

***Educators' attitudes towards the inclusion of  
hearing impaired learners***

by

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## DECLARATION

I declare that 'this dissertation *Educators' attitudes towards the inclusion of hearing impaired learners* represents my own work. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete reference.

  
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N.T. MSIYA  
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## SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to investigate educators' attitudes concerning the inclusion of hearing impaired learners in mainstream classrooms

As an introduction to the study the attitudes of educators towards inclusion were reviewed by means of a study of available and relevant literature. Educators are the people who make learning possible and their own attitudes towards what is happening in the classroom are of crucial importance. Research done in South Africa on educators' attitudes towards inclusive education indicated that educators in mainstream classrooms generally express negative attitudes to mainstreaming policies. In the new education dispensation educators in mainstream classrooms have to accommodate learners with impairments, such as the hearing impaired child. Inclusion makes additional demands on educators because of the special educational needs of learners with impairments. The attitude of educators towards inclusion and their efficacy in meeting the special needs of learners with impairments play a determining role in the successful implementation of an inclusive education policy.

For the purpose of the empirical investigation a self-structured questionnaire was utilised. An analysis was done of 110 questionnaires completed by primary school educators from the Port Shepstone district on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal. The data was processed and interpreted by means of descriptive statistics.

Essentially the following were the main findings from the empirical study:

- ✓ Educators' attitudes towards inclusion are influenced by the availability of sufficient support and resources for learners with special educational needs.
- ✓ Educators' lack of knowledge and experience of learners with impairments have a negative influence on their attitude towards inclusive education.

- ✓ Many mainstream educators lack confidence in their own abilities to teach learners with diverse educational needs in the same classroom.

The study concludes with a summary and findings from the literature study and the descriptive statistics. Based on these findings the following recommendations were made:

- ✓ The development of curricula, institutions and methods of assessment must include a variety of strategies to accommodate learners with special educational needs, such as the hearing impaired.
- ✓ The basic training of educators must include compulsory courses such as orthopedagogics that will enable them to cope with the demands for inclusion of learners with special educational needs.

## DEDICATION

*This work is dedicated to:*

*My parents, my late father (Freeman M. Khumalo), my mother (Bazini Rosemond Khumalo), father (Sipho C. Khumalo) and my uncle (Fortune M. Nqashi) for they have given me the light, which does not end its brightness.*

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*My late brother and sister (Ntando Khumalo and Zamantungwa Precious Khumalo) for loving me until God, Almighty took them unto Him. "LALANI NIPHUMULE MANTUNGWA AMAHLE".*

## CHAPTER 1

### ORIENTATION

	<b>PAGE</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM	2
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	2
1.4 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS	3
1.4.1 Gender issue	3
1.4.2 Educator	3
1.4.3 Education	4
1.4.4 Inclusive education	4
1.4.5 Attitude	4
1.4.6 Disability	5
1.4.7 Handicap	5
1.4.8 Hearing impaired	6
1.4.9 Impairment	6
1.5 AIMS OF THIS STUDY	7
1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH	7
1.7 FURTHER COURSE OF THE STUDY	7



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

	<b>PAGE</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	9
2.2 EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION	9
2.2.1 Training and competency	11
2.2.2 Knowledge and experience	11
2.2.3 Resources	12
2.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	13
2.4 ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNERS' ABILITIES	14
2.4.1 Language development	15
(1) Communication	16
(2) Reading	17
(3) Writing	18
(4) Spelling	29
2.4.2 Self-esteem	20
2.4.3 The "normal" learners in the inclusive class	21
2.5 SUMMARY	22

## CHAPTER 3

### PLANNING OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

	PAGE
3.1 INTRODUCTION	23
3.2 PREPARATION FOR THE RESEARCH	23
3.2.1 Permission	23
3.2.2 Selection of respondents	24
3.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	24
3.3.1 Quantitative research	24
3.3.2 The questionnaire as research instrument	25
3.3.3 Construction of the questionnaire	26
3.3.4 Characteristics of a good questionnaire	27
3.3.5 Advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire	29
(1) Advantages of the written questionnaire	29
(2) Disadvantages of the questionnaire	31
3.3.6 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire	32
(1) Validity of the questionnaire	33
(2) Reliability of the questionnaire	34
3.4 PILOT STUDY	36
3.5 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE	37
3.6 THE PROCESSING OF THE DATA	38
(1) Descriptive statistics	38
3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATION	39
3.8 SUMMARY	39

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA**

	<b>PAGE</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION	40
4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	40
4.2.1 Gender of respondents	41
4.2.2 Age of respondents	41
4.2.3 Qualifications	42
4.2.4 Years in the teaching profession	43
4.2.5 Post level of the respondents	44
4.2.6 Type of post	44
4.2.7 Area in which schools are situated	45
4.2.8 Type of school	45
4.2.9 Educators' attitudes towards inclusive education	46
4.2.10 Successful implementation of inclusive education	53
4.3 SUMMARY	59

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

	<b>PAGE</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION	60
5.1.1 Statement of the problem	60
5.1.2 Literature review	60
5.1.3 Planning the research	62
5.1.4 Presentation and analysis of the research data	62
5.1.5 Aims of the study	63
5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS	63
5.2.1 The curriculum, institutional development and assessment	63
(1) Rationale	63
(2) Recommendations	63
5.2.2 Utilisation and development of human resources	65
(1) Rationale	65
(2) Recommendations	65
5.2.3 Governance and funding	67
(1) Rationale	67
(2) Recommendations	67
5.3 FURTHER RESEARCH	69
5.3.1 Recommendation	69
5.4 CRITICISM	69
5.5 FINAL REMARK	70
REFERENCES	71

<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Table 1      Frequency distribution according to the gender of educators	41
Table 2      Frequency distribution according to the age group of the educators	41
Table 3      Frequency distribution according to the qualifications of educators	42
Table 4      Frequency distribution according to the educators' years of completed service in the teaching profession	43
Table 5      Frequency distribution according to the post level of the respondents	44
Table 6      Frequency distribution according to the type of post held by respondents	44
Table 7      Frequency distribution according to the area in which respondents' schools are situated	45
Table 8      Frequency distribution according to the classification of respondents' schools	45
Table 9      Frequency distribution according to educators' attitudes towards inclusive education	46
Table 10     Frequency distribution according to the availability of facilities or strategies for successful implementation of inclusive education	53

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **ORIENTATION**

	<b>PAGE</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM	2
1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	2
1.4 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS	3
1.4.1 Gender issue	3
1.4.2 Educator	3
1.4.3 Education	4
1.4.4 Inclusive education	4
1.4.5 Attitude	4
1.4.6 Disability	5
1.4.7 Handicap	5
1.4.8 Hearing impaired	6
1.4.9 Impairment	6
1.5 AIMS OF THIS STUDY	7
1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH	7
1.7 FURTHER COURSE OF THE STUDY	7

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **ORIENTATION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The 1994 elections brought about changes such as democratisation, equality, non-discrimination, equity and redress, as well as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (Department of Education, 2001a:10). The new education system stipulates that no unfair discrimination may take place against anyone or anything on the following grounds: age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability, HIV or other infectious diseases. All learners, regardless of their impairments, should be accommodated in the mainstream schools.

The South African Schools Act, Act No. 84 of 1996 categorically states “a mainstream school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfair discrimination in any way.” This implies that based on the rights of all learners and their parents, no learners may be turned away from any mainstream school if it is at all possible to accommodate the learner.

This further implies that, inclusion of all learners, including the hearing impaired learners in mainstream education will help do away with the labelling of learners with impairments. Learners with impairments will therefore be able to live with their parents, sisters, brothers or relatives and attend a mainstream school (Department of Education, 2001a:3).

The aim of inclusive education is to enable learners with impairments to maximise their opportunities, potential and personal fulfilment in their family environment, in school and in the wider community (Booth & Potts, 1983:62).

## 1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

Various research studies in South Africa on inclusive education indicate that educators in mainstream classrooms generally express negative attitudes to mainstreaming policies (Bothma, Gravett & Swart, 2000:20; 200-204). If educators in the mainstream classrooms have a negative attitude to inclusive education, this could become a critical barrier to learning and development and the successful implementation of the policy of inclusive education.

There are some concerns about the inclusion of the hearing impaired learners in the mainstream classrooms. These concerns include, *inter alia*, the following (Sethosa, 2001:169-192; Weeks, 2000:258-259):

- ✓ South African educators are confused and insecure because of a series of radical changes that have transformed their working environment.
- ✓ Educators are not acquainted with the principles of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE).
- ✓ Educators struggle to involve parents and communities in the learning process.
- ✓ Educators feel that they are obliged to implement the inclusion policy about which they were not consulted.
- ✓ The availability and provision of sufficient support and resources.
- ✓ Educators' lack confidence in their own abilities to teach hearing impaired learners.

## 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem that will be investigated in this study pertains to the special needs and problems, such as uncertainties, difficulties and adjustments that are created



for educators, with the inclusion of hearing impaired learners in mainstream education. The following are questions that require answers concerning inclusive education:

- ✓ Are educators in the mainstream class adequately equipped to meet the special needs of the hearing impaired learner?
- ✓ Are the special needs of the hearing impaired learner sufficiently met in a mainstream classroom?
- ✓ Is sufficient professional support available to assist educators to meet the special educational needs of the hearing impaired learner?

#### **1.4 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS**

The study on educators' attitudes to inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner will cover a variety of concepts. To ensure a clear understanding of the problem to be investigated it is necessary to explain some of these concepts.

##### **1.4.1 Gender issue**

In this study all references to any gender include references to the other gender.

##### **1.4.2 Educator**

According to the South African Schools Act, Act No. 84 of 1996 an educator is any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services, including professional therapy and education psychological services at any public school, further education and training institutions, departmental office or adult basic education centre, and who is appointed in a post or any educator establishment under this Act (Department of Education, 2001:10).

### 1.4.3 **Education**

Education as pedagogic assistance is the positive influencing of a non-adult by an adult, with the specific purpose of effecting changes of significant value. Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1990:9) say education is the process of learning and changing as a result of schooling and other experiences.

### 1.4.4 **Inclusive education**

According to the Department of Education (2001:6), inclusive education is a system of education that acknowledges that all children and youth need support. It also respects differences in learners whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, and disability or HIV status. Inclusive education is a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of all learners (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:19).

All learners have the right of access to a learning environment that values, respects and accommodates diversity and that provides education appropriate to the learners' needs within an integrated system of education (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996:55). According to Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:200) the South African government's policy on inclusive education stipulates that all learners, irrespective of race, gender, class, religion, disability, culture or sexual preference have a right of access to a learning environment in a single system of education that values, respects and accommodates diversity.

The ultimate purpose or aim of inclusive education is to enable learners with impairments to maximise their opportunities, potential and personal fulfilment in their family environment, in school and in the wider community (Booth & Potts, 1983:62).

