education:** Education is defined as the process of teaching; to give knowledge to someone; to instruct someone in a skill or help them to learn (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1996).

**Mainstream School:** The term ‘mainstream school’ refers to a school that integrates learners with special needs/barriers to learning into regular school classes (DoE, 2005e). The aim of mainstream schools and mainstreaming is to develop the learners at lower levels while encouraging leadership roles from the higher level learners.

**Special School:** The term ‘special school’ refers to a school that is equipped to deliver education to learners requiring high-intensive educational and other support either on a full-time or part-time basis (DoE, 2005d). The special school offers education that is modified or particularized for those having singular needs or disabilities, as disabled or maladjusted people, slow learners, or gifted children.

**Special Education:** The term ‘special education’ refers to the education of physically or mentally disabled children whose needs cannot be met in an ordinary classroom (DoE, 2005d).

**Inclusive School:** The term ‘inclusive schools’ refers to those schools that individualize instruction and support to meet the needs of all children. Inclusive schools benefit children both developmentally and socially by embracing the notion that all children will learn (Schwartz & Green, 2001). Inclusive schools are those in which “everyone belongs, is accepted, supports, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met” (Stainback & Stainback, 1990, p.3).

**Inclusive Education:** The term ‘inclusive education’ will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

## **1.6 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

Delimitations are restrictions/bounds that researchers impose prior to the inception of the study to narrow the scope of a study. The current study was delimited to three schools in Pietermaritzburg where inclusive education is being implemented. The number of schools selected is small and might affect the generalizability of the findings of this study.

## **1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

Chapter I covers the background of the problem, statement of the problem, aims and rationale of the study, research questions, target population, methodology, definition of terms/concepts featuring prominently in this work, and the outline of the research.

In Chapter II, the researcher reviews the literature relevant to the study and discusses the history of inclusive education globally and in South Africa; inclusive education and human rights in South Africa, and findings from previous research relevant to this study.

Chapter III gives details of the research methodology adopted by the researcher in this study. It elucidates the sampling methods used, methods of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter IV gives an analysis of the quantitative data and qualitative data. In Chapter V the researcher discusses the findings documented in Chapter IV. Chapter VI gives conclusions of the research, the limitations of the research, and recommendations.

## **1.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused attention on the orientation of the problem. The problem was analysed and the aim of the study was explained. The research method and various relevant concepts were explained and the chapter outline was given. The next chapter will focus on the literature relevant to the study.



## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the literature relevant to the study, looking at the history of inclusive education globally and in South Africa; inclusive education and human rights in South Africa, and findings from previous research relevant to this study. The chapter talks about issues pertaining to inclusive legislation and policies that underpin inclusion. The chapter also looks at some theories that informed the move from a dual system of education to a unitary system of education.

### **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study was informed by the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, Ecological System's Theory, and the Sociocultural Approach to Cognitive Development.

#### **2.2.1 THEORY OF MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES**

The Education White Paper 6 titled "Special Needs Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System" acknowledges that learners possess different or multiple intelligences (DoE, 2005e). These multiple intelligences are derived from Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences.

Gardner (1983) proposed a new view of intelligence that is rapidly being incorporated in school curricula. In his theory of Multiple Intelligences, he expanded the concept of intelligence to also include areas such as musical intelligence, spatial intelligence, and interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, in addition to mathematical intelligence and linguistic intelligence.

Gardner (cited in Gardner & Hatch 1989) defines intelligence as the capacity to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings. Using biological as well as cultural research, he formulated a list of eight intelligences. The first two are ones that have been valued in schools; the next three are usually associated with

the arts; the next two are what Gardner called interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences, and the last is a naturalistic intelligence (Gardner, 1983).

The first, *Linguistic Intelligence*, involves a mastery of language. Linguistic intelligence involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. It is the ability to think in words and to use language to express and appreciate complex meanings (Campbell, Campbell & Dickinson, 2004). This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information (Gardner, 1983).

The second, *Logical-mathematical Intelligence*, comprises of the capacity to (i) analyze problems logically, (ii) carry out mathematical operations, and (iii) investigate issues scientifically. Gardner (1983) states that logical-mathematical intelligence entails the ability to detect patterns, reason deductively and think logically. This intelligence is most often associated with scientific and mathematical thinking (Gardner, 1999).

*Musical Intelligence* involves skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns. It encompasses the capacity to recognize and compose musical pitches, tones, and rhythms. According to Gardner (1983; 1999), musical intelligence runs in an almost structural parallel to linguistic intelligence.

*Bodily-kinaesthetic Intelligence* entails the potential of using one's whole body or parts of the body to solve problems (Gardner, 1983; 1999). In other words, it is the ability to use one's mental abilities to coordinate one's own bodily movements. Gardner sees mental and physical activity as related.

*Spatial Intelligence* enables us to manipulate and create mental images in order to solve problems. It involves the potential to recognize and use the patterns of wide space and more confined areas (Gardner, 1983; 1999).

*Interpersonal Intelligence* is concerned with the capacity to understand the intentions, motivations and desires of other people. It allows people to work effectively with others (Gardner, 1983; 1999).

*Intrapersonal Intelligence* entails the capacity to understand oneself, to appreciate one's feelings, fears and motivations. Gardner views it as involving the capacity to have an effective working model of ourselves, and to be able to use such information to regulate our lives (Gardner, 1983; 1999).

Finally, *Naturalistic Intelligence* refers to the ability to observe patterns in nature, to identify and classify objects, and to understand natural and human-made systems (Campbell *et al.*, 2004; Gardner, 1983).

Although the intelligences seem anatomically separated from each other, Gardner (1983) claims that the eight intelligences very rarely operate independently. Rather, the intelligences are used concurrently and typically complement each other as individuals develop skills or solve problems.

The Department of Education has provided different learning styles for the implementation of inclusive education (DoE, 2005e). The diversity of learners dictates the manner of implementing the curriculum (DoE, 2005e). According to the DoE (2005e), recognition of the fact that learners possess different or multiple intelligences is crucial for the inclusive classroom. The learners' intelligence and accompanying learning styles, therefore, should be taken as a starting point in determining the teaching methodologies and assessment procedures to be applied.

It is therefore crucial for educators to think of all intelligences as equally important, as all eight intelligences are needed to productively function in society (Gardner, 1999). This is in great contrast to traditional education systems which typically place a strong emphasis on the development and use of verbal and mathematical intelligences. Thus, the Theory of Multiple Intelligences implies that educators should recognize and teach to a broader range of talents and skills.

The Department of Education acknowledges that educators should structure the presentation of material in a style which engages most or all of the intelligences. It is for this reason that the Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes were produced in June 2005 (DoE, 2005e). These guidelines are derived from Gardner's Theory of Multiple

Intelligences, a theoretical foundation for recognizing the different abilities and talents of students. Table 1 below gives examples of how to recognise the way in which different intelligences process information, and how they link to different learning styles (as cited by DoE, 2005e).

**Table 1: Ways to recognise the way in which different intelligences process information, and how they link to different learning styles (DoE, 2005e)**

Intelligence	Recognize by	Learning Style	Ways to reach all learners
Linguistic Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use of core operations of language</li> <li>-Sensitivity to the meaning, sound, inflection and order of words</li> <li>-Loves language - reads and loves to talk</li> <li>Enjoys reading</li> </ul>	Learners with strong oral / SASL language abilities like to read and think out loud/ sign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Provide opportunities for presentations, speeches, role-play, dialogue, interactive games, writing, group work, doing reports, discussion, listening to tapes and reading - especially books with dialogue.</li> <li>-Ensure that topics /activities do not exclude some learners on the basis of barriers identified in White Paper 6.</li> </ul>
Logical-Mathematical Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strong at math &amp; problem-solving skills</li> <li>-Ability to discern logical or numerical patterns</li> <li>-Ability to pursue extended lines of logic and reasoning</li> <li>-Asks 'why' &amp; 'how' questions, wants to reason things out, wants to know 'what's coming up next' - sequential thinking</li> </ul>	The highly logical mathematical learners will be interested in problem solving and hypothesis – testing strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Problems should relate to social and environmental situations</li> <li>- Ensure that problems presented are varied in terms of complexity to address difference in abilities.</li> <li>- All barriers to learning should be addressed</li> <li>- Tactile shapes could be used for some learners, word-problems for others etc.</li> </ul>
Bodily-Kinaesthetic Intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ability to handle objects skilfully, either fine or gross motor movements</li> <li>-Also the ability to control your own movements for function or expression</li> <li>-Desire to move!</li> <li>-Wants to get up, move around, tap, touch, fiddle with things &amp; do things</li> </ul>	Learners who are highly bodily-kinesthetic enjoy learning whilst moving about freely and touching. They also learn best from handling materials, writing and drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow learners to read standing up, lying down or in some any other posture so long as it is comfortable for the learner.</li> <li>-Learners should be allowed to use their hands and fingers while they read. Touching the words that they read increases their kinaesthetic connection to the material</li> <li>- Physical exercise designed for relaxation may precede or follow reading and writing exercises.</li> </ul>

**Table 1, continued**

<p>Spatial</p>	<p>Strong visual imagination and other spatial abilities Likes to design, draw, read graphics, posters Needs pictures to understand, likes puzzles, mazes, organizing space, objects and areas Has ability to mentally manipulate forms, objects or people in space or transfer them to other locations or into other elements</p>	<p>Learners who are visually-spatially strong learn best from information that they see or read. They have strong visual imaginations and are inclined to be involved in spatial activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide learners with opportunities to visualize, and sketch as they read.</li> <li>- Integrate painting or any other visual art form with learning experiences.</li> <li>- Unfamiliar words maybe explained by drawing pictures or by finding relevant images on the Internet or in SASL and Braille.</li> <li>- Allow use of colored pencils and supply paper in a range of shapes and sizes.</li> <li>- Learners should be allowed to illustrate their writing by drawings.</li> <li>- Use pictures out of magazines.</li> <li>- Introduce the drawing of cartoons with captions.</li> </ul>
<p>Intrapersonal Intelligence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Has a good understanding of own strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>-Able to exercise self-control</li> <li>-Good at goal-setting &amp; is comfortable being alone</li> <li>-Make choices in favour of long term benefit</li> <li>-The ability to develop successful working models of oneself</li> <li>-A way to learn and develop new behaviours based on self-knowledge</li> </ul>	<p>Learners who are highly emotionally sensitive enjoy solitude, like thinking and are happy to work alone.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promote writing contexts and other events where the learners' writing will be read in a public setting.</li> <li>- Learners should be given the freedom to choose their books or texts, they should where possible own these books so as to make it possible for them to write on them whenever they want, talk back to them or in some cases throw them down on the ground if they happen to disagree with what is written.</li> </ul>
<p>Interpersonal Intelligence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Strong people skills</li> <li>-Ability to make distinctions among others in their moods, feelings, biases, thoughts and values</li> <li>-It's the ability to act appropriately using knowledge of others</li> <li>-Loves to talk &amp; influence, usually a group leader, an organizer</li> <li>-Communicates well</li> <li>-Good at conflict resolution, listening, negotiating &amp; persuasion</li> </ul>	<p>Highly interpersonal learners enjoy engaging in learning experiences in a social setting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide opportunities to read out loud / sign and think out loud / sign about the text learners would be reading. (Take note that some readers may need SASL intervention in order to engage with written texts).</li> <li>- Allow group discussions.</li> <li>- It is essential for some learners to talk out loud or fingerspell words as they write.</li> <li>-Encourage learners to create text directly from their spoken language / SASL.</li> </ul>

This theory assists the educators to acknowledge that while all learners may not be verbally or mathematically gifted, children may have an expertise in other areas, such as music, spatial relations, or interpersonal knowledge. Approaching and assessing learning in this manner allows a wider range of learners to successfully participate in classroom learning. The document, *Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes*, gives guidelines on how to recognise the way in which different intelligences process information and how that links to different learning styles (DoE, 2005e).

A study conducted by Kallenbach and Veins (2000) found that using Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences in inclusive settings leads educators to offer a greater variety of learning activities through interdisciplinary lessons that provide genuine experiences for their learners. In their 18-month study, Kallenbach and Veins (2000) explored how the Theory of Multiple Intelligences supported instruction and assessment in various adult learning contexts. Two themes specifically related to math instruction were identified, i.e., Multiple Intelligence reflections and Multiple Intelligence inspired instruction. The Multiple Intelligence reflections explored ways to teach about and use multiple intelligence theory as a tool for learner self-reflection and self-understanding.

According to Kallenbach and Veins (2000), Multiple Intelligence inspired instruction further encourages educators to analyze their own instructional practices and provides learners with a range of learning opportunities based on their strengths and interests. They go on to say that understanding the plurality of intelligences leads the educators to offer a variety of ways to engage learners in a topic. Participants in their study found that the Theory of Multiple Intelligences validated instructional practices already found successful when working with adults, including multi-modal, real-world based lessons and assignments (Kallenbach & Veins, 2000).

It would be interesting to find out how educators experience and perceive the implementation of inclusive education with reference to Gardner's Theory of Multiple intelligences in selected Pietermaritzburg schools, as this subject has not been tackled in this area. It would be interesting to find out whether there is a theoretical explanation for these educators' perceptions and experiences with regard to this Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

### **2.2.2 ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY**

In his Ecological Systems Theory, Bronfenbrenner argues that the child is embedded in multiple layers of contexts that influence his/her development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's conceptualization of the ecology of human development provides a useful theoretical framework for research on the implementation of inclusion (Peck, 1993). Bronfenbrenner proposed that human development is influenced by factors operating at different systems levels within a broad, ecological structure. These different levels exert reciprocal influences on one another.

Each person is significantly affected by interactions among a number of overlapping ecosystems, namely, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1973). Ecological System's Theory suggests that the micro-, meso-, exo- and macro- systems impact the child in different ways with the mutual influence on the child strongest at micro level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The microsystem entails the structure that is closest to the child e.g. family, peer group, classroom, neighbourhood, and sometimes a church. It contains the factors within a child's immediate environment. These factors directly affect the child, and, in turn, may be affected by the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The mesosystem refers to the connection between the microstructures e.g. connection between child's teacher and parent. It encompasses "the interrelations of two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, for a child, the relations between home, school, and neighbourhood peer groups)" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25).

The exosystem refers to structures that impact on the child's mesosystem and therefore have ripple effects on the child. It includes all the external networks, such as community structures and local educational, medical, employment, and communications systems, which influence the microsystem. The exosystem consists of settings "that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what is happening in the setting containing the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25).

The macrosystem refers to those structures that have cascading influence on the child although they are far from the child e.g. government policies, cultural values, political philosophies, economic patterns, and social conditions (Paquette & Ryan, n.d.). The macrosystem envelops the micro-, meso-, and exosystems. Bronfenbrenner defined the macrosystem as “consistencies in the form and content of lower-order systems . . . that exist at the level of the subculture or the culture as a whole, along with any belief system or ideology underlying such consistencies” (1979, p.26). All settings at each level operate within a cultural context.

Formal education takes place in school; therefore the school as a system that has bearing on the development of the child plays a crucial role in determining the extent to which the child realizes his/her potential. In implementing inclusive education, the DoE is the exosystem. Through schools, the DoE has to play a major role in teaching learners in a manner that will assist them, as diverse as they are, in their cognitive development. It is crucial for educators to have support from other levels or systems in doing their work.

It is for this reason that after producing the White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive Education System, the Department of Education also issued Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education (DoE, 2005). These guidelines outline how special schools are now to function as resource centres and how mainstream schools are to operate as full service schools. The guidelines also suggest that there should be district-based support teams available to educators. All these systems contribute to the learners’ psycho-social development.

An ecological model of inclusion requires that a complete analysis of inclusion must take place at the microsystem level of children, families, and classrooms; the mesosystem level of collaborations and relationships, such as those between parents and professionals; the exosystem level of organizational structures, policies, and external resources; and the macrosystem level of cultural beliefs, assumptions, and values (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002; Odom & Diamond, 1998).

Research on inclusive education has been devoted to identifying effects of inclusion on the behaviour or development of children with disabilities, with results being attributable



to practices that occur within inclusive programmes (Buysse & Bailey, 1993). With regard to the learners' microsystem, research has documented the reciprocal effects of children on the environment. In one study, educators expressed concerns about the increased time and attention devoted to learners with barriers to learning at the expense of attention devoted to typically developing children (Peck, Hayden, Wandschneider, Peterson & Richarz, 1989). Other research has documented the positive contributions of preschool-aged learners with barriers to learning to inclusive programmes (Peck, Carlson & Helmstetter, 1992).

With regard to the learners' mesosystem, the study conducted by Winton (1993) found that family members' beliefs about inclusive education and the family's relationship with the school affect the implementation of inclusive education. The study also found that the way in which learners with barriers to learning relate to typical peers in the classroom setting may affect relationships outside class e.g., invitations to birthday parties (Winton, 1993). Further, how professionals who serve young these learners work with and feel about each other is also a part of the mesosystem.

Looking at the learners' exosystem, Peck *et al.* (1992) state that the service delivery agency responsible for programmes in inclusive education provides an example of an exosystem setting. They go on to say that how the agency is organized can affect programme implementation (Peck *et al.*, 1992). In a study that followed inclusive education programmes in Washington over a 5-year period, it was found that the programmes that were able to sustain inclusion services appeared to be those whose organizational structures had been reshaped explicitly to support the implementation of inclusive education (Peck, Mabry, Curley & Conn-Powers, 1994). Examples of factors operating at the exosystem level include the interactions of professionals responsible for inclusion programmes, formal and informal policies of school systems, and social policy that connect organizational layers. Any of these exosystem factors can affect the experiences of individual learners in individual programmes.

With regard to the learners' macrosystem, the culture of special education values inclusion as a practice (Wolfensberger, 1972). Wolfensberger (1972) found that over time, when influenced by the appropriate organizations (e.g., Department of Education) and by relevant legislation (e.g., Bill of Rights, South African Schools Act, etc.), many

families and professionals would be driven to endorse the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning in inclusive schools.

There appears to be a need for research to continue to focus on the factors in the microsystem (e.g., individualized curriculum, social relationships with peers) that affect the quality of the inclusion experience for learners and educators. This is one of the reasons why the researcher opted to undertake this study. (However, factors operating at other systems levels must be investigated.)

### **2.2.3 SOCIOCULTURAL APPROACH TO COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

According to Lev Semonovich Vygotsky's theory of social cognitive development, social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky developed the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). The zone of proximal development refers to "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.85-86). He developed this concept to consider the problems of the measurement of mental age and the prediction of future development and learning.

Vygotsky's approach suggests that, in the classroom, effective instruction occurs within the learner's zone of proximal development. Instruction directed at the level of completed (actual) development can increase the knowledge base, but will have minimal effect upon the learner's cognitive ability. Instruction directed beyond the proximal level will tend to be perplexing and confusing to the learner and therefore will affect neither knowledge nor cognitive ability. The most effective teaching is therefore somewhat, but not too much, in advance of development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Such instruction involves scaffolding, i.e., the learner working with experts or more capable others (educators or parents) on challenging tasks that he or she could not solve independently. The experts model appropriate problem solving behaviours, present new approaches to the problem, and encourage the learner to use her or his embryonic skills by assuming responsibility for some parts of the task (Vygotsky, 1978). As the learner

develops the abilities required, he or she should receive less assistance and solve more of the problem independently. Simultaneously, the learner will encounter yet more challenging tasks on which he or she will continue to receive assistance. Effective teaching-learning transactions thus establish successive zones of proximal development.

Wilkinson and Silliman (2001) identify two types of scaffolds. The first one is supportive scaffolds. Contemporary instructional applications of supportive scaffold directly mirror Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development. This approach to scaffolding is consistent with current recommendations for learner-centred instruction, values learning as a search for understanding, provides opportunities for responsive feedback, and views the educational process as occurring within a community of learners (Wilkinson & Silliman, 2001). The second type is directive scaffolds. This is the most prevalent and most formal organizational unit of classroom interaction. According to Wilkinson and Silliman (2001), the directive scaffold parallels the direct instruction or skills-emphasis model of instruction.

Wilkinson and Silliman (2001) further identified four types of scaffolding sequences of classroom-based instructional conversations. These are i) explicit modelling, ii) direct explanations and re-explanations, iii) invitations to participate in the conversation, and iv) verifying and clarifying student understanding. The first of these is explicit modelling. The educator demonstrates how to work through a specific task, including reasons for its selection and the steps involved through verbal examples. Learners are encouraged to adopt similar schemata in resolving the task. Following this is direct explanations and re-explanations. The educator makes explicit statements tailored to assist learners in understanding the underlying concept, the relevance of applying the concept in particular situations, or how concepts are used (Wilkinson & Silliman, 2001).

Invitations to participate in the conversation are the third type. With this type, participation is encouraged through strategies such as eliciting learners' reasoning to support a statement or position, or creating opportunities for more complex expression through invitations to expand in meaningful ways. The final type is verifying and clarifying student understanding. Explicit and positive feedback is intended to guide learners on learning how to evaluate the creation of a shared perspective or revise their

perspective when misunderstandings occur. When misunderstanding occurs, learners are guided to repair the breakdown by asking appropriate and relevant questions.

It has been found that “a source of academic difficulty for children with learning difficulties is a lack of cognitive and metacognitive strategies” (Wade, 2000, p.13). Wade (2000) goes on to describe cognitive strategies as task specific, i.e., they are used to achieve a certain goal. Metacognitive strategies are used to monitor and evaluate cognitive strategies to assure that the goal has been reached. These strategies, when used as a form of instruction, can increase the performance of learners with learning difficulties and can bring their achievement on academic tasks up to the same level with other learners who do not have learning difficulties (Wade, 2000). The educators need to use these strategies as means of scaffolding learners to reach a state where their academic performance is at par with their peers.

