

**THE EXPERIENCES OF LEARNERS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES
IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM**

by

Selvum Jane Sebastian

**submitted to the Faculty of Education
in accordance with the requirements of the degree
Magister Educationis**

at

The University of KwaZulu Natal

Supervisor: Dr N de Lange

**November 2004
Durban**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby express my appreciation and gratitude to the following individuals who contributed to the completion of this dissertation:

My supervisor, Dr N de Lange, for her guidance, in keeping me focused and for the supportive feedback in this learning experience.

Dr Terence McGee, for his invaluable input in the language edit and proofreading this dissertation.

My sister, Jennet Hansen, for the sustained motivation and endearing support in reading for this dissertation.

My dear friend, John Benjamin, for the moral support, encouragement and unconditional assistance during the reading for this dissertation.

My mother, Giramah Pillay, for her constant prayers and unfailing encouragement.

Participants, for their co-operation and willingness to participate in the research.

The principal and parents of the school where the interviews were conducted.

DECLARATION

I declare that:

THE EXPERIENCES OF LEARNERS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

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

SIGNED : *Jd. bastian*

DATE : 2005-01-17

THE EXPERIENCES OF LEARNERS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

by

Selvum Jane Sebastian

Abstract

The last decade has seen enormous transformation in public schools in South Africa. One of the greatest changes is the increase in the diversity in the classroom. Since 2000, education policies emphasize the development of quality education in inclusive settings meeting the needs of all learners. The concept of inclusive education places emphasis on changing the system rather than the child, thereby requiring transformation of traditional approaches to teaching and learning. The factor that has the greatest impact on diversity is the movement towards including learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in the general education classroom in mainstream settings.

This study is an attempt to explore and describe the experiences of grade 6 learners, particularly with reading difficulties, and the challenges faced by them in being included in the inclusive classrooms. A qualitative approach was employed in conducting this research. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. The data was obtained by means of unstructured interviews from individual learners. The recorded interviews were then transcribed and analyzed. The findings indicate that learners encountered negative and positive experiences and that it is important to listen to the often 'hidden' voices of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. Therefore it is important for both educators and all learners to value differences in an inclusive classroom in order to accept and promote learning for the learners with barriers to learning and development.

KEYWORDS

- Barriers to learning and development
- Educators
- Inclusion
- Inclusive education
- Inclusive classroom
- Inclusive support programme
- Learners
- Learners' experiences
- Reading difficulties

LIST OF ACRONYMS

DNE	:	Department of National Education
DoE	:	Department of Education
ILP	:	Individual learning programmes
INSET	:	In-service education and training
LSEN	:	Learners with special education needs
NCESS	:	National Committee on Educational Support Services
NCSNET	:	National Commission on Special Educational Needs and Training
OBE	:	Outcomes-based education
PEN	:	Phoenix ELSEN Networking Group
RNCS	:	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SEN	:	Special educational needs
SPC	:	Special progress card
STT	:	School Support Team
TT	:	Transition Tech
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

A	Details of participants: grade 6 learners	40
B	Themes and categories	44

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Acknowledgment	ii
Declaration	iii
Summary	iv
Keywords	v
List of acronyms	vi
List of tables	vii

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, AIM, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND COURSE OF STUDY

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Aim of the investigation	3
1.2.1	Primary aim	3
1.2.2	Secondary aim	3
1.3	Statement of the problem	3
1.3.1	Primary research question	4
1.3.2	Secondary research question	4
1.4	Concept clarification	4
1.4.1	Inclusive education	4
1.4.2	Learners experiencing barriers to learning and development	5
1.4.3	Learning difficulty	6
1.4.4	Educator	6
1.5	Research design and research methodology	6
1.5.1	Research design	6
1.5.2	Research methodology	7
1.5.2.1	Sample	7
1.5.2.2	Data collection	7
1.5.2.3	Data analysis	8

1.6	Delimitation of the study	8
1.7	Course of study	9
1.8	Conclusion	9

CHAPTER TWO

A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1	Introduction	10
2.2	Inclusive education	12
2.2.1	What is inclusive education?	12
2.2.2	Rationale for education of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in inclusive classrooms	13
2.2.2.1	Historical background	13
2.2.2.2	Legal basis	14
2.2.2.3	Socio-political basis	15
2.3	Theoretical context and interpretation of assumptions underpinning provisioning for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development	16
2.3.1	Introduction	16
2.3.1.1	The medical model: a traditional perspective	16
2.3.1.2	The social model: a modern perspective	18
2.4	Barriers to learning and development	20
2.4.1	Socio-economic barriers	21
2.4.1.1	Poverty and underdevelopment	21
2.4.1.2	Lack of access to basic services	21
2.4.2	Social and emotional well-being of learners	21
2.4.2.1	Abuse	21
2.4.2.2	Conditions in wider society	22
2.4.2.3	Epidemics	22
2.4.3	Attitudes	22
2.4.4	Inflexible curriculum	22
2.4.5	Inappropriate and inadequate support services	23

2.4.6	Lack of human resources development strategies	23
2.4.7	Lack of protective legislation and policy	24
2.4.8	Language and communication	24
2.4.9	Lack of parental recognition and involvement	25
2.4.10	Inaccessible and unsafe built environment	25
2.5	The inclusive classroom	25
2.5.1	A positive learning environment	25
2.5.2	Classroom organization	26
2.5.3	The psycho-social environment	26
2.5.4	The inclusive support programme	27
2.6	The practice of inclusion	27
2.6.1	Types of inclusion	27
2.6.1.1	Full inclusion	27
2.6.1.2	Partial inclusion	28
2.6.2	Collaboration and teamwork	29
2.6.3	The curriculum	29
2.6.3.1	Learner-centred curriculum	29
2.6.3.2	Outcomes-based education (OBE)	30
2.6.3.3	Development of cognitive skills	30
2.7	Conclusion	31

CHAPTER THREE

	RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	32
3.1	Introduction	32
3.2	Aim of the investigation	32
3.2.1	Primary aim	32
3.2.2	Secondary aim	33
3.3	Statement of the problem	33
3.3.1	General orientation	33
3.3.2	Primary research question	33
3.3.3	Secondary research question	33

3.4	Research design	34
3.4.1	Qualitative research	34
3.4.2	Trustworthiness	34
3.5	Research methodology	36
3.5.1	Introduction	36
3.5.2	Literature review	36
3.5.3	Procedure	36
3.5.4	Sampling	37
3.5.5	Data collection	39
3.5.5.1	Unstructured interview	39
3.5.5.2	Observation	40
3.5.6	Data analysis	40
3.5.7	Ethical consideration	41
3.5.7.1	Informed consent	41
3.5.7.2	Confidentiality	42
3.5.7.3	Anonymity	42
3.6	Conclusion	42

CHAPTER FOUR

	RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF FINDINGS	43
4.1	Introduction	43
4.2	Results	43
4.2.1.	Theme 1: Learners' experiences in the inclusive class	44
4.2.1.1	Negative experiences	44
4.2.1.1.1	Labelled	44
4.2.1.1.2	Falsely accused	46
4.2.1.1.3	Excluded	47
4.2.1.2	Positive experiences	48
4.2.1.2.1	Acceptance	48
4.2.1.2.2	Enjoying special care and attention	49
4.2.1.2.3	Enjoying a wider circle of friends	51
4.2.2	Theme 2: The attitude of educators as experienced by learners	52

4.2.2.1	Educators are impatient with learners	52
4.2.2.2	Educators ignore and reject learners	54
4.2.2.3	Educators feel that learners cannot cope with work	55
4.2.3	Theme 3: Learners' feelings	56
4.2.3.1	Negative feelings	57
4.2.3.1.1	Angry, sad, fear and anxiety	57
4.2.3.1.2	Shy and worthless, lacking confidence and having a low self-esteem	58
4.2.3.2	Positive feelings	60
4.3.3.2.1	Happiness and appreciation	60
4.3	Conclusion	61

CHAPTER FIVE

	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	62
5.1	Introduction	62
5.2	Conclusions: Theme 1: Learners' experiences in the inclusive class	62
5.2.1	Negative experiences	63
5.2.1.1	Labelled	62
5.2.1.2	Falsely accused	62
5.2.1.3	Excluded	63
5.2.2	Positive experiences	63
5.2.2.1	Acceptance	63
5.2.2.2	Enjoying special care and attention	63
5.2.2.3	Enjoying a wider circle of friends	64
5.3	Conclusions: Theme 2: Attitude of educators	64
5.3.1	Educators are impatient with learners	64
5.3.2	Educators ignore and reject learners	64
5.3.3	Educators feel that learners cannot cope with work	65
5.4	Conclusions: Theme 3: Learners' feelings	65
5.4.1	Negative feelings	65
5.4.1.1	Angry, sad, fear and anxiety	65
5.4.1.2	Shy and worthless, lacking confidence and	65

having a low self-esteem	67
5.4.2 Positive feelings	67
5.4.2.1 Happiness and appreciation	67
5.5 Recommendations	
5.5.1 Support needed for learners to overcome barriers to learning and development	68
5.5.2 Adequate support provided for educators to change their attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning and development and to teach all learners effectively	68
5.5.3 Provision of emotional support for learners	69
5.6 Limitations of the study	70
5.7 Recommendations for further study	70
5.8 Conclusion	70
Bibliography	72
Appendix A	83
Appendix B	84
Appendix C	85
Appendix D	86

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL ORIENTATION, PROBLEM STATEMENT, AIM, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND COURSE OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In 2000, when rapid transformation was taking place in education in South Africa, the Department of Education and Culture put into practice its policy to abolish “special classes” (in which learners were segregated and labelled “slow learners”) in the mainstream schools and to adapt classes to cater for inclusive education in which learners experiencing barriers to learning and development were included. The “social model of disability” as explained by Peters (1993:27), states that it is assumed that some learners deviate from the norm in terms of ability to function in society. As a result learners received remediation by specialist and support services and societal filtering and educational tracking occurred. In turn they became the victims labelling as they were maintained in a sheltered position and were allocated inferior status.

Prior to 1996, the impact of apartheid on education remained most evident in the sector of special needs education. In addition to segregation of learners on the basis of race, it also occurred on the basis of disability. Not all learners with disabilities could gain easy access to education because the few special schools that existed applied rigid criteria for admission. As a result, learners experiencing barriers to learning from severely economically impoverished backgrounds did not qualify for education. Evidence of inequalities and imbalances between special schools as a result of decades of segregation and under-resourcing of black schools has continued into post apartheid education. Therefore inclusive education is deemed necessary to ensure that learners with disabilities are not marginalized and that schools function to eradicate such inequalities and discriminatory practices.

The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001a:10) points out that the National Disability Strategy condemns the segregation of persons with disabilities from the mainstream of

✓

society. It advocates and promotes full participation of persons with disabilities in society, i.e. in the workplace, in differing social environments, in politics and in sport.

Inclusion and special education needs emphasized in the Education White Paper 6, argues that all children and youth can learn and need support; and that all learners differ and have different learning needs which are equally valued. It is about creating enabling “education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners, and about empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning” (DoE, 2001a:18).

Therefore, the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001a:5) recommends an education system that promotes education for all through the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning, and correcting past educational practices in which a number of learners had dropped out of learning because of the inability of the education and training system to accommodate the diversity of learning needs. Fostering inclusive educational programmes would enable all learners to participate in the education process, thereby developing and extending their potential and allowing them to participate as full members of society.

In keeping with the National Policy on inclusive education and the policy framework outlined in Education White Paper 6, the school at which I am employed, became proactive in implementing a programme in April 2000 to include learners experiencing barriers to learning and development into the inclusive classes. The curriculum and assessment programme were modified and adapted to meet the needs of learners with specific learning disabilities and offered support to maximize their participation in the school’s programme and to minimize barriers to learning. My role as an educator for learners with special educational needs (LSEN) also changed to that of a support educator to both learners experiencing barriers to learning and development and mainstream educators into whose classes these learners were placed. Over time, I observed that these learners who had been making steady progress in reading while in the segregated class, i.e. the separate unit in which I offered remedial lessons to correct reading difficulties,

had regressed when they were placed in the inclusive class. Being the chairperson of the Phoenix ELSEN Networking Group (PEN), a support group for LSEN educators in mainstream settings and special schools, and because of my interest in compiling and refining Individual Learning Programmes (ILP) for learners experiencing learning barriers, I decided to explore these learners' experiences in the inclusive class.

1.2 AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION

Against the background mentioned above, the following primary and secondary aims were identified:

1.2.1 Primary aim

The research aims to explore and describe how grade 6 learners with reading difficulties experience schooling, in particular the challenges faced by them in being included in the inclusive class.

1.2.2 Secondary aim

The study intends to use the findings towards formulating guidelines in the form of recommendations to improve the experiences of grade 6 learners with reading difficulties in an inclusive classroom.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Consultative Paper No.1 on Special Education, a forerunner of Education White Paper 6, advocates inclusion "based on the principle that learning disabilities arise from the education system rather than the learner" (DoE, 1999:12). The research bears in mind that school management teams and educators are becoming aware that all learners have the ability to learn and develop and that it is not the learner who is failing to cope but that it is the education system and its practices that fail to address the diverse needs and

differences of learners. Traditional thinking associates disability with impairment whereby the individual is viewed as helpless and dependent. Access to education is actually impaired as a result of barriers, which reflect a deficient system and not a deficient person (Naicker, 1999:31).

To achieve the research aims, the following research questions were answered:

1.3.1 Primary research question

What are the experiences of grade 6 learners with reading difficulties in the inclusive classroom?

1.3.2 Secondary research questions

What guidelines in the form of recommendations can be formulated to improve the experiences of grade 6 learners with reading difficulties in an inclusive classroom?

1.4 CONCEPT CLARIFICATIONS

1.4.1 Inclusive education

Mainstreaming, integration and inclusion are three concepts that are often used interchangeably. Mainstreaming involves integrating learners with barriers to learning and development into mainstream schools. Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (1999:7), mention that mainstreaming began in the 1970s and 1980s by selectively integrating learners experiencing barriers to learning and development into mainstream classrooms, depending on the needs of each learner and the specific demands of the class.

Integration is linked to mainstreaming. According to Nes (1999:116), integration is defined as “belonging, participation and responsibility”. Every child irrespective of race, culture, gender or disability should be granted an equitable and suitable education,

preferably in a local school. The principle of integration in a school context suggests opportunities for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development and other members of the learning community to work together in a co-operative environment; to address prejudices, to identify differences as a rich resource that can be beneficial to all and to nurture respect for oneself and each other (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:47). Integration encourages and facilitates access to the curriculum and access to learning, and attempts to reduce all barriers to learning in the classroom. In this way, learners with special needs are given adequate opportunities to realize their potential (DoE, 2002:139).

Inclusive education can be defined as a system of education that responds to the diverse needs of learners (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:19). It implies acknowledging that all children, youth and adults can learn, and need support. It acknowledges and respects the differences in learners, viz. age, gender, ethnicity, language, class and/or disability status (DoE, 2001a:16). “It encourages maximizing the participation of all learners in the culture and curriculum of schools and identifying and minimizing barriers to learning” (DoE, 2002:294). It is therefore a process whereby learners with differing needs participate fully in the school curriculum with support and encouragement.