### 1.4.5 **Attitude**

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:28) an attitude is a mental or neutral state of readiness, organised through experience, exerting a

directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related. Attitudes prepare people for action, are learned from experience and exert a motivating force on behaviour. Sdorow and Rickabaugh (2000:478) say attitudes are cognitively and emotionally toned dispositions acquired through maturation and experience and they influence a person's approach-avoidance behaviour towards persons, objects, events and ideas. All attitudes are learned consciously or unconsciously and usually they become stronger and long lasting. Du Toit and Kruger (1994:59) maintain that an attitude always involves a relationship and will involve a certain disposition or action. The cognitive component is the factual information one has and the effective component is the emotion associated with the attitude. For the purpose of this study an attitude is seen as a conscious state of readiness which has a direct or indirect directive influence on a person's actions towards all related objects and situations.

#### 1.4.6 **Disability**

According to Wolfendale (1992:70) and Du Toit (1991:11) disability is a defect in physical make-up or functioning that can be specified and described objectively. Davies and Green (1998:27) say the term disability refers to "an inference in function" and is therefore the commonly used term that indicates what the individual cannot do. It may be absolute, for example blindness, or partial, like stiffness and pain in joints following arthritis. Disabilities may be congenital or acquired (Booth & Potts, 1983:21). From the above it is clear that the definitions of "impairment" and "disability" overlap and a clear distinction between the two terms is not possible.

#### 1.4.7 **Handicap**

A handicap refers to an identifiable deficiency in the child's given potential, such as sensory, neural, intellectual or physical deficiencies (Kapp, 1991:27).

#### 1.4.8 **Hearing impaired**

- ✓ According to Mastropier and Scruggs (2000:7) a great deal of confusion among professionals working with children with hearing losses may be traced to an unfortunate inability to reach consensus on terminology. For most people the term “hearing impaired” covers the entire range of auditory impairment, encompassing both the deaf and those with a very mild hearing loss. For others the term “hearing impaired” refers to the hard of hearing.

Webster and Ellwood (1985:61) note that the term deaf is mostly used to describe impairment, disability and handicap. Mahlangu (1989:56) says the terms deaf and deafness are restricted to describing the disability caused by the impairment. With the above definitions in mind the researcher distinguishes between a deaf and a hearing impaired person as follows:

- ✓ A deaf person is one whose hearing is impaired to an extent that precludes the understanding of speech through the ear alone, with or without the use of a hearing aid. Learners who are deaf require special class / school placement and they require special speech, hearing, language and educational assistance.
- ✓ A hearing impaired (hard of hearing) person is one whose hearing is impaired to an extent that makes it difficult, but does not preclude the understanding of speech through the ear alone, with or without a hearing aid. Learners in this category routinely do not require special school placement but do require special speech and hearing assistance.

#### 1.4.9 **Impairment**

Impairment is a physical or psychological abnormality that is clearly recognisable, such as an amputated or defective limb, or a disease affecting some organ mechanism or system of the body (Webster & Ellwood. 1985:42).

## **1.5 AIMS OF THIS STUDY**

The aims of this study are:

- ✓ To pursue a study of relevant literature in order to establish educators' attitudes to the inclusion of the hearing impaired learner in mainstream education.
- ✓ To undertake an empirical investigation into educators' attitudes to the inclusion of the hearing impaired learner in mainstream education.
- ✓ To make certain recommendations in order to provide accountable support for educators to meet the special educational needs of the hearing impaired learner in mainstream education.

## **1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH**

Research with regard to this study will be conducted as follows:

- ✓ A literature study of available, relevant literature.
- ✓ An empirical survey comprising self-structured questionnaires to be completed by primary school educators with hearing impaired learners in their mainstream classes.

## **1.7 FURTHER COURSE OF THE STUDY**

Chapter 2 will be a literature review of the attitudes of educators with regard to inclusive education, with emphasis on the inclusion of hearing impaired learners.

In Chapter 3 the method of the empirical research followed in this study will be explained.

Chapter 4 will represent an analysis of the data.

In Chapter 5 a summary of the research, findings from the literature and empirical studies, shortcomings and certain recommendations will be presented.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

	<b>PAGE</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	9
2.2 EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION	9
2.2.1 Training and competency	11
2.2.2 Knowledge and experience	11
2.2.3 Resources	12
2.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	13
2.4 ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNERS' ABILITIES	14
2.4.1 Language development	15
(1) Communication	16
(2) Reading	17
(3) Writing	18
(4) Spelling	29
2.4.2 Self-esteem	20
2.4.3 The "normal" learners in the inclusive class	21
2.5 SUMMARY	22

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Since educators are the people who make learning possible, their own attitudes, beliefs and feelings with regard to what is happening in the schools and in the classroom are of crucial importance (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1998:70). It is generally accepted that change is challenging and may be perceived as either a threat or an opportunity. Various researches undertaken in South Africa on educators' attitudes towards inclusive education, indicate that educators in mainstream classrooms generally express negative attitudes to mainstreaming policies (Bothma, Gravett & Swart, 200-204).

Engelbrecht and Forlin (1998:3), on the other hand, found that a number of South African educators in mainstream classrooms were positively disposed towards inclusive education. Educators in mainstream classrooms will be, and in many cases are, accommodating learners with impairments, such as hearing impairments. Inclusive education makes additional demands on educators and educators' sense of efficacy in including hearing impaired learners in mainstream classes, and plays a determining role in the successful implementation of an inclusive educational policy.

In this chapter the discussion will focus on educators' attitudes towards the inclusion of hearing impaired learners in a mainstream classroom.

#### **2.2 EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION**

According to Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:200-204) there are a number of views that may influence educators' attitudes towards the inclusion of the hearing impaired learners in the mainstream classroom.



According to Kauffman and Hallaham (1989:156) educators perceive hearing-impaired learners as:

- ✓ less desirable to have in the classroom relative to other children;
- ✓ less attentive;
- ✓ less able to organise themselves;
- ✓ less able to cope with new situations;
- ✓ less socially acceptable to others;
- ✓ less able to complete assignments; and
- ✓ less tactful than classmates.

Bender, Vail and Scott (1995:87-94) refer to several international studies that indicate that to some educators, inclusion and special needs carry negative connotations. These include feelings of insufficient support resources, insufficient training and insufficient assistance (Forlin, Douglas & Hattie, 1996:43).

Some educators have concerns about the inclusion of hearing impaired learners in the mainstream classrooms. These concerns are, *inter alia* the following (Sethosa, 2001:169-192; Weeks, 2000:258-259):

- ✓ Educators have not been trained to teach learners with impairments like hearing disabilities.
- ✓ South African educators are confused and insecure because of the series of radical changes that have transformed their working environment.
- ✓ Educators are not acquainted with the principles of Outcomes-Based Education.
- ✓ The burden of additional responsibilities and the amount of time required to address the needs of the hearing impaired learners.

- ✓ The availability and provision of sufficient support and resources.
- ✓ Educators struggle to involve parents and communities in the learning process.

### 2.2.1 **Training and competency**

Educators' feelings that they are not adequately trained or have the abilities that are needed to cope with hearing impaired learners can be seen as one of the causes of their negative attitudes to inclusive education (Webster & Ellwood, 1985:56). According to Sethosa (2001:76) educators' attitudes to inclusive education are closely related to their feelings of competency and effectiveness. Educators feel that they are adequately equipped (competent and effective) to teach learners with disabilities and/or handicaps if they have relevant training in that field (Mastropier & Scruggs, 2000:201). The training of educators also seems to be a problem for inclusive education in South Africa. The challenge thus facing many South African teachers is that they have not been trained to cope with the diversity of learners entering schools.

International research has found that most educators of hearing impaired learners in mainstream schools who have not been trained to teach these learners, did not choose to teach such learners and prefer not to teach these learners (Bender, Vail & Scott, 1995:87-94).

### 2.2.2 **Knowledge and experience**

To be an effective educator knowledge and experience are needed. In general mainstream educators have little or no knowledge and experience to teach hearing impaired learners in normal classrooms in mainstream schools (Sethosa, 2001:42). An educator must have knowledge of the special educational needs of a learner before true education can take place (Vahid, Harwood & Brown, 1999:56). According to Weeks (2000:258-259) inadequate training of educators results in little or no knowledge of inclusive education.

Mainstream educators do not know the needs of hearing impaired learners, thus viewing them as less cooperative (Kauffman & Hallaham, 1989:156). They find it difficult to assist all the learners in an inclusive classroom because of the problem of individual differences (Silberg & Kruft, 1998:147). Because of the lack of knowledge, educators experience difficulty in teaching the hearing impaired learners in mainstream classes (Nissen, 2000:56). According to Davies and Green (1998:97) insufficient knowledge and experience of hearing impaired learners in mainstream classrooms also affect educators' attitudes towards inclusion. Educators who do not have knowledge and experience to meet the diversity of needs in an inclusive classroom, thus experience negative attitudes towards inclusive education (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996:1-08).

Insufficient knowledge and experience of inclusive education by educators also lead to feelings of inferiority and fears of breaching learners' rights, thus resulting in a lack of motivation and enthusiasm to meet the special needs of all the learners in their inclusive classrooms (Weeks, 2000:258-158).

According to Webster (1986:34) educators are willing to accept hearing-impaired learners in their ordinary class if they can consult with people with knowledge of special education.

### 2.2.3 **Resources**

To teach hearing impaired learners, special resources are needed. Research has found that educators feel unprepared and unequipped to teach hearing impaired learners in an inclusive classroom, and they ascribe this to a lack of facilities (Bagwandeen, 1994:15-19). If resources are not readily available to educators it makes the teaching of hearing impaired learners difficult (Giangreco, 1997, 44:193-206). Educators are often unable to identify the nature and extent of the learning difficulties of learners with impairments, including the hearing impaired learners (Bouwer & Du Toit, 2000:242).

Educators experience stress regarding the location of age-appropriate educational resources and securing suitable resources for the inclusive

classrooms (Engelbrecht & Forlin, 3:1-10). Human resources are not easily utilised in order to address barriers to learning and development. These include (Slavin, 1994:106; Lewis, 1991:93-94):

- ✓ guidance educators;
- ✓ remedial and special / adaptation class teachers;
- ✓ therapists;
- ✓ psychologists;
- ✓ special workers;
- ✓ school nurses;
- ✓ specialist personnel, and
- ✓ community resources, e.g. parents and NGOs.

### **2.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

A literature review on educators' attitudes to the implementation of inclusive education clearly indicates that there are numerous factors which influence their attitudes (Peresuh & Ndawi, 1998:210). According to Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:203) and Mittler (1995:22.(2):105-108) the following factors can, *inter alia*, be seen as contributing to educators' negative attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education for hearing impaired learners:

- ✓ Some educators have the impression that all special and remedial schools, as well as special classes, are to be closed and thus leave no placement options open for learners with learning disabilities, except within mainstream schools.
- ✓ The educators in mainstream schools feel that they had neither the training nor the experience to work with learners with special educational needs.
- ✓ With the new inclusive policy mainstream educators are now challenged with the task to accommodate a diversity of learners and to address different barriers to learning.

- ✓ There had not been sufficient consultations with educators before it was decided to implement inclusive education and they feel they have no choice but to accept and implement the policy.
- ✓ Educators feel they do not have adequate training or the necessary experience to educate learners with special educational needs in an ordinary classroom setting.
- ✓ A factor that seems to be very important to educators concerning successful implementation of inclusion is the large classes and the understaffing in schools.