In the case of inclusive education, the educators have to step in each learner’s zone of proximal development and scaffold them till the learners reach a state where they can perform without assistance. This calls for educators to fully understand each learner’s potential, even the potential of those learners experiencing barriers to education and those having special education needs. This is why the Department of Education has provided learning styles that are remedial in nature. It is through this remedial form of instruction that the educators enter into the learners’ zone of proximal development and scaffold them to their level of potential development.

In her PhD thesis, Rodina (2006), like Vygotsky (1978), stresses the importance of the dynamic, socio-cultural nature of disability for the methodology of inclusive education. Rodina (2006) also stresses the importance of social learning in the upbringing and education of learners with barriers to learning. Vygotsky focused on child health, not on “disorders”. As far as Vygotsky is concerned, disorder or disability is not a tragedy; psychological-physical insufficiency is determined by a certain social setting, arrangement, or aberration, hindering children’s normal socialization (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky criticized the parents’, educators’ and psychologists’ pathological approach to child abnormality.

A study by Rubinshtein (1979) found that, in inclusive settings, the significant need for social interaction among learners with barriers to learning does not immediately become a need through social intercourse; it is rather preserved as a need for assistance, thus causing *secondary* (socio-cultural) developmental complications. This study found that parents and many educators continuously pity, and consequently help, the helpless learners with barriers to learning, thus hindering the *zone of proximal development*, and causing *secondary* disability (Rubinshtein, 1979). The excessive surveillance, the manifold limitations, and the deprivation of independency, the long-term period outside the child collective – all these factors were crucial to the occurrence of *secondary* socio-cultural disability among children with an intellectual disability (Rodina, 2005).

It would be interesting to investigate how the implementation of inclusive education impacts on the educators' performance in the learners' zone of proximal development; and also to investigate the impact of the sociocultural approach to disability in inclusive education (but cannot be done in this study).

### **2.3 DEFINING BARRIERS TO LEARNING**

'Barriers to learning and development' is a term that was coined by the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) to broaden the scope of needs from the disabled few, to other learners, whose special needs often arise as a result of impediments to learning and development (DoE, 1997a). Barriers to learning refer to difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole and the learning site (DoE, 2005d). These barriers have been identified and may lie within the curriculum, the centre of learning, the system of education, and the broader social context. This prevents both the system and the learner needs from being met (DoE, 2005d). The implication that the term 'barriers' carries is that in order to provide sustained effective learning the education system must be able to accommodate a diverse range of needs amongst the learner population (DoE, 1997a; 2001b; 2005a).

The key barriers found in the system include: socio-economic conditions, attitudes, inflexible curriculum, language skills and communication, inaccessible and unsafe

building environments, inappropriate and inadequate provision of support services, lack of enabling and protective legislation and policy, lack of parental recognition and involvement, disability and the lack of human resource development strategies. The term ‘barriers’ views special needs from an ecosystemic approach, i.e., a point of view that is consistent with a significant body of literature on classroom and learning problems (DoE, 1997a).

## **2.4 DEFINING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Below is the definition of inclusive education as extracted from UNESCO (1994b, p. 61) in their Section for Special Needs Education:

The fundamental principle of the inclusive school is that all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they have. Inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities. There should be a continuum of support and services to match the continuum of special needs encountered in every school.

The Education White Paper 6, titled “Special Needs Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System”, defined inclusive education as:

- “Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support;
- Accepting and respecting that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience;
- Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners;

- A never ending process rather than a simple change of state, increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from cultures, curricula, and communities of local centres of learning;
- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, and disability or HIV status;
- Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners;
- Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning;
- Empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning;
- Broader than formal schooling, and acknowledging that learning occurs in the home, the community, and within formal and informal contexts;
- Acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures.”

(DoE, 2001b, p. 16).

According to Miles (2000), inclusive education is concerned with removing all barriers to learning, and with the participation of all learners vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation. It is a strategic approach designed to facilitate learning success for all children. It addresses the common goals of decreasing and overcoming all exclusion from the human right to education, at least at the elementary level, and enhancing access, participation and learning success in quality basic education for all (Miles, 2000).

Lawson (2005, p. 1) states that inclusive education can be used to mean many things including “the placement with learners with special education needs in mainstream schools; the participation of all learners in the curriculum and social life of mainstream schools; and the participation of all learners in learning which leads to the highest possible level of achievement”. Cartledge and Johnson (1996) state that inclusive education refers to the attempt to educate the child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom with the child’s age-mates; with an objective to increase the social competence of learners with disabilities.

In their report, Miles, Ainscow, Kangwa, Kisanji, Lewis, Mmbaga and Mumba (2003, p. 7), define inclusive education as being “the process of increasing the presence, participation and achievement of all students in their local schools, with particular reference to those groups of learners who are at risk of exclusion, marginalisation or under-achievement”. They state that many existing initiatives to promote inclusion in schools in the South have tended to emphasise externally-led training activities, often based on Northern models, and lacking local ownership, or adequate understandings of the complexity of the issues (Miles *et al.*, 2003). Inclusion has been managed by external expertise rather than by mainstream educators themselves.

Other authors add that inclusive education is concerned with the well-being of all learners (Daniels, 2000; Nind, Rix, Sheehy & Simmons, 2003). It is a human rights approach to social relations and conditions (Barton, 2003b; Clough & Corbett, 2000); a process of increasing the participation of learners in reducing their exclusion from the curricula, cultures and communities of the neighbourhood mainstream centres of learning (Booth, 2003); a process relating to the principles involved in increasing a school’s capacity to respond to learner diversity and promote greater participation for all learners (Armstrong & Moore, 2003). It is a celebration of diversity (Pandor, 2004), concerning a school culture which welcomes differences and recognizes individual needs; involving the identification and minimizing of barriers to learning (Corbett, 2001).

Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005, p. 8) state that inclusive education is about developing inclusive community and education systems, which “must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their learners, accommodating all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions”. Furthermore, inclusive education is about responding simultaneously to students who all differ from each other in important ways, some of which pose particular challenges to the school (DoE, 2005a). It is not only about maintaining the presence of the learners in school but it is also about maximising their participation (Barton, 2003a). Barton (2003a) goes on to state that inclusive education is about contributing to the realisation of an inclusive society with the demand for a rights approach as a central component of policy-making.

Ainscow (1999) writes that inclusive education is fundamentally about how we understand and engage with difference in ways that are constructive and valued. It is a



public process of naming and celebrating differences and engaging with the identification of what it is we value about one another. To do justice to the difference between pupils, to utilise these differences and to approach such factors as a resource, an opportunity for learning and not a problem to be fixed or excluded, thus become a crucial dimension of an approach that is working toward inclusive education (Ainscow, 1999).

## **2.5 IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

The achievement of an inclusive education system is said to be a major challenge facing countries around the world (Avramidis, 2005). Inclusive education is guided by the principle that schools should work toward accommodating all learners regardless of physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions (Lockwood, 2003). Lockwood (2003, p. 2) goes on to say that the differences in children ought to be respected and teaching and learning needs to be “adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child being fit into an existing set of expectations”.

Implementing inclusive education implies a development of broad learning strategies to accommodate and include learners with special needs. This is based on individual perceptions of special needs and the focus that is put on the school’s organization and culture (Armstrong & Moore, 2003; DoE, 2005b; 2005d). The schools have to be committed to and responsible for the process of restructuring themselves in response to the diversity of learners. To successfully implement inclusive education, Hay (2003) states that the school has to provide quality education support services.

The 1994 UNESCO World Conference also realized this situation when it agreed that a school should “accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized area and groups”. (UNESCO, 1994b, p. 6). These inclusive schools “must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula,

organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities” (UNESCO, 1994b, p. 11-12).

Educators have to perform their usual duties while providing special support and attention to learners with special needs at the same time. In order to survive, educators must be able to deal with the unpredictable, immediate, public, simultaneous, and multidimensional demands of classroom life in ways that win and maintain some respect from their colleagues, learners, and themselves (Nind *et al.*, 2003).

Mabaso (2006) conducted a study that investigated the management of the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools. The study had a sample which consisted of eight educators and principals teaching in two public primary schools situated in Gauteng Province. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of educators understand what inclusive education is about. The findings of the study also indicated that the majority of educators were not trained in inclusive education. Resources and the teacher-learner ratio were shown by the study as one of the challenges that educators and learners experience in implementing inclusive education in public primary schools (Mabaso, 2006). It was also found that the majority of educators were in favour of inclusive education, as it addresses the imbalances of the past, and promotes tolerance of social interaction (Mabaso, 2006). In addition, the study found that the majority of schools have School-Based Support Teams, although most of them are only partially effective or ineffective (Mabaso, 2006).

Another study conducted by Maphula (2005) on managing the implication of inclusion in five schools in the Johannesburg South Mega District in Soweto found that lack of knowledge of the concept of inclusion, its management and its implementation, has been detected as one of the basic challenges prevailing amongst the educators. Training, which is a way of acquiring knowledge, was the most spoken about concept throughout the study’s investigation (Maphula, 2005). The educators indicated that the very trainers that are being sent by the DoE lack understanding, direction and confidence about the implementation of this inclusive approach. They noted that the trainers’ emphasis was and remained on the basic principles and orientation of the terminology instead of dealing with crucial issues like application of the inclusive lesson plan, assessment criteria and strategies, designing and curriculum planning (Maphula, 2005).

It appears that in South Africa, implementing inclusive education has challenges and is difficult because of, mainly, lack of training. While some educators are found to understand inclusive education, other educators lack the knowledge and understanding thereof. This poses a need for further research and intervention in this aspect.

## **2.6 THE SHIFT FROM A DUAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION TO A UNITARY SYSTEM OF EDUCATION – AN OVERVIEW**

The dual system of education was composed of mainstream education and special education. The special education system had introduced several educational problems (Kisanji, 1999). It had some negative connotations. According to Kisanji (1999), the first implication is that children who qualify for special education have something wrong with them, and need to receive a curriculum that is different from that of their peers as they have difficulty in participating in the regular school curriculum. Another concern was that assessment procedures tended to label and categorise the learners and this has damaging effects on teacher and parent expectations and on the learners' self-concept.

Thomas and Loxley (2001) give different perspectives from which disability and special education have been viewed and critiqued. The first of these perspectives is the essentialist perspective, which locates children's differences and disabilities unproblematically in their individual pathology. This has sometimes been called a deficit or medical approach. The second is the social constructionist perspective, which interprets and presents disability as a socially contrived construct deployed against minorities enforcing social marginalisation.

The third perspective is the materialist perspective, which sees disability as a form of exclusion created and maintained by the economic system. The post-modern perspective is the fourth perspective which Thomas and Loxley (2001) write about. This perspective rejects the theoretical explanations offered by materialist accounts, seeing the experiences of excluded children and adults as discontinuous. The existence of excluded groups forces the system to categorize, and the categories encourage a particular mindset about that group. Lastly, the disability movement perspective is the fifth perspective, which

devotes less attention to the production of a coherent theoretical explication of disability in its eclectic quest for social change.

A problem reported from a number of Northern countries was that despite national policies emphasising integration, there is evidence of a significant increase in the proportions of learners being categorised in order that their schools can earn additional resources (Ainscow 1999; Miles *et al.*, 2003). One of the concerns of those who adopt this view is with the way in which learners have come to be designated as having special needs. They see integration as a social process that needs to be continually challenged. More specifically they argue that the continued use of the medical model of assessment – within which educational difficulties are explained solely in terms of a child’s deficits – prevents progress in the field, not least because it distracts attention from questions about why schools fail to teach so many children successfully (Miles *et al.*, 2003).

These arguments led to proposals for a re-conceptualisation of the ‘special needs’ concept. It was argued that the difficulties experienced by learners result from the ways in which schools were organised and from the forms of teaching that were provided (Ainscow, 1999). Ainscow (1999) goes on to suggest that the schools need to be reformed and pedagogy needs to be improved in ways that will lead them to respond positively to learner diversity, seeing individual differences not as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for enriching learning. Within such a conceptualisation, a consideration of difficulties experienced by learners and by educators can provide an agenda for reforms and insights as to how such reforms might be brought about, but this kind of approach is more likely to be successful in contexts where there is a culture of collaboration that encourages and supports problem-solving (Ainscow 1999).

Integration was seen as a reasonable arrangement to respond to the above-mentioned limitations and critiques. The Regular Education Initiative (REI) movement was launched in the United States of America calling for the merging of special and mainstream education into one single system in which all children attended the regular community school (Kisanji, 1999). After the Regular Education Initiative, another movement, the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH), was initiated to promote the rights and well-being of people with severe intellectual disability (Kisanji,

1999). This movement proposed the merging of special and mainstream education, not believing in the continuum from special class to regular class. This movement suggested that there should be only one unified education system. A restructuring of the schools to accommodate all learners and radical changes to the curriculum were proposed.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) carried out a survey on teacher education in 14 countries involving all world regions (UNESCO, 1994). They found that regular classroom teachers were willing to take on the responsibility for special needs children, but were not confident whether they had the skills to carry out that task. According to the report, most teachers felt that they needed training in the special needs field. These findings suggested the need for in-service training for regular classroom teachers through teacher trainers. UNESCO then set up a project to develop materials and teaching strategies that would meet the needs of teachers in inclusive schools (UNESCO, 1994).

Moves toward inclusion are also endorsed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) (UN, 1989). The adoption of the Convention by the UN General Assembly and its subsequent ratification by 187 countries imposes a requirement for radical changes to traditional approaches to provision made for disabled children (Miles *et al.*, 2003; UN, 1989). The UN CRC contains a number of articles which require governments to undertake a systematic analysis of their laws, policies and practices and assess the extent to which they currently comply with the obligations.

Miles *et al.* (2003) cite Article 28 of the UN CRC, which asserts the basic right of every child to education and requires that this should be provided on the basis of equality of opportunity. This allows no discrimination in relation to access to education on grounds of disability. Furthermore, the continued justification of the types of segregated provision made in many countries needs to be tested against the child's rights not to be discriminated against. Articles 28 and 29, together with Articles 2 and 3 imply that all children have a right to inclusive education, irrespective of impairment and disability (UN, 1989). Article 23, however, suggests that disabled children need special care, as well as education, and so could be interpreted to mean some form of segregated education (Miles *et al.*, 2000).

The United Nations Standard Rules for the Equalisation of Opportunities for Disabled Persons made it clear that the rights of disabled people are to be achieved through a policy of inclusion (UN, 1993). These standard rules provide a globally recognised framework for the formulation of rights-based disability legislation by governments. Disabled children's rights to inclusive education can be secured through a combination of the UN Standard Rules and the UN CRC (UN, 1993). The continued marginalisation of many groups of children was acknowledged, particularly those children from minority ethnic groups and those with special learning needs. Disability-focused organisations were concerned that the education of disabled children was likely to continue to be overlooked within the Education for All (EFA) framework, despite existing international frameworks and conventions (UN, 1993).

In 1994, UNESCO was led to assemble with the assistance of the government of Spain, and convened the 1994 World Conference at Salamanca. At the end of the conference, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action was unanimously adopted by acclamation (Pottas, 2005; UNESCO, 1994a). This statement calls on governments to “adopt the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in mainstream schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise” (Dyson & Millward, 2000, p.1).

This Statement, and the accompanying Framework for Action, is arguably the most significant international document that has ever appeared in special education (Miles *et al.*, 2003). It argues that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Furthermore, it suggests, such schools can provide an effective education for the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

The Salamanca Statement encourages the education system to look at educational difficulties in new ways. This new direction in thinking is based on the belief that changes in methodology and organisation made in response to the learners experiencing difficulties can, under certain conditions, benefit all children (UNESCO, 1994b). In this way, learners who are currently categorised as having special needs come to be seen as a stimulus for encouraging the development of richer learning environments.

In 2002, a UNESCO Flagship on 'Education for All and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Toward Inclusion' was created to address the concern that the education of disabled learners was likely to continue to be overlooked within Education for All (EFA) framework (UNESCO, 2002). Similar concerns about safeguarding the rights of disabled people led to the setting up of an Ad Hoc Committee for the development of a UN Convention on 'Promotion and Protection of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities' (UN, 2003).

It is argued that in order to develop educational systems that encourage and support the development of schools that are effective in reaching all children in the community, it is necessary to recognise that the field itself is riddled with uncertainties, disputes and contradictions (UN, 2003; UNESCO, 2002). However, what can be said is that throughout the world attempts are being made to provide more effective educational responses to such children, and that, encouraged by the Salamanca Statement, the overall trend is toward making these responses, as far as possible, within the context of general educational provision. As a consequence this is leading to a reconsideration of the future roles and purposes of specialists and specialist facilities in education.

Whilst many of the debates and disputes about the moves toward inclusive education are driven by Northern agendas, they clearly have implications for policy initiatives in countries of the South (Miles *et al.*, 2003). In economically poorer countries many groups of learners are particularly vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion, not only disabled learners.

The literature on special and inclusive education in the South is not much, and it has tended to be dominated by authors who have a special education background, and most of whom are based in the North. In their report, Miles *et al.* (2003) give an example of a study carried out in 1994 by Stubbs, which showed less than 25 articles relating to education and disabled children in developing countries of the South. It was found that statistics on disability and inclusive education lack consistency in their definitions, degrees of impairment and disability, and cultural context (Miles *et al.*, 2003). Research suggests that many cultural assumptions have been made by the Western authors about the form that special/inclusive education should take in the South; indigenous knowledge

has been overlooked; statistics are unreliable; and critical evaluations of donor-funded special education programmes, modelled on Northern practice, are urgently needed (Stubbs, 1994).

The study conducted by Stubbs (1994) found that in most countries of the South, there is a serious problem with very high school failure, repetition and drop-out rates. However, it seems likely that learners who are often labelled as 'slow learners' and tend to drop out of school are likely to have unrecognised and unidentified difficulties in learning (Stubbs, 1994). This study also found that in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, learners who do not do well in class are collectively referred to as slow learners, distinguishing them from the fast learners who receive the majority of the educators' time and attention. They tend not to be considered as having special educational needs (Miles *et al.*, 2003; Stubbs, 1994). The label "slow learners" carries with it worrying assumptions that these learners have deficits and so risks further entrenching a medical model approach to children experiencing difficulties in the school system, and fails to draw attention to the failure of the school system to meet their diverse needs (Miles *et al.*, 2003). The label becomes a barrier to learning, along with other barriers.

South Africa can learn from the large-scale cross-national studies in countries of the North that provide extensive information on best practice for Inclusive Education. A high priority involves educator training, perhaps not surprisingly, due to the fact that personnel resources constitute approximately 80% of all school expenditures (Peters, 2003). Peters (2003) suggests that, like Northern countries, educator training for inclusive education in South Africa needs to focus on enhancing the skills of classroom educators in areas of pedagogy, curriculum development and adaptation. Training should be intentional and classroom-based, intensive, and on-going in order to promote sustainable effective practice.

Although a definite trend toward inclusive practice and increase in inclusive education programming is evident in all countries of the North, considerable variation exists, most notably in the areas of classification and placement decisions (Peters, 2003). It is important to note that all countries face several challenges.



## **2.7 THE SHIFT FROM A DUAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION TO A UNITARY SYSTEM OF EDUCATION – INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.7.1 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Prior the 1994 national democratic elections, the South African Department of Education was split into 18 racially divided education departments (Hay & Beyers, 2000; WCED, 2002). This produced a dual system of education that included a mainstream component and a special education component (Naicker, 1999; 2000). This system resulted in a number of learners, especially Black learners, being excluded from the mainstream of education (Carrim, 2002). Special education was not only organized according to racial segregation; there was segregation on the basis of learner disability as well.

Learners with disabilities/difficulties had to obtain their education from special schools which provided special resources, adaptations to the curriculum, and different assessment strategies to assist them in their learning. Learners with disabilities were referred to as learners with special education needs (Muthukrishna, 2002; van Rooyen & Le Grange, 2003; WCED, 2002). Thus, disabled learners were labelled, categorized, and stigmatised; leading to them having a low self-esteem (WCED, 2002).

Responding to the 1994 Salamanca Statement and framework on Special Needs education, the South African government has promulgated acts and policies promoting the inclusion of learners with special needs in education. Among these is the Education White Paper No.1 of 1995, which highlights the importance of addressing the needs of learners with special needs, both in special schools and in mainstream schools (DoE, 1995; RSA, 1995). In 1996, the South African Schools Act was passed, stating that principals should allow parents the right to decide where they wish their learning-disabled children to be placed (RSA, 1996; van Rooyen & Le Grange, 2003).

In 1997, the National Commission on Special Needs Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) were appointed to “investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa” (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999; KZN – DoE, 2001; Pettipher, 2000; UNESCO, 2003). They

produced a report, namely, Quality Education for All, which describes special needs as barriers to learning and development, and asserts that “all learners have a right to access both basic and quality education without discrimination of any sort”; and that “no learner may be denied admission to an ordinary school on any grounds, including grounds of disability, language, learning difficulty or pregnancy" (DoE, 1997a, p. 44).

They argued that a range of needs existed among all learners, which must be met if effective learning and development are to be sustained (DoE, 1997a). Furthermore, their report argued that the education system should address those factors that lead to the failure of the system to accommodate diversity, or which lead to learning breakdown (Muthukrishna, 2002). According to Miles *et al.* (2003), this was the first report to challenge the conceptualisation of special needs in South Africa, and it came to be seen internationally as an example of the way in which the special needs agenda has the potential to transform whole education systems. Naicker (1999, p. 26) suggests that, “...it is important that the majority of educationists in mainstream education take ownership of the management of diversity”.

The Higher Education White Paper, produced in 1997, suggested the identification of inequalities based on racial, gender, and disability discrimination or disadvantage (DoE, 1997b). In August 1999, the Ministry of Education released the “Consultative Paper No 1 on Special Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System, First Steps” (DoE, 1999). This Paper suggested a move away from using segregation according to disability as an organising principle for schools and educational institutions.