For the purpose of this study, the concept of inclusive education involves more extensive participation of grade 6 learners with reading difficulties in age-appropriate activities with non-disabled peers in inclusive classroom settings.

1.4.2 Learners experiencing barriers to learning and development

For the purpose of this research, “learners experiencing barriers to learning and development” refers to grade 6 learners with reading difficulties who have been placed in the inclusive classroom and who are removed at times from the inclusive class for educational support from the support educator. LSEN refers to learners who are experiencing difficulties in learning and/or who may be experiencing particular barriers to learning and development and who are placed in segregated school settings such as

special schools or who prior to the advocacy of inclusive education in 2001 were placed in special classes in mainstream schools (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:8,9).

1.4.3 Reading Difficulty

Reading difficulty is a specific language-based disorder, characterized by difficulties in single word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing (Moss, 1995:25). Difficulties may be experienced in perceptual, conceptual, gross and fine motor skills and other activities. Reading difficulties are viewed as intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be of a central nervous system dysfunction or through extrinsic factors such as the environment or social interaction. Difficulties occur in sorting out sounds and symbols and recognizing whole words. In this study, “learning disability” particularly refers to difficulties in reading.

1.4.4 Educator

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1993:77) point out that an educator is one who educates, who is responsible for leading the child into adulthood. Educators who teach in inclusive classes consider the importance of valuing differences amongst the learners and reconstruct the classroom and modify the curriculum to meet all the learners’ needs (DoE, 2002:138). For the purpose of this research, “educator” refers to grade 6 mainstream educators into whose classes learners with reading difficulties have been included.

1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 Research design

A qualitative research design was used in this study. As pointed out by Cresswell (1998:15), qualitative research is a process of enquiry in which social and human problems are explored. The researcher decided to use a qualitative approach in order to

explore and describe learners' experiences through interviews to record data in the participants' own words. Qualitative research seeks to understand human behaviour through observing and communicating with people. It allows the researcher to explore and understand the meaning of the experiences from the viewpoint of the learner being interviewed. Learners' individual and collective social actions, thoughts and perceptions are described and analyzed (Eisner, 1998:33).

To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative research, the four criteria, truth-value, consistency, applicability and neutrality, as suggested by Guba (Poggenpoel, 1998:348-350), will be adhered to.

1.5.2 Research methodology

1.5.2.1 Sample

The sample for this research was grade 6 learners, inclusive of boys and girls, all manifesting reading difficulties and who were previously in a segregated setting. Presently all learners are in an inclusive class. Of these grade 6 learners, those who were available and willing to participate in the study were interviewed.

1.5.2.2 Data collection

The research utilized unstructured interviews to collect data. Responses were recorded on a tape recorder and transcribed accounts of the interviews formed the primary data (Greeff, 2002:299,305). Parents were informed of interviews in order to attain their permission to interview their children and a verbal consent was recorded at the beginning of the interview. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured.

Data collection included observation of learners during a reading and comprehension lesson in class. The researcher's concern was that learners interviewed may not be able to explain, to elaborate on ideas or to express themselves clearly; hence the need to conduct

unstructured interviews (to allow the researcher to probe initial responses and/or prompt responses) to enable data to be rich, meaningful and valid. One open-ended question was used to allow participants to express themselves freely (Greeff, 2002:302).

1.5.2.3 Data analysis

The data was analyzed through the integrated process of organizing, analyzing and interpreting the data. The researcher used open coding, a process of classifying data into parts (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993:486). The data will be analyzed, using Tesch's descriptive analysis technique to identify themes and categories (Poggenpoel, 1998:343-344). The findings were recontextualised, using literature and existing theories to support or refute the findings (Poggenpoel, 1998:342).

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The research considers the place of the rights model in the study of disability and its impact on the changing trends in education, especially in the shift to inclusive education. Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:76) mention that the outcomes for inclusive education, and outcomes-based education are congruent. They form one cohesive, integrated framework for education. Inclusive education, presently a critical issue in the shift to transformation in South African education, is discussed in this research.

1.7 COURSE OF STUDY

Chapter one: The introduction focuses on the background and the rationale of the study, the research problem and the aims of the research. This chapter also includes a description of the research methodology and the course of the research.

Chapter two: The theoretical framework in which inclusive education is placed is explained. This chapter explains the definition of inclusive education and the rationale for education of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.

Chapter three: In this chapter the research design and methodology is explained. This includes the formulation of the research questions, the stating of the aims, the sample, the data collection procedure and the analysis thereof.

Chapter four: The results and interpretations of the data will be discussed in this chapter. The findings will be recontextualised through a literature control to support/ refute the findings.

Chapter five: Conclusions and recommendations of the research will be discussed. Recommendations for further research in this regard will be suggested and limitations of the study will also be pointed out.

1.8 CONCLUSION

This study endeavours to explore the experiences of grade 6 learners experiencing barriers to learning, especially in reading, in the inclusive class. The aim is that through the findings, guidelines will be formulated in the form of recommendations to improve the experiences of these learners in the inclusive classroom.

CHAPTER TWO

A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Historically and in terms of current educational trends, the issue of Special Educational Needs in South Africa and the provision of specialized educational support services have fallen behind the estimated need. Special Education needs provision is also a process of apartheid, where the segregation of learners on the basis of race was extended to segregation on the basis of disability. The previous education system embraced the principles of segregation and exclusive education policies regarding learners with special education needs (DoE, 2001a:8). It is recognized by the current ministry of education that different learning needs arise from various factors such as physical, mental, sensory, neurological development impairments, psychosocial disturbances and/or differences in intellectual ability, context or socio-economic deprivation (DoE, 2001a:7). Understanding the context enables one to understand information and is therefore the first step to understanding new developments in education and the movement towards inclusive education (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:5). When learners' needs are not met at any point in time, they may fail to learn effectively or be excluded from the learning system. The Education White Paper 1 (DoE, 1995) reported concerns about the unsatisfactory educational experiences of learners with special education needs, including learners within mainstream schools whose educational needs were inadequately accommodated.

It is against this background that in October 1996, the National Commission on Special Educational Needs and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Educational Support Services (NCESS) were appointed by the Ministry of Education. These committees were tasked to investigate and make recommendations on aspects of "Special Needs and Support Services" in education and training in South Africa. In the light of their findings, the two bodies recommended that the education and training system should promote "education for all" by fostering and developing inclusive and

supportive centres for learning, thereby encouraging equal access to a single, inclusive education system, access to the curriculum, equity, redress and community responsiveness (Naicker, 1999:43). A Consultative Paper No.1 On Special Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DoE, 1999), advocated inclusion based on the principle that barriers to learning and development arise from the education system rather than the learner. Proponents of inclusive education mention that the goal of inclusion in schools is to create a world in which people become knowledgeable and supportive of all other people. This alternative to segregation is not to place learners in heterogeneous groups and ignore their differences but to build inclusive school communities that acknowledge differences and meet all learners' needs within a common context (Stainback, Stainback, East & Sapon-Shevin, 1994:487).

Bearing the above in mind the research aims to explore and describe the experiences of grade 6 learners with reading difficulties in the inclusive class, and the researcher heeds the critical voice of learners who are themselves affected by the experiences explored. Corbett (2001:7) argues that it is only possible to evaluate the quality of inclusive practices if the learners' experiences are at the centre of the research framework. Theories of disability should incorporate the perception of people with disability themselves in order to understand the 'other' in their own terms. The learners' experiences are critical if one is to re-articulate ideas of justice and equality (Peters, 1993:20).

In this chapter, the researcher presents a literature review based on discussion documents, research reports and other sources that are relevant to the discussion. It must be noted that inclusive education in South Africa is in its infancy stage (a 20-year plan has been proposed that began in 2001), therefore very little, in this regard has been done in South Africa and literature is limited with regard to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development that are in inclusive classes. The research involves a critical element of study especially relating to inclusive classroom practices that can be shared and adopted by other educators (Corbett, 2001:5).


2.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.2.1 What is inclusive education?

The principle governing inclusive education acknowledges that all children and youth can learn and need support. Therefore inclusive education means the right to education for all (DoE, 2001a:6) in a single education system. Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:19) define inclusive education as a system that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners, and refers to the operational definition of an integrated system as spelt out in the NCSNET/NCESS reports that state that the separate systems of education (“special” and “ordinary”) should be integrated to form one system that is able to recognize and respond to the needs of all learners. This single system should be structured, irrespective of the learning context, to provide opportunities for facilitating integration and inclusion of the learner in all aspects of life. The White Paper on special educational needs advocates the right to education for all learners. There are strong educational, social and moral grounds for education of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in the inclusive classes (DoE, 2001:34). Inclusive education can therefore be explained as a process enabling a single system of education to facilitate the inclusion of all learners and to ensure that their needs are equally met.

Inclusion can be closely linked to the principle of comprehensive education, which implies that enrolment at a school should reflect the composition of the community through its social, cultural, religious and intellectual diversity. It also implies the adoption of a curriculum that recognizes and values the difference and diversity of its learners (Naicker, 1999:87; Booth, 2000:7) and therefore organizes learning in a way that respects the learners’ varied abilities. More importantly, inclusive education is based on the principle of equality, of access to resources so that all learners’ needs are equally met (McDonnell, 2000:23).

“The vision proposed by the NCSNET/NCESS is that of an education and training system that promotes education for all and fosters the development of inclusive and



supportive centres of learning that enable all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they can develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society” (DoE, 1997b:1). Inclusive education therefore involves a process of reform and restructuring of the school as a whole with the aim of ensuring that all learners have access to a whole range of educational and social opportunities, that include the curriculum, assessment and reporting to parents, pedagogy and classroom practice, sport and recreational activities (Mittler, 2000:2). It is a fact that all learners are different, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status and therefore will have different learning needs. Schools are encouraged through whole school development planning (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:62-65) and through curriculum development and implementation to create cultures that ensure full participation of all learners (DoE, 2001a: 6,7; Flavell, 2002:10-12; Mittler, 2000:113).

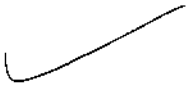
Therefore inclusion may be described as a process for and outcome of understanding, acceptance and valuing of differences amongst learners and youth. York-Burr, Schultz, Doyle, Kronberg, and Crossett (1996:92) state that: “It is potentially both a process and an outcome for achieving social justice and equity in a society.”

2.2.2 Rationale for education of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in inclusive classes

The implementation of a framework for education for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development is guided by historical, legal and socio-political principles discussed below.

2.2.2.1 Historical background

The South African education system in the apartheid era practised and perpetuated inequalities along racial lines. Disadvantaged learners received inadequate or no provision in terms of learning site infrastructure, post provisioning and curriculum accessibility. The majority of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development



were either mainstreamed by default or 'dropped out' because the education system could not accommodate them. Special schools, special classes and mainstream schools were provided for according to race group enrolment, resulting in large disparities in resources such as learning-site infrastructure, staffing and curriculum accessibility (DoE, 2001a:9; Naicker, 1999:21,36-37).

An historical perspective in understanding past exclusionary policies and practices is crucial in reminding us that current practices are neither "natural, inevitable nor unchangeable" and that key concepts such as "retarded", "special educational needs" and "learning difficulties", examples of terminology that are defined and still applied within particular professional discourses, highlight "individualized and deficit models of disability" (Armstrong, Armstrong & Barton, 2000:3). Armstrong, *et al.* (2000:4) mention that although historical understanding may not guarantee the development of a more socially just and equal society, it can through informed awareness of the past perspectives and practices enable us to ensure that the struggle for change continues.

2.2.2.2 Legal basis



The concept of inclusion is a critical theme in the new democratic government's education policies. The South African Constitution and the following Acts and Policies mandate us to provide education that is accessible to all learners:

- South African Constitution Act, 108 (RSA, 1996a:12): "Everyone has the right to basic education."
- S A Schools Act, 84 (DoE, 1996b:23): " a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, and provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners."
- KwaZulu-Natal School Education Act, 3 (DoE, 1996a:3): "Education be provided in accordance with the aptitude, ability, needs and interests of the learner."
- National Policy Act of 1996, Act 27 (DoE, 1996b:7) (Assessment Policy): "It is important that learners who are likely to experience barriers to learning and development are identified early, assessed and provided with learning support."

- National Policy Act of 1996, Act 27 (DoE, 1996b:9) (Admission Policy): “ The rights and wishes of learners with special education needs must be taken into account at the admission of the learners to an ordinary public school.”
- Education White Paper No.6 on Special Needs Education (DoE, 2001a:10): “ The Education and Training system must change to accommodate the full range of learners.”

The International Salamanca Statement (1994) proclaimed that: “ ...regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all...” (UNESCO, 1994:ix).

Despite the difficulties associated with the implementation of inclusive education policies in the South African education system, Florian (1998:108) mentions that there is a great deal of philosophical agreement about the rights of learners experiencing barriers to learning to equal educational opportunity.

2.2.2.3 Socio-political basis

The 1994 elections and the new South African government effected changes such as democratization, equality, non-discrimination, equity and redress. The government’s commitment to transform the education system is evident in the new legislative and policy infrastructure, which is conducive to reconstruction and development (Naicker, 1999:35,36). This has resulted in the formation of a single and unified education system with provisions to meet the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, especially those who have been historically marginalized and excluded (DoE, 2001a:10). The aim is to minimize, eradicate and prevent barriers to learning and development that the learners experience. In the social context, placement of learners in special classes may be viewed as segregation. Byrnes (1990:345) states for a child experiencing difficulties, segregated programming will emphasize differences as it promotes dependence and lessens self-sufficiency. When learners are segregated into

special programmes they are denied opportunities to show the other members of the community that they can function in the 'real world' and to enable their non-disabled peers to know or understand them. This form of social discrimination has a major effect on the opportunities they have later as adults and how they function in society.

Those who espouse the political paradigm believe that obstacles to education, employment and personal relations are not due to inherent incapacities but exist because of the physical and attitudinal barriers that are socially and politically constructed by the environment (Peters, 1993: 31; Bothma, Gravett & Swart, 2000:201-202).

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND INTERPRETATIONS OF ASSUMPTIONS UNDERPINNING PROVISIONING FOR LEARNERS EXPERIENCING BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

2.3.1 Introduction

Education for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, often referred to as Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) has for a long time been conceptualized in a number of different ways. For the purpose of this study the researcher critically discusses a traditional perspective (the medical model) and an opposing perspective (the social model, sometimes referred to as the rights model).

2.3.1.1 The medical model: a traditional perspective

The medical model is the most commonly cited explanation of special educational needs. Impairment or disability is not perceived as social but always hereditary (Sandow, 1994:4). The medical paradigm is a diagnostic prescriptive approach that concentrates on the individual at the expense of context. Therefore in diagnosis no attention is paid to external contextual factors. Learners are labelled diseased and are separated on the basis of diagnosis into separate programmes where they are prepared for a place in society as handicapped people (Peters, 1993:28; Naicker, 1999:47). Traditionally, learners with

special needs (LSEN) were admitted to special schools according to their specific disabilities. This school of thought was informed and characterized by segregationist policies. Therefore these learners were seen as learners with problems that had to be treated and rectified (DoE, 2001a:11).