## **2.4 ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNERS' ABILITIES**

Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (1999:70) maintain that educators whose professional education took place in a climate that views intelligence as fixed and unmodifiable are likely to have limited expectations about the abilities of learners with special educational needs, such as hearing impaired learners. A more optimistic attitude is the belief that abilities can be changed and modified, and that each learner has the potential for learning.

According to Davies and Green (1998:16-22) inclusion of hearing-impaired learners in mainstream schools showed a remarkable change in some educators' attitudes toward learners' abilities. Educators have a diversity of learners in an inclusive classroom, which means a diversity of abilities (Bothma, Gravett & Swart, 2000:20:200-204). However, educators also have individual and thus a diversity of attitudes about the different abilities of learners. International research discovered that educators with little experience of learners with disabilities are likely to have negative attitudes to inclusion (Coates, 1989:534). Unfortunately many learners with disabilities often experience discrimination and/or inadequate educational programmes because they are different from the majority of learners in the inclusive classroom (Green, Forrester, Mvambi, Janse van Vuuren & Du Toit, 1999:42, 70, 71).

The school environment should provide the opportunity for teaching and learning to take place through several modalities to develop a curriculum that caters for a diversity of intelligence, including the diversity of abilities of learners with special educational needs such as the hearing impaired learners (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:70). According to Forlin (1998:87-110) good educators are responsive to the different abilities of learners and the difference in their individual performances. The possibility exists that learners' motivation and achievements will improve because competent educators are using many different methods of teaching to accommodate different learners in an inclusive classroom, resulting in a supportive and positive attitude towards learners' different abilities (Mahlangu, 1989:64; Webster & Ellwood, 1986:105).

Educators' attitudes towards the hearing impaired learners' abilities will be discussed under the following headings:

- ✓ language development;
- ✓ communication;
- ✓ reading;
- ✓ writing; and
- ✓ spelling.

#### 2.4.1 **Language development**

Language is a system of symbols which one employs for making sense of one's world, in a way which also makes sense for others (Jordaan & Jordaan, 1989:422). Language development is very important because all learning depends on a command of language. Everything the learner learns is to a certain extent dependent upon his knowledge and control of a language, hence the enormous importance of language with regard to education (Miller, 1997:109). According to Jordaan and Jordaan (1989:425) language competence helps a child to classify and stabilise his perceptions, i.e. to place them in conceptual categories, which will facilitate meaning attribution in future perceptual situations.

Wood (1989:105) maintains that if a learner cannot hear the difference between morphemes, phonemes, words and larger syntactic patterns, he cannot learn to recognise these patterns and to associate them with meanings. Webster (1989:49) agrees by stating that being hearing impaired does not only deprive learners of sound but could be better described as the deprivation of language. The deprivation of language also affects the hearing impaired learner's social relationships, emotional well-being and educational development (Lewis, 1991:116-120). According to Webster and Wood (1989:59) an inability to grasp a language and to communicate inhibits the child's intellectual development.

In the formal education system, educators often use methods that involve learners (including the hearing impaired learners) in learning language through words only, and do not always plan non-verbal activities. In mainstream classrooms, educators expect learners to learn by listening to them, and do not provide for learners who find it difficult to listen, like the hearing impaired learners. These learners get bored quickly or feel frustrated (Winkler, Modise & Dauber, 1989:76).

According to Mercer (1992:106) the linguistic skills of the hearing impaired learner not only directly affects his academic achievement, but also the nature of the learner's acceptance by a hearing society. Kauffman and Hallaham (1989:156) confirm this by saying that educators tend to have negative attitudes towards language development of hearing impaired learners as they view them as less attentive and less socially acceptable to others.

#### (1) Communication

Communication is the means by which a person is able to transmit his thoughts, feelings, ideas and information from himself to another (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996:5). In every part of people's daily lives they need to communicate with someone else, in which verbal communication plays a major role that depends on the command of a language (Webster, 1989:106).

According to Reed (1987:108) the spoken language of hearing impaired learners vary from almost perfect to poor, and are not always on the same level of development as that of their 'normal' peers. The hearing impaired learner cannot control his volume when speaking. They cannot control their voice level so well because they cannot hear themselves correctly. As a result, they may talk very loudly. They are at times aware of this problem and as a result over-compensate and talk too softly (Mercer, 1992:106). A voice that is too loud or too soft can create difficulties in a busy classroom, both for the learning impaired child and those around him (Webster, 1986:1211).

Many educators of hearing impaired learners have negative attitudes in communicating with them. The reason for this is that they lack the necessary skills and knowledge of speaking to the hearing impaired learners (Engelbrecht & Fourie, 1998:107). The possibility of having a hearing impaired learner in the mainstream classroom gives rise to grave doubts to many educators, about their ability to be able to communicate and to teach the child effectively.

## (2) Reading

According to Goodman (1986:101) and Coates (1989:72) the results of numerous international studies have consistently demonstrated that the reading comprehension skills of hearing impaired learners are considerably lower than those of normal hearing learners of comparable age. Webster (1989:93) agreed that there is no doubt about the deficits in reading skills when hearing impaired learners are compared with hearing learners on traditional reading tests. He says what is even more disheartening is that several researchers have concluded that some hearing impaired learners reach a plateau in their reading development. According to Sethosa (2001:169-192) educators tend to have a negative attitude to the hearing impaired learners because they are not acquainted with the principles of outcomes-based education, thus finding it difficult to involve these learners

Wood (1989:169) maintains that hearing learners understand passives, negatives and verb tenses better than hearing impaired learners. In their reading, hearing



impaired learners also ignore markers indicating negation, passive voice and verb tense and thereby read the sentences as simple, active constructions. Investigations into the performance of hearing impaired learners on standardised tests of reading comprehension suggest that they encounter difficulty in processing a language in print (Silberg & Kluft, 1998:89). Mercer (1992:146) state that reading and writing are seen not as separate entities but rather as components of a larger and more complex process involving production, mediation and reception. In many ways reading may be considered more important for hearing impaired learners than for the hearing learners.

### (3) Writing

Writing is not just a simple process of transcribing speech into printed symbols, nor can it be considered as the equal, but opposite process to reading (Lewis, 1991:14). Handwriting and spelling affect the ease with which a person writes. Houck (1989:203) maintains that the more central aspects which affect the meaning of what is written, involve the vocabulary chosen, how sentences are constructed and how sentences are linked together to make a cohesive text. Hearing impaired learners find it difficult to fulfil these writing requirements because they have a much poorer grasp of the language system than their hearing peers (Wood, 1989:16). According to Webster (1989:34) it appears that educators are more willing to accept and teach handwriting to the hearing impaired learners in their ordinary class if they can consult with an educator with knowledge of special education.

Hearing impaired learners have difficulties in writing (Lerna, 1990:24). The written language of hearing impaired learners has received more research attention than any other aspect. Writing is easier to study, in the sense that it can be inspected visually. These studies have found that certain recognisable features can be detected in the writing of hearing impaired learners (Webster & Wood, 1989:96; Wood, 1989:25). Compared with the writing of hearing learners the hearing impaired learners (Mittler, 1995:28):

- ✓ use shorter and simpler sentences,

- ✓ use more 'content' words, such as nouns, verbs and adjectives,
- ✓ use few 'function' words such as articles, auxiliaries, prepositions and conjunctions,
- ✓ keep to a particular sentence pattern, and
- ✓ their sentences are more rigid and stereotyped.

Educators that feel they lack knowledge and experience to teach handwriting to the hearing impaired learners are more accepting of them if the following suggested modifications are available (Giangreco, 1997:190):

- ✓ Availability of support services.
- ✓ Decreased class size.
- ✓ Consultation with special educators.
- ✓ Appropriate resources.

#### (4) Spelling

Although spelling is the one area of language competency most dependent on auditory awareness, it seems to pose very few problems to hearing impaired learners when compared to normal learners (Webster, 1989:200). A possible explanation for this finding is that in just the same way as there are many possible routes to reconstruct the meaning of words, so are there many cue sources in relation to how words are spelt (Webster & Wood, 1989:89). Mahlangu (1989:65) says both reading and spelling depend on the redundancy of information in print and that there are more cues available than are strictly necessary. Unfortunately many learners with impairments such as the hearing impairment often experience discrimination and/or inadequate educational programmes because they are different from the majority of learners in the inclusive classroom (Forlin, 1998:24).

In reading and spelling, hearing impaired learners pay attention to different cue sources in the text and therefore tackle literacy tasks in qualitatively different ways from hearing learners (Reed, 1987:107). Webster and Ellwood (1986:65) maintain that hearing-impaired learners might remember some word on a purely visual basis without any interference from the sound or letter components. International research reveals that educators with little experience of learners with impairments like the hearing impairment are likely to have negative attitudes to the spelling of the hearing impaired learners (Mittler, 1995:06). According to Coates (1989:533) it appears that educators want other professionals to help them with the hearing impaired learners rather than being assisted by other educators, to effect the change to inclusion.

#### 2.4.2 **Self-esteem**

Self-esteem is the degree of positive or negative feeling that one has on the assessment or evaluation of oneself. Sebba and Ainscow (1996:26) say it is what one feels about oneself, and such feelings that are brought about as one compares oneself to others. A person who is able to do things better than others, achieves the goals he has set for himself and will thus have a high self-concept. According to Webster (1989:23) self-esteem is one's self-judgement of one's own abilities, influence and popularity. Low self-esteem affects the hearing impaired learner's social relationships, emotional well-being and educational development (Reed, 1987:106).

Davies and Green (1998:97) found that educators have positive attitudes towards mainstreaming learners with hearing impairments, who have low self-esteem. Although the finding was based on the responses from a relatively small sample of primary school educators, it suggests that there are educators with positive feelings towards inclusion of hearing impaired learners with low-esteem (Forlin, 1998:25).

A learner's attitude to the facts of his own hearing impairment and to the way he looks and communicates, will relate closely to the way in which others accept him. According to Kauffman and Hallahan (1989:158) acceptance by parents,

family educators and peers bring self-acceptance. Self-acceptance enhances self-esteem. Thus the hearing impaired learner's low self-esteem evolves from long-term experiences of failure, or not understanding or functioning at the same levels as his peers. This includes being unable to make friends, join in conversation, follow jokes and repartee, the feeling of being left out of social occasions, rumour or announcement, and an identification of wearing hearing aids.

All these contribute to a poor sense of self-worth and a low self-esteem (Webster & Ellwood, 1996:122). A sure sign that a hearing impaired learner is suffering from a low self-esteem is a refusal to wear a hearing aid, especially the more visible aid, or avoidance of special facilities for the hearing impaired (Webster & Wood, 1989:72).

International research has found that most educators of hearing impaired learners with low self-esteem in mainstream schools who have not been trained to teach these learners, did not choose to teach such learners and would prefer not to teach these learners (Bothma, Gravett & Swart, 2000:20: 2000-204).