The “Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: An Inclusive Education and Training System”, released in 2001, emphasizing supporting learners through full service schools; and the “Draft Guidelines for the Implementation for Inclusive Education”, produced in 2002, made recommendations for the provision of quality education for all (DoE, 2001; 2002; Engelbrecht, Kriegler & Booysen, 1996; Hay, 2003). This was after the National Department of Education felt that inclusive education would be an intervention for overcoming barriers to learning (DoE, 2005d; Pandor, 2004).

### **2.7.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

It is important to consider whether South Africa's new inclusive education policy would improve the human rights of learners, as compared to the dual system of education that was partially in place in pre-democratic South Africa. South Africa has, since the advent of democracy in 1994, developed some of the best policy documents in the world. An example is the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996), which has been praised for its quality, comprehensiveness and attention to as well as protection of human rights (Hay & Malindi, 2005).

This optimism is particularly evident in the field of promotion of human rights, where authors view inclusive education as the culmination of the struggle for human rights in South Africa within the educational field; with separation and stigmatization ceasing to exist, and every learner's rights to equality, human dignity and education being realized and acknowledged (Naicker, 1999).

The South African Constitution focuses strongly on 3 basic rights, namely the right to equality, the right to human dignity as well as the right to education. It can be deduced that these rights were often violated in pre-democratic South Africa (Hay & Malindi, 2005). The right to equality, in section 9 (1-5) of the Constitution, states that every citizen enjoys equality before the law. The state may not unfairly discriminate against anyone, directly or indirectly on the basis of race, gender, colour, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth. The Constitution also prohibits anyone from unfairly discriminating, directly or indirectly, against anyone on the basis of the factors already listed above (RSA, 1996).

Section 10 of the Constitution deals with the right to human dignity. It is stated that everyone has a right to human dignity and the respect that goes with it. No one can insult another because of his or her race, colour or appearance. A child's right to human dignity is also spelled out – every child has a right to family or parental care and appropriate care if and when such a child should be placed in an alternative environment (RSA, 1996). Section 28 (1) further prohibits anyone from maltreating, neglecting, abusing, degrading

or placing the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development in jeopardy in any form whatsoever (RSA, 1996).

The right to education appears in section 29, and states that everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education. Everyone further has the right to further and higher education, which the state must make progressively available and accessible (RSA, 1996). Education is a right for every learner of school going age, including learners experiencing barriers to learning and development (Hay & Malindi, 2005).

Hay and Malindi (2005) state that the policy makers and departmental officials have often created an impression that human rights have been grossly abused in the old dual system of special and regular education, especially because learners with special needs were separated from the mainstream. Hay and Malindi (2005) argue that it is perhaps unfair to simply describe the old system as the dual education system of pre-democratic South Africa as it may create the impression that the country had a fully fledged dual education system. They go on to state the fact that South Africa had racially segregated education departments, but with a continuum of dual education system provisioning – from developed to developing (Hay & Malindi, 2005).

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) Support Services Report of 1992, found that the White and Indian education systems had well developed dual education systems, whilst the coloured and to the least extent the Black communities only had a semblance of a dual education system (NEPI, 1992). Their report reflects that by 1990 the White education department had 89 special schools representing 37,1% of the total special schools, whilst the learners made up only 9,7% of the total learners. The special schools for Black learners totalled 71 which constituted 29,6% of special schools, whilst the learners represented 79,1% of all learners. The Indians had 60 special schools (25% of all special schools), whereas the learners were only 8,7% of all learners. The Coloured communities had 20 special schools (8,3% of special schools), whilst constituting only 2,4% of the learner population (NEPI, 1992).

This shows clearly that South Africa experienced the dual education system on a continuum, with Black learners having the slimmest chance of being placed in a special school. However, it is felt that it is not that simple to pronounce the dual education

system as inherently bad and as negating human rights. The separation of learners with barriers from others surely can be viewed as infringing on the rights to equality and human dignity, but the other side of the coin is that the individual, specialized attention received with low ratios may have contributed to human dignity and quality education (Hay & Malindi, 2005).

The right to education for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development has taken much longer to be established than for those not experiencing barriers. The initial phase of dual education provision has been gradually transformed to mainstreaming, integration and currently inclusive education provisioning.

The Salamanca Statement of 1994 articulated the relationship between human rights and inclusive education, by reaffirming the education of all learners in the regular education system:

- It is believed that every child has a fundamental right to education;
- The unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs of every learner must be recognized in the practice of education;
- Learners experiencing barriers to learning and development must have access to regular schools that should be made to accommodate them in a child centred pedagogy that will meet their needs;
- Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system;

(UNESCO, 1994, p.viii)

Proponents of inclusive education therefore, according to Hay and Malindi (2005), view a system of inclusion as most beneficial to children's rights, including the rights to equality, human dignity and education.

## **2.8 THE EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION - FINDINGS FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH**

The concern in South Africa is that most educators did not receive training in special education. They are expected to work hard and produce good results at the end of each academic year. It is therefore important that their perceptions of and attitudes toward inclusive education are positive and not biased.

### **2.8.1 EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Little research exists on educators' perceptions of inclusive education (Koay, Lim, Sim & Elkins, 2006). The educators' perceptions of inclusive education are significant because they can influence the degree to which learners with barriers to learning are accepted and accommodated within mainstream schools.

In their study, Koay, Lim, Sim and Elkins (2006) found that the success of inclusive education depends heavily on the perceptions and attitudes of educators within mainstream schools toward learners with special needs / barriers to learning. They state that positive perceptions and feelings on the part of educators tend to encourage successful inclusion; this has been found to be influenced by various factors. Some survey studies have shown that educator acceptance or resistance to the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning into mainstream classrooms is related to the knowledge base and experiences of educators (Stoler 1992; Taylor, Richards, Goldstein & Schilit, 1997). Other researchers have cited the lack of skills necessary to teach learners with barriers to learning as the most common source of educator resistance (Kauffman, Gerber & Semmel, 1988).

The results of the research in Brunei Darussalam by Koay, Lim, Sim and Elkins (2006) support the findings of these previous studies. They found that as educators gain more experience and knowledge with learners with barriers to learning, they become more positive in their perceptions and beliefs about including these learners. They also found that the educators who had received the most training and experience in special needs

have the most positive views and perceptions about inclusive education (Koay, Lim, Sim & Elkins, 2006).

Chen, Turner and Cheng (n.d., p. 7) write that “research supports the fact that teacher expectations influence student achievement, behaviour, and self-esteem”. They go on to say that if an educator’s perceptions of learners with disabilities are negative then including such learners in mainstream schools may not result in a beneficial experience for the students. According to Schuum, Vaughn, Gordon and Rothlein (1994), prior research has indicated that general education teachers do not always feel prepared to teach students who have special needs, and special and general education teachers often lack the skills in teaming and collaboration needed to teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

According to Luseno (2001), the educators’ perceptions of success in educating students in inclusive classrooms seem to be influenced by their efficacy beliefs for teaching students with special needs. The effective implementation of inclusive programmes requires that the educators know the characteristics of children with disabilities, the special education laws, strategies for assessing the learners’ needs, and strategies for teaching and structuring instruction to individual learner needs, if they are to successfully educate exceptional learners in inclusive settings (Luseno, 2001).

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) conducted a synthesis of the research pertaining to teacher perceptions of inclusion spanning the years from 1958 – 1995. This review organized the findings of 28 studies around key questions that appeared to be most relevant to the issues involved in inclusion, and evaluated the prospective impact of geographical region, year of publication, and teacher characteristics on teacher perceptions. These issues included (a) teacher support of the philosophy of inclusion and their willingness to include students in their classrooms, (b) the benefits of inclusion to students and the barriers to its effectiveness, (c) the perceived effects of inclusion on the general education classroom environment, and (d) perceptions about the needed resources in order to implement inclusion effectively.

The findings from this study indicated that some mainstream educators held positive perceptions regarding mainstreaming or inclusion only at a conceptual level – not on a

practical level, while other educators indicated a willingness to include students in their classrooms (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). This variability in support of inclusion tended to be related to the severity level of the disability and the degree of intensity of implementation. Variability in willingness to include learners with barriers to learning was also related to the degree of perceived added responsibilities on the part of the mainstream educator as a result of the inclusion (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

### **2.8.2 EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Research shows that educators are struggling to adjust to the “new way of doing things and they are suffering because of the overload they have” (Hay, 2003, p.135). Other research emphasizes that inclusive education assumes that there is adequate classroom and other support to learners with special needs (Stainback & Stainback, 1996; Swart *et al.*, 2000).

However, most educators do not have adequate training to provide such support (Donald & Hlongwane, 1993). The latter poses a big challenge to schools and educators because the Human Rights Foundation of Inclusive Education suggests that a learner should be able to choose his or her classroom and school preference, and that adequate support should be provided in that chosen classroom (Hay, 2003).

Roaf (2003), Cook, Klein, Tessier and Daley (2004) state some of the challenges of inclusive education. The educators have to accept and deal with the diversity of their learners. They have to teach learners without special needs together with learners with learning difficulties, behaviour, speech, language, and communication problems in the same classroom (Roaf, 2003). The educators' work becomes wider with much higher targets set for them to achieve. Learners who are struggling in lessons need extra attention and extra support, which is not always possible to give in class.

Another challenge is that educators have differences in their training backgrounds, level of education, and remuneration (BCTF, 2004; & Cook *et al.*, 2004). There are also differences in their levels of experience and understanding of disabilities. The challenge is that they must be able to explain the nature of a learner's disability and learning style,



which “requires a certain level of expertise across all disabilities” (Cook *et al.*, 2004, p. 372). Then they would have to take on an unfamiliar role of providing support services. Cook *et al.* (2004, p. 373) go on to state that educators have to manage their role as educators and avoid being invasive; this might lead to educators “feeling uncomfortable with their lack of knowledge and experience with disabilities, thus experiencing additional stress in an already stressful job”. Educators would then have to seek and find ways of coping so that they would be able to adequately provide their services to the school and to the learners. They are faced with a challenge of maintaining their psychosocial and emotional well-being.

There is also a challenge of strict adherence to a particular curriculum as opposed to adapting a more flexible implementation of the curriculum (Cook *et al.*, 2004). Educators have to decide whether to use very unstructured interventions or a combination of more structured, teacher-directed teaching interventions. At the same time, they have to decide on how to organize their daily activities, and decide whether the activities should be fairly unstructured and flexible or they should be predictable daily routines (Cook *et al.*, 2004).

As mainstream classroom educators are responsible for teaching a diversity of learners with a wide range of achievement levels, inclusion of learners experiencing barriers to learning further increases variance in achievement, as well as in behaviour problems, requiring these educators to direct more attention to their specific needs. The biggest challenge reported is that in the absence of increased time to devote to individual learners, and a continued press to improve average achievement of the class, mainstream classroom educators recognize that the educational needs of the learners with and without barriers to learning are likely to suffer (Salend & Duhaney, 1999).

The South African education system has a large percentage of overcrowded classes which is faced with a number of challenges which may jeopardize the practicing of human rights within inclusive education (Hay & Malindi, 2005). These challenges are as follows:

- a large percentage of overcrowded classes which are not in line with the national norm of 1:40 for primary schools or 1:35 for secondary schools. Despite efforts

from provincial education departments, this problem continues without an imminent solution;

- underqualified educators that do not have the capacity to implement inclusive education well. Huge efforts are under way to improve these educators' qualifications, but only time will tell whether this improvement will have a bearing on inclusive classrooms;
- capacity of education managers to implement inclusive education in a coordinated, focused way. It appears as if many provincial managers do not have adequate background to manage this complex process;
- change overload that educators are experiencing. The stream of new policies seems never-ending, and is affecting educator morale;
- remnants of the dual system that are still operational in combination with the new inclusive education system. Special classes at mainstream schools still exist, and the majority of special schools have not been transformed into resource centres yet.

(as cited on [http://www.isec2005.org.uk/isec/abstracts/papers\\_h/hay\\_j.shtml](http://www.isec2005.org.uk/isec/abstracts/papers_h/hay_j.shtml))

### **2.8.3 EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Attitudes can be defined as learned beliefs that develop over time (Luseno, 2001). According to Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), attitudes represent our covert/hidden feelings of favourability or unfavourability toward an object, person, issue, or behaviour. Attitude is defined as "a learned predisposition to response in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object" (Fishbein & Ajzen 1975, p. 6). It is said that people learn attitudes over time by being exposed to the object directly (experience) or through receiving information about the object. The learned attitudes serve as general guides to overt/unhidden behaviour with respect to the attitude object, giving rise to a consistently favourable or unfavourable pattern of response (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

How well educators implement inclusive programmes depends on their attitude toward inclusive education. The educators have to believe that all learners can be educated; learners experiencing barriers to learning can be educated in regular classrooms; and that

inclusive education is a beneficial programme if they are expected to accept working with included learners (Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher & Saumell, 1996). Research on educators' attitudes has been carried out in most regions of the world and mirrors the political agendas of these countries in focusing attention on the exclusion of children from educational opportunities (UNESCO, 1994). One of the most important factors affecting educators' attitudes toward inclusive education is the type and severity of disability or barriers to learning.

Research has revealed that, irrespective of teaching experience, severity of disability or barriers to learning shows an inverse relationship with positive attitudes such that as the perception of severity increases, educators' positive attitudes decrease (Dupoux, Hammond, Ingalls & Wolman, 2006). Mainstream educators find it difficult to respond to the mandate to integrate students with disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate in general settings; and they may perceive this as an additional burden on their already stressed workloads (Dupoux, Hammond, Ingalls & Wolman, 2006).

It has been reported that male educators' attitudes toward integration are more negative than female educators (Alghazo & Naggar Gaad, 2004). Factors related to administrative support have been linked to educators' attitudes toward inclusive education. Educators consider the presence of organizational support and resources as critical in forming positive attitudes toward inclusive education (Kruger, Struzziero & Vacca, 1995). An additional component of positive attitude is related to class size. Mainstream educators reported that reducing class size to 20 learners would facilitate their inclusion effort (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

Research has found that there are variables that influence the educators' attitudes toward inclusive education. These variables consist of the availability of building principal and parental support; educators' pre-service and in-service preparation; experience with disabled children; knowledge of disabling conditions; knowledge of pertinent special education laws; and the length of teaching experience; the availability of community support, technical support, and administrative support (Wigle & Wilcox, 1997).

The degree to which special and general classroom teachers are prepared to work in inclusive settings greatly determines the ultimate success of inclusive programmes

(Luseno, 2001). These authors note that teachers are more willing to include students with mild disabilities than students with more severe disabilities due to their perceived ability to successfully implement instructional goals for the entire classroom. Luseno (2001) reports that previous research indicates that educators do not believe the academic and social needs of majority of learners experiencing barriers to learning can be best met in general education classrooms.

Previous research indicates that effective educators in mainstream schools tend to be less tolerant of maladaptive behaviour and learning problems, and have higher standards for acceptable classroom behaviour (Roaf, 2003). These educators believe that learners experiencing barriers to learning are disruptive in the classroom, therefore they tend to be more likely to resist the placement of these learners in their classrooms.

These educators also believe that educating these learners requires additional time, work, and attention; and there are significant classroom changes that need to be made to accommodate these learners, in addition to perceiving inclusion as requiring significant changes in classroom and instructional procedures and curricula (Salend & Duhaney, 1999). Subban and Sharma (2006) report that previous research in the educators' attitudes toward inclusive education links demographic and contextual variables to educators' attitudes toward inclusive education. Variables such as the educators' gender, age, level of qualification in special education, and the severity of the learner's disability have previously been investigated as factors that may shape educators' attitudes toward the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning.

It was found that older, more experienced educators appear to foster less positive attitudes than younger educators (Cartledge & Johnson, 1996; Subban & Sharma, 2006). Also, the lack of training in the field of inclusive or special education may lead to less positive attitudes toward the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning into mainstream schools, while increased training has been associated with more positive attitudes in this regard (Briggs, Johnson, Shepherd & Sedbrook, 2002).

Avramidis, Bayliss, and Burden (2000) state that another variable makes reference to the perceived confidence of mainstream educators. Teachers who perceive themselves as confident enough to include students with barriers to learning appear to hold more

positive attitudes toward inclusive education; and, previous experience educating learners experiencing barriers to learning may allow the mainstream teacher to view inclusive educational practices more positively (Avramidis *et al.*, 2000).

Another finding was that the educators' attitude toward the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning and learning disabilities into mainstream schools may also be influenced by the severity of the disability experienced by such learners (Kuester, 2000). The inclusion of learners with behavioural disorders and emotional difficulties appear to attract the least favourable responses from mainstream educators (Kuester, 2000).

Avramidis *et al.* (2000) report that previous studies support the view that educators perceive learners with emotional and behavioural disorders as more challenging in the classroom, and most mainstream educators believe that they lack the skill, knowledge and competence to effectively include these learners. There is also evidence that educators are reluctant to include learners with emotional and behavioural disorders, while preferring to include learners with learning disabilities (Briggs *et al.*, 2002). Literature also suggests that educators are more willing to include learners who present with speech and language disorders than they are to include learners with physical disabilities (Briggs *et al.*, 2002).

In a study by Elhoweris and Alsheikh (2006), most special education educators were found to be highly supportive of inclusion – they held positive attitudes toward inclusive education, while most general education teachers were not highly supportive of inclusion, and had strong reservations toward including learners with barriers to learning. These findings were consistent with the work of Taylor *et al.* (1997).

#### **2.8.4 EDUCATORS' CONCERNS ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Educators view the inclusion of learners with disabilities into mainstream settings as difficult and stressful (Subban & Sharma, 2006). The need for collaboration with several support staff has resulted in tension and confusion; and the inclusion of learners with disabilities into regular classrooms is viewed by some educators as contributing to increased workloads (Daane, Beirne-Smith & Latham, 2000). Educators appear to be concerned about the non-acceptance of such learners by their non-disabled peers (Daane

*et al.*, 2000), and they seem to fear that the dynamics within inclusive settings may impact on the academic progress of non-disabled learners (Forlin, 1998).

Research shows that mainstream educators are apprehensive about meeting the individual needs of learners with disabilities, of the risk of social stigmas being attached to such learners in inclusive settings, of the availability and supply of resources to assist in the implementation of inclusive programmes (Bradshaw, 1998), the level of preparedness experienced by educators through training, the access to funding to support learners with disabilities within mainstream settings, and the perceived lack of support from the administrative personnel at schools to support inclusive programmes (Daane *et al.*, 2000).

Other educators are concerned that as more learners are included, the educators would need additional tools and skills for coping with the social and emotional problems that accompany inclusive schooling (Ali, Mustapha & Jelas, 2006). Bradshaw (1998) found that educators are most concerned about the provision of para-professional staff to assist schools with the provision of an equitable education system for all learners. Other areas of concern included the severity of the included learner's disability and the need to adequately cater to the needs of both learners with disabilities and the non-disabled peers.

Educators evidently view access to resources as being limited and restricted (Subban & Sharma, 2006). It would appear that the inclusion of learners with disabilities into regular classrooms necessitates the need for more assistants for educators in the classroom. The results of previous studies concur with the view that educator concerns about the inclusion of learners with disabilities could stem from the need for additional support, resources, funding and access to teacher aids (Kuester, 2000).

It was found that other concerns experienced by mainstream educators included their ability as educators to adequately cater for learners with disabilities, their part in the decision making process regarding inclusive education, concerns about catering to the needs of both disabled and non-disabled learners, and concerns about having sufficient time to implement inclusive programmes (Kuester, 2000). Some of the mainstream educators claim that they had chosen to teach a specific discipline and not special education, and the inclusion policy forces them to enter areas they are unsure about or not interested in (Ali *et al.*, 2006).

It is argued that educators experience higher degrees of concern about inclusive education because they believe that they have not been consulted as part of this process (Avramidis *et al.*, 2000). Increased levels of concern also arise from the educators' need to consider the progress of all learners within the inclusive classroom, and concerns about the time and attention they require to include students with disabilities into mainstream settings (Avramidis *et al.*, 2000). Avramidis *et al.* (2000) report that it was evident that educators who had undertaken training in special education, those who had a close friend with a disability and those with higher levels of concern expressed lower degrees of concern about implementing inclusive education.

It is probable that teachers who received the appropriate training experienced fewer concerns about including students with disabilities into mainstream settings, as the training provided them with some form of preparedness. The increased need for more specialized training and professional support is viewed as critical to the success of inclusive education (Briggs *et al.*, 2002). Subban and Sharma (2006) found that training in special education appeared to lessen pre-service educators' concerns regarding inclusive education.

## **2.9 THE NEED FOR THIS STUDY IN PIETERMARITZBURG**

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that some educators hold negative attitudes toward inclusive education. Some have had negative experiences. Some have negative perceptions and others have raised concerns about inclusive education. These findings are from studies conducted in other countries and in other provinces in South Africa. Therefore these findings do not apply to all educators and learners in KwaZulu-Natal.

In KwaZulu-Natal, there is little research on the educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented. Inclusive education can be implemented with success if and when the classrooms are welcoming and supporting; when the educators are trained and positive about inclusion; when individualised programmes designed to address the learning needs and styles of the learners are put in

place; and when the support services and materials necessary to support inclusion are available as and when needed (Lawson, 2005).

To ensure that this is attained, it is, therefore, vital to find out what the educators in Pietermaritzburg schools where inclusive education is being implemented perceive to be the positive aspects and strengths of inclusive education. It is important to know their attitudes toward inclusive education; their perspectives about and experiences of inclusive education; as well as the challenges associated with the implementation of inclusive education. It is also important to find out what the educators in Pietermaritzburg schools where inclusive education is being implemented perceive to be the barriers to inclusive education; the factors conducive to the implementation of inclusive education; and the impact of inclusive education on educators and the learners.