Peters (1993:28) mentions two characteristics of the medical perception of disability. Firstly, individual differences are collectivized, as specific differences of individuals such as their interests, motivations and adaptability are ignored and their school experiences become a matter of fitting a prescribed characteristic to a task. Secondly, learners with special needs and their families must passively accept what professionals prescribe for them. They are made to feel fortunate to be included and to be recipients of such service.

Previous education support services have traditionally focused on this deficit approach wherein educational difficulties are explained solely in terms of learner deficits. In South African education, the medical deficit approach has led to direct support services to only a few advantaged schools and communities and to the exclusion of many environmentally and economically disadvantaged learners who had equal rights to such support (Engelbrecht, 2000:77). Many professionals still work from the medical model view that learners with disabilities are different and therefore need 'special provisions/treatment' to rectify the problem within them (Brown, 1999:38,39).

There are various criticisms levelled against the medical model especially when considering the rights and needs of learners. It is viewed as narrow and reductionist because patients are viewed in terms of 'pathology' (Reed & Watson, 1994:59); it overlooks the rights of the client, with parents and patients assuming passive and recipient roles and it promotes helplessness (Chewning & Sleath, 1996:91,92; Stambolovic, 1996:302); its language of persuasion, "the doctor knows best", excludes the person with special needs' rights, wants and integration in mainstream social practices (Fulcher, 1995:19) and a common explanation for failure is that there is something wrong with the individual (Naicker, 1999:79). Bailey and Barton (1999:84) mention that a major limitation caused by the use of medical labels for learners with

special needs is that educators may presume that the learner's medical condition is unrelated to education. Therefore the learner does not need any specific intervention by the educator as other professionals are treating the learner.

Ballard and McDonald (1999:169) point out that in restructuring schools to cater for inclusive education as a political strategy or to satisfy educational legislature, may seem likely to maintain segregational thinking through "medical model labeling of learners with special needs as pathologically different." Labelling learners with 'special educational needs' tends to categorize their status intimating deficit and failure in learners. This categorization can direct attention away from shortcomings in teaching towards a discourse around resources and needs rather than learners' preferences and rights (Fulcher, 1995: 19,20.)

2.3.1.2 The social model: a modern perspective

The rights or social model proposes that society and its institutions are oppressive, discriminating and disabling and there must be a change in focus to remove barriers to participation in society and to changing institutions, regulations and attitudes of people that promote exclusion (Mittler, 2000:3). It is suggested that barriers to learning and participation arise through the interaction between learners and their contexts, i.e. the people, policies, institutions, cultures, social and economical circumstances affecting their lives (Booth, 2000:3).

In the context of education in South Africa, the restructuring of schools along inclusive lines is a reflection of the rights model in action (Mittler, 2000:3). In the social paradigm, learners are no longer categorized as pathologically different that need 'curing' but are perceived as dignified human beings, each with unique potential, needs and abilities (DoE, 2001a:11; Engelbrecht , *et al.*, 1999:14-15).

Although inclusive education is an exciting development in the South African education system, the debate on the viability of inclusive education as a social paradigm shift shows that there are many problems to overcome. There is still a prevalence of labelling in

schools such as “learners with special needs”, “learning disabled”, and “learning impaired” implying that these learners show limited functioning in terms of ability to perform academic and social roles and expectations. As a result learners receive remediation by specialist staff through diagnosis and prescription. Therefore, educational practitioners still impose such labels on persons experiencing barriers to learning and development (Peters, 1993:27). In the light of the above statement one may become suspicious of the social discourse as one questions whether the rights of learners are really considered. Learners are still marginalized with a “greater variety of handicaps” when considering “the increased number of professionals engaged in teaching, testing, managing, examining and supporting them has then an interest in preserving ‘the special needs industry’ irrespective of the needs of learners” (Sandow, 1994:9). This argument is further highlighted by Peters (1993:30) who mentions that inclusive education, as presently practised in South African public schools, provides support programmes for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development through partial integration or in special classes. Learners are removed for all or part of the day from mainstream classrooms and provided with specialized teaching by special class educators or remedial educators. Although the aim is to prepare learners to re-enter the mainstream with functional, social and vocational skills, this rarely occurs because learners are trapped in an inferior status. This happens because learners are kept in a programme in which they never seem to ‘catch up’ with the rest of their mainstream peers.

The move towards the ‘new’ social model, sometimes referred to as the rights model, takes up a different stance from a political position that emphasizes equality and full citizenship. The right of every individual (including people with disabilities and those marginalized) to full participation in society is increasingly being recognized (Green, 2001:5). Therefore, the shift in discourse is to bring the social model closer to the rights discourse (Naicker, 1999:48). It stresses equal opportunity, self-reliance, independence (wants rather than needs) as argued in the Salamanca Statement:

“Regular schools with the 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, 1994:17).

Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001:213) make reference to a summary in the White Paper on the Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997), which states that if society cannot cater for people with disabilities, then the society must change to allow for these people to play a full participatory role in that society. The new model of education (DoE, 2001b:11) claims that barriers to learning cause breakdown in learning and those learners can learn effectively when these barriers are identified or removed and when learners are assisted to overcome them. Diversity must be recognized as part of a normal society and it can be accommodated in an inclusive education system (DoE, 1997a:12).

The purpose of discussing these two paradigms is twofold: firstly, to enable educationists to examine education practices and note that “Learning difficulties are not to be perceived as residing within learners, but equally if not more, within the learning system itself” (Green, 2001:13), and secondly, to describe possible causal relations between education policy and education practice. It underscores the need for change when dealing with special needs and inclusive education (Booth, 2000:4-5).

2.4 BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In addressing the issues on barriers to learning and development that have emerged from the NCSNET/NCESS (DoE, 1997b) reports, the emphasis is not on the deficit of the learner but what barriers are being experienced by the learner and how these can be addressed. The NCSNET/NCESS (DoE, 1997b) reports made clear recommendations regarding the barriers to learning. Schools are challenged to develop barrier-free teaching and learning environments (Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht, 1999:45). This section outlines briefly the main barriers to learning and development that can negatively impact on teaching and learning. The following factors are pertinent to all schooling but also the school setting in which the study has been conducted, and need to be addressed if inclusive teaching and practices are to minimize/prevent such barriers.

2.4.1 Socio-economic barriers

2.4.1.1 Poverty and underdevelopment

Learners from impoverished economic backgrounds lack basic needs such as nutrition and shelter. These learners tend to stay away from school frequently and when at school lack concentration when learning (DoE, 1997b:13). When learners experience breakdown in learning, the educator needs to assess what barriers are causing the problem. Naicker (1999:88,95) cautions that inherent factors within the learner should not be overemphasized but should be considered together with environmental factors such as the sociological impact of poverty on learning and its concomitant ills.

2.4.1.2 Lack of access to basic services

The NCSNET/NCESS reports indicate that lack of early intervention facilities and basic services such as lack of basic resources, adequate medical treatment and access to schools rendered many learners ill-equipped to participate effectively in the learning process. Lack of access to other support services led to increased impairment and exclusion to learners in integrated settings (DoE, 1997b:13).

2.4.2 Social and emotional well-being of learners

Certain factors and conditions which may arise impact negatively on the learners' social and emotional well-being thereby affecting their learning, include:

2.4.2.1 Abuse

Physical, emotional and sexual abuse is not only physically and emotionally damaging but may cause the learner to experience long periods of absence and eventually 'drop out' of the education system (DoE, 1997b:14).

2.4.2.2 Conditions in wider society

Learners may be placed at risk through conditions in the wider society, e.g. violence, crime, unrest, migratory residency (domestic disruptions), high levels of mobility (due to urbanization, eviction, foster care, etc) (DoE, 1997b:14).

2.4.2.3 Epidemics

Problems such as natural disasters/epidemics, e.g. currently HIV and AIDS, have a significant impact on learners through the loss of parents and through death/chronic illness (DoE, 1997b: 14). Being infected and affected is a barrier which affects many learners.

2.4.3 Attitudes

Discriminatory attitudes resulting from prejudices manifest themselves as barriers to learning when such attitudes are directed towards learners in the education system. Such negative attitudes manifest themselves in labelling of learners and stigmatization (DoE, 1997b:14). These attitudes can negatively affect and incorrectly inform decision-making in educational practices. Swart and Pettipher (2001:41) and Bothma, *et al.* (2000:202-203) state that inclusion of learners is an issue related to educators' attitudes. If repressed and unquestioned, negative attitudes can be counterproductive and detrimental to efforts to implement inclusive education.

2.4.4 Inflexible curriculum

One of the serious barriers to learning and development is an inflexible curriculum that does not address diverse needs of the learners. Aspects of an inflexible curriculum are teaching styles and pace of teaching, choice of materials/resources/equipment and incorrect assessment tools and skills (Flavell, 2002:72).

An Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) approach shows compatibility with inclusive education, as curriculum developers should establish outcomes for learners in relation to their needs (Naicker, 2000:13). Based on the following premises, OBE is a useful teaching tool for implementing inclusive education (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:21) because all learners can perform successfully but not at the same pace. Each successful learning experience leads to more success. Correct implementations at schools are pivotal in creating the conditions for success at schools. Educators ought to develop competence to identify and respond to learners' needs and to design flexible programmes (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:51).

2.4.5 Inappropriate and inadequate support services

The NCSNET/NCESS reports unfold that in some learning contexts, inappropriate or inadequate support services may contribute to breakdown in learning and exclusion (DoE, 1997b:17). For example, an inadequate support service may be provided where the focus is on the learner rather than addressing the inadequacy in the system. This implies that barriers to learning may be caused by the system that is unable to adapt or meet the needs of the specific learner (Hegarty, 1994:126).

2.4.6 Lack of human resource development strategies

Important to resource development is ongoing training of educators, service providers and other human resources. There is a marked absence of such training and it is often fragmented and unsustainable (Hay, *et al.*, 2001:214). This leads to insecurity, low self-esteem and uncertainty on the part of the educator. Furthermore there is a lack of innovative practices in the classroom and adequate design of learning programmes to meet learners' needs that lead to resistance and harmful attitudes towards learners who experience barriers to learning (DoE, 1997b:19).

Research on educator preparedness for inclusive education revealed that many educators bear negative attitudes towards the policy of education as laid down in the Education

White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001a). Educators need suitable in-service education and training (INSET) to gain the necessary skills, knowledge and values to deal with learners of varying abilities and diverse needs in the classroom (Bothma, *et al.*, 2000:204).

2.4.7 Lack of protective legislation and policy

Where legislation or policy fails to protect learners from discrimination or perpetuate inequalities in the system, it may directly or indirectly facilitate barriers to learning (DoE, 1997b:18; Booth, 2000:3-4). The level and pace of the inclusive education process in South Africa will differ in various provinces because of disparity in resources. Because of poor human resources development, some provinces may take a longer period to build effective support systems, while other provinces' initial support systems still have to be built prior to the formal introduction of an inclusive system. Meanwhile, a large number of learners are being mainstreamed by default (Naicker, 1999:55).

2.4.8 Language and communication

A further barrier arising from the curriculum is the medium of teaching and learning. Because many learners are attending schools of multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-lingual backgrounds, teaching and learning for many learners take place through a language that is not their first language. Therefore these learners may be disadvantaged by linguistic differences and difficulties that contribute to learning breakdown. Many second language learners find it difficult to understand the language of instruction and to communicate with the educator and their peers in inclusive classes and are often excluded from full participation in classroom activities. Furthermore, second language learners become subjected to discrimination, lack of interaction between cultural peers, and low expectations and do not enjoy appropriate support mechanisms from educators (Armstrong, *et al.*, 2000:93).

2.4.9 Lack of parental recognition and involvement

It is necessary to involve parents and the broader community in the teaching and learning process for effective learning and development of their children. Where parents are not given the recognition or where their participation is not encouraged or where parents are unable to participate, effective learning is threatened and hindered.

2.4.10 Inaccessible and unsafe built environment

Inaccessibility is evident where schools are physically inaccessible to learners, educators and members of the community with physical disabilities such as the physically handicapped who use wheelchairs or where they are in places unsafe for the blind and deaf learners (Feldman & Gordon, 2001:135). Many of these learners, especially those from deep rural areas, do not have the means to be transported to other schools that are safe and equipped to provide for their needs. Therefore they are excluded from gaining an education.

2.5 THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

In an inclusive classroom, learning programmes are adjusted and adapted to enable learners of differing needs and abilities to work together (Flavell, 2002:7). This new concept requires mainstream educators to accept responsibility for a diverse range of learners and a classroom perspective that embraces this diversity as a means of providing positive opportunities for learning through the development of new teaching and learning approaches (Jenkins, 1997:141). It also means that the classroom must be organized in such a way to create a positive learning environment.

2.5.1 A positive learning environment

It is of importance that the inclusive classroom reflects a positive, friendly and supportive learning environment with many opportunities for learning. Learners, because of their

diverse needs and abilities, should be actively engaged, with a good deal of time for social interaction and the freedom to make choices about what they want to work on (DoE, 2002:139). An inclusive classroom also offers many opportunities for support in learning. Corbett (2001:25) mentions that inclusive learning demonstrates to learners that they can learn and can be offered support in understanding how they learn. Difficulties can be supported in the inclusive class through a partnership between regular and special education. Support service personnel such as speech therapists, occupational therapists can work with inclusive class educators to develop programmes and instructional strategies for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development (Jenkinson, 1997:143).

2.5.2 Classroom Organization

Inclusive classrooms accommodate flexibility and co-operative methods of teaching/learning, i.e. sufficient space, arrangement of desks and chairs to encourage group work and accessibility to resources and equipment (Engelbrecht *et. al.*, 1999:50). Learning often happens in small groups with peer support, co-operative learning activities and individualized instruction. In an inclusive learning environment, various practices enhance the development of self, relationships with others and awareness of the environment. Some of these practices are peer modelling (modelling socially acceptable behaviour), peer tutoring (one-to-one instruction encouraging immediate response and feedback) and buddy system (providing support for social development) (Eloff, 2001:67; Flavell, 2002:12).

2.5.3 The psycho-social environment

An inclusive classroom must nurture the personal, cognitive and social development of all learners. The focus is on valuing individuals, fostering a happy school culture and ensuring that learning is a positive experience for all learners. Inclusion in the classroom means that educators consider the needs of all learners, particularly those whose vulnerability is due to circumstances, barriers to learning and development or learning

needs, yet enable the learners to come to school, feeling happy to be in school, having fun and learning with one's friends (Alderson, 1999:44).

In the inclusive classroom all learners should be encouraged to feel self-worth and self-respect through their own efforts and achievements. This notion is aptly expressed by O'Brien (2000:5) as "inclusive learning is grounded in who you are as a person, your sense of worth and the contribution you can make to the community and in the future. It is also grounded in how you learn." Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:72) mention that inclusive classrooms should foster acceptance, tolerance and caring in all learners. They must be encouraged to take risks and be prepared to make mistakes without the fear of being ridiculed or reprimanded, thereby providing a safe and supportive atmosphere.

2.5.4 The inclusive support programme

With the advocacy of inclusive education and the abolishment of the special class, a support programme aligned to the principles of Education White Paper 6 (DoE 2001a) was implemented at the school in which I teach. The programme involved the placing of all learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in an inclusive class to follow the school's curriculum. The inclusive programme may be classified as partial inclusion (2.6.1.2) because the support educator, when dealing with learners' specific barriers to learning and development, offers the class educator support programmes designed for these learners to implement in their classes. The support programme includes learners experiencing barriers to learning and development being removed from the inclusive class for a short duration for evaluation of their reading development and progress.