#### 2.4.3 **The "normal" learners in the inclusive class**

Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:200) revealed that educators in an inclusive classroom show much more concern for the "normal" learners. The general sentiment amongst inclusive class educators appeared to be that the "normal" learner in the system would be neglected, due to the educator's time and effort being consumed by the learners with special educational needs in the class (Davies & Green, 1998, 18).

According to Tomlinson (1982:71) educators also fear that the standards in the mainstream class would drop because they feel that "normal" learners would be neglected in order to accommodate learners with special educational needs like the hearing impaired. Educators feel it is not fair to expect from "normal" learners to support and help the learner with special educational needs instead of spending time to focus on their own education.

## 2.5 SUMMARY

Inclusive education, in the context of outcomes-based education, constitutes a challenge to the education system as a whole and in particular to the South African educators with a hearing impaired learner in the class. Inclusive education for hearing impaired learners requires educators to be flexible in their thinking and innovative and creative in their approaches to teaching and learning.

Educators are expected to have the necessary knowledge, skills, competencies and support to accommodate a diversity of learners in the inclusive class. This implies that educators must be able to select appropriate teaching strategies to achieve the specific outcomes of education. It seems to be unrealistic for educators in an inclusive education setting to manage the changes and challenges on their own. An efficient support system and appropriate resources are required both in and outside an inclusive classroom.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PLANNING OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

	<b>PAGE</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION	23
3.2 PREPARATION FOR THE RESEARCH	23
3.2.1 Permission	23
3.2.2 Selection of respondents	24
3.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	24
3.3.1 Quantitative research	24
3.3.2 The questionnaire as research instrument	25
3.3.3 Construction of the questionnaire	26
3.3.4 Characteristics of a good questionnaire	27
3.3.5 Advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire	29
(1) Advantages of the written questionnaire	29
(2) Disadvantages of the questionnaire	31
3.3.6 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire	32
(1) Validity of the questionnaire	33
(2) Reliability of the questionnaire	34
3.4 PILOT STUDY	36
3.5 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE	37
3.6 THE PROCESSING OF THE DATA	38
(1) Descriptive statistics	38
3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATION	39
3.8 SUMMARY	39

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PLANNING OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the preceding chapter educators' attitudes towards the inclusion of hearing impaired learners were described by means of literature research. The literature study has revealed numerous factors which may influence educators' attitudes towards inclusive education for hearing impaired learners. Mainstream educators feel that they are not adequately trained or have the abilities to cope with a diversity of learners, which include the hearing impaired. Lack of relevant knowledge and experience of learners with special educational needs also affect the educators' attitudes towards inclusive education. In order to gain insight into educators' attitudes towards inclusive education and their perceptions of the success of such education, a research instrument was developed to provide the necessary data. This research instrument comprised a questionnaire administered to 110 primary school educators in the Port Shepstone district on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **3.2 PREPARATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

##### **3.2.1 Permission**

With the aim of administering the questionnaire to educators it was required to first request permission from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC). A letter to seek the necessary permission was drafted (Appendix B) and directed to the Port Shepstone Circuit Manager being the area where the research sample would be selected. A copy of the questionnaire (Appendix A) was sent with the letter for approval by the department. After permission was granted by the Circuit Manager for the intended research to be undertaken (Appendix C) the researcher visited the principals of the randomly

selected schools with the letter of approval in order to seek their permission to administer the questionnaire to the educators at the school.

### **3.2.2 Selection of respondents**

Thirty schools were randomly selected from the list of primary schools in the Port Shepstone District on the KwaZulu-Natal South Coast. The district comprises predominantly of semi-urban areas. From each school five educators were randomly selected. This provided the researcher with a randomly selected sample of 150 educators as respondents, which can be considered an adequate sample for reliable data analysis by means of descriptive statistics. Only 110 correctly completed questionnaires were received from the 150 respondents.

## **3.3 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

### **3.3.1 Quantitative research**

The purpose of a research design is to provide the most valid and accurate answers possible to research questions. McMillan and Schumacher (1998:34) say that since there are many types of research questions and many types of designs, it is important to match the design with the questions. Quantitative research methods collect data to be translated into a statistical format. The responses of respondents to the questions in a questionnaire are recorded in coded format, presented in frequency tables, graphs and/or chart formats, analysed and interpreted (De Vos, 2001:208). The simplest form of data analysis is univariate analysis, which means that one variable is analysed, mainly with the view to describing that variable (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:100). It can thus be stated that where a first time researcher requires information, quantitative data collection and analysis seem to be the most suitable method. The researcher selected the quantitative approach because:

- ✓ it is more formalised;
- ✓ is better controlled;



- ✓ has a range that is more exactly defined, and
- ✓ uses methods relatively close to the physical sciences.

### 3.3.2 **The questionnaire as research instrument**

According to Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:504) a questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with some topic or related group of topics, given to a selected group of individuals for the purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:190) say the questionnaire is a prepared question form submitted to certain persons (respondents) with a view to obtaining information.

Churchill and Peter (Schnetler, 1993:77) have shown that the measuring instrument has the greatest influence on the reliability of research data. The characteristics of measurement are best controlled by the careful construction of the instrument. There is, however, insufficient appreciation for the fact that a questionnaire should be constructed according to certain principles (De Vos, 2001:89).

A well-designed questionnaire is the culmination of a long process of planning the research objective, formulating the problem, generating the hypothesis, etc. A questionnaire is not simply thrown together. A poorly designed questionnaire can invalidate any research results, notwithstanding the merits of the sample, the field workers and the statistical techniques (Huysamen, 1989:2). In their criticism of questionnaires Berchie and Anderson (Schnetler, 1993:61) object to poor design rather than to questionnaires as such. A well-designed questionnaire can boost the reliability and validity of the data to acceptable tolerances (Schumacher & Meillon, 1993:42).

It therefore stands to reason that questionnaire design does not take place in a vacuum. According to Dane (1990:315-319) the length of individual questions, the number of response options, as well as the format and wording of questions are determined by the following:

- ✓ The choice of the subject to be researched.
- ✓ The aim of the research.
- ✓ The size of the research sample.
- ✓ The method of data collection.
- ✓ The analysis of the data.

Against this background the researcher can now look at the principles that determine whether a questionnaire is well designed. It is thus necessary to draw a distinction between questionnaire content, question format, question order, type of questions, formulation of questions and validity and reliability of questions.

### 3.3.3 Construction of the questionnaire

Questionnaire design is an activity that should not take place in isolation. The researcher should consult and seek advice from specialists and colleagues at all times during the construction of the questionnaire (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:198). Questions to be taken up in the questionnaire should be tested on people to eliminate possible errors. A question may appear correct to the researcher when written down but can be interpreted differently when posed to another person. There should be no hesitation in changing questions several times before the final formulation whilst keeping the original purpose in mind. The most important point to be taken into account in questionnaire design is that it takes time and effort and that the questionnaire will be re-drafted a number of times before being finalised. A researcher must therefore ensure that adequate time is budgeted for in the construction and preliminary testing of the questionnaire. All these were taken into consideration by the researcher during the designing of the questionnaire for this investigation.

An important aim in the construction of the questionnaire for this investigation was to present the questions as simply and straightforwardly as possible. The researcher further aimed to avoid ambiguity, vagueness, bias, prejudice and technical language in the questions.

The aim of the questionnaire (Appendix A) was to obtain information regarding educators' attitudes towards the inclusion of hearing impaired learners in mainstream classrooms. The questions were formulated to establish educators' responses with regard to the following:

- ✓ Educators' attitudes towards inclusive education.
- ✓ The requirements for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

The questionnaire was subdivided into the following sections:

- ✓ Section one, which dealt with the biographical information of the respondents, namely primary school educators, and consisted of questions 1 to 7.
- ✓ Sections two and three of the questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions. The respondents were requested to indicate their responses to the statements pertaining to educators' attitudes towards inclusive education and the successful implementation thereof. The educators had to state their views concerning the latter in three ways, namely agree, disagree and uncertain. The questions were grouped as follows:
  - Section two contained questions concerning educators' attitudes towards inclusive education.
  - Section three consisted of questions relating to the requirements for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

#### 3.3.4 **Characteristics of a good questionnaire**

Throughout the construction of the questionnaire the researcher had to consider the characteristics of a good questionnaire in order to meet the requirements necessary for the research instrument to be reliable. The characteristics of a good questionnaire that were considered by the researcher are, according to Van

before proceeding to those that are more intimate or delicate in nature. Annoying and/or embarrassing questions should be avoided if possible.

### 3.3.5 **Advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire**

Data can be gathered by means of a structured questionnaire in, *inter alia*, the following ways: a written questionnaire that is mailed, delivered or handed out personally; personal interviews or telephone interviews (Kidder & Judd, 1986:221). Each mode has specific advantages and disadvantages which the researcher needs to evaluate for their suitability to the research question and the specific target population being studied, as well as relative cost.

The researcher used the written questionnaire as research instrument taking into consideration the following advantages:

#### (1) **Advantages of the written questionnaire**

The written questionnaire as a research instrument to obtain information has the following advantages (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:110; Cooper, 1989:01):

- ✓ Affordability is the primary advantage of written questionnaires because it is the least expensive means of data gathering.
- ✓ Written questionnaires preclude possible interviewer bias. The way the interviewer asks questions and even the interviewer's general appearance or interaction may influence respondents' answers. Such biases can be completely eliminated with a written questionnaire.
- ✓ A questionnaire permits anonymity. If it is arranged such that responses are given anonymously, this will increase the researcher's chances of receiving responses which genuinely represent a person's beliefs, feelings, opinions or perceptions.

den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:190), Mahlangu (1987:84-85) and Norval (1990:60), *inter alia*, the following:

- ✓ It has to deal with a significant topic, one the respondent will recognise as important enough to warrant spending his or her time on. The significance should be clearly and carefully stated on the questionnaire and in the accompanying letter.
- ✓ It must seek only that information which cannot be obtained from other sources.
- ✓ It must be as short as possible, but long enough to acquire the essential data. Long questionnaires frequently find their way into the wastepaper basket.
- ✓ Questionnaires should be attractive in appearance, neatly arranged and clearly duplicated or printed.
- ✓ Directions for a good questionnaire must be clear and complete and important terms clearly defined.
- ✓ Each question has to deal with a single concept and should be worded as simply and straightforwardly as possible.
- ✓ Different categories should provide an opportunity for easy, accurate and unambiguous responses.
- ✓ Objectively formulated questions with no leading suggestions should render the desired responses. Leading questions are just as inappropriate in a questionnaire as they are in a court of law.