## **2.10 CONCLUSION**

There have been major transformations in the education system in South Africa. The system moved from a segregated system during the apartheid era to a unitary system after the democratic elections in 1994. It is crucial that all stakeholders in the education system are able to adapt and adjust to these changes in order to provide quality education for all as stated in the Salamanca Statement and the education White Paper 6.

Inclusive education implies a sense of belonging and acceptance and therefore has to do with how educators and the system respond to individual differences. It is important to realize that renewal and change must be coordinated, comprehensive and efficient. It must present a clear and strong moral imperative to promote the quality of life of the learner with specific needs in order to become part of the mainstream education communities. Regardless of the unique characteristics of children with barriers to learning, inclusive education implies that all learners should have access to the core curriculum. The learners' individual differences, needs, abilities and capacities, as well as the notion that all learners learn in different ways, should be treated with respect.

In the next chapter, the research methodology will be discussed.



## **CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter reviewed findings from previous research in other countries and in South Africa. This chapter focuses on the method in which the research questions were investigated. It provides insight into the research design, sampling method employed, the data collection instrument used and the data analysis techniques applied.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design refers to the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions. It involves planning, visualising of data and the employment of this data in the research project as a whole (Leedy, 1993). This study is contextually based in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. The research methods chosen for this study have emerged from the researcher's orientation and the aim of this study. In an effort to understand the educators' experiences, quantitative and qualitative methods were seen as the most effective for this study. These methods were chosen because a holistic picture was required of the phenomena within the context where it occurred, i.e., the selected inclusive schools.

For the purposes of this study, the quantitative and qualitative research designs were used in order to make broad and generalisable comparisons. The theory behind the research design specifies how the research is to be carried out (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999); and the principles of this research were set along four dimensions, viz., the purpose of the research, the paradigm informing the research, the context within which the research would be carried out, and the techniques to collect data (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

### **3.2.1 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**

The nature of the knowledge to which this study contributes to the body of knowledge is descriptive. Therefore, part of the research design for this study was quantitative and characterized by a contextual, descriptive and explorative approach. As it is descriptive, it involved collecting statistical data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects of the study. It determines and reports the way things are. It collects numerical data in order to explain, predict and or control phenomena of interest; and data analysis is mainly statistical.

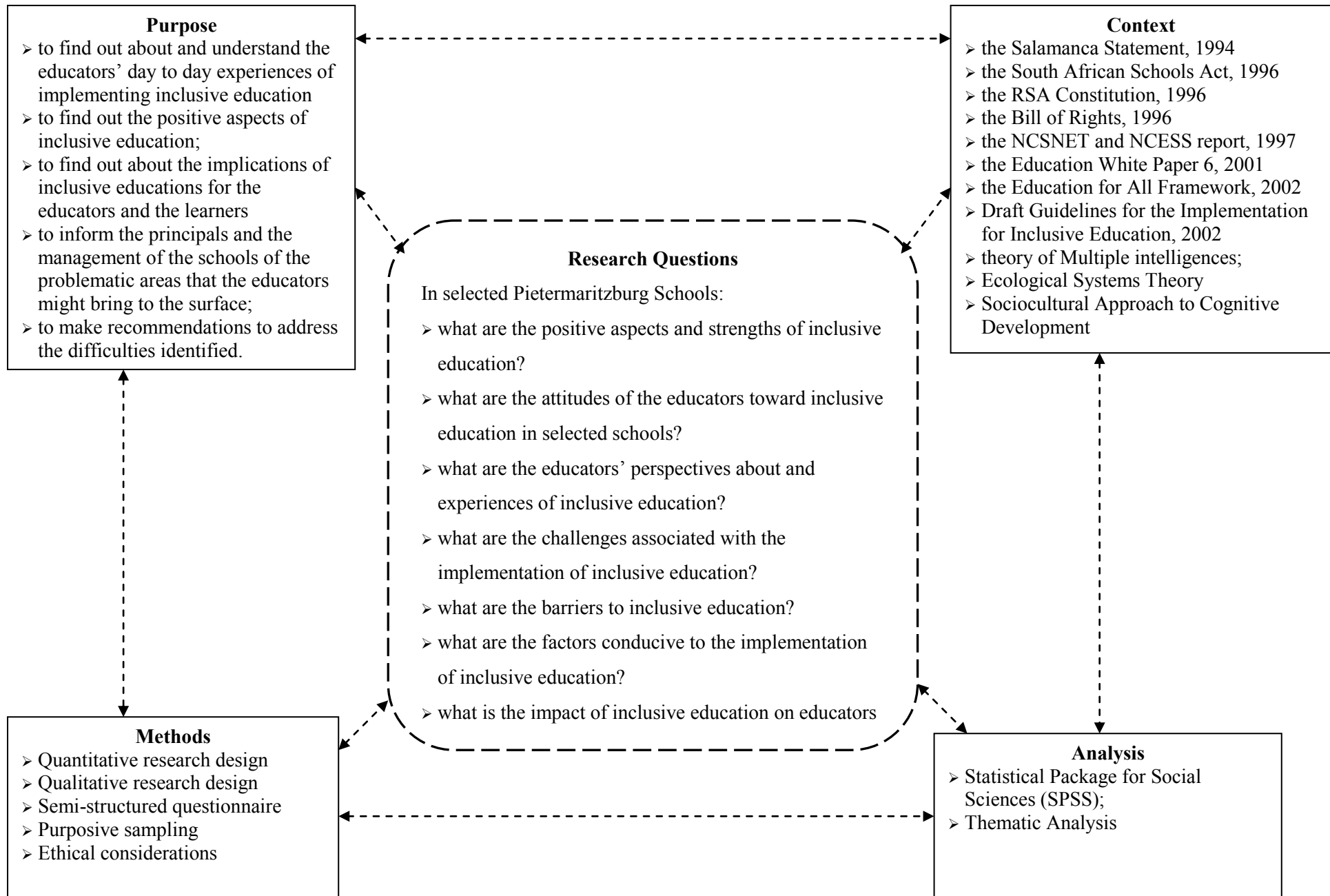
### **3.2.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN**

A qualitative research design was chosen for this study because of the advantage that it enables the researcher to understand people in terms of their own definition of the world. It allows the researcher to understand the participants' personal experiences. Through the qualitative approach the researcher attempted to understand the educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education where it is being implemented in the selected schools in Pietermaritzburg.

The qualitative research design produces data that consist of words in the form of rich verbal descriptions rather than numbers (McMillan & Schumacher 1997), which allows the researcher to remain receptive to new ideas, issues and undercurrents emerging in the study. This was necessary in the context of this study where the inclusion policy, which is still something relatively recent, is studied. It is possible that new developments, relating to the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning, may evolve during the process of this research.

The framework for this study was provided for by a pattern of particular research methods of data collection and interpretation. These were the use of a quantitative survey and the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The context where research was conducted is the schools in Pietermaritzburg where inclusive education is being implemented; and the research method used for data collection was the administration of the questionnaire. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Research design**



### **3.2.3 DESIGN VALIDITY AND DESIGN COHERENCE**

According to Durrheim (1999), a good research design is both valid and coherent. Design validity refers to a criterion of a good research design that is attained by identifying and eliminating rival hypotheses. Rival hypotheses are the causal factors that could impact the research findings in the way that the results of the research could be attributed to factors other than those that the researcher is investigating (Durrheim, 1999).

Design coherence refers to a criterion of a good research design which is attained by ensuring that the research purposes and techniques are arranged logically so as to fit within the research framework provided by a particular paradigm (Durrheim, 1999). The researcher maintained that the research design for this study is both valid and coherent in order for the study to yield good results.

### **3.3 SAMPLING**

Sampling is a process used to study a response to an intervention in a small population that can be applied to a larger population (Patton, 1990). Sampling is the use of a subset of the population to represent the whole population. As the purpose of the study was to establish the educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented in Pietermaritzburg, the participants were educators selected from 3 schools in Pietermaritzburg where the implementation of inclusive education is in progress. Two of the schools were primary schools ranging from Grade R to Grade 7, and one school was a secondary school ranging from Grade 8 to Grade 12.

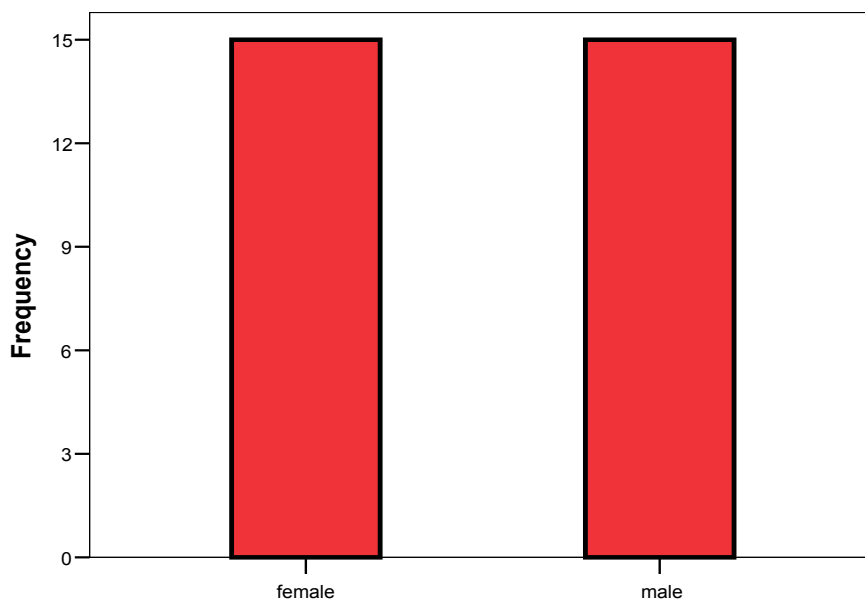
The researcher used purposive sampling because the research aimed to study the lived experience of the educators in the mentioned schools. Purposeful sampling occurs when researchers choose participants that they consider as fitting for the study. The researcher chooses the sample based on who they think would be appropriate for the study (Patton, 1990). This is used primarily when there is a limited number of people that have expertise in the area that is being researched or studied. Because the sample size for the current study is small, purposive sampling assists in decreasing the probability of conducting biased research (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The researcher encountered a few difficulties during the sampling process. Not all educators in the selected schools participated. This resulted in the sample size being very small (N = 30). Following are the demographic aspects of the sample.

### 3.3.1 PARTICIPANTS' GENDER

In the sample, males and females were equally represented; n = 15 (50%) for each gender (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Participants' Gender**



### 3.3.2 AGE

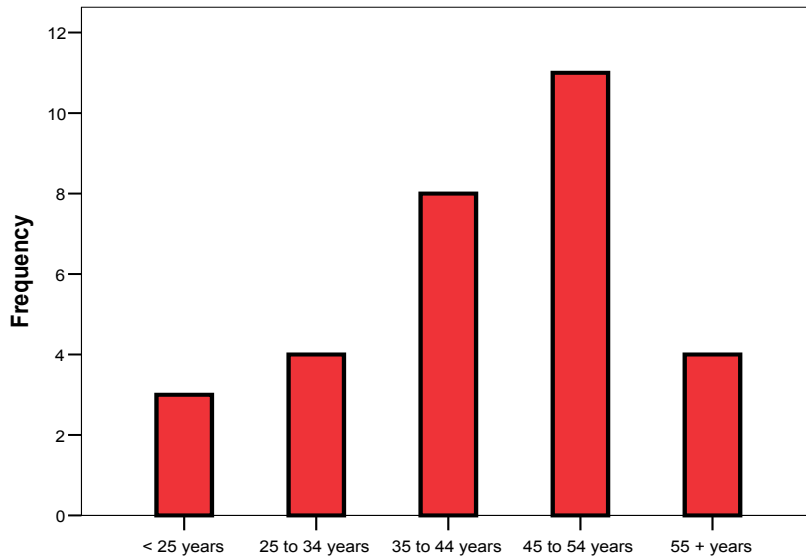
The under 25 years age group was represented by 3 educators in the sample (10%), while the 25 to 34 years age group was represented by 4 educators (13.3 %). The 35 to 44 years age group was composed of 8 educators (26.7%). About 11 educators in the sample (36.7%) fell in the 45 to 54 years age group and only 4 educators (13.3 %) in the sample were 55 years old and older (Figure 3).

### 3.3.3 YEARS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

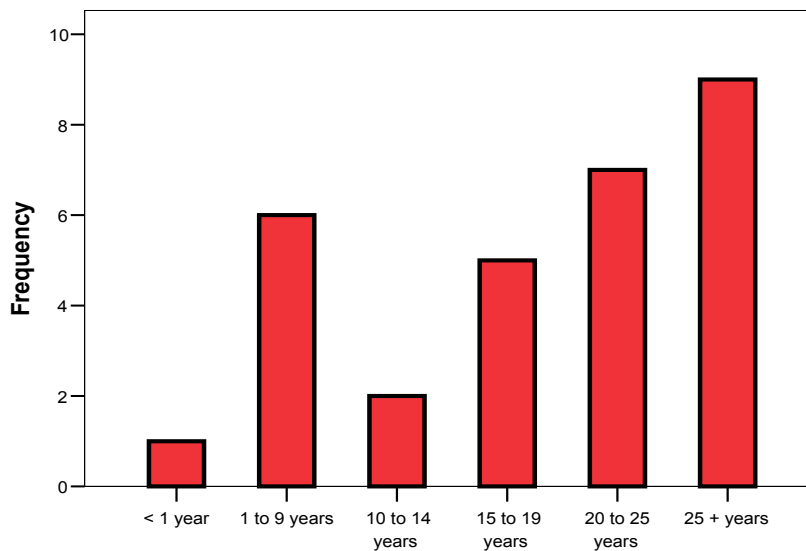
At the time of the study, only 1 participant (3.3%) had worked as an educator for less than a year. About 6 participants (20%) had taught for a period of 1 to 9 years. Only 2

participants (6.7%) had taught for a period of 10 to 14 years. About 5 participants (16.7%) had taught for a period of 15 to 19 years; while 7 participants (23.3%) have taught for a period of 20 to 25 years; and 30% have taught for a period above 25 years (Figure 4). All the participants of the study were serving under a full-time contract.

**Figure 3: Participants' Age**



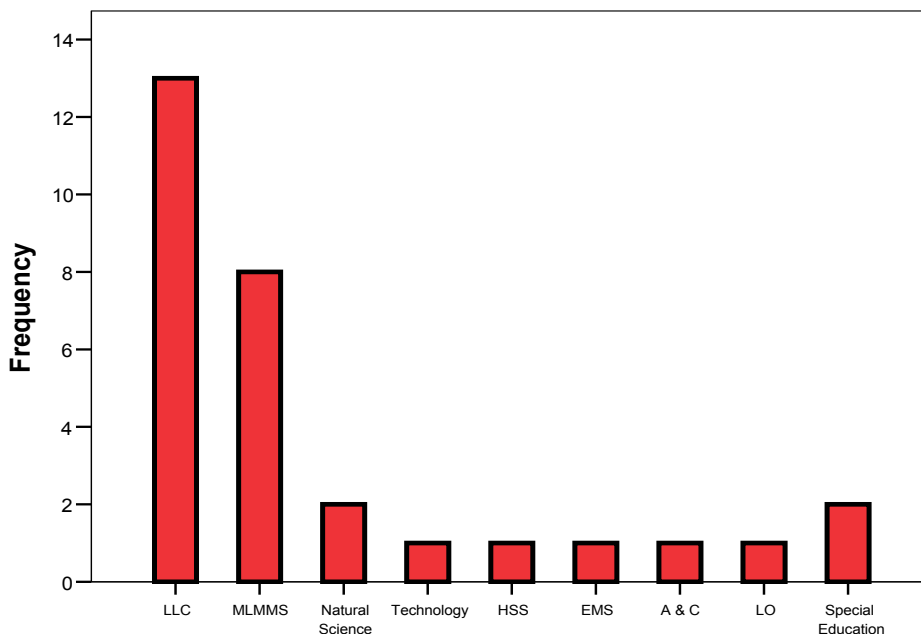
**Figure 4: Years of Teaching Experience**



### 3.3.4 SUBJECT/WORK AREAS

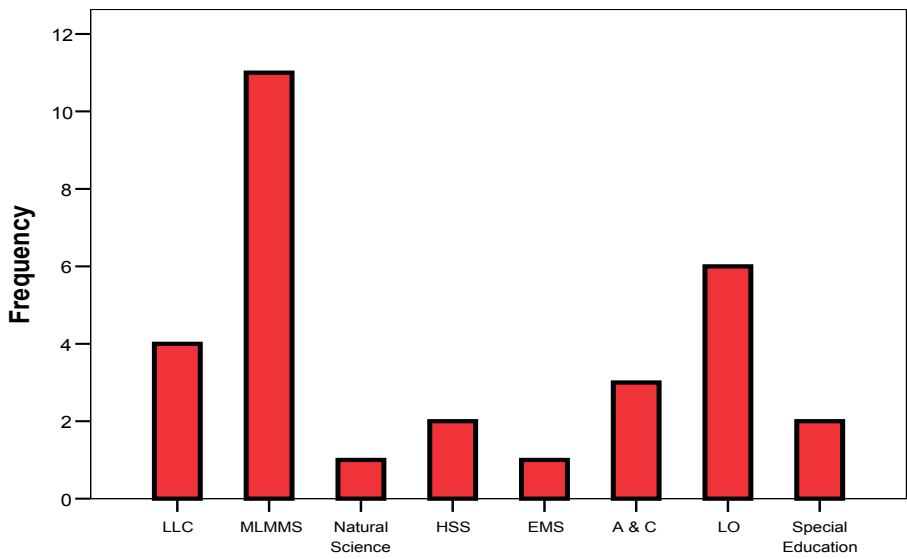
The participants were invited to identify the subject/work area in which they spent most of their teaching time. As their first subject, most educators, about 13 participants (43.3%) within the sample taught Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC). About 8 participants (26.7%) taught Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (MLMMS). Natural Science and Special Education were each taught by 2 participants (6.7%) in the sample. Technology, Human and Social Science (HSS), Economic and Management Sciences (EMS), Arts and Culture (A&C), and Life Orientation (LO) were each taught by 1 participant (3.3%) in the sample (Figure 5).

**Figure 5: First Subject Taught**



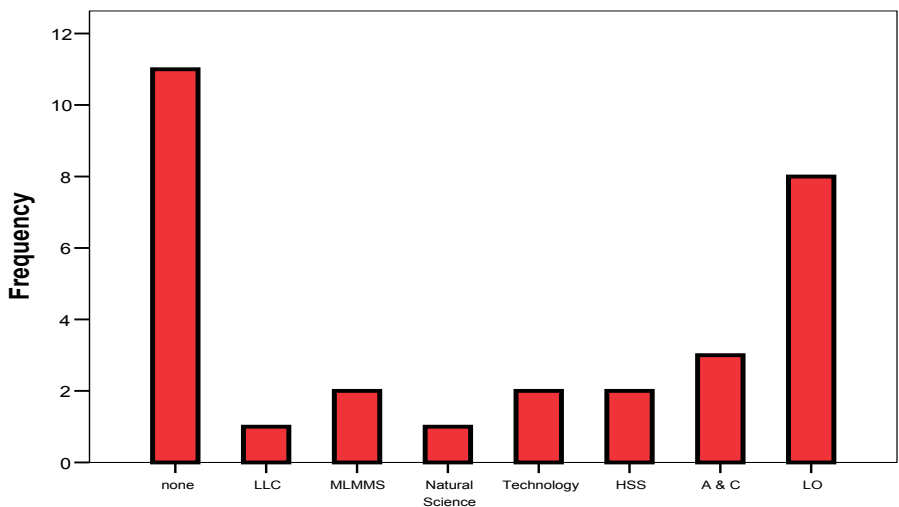
As their second subject, about 4 participants (13.3%) taught Language, Literacy and Communication. About 11 participants (36.7%) taught Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences. Natural Science and Economic and Management Sciences were each taught by 1 participant (3.3%), while Human and Social Science and Special Education were each taught by 2 participants (6.7%). About 3 participants (10%) taught Arts and Culture, and 6 (20%) taught Life Orientation (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Second Subject Taught**



About 11 (36.7%) participants did not have any other responsibility. Language, Literacy and Communication, as well as Natural Science were each taught by 1 (3.3%) participant as another responsibility. Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences; Technology; and Human and Social Science were each taught by 2 (6.7%) participants. About 3 (10%) participants taught Arts and Culture, and 8 (26.7%) taught Life Orientation (Figure 7) as another responsibility.

**Figure 7: Other responsibility**





### 3.3.5 GRADE LEVELS TAUGHT

Some of the participants taught more than one Grade level. Table 2 displays that, in the sample, only 1 participant taught Grade 1. Grade 2 and Grade 3 were each taught by 3 participants. About 5 participants taught Grade 4 and 7 participants taught Grade 5. About 13 participants taught Grade 6 and 11 participants taught Grade 7. Only 2 participants taught Grade 8, and Grade 9 and Grade 10 were each taught by 4 participants. All the participants reported that they had learners with barriers to learning in their classrooms.

**Table 2: Grade Levels Taught**

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
1	1
2	3
3	3
4	5
5	7
6	13
7	11
8	2
9	4
10	4

### 3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

For the purposes of this study, a semi-structured questionnaire was used (see Appendix 4). The contents of the questionnaire were both closed (quantitative) questions and open-ended (qualitative) questions. The questionnaire was adapted from the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF) Worklife of Teachers Survey Series 2: Special Education (BCTF, 2001).

This questionnaire was developed and used in 2001, by the BCTF Research Department staff. They conducted a major study of British Columbia teachers' experiences of working and learning conditions in and out of the classroom. The questionnaire was mailed out to 1,500 teachers, selected randomly from the BCTF's membership database.

617 teachers returned completed surveys; 384 completed surveys were required to ensure confidence level of 95%. The survey was found to be consistent 19 times out of 20 within a range of plus or minus 5% or less. This means that it was 95% reliable (BCTF, 2001).