2.6 THE PRACTICE OF INCLUSION

2.6.1 Types of inclusion

2.6.1.1 Full inclusion

Mittler (2000:2) points out that inclusion involves a process of reforming and restructuring the school to ensure that all learners can have access to a whole range of learning and social opportunities. Inclusive practice involves restructuring of the curriculum, assessment, recording and reporting of learners' achievements, grouping of learners within schools and classrooms, classroom practice and recreational opportunities, thus ensuring that all learners regardless of abilities or disabilities are able to benefit through full participation.

Full inclusion also implies that all educators are responsible for the education of all learners. Therefore in preparedness for inclusive education, Hay, *et al.* (2001:213) motivate that all educators be appropriately prepared for inclusive practices and continuing professional development to teach in an inclusive classroom. The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001a:18) postulates that classroom educators will be the primary resource for achieving the goals of inclusive education. This involves the training of educators to improve their skills and knowledge and develop new ones in dealing with the practice of inclusion. Thus, teaching in inclusive classrooms will include multi-level classroom instruction, lessons with varying strategies and techniques that are responsive to individual learner needs, co-operative learning, curriculum enrichment and programmes dealing with learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.

2.6.1.2 Partial inclusion

Although a learner is placed in an inclusive classroom, he/she is offered support that is planned and delivered with a learning support aide or another educator in the class. An alternative practice in partial inclusion takes the form of planning between the class educator and a special needs educator or remedial educator, who provides alternative strategies or approaches to dealing with individual learners. The nature and intensity of support will vary from learner to learner and will differ for a particular learner throughout the day. In some cases the learner may be removed for a short duration from the inclusive class by the support educator for individual support as the need arises.

The practice of inclusion is in line with the learner-centred approach to learning and teaching. It encourages the development of the learners' strengths and empowers and enables them to participate actively and critically in the learning process. The Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001b:19) states that such an approach involves identifying and overcoming the cause of barriers to learning and development.

2.6.2 Collaboration and teamwork

Collaboration can be explained as collaborative planning that includes exchanging and sharing information, joint responsibility and accountability, thereby creating interdependence and making unique contributions (Bradley, King-Sears & Tessier-Switlick, 1997:72). In inclusive practice, collaboration encompasses educators, principals, administrators, professional support personnel, parents and learners. Inclusive approaches to practice are based on some form of educator collaboration and teamwork, ranging from consultation and support teams to ongoing collaborative relationships to bring about changes to the curriculum and create a positive and creative educational environment (Campher, 1997:52). Teamwork and collaborative planning are imperative in implementing sound learning programmes that meet the needs of all learners. Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:23) explain that collaborative practices require sharing ideas, mutual respect and support, trust, open communication, consensual decision-making and joint ownership. Involvement in collaborative teaming means that members will contribute their own unique perspectives, experiences and knowledge that hold equal weight and value for the betterment of teaching/learning practices.

2.6.3 The curriculum

2.6.3.1 Learner-centred curriculum

Curriculum practice should be learner-centred, founded on the premise that all children regardless of disability, are capable of learning and should be given the same

opportunities to achieve to the best of their abilities (Jenkinson, 1997:141). In implementing the curriculum, educators are encouraged to be more creative, varied and flexible in their teaching strategies, styles and methodologies enabling all learners to participate and learn at their own pace and level of understanding (DoE, 2003: 2-3; DoE, 2002:139).

2.6.3.2 Outcomes-based education (OBE)

OBE can be defined as a learner-centred, results-orientated instructional strategy (DoE, 1997a:17; Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:7). OBE focuses, through the learning process, on guiding learners to the desired outcomes (Van der Horst & McDonald, 1997:7).

Naicker (1999:13,87) explains that there is compatibility between OBE and inclusive education in both their concepts and practices. OBE is based on the premise that all learners can succeed at different times, successful learning can result in successful learning experiences, schools can encourage the possibilities for success and educators can expect all learners to perform optimally (Spady, 1994:9). Mixed ability teaching requires different teaching strategies. Educators need to identify learners' strengths and concurrently assist with developing their special abilities and talents. Within an inclusive system all learners will have access to quality education via OBE (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:75,76). Therefore the OBE curriculum is compatible with inclusive education because it is more flexible than the traditional curriculum and allows for variations in outcomes, learning rates, styles and pace of learners.

2.6.3.3 Development of cognitive skills

The teaching of cognitive strategies and thinking skills must be infused in all learning areas because the critical outcomes of OBE are based largely on principles and techniques developed in the field of cognitive psychology and education (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:76). The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) encourages learners

to become critical thinkers and problem solvers (DoE, 2003:5). Cognitive research has revealed that all thinking skills can be taught to everyone. Nelson, Carlson and Palansky (1993:167) believe that learners need to understand the connections of valuable knowledge and how to use that knowledge in problem solving. Teaching learners how to think and learn is as important as teaching them curriculum content.

Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999: 77,78) mention metacognition, as a process of thinking about ones' own thinking. It involves a self-monitoring and self-regulating mode of thinking to become aware of and gain control over one's thought processes and learning strategies. Learners who experience difficulties in learning usually lack the ability to structure themselves because of metacognitive deficiencies that constitute a barrier to learning. Educators can foster the development of metacognitive skills in these learners by directing them to set their own learning outcomes, gain control over their own thought processes and learning strategies, and enable them to achieve their specific outcomes.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter brings to a close an overview of literature on inclusive education and the need for training particularly in the South African context. In the next chapter, the research design and methodology are discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on Inclusive Education, particularly in relation to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in a primary school. Through a single inclusive education system, the education transformation in South Africa ensures that learners experiencing barriers to learning and development have a right to and equal access to learning (DoE, 2001a:11). Literature highlights (UNESCO, 1994) that all learners have a right to equal education (DoE: 2001a:18). In the South African education system, inclusion of learners in a single unified learning and training system explores and describes a paradigm shift from the traditional medical discourse where "...impairment is linked with disability", to a social rights discourse that purports equal opportunity, self-reliance, and independence being achievable by all learners (Naicker, 1999:12).

This chapter unfolds the description of the research design and methodology with reference to the aim, statement of the problem, selection of the research sample, data collection and methods of analysis.

3.2 AIM OF THE INVESTIGATION

Against the background described above, the following primary and secondary aims were identified:

3.2.1 Primary aim

The research aims to explore and describe how grade 6 learners with reading difficulties experience schooling, in particular the challenges faced by them in the inclusive class.

3.2.2 Secondary aim

The research intended as its secondary aim to use the findings towards formulating guidelines in the form of recommendations to improve the experiences of learners experiencing reading difficulties in the inclusive classroom.

3.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

3.3.1 General orientation

Even though inclusive education has been advocated as national policy by the Department of Education in South Africa (cf. 1.1), a literature study reveals that barriers to learning and development are not due to inherent deficiencies but exist because of barriers to learning that are socially and politically constructed by the environment (cf. 2.2.2.3 and 2.4).

Bearing the above in mind, a qualitative study was undertaken to explore and describe how grade 6 learners with reading difficulties experience schooling, in particular the challenges faced by their being included in the inclusive class. The research question expresses the essence of the investigation. Against the background mentioned above, the following primary and secondary questions were formulated.

3.3.2 Primary research question

What are the experiences of grade 6 learners with reading difficulties in the inclusive class?

3.3.3 Secondary research question

What guidelines in the form of recommendations can be formulated to improve the experiences of learners with reading difficulties in the inclusive class?

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research was conducted because this study aimed to focus on qualities of human behaviour. Such an approach is a naturalistic one that explains social and human problems and interprets a phenomenon in terms of meaning created by people (Krefting, 1990:214; Schurink, 1998:240-241). Such an investigation develops a holistic picture of social behaviour (Cresswell, 1998:15; Myburgh & Poggenpoel, 1995:5).

Critical to qualitative research are the subjective meanings and perceptions of the participants (Delpont & Fouche, 1998:357; Krefting, 1990:214). Qualitative research entails formulating questions that need to be described and explored (Mason, 1996:15). The researcher explored and described experiences of learners with reading difficulties in inclusive classrooms, in one school, and utilized a case study strategy.

The researcher, when conducting qualitative research, which tends to be field-focused, reveals certain qualities (Eisner, 1998:32). The researcher creates meaning of what is being investigated, making it interpretative in character. Qualitative researchers must also be able to express empathy through scientific writing and through interaction with individuals in order to create a better understanding for the reader. The researcher in this study conducted qualitative research, in a natural setting, i.e. the school environment, analyzed data through 'text' information and reported the data in a detailed and descriptive manner. To ensure the rigour of the research, measures of trustworthiness were applied.

The criteria of truth-value, applicability, consistency and neutrality based on Guba's model (1981), were applied to ensure trustworthiness.

3.4.2 Trustworthiness

Poggenpoel (1998:348-351) proposes Guba's model in ensuring trustworthiness through applying the following criteria:

- **Truth-value** implies that the findings of the study undertaken can be deemed truthful. In order to determine whether the information gathered from the participants was truthful, the researcher attempted to establish a correlation between their verbal accounts and the analysis of the study (Poggenpoel, 1998:348). The researcher quoted verbatim accounts (transcripts of interviews) of the participants to confirm the analysis of data and to contribute to its credibility. The verbatim accounts of the participants enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of the responses and will allow the reader to assess critically the interpretations from the direct quotes (Cresswell, 1998:221).
- **Applicability** of findings can be assessed by their transferability to other contexts or settings. Cresswell (1998:221) mentions that if the researcher intends to make generalizations about the subject of the research, as it occurs in disability ethnography, it is important to indicate strategies that will enhance the transferability. Therefore, the researcher viewed each participant as unique and focused on describing the phenomena studied and avoided generalization (Poggenpoel, 1998:349).
- **Consistency** refers to how repeatable the study might be with the same participants or in a similar context (Cresswell, 1998:221). Therefore if participants expressed the same opinions if another researcher undertook the study, the findings would not be altered (Poggenpoel, 1998: 350).
- **Neutrality** refers to the freedom of bias in the research procedure and results (Poggenpoel, 1998:350). To ensure neutrality and interpretational confirmability, the researcher adopted the following strategies: (i) All Grade 6 learners with reading difficulties were interviewed; (ii) The researcher posed the same question to all participants in order to standardize the interviewing process (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1990:420); (iii) The method of data collection was mainly through interviews, therefore the researcher realizes that she could not distance herself from participants. These strategies enabled the researcher to analyze the data and present the findings

without bias (Cohen & Manion, 1994:282). However in qualitative research, as pointed out by Smaling (1995:22), total objectivity is difficult to achieve.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.5.1 Introduction

Participants were interviewed individually for the purpose of data collection and they were observed in the learning-teaching environment. Their experiences were explored through unstructured interviews, which were recorded for authentic verbal accounts and to describe and understand their meaning in their life world (Kvale, 1996:175).

3.5.2 Literature review

A literature review of the move towards inclusive education served as a frame of reference to demonstrate further the researcher's paradigm, map out the main issues studied and define the research question (Fouche & Delport, 2002:265-269; De Vos & Fouche, 1998:119). Previous research, documents and theories were consulted to unfold the conceptual and theoretical framework of the study (De Vos, 1998:119; Rossman & Rallis, 1998:74) and to recontextualise the data (Poggenpoel, 1998:342).

3.5.3 Procedure

The researcher sought permission from her subject adviser, the departmental official who referred her to seek permission from the principal of the school and from the parents of all participants. The researcher briefed all grade 6 learners experiencing reading difficulties, about the purpose of the study and the structure of the interview. All learners were willing to participate and were interviewed individually according to appointment times scheduled over a two-week period.

3.5.4 Sampling

The sample population consisted of grade 6 learners experiencing difficulty in reading in a public primary school, situated in Phoenix, north of Durban. The school is a co-educational institution with learners from multi-cultural backgrounds and a socio-economically impoverished community.

Since 2000, the schools in the area that had “special classes”, decided under the guidance and supervision of the school psychologist (Psychological & Guidance Services, Department of Education) to include learners experiencing barriers to learning and development partially into mainstream classes (as these learners were being taught separately). A special support programme was initiated by a group of support educators with a remedial education background (teaching in Phoenix, Durban) to encourage inclusive schooling by providing individualized instruction to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development for a few hours in the day, thereafter placing them in inclusive classrooms for the rest of the day. The particular school also adopted the programme in 2000 and began encouraging inclusive classrooms after disbanding the ‘special class’ it had run for 15 years. Since 2000, learners experiencing barriers to learning and development at the school are being placed permanently in inclusive classes according to their progress and adaptability. Furthermore, the support programmes are being continually modified and adapted towards full inclusion.

For this study, the researcher focused on participants who experienced difficulties in reading. This could possibly be attributed to lack of acquisition of oral language because they were raised in home environments where they had not been exposed to a range of literacy activities (because of a lack of reading material/stimuli) or lack continuous support from parents and other adults at home. Research on reading indicates that learners who have been raised in environments where they have been exposed to a range of literacy activities and have continuous home support tend to perform better at reading in school as prior knowledge about reading and print brought to the classroom is from their natural environment (Willenberg, 1997:23). The sample also included second language learners who are taught in English and had difficulty in grasping the phonic approach while in the Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3) thereby developing reading lags. Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:81) suggest that a phonic approach to teaching reading can present difficulties for the Zulu, Xhosa and other

African language-speaking learners because the English alphabet has many inconsistencies and is not as phonetically regular as African languages. The sample also comprised learners who experience difficulty in encoding, decoding and comprehension. Decoding and comprehension are two important aspects of reading (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999:80). These learners reveal much more serious scholastic lags and read at levels far below their chronological reading ages.

The physical condition of the school may be described as good as it is well maintained and adequately equipped. The enrolment at the school is 907. The sample population came from three classes with a learner-educator ratio of 1: 42.

Purposive sampling was used based on the judgment of the researcher (Strydom & Delpont, 2002:334) to ensure that participants could provide rich data and to maximize the range of specific information collected as mentioned by Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993:33). In order to ensure that the sample was information rich, the researcher interviewed all grade 6 learners experiencing difficulties in reading and who were willing to participate. Furthermore, grade 6 learners (being older than the other group of learners with reading difficulties) were selected because they would be able to understand and articulate their experiences adequately. In addition, these learners with reading difficulties had a longer experience of inclusion (3 years) and were settled into the routine of an inclusive class. The Zulu-speaking participants were able to respond in English. Table A indicates the age, gender, first language or second language preference, number of years in the class for learners experiencing difficulty in reading and number of years in the inclusive class. For the purpose of this study, thirteen learners were interviewed, comprising five females and eight males. The mean age of the participants was 12 years and six months. The mean number of years in the class for learners experiencing barriers to learning was three years and the mean number of years in the inclusive class was three years.