Questions should be presented in a proper psychological order, proceeding from general to more specific and sensitive responses. An orderly grouping helps respondents to organise their own thinking so that their answers are logical and objective. It is preferable to present questions that create a favourable attitude

- ✓ They permit a respondent a sufficient amount of time to consider answers before responding.
- ✓ Questionnaires can be given to many people simultaneously, that is to say a large sample of the target population can be reached.
- ✓ They provide greater uniformity across the measurement situations than do interviews. Each person responds to exactly the same questions because standard instructions are given to the respondents.
- ✓ Generally the data provided by questionnaires can be more easily analysed and interpreted than the data obtained from verbal responses.
- ✓ A respondent may answer questions of a personal or embarrassing nature more willingly and frankly on a questionnaire than in a face-to-face situation with an interviewer who may be a complete stranger. In some cases it may happen that respondents report less than expected and make more critical comments in a mail questionnaire.
- ✓ Questions requiring considered answers rather than immediate answers could enable respondents to consult documents in the case of the mail questionnaire approach.
- ✓ Respondents can complete questionnaires in their own time and in a more relaxed atmosphere.
- ✓ Questionnaire design is relatively easy if the set guidelines are followed.
- ✓ The administering of a questionnaire and the coding, analysis and interpretation of data can be done without any special training.

(2) Disadvantages of the questionnaire

The researcher is also aware of the fact that the written questionnaire has important disadvantages. According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:190) and Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:112) the disadvantages of the questionnaire are, *inter alia*, the following:

- ✓ Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility of interviews. In an interview an idea or comment can be explored. This makes it possible to gauge how people are interpreting the question. If questions asked are interpreted differently by respondents the validity of the information obtained is jeopardised.
- ✓ People are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing.
- ✓ Questions can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straightforward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions.
- ✓ The mail questionnaire does not make provision for obtaining the views of more than one person at a time. It requires uninfluenced views of one person only.
- ✓ Answers to written questionnaires must be seen as final. Re-checking of responses cannot be done. There is no chance of investigating beyond the given answer for a clarification of ambiguous answers. If respondents are unwilling to answer certain questions nothing can be done about it because the mail questionnaire is essentially inflexible.
- ✓ In a written questionnaire the respondent examines all the questions at the same time before answering them and the answers to the different questions can therefore not be treated as "independent".

- ✓ Researchers are unable to control the context of question answering, and specifically, the presence of other people. Respondents may ask friends or family members to examine the questionnaire or comment on their answers, causing bias if the respondent's own private opinions are desired.
- ✓ Written questionnaires do not allow the researcher to correct misunderstandings or answer questions that the respondents may have. Respondents might answer questions incorrectly or not at all due to confusion or misinterpretation.

### 3.3.6 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

There are two concepts that are of critical importance in understanding issues of measurement in social science research, namely validity and reliability (Huysamen, 1989:1-3). All too rarely do questionnaire designers deal consciously with the degree of validity and reliability of their instrument. This is one of the reasons why so many questionnaires are lacking in these two qualities (Cooper, 1989:15). Questionnaires have a very limited purpose. In fact, they are often one-time data gathering devices with a very short life, administered to a limited population. There are ways to improve both the validity and reliability of questionnaires. Basic to the validity of a questionnaire is asking the right questions phrased in the least ambiguous way. In other words, do the items sample a significant aspect of the purpose of the investigation? Terms must therefore be clearly defined so that they have the same meaning to all respondents (Cohen & Manion, 1989:111-112).

Kidder and Judd (1989:53-54) mention the fact that although reliability and validity are two different characteristics of measurement, they "shade into each other". They are two ends of a continuum but at points in the middle it is difficult to distinguish between them. Validity and reliability are especially important in educational research because most of the measurements attempted in this area are obtained indirectly. Researchers can never guarantee that an educational or psychological measuring instrument measures precisely and dependably what it is intended to measure (Van den Aardweg & Van den



Aardweg, 1990:198). It is essential, therefore, to assess the validity and reliability of these instruments. Researchers must have a general knowledge as to what validity and reliability are and how one goes about validating a research instrument and establishing its reliability.

(1) Validity of the questionnaire

Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:560) define validity as the extent to which a measuring instrument satisfies the purpose for which it was constructed. It also refers to the extent to which it correlates with some criterion external to the instrument itself. Validity is that quality of a data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to determine what it was designed to determine. In general terms validity refers to the degree to which an instrument succeeds in measuring what it has set out to measure.

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:237), Mouton (1996:85-87) and Dane (1990:257-258) distinguish between three types of validity:

- ✓ Content validity, where content and cognitive processes included can be measured. Topics, skills and abilities should be prepared and items from each category randomly drawn.
- ✓ Criterion validity, which refers to the relationship between scores on a measuring instrument and an independent variable (criterion), believed to measure directly the behaviour or characteristic in question. The criterion should be relevant, reliable and free from bias and contamination.
- ✓ Construct validity, where the extent to which the test measures a specific trait or construct is concerned, for example, intelligence, reasoning ability, attitudes, etc.

The validity of the questionnaire indicates how worthwhile a measure is likely to be in a given situation. Validity shows whether the instrument is reflecting the true story, or at least something approximating the truth. A valid research

instrument is one that has demonstrated that it detects some “real” ability, attitude or prevailing situation that the researcher can identify and characterise (Schnetler, 1993:71). If the ability or attitude is itself stable, and if a respondent’s answers to the items are not affected by other unpredictable factors, then each administration of the instrument should yield essentially the same results (Dane, 1990:158).

The validity of the questionnaire as a research instrument reflects the sureness with which conclusions can be drawn. It refers to the extent to which interpretations of the instrument’s results, other than the ones the researcher wishes to make, can be ruled out. Establishing validity requires that the researcher anticipates the potential arguments that sceptics might use to dismiss the research results (Cooper, 1989:120).

The researcher employed the questionnaire as an indirect method to measure educators’ attitudes towards inclusive education. Because of the complexity of the respondents’ attributes one is never sure that the questionnaire devised will actually measure what it purports to measure. Items in the questionnaire cannot be measured like height, mass, length or size. From the interpretation of the results obtained in this investigation and the sureness with which conclusions could be drawn, the researcher is convinced that the questionnaire, to a great extent, did measure that which it was designed for.

## (2) Reliability of the questionnaire

According to Mulder (1989:209) and Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:512) reliability is a statistical concept and relates to consistency and dependability; that is consistency of obtaining the same relative answer when measuring phenomena that have not changed. A reliable measuring instrument is one that, if repeated under similar conditions, would present the same result or a near approximation of the initial result.

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:194) and Kidder and Judd (1986:47-48) distinguish between the following types of reliability:

- ✓ Test-retest reliability (coefficient of stability) – consistency estimated by comparing two or more repeated administrations of the measuring instrument. This gives an indication of the dependability of the results on one occasion and on another occasion.
- ✓ Internal consistency reliability – this indicates how well the test items measure the same thing.
- ✓ Split-half reliability – by correlating the results obtained from two halves of the same measuring instrument, one can calculate the split-half reliability.

In essence, reliability refers to consistency, but consistency does not guarantee truthfulness. The reliability of the question is no proof that the answers given reflect the respondent's true feelings (Dane, 1990:256). A demonstration of reliability is necessary but not conclusive evidence that an instrument is valid. Reliability refers to the extent to which measurement results are free of unpredictable kinds of error. Sources of error that effect reliability are, *inter alia*, the following (Mulder, 1989:209; Kidder & Judd, 1986:45):

- ✓ Fluctuations in the mood or alertness of respondents because of illness, fatigue, recent good or bad experiences, or temporary differences amongst members of the group being measured.
- ✓ Variations in the conditions of administration between groups. These range from various distractions, such as unusual outside noise to inconsistencies in the administration of the measuring instrument, such as omissions in verbal instructions.
- ✓ Differences in scoring or interpretation of results, chance differences in what the observer notices and errors in computing scores.
- ✓ Random effects by respondents who guess or check off attitude alternatives without trying to understand them.

When the questionnaire is used as an empirical research instrument there is no specific method, for example the “test-retest” method, to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Therefore, it will be difficult to establish to what extent the answers of the respondents were reliable. The researcher, however, believes that the questionnaires in this investigation were completed with the necessary honesty and sincerity required to render the maximum possible reliability. Frankness in responding to questions was made possible by the anonymity of the questionnaire. In the coding of the responses to the questions it was evident that questionnaires were completed with the necessary dedication.

### **3.4 PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study is an abbreviated version of a research project in which the researcher practises or tests the procedures to be used in the subsequent full-scale project (De Vos, 2001:178). For the purpose of the pilot study in this research project ten educators were selected from amongst the researcher’s colleagues and educator friends. The pilot study is a preliminary or “trial run” investigation using similar questions and similar subjects as in the final survey. Kidder and Judd (1986:211-212) say the basic purpose of a pilot study is to determine how the design of the subsequent study can be improved and to identify flaws in the measuring instrument. A pilot study gives the researcher an idea of what the method will actually look like in operation and what effects (intended or not) it is likely to have. In other words, by generating many of the practical problems that will ultimately arise, a pilot study enables the researcher to avert these problems by changing procedures, instructions and questions.

The number of participants in the pilot study or group is normally smaller than the number scheduled to take part in the final survey. Participants in the pilot study and the sample for the final study must be selected from the same target population. For the purpose of this study the researcher conducted a pilot run on her colleagues.

According to Plug, Meyer, Louw and Gouws (1991:49-66) the following are the purposes of a pilot study, and these were also the aim of the researcher in this survey:

- ✓ It provided the researcher with the opportunity of refining the wording and ordering the layout, which helped to prune the questionnaire to a manageable size.
- ✓ It permitted a thorough check of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, thus allowing an appraisal of their adequacy in treating the data.
- ✓ It greatly reduced the number of treatment errors because unforeseen problems revealed in the pilot study resulted in redesigning the main study.
- ✓ It saved the researcher major expenditures in time and money on aspects of the research, which would have been unnecessary.
- ✓ Feedback from other persons involved was made possible and led to important improvements in the main study.
- ✓ The approximate time required to complete the questionnaire was established in the pilot study.
- ✓ Questions and/or instructions that were misinterpreted were reformulated.

Through the use of the pilot study as “pre-test” the researcher was satisfied that the questions asked complied adequately with the requirements of the study.

### **3.5 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

If properly administered the questionnaire is the best available instrument for obtaining information from widespread sources or large groups simultaneously (Cooper, 1989:39). The researcher personally delivered questionnaires to the selected schools in the Port Shepstone District and collected them again after

completion. This method of administration facilitated the process and the response rate. A satisfactory return rate of 73% was obtained with 110 questionnaires completed and collected out of a distributed 150.

### **3.6 THE PROCESSING OF THE DATA**

Once data was collected, it had to be captured in a format, which would permit analysis and interpretation. This involved the careful coding of the 110 questionnaires completed by the randomly selected educators. The coded data was subsequently transferred onto a computer spreadsheet using the Quattro Pro 6.0 programme. The coded data was analysed using the same programme in order to interpret the results by means of descriptive statistics.

#### **(1) Descriptive statistics**

Descriptive statistics serve to describe and summarise observations (Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein, 1994:355). Frequency tables, histograms and polygons are useful in forming impressions about the distribution of data.

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:65) frequency distribution is a method to organise data obtained from questionnaires to simplify statistical analysis. A frequency table provides the following information:

- ✓ It indicates how many times a particular response appears on the completed questionnaires.
- ✓ It provides percentages that reflect the number of responses to a certain question in relation to the total number of responses.
- ✓ The arithmetic mean (average) can be calculated by adding all the scores and dividing it by the number of scores.