Literature looking at the effects of teaching experience on the educators' ability to work in inclusive classrooms found that educators who had previously worked with exceptional learners implemented inclusive programmes more successfully (Luseno, 2001). Authors looking at the effects of grade level taught on educators' ability to teach in inclusive classrooms found that educators at the primary school level are more likely; to implement inclusion effectively than those at the secondary school level (Petch-Hogan & Hagar, 1999).

The purpose of the current study is to detect what the educators' perceptions and experiences are with regard to inclusive education. Using this instrument is necessary to detect whether the implementation of inclusive education in the schools at issue has any problematic areas, which might pose challenges to the educators as they offer their services at the schools – not disregarding the positive aspects of inclusive education. (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999).

The researcher modified the BCTF questionnaire to fit the purposes of the current study. Some sections of the quantitative part of the questionnaire had a five-point Likert Scale. The questionnaire had seven sections, namely, background information; philosophy and practice; availability of support; class composition; dealing with aggressive/disruptive learners; positive factors and problematic issues in inclusive education; and experiences and perceptions of inclusive education.

Table 3 below displays the research questions and the parts of the questionnaire that address the research questions. Some parts of the questionnaire addressed more than one research question (Table 3).

**Table 3: Questions Addressed**

<i>Research Questions:</i>	<i>Sections of the Questionnaire:</i>
Q1: What are the educators' perceived positive aspects (strengths) and negative aspects (weaknesses) of inclusive education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Section B: number 9c, e, f, g, h, and q.</li><li>▪ Section C: number 10a-i.</li><li>▪ Section F: 20a-b.</li></ul>
Q2: What are the educators' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of inclusive education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Section B: number 9n, o, p, and q.</li><li>▪ Section G: number 21a-b.</li></ul>
Q3: What are the educators' perceived challenges and barriers associated with the implementation of inclusive education?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Section B: number 9b</li><li>▪ Section E: number 15-19</li></ul>
Q4: What is the perceived impact of inclusive education on educators and the learners?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Section A: number 7a-b</li><li>▪ Section B: number 9d, i, j, k, l, and m.</li></ul>

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics are the basis upon which the researcher ought to evaluate his/her conduct. The researcher is obliged to behave in a professional and responsible way. Ethics are usually determined to deal with beliefs concerning what is right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate, moral or immoral (Mcmillan & Schumacher 1997).

Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Higher Degrees Committee at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, permitting the researcher to proceed with the study (Appendix 1). Letters were sent to principals of the selected schools, requesting permission to conduct the study at the school, and this was done in writing (Appendix 2). Informed consent was voluntary (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). To obtain the participants' consent, the aims and the rationale behind the research were explained verbally and in writing so that the participants were given a chance to make an informed decision on whether they wish to take part in the research. They were given a consent form to sign in order to show that they agreed to participate (Appendix 3).

The participants were not in any way coerced to participate in the study. They were made aware that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without

having to specify any reasons for doing so. The participants were informed that the information they give will be treated as confidential. They do not have to write their names on the questionnaire.

It was explained to the participants that their names and signatures would be required on the consent form to show that they were not forced but agreed to participate in the study. It was explained further that the consent forms and the questionnaires will not be linked in any way; therefore, the responses they give on the questionnaires will be anonymous. They were made aware that the researcher's supervisor will see the data but they will not be linked to their responses to the questionnaires.

The study posed no foreseeable risks and physical, psychological, or emotional harm to the participants. The participants did not have to pay for taking part in the study, financially or in any other way. It was explained that the participation in the study will benefit the participants in that they would bring to the surface the challenges they encounter, which will be anonymously communicated by the researcher, to the schools' management systems. This will be done in a form of a report. This will then assist in the provision of special education support services, if necessary.

### **3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Data analysis is a systematic process of selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesizing and interpreting to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest (MacMillan & Schumacher, 1993). It refers to the act of transforming data with the aim of extracting useful information and facilitating conclusions. Below are details of the steps taken by the researcher to analyze both the quantitative data and the qualitative data.

#### **3.6.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

The first stage of quantitative data analysis is the preparatory stage. In this stage, the researcher transformed the raw data into a form that can be read by a computer. This was done by coding the data, entering it in the database, and cleaning the data (Durrheim, 1999). According to Durrheim (1999), coding involves applying a set of rules to the data

to transform information from one form to another. The researcher took the information provided in the questionnaire and transformed it into numerical codes. These numerical codes were then entered into the computer in a format that can be used by a statistical computer package. As mentioned in Chapter I, the quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

In the final stage, the researcher cleaned the data. This process involves checking the data set for errors and then, if errors were found, correcting those errors (Durrheim, 1999). This was done with the summary function of the SPSS. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used descriptive analysis to analyse the quantitative data. This aimed at describing the data by investigating the distribution of scores on each variable (Durrheim, 1999).

The data analysis produced descriptive statistics, frequency tables and frequency graphs, which were the visual representation of the data. This made it easy for the researcher to interpret the findings of the study.

### **3.6.2 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used thematic analysis to analyse qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data. A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis organizes and describes the data in rich detail, and interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998).

The researcher found it useful and advantageous to use thematic analysis to analyse qualitative data because of its flexibility. Thematic analysis is relatively an easy and quick method to learn, and do. The researcher found that she could usefully summarize key features of a large body of data, and offer a thick description of the data set. Thematic analysis also helped highlight similarities and differences across the data set.

In analysing the qualitative data, the researcher was guided by the phases of thematic analysis (cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006). Using thematic analysis, the researcher

familiarised herself with the data – by means of reading and re-reading the data, and then noting down initial ideas. The next step was to generate initial codes. After this, the researcher searched for themes that emerged from the data. All the data that was relevant to each potential theme was gathered.

Once the themes were identified, the researcher reviewed them; checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. The themes were then defined and named. This was done in order to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme. The final step was for the researcher to produce the findings in the form of the report. This involved the selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the, research design and the various components of the research methodology were discussed in depth. The chapter also considered the ethical aspects of research. In the next chapter the results of the research will be reported, bearing in mind all the information gained from the literature research.

## **CHAPTER IV: RESULTS**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Education in South Africa has undergone major transitions and the role of mainstream classroom educators has changed greatly during the past years and will continue to do so if successful implementation of the education White Paper No 6 is to be achieved. As educators may be the most influential people in determining the extent to which a child's potential is achieved, it is important that they should be prepared to meet and accept the new challenges that come with the implementation of the education White Paper 6. The main aim of the current study was to determine educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented in the Pietermaritzburg area. The aim of this chapter is to summarise the key findings of the study.

### **4.2 THE EDUCATORS' PERCEIVED POSITIVE ASPECTS (STRENGTHS) AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS (WEAKNESSES) OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

As displayed in Table 4, most participants gave negative responses to the questions in the questionnaire. About 23 (76.6%) participants agreed that the paperwork linked to learners experiencing barriers to learning has increased over the last 3 years. About 25 (83.3%) participants felt that resources/financial support for inclusive education are not adequate and they do not enable appropriate delivery. About 12 (40%) participants disagreed that the curriculum material supports for inclusive education (e.g., modified and adapted materials) are adequate, while 11 (36.6%) participants agreed. About 22 (73.4%) participants disagreed that there is adequate support from the Department of Education for improving programmes and services (Table 4).

About 16 (53.3%) participants disagreed that the identification/assessment of learners considered likely to experience barriers to learning is timely (i.e., done promptly). About 14 (46.7%) participants disagreed that their relationships with the parents of learners experiencing barriers to learning are generally positive, while 11 (36.6%) participants agreed (Table 4).

**Table 4: Positive Aspects and Factors Conducive to Inclusive Education**

	<i>SD / D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SA / A</i>	<i>Positive or negative</i>
▪ Paperwork linked to learners experiencing barriers to learning has increased over the last 3 years.	0 (0%)	7 (23.3%)	23 (76.6%)	Negative
▪ Resource/financial supports for inclusive education are adequate and enable appropriate delivery.	25 (83.3%)	4 (13.3%)	1 (3.3%)	Negative
▪ Curriculum material supports for inclusive education (e.g., modified and adapted materials) are adequate.	12 (40%)	7 (23.3%)	11 (36.6%)	Negative
▪ There is adequate support from the Department of Education for improving programmes and services.	22 (73.4%)	3 (10%)	5 (16.7%)	Negative
▪ The identification/assessment of learners considered likely to experience barriers to learning is timely (i.e., done promptly).	16 (53.3%)	10 (33.3%)	4 (13.3%)	Negative
▪ My relationships with the parents of learners experiencing barriers to learning are generally positive.	14 (46.7%)	5 (16.7%)	11 (36.6%)	Negative

The participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with the statements about support for integration and inclusion. They were asked to indicate



which type of support was available to them. Their responses are displayed in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Available support**

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Neutral</i>
▪ Class-size reduction (reduced number of learners).	10 (33.4%)	17 (56.7%)	3 (10%)
▪ In-service training.	6 (20%)	20 (66.7%)	4 (13.3%)
▪ A trained Special Education Assistant/Teacher Support.	4 (13.3%)	21 (70%)	5 (16.7%)
▪ Support from a Resource Teacher in the school/district.	0 (0%)	23 (76.7%)	7 (23.3%)
▪ District services for assessment and support which are available to me in my school.	11 (36.7%)	10 (33.3%)	9 (30%)
▪ A supportive Administrative Officer.	5 (16.7%)	16 (53.3%)	9 (30%)
▪ Technical resources where needed (e.g., computer, talking books).	14 (46.6%)	11 (36.7%)	5 (16.7%)
▪ Appropriate modified/adapted curriculum materials.	10 (33.4%)	13 (43.4%)	7 (23.3%)

From the results displayed in Table 5, it seems like most participants felt that the support available to them only include district services for assessment and support, and technical resources. A larger percentage of participants felt that the other supports in Table 5 are not available to them in their schools (i.e. class-size reduction; in-service training; trained special education assistant/teacher support; support from a resource teacher in the school/district; a supportive administrative officer; and appropriate modified/adapted curriculum materials).

The participants were then asked to indicate which support(s) were most important to them. Their responses are displayed below (Table 6).

**Table 6: Most important support needed**

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
▪ Class-size reduction (reduced number of learners).	23 (76.7%)	7 (23.3%)
▪ In-service training.	13 (43.3%)	17 (56.7%)
▪ A trained Special Education Assistant/Teacher Support.	17 (56.7%)	13 (43.3%)
▪ Support from a Resource Teacher in the school/district.	12 (40%)	18 (60%)
▪ District services for assessment and support which are available to me in my school.	4 (13.3%)	26 (86.7%)
▪ A supportive Administrative Officer.	1 (3.3%)	29 (96.7%)
▪ Technical resources where needed (e.g., computer, talking books).	5 (16.7%)	25 (83.3%)
▪ Appropriate modified/adapted curriculum materials.	16 (53.3%)	14 (46.7%)

The data reflects that most participants, about 23 (76.7%), see class-size reduction as most important. About 17 (56.7%) participants seemed to feel that having a trained Special Education Assistant/Teacher Support is most important. About 16 (53.3%) participants feel that having appropriate modified/adapted curriculum materials is most important to them. About 13 (43.3%) participants felt that in-service training is most important, while 12 (40%) participants felt that it is most important that they receive support from a Resource Teacher in the school/district (Table 6).

The participants were asked if they would like to further their education and training in special and inclusive education; and if they were offered such opportunities by the Department of Education. The participants indicated that the Department of Education does not offer them bursaries for special education courses. They indicated that they did not have access to such bursaries because they are not offered to them, and, if offered, they do not intend to access special education courses with bursaries in the foreseeable future (Table 7).

**Table 7: Further Education and Training**

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
▪ Bursary	0 (0%)	30 (100%)
▪ Access	0 (0%)	30 (100%)
▪ Courses	0 (0%)	30 (100%)

Looking at the qualitative data, thematic analysis also allowed us to identify a perceived lack of resources and support needed in inclusive classrooms. It appeared that mainstream educators do not perceive the degree of support and availability of resources to be adequate. They indicated that they lack appropriate instructional material needed for teaching learners with barriers to learning, and sufficient time needed for consulting with other educators. They also indicated that the large class size makes it hard for them to meet the needs of their learners with barriers to learning effectively.

*Participant 1: In theory, inclusive education is a fantastic idea; but the realities of the world detract from it. There are not sufficient tolerance levels or resources to make it work, although perhaps these will only improve when there is more awareness and visibility.*

The participants indicated they need administrative support, parental support, and support from experts in the Department of Education in understanding what is expected of them in assisting their learners. They indicated that they need assistance from professional experts (e.g. medical practitioners, psychologists, speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, etc.) to deal with the physical and psychological problems experienced by learners and educators as well.

The participants also indicated that they need more instructional resources, additional resource people, more funds, and assistance in dealing with school administrators. They also indicated that they need training on the characteristics of learners with special needs/barriers to learning, and strategies for adapting the curriculum, behaviour management, conflict resolution, anger management, and disciplinary techniques.

*Participant 2: Inclusive education is United Kingdom based. There it is largely helped by the presence of teaching assistants and resources, which we do not have in South Africa.*

### 4.3 THE EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS, AND EXPERIENCES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Following are the participants' responses to the questionnaire regarding their attitudes toward inclusive education and their perceptions about and experiences of inclusive education.

Table 8 shows that most participants seem to have negative attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of inclusive education. Table 8 displays that 23 (76.7%) participants expressed that they do not believe in and support the philosophy of inclusive education. About 22 participants (73.3%) expressed that they did not feel professionally prepared to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning. About 16 (53.3%) participants expressed that they are not positive about working with other teachers to implement inclusive education; and 17 (56.7%) participants felt that they are not positive about working with Teacher Support Teams to implement inclusive education (Table 8).

**Table 8: Attitudes, Perceptions, and Experiences of Inclusive Education**

	<i>SD / D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SA / A</i>	<i>Positive or negative</i>
▪ I believe in and support the philosophy of inclusive education.	23 (76.7%)	4 (13.3%)	3 (10%)	Negative
▪ I feel professionally prepared to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning.	22 (73.3%)	2 (6.7%)	6 (20%)	Negative
▪ I am positive about working with other teachers to implement inclusive education.	16 (53.3%)	9 (30%)	5 (16.6%)	Negative
▪ I am positive about working with Teacher Support Teams to implement inclusive education.	17 (56.7%)	8 (26.7%)	5 (16.6%)	Negative

Thematic analysis allows us to identify that most educators held negative attitudes toward educating learners with barriers to learning in the mainstream classrooms. They were less willing to educate these learners. Some educators, as well as other learners, look down on learners with barriers to learning. They treat them as if they are not normal children. This seemed to be a problem to the educators as they reported that sometimes they have a negative attitude toward these learners. They do not seem to know how to respond to them. They are able to recognise that some things they say to these learners humiliate them (i.e., the learners).

*Participant 3: It is very challenging because sometimes I lose my temper because I do not know how to be patient with these learners. They are just not 'normal' as the other learners. I do not feel comfortable having to teach these learners in my class.*

It was found that most participants seemed to hold a negative perception toward adapting the curriculum to learners with barriers to learning. The educators seemed to be less confident about their ability to make instructional adaptations for students with barriers to learning.

*Participant 4: To me, inclusive education means more work but less or not enough time. It means increased class sizes. It also means having learners with behaviour problems in your class who are often socially not accepted. It becomes difficult to teach all these learners the same curriculum material because they are not at the same intellectual level.*

*Participant 5: For me, it was going to be better if the government had provided extra training for us in special or inclusive education. I do not feel confident enough to teach learners with barriers to learning. I do not think I am competent.*

#### 4.4 THE EDUCATORS' PERCEIVED CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

About 27 (90%) participants agreed that the daily implementing of inclusive education is difficult (Table 9). The participants were also asked to indicate the amount of time they spend managing aggressive/disruptive learners in their classrooms.

**Table 9: Challenges/Barriers of implementing inclusive education**

	<i>SD / D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>SA / A</i>	<i>Positive or negative</i>
▪ The daily implementing of inclusive education is difficult.	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	27 (90%)	Negative

About 9 (30%) participants indicated that less than 20% of their teaching time goes into managing aggressive/disruptive learners. About 5 (16.7%) participants indicated that 20 to 29% of their teaching time goes to managing these learners. About 9 (30%) participants in the sample indicated that they spend 30 to 39% of their time managing aggressive/disruptive learners. About 5 (16.7%) participants indicated that 40 to 49% of their teaching time goes to managing these learners. Only 2 (6.7%) participants indicated that 50% of their teaching time or even more goes to managing learners with aggressive/disruptive learners (Table 10).

**Table 10: Time to manage aggressive/disruptive learners**

<i>Time</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
▪ <20%	9	30%
▪ 20 to 29%	5	16.7%
▪ 30 to 39%	9	30%
▪ 40 to 49%	5	16.7%
▪ 50% or more	2	6.7%

Only 5 (16.7%) participants rated the support their schools or district provided them for managing aggressive or disruptive learners in their classes as good. About 11 (36.7%)

participants rated the support as fair, and 14 (46.7%) participants rated it as poor (Table 11).

**Table 11: Ratings of the support provided at schools**

<i>Rating</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
▪ Good	5	16.7%
▪ Fair	11	36.7%
▪ Poor	14	46.7%

Compared to 5 years ago, 13 (43.3%) participants indicated that the impact of aggressive/disruptive learners in their classrooms has increased. About 1 (3.3%) participant indicated that the impact of disruptive/aggressive learners on the classroom has decreased. About 15 (50%) participants indicated that the learners' impact has stayed the same over the past 5 years. Only 1 (3.3%) participant gave a neutral response (Table12).

**Table 12: The impact of aggressive/disruptive learners**

<i>Impact</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
▪ Increased	13	43.3%
▪ Decreased	1	3.3%
▪ Stayed the same	15	50%
▪ N/A	1	3.3%

Another theme that emerged was that inclusive education is challenging by its very nature. The participants highlighted that special education is different from mainstream education. They indicated that they find it difficult to adjust to the differences in the intellectual levels of learners of the same age in one group. They also find it difficult to communicate effectively in class because language is a barrier to learning for some learners.

The participants were found to be concerned that discipline in inclusive classrooms is complicated and challenging. The challenge is that for some of these learners, disciplinary and/or behavioural problems might occur for reasons such as a short

attention span or lack of understanding on the part of educators. At times learners with barriers to learning would not understand why they are being disciplined.

*Participant 6: It is difficult to manage the diverse needs of learners and to teach at the same pace learners who are at different cognitive levels.*

*Participant 7: It can be very difficult when you have a large class with learners who are unable to do basic operations. They often become disruptive and upset the learning of others. They do not understand what it means when you discipline them.*

The theme that seemed to emerge as a barrier to inclusive education was that the educators' workload and stress have increased, while the learners' needs are not being met. It was clear that teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning requires a lot of additional work and responsibilities. Participants' negativity toward inclusive education seemed to be linked to the perceived failure of the Department of Education to adequately fund and support policy, with the result that many learners' needs are not being met. This in turn makes educators' work more difficult and more stressful as they struggle to maximize the learners' academic learning and socialization.

The participants reported that they attempt to meet all the learners' needs with no time for consultation, they have learners in their classes who are experiencing barriers to learning, and they have minimal access to supplies of adapted and modified curriculum materials.

*Participant 8: I think inclusive education itself is a barrier to teaching. We have not received any training in special education. We do not know exactly how to teach these learners. We do not even get assistance from the Department of Education and yet we are expected to give good results at the end of the day.*

*Participant 9: It is difficult to include these learners in group activities. They cannot cope with the work and do feel left out and shy. Usually the level is too difficult for them. They cannot concentrate and need help constantly. The workload increases. It is impossible to give extra attention and assistance to*



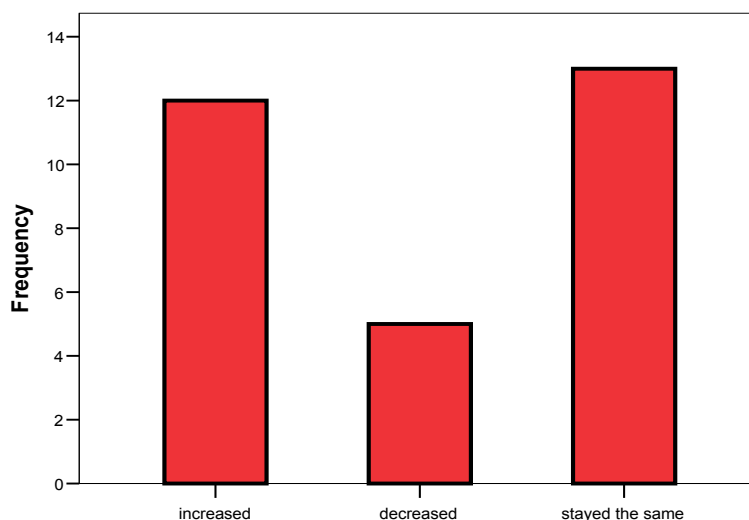
*these learners - especially in a big class.*

*Participant 10: The learners we teach do not benefit much as they have psychological problems. Others receive their education in their second language and so need lots of help. I, as an educator, feel fully stretched and overworked just seeing to all their needs - which are not always fully met; never mind the added problem of a learner with barriers.*

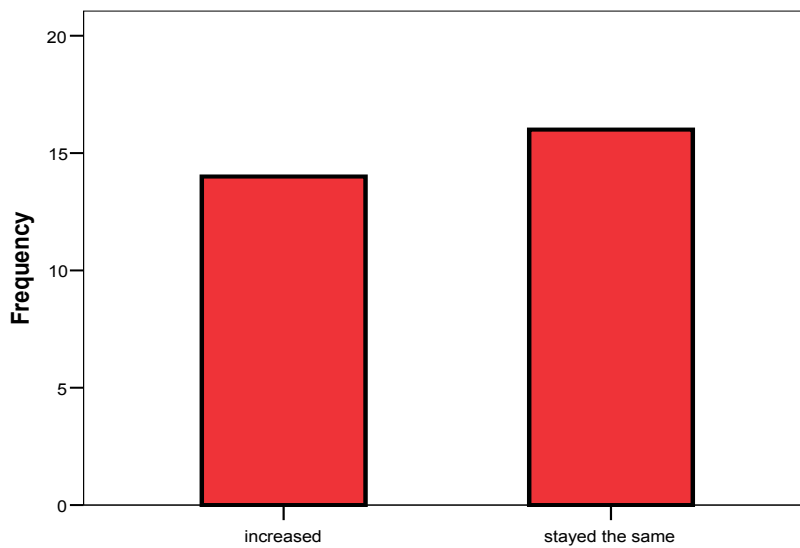
#### **4.5 THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ON EDUCATORS AND THE LEARNERS**

The participants were asked to consider whether they believed their class size and/or caseload had increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the last three years. Figure 8 and Figure 9 show their responses. As it is displayed, about 12 (40%) participants felt that their class size had increased over the last three years. About 5 (16.7%) participants felt that their class size has decreased, and about 13 (43.3%) participants felt that their class size had stayed the same over the last three years. Looking at their caseload, none of the participants felt that their caseload had decreased over the last three years. About 14 (46.7%) participants felt that their caseload had increased, and 16 (53.3%) participants felt that their caseload had stayed the same over the last three years.