TABLE A: DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS - GRADE 6 LEARNERS

PARTICIPANTS	AGE	GENDER	1ST LANG 2ND LANG	NO.OF YRS IN LSEN UNIT	NO. OF YRS. IN INCLUSIVE CLASS
A	12	F	1st	2	3
B	14	M	1st	3	3
C	11	M	1st	2	3
D	13	M	2nd	2	3
E	12	M	1st	3	2
F	12	M	1st	3	2
G	14	M	1st	4	2
H	13	M	1st	2	3
I	13	F	2nd	2	3
J	13	M	1st	3	3
K	12	F	1st	2	3
L	13	F	1st	3	3
M	12	F	2nd	3	3

3.5.5 DATA COLLECTION

3.5.5.1 Unstructured interview

Interviewing is regarded as a predominant mode of data collection in qualitative research (Greef, 2002:292). It can also be described as a social action between the interviewer and interviewee to obtain research information (Schurink, 1998:298). The researcher preferred individual interviews to group interviews as it allowed for individual thinking whereby participants would not be influenced by similar thoughts and experiences as expressed by others in a group (De Vos, 1998:302; Cohen & Manion, 1994:287). Schurink (1998:325) mentions that in a group interview, other participants can influence one another as well as the course of the interview. The study through the interview process aimed to explore the world

of the participants through unfolding meaning of their experiences in the inclusive classroom (De Vos, 1998:292).

To ensure an effective interview process, the researcher considered the following techniques:

- The researcher ensured that the participants were put at ease by establishing rapport with them before the interview took place and by explaining how the interview would be conducted and how the information would be used (Cohen & Manion, 1994:280-281).
- One open-ended question was asked, namely, "Since being placed in the inclusive class (i.e. the mainstream class), what is it like for you?" An open-ended question was asked to allow for a variety of responses (Fouche, 1998:160; Ary, *et al.*, 1990:419).
- Clarification of unclear responses was requested by encouraging participants to answer more fully on his/her thoughts.
- Participants were probed on issues revealed in the interview, through direct questions and procurement of details, for example, "Why do other learners laugh at you while you are reading?" in order to increase richness of the information being collected (Ary, *et al.*, 1990:420).

3.5.5.2 Observation

The researcher also used non-participant observation techniques in order to acquire first hand information and to enrich the understanding of phenomena of interest (De Vos, 1998:80). Participants were observed at work in their inclusive classrooms. To avoid being intrusive, the researcher sat at the back of the classroom and made cursory notes, which was expanded to fuller accounts later (Cohen & Manion, 1994:109,112).

3.5.6 Data Analysis

The data recorded from the interviews were analysed through systematic sorting and arranging of transcripts. The researcher employed open coding to identify themes. Open coding is the process of breaking down and examining data, comparing, contextualising and

categorizing it (De Vos, 1998:345). The researcher used Tesch's approach to analyze the data (Poggenpoel, 1998:343-344). All transcripts were carefully reviewed and ideas were jotted down. Transcripts were read and reread to gain further insight and objective perceptions of the participants' experiences (Cohen & Manion, 1994:293). Notes were made in the margins. Topics were identified and listed. Similar topics were clustered and labelled as themes. Categories were then identified for the themes. A literature control, namely recontextualisation, was undertaken to place findings in the context of known knowledge and to identify the findings that are supported by the literature or that claim to be unique (Poggenpoel, 1998:342).

3.5.7 Ethical consideration

Ethics is defined as a set of acceptable moral principles that determine rules for and behavioural expectations of the correct conduct towards participants and other researchers in research study (Strydom & Delpont, 2002:75). In this regard ethical dilemmas may arise if the researcher chooses one form of conduct and conforms to one moral principle but transgresses another (Cwikel & Cnaan, 1991:115). However, the final responsibility lies eventually with the researcher to present the research study that meets all ethical requirements (Dane, 1990:58). Therefore, having a responsibility towards the participants who were interviewed and considering their rights to privacy (in some cases, the information disseminated was very personal), the researcher took cognizance of the following ethical considerations (Cohen & Manion, 1994:359-362):

3.5.7.1 Informed consent

The researcher acquired informed consent from all participants. *Informed consent* means that participants were adequately informed of their participation to enable them to understand fully the investigation and its consequences. This allowed them to feel comfortable about their participation (Ary, *et al.*, 1990:479; Mason, 1996:57).

3.5.7.2 Confidentiality

The participants were assured of *confidentiality* which means that the researcher would not disclose information gleaned (Cohen & Manion, 1994:367). Participants were also promised anonymity as well as feedback.

3.5.7.3 Anonymity

Anonymity implies that information provided by the participants would in no way reveal their identity (Strydom, 1998:28-29; Cohen & Manion, 1994:366). For this reason, neither the name of the school nor that of the principal and participants is mentioned. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that no one else had access to the tape recordings or data collected during the investigation.

3.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has given an exposition of the research problem, the research procedure and what research design and research methodology were adopted. The data collection and analysis also explained what measures were used to ensure trustworthiness. The chapter concluded with an explanation of ethical considerations in qualitative research study. Chapter four focuses on the interpretations /discussions of the findings of the investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the major themes and categories (see table) of learners' experiences in the inclusive class are presented. Verbal accounts are used extensively in the findings to validate the trustworthiness of the study.

4.2 RESULTS

Table: Themes and categories

MAIN THEMES	RELATED CATEGORIES	
4.2.1 Theme 1: Learners' experiences in the inclusive class	4.2.1.1 Negative experiences	4.2.1.1.1 Labelled 4.2.1.1.2 Falsely accused 4.2.1.1.3 Excluded
	4.2.1.2 Positive experiences	4.2.1.2.1 Acceptance 4.2.1.2.2 Enjoying special care and attention 4.2.1.2.3 Enjoying a wider circle of friends
4.2.2 Theme 2: Attitude of educators	4.2.2.1 Educators are impatient with learners 4.2.2.2 Educators ignore and reject learners 4.2.2.3 Educators feel that learners can't cope with work	
4.2.3 Theme 3: Learners' feelings	4.2.3.1 Negative feelings 4.2.3.2 Positive feelings	4.2.3.1.1 Angry, sad, fearful and anxious 4.2.3.1.2 Shy and worthless, lacking confidence, having a low self-esteem Happiness and appreciation

4.2.1 THEME 1: LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASS

The learners' experiences, forming a central theme, focus on negative and positive experiences encountered in the inclusive class. It is important to listen to the often 'hidden' voices of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development about their experiences, to understand fully the implications, policies and practices of an inclusive classroom. What a learner experiences in the teaching-learning context can either hinder or promote his/her progress. Therefore, it is important for the educator and peers to value differences in an inclusive class in order to accept and promote learning for the learner with barriers to learning (Corbett, 2001:52-23).

4.2.1.1 Negative Experiences

4.2.1.1.1 Labelled

Prior to being included in the mainstream class, the learners interviewed were taught in a separate class called the Learners with Special Needs (LSEN) unit. Most of the participants indicated that they disliked being labelled LSEN. They felt that because of being referred to as LSEN by peers and educators as well, they were teased, laughed at and mocked by their peers. Since inclusion, they leave the inclusive class for an hour per day to spend in the Support Programme for evaluation on their progress and development.

A participant said that *when I first went to the mainstream class, the children did not treat me that okay, they teased me 'LSEN', called me mad and laughed at me*. A similar experience was stated by another participant, *sometimes when I talk, they laugh at me, even the ma'm, calling me a stupid*. One of the participants interviewed mentioned, *I don't like taking part in oral work in front of the class or assembly because children know I'm from the LSEN class and immediately start laughing at me. They call me names, always teasing me for nothing*. One of the participants said that *the pupils say I'm funny; I'm from the LSEN class*, with another participant mentioning that *even the educators call me LSEN learner*. A participant mentioned that when returning to the

inclusive class from the Support Programme, he often heard his peers comment, *the LSEN children are coming back to class.*

Naicker (1999:46,47) concurs and mentions that labelling by use of various terminologies for the learner experiencing barriers to learning and development implies a functional loss and lack of worth. Such debilitating labels are particularly significant in a society in which values of production and economic worth shape social conditions and relations.

Referring to a study in the United States of America, Ware (2000:54,55) agrees that students are labelled and excluded in mini-grant schools in New York that offer inclusive education. Students with special needs attending these schools are labeled TT (Transition Tech). Their enrolment forms, report cards and student identification cards are stamped SPC (special) in bold lettering. Furthermore, she cites the exclusionary practice whereby these students receive no textbooks, which indicate to other students their TT status. More important than such labelling, students describe their reluctance to participate in the graduation ceremony where each 'House' bestows its own diplomas, in this case another public demarcation of labelling them special graduates.

The above problem is also highlighted in the report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) (DoE, 1997b:16) where it is stated that labelling of learners is linked to the negative attitudes towards different learners. Labels such as 'slow learners', 'drop outs', 'disabled learners' are described as negative associations between the learner and the system. Such labelling, other than impacting negatively on the learner's self-esteem, also seriously impacts on the learner's placement in an educational institution or his/her exclusion. It is mentioned that because the placement occurs through the attachment of a label and not through an appropriate assessment of the learner's educational needs, the placement may not only be inappropriate for the learner's needs but will also result in the learner being marginalized, creating further barriers to his/her learning. Therefore, these learners who may have special aptitudes or talents in certain learning areas may never be promoted or given the opportunity to excel because of such labelling and placement.

Even though participants disliked being labelled by their educators and peers, they showed preference to being in an inclusive class rather than being segregated in the class for learners experiencing learning barriers.

4.2.1.1.2 Falsely accused

Participants spoke of being falsely accused and blamed for misbehaviour and mischief-making in the class, as is revealed in some of the responses from participants, *I'm always labelled a thief, when something goes missing. Everyone suspects me and calls me a rogue; I'm sent to the office because my classmates blame me even when I'm innocent.* One participant stated that she avoids doing things that could get her into trouble, but that *I am blamed for things, for example the girl that sits next to me accuses me of taking her pen when it goes missing* while another participant concurred by saying that *I'm always blamed for things that go wrong in class.* One participant, in a pathetic manner, described how he was constantly blamed for other learners' misdemeanors when he said, *I'm blamed for other classmates' tricks and sent to the office all the time. I'm scolded in the office for nothing.* It appears to be a general trend that, *when there is a problem, other children lie about it and I'm blamed for the problem.*

Being falsely accused and being made the scapegoat by peers and educators can be attributed to stereotyping all learners experiencing barriers to learning and development as manifesting deviant behaviour or not being able to adjust socially. Nes (1999:121) refers to such incidents as being the victim of stereotyping. When a learner experiencing barriers to learning and development talks in class, the learner is regarded as fooling around and is instructed by the educator to do his/her work. Even when provoked and when conflict ensues, these learners are often the ones who are punished.

Negative attitudes on the part of learners and educators (who lack training to teach an inclusive class) can contribute to learners with learning barriers being falsely accused. The report of the NCSNET and NCESS (DoE 1997b:18) highlight this issue when it refers to educators fearing the inclusion of children with disabilities in their classes and responding negatively to them. Other children in the class, who in turn further alienate

the learner experiencing barriers to learning, pick up such negative attitudes. Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:71) state that educators need to develop a critical understanding of common stereotypes and prejudices relating to disabilities and reflect how these affect their own attitudes in relation to their interaction with learners.

It is evident that participants are aware that they are being stereotyped and are being treated inappropriately by their educators and peers. Educators are not sensitive enough to their learners as well as to their own attitudes and feelings in order to support inclusion of learners with barriers to learning and development. Only when they have gained clarity on their own strengths, vulnerabilities and needs, will they be able to work as 'change agents' in inclusive schooling.

4.2.1.1.3 Excluded

A few learners shared their experiences of the deeply harmful effects of being excluded, not participating in the peer group, or being isolated from the rest of the class and excluded from tasks and activities assigned in the classroom. A participant mentioned that when she returns from the support programme after an hour, some learners say *don't come back. Go to the LSEN support class because you are 'LSEN.' You must go back.* It was mentioned by another participant, *a boy near me said, I am an LSEN learner and I mustn't sit next to him.* Some participants spoke of being ostracized and at times deliberately excluded from reading activities and group work as is expressed in the following statements, *I don't feel part of the group and I am left to work alone; They do not like me as part of the group, I can't read well, and sometimes I feel left out; In group work I just stand and watch others; I long to be part of them; I'm made to sit alone in class.*

These findings are in line with the views of Ballard (1999:113) who cites Blatt (1987) as stating that to be excluded can mean that one is treated as less than human because to be "disabled" means seeking permission for access to education and other culturally valued resources that are available as an automatic right to fellow citizens. Therefore exclusion can preclude one from learning opportunities, from friends and the community.

Furthermore, Ballard (1999:104), in his studies on discrimination in mainstream settings, refers to learners feeling miserable and isolated from peers because they are viewed as different and unacceptable. He mentions that in some cases, the physical and emotional insults received are condoned by some of the educators, reflecting the kind of socio-cultural prejudices reported in studies of students experiencing learning barriers.

Nind, Rix, Sheehy and Simmons (2003:187,189) extend this argument on exclusion when mentioning that many educators cannot envisage how learners experiencing barriers to learning and development can be included in secondary schools. It is these barriers of attitude, school organization, teaching, learning, communication and school environment that prevent learners with barriers to learning and development from being involved.

Armstrong, Belmont and Verillon (2000:69) state that as long as the term 'special' or 'specialized' is used in ways that mark out or separate one group of learners from another, exclusion and segregation continue to be integral and a defining process in the education system. Nind, *et al.* (2003:230) strongly advocate full pupil participation in an inclusive system that includes diverse participation. In studies in inclusive education they cite an educator as stating that when all children ask for help and can be given it and when the educator works with all the children, they will see the educator as one who does not stigmatize them.

However, such negative experiences are not the only types of reaction prevalent in an inclusive classroom as some participants spoke of enjoyable and happy experiences.

4.2.1.2 Positive experiences

4.2.1.2.1 Acceptance

A few of the participants expressed how comfortable they felt in group work because of the input they made to artwork and constructing things. They felt happy to be included in activities that did not involve too much reading and felt appreciated for their special skills as is expressed in the following, *I feel good when the other children want me to help them*

with the writing and colouring in the group work. Another participant said, they like to choose me in their group because I can draw well while another participant explained her involvement in activities by stating that now I look forward to sharing tasks with other classmates because they are beginning to accept me as part of the group. I have good experiences in class because ma'm chooses me to pass out and collect the books. She says that she trusts me to look after the books, was a response by one of the participants. I like being in the mainstream class, mentioned a participant, because other pupils don't ask me why I am in another class (LSEN unit): I feel accepted and as one of the group.

Ballard (1999:106) supports these findings when he states that a supportive atmosphere is essential to acceptance amongst peers. Ainscow, Booth and Dyson (1999:141) mention that acceptance in a mainstream class is valued as a positive social experience. Many learners view a good relationship with peers and educators as an important factor in promoting effective learning and acceptance. Such acceptance can lead to learners changing their views of themselves and gaining more self-confidence. Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999: 144-45) refer to learners who were in special education classes benefitting when included within ordinary classes. These learners are accepted socially amongst their peers. Learners themselves become more aware of what is expected of others academically and are more motivated to improve their own basic skills.