### **3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

This investigation was constrained by a number of factors. The following are likely factors that might have influenced the reliability and validity of the questionnaire:

- ✓ Although anonymity was required in the questionnaire the possibility exists that, because of the educators' cautiousness, they might not have been frank and truthful in their responses.
- ✓ The sensitive nature of items in the questionnaire might have elicited false or misleading responses that influenced the reliability of the results.
- ✓ To restrict the investigation to manageable proportions, the researcher limited the study to educators of schools which are easily accessible.

### **3.8 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the planning and design of the empirical research was discussed and a comprehensive description of the questionnaire as research instrument was given.

In the following chapter the data obtained from the completed questionnaires will be analysed and interpreted.

# CHAPTER 4

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA

	PAGE
4.1 INTRODUCTION	40
4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS	40
4.2.1 Gender of respondents	41
4.2.2 Age of respondents	41
4.2.3 Qualifications	42
4.2.4 Years in the teaching profession	43
4.2.5 Post level of the respondents	44
4.2.6 Type of post	44
4.2.7 Area in which schools are situated	45
4.2.8 Type of school	45
4.2.9 Educators' attitudes towards inclusive education	46
4.2.10 Successful implementation of inclusive education	53
4.3 SUMMARY	59



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the data that was collected from the completed questionnaires will be analysed, findings will be interpreted and some comments will be presented. The data comprised biographical information, educators' attitudes towards inclusive education and their perceptions of the successful implementation of inclusion education. Educators correctly completed one hundred and ten (110) questionnaires.

#### **4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:42) state that the purpose of research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person. Descriptive research is one of the methods of research used to study a person or persons scientifically in the educational situation. It attempts to describe the situation as it is, thus there is no intervention on the part of the researcher and therefore, no control. Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:355) say descriptive studies do not set out with the idea of testing hypotheses about relationships, but want to find the distribution of variables. In this study homothetic descriptive research was employed with the aim of describing educators' attitudes towards inclusive education.

The researcher was primarily concerned with the nature and degree of existing situations in schools.

#### 4.2.1 Gender of respondents

Table 1: Frequency distribution according to the gender of educators

Gender		Frequency	%
1	Male	42	38%
2	Female	68	62%
TOTAL		110	100%

Table 1 shows that the majority (62%) of the educators in the research sample are females. Possible reasons for this finding are the following:

- ✓ The research sample involved only primary schools. Primary schools tend to appoint more female than male educators.
- ✓ A female educator represents a motherly figure and is more acceptable by younger children as *in loco parentis*.
- ✓ Van der Linde (1993:42) believes that female educators have special qualities to care for the grade ones in the junior primary phase.

#### 4.2.2 Age of respondents

Table 2: Frequency distribution according to the age group of the educators

Age group		Frequency	%
1	20-25 years	7	6%
2	26-30 years	6	5%
3	31-35 years	27	25%
4	36-40 years	25	23%
5	41-45 years	15	14%
6	46-50 years	13	12%
7	51-55 years	12	11%
8	56-60 years	5	4%
TOTAL		110	100%

Close to fifty percent (48%) of the educators in the research sample are in the age group 31 to 40 years (Table 2). The Table also shows that most of the

educators (59%) are younger than 40 years which means that they have more to offer in terms of energy and productivity. The possibility also exists that younger educators may stay in the education profession for a longer period of time to gain more experience with the aim of possible promotion. Younger educators might also be more acceptable to the changes required in an inclusive classroom.

#### 4.2.3 Qualifications

Table 3: Frequency distribution according to the qualifications of educators

Qualifications		Frequency	%
1	Degree and diploma of certificate	34	31%
2	Diplomas and certificates	76	69%
TOTAL		110	100%

From Table 3 it emerges that the minority (31%) of the educators possess academic and professional qualifications that by many are perceived as being better qualified for the teaching profession. However, the finding that most (69%) of the educators have diplomas and certificates may be because they are teaching in primary schools. The contents (curricula) of teaching diplomas and certificates are more practical than theoretically orientated degree courses and therefore more appropriate for teaching younger primary school children (Griessel, Louw & Swart, 1993:71). In order to be an effective educator a person should have obtained the most suitable qualifications.

#### 4.2.4 Years in the teaching profession

Table 4      Frequency distribution according to the educators' years of completed service in the teaching profession

Completed years of service		Frequency	%
1	0-5 years	19	17%
2	6-10 years	23	21%
3	11-15 years	11	10%
4	16-20 years	30	27%
5	21-25 years	11	10%
6	26-30 years	15	14%
7	30 years and more	1	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents (62%) in the research sample have more than 10 years teaching experience while more than half (52%) have more than 15 years' teaching experience. Experience together with adequate training is needed for the responsibilities and the demands imposed on educators (Gorman, 1989:21). The more experience and training an educator has, the more confidence and expertise he will have acquired to be an effective educator. Marsh (1992:88) says continuous professional development and experience are prerequisites for educators to keep up with the rapid pace of change in knowledge, advancement of technology and increasing demands imposed upon educators.

Research has also shown that experience is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of inclusive education (cf. 2.2.2).

#### 4.2.5 Post level of the respondents

Table 5: Frequency distribution according to the post level of the respondents

Post level		Frequency	%
1	Principal	8	8%
2	Deputy principal	4	4%
3	HOD	12	11%
4	Educator (Post level 1)	85	77%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the frequency distribution in Table 5 more than three quarters (77%) of the respondents are level one educators. This finding is consistent with the composition of educators in most schools. According to Chetty (2004:113) level one educators generally comprise a little over seventy percent of the teaching personnel at schools.

#### 4.2.6 Type of post

Table 6: Frequency distribution according to the type of post held by respondents

Type of post		Frequency	%
1	Permanent	92	84%
2	Temporary	18	16%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 6 shows that the majority of the respondents (84%) in the research sample are on the permanent staff. This high percentage can be seen as a favourable situation in a school. To be on the permanent staff has the following advantages (Chetty, 2004:114):

- ✓ Permanent staff are entitled to a housing subsidy, which enables them to buy a house or flat.
- ✓ They can provide for their retirement, as they are contributors to a pension fund.

- ✓ They can join a medical aid benefit scheme to which the employer contributes a percentage of the monthly premium.

The above fringe benefits may act as motivators in their teaching.

#### 4.2.7 Area in which schools are situated

Table 7: Frequency distribution according to the area in which respondents' schools are situated

Area in which school is situated		Frequency	%
1	Urban area	26	23%
2	Semi-urban area	36	33%
3	Rural area	49	44%
TOTAL		110	100%

The majority of schools (88%) selected for administration of the questionnaire are situated in rural areas and therefore resulted in the findings in Table 6. The Scottburgh district from which the primary schools for the research sample were selected is situated on the South Coast of KwaZulu-Natal and includes large rural areas.

#### 4.2.8 Type of school

Table 8: Frequency distribution according to the classification of respondents' schools

School		Frequency	%
1	Junior primary	46	42%
2	Senior primary	33	30%
3	Combined school	31	28%
TOTAL		110	100%

In accordance with the focus of the research the schools where the questionnaire was administered is composed of senior and junior primary schools (Table 5) (cf. Chapter 3)

#### 4.2.9 Educators' attitudes towards inclusive education

Table 9: Frequency distribution according to educators' attitudes towards inclusive education

Question No	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain	Total
2.1	106 96%	3 3%	1 1%	110 100%
2.2	38 35%	66 60%	6 5%	110 100%
2.3	71 65%	32 29%	7 6%	110 100%
2.4	36 33%	60 55%	14 12%	110 100%
2.5	73 66%	32 29%	5 5%	110 100%
2.6	79 72%	26 23%	5 5%	110 100%
2.7	69 63%	32 29%	9 8%	110 100%
2.8	90 81%	15 14%	5 5%	110 100%
2.9	51 46%	47 43%	12 11%	110 100%
2.10	75 68%	25 23%	10 9%	110 100%
2.11	69 63%	30 27%	11 10%	110 100%
2.12	77 70%	27 25%	6 5%	110 100%
2.13	80 73%	26 23%	4 4%	110 100%
2.14	75 68%	32 29%	3 3%	110 100%
2.15	80 73%	22 20%	8 7%	110 100%

The responses in Table 9 reflect the attitudes of primary school educators towards inclusive education – a policy that stipulates that all learners irrespective of race, gender, class, religion, disability, culture or sexual preference have a right to access in a learning environment, in a single system of education that values, respects and accommodates diversity. In the following discussion the findings from Table 9 will be analysed, interpreted and commented upon.

**Acceptance of hearing impaired learners (2.1):** Successful inclusive education expects mainstream educators to accept hearing impaired learners like any other “normal” child (Barton, 1993:20). The majority of the respondents (96%) supported this statement. Meyer, Nagel and Snyder (1993:19) say, “inclusion is unconditional and the program must fit the child rather than

children fitting the program.” The inclusive classroom should foster acceptance, tolerance and caring in all learners. The educator has the responsibility of creating and maintaining a classroom atmosphere, which nurtures the personal, cognitive and social development of all learners.

**Changes in teaching procedures (2.2):** Most of the respondents (60%) hold the attitude that to educate hearing impaired learners there must be fundamental changes to mainstream classes and teaching. From responses it appears that this contributes to the negative attitudes of educators towards inclusive education. According to Moore and Gilbreath (1989:9) educators feel threatened by having to change their tried and tested teaching methods and having to cope with too much diversity in their classroom.

Inclusive education implies that hearing impaired learners must be confronted with a differentiated curriculum and evaluation system that will enable them to progress at their own rate and at their own level while placed in mainstream classes. Educators will have to be adequately prepared to utilise orthodidactic devices as well as medical and paramedical assistive devices required by some of the hearing impaired learners (Nell, 1996:35). Inclusive education is assisting all children by facilitating problem-solving and learning to develop their abilities by exposing them to the abilities of normal people, and *vice-versa* (Ainscow, 1993:8). This involves drastic fundamental changes for school curricula, the role of educators in the classroom and educator training or development.

**Hearing impaired learners require more time (2.3):** The larger percentage of the respondents (65%) admitted that educators have to spend more time attending to the needs of learners with hearing impairments. According to Czapo (1992:253) educators are very concerned about the “normal” learner in their classroom. The general sentiment appeared to be that the “normal” learners in the system would be neglected due to the educators’ time and effort being consumed by the hearing impaired learners in their class.



Booyse (1995:51) predicts that the standards would possibly drop due to the neglect of the “regular” learners in order to accommodate the hearing impaired learners. Educators feel that it is not fair to expect the regular learners to support and carry the hearing impaired learners when their focus should be on their own education (Pillay, 2001:94).

**Negative feeling towards hearing impaired learners (2.4):** Most of the educators (55%) said they do not experience negative feelings towards hearing impaired learners because of inclusion. A positive feeling towards inclusive education is closely tied to educators’ feelings of competency and effectiveness in educating learners with disabilities (Moore & Gilbreath, 1998:10).