**Figure 8: Class Size in the past 3 years**



**Figure 9: Caseload in the Past 3 years**



With regard to the impact of inclusive education on educators, about 3 (10%) participants rated having learners with barriers to learning in their classrooms as not stressful; and 3 (10%) other participants rated the level of stress as low. About 14 (46.7%) participants rated the level of stress as medium; and 10 (33.3%) participants rated the stress level as high (Figure 10).

**Figure 10: Stress Level**

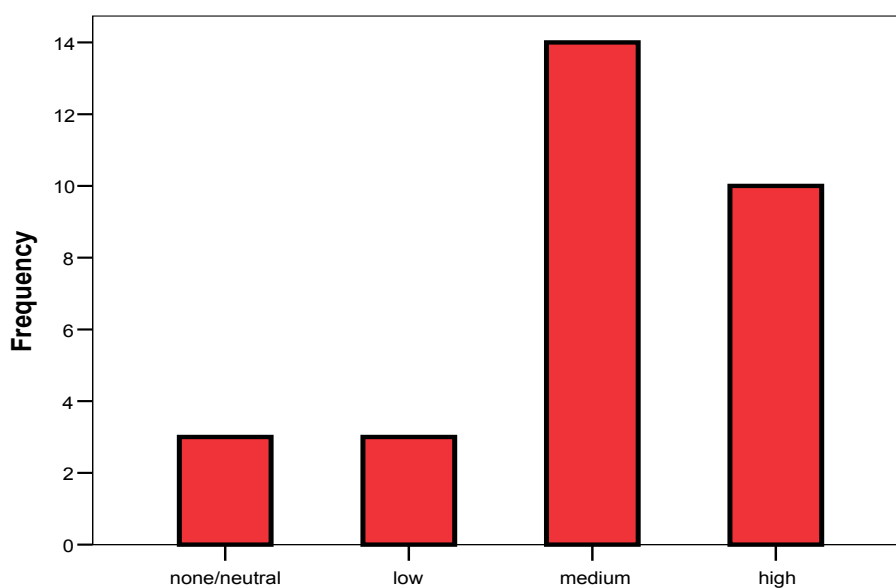


Table 13 displays the participants' responses with regard to the impact of inclusive education on learners. Most responses were negative. As displayed in Table 13, about 14 (46.7%) participants agreed that some learners who are experiencing barriers to learning are not included in the inclusive education policy. About 19 (63.3%) participants felt that learners experiencing barriers to learning are not well served by current identification processes and assessment instruments.

**Table 13: Impact of Inclusive Education on Learners**

	<b>SD / D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>SA / A</b>	<b>Positive or negative</b>
▪ Some learners who are experiencing barriers to learning are not included in the inclusive education policy	4 (13.3%)	12 (40%)	14 (46.7%)	Negative
▪ Learners experiencing barriers to learning are well served by current identification processes and assessment instruments.	19 (63.3%)	7 (23.3%)	4 (13.3%)	Negative
▪ In my school, learners experiencing barriers to learning are required to spend 100% of every day in a regular classroom	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	30 (100%)	N/A
▪ Most learners experiencing barriers to learning benefit <i>academically</i> from inclusive education.	23 (76.7%)	5 (16.7%)	2 (6.7%)	Negative
▪ Most learners experiencing barriers to learning benefit <i>socially</i> from inclusive education.	22 (73.3%)	4 (13.3%)	4 (13.3%)	Negative
▪ Integration of learners experiencing barriers to learning affects my capacity to meet the needs of other learners in class.	4 (13.3%)	3 (10%)	23 (76.6%)	Negative

All participants agreed that in their schools, learners experiencing barriers to learning are required to spend 100% of every day in a regular classroom. About 23 (76.7%) participants felt that most learners experiencing barriers to learning do not benefit *academically* from inclusive education; and 22 (73.3%) participants felt that most learners experiencing barriers to learning do not benefit *socially* from inclusive education. About 23 (76.6%) participants agreed that integration of learners experiencing barriers to learning affects their capacity to meet the needs of other learners in class (Table 13).

Qualitative data indicates that most participants indicated that having learners with barriers to learning in their classrooms is stressful for them. Some felt that, because of the increased class size, they cannot give enough attention to their learners, not to mention the extra attention to learners with barriers to learning.

*Participant 11: I believe the learner with barriers needs to be in an environment where he/she feels comfortable and acceptable amongst his/her own kind. I feel I am already stretched beyond myself to give my very best to my 35 learners. I often feel I do not give enough attention and time to the learners with barriers. Educators are already stressed – please do not destroy us even more.*

The participants indicated that being placed in the same classroom with mainstream learners victimises learners experiencing barriers to learning. The mainstream learners tend to bully and tease the learners experiencing barriers to learning, and this has a negative impact on these learners.

*Participant 12: These learners are victimised by other ‘mainstream’ learners. They seem to be discriminated against as soon as they realise that they are ‘different’. The other learners do not want to integrate with them.*

*Participant 13: These learners are often the slowest and last to finish their work and so are teased and bullied by the other learners. They are seen as ‘special’ by the other children and are often teased. They are very aware of*

*not being as clever as other children in the mainstream and this does not benefit their self-esteem.*

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

The results indicate that most participants hold a negative attitude toward educating learners experiencing barriers to learning in the mainstream classroom. Some participants felt that these learners lack the skills needed to master the mainstream classroom curriculum. The thematic analysis of the participants' responses indicates that the participants hold a negative attitude toward their ability to adapt instruction to learners experiencing barriers to learning. They hold a negative perception toward the availability of support and resources needed to work with these learners.

The participants also thought that there was insufficient time to consult with other educators. They felt that the large teaching load in the mainstream classroom makes it hard to effectively meet the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classrooms. They indicated that this has a negative impact on both the educators and the learners.

The following chapter is a discussion of the results of the study.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

South African education is undeniably changing. The educators are the key role-players in determining the quality of the implementation of inclusive education. They are expected to embrace the new philosophy, and achieve the goals set by the Department of Education. For many educators in mainstream classrooms in South Africa, there have been changes in practice and attitudes that few would have foreseen as they entered the profession. In response to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), it was declared that learners with barriers to learning should be educated in mainstream classrooms.

Over the past years, restructuring in education in a democratic South Africa has stimulated a commitment to the development of a single, inclusive system of education which has the capacity to provide for appropriate ways and means to facilitate learning and meet the needs of all learners, including those with disabilities or barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms (DoE, 2001b).

Mainstream educators have been found to see inclusive education as being imposed upon them and they have raised many concerns regarding the implementation of inclusive education (Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2000). They do not seem to be prepared to provide quality inclusive teaching to learners experiencing barriers to learning, and the limitation of existing support structures impacts on inclusion. This needs to be addressed as the education of learners with barriers to learning relies on the commitment and effective support of educators (Swart *et al.*, 2000).

The aim of this study was to explore the educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented in the Pietermaritzburg area. It aimed to find out what these educators' attitudes are toward inclusive education. It also aimed to find out from the educators what the implications of inclusive education are for themselves and the learners. This study sought to make recommendations to address the difficulties identified (if any).

In selected Pietermaritzburg Schools, the study aimed to find out about: 1) the educators' perceived positive aspects (strengths) and negative aspects (weaknesses) of inclusive education; 2) the educators' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of inclusive education; 3) the educators' perceived challenges and barriers associated with the implementation of inclusive education; and 4) the perceived impact of inclusive education on educators and the learners.

## **5.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Engelbrecht and Green (2001) argue that educators' assumptions, beliefs and attitudes are directly translated into actions and teaching practises, and that they inform their decision-making. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002) argue that what needs to be examined is what people believe about themselves and what they are involved in, what they think and why they think it, why they do it and how they do it. The following discussion deals with the participants' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education.

### **5.2.1 THE EDUCATORS' PERCEIVED POSITIVE ASPECTS (STRENGTHS) AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS (WEAKNESSES) OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

The participants of this study did not mention any issues they perceive to be positive about inclusive education. It is noted that the problematic issues faced by the participants currently working in inclusive classrooms are that they do not have sufficient time for inclusion; they are not adequately prepared for placement of learners with barriers to learning in their classes; they lack sufficient resources, expertise, and training for inclusion; and they perceive themselves to be unprepared to teach learners with barriers to learning in the regular classroom.

The participants indicated that sometimes they express negative attitudes toward learners with barriers to learning, and that, based on their experiences, they do not perceive themselves as well prepared for inclusive education. This finding is related to findings of studies by Dupoux, Hammond, Ingalls, and Wolman (2006); Hay and Malindi (2005); Kuester (2000); and Roaf (2003), who state that mainstream educators find it difficult to respond to the mandate to integrate students with barriers to learning to the maximum

extent appropriate in general settings; they may perceive themselves as not well prepared and see this as an additional burden on their already heavy workloads.

The biggest concern that the participants reported is that sometimes they have a negative attitude toward the learners with barriers to learning and they do not seem to know how to respond to them. They indicated that they need training as well as appropriate and adequate resources in order for them to be effective in their work. They also need sufficient time for consulting with other educators and relevant professional experts for support. The participants also expressed strongly that large class sizes make it hard for them to meet the needs of their learners with barriers to learning effectively.

This might be related to the findings by Donald and Hlongwane (1993), who report that most educators do not have adequate training to provide such support; and the effective implementation of inclusive programmes requires that the educators know the characteristics of children with disabilities, the special education laws, strategies for assessing the learners' needs, and, strategies for teaching and structuring instruction to individual learner needs, if they are to successfully educate exceptional learners in inclusive settings (Cook *et al.*, 2004; Hay, 2003; Luseno, 2000; Salend & Duhaney, 1999).

Formal training is considered an important factor in improving educators' views and actions toward the implementation of inclusive education policies (Mentis, Quinn & Ryba, 2005). According to O'Brian and Ryba (2005), without a coherent plan for educator training in the educational needs of learners with barriers to learning, attempts to include them in regular schools would be difficult. The importance of training in the formation of positive views and actions toward inclusion was supported by the findings of Beh-Pajooh (1992) and Shimman (1990) based on educators in the colleges. Both studied the views of college educators in the United Kingdom toward students with disabilities and their inclusion into ordinary college courses. Their findings showed that college lecturers who had been trained to teach learners and students with learning difficulties expressed more favourable attitudes and emotional reactions to students with disabilities and their inclusion than did those who had no such training (Beh-Pajooh, 1992; Shimman, 1990).



Educators have been found to perceive the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning into mainstream classrooms as an additional burden on their already stressed workloads (Dupoux, Hammond, Ingalls & Wolman, 2006; Hay & Malindi, 2005). It has been found that they suggest that the size of their classes should be reduced as they are struggling to adjust to the new way of doing things and they are suffering because of the overload they have (Hay, 2003; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996).

With regard to support, provision of organizational support; principal and parental support; educators' pre-service and in-service preparation; knowledge of disabling conditions; knowledge of pertinent special education laws; community support, technical support, and administrative support should be made available for educators (Bradshaw, 1998; Kruger, Struzziero & Vacca, 1995; Kuester, 2000; Subban & Sharma, 2006; Wigle & Wilcox, 1997). The increased need for more specialized training and professional support is viewed as critical to the success of inclusive education (Briggs *et al.*, 2002; Subban and Sharma (2006). As the participants indicated that they are faced with a challenge of maintaining their psychosocial and emotional well-being, research suggests that additional resources, tools and skills for coping with the social and emotional problems that accompany inclusive schooling need to be provided (Ali, Mustapha & Jelas, 2006; Bradshaw, 1998).

Previous studies looking at the educators' perceptions of inclusive education, like the study by Schumm, Slusher and Saumell (1996), examined mainstream and special educators' perceptions of inclusion through the use of focus group interviews. The majority of the educators who were not currently participating in inclusive programmes had strong negative feelings about inclusive education and felt that decision makers were out of touch with classroom realities. These educators identified several factors that would affect the success of inclusive education, including class size, inadequate resources, the extent to which all learners would benefit from inclusion and lack of adequate educator preparation.

## 5.2.2 THE EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS, AND EXPERIENCES OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The current study found that most participants hold a negative attitude toward teaching learners with barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms. The fact that special schools may close down as a result of inclusive education, the participants presume that they may be redeployed to other schools or be forced to work at special schools that will become resource centres. They fear that they are not adequately trained to become resource personnel and, there will be no placement options for learners with barriers to learning, except in inclusive classrooms that may not be able to cater for their needs.

Hegarty (1994) notes that the negative attitudes are not necessarily due to dislike or discrimination but are due to the labels that learners with barriers to learning are given, educators may severely underestimate the abilities of learners with barriers to learning. Even though they accept them in their classes, they may accept them with low expectations of what they are able to achieve as a result of the attitude that already exist among educators. According to Engelbrecht and Green (2001, p.6), “inclusive education is not simply a question of making special arrangements for some learners with disabilities in a system designed for others. It is about designing education for all in such a way that it becomes normal for differences to be accommodated rather than seen to be an exception”.

This finding supports previous research, which indicated that educators who perceive themselves as less confident to include students with barriers to learning appear to hold more negative attitudes toward inclusive education (Avramidis *et al.*, 2000).

Most of the participants in this study felt that the learners' needs would not be met in an inclusive educational setting. Some of the participants indicated that the needs of learners with barriers to learning could best be served in special schools. Previous research also found that the educators' attitude toward the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning and learning disabilities into mainstream schools may be influenced by the severity of the disability experienced by learners and that the inclusion of learners with behavioural disorders and emotional difficulties appear to attract the least favourable responses from mainstream educators (Kuester, 2000).

This influence can be explained in terms of the Tolerance Theory. According to Geber (1988), in a classroom where learners' learning needs vary and instructional resources are limited, the educators cannot optimally match their instruction to meet the unique characteristics of all learners. Because of the severity of the disability experienced by learners, the learners tend to fall out of the educators' instructional tolerance (Cook, Tankersley, Cook & Landrum, 2000). Instructional tolerance refers to the limited range of learning characteristics that educators optimally address with their instruction (Cook *et al.*, 2000). Also, "the experience teaching in inclusive classrooms, training in special education and inclusion, collaboration with special education personnel outside of class, ... are all theoretically associated with expanding the educators' instructional tolerance boundaries" (Cook *et al.*, 2000, p. 118). The absence of these would lead to educators' negative attitudes and negative perceptions toward inclusive education – and some learners' needs not being met.

The current study found that most participants hold negative perceptions about inclusive education and they have negative experiences of inclusion. According to Luseno (2001), the effective implementation of inclusive programmes requires that the educators know the characteristics of children with disabilities, the special education laws, strategies for assessing the learners' needs, and strategies for teaching and structuring instruction to individual learner needs, if they are to successfully educate exceptional learners in inclusive settings.

The educators in the selected schools for this study seemed concerned that the Department of Education expects too much out of them; they are compelled to follow policies they were not part of and have not made contribution toward their existence. They seemed to be holding negative perceptions and negative attitudes toward inclusive education due to the lack of knowledge about the different barriers to learning that some of their learners are experiencing. This is a result of lack of training in the field of special and inclusive education. A need was indicated for more training and workshops to help educators be able to do quality work in an inclusive learning environment. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) found that lack of educator training in the field of special and inclusive education leads to educators holding negative attitudes toward the implementation of inclusive education policies.

Destefano, Shriner and Lloyd (2001) conducted a study to test the effectiveness of an intervention with educators and school administrators to improve decision making regarding participation and accommodation for learners with barriers to learning in large scale assessments in a mainstream school. Using a pre-test/post-test multiple measures design involving more than 80 educators, the study assessed the impact of training on educators' knowledge and confidence about participation and accommodation for learners with barriers to learning. These included accommodation decisions for hypothetical learners and actual accommodation decisions for the following year. The results indicated that after training, there was a stronger relationship among participation/accommodation, curriculum, and instructional needs. The educators expressed high confidence in their ability to make accommodation decisions after training. It can be said that educators who accept responsibility for teaching a wide diversity of learners come to understand the contribution their teaching has on the learners' progress (Destefano *et al.*, 2001). Therefore, Stanovich and Jordan (1998) stated that educators were assumed to have felt confident in their instructional and management skills, which is a result of appropriate training programmes tailored to meet the challenges associated with inclusive education programmes.

Training, therefore, helps to build a positive self-esteem and confidence for these educators, which will result in effective rendering of services and learning for all learners. Some of the participants in the study were concerned that they were not trained well enough to cope with the needs of learners with barriers to learning. In addition their schools lacked the resources and service of other therapists and also the equipment needed by the learners in the school.

Previous research supporting the findings of this study include findings by Engelbrecht, Swart, Eloff, and Forlin (2000), who conducted a study looking at stressors for South African educators in the implementation of inclusive education. The 107 educators that participated in that study indicated that the most stressful issues for them included their perceived lack of confidence in their ability to teach in inclusive settings, due to lack of appropriate training.

Also supporting the findings of the current study are the findings by Eloff and Kgwete (2007). Their study found that most educators had not received any formal training on addressing the learners' needs in an inclusive classroom. The educators had obtained ordinary (mainstream) diplomas and degrees in education. They indicated that they felt unprepared to help the learners, because their pre-service training did not focus on assisting learners with diverse needs. The educators also indicated that the in-service training they received in preparation for inclusive education was too brief - mainly conducted in the afternoon after a long school day (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007).

The educators' perception of lack of skills and competence has been mentioned in several studies on inclusion in South Africa (Engelbrecht, Forlin, Eloff & Swart, 2001; Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2001), while some studies (Engelbrecht & Forlin, 1998; Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff & Pettipher, 2001) have indicated that the attitude of an educator is a more important predictor of successful inclusion than the educator's training. The consistency with which this issue is raised across studies in South Africa illustrates the need for further exploration.

### **5.2.3 THE EDUCATORS' PERCEIVED CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

As it is mentioned in the previous chapter, it was clear that the participants of this study felt that teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning requires a lot of additional work and responsibilities. This finding supports the findings of a study by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996), who found that the educators' willingness to include learners with barriers to learning was related to the degree of perceived added responsibilities on the part of the mainstream educator as a result of the inclusion.

The current study also supports the findings of a study by Salend and Duhaney (1999), who found that educators working in mainstream schools believe that educating learners with barriers to learning requires additional time, work, and attention; and there are significant classroom changes that need to be made to accommodate these learners, in addition to perceiving inclusion as requiring significant changes in classroom and instructional procedures and curricula.

The participants indicated that they find it difficult to adjust to the differences in the intellectual levels of learners of the same age in one group. (As mentioned above, this is due to the lack of formal training in special and inclusive education.) This is a challenge in the way that it can make educators feel less confident about their ability to make instructional adaptations for learners with barriers to learning. They expressed that implementing inclusive education makes their work more difficult and more stressful as they struggle to maximize the learners' academic learning and socialization. The participants did not seem to agree that learners with barriers to learning benefit academically and socially from inclusive education.

The finding of the current study concurs with the study conducted by Eloff and Kgwete (2007), which looked at the South African educators' voices on support in inclusive education. In their study, the educators indicated a lack of skills and competence to accommodate diversity in inclusive classrooms as one of their main challenges and, therefore, an area in which educator support can be crucial. They indicated that this is a big challenge as they did not have the necessary skills and competencies to handle learners experiencing barriers to learning in their classrooms. They all believed that they were failing to meet the needs of all learners due to their limited skills. This finding was also confirmed by the researchers' observations during visits in the classrooms (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007).

The research that supports this finding shows that educators view the inclusion of learners with barriers to learning into mainstream schools as difficult and stressful (Subban & Sharma, 2006). Avramidis et al. (2000) report that previous studies show that most mainstream educators believe that they lack the skill, knowledge and competence to effectively include these learners. It was also found that the perceived confidence of mainstream educators and the level of preparedness experienced by educators through training, the access to funding to support learners with barriers to learning within mainstream settings, and the perceived support from the administrative personnel at schools to support inclusive programmes are important factors for the positive implementation of inclusive education (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Daane et al., 2000; Kuester, 2000).

This might also be related to the findings from previous research, which indicates that the educators have to adjust and accept and deal with the diversity of their learners. They have to teach learners without special needs together with learners with learning difficulties, behaviour, speech, language, and communication problems in the same classroom (Cook, Klein, Tessier & Daley, 2004; Roaf, 2003).

The participants were found to be concerned that discipline in inclusive classrooms is complicated and challenging. They state that the challenge is that for some of these learners, disciplinary and/or behavioural problems might occur because of the lack of understanding on the part of educators. This might be related to the findings of previous studies, which state that the inclusion of learners with behavioural disorders and emotional difficulties appears to attract the least favourable responses from mainstream educators; and the educators believe that learners experiencing barriers to learning are disruptive in the classroom, therefore they tend not to understand them and be more likely to resist the placement these learners in their classrooms (Kuester, 2000; Roaf 2003).