4.2.1.2.2 Enjoying special care and attention

Participants who expressed positive experiences of being in the inclusive class, attributed these mainly to the special care and attention they received from their educators especially during reading lessons. A few participants mentioned that they received individual attention from educators during reading lessons and that they felt cared for. Participants made the following comments: *some educators help me and encourage me to read by saying, 'you can do it, just take your time'.* Another participant said that, *my teacher calls me to the board and shows me how to solve the problem. I like this help when I am taught on my own especially when it is a difficult one.* A participant, who stated, *my teacher makes time to read with me alone,* expressed a similar feeling. *She helps me with spelling words.* Another participant who said, *she spends a lot of time with*

us when it comes to reading, concurred with this statement while one of the participants pointed out that *my teacher teaches me slowly and always stops to ask me if I understood what she said*. A participant spoke of how good she felt about the special care she gets: *I feel good when my teacher calls me separately and teaches me phonics and to read sight words*. This feeling of enjoyment, special care and attention was encapsulated by another participant as follows: *I think my teacher cares about me a lot because she comes near me to check my work, ma'm explains things to me. She makes me understand my work*.

Some participants spoke of how they enjoyed special care and attention from their classmates as well. A participant said that his classmates *make me feel that they want me to be there; sometimes they help me when I struggle with my reading*. Another participant stated, *I feel comfortable and wanted. My classmates treat me with care and love*. A participant mentioned, *my friends are very helpful, when I get absent; they lend me their book to copy work done the day before that I had missed. They care about me*.

Porter (1997:75), when discussing the role of the educator dealing with inclusive education and integration in the classroom, mentions that special education and resource/media educators with experience of extensive classroom teaching and who are regarded by their colleagues as competent classroom practitioners, have the greatest success in this position. Other critical elements for teaching in inclusive classrooms as proposed by Porter (1997:76,77) are that educators who develop positive expectations for learners with learning barriers, respond positively to challenges in the classroom; are persistent in looking for new ideas and strategies and have a positive and optimistic outlook.

Flavell (2002:8,12) states that if one is to make the learning environment suitable for all learners, it will be a positive attitude and ethos of the educational establishment. Educators need to understand the importance of their role as caregivers, overseeing development in a sensitive way, extending the scope of the lesson to meet diverse needs in the classroom and being able to empathize with others while assisting learning. Such supportive conditions in the learning environment can assist learners in understanding their own skills and abilities.

In elaborating on the importance of special care and attention in an inclusive class, it is recognized by educators that different needs require different approaches. Corbett (2001:71,75,77) expounds on the treatment of learners with behavioural problems in an inclusive classroom. She mentions that at the school in which the study was conducted, there was an atmosphere of reasonable dialogue, rather than confrontation. Children are listened to with respect and there is no denial of difference. Such an approach reflects how positive re-inforcement through communication, listening and valuing differences cultivates positive behavioural patterns. Observation in these classrooms indicates that learners feel safe, secure and cared for.

4.2.1.2.3 Enjoying a wider circle of friends

Of the learners who expressed positive experiences, all referred to having friends in their class or making more friends as an important factor in contributing to their enjoyment and security in the mainstream class. A participant who said *when I was in the LSEN class, no one wanted to join me, pointed out, now I have a lot of friends to play with.* Another participant indicated that *I like to be in the mainstream class because I have many friends now to play with and I feel good to be called a Grade 6 learner like my friends.* The positive experience of being able to interact with classmates was highlighted by a participant as, *now that I am in the mainstream class, I am not ignored; other children want to be my friend. They do not treat me differently.* A participant shared her delight by stating that, *I feel wanted because I have many friends now that I am in a mainstream class. This class has many boys and girls unlike the LSEN class. I can make friends easily because the girls are all my age,* said one of the participants, *because in the LSEN class there were children smaller than me.*

Considering the above findings, it should be noted that in literature on disability studies and inclusion, a recurring theme is the importance of friendships and friendly relationships with people. It is such links that make learners happy. Ballard (1999:106) cites an example from an interview with a 'disabled' boy who recalls that the most settling period of his life in school was when he had more friends, 'Heaps of friends', as described by him. Participants in other disability studies also speak of the sustaining

value of friendship. Ballard and McDonald (1999:111) suggest that the role of friendship is the key to understanding the place of emotion in the study and practice of inclusion in education. Friendship does not exist without respect and care in knowing another person. Inclusion focuses on equality and reciprocity in relationships. Ballard (1999:141) agrees that the most significant and frequently mentioned factor relating to positive experiences is the source of social encounters. It is found that there are many possibilities to make new friends in large classes.

Ballard (1999:99,101) when discussing studies on inclusion refers to having friends and being part of a group as the most significant aspect of school. The importance of the social relationship is that partnering in good peer group interaction helps sustain the learner through school. The following statement by one of the participants in this study exemplifies the feelings shared by the vast majority of learners interviewed: *I was just friends with anybody who would want to be friends with me. I don't remember having trouble adapting because I was in with all my friends and was allowed to just keep going.*

4.2.2 THEME TWO: THE ATTITUDE OF EDUCATORS AS EXPERIENCED BY LEARNERS

Theme two reflects learners' views of their educators' attitude towards them during instruction time and in their general interaction with them. Since educators are the people who make learning possible, it is their positive attitudes that will help manage the change process towards inclusion. Regarding educator attitudes, Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:5) cite Davies and Green (1998) as stating that a number of South African educators in mainstream classrooms will be, and in many cases already are, accommodating learners of different ages and stages of development, cultural and linguistic diversity and a wide range of ability/disability needs.

4.2.2.1 Educators are impatient with learners

Most of the participants expressed the view that educators often became impatient with them as mentioned by the following participants, *if we don't know our words when*

reading, teachers scold us; I feel bad when the teacher does not listen to me and tells me to go and sit in my place while another participant explicitly stated, ma'm becomes impatient and angry with me when I take my time to complete the reading passage. She will ask someone else to read the answer. Another participant pointed out, I become hurt when the teacher says, "you are taking too long, I don't have the time to wait for you." Further accounts of educators' impatience were mentioned in the following statements, *if I don't give the answers in time, the teacher shouts at me. They say we are too slow, "can't you speak up?" It seems they don't know that we don't understand the work. Some teachers don't treat me okay because when I am slow, with reading, they hit me, call me names and say that I am a 'good for nothing' and I am wasting their valuable time.*

Lomofsky and Skuy (2001:200-202) say that inclusion requires that learners are not simply pitied but viewed more positively in terms of their disabilities. In order to support learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, the educator needs to be sensitive not only to the needs of individual learners but to their own attitudes and feelings as well.

Studies conducted on educator attitudes indicate that they have too many issues to deal with in classrooms and this may lead to their impatience with learners experiencing barriers to learning. Educators indicate that they have to deal with regular learners manifesting emotional, disciplinary and behavioural problems as well as dealing with learners who cannot adequately speak the language of instruction as experienced in the recent transformation of the educational system in South Africa. Educators feel overwhelmed by the current problems they deal with, and having learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in their classrooms makes their task more daunting (Bothma, *et al.*, 2002:202).

Bothma, *et al.* (2000: 202,203) further mention that educators are more concerned that the regular learners in class would be neglected due to the educator's time and effort being taken up by the learners with learning barriers in the class. Some educators felt it was not fair to expect regular learners to support and carry the learner experiencing barriers to learning and development when their focus should be on their own education.

Such a view reflects a narrow approach of teaching as a process where standards are set for all learners to achieve and not a learning process aimed at ensuring that all learners are capable of attaining outcomes.

4.2.2.2 Educators ignore and reject learners

Some participants believe that they are rejected and ignored in class by educators. One of the participants expressed this view by stating, *we group of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development that were integrated into the inclusive class) are made to sit at the back of the class. The teacher does not bother if we do not take part in the lesson.* Similar feelings were expressed by other participants who said, *I'm made to sit in front and when I complain to the teacher that I cannot see the board because I'm too near the board, he ignores me, I feel rejected because I am called names when I answer wrongly. Yet other children are not treated the same way when they make mistakes. I feel that I am not accepted because the teachers ignore me when I put up my hand to answer. I'm never given a chance to answer.* Another participant said that *my teacher never looks at me when she is teaching and doesn't ask me if I understand like she asks the other children. I like to answer questions and when I put up my hand, I'm ignored.*

The findings concur with Meijer, Pijl and Hegarty's (1997:160) views that prevailing attitudes within school and society need more refining because attitudes are crucial to achieving inclusion. Importantly one should explore the reasons for these different perceptions, trace the development of people's attitudes and try to understand their effects on learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.

A reason for ignoring and rejecting learners with special needs in the classroom may be attributed to ignorance and lack of coping skills. Bothma, *et al.* (2000:203) state that educators feel that they have neither the training nor the ability to work with learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. Educators also feel threatened when they have to change their 'tried and tested methods' of teaching to cope with too much diversity in the classroom. They feel inadequately prepared and unable to cope with learners who experience barriers to learning and development.

Hay, *et al.* (2001:216,217), in their research on teacher preparedness for inclusive education, state that the majority of the respondents indicated that they did not feel equipped to teach both regular learners and learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in the same class. They explained that they had not received sufficient training to deal with these classes. In Hay's research, 80% of the respondents wanted to know more about these learners.

4.2.2.3 Educators feel that learners cannot cope with work

In reference to the above category, some learners expressed the view that they felt that educators felt that they could not cope with the work set in class. This view is highlighted in the following comment, *teachers don't give me work to do because they say 'you cannot do anything.'* Another participant mentioned, *when I get all my work right, my teacher does not believe I did the work myself. She thinks I copied someone else's work, whereas another participant said that my teacher looks at me in surprise when I spell the word correctly but she never praises me. Some of our teachers tell us that we don't belong in the class and that we are not coping,* said a participant. Adding to this a participant conveyed that *my teachers don't let me take part in inter-class competitions because they think that I cannot do as well as the other children. They say I will not cope and I let my classmates down.*

Literature in keeping with the findings reveal that educator perceptions of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development are that they have low self-esteem because of constant failure in the regular education system and that they cannot keep up with their peers (Bothma, *et al.*, 2000:202).

Pijl, *et al.* (1997:126,127) explain that because of the experiences of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development in school, these learners show little active involvement and self-awareness. Furthermore, they show a lack of motivation to do anything because they feel incompetent and expect failure. The educator then

responds to such behaviour, i.e. an attitude of inattention, restlessness and evasion, with increasing control and rigid expectations.

Borkowski, *et al.* (1989) cited by Pijl, *et al.* (1997:125) state that children who experience persistent problems in learning, have been defined as inactive learners. Pijl, *et al.* (1997:125) suggest that instead of educators looking at the situation from the learner's perspective, making an attempt to simulate their initiatives and capture their interests, educators wait on learners to respond spontaneously to stimuli around them.

Bothma, *et al.* (2000:202) found that educators perceive learners experiencing barriers to learning and development as always requiring intensive remedial education and support services. Such views are linked with the deficit-medical view that proposes that the problem is located within the individual who has to be removed from and helped to change to fit the community in which he/she lives (DoE, 1997b:7).

Educators, in catering for learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, must replace the objective of inclusion with the objective of developing good education. Pijl, *et al.* (1997:125) state that the above is based on the assumption that learners will be able to accomplish and complete tasks according to their own talent, abilities, pace and temperament. This assumption denounces the principle of teaching that is structured on the basis of similarities between learners and on fixed expectations of what a certain age group is capable of achieving. Therefore if teaching is to be effective, the educator needs to take into account differences in pupils' characteristics and needs. Characteristics and needs of learners involve their emotions. It is imperative that educators consider all learners' feelings in the learning-teaching environment.

4.2.3 THEME THREE: LEARNERS' FEELINGS

Personal development can be defined as maturing emotionally and the emergence of one's personality. Eloff (2001:86) mentions the importance of understanding the feelings and needs of children in the development of their emotional growth and self-identity. Participants expressed both positive and negative feelings. However, of all the participants interviewed only two of them expressed positive feelings.

4.2.3.1 Negative feelings

4.2.3.1.1 Angry, sad, fearful and anxious

Anger, sadness and anxiety were feelings mentioned when learners spoke about their participation in class, during reading lessons, when writing tests and when interacting with other learners. These feelings were clearly evident by participants who stated, *I like being in the mainstream class but I feel sad when teachers do not allow me in the discussion, I feel sad and disheartened when I am made to feel different and when my friends think that there is something wrong with me and I feel very angry when I am accused of talking when others are and I am sent out of the class.* Another participant concurred by stating, *it makes me angry when my classmates tease me and when they blame me for the problem. That's when I feel like hitting them,* while another participant expressed, *I can become very angry and feel like fighting when others call me stupid. My teacher does not scold them. It makes me feel like I don't belong in her class.* A participant who expressed fear of writing tests said that, *I feel anxious when I have to write a test because I cannot read very well.* Another participant mentioned that *I feel afraid to stand up and read aloud because the children laugh at me when I make a mistake.* A participant pointed out, *I get very nervous to answer questions and I get frightened when the teacher calls me to work on the board.* These feelings of fear were also conveyed by a participant who stated, *I'm afraid during reading and oral communication period because I get nervous standing in front of the class to read and talk because I make mistakes and everyone laughs.* One participant said, *I feel very anxious in the mainstream class. I felt safe in the LSEN class.*

Ballard (1999:93,104,105,121), in discussing his findings of learners' experiences in mainstream settings, mentions that learners express anxiety when trying to cope with added work too fast for their pace or when trying to make up for missed school work or when they fail in tasks or tests. Learners may express anger when they are not taken seriously, when they are made fun of, when educators do not recognize their strengths or

when they are not valued. Learners also reveal that they feel insecure and sad when they are isolated from peers and when mistreated by their peers and educators.

Corbett (2001:83) states that it is important to listen to children and to help them work with the stresses expressed in coping with frustration and varied emotions. She believes that a 'listening culture' is a solution to successfully addressing and modifying 'challenging behaviour' that is manifested by learners experiencing barriers to learning and development. Challenging behaviour is described as behaviour that is negative, abusive or non-supportive of others.

It is therefore necessary, according to Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:48,72) that the psychological environment of a school (culture and ethos of the school reflecting attitudes and human relations, i.e. between learners and learners, teachers and learners and others), provide opportunities for learners to develop. In this respect the educator plays a prominent role acting as a role model and in providing a safe and supportive atmosphere wherein learners can take risks or learn from their mistakes without being reprimanded or ridiculed. Such a classroom fosters acceptance, tolerance and caring in all learners.

4.2.3.1.2 Shy and worthless, lacking confidence and having a low self-esteem

In relation to feeling worthless, shy, lacking confidence and having a low self-esteem, some participants felt that they were inferior to their classmates and preferred not to participate in class activities for fear of making mistakes and being teased. A participant expressed, *I do not like to take part in any activities because I feel shy* while another participant expressed a similar feeling by saying, *I don't like reading, drama and oral work because I feel shy to stand in front of the class. Sometimes when I make mistakes they laugh at me.* Regarding self-confidence and self-worth, one participant mentioned the following, *when my friends talk about what they like, they don't ask me because they don't think I'm important enough. Sometimes I feel useless.* Another participant mentioned, *because I cannot read well and forget my words all the time, the other children joke about me being a special case. I don't have the confidence to speak like*

they do and so I keep quiet during discussions. Still another participant added, I am very shy and don't feel confident to give my views. Once I tried to speak during orals but my teacher did not pay attention to me.