Davies and Green (1998:97) suggest that often educators need other professionals to solve learner problems rather than have the professionals help the educators to effect changes themselves. Sleeter (1995:156) makes the point that until schools develop an understanding of why change is necessary, most educators will perceive learners with hearing impairments as not their problem. He also stated that inclusive education might have a negative effect on both the hearing impaired learners and their peers in regular classrooms. Only 33% of the respondents said that they experienced negative feelings towards hearing impaired learners because of inclusion.

**Learner diversity (2.5):** Two thirds of the respondents (66%) indicated that they experience difficulty in meeting the needs of learner diversity. This possibly reflects a negative attitude of the respondents towards inclusive classrooms. The Green Paper on special needs and education support services points out that ordinary educators are now challenged with the task to accommodate diversity and to prevent and address barriers to learning and development (DNE, 1998:36). Educators perhaps felt inadequately prepared and therefore unable to cope with hearing impaired learners in the classroom (DNE, 1999:10).

In their research Lomofsky, Roberts and Mvambu (1999:71) found that a number of South African educators are already accommodating learners with a

diverse range of needs. They work with learners of different ages and stages of development, cultural and linguistic diversity and a wide range of ability/disability and special educational needs. According to their findings a low percentage of educators (24,1%) were able to meet the needs of learner diversity.

**Collaboration with educators (2.6):** The collaborative role of educators includes actively planning for skills transfer to educators in similar circumstances, team teaching, directing small-group instruction in mainstream schools, special education settings and training, and peer tutors (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997:138; Friend & Cook, 1996:239; Phillips & McCulloch, 1990:301). A network between schools could assist in sharing valuable knowledge and expertise as well as providing support. A high percentage of respondents (72%) indicated that there is a need to share information with other educators who are jointly responsible for learners experiencing barriers to learning, like the hearing impaired.

**Class size (2.7):** According to Clarke (1999:9) in the current class sizes of 38 learners to one educator, hearing impaired learners would not receive anywhere near the kind of individual attention they need. Therefore, in South Africa, inclusive education is still a dream that must be strived for. The majority of the respondents (63%) supported the statement that educators feel they would not have the time to give adequate individual attention to hearing-impaired learners, because of the large number of learners in their classes. An issue that seems to bear importance for most of the respondents was the large class size and the perception that schools were understaffed.

Educators generally felt that having to cope with the normal day-to-day problems in large classes was nearly more than they were able to do. The concern aired was that an impaired learner demanded so much more attention, yet no allowance was made for this by the education department in the prescribed class sizes (Pretorius, 2000:6). Some of the respondents felt that inclusion could work if the class sizes were smaller. This coincides with the research of York, Van der Cook, MacDonald, Heiso-Nett and Caughey

(1992:246) and Moore and Gilbreath (1998:9) that found that a good predictor of more positive attitudes towards inclusion is a smaller class size.

**Training (2.8):** The majority of the respondents (81%) agreed that educators need more training to educate hearing impaired learners. The respondents felt that they had neither the training nor the ability to work with hearing impaired learners. According to Schumacher and Meillon (1993:121) educators need to receive in-service education and training to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and values to cope with learners of varying abilities and diverse needs. Policy makers must therefore focus on knowledge, skills and practical assistance rather than attending to educators' attitudes, needs and emotional inhibitions. According to Booyse (1995:59) the objective is not to train subject educators as specialised remedial educators but to provide information about problems that may be encountered and how these may be solved. The successful implementation of inclusive education will depend on in-service training and ongoing retraining (educator development of all educators). This training should have a reflective and research approach, exploring innovatory ways of responding to day-to-day concerns in the workplace (Ainscow, 1993:7).

**Consultation between special and mainstream educators (2.9):** Forty six percent (46%) of the respondents were in agreement that regular consultation with special school educators should be made available to mainstream educators; however, the percentage that disagreed (43%) is very close. Consultation should include sharing knowledge and learner-related information for educators who are responsible for learners who are experiencing barriers to learning, and to provide a platform for other collaborative roles such as problem-solving (Pugach & Johnston, 1995:123).

Through the process of problem-solving, mainstream and special school educators use their collective expertise in a collegial, equal status relationship (Reed, 1987:53). This partnership allows special school educators to prepare alternative teaching strategies or supplementary instructional materials by special school educators in consultation with the mainstream school educator.

Collaborative problem-solving may also entail the periodic observation of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning in mainstream classes, in order to identify areas of difficulty or monitor the success of intervention strategies (Hall, Campher, Smit, Oswald & Engelbrecht, 1999:163).

**Discrimination (2.10):** More than two-thirds (68%) of the respondents agreed that educators should not discriminate against hearing impaired learners. According to Davies and Green (1998:97) educators who have negative attitudes to inclusive education would reject learners with special educational needs, which would hinder the successful implementation of inclusive education. Baker and Gottlieb (1980:6) state that educators' attitudes are expected to influence the extent to which hearing impaired learners become not only physically integrated, but integral members of regular classes, benefiting academically, socially and emotionally from the experience.

Vlachou (1997:53) maintains that educators can directly introduce anti-bias material in the classroom and generate discussion from either factual information or fiction involving people with disabilities. They may also make use of role-play and experiential activities in the classroom or arrange for the class to meet with people with disabilities.

**Treatment (2.11):** Most of the respondents (63%) indicated that educators should avoid treating learners with hearing impairments more sympathetically in class. Lomofsky, Roberts and Mvambu (1997:71) say inclusion requires that hearing impaired learners are not simply thought of with pity but viewed more positively in terms of their abilities rather than their disabilities. Care should be taken not to emphasise individual disabilities, but to look at the class as a whole in a total context (Ainscow, 1992:18).

**Discipline (2.12):** The majority of the respondents (70%) agreed that all learners must be disciplined in the same manner. Lomofsky, Roberts and Mvambu (1999:72) maintain that educators have the responsibility of creating and maintaining a classroom atmosphere that nurtures the personal, cognitive and social development of all learners. Discipline in the classroom will be

influenced by the ethos of the school. Most schools follow a democratic system of discipline that encourages the participation of parents, teachers, learners and the community. Ainscow (1992:18) states that care must be taken not to emphasise the individuals with disabilities but to look at the class as a whole when disciplining learners. Czapo (1992:244) maintains that all learners must be disciplined in an appropriate manner within the regular classroom. Educators and school management should effectively cooperate with parents, other teachers, teacher consultation teams and others to alleviate or solve the learner's problem.

**Understanding of hearing impaired learners (2.13):** More than seventy percent (73%) of the respondents were in agreement that learners with hearing impairments, demand better understanding. Elliott (1996:223) states that educators need to understand the challenge of successful inclusive education and to recognise that they do have the power and the responsibility to act as agents of change in education and in society.

To support the inclusion of learners with hearing impairments, educators have to understand not only the particular needs of the individual learners, but also their own attitudes and feelings concerning hearing impaired learners.

**Tolerance (2.14):** A larger percentage of respondents (68%) confirmed that the education of hearing impaired learners requires more tolerance from educators. The success of inclusive education is dependent on the educators' attitudes of special needs and tolerance of hearing impaired learners and to the extent of their willingness to make adaptations to accommodate these learners (Alizan & Jelas, 2000:52).

According to Forlin and Engelbrecht (1997:202) it is possible that the normal learners in class would be disadvantaged and neglected as a result of all the time and attention needed by hearing impaired learners.

**Remedial educators (2.15):** In most mainstream schools there are a significant percentage of learners with learning problems (Barnard, Le Roux & Van Zyl,

1993:1). These learners require specialised help to ensure that their learning potential is realised and for this purpose intensive teaching, known as remedial teaching is necessary (Steenkamp & Steenkamp, 1992:6). The majority of respondents (73%) were in agreement that they could educate hearing impaired learners better with the help of a remedial educator. In spite of normal intellectual, physical and sensory abilities the disabled child is affected in such a way that their learning problems cannot be rectified in the normal class situation. Remedial teaching is mainly given on an individual basis due to the uniqueness of each child and his specific learning disability (Derbyshire, 1991:377). According to Du Toit (1991:5) remedial teaching has improved the performance of hearing impaired learners. Rationalisation of educational remedial services has already led to massive cutbacks, both in terms of finances and manpower. For this reason the question arises whether the influence of remedial teaching on learners with hearing impairments would make a difference to mainstream educators' attitudes towards inclusive education (Barnard, Le Roux & Van Zyl, 1993:13).

#### 4.2.10 Successful implementation of inclusive education

Table 10: Frequency distribution according to the availability of facilities or strategies for successful implementation of inclusive education

Question No	Agree	Disagree	Uncertain	Total
3.1	98 89%	12 11%	0 0%	110 100%
3.2	73 89%	34 31%	3 3%	110 100%
3.3	32 29%	65 59%	13 12%	110 100%
3.4	47 45%	51 46%	12 11%	110 100%
3.5	53 48%	43 39%	14 13%	110 100%
3.6	45 41%	52 47%	13 12%	110 100%
3.7	67 61%	34 31%	9 8%	110 100%
3.8	56 51%	49 45%	5 4%	110 100%
3.9	66 60%	37 34%	7 6%	110 100%
3.10	65 58%	38 35%	8 7%	110 100%

The responses in Table 10 refer to the successful implementation of inclusive education – a policy that requires educators to be flexible in their thinking and innovative and creative in their approaches to teaching and learning. In the following discussion the findings from Table 10 will be analysed, interpreted and commented upon.

**A school-based support team (3.1):** Most educators (89%) agreed with the statement that a school-based support team for assisting educators with hearing impaired learners should be available in their schools. Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000:319) point out that the reports of the National Commission on Special Education Needs and Training and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCSNET / NCESS) state that an inclusive education policy will place some of the responsibility for addressing barriers to learning and development on the shoulders of the school support teams that will be developed in the schools over the next few years (Department of Education, 2002:16). The school support team has been conceptualised as comprising mainly of educators in the school itself. It has been proposed that the school support team be coordinated by a member of staff, preferably someone who has received extra training in one of the specialised competency areas emerging from the NCSNET/NCESS report, for example life-skills education, counselling or learning support (Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht, 1999:54). A school-based support team will develop the mainstream educators' competency in dealing with hearing impaired learners.

**In-service training (3.2):** Most educators (66%) indicated that in-service training opportunities are not available for mainstream educators to cope with hearing impaired learners. Levitz (1996:9) states that UNISA and other universities and training colleges present courses for Diplomas in Special Education. However, of more pressing concern at the moment is the upgrading of educators to be better equipped to educate hearing impaired learners. According to Nell (1996:39) successful inclusive education has major implications for the pre-service and in-service training of educators. Appropriate preparation of all educational personnel is vitally important. In-depth knowledge of the philosophy of inclusion and the need for educators to develop

the commitment and caring required to accommodate hearing impaired learners as much as possible in mainstream classes should be developed during pre-service and in-service training.

Educators in mainstream schools will have to develop an inclusion mentality which implies that they will have to accept that they have a duty to accommodate all children in their classes and not to want to exclude those with disabilities.

Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:201) state that the challenge facing many South African educators is that they have not been trained to cope with the diversity of learners now entering schools.

Educators will have to be adequately prepared to assess special needs in order to adapt curriculum content to the needs of the learners in the classroom, and to utilise special orthodidactic devices and instructional aids required by some of the hearing impaired learners.