It was found that the participants were concerned that their workload and stress have increased, while the learners' needs are not being met. A lot of additional work and responsibilities are required from them. They reported that they do try to meet all the learners' needs with no time for consultation, without appropriate training in special education, and without adequate support from the Department of Education.

The participants felt that inclusive education itself is a barrier to teaching. This has been found to be the case as most educators seem not to expand their instructional tolerance. They seem to give attention to those learners who can do well on their own and give less attention to learners with barriers to learning (due to big class sizes, insufficient time to teach, and lack of appropriate skills to teach learners with barriers to learning) (Cook *et al.*, 2000). Thus, they exclude 'the included'. They end up not teaching in a manner that is expected of them in inclusive settings.

The findings of this study support findings from previous research, which show that educators are struggling to adjust to the new way of doing things and they are suffering because of the overload they have (Hay, 2003). Stainback and Stainback, (1996) state

that inclusive education assumes that there is adequate classroom and other support available to educators to teach in inclusive settings. This study found this not to be the case in the selected schools in Pietermaritzburg, as the participants indicated that they do not receive any support from the Department of Education. This finding also supports what was previously found in other research concerning the educators' training in special education. Donald and Hlongwane (1993) found that most educators in South Africa do not have adequate training to render their services appropriately in inclusive settings.

The current study found that a high number of learners in one classroom makes it difficult for educators to adequately teach in inclusive classrooms. This finding is similar to the findings of the study conducted by Eloff and Kgwete (2007). They state that the educators in their study indicated that they are serving big inclusive classrooms. They are expected to complete a specified volume of work within a given time period while simultaneously assisting learners who are experiencing barriers to learning. Further, the educators indicated that they experienced difficulties in giving individual attention to learners with slower work tempos while managing their classrooms (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007).

When schools are understaffed and under-resourced, educators feel hard-pressed to provide the necessary support for all the learners in their classrooms (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007). This becomes a challenge and a barrier to the implementation of inclusive education. Lack of resources, knowledge, experience and expertise of qualified educators and training are also regarded as barriers against the successful implementation of inclusive education. Eloff and Kgwete (2007) state that without the necessary training, skills, qualification and workshops, educators are inclined to feel frustrated with the inclusion of all learners, irrespective of their disabilities.

#### **5.2.4 THE PERCEIVED IMPACT OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION ON EDUCATORS AND THE LEARNERS**

It was found that the participants felt that inclusive education has a negative impact on both the educators and the learners experiencing barriers to learning. The educators indicated that this is stressful to them and the learners experiencing barriers to learning are often teased and bullied by normal or mainstream learners. As the participants



indicated, they hold negative perceptions toward implementing inclusive education; this impacts negatively on the learners experiencing barriers to learning. Chen, Turner and Cheng (n.d.) state that if an educator's perceptions of learners with disabilities are negative, then including such learners in mainstream schools may not result in a beneficial experience for the learners.

Kubyana (2005) found that with inclusive education being implemented, other learners would be neglected and disadvantaged as much time will be given to learners with barriers to learners. During this study, reference was made to the learners with barriers to learning being teased by other learners and also being labelled according to their disabilities that further lowers their self-esteem.

According to Hallahan and Kauffman (1994), learners with barriers to learning tend to have emotional problems and poor self-concepts in the sense that they are rejected by their peer group. Many of the behaviours that cause particular concerns to educators such as shouting in class, bullying, hurting others, and not finishing tasks, are the result of conditioning and/or the result of inappropriate behaviour modelled by other peers in the learner's environment (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 2001).

### **5.2.5 FURTHER ISSUES RELATED TO THEORY**

From the findings of the current study, it is evident that the participants feel incompetent and overloaded with work because the design of the curriculum and the method of instruction used by the participants do not meet the needs of all learners. The application of the *Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, as illustrated in Table 1, would help the educators in teaching all learners as diverse as they are. They would be able to prepare and teach lessons with variations that are responsive to individual learner's needs. It is possible that the participants hold negative perceptions and attitudes toward inclusive education because they are not equipped with the perspective of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. This theory suggests for educators to be in the position to appreciate learners' unconventional behaviour and seek productive applications of these skills within a learning context (Udvari-Solner & Thousand, 1995). This would aid the educators in arranging learning activities to allow expression of knowledge through multiple modes and the use of different intelligences. Udvari-Solner and Thousand

(1995) go on to say that with the application of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences in inclusive classrooms, the educators may use the learners' strongest intelligences as vehicles to promote skill acquisition in areas of weaker performance.

Westhood (2003) argues that in inclusive classrooms, in order to achieve optimum learning through the application of the above-mentioned theory, educators must seek to implement differentiated strategies across all school curriculum areas. According to Mentis, Quinn and Ryba (2005) and Westhood (2003), differentiation refers to doing things differently to target the observed differences among learners' behaviour and learning patterns. They further recommended that the differentiated strategies can be used in areas such as the teaching approaches, curriculum content, assessment strategies and the general classroom organization.

It can be deduced that the way inclusive education is implemented in the selected schools has shortcomings when taking the *Ecological Systems Theory* into account. Viewing this theory from a developmental psychological perspective, a child's development is influenced by the surrounding environment and social context. The theory emphasises that human behaviour emanates from the function of the human person and the environment in which the person exists (Damon & Lerner, 2006 & 1997). The way learners with barriers to learning are viewed, treated and included in the learning process in mainstream school contexts would play a major part in their learning achievements. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory has recently been viewed as useful in fostering inclusive practices for developing learners with barriers to learning (Guralnick, 1982; Peck, 1993).

The negative attitudes shown by the selected educators toward learners with barriers to learning can have negative repercussions for inclusion in mainstream schools. The individualization of context-based instructions and practices like curriculum differentiation cannot be successful if the educators' attitudes are negative. The individual learner's specific needs have to be met. "In effect, how the child grows up is also strongly affected by what is said or done to the child – or in the child's presence – by parents, siblings, other relatives, teachers, coaches, club leaders, and the like" (Thomas, 2005, p. 352). These are viewed as practices that support inclusion. How professionals

who serve young children with disabilities work with and feel about each other is also a part of the mesosystem (Peck *et al.*, 1989).

Bronfenbrenner stated that the macrosystem is referred to as the wider cultural milieu from which the different ecological systems, practices, and cultures exist (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). It consists of "... the array of attitudes, practices, and convictions shared throughout society at large" (Thomas, 2005, p. 355). At the macrosystem level, within the wider school culture, other sub-cultures such as the students, teachers, and parents exist and influence each other through the decisions they make; their individual and collective actions and practices (Prosser & Warburton, 1999).

Previous research has found that if learners with barriers to learning are viewed from the deficiency lens, which is characterized by the shortcomings and difficulties that are associated with learners with barriers to learning, which require adjustment to the curricula and contexts in the learning process in regular schools, it would be difficult for inclusion to be implemented successfully (Mitchell, 2005; Villa & Thousand, 2005). The educators who participated in this study viewed learners with barriers to learning from the deficiency lens, which resulted in the unsuccessful implementation of inclusion in their classrooms. Special and inclusive education are viewed to be a philosophy or practice toward giving equal and greater value to all learners in the wider society and macrosystem (Villa & Thousand, 2005).

The current study found that it is difficult for educators to target the zone of proximal development in learners with barriers to learning. This is because, according to the *Sociocultural Approach to Cognitive Development*, learners with barriers to learning have qualitatively distinct zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1993). The zone of proximal development has a direct bearing on practice with learners with barriers to learning, but as yet it has not been employed extensively in the development of programs in most countries (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007). The usefulness of the zone of proximal development is that it is capable of revealing the hidden potential of the learner with barriers to learning rather than just the current level of functioning.

According to Vygotsky (1993), the actual level of development (level of independent performance) does not sufficiently describe the development of a child. Rather, it

indicates what is already developed or achieved, that is a 'yesterday of development'. The level of assisted performance indicates what the child can achieve in the near future, what is developing (potential level, 'tomorrow of development', what the child can become) (Vygotsky, 1986). In inclusive education, it is especially important not to concentrate on yesterday's development but on tomorrow's development (Gindis, 2003, p. 211) as the gap between the independent performance and an appropriately assisted performance in learners with barriers to learning might be of a great significance due to initially distorted communication. Thus, the actual level of development becomes less important than the potential level of development with an expert (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007).

In his later writings, Vygotsky proposed that a very different learning environment, where all of the educators could concentrate on the individual needs of the learners, was necessary (Vygotsky, 1993). (This is similar to the emphasis made by the Theory of Multiple Intelligences and the Ecological Systems Theory.) Vygotsky emphasized the methods of teaching should be changed and the learner must always be maintained as much as is possible within the mainstream social and cultural environment (Vygotsky, 1993).

### **5.3 CONCLUSION**

The perceptions and attitudes of educators play a primary role in the successful implementation of inclusive education. They are the people who work directly with learners in their daily classroom routines. The successful implementation of inclusive education will depend on changing the educators' negative perceptions and attitudes, and providing them with adequate training and support. There is a need for appropriate resources, a need for appropriate educator training, a need for recognition of the ability of every child to learn, a need to focus on the learners' strengths rather than their weaknesses and a need to recognise that instruction must be individualised in order to provide for a positive educational experience (Dixon & Verenikina, 2007).

The following chapter gives the conclusions of this study, implications, and limitations.

## **CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study was undertaken in attempt to find out what the educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented are, in the Pietermaritzburg area. The study intended to find out what these educators' attitudes are toward inclusive education. It also aimed to find out from the educators what the implications of inclusive educations are for the educators and the learners.

Chapter I covered the background of the problem, statement of the problem, aims and rationale of the study, research questions, target population, methodology, definition of terms/concepts featuring prominently in this work, and the outline of the research. In Chapter II, the relevant literature was reviewed. The chapter discussed the history of inclusive education globally and in South Africa; inclusive education and human rights in South Africa, and findings from previous research relevant to this study.

Chapter III covered the details of the research methodology adopted by the researcher in this study. It explained the sampling methods used, methods of data collection and data analysis. In Chapter IV, an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data is given. Chapter V discusses the findings of the study. The focus of this chapter, Chapter VI, will be the articulation of significant conclusions and the formulation of relevant implications. The limitations of the study will also be stated.

### **6.2 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study was conducted in Pietermaritzburg with the aim to investigate factors that facilitate inclusive education as well as challenges facing educators in schools where inclusive education is currently being implemented. Findings of this study lead to a few conclusions.

The first research question was “what are the educators’ perceived positive aspects (strengths) and negative aspects (weaknesses) of inclusive education?” It appears that most mainstream educators in schools where inclusive education is being implemented in Pietermaritzburg could not identify any positive aspects and strengths of inclusive education. This could be because they seem to have negative perceptions about inclusive education and they hold negative attitudes toward inclusive education.

In the schools selected for this study, participants did not report any factor conducive to the implementation of inclusive education. Instead, conditions seem to be less favourable for inclusive education to be implemented successfully as the educators concerned do not receive any support from the Department of Education. The size of their classes does not make it easy for the educators to work effectively. The educators’ negative perceptions of inclusive education and their negative attitudes toward it also do not make it easy for inclusive education to be implemented successfully.

The second research question was “what are the educators’ attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of inclusive education?” It can be concluded that most mainstream educators in schools where inclusive education is being implemented in the Pietermaritzburg area hold negative attitudes toward inclusive education. The negative attitudes toward inclusive education relate to their unwillingness to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning. It also relates to their low level of confidence in themselves and the fact that they are not prepared to work with these learners.

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that most educators in the study sample have negative perceptions about inclusive education and negative experiences of inclusive education. This negativity relates to the fact that these educators do not have sufficient time for inclusion; they lack sufficient resources, expertise, and training for inclusion. Further training would equip them with skills and knowledge work effectively with their learners. The negative perceptions also relate to the fact that because of inclusive education, the sizes of their classrooms have increased. Their needs for class size reduction, increased consultation time, and more resources and support services have not been met. This, in turn, makes the services rendered by these educators to be unsatisfactory, and the learners do not benefit as they should.

The third research question was “what are the educators’ perceived challenges and barriers associated with the implementation of inclusive education?” It can be concluded that implementing inclusive education is associated with many challenges. It is perceived that educating learners with barriers to learning is challenging because it requires additional time, work, and attention; and there are significant classroom changes that need to be made to accommodate these learners, in addition to perceiving inclusion as requiring significant changes in classroom and instructional procedures and curricula.

Another conclusion that can be made is that inclusive education is challenging as the educators find it difficult to adjust to the differences in the intellectual levels of learners of the same age in one group. It is also difficult to maintain discipline in the classroom. Most educators feel less confident and they feel professionally unprepared to implement inclusive education. This poses a big challenge to the education system, because for inclusive education to be implemented successfully, the educators have to be confident in themselves and in their abilities.

The participants of this study seem to believe that inclusive education is a barrier in and of itself, i.e., inclusive education is a barrier to teaching and learning. Inclusive education seems to come with increased workload and stress levels, while the learners’ needs are not being met. A lot of additional work and responsibilities is required from the educators, while they do not receive appropriate training in special education and support from the Department of Education remains inadequate. From this, it can be deduced that inclusive education itself is a barrier to teaching.

The fourth research question was “what is the perceived impact of inclusive education on educators and the learners?” It can be concluded that the implementation of inclusive education in the selected Pietermaritzburg schools has a negative impact on the educators and learners concerned. Implementing inclusive education seems to be stressful to both the educators as they are expected to produce good results in conditions that are not conducive to the implementation of inclusive education. Implementing inclusive education has a negative impact on the learners experiencing barriers to learning as they are often teased and bullied by mainstream learners. The educators’ negative perceptions

and attitudes toward implementing inclusive education also impact negatively on the learners experiencing barriers to learning.

### **6.3 CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Prior 1994, different educational support services in South Africa were managed by racially segregated education departments and service provision was characterised by obvious inequalities and inconsistencies, a lack of co-ordination, and a lack of national focus and clarity on the nature of support services (Department of Education, 1997a).

The NCSNET/NCESS report (DoE, 1997a) addresses the challenge facing support services in South Africa by the recommendation that support provision should reflect a commitment to an integrated approach. In the development of an inclusive educational approach as discussed in the White Paper 6: titled “Special Needs Education – Building an Inclusive Education and Training System” (DoE, 2001b), it is clearly stated that the establishment of an inclusive education system will require appropriate support services. South Africa seems to have no choice but to continue with inclusive education, as it is financially impossible and morally untenable to implement a fully fledged dual education system.

The educators are expected to use multi-dimensional approaches when designing their curriculum and implementing it (Vaughn *et al.*, 1996). They are expected to encourage diversity among learners, and to be able to cater for learners from different environments or backgrounds, and dealing with multilingual classrooms and learners with special needs. These various aspects require educators to change their own perceptions and attitudes toward learners with barriers to learning.

A conclusion can be made that training in special and inclusive education would make a big difference for most educators working in inclusive environments. This training will aid to improve their skills and knowledge and develop new ones, in ensuring that there is a smooth implementation of inclusive education. The training, together with the provision of appropriate resources, will equip the educators with important skills required in preparing main lessons with variations that are responsive to individual learners’



needs, facilitating co-operative learning, curriculum enrichment and dealing with learners with behavioural problems as in a multi-level classroom. This would help the educators apply the Theory of Multiple Intelligences in their classrooms.

#### **6.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY**

The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001b) brought about change in the South African education system. Change is therefore important when the principle of putting theory into practice is applied. According to Naicker (2000), change is a powerful symbol for people disconcerted with existing conditions, and not just a declaration of improvement in well-being for the diverse sectors. Naicker (2000) goes on to say that in building inclusive education, the first step is to form an understanding of disabilities shaped by a medical model, with an understanding underpinned by a right model. Secondly, barriers to learning in the system need to be identified and appropriate intervention made.

Wilson (1998) suggests that the use of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences in implementing inclusive education would aid educators in easily creating more personalized and diversified instructional experiences. It would offer educators assistance in helping students become empowered learners by extending and promoting cognitive bridging techniques based on the seven intelligences; by fostering deep meta-cognitive understanding; and by advancing suggestions for a broad array of diversified study skills techniques. He goes on to say that this theory would help educators explain and promote understanding at intrapersonal, interpersonal and cultural levels. This in turn would tap into the learners' intrinsic levels of motivation through natural talents – helping teachers construct self-motivating educational experiences and ones which help promote the concept of flow in the classroom (Wilson, 1998). This would require significant reduction in class sizes as well as training of many new educators.

Donald *et al.* (2002) suggest how Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory could be useful in inclusive education. They indicate that the model shows how individuals and groups at different levels within the social context are linked in dynamic, interdependent, and interacting relationships. The Education White Paper 6 states that an inclusive education and training system should be organized to provide various levels and kinds of

support to all learners and educators (DoE, 2001b). In order to ensure that inclusive education takes place, Naicker (2000) argues that a new service cannot be delivered within an old system, and that “inclusive education, has to do with re-thinking issues of theory, pedagogy, assumption, practices, tools, models, race, class, disabilities and gender” (p. 21).

The sociocultural approach to cognitive development can be applied by educators in inclusive classrooms as it stresses the importance of the dynamic, socio-cultural nature of disability for the methodology of inclusive education (Rodina, 2005). Vygotsky stressed the importance of social learning in the upbringing and education of children with learning difficulties. A study of the application of Vygotsky’s sociocultural approach to cognitive development as a theoretical framework in Russia found that social learning constitutes the source for development and forms the basis for the zone of proximal development (ZPD) - and inclusive education is fundamentally developmental (Rodina, 2005). A main task for inclusive learning is to bring about a transformation of the ZPD as well as the zone of actual development (Rodina, 2005).

It is evident that there is an inactive interplay between theory and the findings of the current study. It seems that there is no a link between practical reality as provided by the data and theory. In other countries, the above-mentioned theories have been applied successfully as theoretical frameworks for inclusive education. In South Africa, these theories need to be stretched, and research needs to be conducted in search for ways in which such theories can be applied for the successful implementation of inclusive education. This study has also made a contribution to the limited literature on the educators’ perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in Pietermaritzburg schools where it is currently being implemented.

## **6.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE**

The findings in this study imply that the Department of Education does not take adequate cognisance of issues that educators regard as important. The educators’ attitudes may become positive if more information can be provided in the form of workshops and training. With a good support system from both the school support team and the district

office, more can be attained. With the Department's efforts in catering for the needs, fears and anger of teachers in a positive manner much will be achieved. There needs to be a wide stakeholders' consultation in developing policies. The educators need to be involved when crucial decisions are made as they are the ones who implement policies in classrooms. If this is done, things would be better and their negative attitudes would be changed.

When developing educational policy, it must be understood that it is important and legally mandated to make modifications for learners who need adaptations to benefit from a particular instructional environment. Educators need assistance in developing strategies to individualize instruction. This assistance translates into additional time and programme cost. Policy proposals must include detailed means to reach policy goals. This aspect of the policy process involves "legitimizing (selecting a proposal, building providing payments and services, and levying taxes)" (Dye, 1995, p. 21).

From the findings of the study, it is evident that maximum class size should be reduced when learners experiencing barriers to learning are placed in mainstream classrooms. This issue touches on funding policy from the state level. The expense involved in educating learners with barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms needs to be addressed. Funding for different teaching models required in inclusive settings needs to be provided. There seems to be a need for policies to reduce maximum class size and generate funds for additional personnel when models such as inclusion, collaboration or team-teaching are used. Also, a policy advocating smaller class sizes in inclusive schools is appropriate.

When developing policy, it must be kept in mind that support is the cornerstone of successful inclusive education (Landsberg *et al.*, 2005). This study found that for most educators working in the study sample, inclusive education is very challenging and stressful. This implies that no educator should handle this alone. Policies need to make provision for appropriate resources, Teacher Support Teams and other professional support. In other inclusive schools in other provinces such support and resources are provided (Kubyana, 2005; Luseno, 2001), this appears not to be the case in the schools selected for this study. This implies that policy should provide resources and

professional support to all educators, equally, throughout the country. This would result in successful implementation of inclusive education.

## **6.6 LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

It is important to note that this study was conducted in the early years of implementing inclusive education in South Africa. It is anticipated that there might be further changes in policies and practical implementation of inclusive education. On-going studies to develop best practice models for the implementation of inclusive education in resource constrained settings is recommended. Based on the findings of this study, the following are limitations and implications for future research.

This study is limited in scope, as only three schools were sampled. It may be helpful to determine if the attitudes and beliefs of the responders to this study are similar to those responding to the same issues in other similar schools in the KwaZulu-Natal province and in South Africa as a whole. To add, the other limitation of this study is that the sample size was small, which makes it difficult for the findings to be generalized to the whole population of educators working in schools where inclusive education is being implemented in South Africa. The researcher recommends that for future research in this topic and/or relevant topics, the sample size should be bigger.

It might also be helpful to conduct a study on inclusion, taking into account type and severity of the learners' disability. In-depth qualitative studies that would look specifically at the factors that have shaped the educators' experiences could be informative. A study by Lieber *et al.* (2000) found that inclusion was a success where school principals initiated inclusive programmes. Therefore, further focus on the characteristics of principals could throw insight into inclusion.

Most participants in this study were working at the primary school level and a few were working at a high school level. It may be interesting and beneficial to determine if educators working at the high school levels have similar experiences, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs about inclusive education. As there is little research addressing the effectiveness of inclusion in KwaZulu-Natal, it is suggested that this area is researched in

the near future. It is crucial to determine if educating learners experiencing barriers to learning in mainstream classrooms has quantifiable benefits for educators and for learners with and those without barriers to learning. It might also be interesting to consider the participants' level of education.