Literature shows that the social self-concept develops from experiences of social acceptance or rejection by peers and adults. Engelbrecht and Green (2001:90) mention that by middle-childhood, children begin to have positive or negative feelings about themselves. Positive expressions and values in learners experiencing barriers to learning and development will emerge due to the significant role that adults and peers play in their lives. Their self-esteem will be high and self-concept will be positive. If the opposite occurs, their self-esteem will be low and self-concept negative.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001:67) also mention that developing a sense of self is a life long process and is closely related to the way one is perceived by others. It is noted that young learners often do not show tolerance, co-operation, sharing and sensitivity to others when playing with each other. Therefore children need to learn to care and show concern for others. The development of high self-esteem is a priority in consideration of personal and social development. Learners with high self-esteem are more likely to learn successfully than learners with low self-esteem. Therefore communicating with confidence and developing social skills in an inclusive learning environment can enhance the development of self, and positive relationships with others.

Nind, *et al.* (2003:84,85) discuss the importance of inculcating a caring culture that attempts to remove barriers that discriminate against any learner within a school. Such a system is flexible in defining the learner's personal and academic needs and avoids 'squeezing him into a box' and forcing the learner to tag along conforming to the majority's needs. The study also refers to a parent of a learner experiencing barriers to learning and development in an inclusive class, as stating that he hoped his child would develop a feeling of achievement and a growing sense of who he is, i.e. self-understanding, self-identity and self-worth.

Feelings of shyness, withdrawal and being reserved can be linked to the learner's temperament. Engelbrecht and Green (2001:214, 215) cite Thomas and Chass (1977) who define temperament as an individual's characteristic way of experiencing and reacting to the environment. Temperamental adaptability varies in different people. While some learners may adapt easily and quickly to any situation, other learners need more time to adapt or may adapt with difficulty to new stimuli. Thus insight into temperament may be important to help teachers and caregivers to understand learners in their care. They may have to adjust their own behaviour to suit individual differences (whether cognitive, emotional or temperamental) to promote optimal learning and development.

Flavell (2002:13) mentions that peer assistance during lessons can be invaluable in helping the emotional development of all learners. Being a member of a group is important to social and educational success. It can lead to a greater understanding of one's own skills and abilities, while developing the confidence that can enhance one's learning experience.

4.2.3.2 Positive feelings

4.2.3.2.1 Happiness and appreciation

Findings show that two participants also enjoyed positive feelings. The one participant said, *now I can say that I have ideas to share in the group. I am getting more involved because my classmates don't say things they use to say. Now they ask me to draw for them and find facts in the group work. I feel comfortable and good because I am appreciated. My teacher sets tasks that I can understand and that suit what I like to do. I am happy in my class.* The other participant expressed that *I love the mainstream class because I have become part of them, and I don't feel separated from grade 6. This makes me happy and comfortable. All my friends appreciate me and enjoy doing things with me.*

Engelbrecht, *et al.* (1999:129,130) believe that the educator is seen as a resource for learning support in the inclusive classroom and one who can inculcate positive feelings and well-being in all learners. The article mentions that educators can make such a

difference in the lives of individual learners by firstly, making efforts to adapt learning environments in creative ways and secondly, by promoting the learning and development of learners in their care.

Armstrong, *et al.* (2000:3) state that in an environment where equality prevails, the abilities and achievements of all participants is appreciated. In order to attain mutual respect, equal opportunity and appreciation; the learner experiencing barriers to learning and development must be consulted. This will enable all those involved in the inclusive classroom to know and understand their needs and difficulties experienced in the education system.

Gaden (1992:2) agrees with the above mentioned thought by stating that learners cannot learn properly to participate without actively participating, neither can appropriate attitudes be developed for understanding of true inclusion practices in the future.

4.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the findings have been presented, analyzed and discussed. A literature control was used to substantiate the findings as well as to expound on the main research question and secondary questions that were answered in this chapter. The next chapter deals with the conclusions drawn and suggested recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter unfolds the conclusions, recommendations, limitations and suggestions for further research. The purpose of the research was to explore the experiences of grade six learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, specifically with reading difficulties, who are currently placed in inclusive classrooms.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS: THEME 1: LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES IN THE INCLUSIVE CLASS

5.2.1. Negative Experiences

5.2.1.1 Labelled

Participants disliked being labelled, especially when they were referred to as LSEN. They implied that by being labeled LSEN, they were regarded as being different and excluded because their non-disabled peers did not treat them well and called them other derogatory names such as 'stupid', 'mad' and 'funny'. Being labelled LSEN by both learners and educators initiated teasing, mocking and being laughed at by learners from other classes. Participants mentioned that when teased, they lacked confidence to participate in group reading and oral work.

5.2.1.2 Falsely accused

Findings indicated that participants were opposed to being falsely accused or often being punished by the educator and/or the school management team for misdemeanours and

mischievousness committed by other learners in the class. Some participants were also accused of thieving when things went missing in class, even though they were innocent. Findings showed that participants were aware that they were stereotyped because of their experiences of barriers to learning and development in reading skills and were being treated unfairly and differently.

5.2.1.3 Excluded

Exclusion had a negative impact when participants were excluded from group activities and sometimes isolated from the rest of the class. The harmful effect of exclusion in the inclusive class was clearly highlighted when participants complained of being ostracized and deliberately excluded from activities they longed to be part of.

5.2.2 Positive experiences

5.2.2.1 Acceptance

Some participants experienced pleasure and took great comfort in being included in group work and in being able to contribute towards the activity. They indicated that they enjoyed positive social experiences because they felt accepted and appreciated by the group.

5.2.2.2 Enjoying special care and attention

Participants who enjoyed positive experiences attributed these to the individual attention and care they received from educators and some of their classmates. Some participants expressed that they enjoyed individual instruction and tutoring as it enabled them to understand better what was being taught.

5.2.2.3 Enjoying a wider circle of friends

All participants who expressed positive experiences mentioned making friends as an important factor that contributed to their enjoyment and feeling of security in the inclusive class. For this reason, they preferred being in the inclusive class to being in the class for learners experiencing barriers to learning. They were able to join children of their own age and, in the larger class, they had more children to befriend, unlike the class for learners experiencing barriers to learning that consisted of a small group of learners of mixed ages.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS: THEME 2: ATTITUDES OF EDUCATORS

5.3.1 Educators are impatient with learners

Educators became impatient with most participants. They were able to gauge this when they were scolded for work not done or when they were slow in reading or in answering a question or when punished for work not completed on time. Some participants intimated that they felt offended when educators did not pay attention to what they were saying and when they were impatiently brushed off during reading lessons.

5.3.2 Educators ignore and reject learners

Findings indicated that some educators deliberately ignored them, making them sit at the back of the classroom, and that educators did not ensure that they were included in class activities. Some participants felt they were rejected because educators did not heed their complaints or listen when they wished to respond to a question, and felt slighted when educators did not look at them when they were teaching or checked on them as to whether they understood what was being taught as was the practice with other peers in their class.

5.3.3 Educators feel that learners can't cope with work

Findings revealed that participants felt that although they worked as best as they could and would have liked to participate in contests and competitions, they were not allowed to because they were considered incompetent and incapable of performing well or coping with the task. Some participants were not given tasks to complete in class because the educator felt that they could not cope with the level of work because of their lack of reading skills. Some educators did not think their efforts were worth praising because it was assumed that the work was copied from another learner in class.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS: THEME 3: LEARNERS' FEELINGS

5.4.1 Negative feelings

5.4.1.1 Angry, sad, fearful and anxious

Participants felt sad when they were excluded from class discussions or when they were made to feel different or when mistreated by their classmates. Being ridiculed, constantly teased and falsely accused by learners and/or punished when educators were biased in dealing with the problem, evoked feelings of anger in participants. Some participants felt afraid during oral reading and oral communication lessons or when called to work out the answer on the chalkboard because their peers laughed at their mistakes. These fearful situations led to feelings of anxiety and discomfort in the inclusive class.

5.4.1.2 Shy and worthless, lacking confidence and having low self-esteem

Participants preferred not to participate in reading activities because they felt shy and feared being embarrassed when they erred. Being laughed at by peers made them feel worthless and inferior to their classmates. In experiencing these feelings, participants intimated that they lacked confidence and had low self-esteem.

5.4.2 Positive feelings

5.4.2.1 Happiness and appreciation

Regarding positive feelings, two participants expressed happiness being in the inclusive class. One of them mentioned that she felt more confident to express herself and to share her ideas with the group. The experience allowed her to become more involved and feel appreciated. The other participant shared that he enjoyed inclusion because he did not feel separated from grade 6 learners and enjoyed the attention of more friends in the class, which enabled him to communicate his needs more freely with them.

5.5 SUMMATIVE RESPONSE TO RESEARCH QUESTION

Findings indicate that learners with difficulty in reading experienced both negative and positive feelings. Experiences and feelings described by majority of learners indicate that although integration is being implemented in the inclusive classroom, learners are still being marginalized. It is evident that the actual implementation of inclusive practices is not easy since educators are not adequately trained and prepared to teach learners with diverse needs, especially learners experiencing barriers to learning. The researcher's observation is that South African schools are far from ready for inclusive practices. Schools promoting an inclusive model, need take heed of what learners want, which is, offering new resources, developing a broader curriculum that include addressing learning difficulties and abandoning conservative practices which are no longer valued by learners.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the findings:

5.6.1 Support needed for learners to overcome barriers in learning

- The Department of Education should reconsider the use of terminology when referring to learners experiencing barriers to learning. *Labelling* such as LSEN, SEN, disabled, learners with disability, etc. *should be removed* from policy documents and other related educational material. Identifying learning difficulties through diagnosis may be confidentially recorded (known only to the support staff, class educators and parents) for the purpose of support and not for labelling. This practice would enable learners to function in an inclusive class without being stereotyped or stigmatized.
- The Department of Education should work in close collaboration with tertiary institutions when planning the course of study for teacher training to ensure that educators in training are *skilled to teach in the inclusive classroom, with learners with diverse needs* when they qualify. In this way *educator preparedness* for inclusive education will be ensured.
- The Department of Education must encourage inclusive classroom practices that ensure *flexibility and co-operative methods of teaching and learning* and accessibility to creative and stimulating resources and equipment. School Management Teams and support personnel of the Department of Education must engage in ongoing monitoring of these practices to ensure adequate implementation.
- Educators should teach all learners during Life Orientation Skills and Social Studies about *valuing differences*. The aim of the lessons should incorporate valuing individuals with diverse needs that come from diverse backgrounds prevalent in most public schools today. Valuing differences could foster a happy, caring and accepting school culture so that learning can be a positive experience for all learners, enhancing development of self and positive relations with others.
- It is imperative that *all learners are made to understand the core principles of Outcomes-based education (OBE)* by their educators so that they are aware that they have the freedom to construct their own knowledge, by setting their own learning outcomes, gaining control over their thought processes and actions and enabling them to achieve their outcomes. In doing so, learners can *take responsibility for their own learning*. Learners experiencing barriers to learning

and development must be guided by support educators and their class educators to know they can work at their own pace and will be assessed accordingly. Being made aware that they have control over their learning environment could ensure positive feelings and positive experiences by these learners.

5.6.2 Adequate support provided for educators to change their attitudes towards learners experiencing barriers to learning and development and teach all learners effectively

- *Adequate training* is essential for all educators in order for them to teach in inclusive classrooms. It is essential that educators be given adequate training in teaching learners with diverse needs, and sufficient support in changing their attitudes towards learners who do not cope as easily as other learners because of barriers to learning and development. INSET training and regular support from the DoE will empower them to cope adequately, implementing inclusive practices.
- Since inclusive education is a new trend in education in South Africa, and because interpretation and implementation of the policy lacks uniformity from school to school, emphasis should be placed on the need for *professional development of the educator*. The school management team should take the initiative to organize and promote staff development programmes on inclusive education. Further professional development should be offered through workshops by the DoE and short courses offered by tertiary institutions for educators to keep abreast with new trends and strategies in teaching learners with diverse needs, specifically learners experiencing barriers to learning and development
- *Educator support* is essential in guiding and supporting the educator who lacks special skills and to ensure that all learners' needs are met in the inclusive class. *Individual Learning Programmes (ILP's) for learners experiencing barriers to learning* should be drawn up by the support educator (based at the school) in consultation with support services of the DoE to assist educators in teaching all learners.

- *Collaborative planning and teaching through frequent consultation and follow-up by the support educator with the class educator are vital to address the needs of the educator and the learner. In this respect the present role of the support educator (who teaches learners experiencing barriers to learning for a specified number of hours per week) should be reviewed.* The support educator should be more active in writing up ILP's for all learners experiencing barriers to learning and development, engage in regular peer support, engage in buddy teaching in the inclusive class and offer counselling to learners who find difficulty in coping emotionally in the inclusive class.
- *The formation of learning communities would enable educators to share their needs, discuss problems encountered in their classrooms and discuss case studies of learners with specific learning barriers, e.g. reading difficulties. Learning communities should be formed by clustering three or four schools located within close proximity within a circuit or a district. Regular meetings scheduled by these learning communities would empower educators to grow professionally, provide adequate skills in coping, provide emotional support and sustain their growth in implementing correct teaching/learning strategies.*

5.6.3 Provision of emotional support for learners

- It is necessary that DoE considers the importance of addressing the needs of learners experiencing barriers to learning by appointing counsellors at schools to offer support to many learners who cannot deal with negative experiences, which results in stress, anxiety and lack of coping skills when dealing with their feelings.
- The establishment of School Support Teams mentioned in the White Paper 6 should become mandatory immediately in all schools. The School Support Team (STT) including the principal, support educator and heads of departments can further draw assistance from the local social and health services. The STT could play a pivotal role in supporting educators and learners through the transitional period of inclusive education.

- It is necessary that tertiary institutions develop programmes focusing on counselling with the aim of training registered counselors and also equipping all educators with basic skills. It is also recommended that each school have a registered counsellor appointed by DoE.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Participants as second language learners showed difficulty in articulating their feelings and experiences. The study could have included participants from Grade 7 as well as those who had spent more time in the inclusion programme.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Further research is recommended in the following areas:

- To explore educators' experiences in teaching learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.
- To study the effect of large classes on educators and learners coping with diversity in an inclusive classroom.))
- To study the impact of good support structures in inclusive education in mainstream settings.

5.9 CONCLUSION

In concluding this chapter, which has focused on conclusions, recommendations, limitations of the study and suggestions for further research, findings have highlighted that a huge effort must still be made by the DoE to recognize the many problems experienced at grass root levels. It is suggested that rather than wait for 20 years, DoE begin addressing these issues immediately to effect the paradigm shift towards inclusive education.

"We will know that inclusive education has fully arrived when designations such as 'inclusive school', 'inclusion classroom', 'inclusion student' are no longer part of our educational vocabulary. Inclusion survives as an issue only so long as someone is excluded." (Giangreco, 1997:194).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ainscow, M., Booth, T. & Dyson, A. 1999. Inclusion and exclusion in schools: listening to some hidden voices. In: Ballard, K. (Ed). *Inclusive education and international voices on disability and justice*. London: Falmer Press.

Alderson, P. 1999. *Learning and inclusion: The Clevees School Experience*. London: David Fulton.

Armstrong, F., Armstrong, D. & Barton, L. 2000. *Inclusive education—policy, contexts and comparative perspectives*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Armstrong, F., Belmont, B. & Verillon, A. 2000. 'Vive la difference?' Exploring context, policy and change in special education in France: developing cross-cultural collaboration. In: Armstrong, F., Armstrong, D. & Barton, L. *Inclusive education-policy, contexts and comparative perspectives*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C. & Razavieh, A. 1990. *Introduction to research in education*. Florida: The Dryden Press.

Ashman, A. & Conway, R. 1993. *Using cognitive methods in the classroom*. London: Routledge.

Bailey, J. & Barton, B. 1999. The impact of hospitalization on school inclusion: the experiences of two students with chronic illness. In: Ballard, K. (Ed). 1999. *Inclusive education international voices on disability and justice*. London: Falmer Press.

Ballard, K. (Ed). 1999. *Inclusive education: international voices on disability and justice*. London: Falmer Press.

Ballard, K. & McDonald, T. 1999. Disability and exclusion: some insider accounts and interpretations. In: Ballard, K. (Ed). *Inclusion education: international voices on disability and justice*. London: Falmer Press.

Booth, T. 2000. Inclusion in education: participation of disabled learners. Executive Summary. *Thematic Study for the EFA 2000 Assessment*.

Bothma, M., Gravett, S. & Swart, E. 2000. The attitude of primary school teachers towards inclusive education. *The South African Journal of Education*, 20(3): 200-204.

Bradley, D.F., King-Sears, M.E. & Tessier-Switlick, D.M. 1997. *Teaching students in inclusive settings: from theory to practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Brown, C. 1999. Parent voices on advocacy, education, disability and justice. In: Ballard, K. (Ed). *Inclusive education international voices on disability and justice*. London: Falmer Press.

Byrnes, M. 1990. The regular education initiative debate: a view from the field. *Exceptional children*, 56(4): 345-349.

Campher, E. 1997. *Establishing teacher support teams to facilitate inclusive education for learners with special educational needs*. Unpublished M.Ed. dissertation. Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch.

Chewning, B. & Sleath, B. 1996. Medication decision-making and management: a client-centred model. *Social service and medicine*, 42(3): 389-398.

Cohen, I. & Manion, I. 1994. *Research methods in education* (4th Ed). London: Routledge.

Corbett, J. 2001. *Supporting inclusive education – a connective pedagogy*. London: Routledge Falmer.

Cresswell, J. 1998. *Qualitative inquiry and research design*. London: Sage Publications.

Cwikel, J.G. & Cnaan, R.A. 1991. Ethical dilemmas in applying second-wave information technology to social work practice. *Social Work*, 36(2): 114-120.

Dane, F.C. 1990. *Research methods*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brookes/Cole.

Delport, C.S.L. & Fouche, C.B. 1998. The qualitative research report. In: De Vos, A.S. (Ed). *Research at grass roots: a primer for the caring professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

✓ Department of Education. 1995. *White paper 1 on education and training*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education. 1996a. *KwaZulu-Natal School Education Act 3*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of Education. 1996b. National Policy Act 27. *Admission Policy*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Department of Education. 1997a. *The green paper on special education needs*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education. 1997b. *Quality education for all: report of the national commission on special education needs and training and national committee on education support services*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education. 1999. *Consultative Paper No.1 on Special Education: building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

✓ Department of Education. 2001a. *Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: building an inclusive education and training system*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education. 2001b. *Policy framework for educators for learners with special education needs*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education. 2002. (1st Draft). *ELSEN Manual: An educator's resource guide to managing learners with special educational needs in the classroom*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Department of Education. 2003. *Revised national curriculum statement grades R-9 (schools) teacher's guide for the development of learning programmes foundation phase*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

De Vos, A. S. (Ed). 1998. *Research at grass roots: a primer for the caring professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

De Vos, A.S. & Fouche, C.B. 1998. Writing the research proposal. In: De Vos, A.S. (Ed). *Research at grass roots: a primer for the caring professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Eisner, E.W. 1998. *The enlightened eye: qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company.

Eloff, I. 2001. Promoting development during the early years. In: Engelbrecht, P. & Green, L. (Eds). *Promoting learner development: preventing and working with barriers to learning*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Engelbrecht, P. 2000. *New approach to the training of education support personnel*. Keynote Presentation National Conference on learner support and development. September, Belville.

Engelbrecht, P. and Green, L. (Eds). 2001. *Promoting learner development: preventing and working with barriers to learning*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Engelbrecht, P., Green, L., Naicker, S.M. & Engelbrecht, J. (Eds). 1999. *Inclusive education in action in South Africa*. Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik.

Erlanson, D.A., Harris, E.L., Skipper, B.L. & Allen, S.D. 1993. *Doing naturalistic inquiry: a guide to methods*. London: Sage.

Feldman, D. & Gordan, P.A. 2001. Educational needs related to physical disabilities and other health impairments. In: Engelbrecht, P. & Green, L. (Eds). *Promoting learner development: preventing and working with barriers to learning*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Flavell, L. 2002. *Preparing to include special children in mainstream school: a practical guide*. London: David Fulton Publishers Ltd.

Florian, L. 1998. An examination of the practical problems associated with the implementation of inclusive education policies. *Exceptional children*, 20(3): 200-204.

Fouche, C.B. 1998. Data collection methods. In: De Vos, A.S. (Ed). *Research at grass roots: a primer for the caring professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Fouche, C.B. & Delpont, C.S.L. 2002. The place of theory and literature review in the qualitative approach to research. In: De Vos, A.S. (Ed). *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Fulcher, G. 1995. Excommunicating the severely disabled: struggles, policy and researching. In: Clough, P. & Barton, L. (Eds). *Making difficulties: construction of SEN*. London: Paul Chapman.

Gaden, G. 1992. Integrated education, mental disability and respect for persons. *Irish Educational Studies*, 12.

Giangreco, M.F. 1997. Key lessons learned about inclusive education: summary of the 1996 Schonell Memorial Lecture. *International journal of disability, development and education*, 44(3): 193-206.

Greeff, M. 2002. (2nd Edition). Information collection: interviewing. Steps unique to the qualitative process. In: De Vos (Ed). *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Green, L. 2001. Theoretical and contextual background. In: Engelbrecht, P. & Green, L. (Eds). *Promoting learner development: preventing and working with barriers to learning*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Hay, J.F., Smit, J. & Paulsen, M. 2001. Teacher preparedness for inclusive education. *South African journal of education*, 21(4): 213-218.

Hegarty, S. 1994. Integration and the teacher. In: Meyer, C.J.W., Pijl, S.J. & Hegarty, S. (Eds). *New perspectives in special education: a six country study of integration*. London: Routledge.

Jenkins, R. 1997. *Social identity*. London: Routledge.

Jenkinson, J.C. 1997. *Mainstream or special*. London: Routledge.

Krefting, L. 1990. Rigor in qualitative research: the assessment of trustworthiness. *American Journal of occupation therapy*, 45(3): 214-222.

Kvale, S. 1996. *Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Lazarus, S., Daniels, B. & Engelbrecht, L. 1999. The inclusive school. In: Engelbrecht, P., Green, L., Naicker, S. M. & Engelbrecht, L. *Inclusive education in action in South Africa*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Lomofsky, L. & Skuy, M. 2001. Educational needs related to intellectual and cognitive difference. In: Engelbrecht, P. & Green, L. (Eds). *Promoting learner development: preventing and working with barriers to learning*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Mason, J. 1996. *Qualitative researching*. London: Sage.

Moss, G. 1995. *The basics of special needs – A special children survival guide for the classroom teacher*. London: Routledge.

McDonnell, P. 2000. Inclusion education in Ireland: rhetoric and reality. In: Armstrong, F., Armstrong, D. & Barton, L. *Inclusive education – policy, contexts and comparative perspectives*. London: David Fulton Publishers.

McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. 1993. *Research in education: a conceptual introduction*. New York: Harper Collins.

Meijer, C.J.W., Pijl, S.J. & Hegarty, S. 1997. Inclusion: implementation and approaches. In: Pijl, S.J., Meijer, C.J.W. & Hegarty, S. *Inclusion education: a global agenda*. London: Routledge.

Mittler, P. 2000. *Working towards inclusive education*. London: David Fulton.

- Myburgh, C.P.H. & Poggenpoel, M. 1995. A qualitative research strategy: and what now? *RAUCUR*, 1(2): 4-9.
- Naicker, S.M. 1999. *A space for all: an introduction to inclusive education*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Publishers Ltd.
- Naicker, S.M. 2000. *From apartheid education to inclusive education*. International Education Summit for a Democratic Society. USA: Wayne State University.
- Nelson, J.L., Carlson, K. & Palansky, S.B. 1993. *Critical issues in education: a dialectic approach*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Nes, K. 1999. The three voices from the first generation of integration students in Norway. In: Ballard, K. (Ed). *Inclusive education: international voices on disability and justice*. London: Falmer Press.
- Nind, M., Rix, J., Sheehy, K. & Simmons, K. 2003. *Inclusive education: diverse perspectives*. London: David Fulton Publishers.
- O'Brien, T. 2000. Increasing inclusion: did anyone mention learning? *Journal of special needs education in Ireland*, 14(1): 2-12.
- Peters, S.J. (Ed). 1993. *Education and disability in cross-cultural perspectives*. New York: Garland Publishing Company.
- Pijl, S.J., Meijer, C.J.W. & Hegarty, S. 1997. *Inclusion education: a global agenda*. London: Routledge.
- Poggenpoel, M. 1998. Data analysis in qualitative research. In: De Vos, A.S. (Ed). *Research at grass roots: a primer for the caring professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Porter, G.L. 1997. Critical elements for inclusive schools. In: Pijl, S.J., Meijer, J.W. and Hegarty, S. *Inclusive education: a global agenda*. London: Routledge.

Reed, J. & Watson, D. 1994. The impact of the medical model on nursing practice and assessment. *International journal of nursing studies*, 31(1): 57-66.

Republic of South Africa . 1996a. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. (Act 108 of 1996). Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 1996b. South African Schools Act 1996 (Act 84 of 1996). Pretoria: Government Printers.

Rossman, G.B. & Rallis, S.F. 1998. *Learning in the field: an introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

Sandow, S. 1994. More ways than one: models of special needs. In: Chopman, P. *Whose special needs?* London: Routledge.

Schurink, E.M. 1998. Deciding to use qualitative research approach. In: De Vos, A.S. (Ed). *Research at grass roots: a primer for the caring professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Smaling, A. 1995. Open-mindedness, open-heartedness and dialogical openness: the dialectics of openings and closures. In: Maso, I., Atkinson, P.A., Delmont, S. & Verhoven, J.C. (Eds). *Openness in research*. The Netherlands: Van Gorcum Asser.

Spady, W. 1994. *Outcomes-based education: critical issues and answers*. Virginia: American Associates of School Administrators.

Stainback, S., Stainback, W., East, K. & Sapon-Shevin, M. 1994. A community on inclusion and the development of a positive self-identity by people with disabilities. *Exceptional children*, 60(6): 486-490.

Stambolovic, V. 1996. Human rights and health within the dominant paradigm. *Social Science and Medicine*, 42(3): 301-303.

Strydom, H. 1998. The pilot study. In: *Research at grass roots: a primer for the caring professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Strydom, H. & Delpont, C.S.L. 2002. Sampling and pilot study in qualitative research. In: De Vos, A.S. (Ed). *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Swart, E. & Pettipher, R. 2001. Changing roles for principals and educators. In: Engelbrecht, P. & Green, L. (Eds). *Promoting learner development: preventing and working with barriers to learning*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 1994. The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education. Paris: UNESCO.

Van den Aardweg, E.M. & Van den Aardweg, E.D. 1993. (2nd Edition). *Psychology of education: a dictionary for students*. Pretoria: E x E Enterprises.

Van der Horst, H. & McDonald, R. 1997. *Outcomes-based education: a teacher's manual*. Pretoria: Kagiso Publishers.

Ware, L. 2000. Sunflowers, enchantment and emphasis: reflections on inclusive education in the United States. In: Armstrong, F., Armstrong, D. & Barton, L. (Ed).

Inclusive education policy, contexts and comparative perspectives. London: David Fulton Publishers.

Willenberg, I.A. 1997. *The emergent literacy development of pre-schoolers and their home supports for literacy*. Unpublished Masters Thesis. Cape Town: University of Cape Town.

York-Burr, J., Schultz, T., Doyle, M.B., Kronberg, R. & Crossett, S. 1996. Inclusive Schooling in St. Cloud: perspectives on the process and people. *Remedial Education*, 17(2): 92-105.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Project : Learners experiencing reading difficulties in the inclusive classroom.

Time of interview :

Date :

Place :

Name : Participant A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M

Gender :

Home language :

Age :

No. of years in LSEN class :

No. of years in inclusive class:

INTERVIEW

INSTRUCTIONS: There are no right or wrong answers, as your experiences are important. (Assure him/her of confidentiality of his/her responses.)

1. Since being placed in the mainstream class, what is like for you?

(Thank the learner for participating in the interview.)

APPENDIX B
EXAMPLE OF AN INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Time of interview : 11h30
Date : 10 August 2003
Place : School library
Interviewee : C
Gender : Male
Home language : English
Age : 11 years
No. of years in LSEN class : 2 years
No. of years in inclusive class : 3 years

QUESTION:

R : Since being placed in the mainstream class, what is it like for you?

I : I don't like the class. The boys fight with me and blame me when they do wrong. They do not like me as part of the group. Sometimes I feel left out. When mam tells me to join a group, they tease me. I feel sad and alone because I'm not part of the group and I am left to work alone. I like to answer questions but when I put up my hand, mam does not ask me to answer. Sometimes mam says, "Get out, go outside," when others are talking because I'm always blamed. Sometimes when I read, my classmates laugh at me.

R : Why do your classmates laugh at you when you read?

I : Because I cannot read well and forget my words all the time, the other children joke about me being a special case. I don't have the confidence to speak like they do and so I keep quiet during discussions and reading periods.

APPENDIX C

111 KENSINGTON
311 NORTH RIDGE ROAD
MORNINGSIDE, 4001

4 AUGUST 2002

**FOR ATTENTION:
THE PRINCIPAL**

It would be appreciated if you would permit me to conduct interviews with the Grade 6 LSEN learners experiencing reading difficulties that are presently included in the mainstream classes.

The data will assist me in my research study towards a Masters Degree in educational psychology – the experiences of learners with barriers to learning in the inclusive class.

It is hoped that the findings of the research study will be used to inform educators on inclusive education and improve the experiences of learners with learning barriers.

I look forward to your support.

S.J. Sebastian

S.J. Sebastian
LSEN EDUCATOR

.....

PERMISSION GRANTED	PERMISSION NOT GRANTED
-----------------------------------	---------------------------

[Signature]

PRINCIPAL

2004-08-06

DATE

APPENDIX D

111 KENSINGTON
311 NORTH RIDGE ROAD
MORNINGSIDE, 4001

6 AUGUST 2002

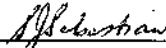
Dear Parent/Guardian

I am conducting a research study on experiences of learners with reading difficulties that are placed in the mainstream classes.

I would appreciate your permission to interview your child/ward who is in my reading support programme. The interview will be conducted at school during my non-instruction time.

Please fill in the response slip and return to me as soon as possible.

Thanking you


LSEN Educator

.....
RESPONSE

I APPROVE /~~DO NOT APPROVE~~ of you interviewing my child.


SIGNATURE
PARENT/GUARDIAN

6/08/2002
DATE