## **6.7 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that school districts, working in conjunction with educator training institutes, provide educators working in inclusive schools with information sharing workshops and adequate in-service training designed to enhance their knowledge of legal aspects of inclusive education and strategies for teaching learners with barriers to learning; adapting and adjusting curricula; working collaboratively; classroom management; and conflict resolution.

Additional training also needs to be provided for school administrators. It should focus on the definition of inclusion; special education law; and strategies for assisting, evaluating, motivating, and scheduling educator duties so that co-educators would have time to plan together and/or share information. Funding for such training needs to be made available and accessible.

It is recommended that educator, school, and district capacity to meet the needs of educators teaching learners with barriers to learning be built, while ensuring that the educators' workload is manageable. This can be achieved by providing adequate funding, resources, equipment, support personnel, and teaching material suitable for included learners; and by reducing class sizes.

## **6.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The current study found that most educators have negative attitudes, experiences and perceptions of inclusive education. They are not receiving adequate support and appropriate resources for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Because they have not been trained in inclusive and special education, the educators feel

incompetent and they feel that they cannot appropriately serve the learners with barriers to learning. They cannot pay adequate attention to all learners in their inclusive classrooms because the class sizes are too big. As a result, they feel that they have heavy workloads.

The current study is valid in the KwaZulu-Natal context. The results thereof are trustworthy as they support findings from other studies. However, the findings of the current study cannot be generalized to the whole of South African context.

We are living in a changing world. Changes produce new challenges for educators and learners. Knowledge of change management is an important ingredient if we are to be successful in our attempts at educational transformation. The new policy of inclusive education advocates the support of all learners in the mainstream classroom irrespective of the diverse needs. Educators can be regarded as the key role players in bringing about the successful implementation of the new curriculum. The educators' perceptions and attitudes impact on how they view and implement new educational policies.

The development of workshops to facilitate personal and professional growth of mainstream educators could be researched and addressed. Further training in special and inclusive education needs to be provided with the hope to bring about a mind shift and the acquisition of new skills for educators. Finally, all necessary efforts should be made to ensure a successful implementation of inclusive education, providing quality education for all.

It is difficult to implement inclusive education if the vital resources are not available. These are resources like money, appropriate equipment, support personnel, and teaching material fitting for included learners. It is therefore important that the Department of Education provides these for the smooth implementation of inclusive education. It is also important and beneficial to have on-going monitoring and review to determine how policies are being implemented on the ground. This would help in detecting challenges and becoming aware of what works in terms of implementing policies.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### Thesis Approval and Ethical Clearance



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)  
WESTVILLE CAMPUS  
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587  
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

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18 JANUARY 2006

MS. PL MAYABA (201500322)  
PSYCHOLOGY

Dear Miss Mayaba

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/05199A

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

“The Educators perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented in the Pietermaritzburg Area”

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA  
RESEARCH OFFICE

PS: The following general condition is applicable to all projects that have been granted ethical clearance:

THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES SHOULD BE CONTACTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY APPROVAL SHOULD THE RESEARCH INVOLVE UTILIZATION OF SPACE AND/OR FACILITIES AT OTHER INSTITUTIONS/ORGANISATIONS. WHERE QUESTIONNAIRES ARE USED IN THE PROJECT, THE RESEARCHER SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE QUESTIONNAIRE INCLUDES A SECTION AT THE END WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE PARTICIPANT (PRIOR TO THE COMPLETION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE) INDICATING THAT HE/SHE WAS INFORMED OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT AND THAT THE INFORMATION GIVEN WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

cc. Faculty Officer  
cc. Supervisor (Dr. NJ Mkhize)

## APPENDIX 2

### Principals' cover letters and letters of informed consent

School of Psychology  
P/Bag X01 Scottsville  
PIETERMARITZBURG, 3209  
South Africa



**Phone: +27 33 260 6047**

**Cell: +27 83 719 4837**

**Fax: +27 33 260 5363**

13 March 2006

The Principal  
(School's address)

Dear Sir/Madam

#### **RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I am a Master of Social Science (Educational Psychology) student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I intend doing a study on educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented in the Pietermaritzburg area.

The study aims to investigate factors that facilitate inclusive education as well as challenges facing educators in schools in the Pietermaritzburg area, where inclusive education is currently being implemented. The intention is to find out from the educators what the implications of inclusive education are to the educators themselves and the learners.

The rationale for conducting this study is to understand the impact that inclusive education has on educators in the Pietermaritzburg area. This would help the Department and other stakeholders to strengthen those factors that contribute positively to inclusive education and to minimize or eliminate factors that have a negative impact. Recently, research on inclusive education has been conducted in other countries and some provinces in South Africa. Findings show that there could be positive outcomes as well as challenges facing educators involved in inclusive education. The purpose of the study is to highlight factors that contribute positively to the implementation of inclusive education, as well as the challenges encountered by educators, in order to inform policy.

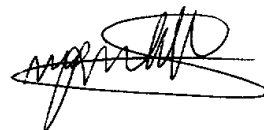
I am planning to obtain data for this research through the use of questionnaires. Therefore, I kindly request your permission to allow your educators to complete the questionnaire, which will not take more than 30 minutes of their time. The educators are not forced to participate in this study. If they wish to participate in the study, they would have to give informed consent to do so. Please note that your identity, all identifying information about the school, your educators as well as their responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

I can be contacted at the above cell phone, telephone and fax numbers.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Phindile Mayaba (Miss)  
MSoc Sc student (Educational Psychology)

Professor N.J. Mkhize  
Deputy Head of School & Supervisor

For more information please contact Phindile Mayaba at 0837194837 or Professor N.J. Mkhize at (033) 260 5963.



**Educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is  
being implemented in the Pietermaritzburg area**

Dear Principal

Please complete the following in order to grant permission to the researcher to conduct this research project in your school.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give permission for the above mentioned research project to be conducted in my school. It is my understanding that individual consent will be further sought from each educator participating in the project.

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 3

### Educator's cover letters and letters of informed consent

School of Psychology  
P/Bag X01 Scottsville  
PIETERMARITZBURG, 3209  
South Africa



**Phone:** +27 33 260 6047

**Cell:** +27 83 719 4837

**Fax:** +27 33 260 5363

13 March 2006

Dear Educator

#### **RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I am a Master of Social Science (Educational Psychology) student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I intend doing a study about the educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where it is being implemented in the Pietermaritzburg Area.

The study aims to find out whether there are positive aspects as well as challenges facing educators in schools in the Pietermaritzburg area, where inclusive education is currently being implemented. The research aims to find out from the educators what the implications of inclusive education are to the educators themselves and the learners.

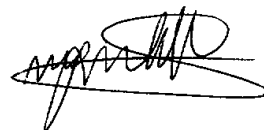
The rationale for conducting this study is to understand the impact that inclusive education has on educators in the Pietermaritzburg area. This would help advise the government on what is happening as they have invested money in the inclusive education and training system. Recent research has been conducted in other countries and some provinces in South Africa. Findings show that there could be positive as well as challenges facing educators involved in inclusive education. The rationale behind this research is to find out more about these in some selected KwaZulu-Natal schools.

I am planning to obtain the information for this research through the use of questionnaires. The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

The participants' identity as well as their responses will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. The information provided by the participants will be treated with confidentiality. In order to maintain confidentiality, the data obtained will not in any way be linked to the participants. The participants are not in any way coerced to participate in the study. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without having to specify any reasons for doing so. The study poses no foreseeable physical, psychological, or emotional harm to the participants.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Phindile Mayaba (Miss)  
MSoc Sc student (Educational Psychology)

Professor N.J. Mkhize  
Deputy Head of School & Supervisor

For more information please contact Phindile Mayaba at 0837194837 or Professor N.J. Mkhize at (033) 260 5963.

**The educators' perceptions and experiences of inclusive education in schools where  
it is being implemented in the Pietermaritzburg area**

Dear Educator

Please complete the following in order to confirm your willingness to participate in the research project:

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby give my informed consent to participate in the above mentioned research project.

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX 4

### Questionnaire

<b>SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION</b>
--

#### **Demographics:**

1. Gender:  Female  Male
2. In what age category are you in?  
 > 25 years  25-34 years  35-44 years  45-54 years  55+ years
3. By the end of this year, for how many years will you have been teaching?  
 <1 year  1-9 years  10-14 years  15-19 years  20-25 years  25+ years
4. Is your employment contract: (fill any one)  
 full-time  part-time

#### **Subject/Work Area(s)**

5. Please indicate up to two (2) areas in which you currently teach/work most of the time. Enter in box "a" (below) the number representing how you spend most of your teaching/working time. Choose from "01" to "10" in the list given here. If you have other responsibilities, enter the corresponding number in box "b" (below).

01 = Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC)

02 = Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (MLMMS)

03 = Natural Science

04 = Technology

05 = Human and Social Science (HSS)

06 = Economic and Management Sciences (EMS)

07 = Arts and Culture (A&C)

08 = Life Orientation (LO)

09 = Special Education (please specify)

10 = Other (please specify)

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a. most of my teaching time

b. other responsibilities

**Grade(s) Taught/ Caseload**

6. What grade(s) are you teaching, or from what grades is your caseload drawn, this school year?

Please fill in the appropriate boxes.

R    1    2    3    4    5    6  
 7    8    9    10    11    12

7 a. Does your class have learners with barriers to learning?

Yes    No

b. If Yes, please rate this as a source of stress:

none/neutral    low    medium    high

8 a. Compared to 3 years ago, my class size has:

increased    decreased    stayed the same

b. Compared to 3 years ago, my caseload has:

increased    decreased    stayed the same

c. Comments:

**SECTION B: PHILOSOPHY AND PRACTICE**

9. For each of the following statements, please tick the appropriate column to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
a. I believe in and support the philosophy of inclusive education.					
b. The daily implementing of inclusive education is difficult.					
c. Paperwork linked to learners experiencing barriers to learning has increased over the last 3 years.					
d. Some learners who are experiencing barriers to learning are not included in the inclusive education policy					
e. Resource/financial supports for inclusive education are adequate and enable appropriate delivery.					
f. Curriculum material supports for inclusive education (e.g., modified and adapted materials) are adequate.					
g. There is adequate support from the Department of Education for improving programs and services.					
h. The identification/assessment of learners considered likely to experience barriers to learning is timely (i.e., done promptly).					
i. Learners experiencing barriers to learning are well served by current identification processes and assessment instruments.					

j. In my school, learners experiencing barriers to learning are required to spend 100% of every day in a regular classroom.					
k. Most learners experiencing barriers to learning benefit <i>academically</i> from inclusive education.					
l. Most learners experiencing barriers to learning benefit <i>socially</i> from inclusive education.					
m. Integration of learners experiencing barriers to learning affects my capacity to meet the needs of other learners in the class.					
n. I feel professionally prepared to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning.					
o. I am positive about working with other teachers to implement inclusive education.					
p. I am positive about working with Teacher Support Teams to implement inclusive education.					
q. My relationships with the parents of learners experiencing barriers to learning are generally positive.					



**SECTION C: AVAILABILITY OF SUPPORT**

10. Please indicate whether each of the following supports is available to you.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
a. Class-size reduction (reduced number of learners).					
b. In-service training.					
c. A trained Special Education Assistant/Teacher Support.					
d. Support from a Resource Teacher in the school/district.					
e. District services for assessment and support which are available to me in my school.					
f. A supportive Administrative Officer.					
g. Technical resources where needed (e.g., computer, talking books).					
h. Appropriate modified/adapted curriculum materials.					
i. Other support (please specify):					

11. Please identify, from the choices above, 3 supports for inclusive education that are most important to you.

Make 3 choices only.

- a       b       c       d       e       f       g  
 h       i

12 a. Does the Department of Education offer bursary schemes for Special Education courses?

Yes     No

b. If yes, have you accessed these bursary schemes?

Yes     No

c. If Yes, please list any courses for which you have received bursarie/s:

d. Do you intend to access Special Education courses with bursaries in the foreseeable future?     Yes     No

13. For sections D and E, I am identifying a (choose one only):

class     caseload

Definitions for Section D:

**"designated"**    - a learner who is officially recognized by the Department of education (fitting in one of the 11 categories below) as experiencing barriers to learning with extra funding provided.

**"non-designated"** - a learner whom you believe is experiencing barriers to learning but that need is not officially recognized by the Department of Education and no extra funding is provided

**SECTION D: CLASS COMPOSITION**

14. Which, and how many, learners experiencing barriers to learning do you have in your class/caseload?

	None	# designated	# non-designated
a. Physical, mental, sensory, neurological and developmental impairments:			
i. Learners with mild intellectual disabilities			
ii. Learners with moderate to severe/profound intellectual disabilities			
iii. Learners with learning disabilities			
iv. Gifted learners			
v. Learners with moderate behaviour disorders			
vi. Learners with severe behaviour disorders			
vii. Learners with multiple disabilities			
viii. Learners with physical disabilities or chronic health impairments			
ix. Learners with visual (sight) impairment			
x. Learners who are deaf/hard of hearing			
xi. Learners with autism			
xii. Other (please specify):			
b. Psycho-social disturbances			
c. Differences in intellectual ability			
d. Particular life experiences			
e. Socio-economic deprivation			
f. Negative attitudes to and stereotyping of differences			
g. An inflexible curriculum			
h. Inappropriate languages or language and teaching			
i. Inappropriate communication			
j. Inaccessible and unsafe built environments			
k. Inappropriate and inadequate support services			
l. Inadequate policies and legislation			
m. The non-recognition and non-involvement of parents			
n. Inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and educators			

o. Comments:

**SECTION E: DEALING WITH AGGRESSIVE/DISRUPTIVE LEARNERS**

15. How many aggressive/disruptive learners are in your classroom or caseload?

designated:

none    1    2    3    4    5    6    7 or more

non-designated:

none    1    2    3    4    5    6    7 or more

16. Of the aggressive/disruptive learners in your class or caseload, how many are male, and how many are female?

male:  none    1    2    3    4    5    6    7 or more

female:  none    1    2    3    4    5    6    7 or more

17. How much of your teaching time goes into managing these learners?

less than 20% of the day    20-29%    30-39%

40-49%    50% or more of the day

18. How would you rate the support your school/district provides you for managing aggressive or disruptive learners in your class?

excellent    good    fair    poor N/A

19. Compared to 5 years ago, has the impact of aggressive/disruptive learners in your classroom or caseload (select one):

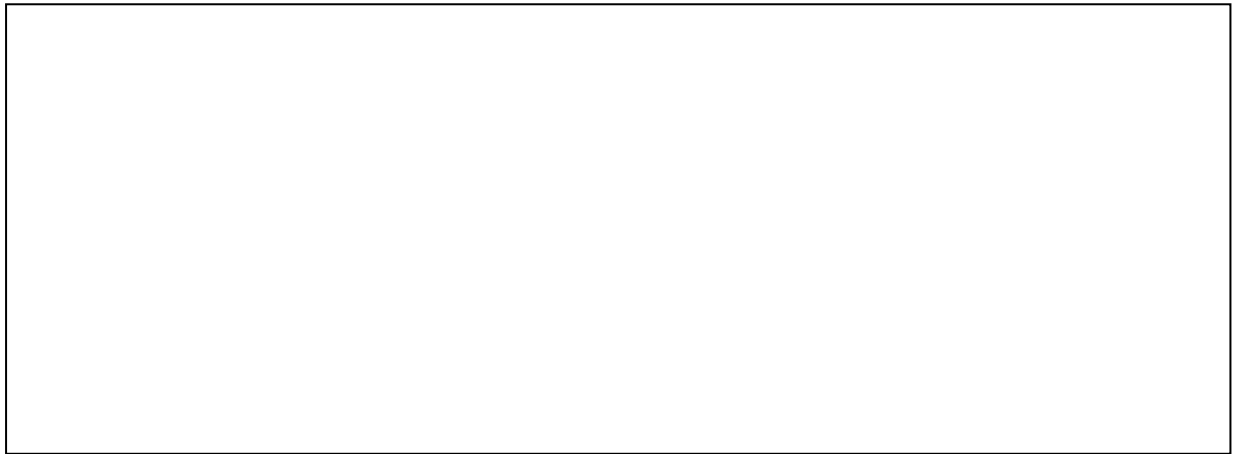
increased    decreased    stayed about the same

N/A    don't know

**SECTION F: POSITIVE FACTORS & PROBLEMATIC ISSUES IN  
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

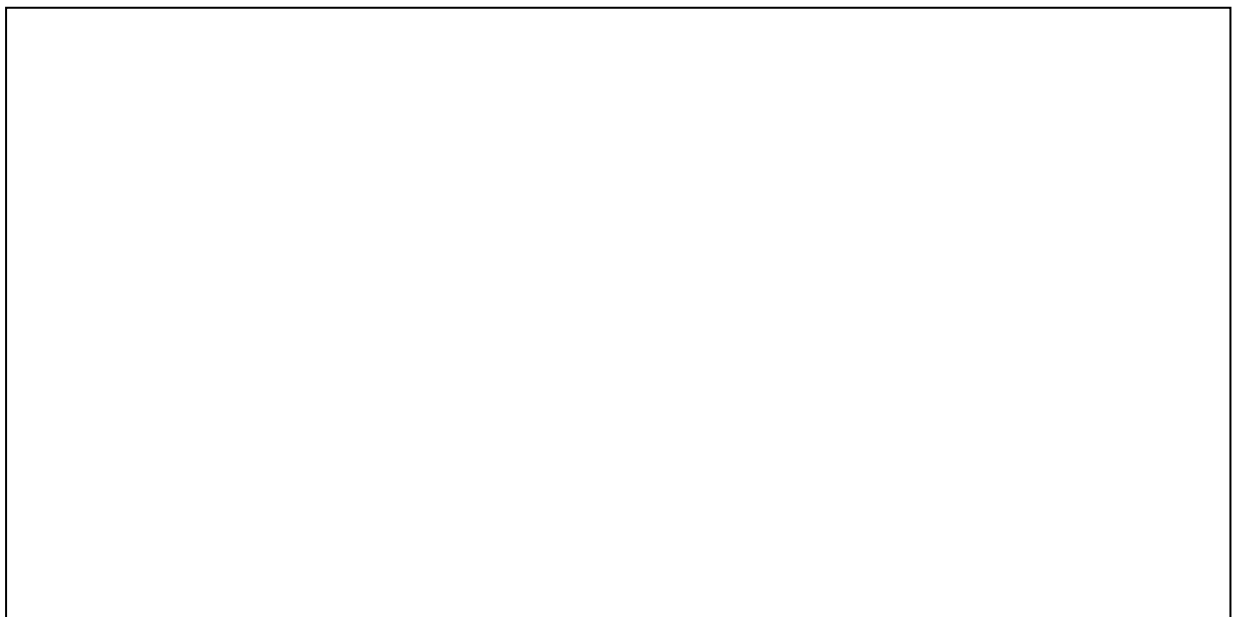
20. a. Positive factors

Please use this space to comment on what you believe to be the most positive aspects of integrating learners experiencing barriers to learning into the school(s) where you work.



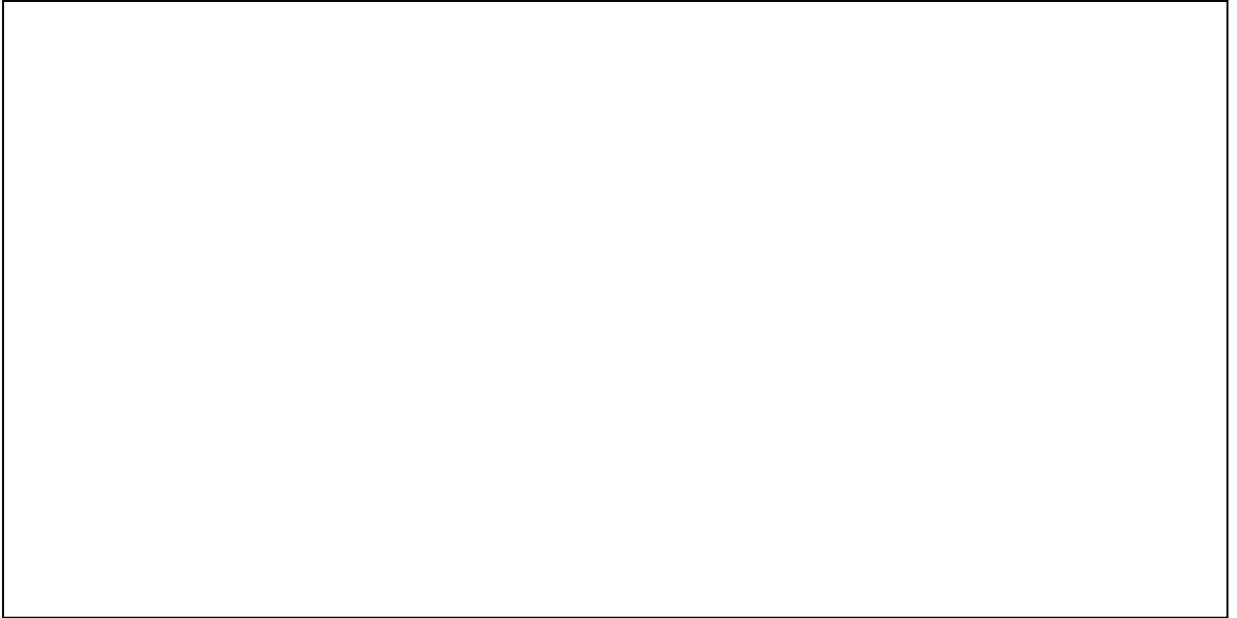
b. Problematic issues

Please use this space to comment on what you believe to be the most problematic issues in terms of integrating learners experiencing barriers to learning into the school(s) where you work.



**SECTION G: EXPERIENCES & PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSIVE  
EDUCATION**

21. a. Please use this space to comment on your experiences of inclusive education.



- b. Please use this space to comment on your perceptions on/of inclusive education.