**Adequate funds (3.3):** Most of the respondents (59%) indicated that their schools lacked the necessary funds for resources to implement successful inclusive education. From this finding it can be inferred that adequate funding is required for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

According to Nell (1996:39) many parts of the country have large classes, inadequate or no support facilities, a lack of orthodidactic materials as well as a lack of expertise of educators to deal with hearing impaired learners. This makes it impossible to fully implement placement of hearing impaired learners in mainstream classes. To provide for effective inclusive education the financial issues will have to be addressed carefully so as to be cost-effective (Donald, 1992:51).

According to Dyson and Forlin (1999:33) inclusive education requires a certain degree of capital investment (in buildings and equipment) and an even greater degree of investment in human resources (educators, managers and administrators). In June 1994 an international conference was held in



Salamanca, Spain with the purpose of developing an international policy document on special needs education. The Salamanca statement reaffirmed that inclusive education is not only cost efficient but also co-effective. The most immediate challenge facing a new South African funding framework is to redress the legacy of apartheid of backlogs and inequities. However, this should be achieved within the policy of inclusive education and a commitment to the accommodation of the full diversity of learning needs and the addressing of learning difficulties (DNE, 1990:90).

**School governing body (3.6):** Most of the educators (47%) indicated that the school governing body does not support inclusive education. For the successful implementation of inclusive education parents should become more involved in the education of their children. This involvement could include insight into progress, participation in decisions, and information on educational issues. An efficient school governing body could involve parents' understanding of the movement towards inclusive education and can influence views more positively. According to Hall and Engelbrecht (1999:33) parents who respect diversity and are willing to become involved, can sway a community.

Belknap, Roberts and Nyewe (1999:177) point out that the school governing body is the key element in empowering parents in the school communities and facilitating their greater involvement in the formal education of their children.

**Effective management (3.7):** The difference between the respondents that disagreed (31%) and agreed (61%) that the management in their schools have the competencies to know how to accommodate diversity and address barriers to learning and development, is thirty percent (30%). Lazarus, Daniels and Engelbrecht (1990:60) state that the style and manner of leadership and management practice of educational managers (in particular that of the school principal) is a critical factor in ensuring that inclusive education is successfully implemented.

Literature acknowledges the key role played by educational managers in providing a supportive framework for inclusive education (De Long, 1989:23;

Du Four & Berkey, 1995:2; Sparks, 1997:22; Bunting, 1997:30). This is based on the assertion that the most effective development programmes take place within the school itself.

**Life-skills programmes (3.8):** More than forty percent (45%) of the educators in the survey indicated that life-skill programmes for integration of hearing impaired learners is lacking in their schools. This may possibly contribute to the lack of knowledge of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE).

The aim of OBE is for all learners to succeed and the school experiences are redefined as preparation for life rather than preparation for more schooling (Spady, 1992:2). Placing the hearing impaired in a mainstream classroom will promote their integration in society and possibly facilitate skills development. According to Davies and Green (1998:97) children with hearing impairments should be educated in the most normalised learning environment consistent with their needs.

Learning difficulties originate not only from within the learner, but also from within the system. Hegarty (194:126) implies that barriers to learning may be caused by a system that is unable to meet or adapt to the needs of the specific learner. With OBE the focus has moved from the learner having to adjust to the demands of the system, to the system that needs to be flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners as inclusively as possible (DNE, 1999:3).

The aim of education is to prepare all children for future adult life. Jenkins and Sileo (1994:84) state that educational systems must redirect their energies and resources to ensure equitable treatment for all learners and to focus on developing skills and competencies that facilitate their successful functioning in society. In essence learners must be confronted with real life problems.

**Discriminating attitudes (3.9):** Sixty percent (60%) of the educators indicated that their schools have strategies in place to combat discriminatory attitudes towards hearing impaired learners. According to UNESCO (1994:ix)

mainstream schools with 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 learners and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

According to the Gauteng Department of Education and Culture (1996:1) the ultimate purpose of inclusive education is to contribute towards building an inclusive society in which all its members are valued, respected and able to fulfil their full potential.

**Harassment of hearing impaired learners (3.10):** More than thirty percent (35%) of the respondents said that their schools did not have procedures in place to address possible harassment of hearing impaired learners. Harassment may include a refusal to admit a hearing impaired learner to a public school, or to provide appropriate educational support services to such a learner. Depending on the wishes and based on the rights of all learners and their parents, including hearing impaired learners, no learners may be turned away from any public school if it is at all possible to accommodate the learner. This means that schools may be legally obliged to provide appropriate educational support services and make structural adjustments to accommodate hearing impaired learners, should they want to attend a regular public school.

Educators who are negative towards inclusive education very often do not have a clear understanding of the demands of changes they must implement and often lack adequate time to prepare for the implementation (Ainscow, 1992:3). They lack confidence in their own abilities to teach learning impaired learners and they fear failure. Educators' negative attitudes are influenced by past experience of hearing impaired learners, availability and provision of sufficient support and resources, the burden of additional responsibility and the amount of time required of the educator to meet the needs of hearing impaired learners.

Other forms of harassment, according to Walman (1993:88), include learners with hearing impairments who have to face beatings from educators, teasing

from fellow-learners or anger from parents. The community labels these children as retarded or naughty when they may in fact be dyslexic or hyperactive, or have an attention deficit order. Hearing impaired learners who either fail repeatedly or are passed without merit are what one educator called "just passengers in class". A policy to address harassment of hearing impaired learners in any form should be part of the school's mission statement.

### **4.3 SUMMARY**

The findings of the investigation suggest that a huge effort will have to be made by policy makers and provincial education departments to affect a paradigm shift towards inclusive education. The average teacher is apparently neither prepared nor trained to teach learners in inclusive classrooms effectively. However, it is commendable that the overwhelming majority of educators are open and willing to learn more about inclusive education.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

	PAGE
5.1 INTRODUCTION	60
5.1.1 Statement of the problem	60
5.1.2 Literature review	60
5.1.3 Planning the research	62
5.1.4 Presentation and analysis of the research data	62
5.1.5 Aims of the study	63
5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS	63
5.2.1 The curriculum, institutional development and assessment	63
(1) Rationale	63
(2) Recommendations	63
5.2.2 Utilisation and development of human resources	65
(1) Rationale	65
(2) Recommendations	65
5.2.3 Governance and funding	67
(1) Rationale	67
(2) Recommendations	67
5.3 FURTHER RESEARCH	69
5.3.1 Recommendation	69
5.4 CRITICISM	69
5.5 FINAL REMARK	70
REFERENCES	71

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the discussion will focus on a summary of the previous chapters and recommendations, criticism and a final remark, based on the findings of the research.

##### **5.1.1 Statement of the problem**

In this study an enquiry was made into educators' attitudes towards the inclusion of hearing impaired learners in mainstream education. In the literature study and through empirical investigation it was found that educators are faced with many challenges concerning the successful implementation of inclusive education. Educators feel they have to change their tried and tested teaching methods in order to cope with more diversity in their classrooms. Furthermore, most educators feel inadequately prepared and equipped for inclusive education and therefore unable to cope with the "hearing impaired learners" in their classrooms. The assistance educators' need concerning the successful implementation of inclusive education is adequate human and material resources, decreased class sizes and relevant training.

##### **5.1.2 Literature review**

The new policy in specialised education implies that learners with hearing impairments have a right to ordinary schools where the classroom environment is recognised to meet the needs of all learners. It was therefore necessary to establish a set of values, attitudes, beliefs, needs and teaching strategies with which one could measure the educators' attitudes to inclusive education.

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The research indicated that the success of inclusive education is a challenge to educators who educate in ordinary schools. The needs of educators in inclusive education were categorised into three main areas, namely:

- ✓ the need for support;
- ✓ the need for knowledge and skills; and
- ✓ emotional needs.

One of the key areas that the educator has to take into account is how to accommodate and provide specific service to learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and development.

The research indicated that educators in ordinary schools generally express negative attitudes towards inclusive education for the following reasons:

- ✓ Large class size.
- ✓ Lack of support.
- ✓ Lack of knowledge.
- ✓ Physical barriers to the built-in environment.
- ✓ High stress level.

The attitudes of educators towards inclusive education are influenced by their level of competency and effectiveness.

The success of inclusive education in South Africa depends on how school principals manage change, motivate their staff, learners and other stakeholders in education and establish a relationship with the community it serves.

One of the key elements to be taken into account is the fact that educators have to manage change effectively and complement new teaching strategies for the successful implementation of inclusive education. This is due to the fact that education in South Africa is in a process of transformation and all stakeholders have to be empowered to be able to accept the changing environment in which all learners can learn and develop.

#### 5.1.3 **Planning the research**

The questionnaire was aimed at principals, heads of departments, deputy principals and educators from both ordinary and special schools. The information sought for this investigation was not available from any other source and had to be acquired directly from the respondents. The aim of the questionnaire was to determine the educators' attitudes to inclusive education in South African classrooms, and to establish performance criteria with which to measure the effectiveness of educators in implementing inclusive education successfully, as well as to determine any possible areas of development in its implementation.

The composition, administration and data analyses of the questionnaire were also dealt with. The principle of a pilot study was addressed, as well as the limitations of the research.

#### 5.1.4 **Presentation and analysis of the research data**

The purpose of this chapter was to statistically discuss data collected from the questionnaire completed by 110 educators, which included school principals, deputy principals, heads of departments and educators. Comments were offered and interpretations were made of the findings. At the outset an explanation and description was provided as to the methods employed in the categorisation of the responses and the analysis of the data. This was followed by the presentation and discussions of the responses to the questions in the questionnaire.



### 5.1.5 Aims of the study

The researcher formulated specific aims (cf. 1.5) to determine the course of the study. These aims were realised through the literature study, which was made from various sources available nationally and internationally. An empirical survey consisting of a structured questionnaire as basis was used together with the literature study, to determine the educators' attitudes to inclusive education and to determine performance criteria with which to measure the effectiveness of educators in implementing inclusive education. On the basis of the findings of this study certain recommendations are offered.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.2.1 The curriculum, institutional development and assessment

#### (1) Rationale

In a developing country like South Africa where thousands of hearing-impaired learners with barriers to learning and development must be assisted in the most economical yet effective way, inclusion is not only a viable solution but the best way of transforming educational policy to address the imbalances and neglect of the past and to bring the country in line with international standards of recognition of human rights. Inclusion is also the best way of expressing that educators really care for everyone including those who were previously excluded. For the implementation of inclusive education in South African classrooms to be effective, changes need to be made to the curriculum, institutions and methods of assessment.

#### (2) Recommendations

The recommendations are that, in order for inclusive education to be implemented successfully in South Africa, the Department of Education must:

- ✓ Develop an integrated system of education where the separate systems of 'special' and 'ordinary' education are integrated into one system responsive to the diverse needs of the learner population.
- ✓ Ensure that the Outcomes-Based approach to education and training address the problems of special educational needs.
- ✓ Provide barrier free access to the built environment.
- ✓ Ensure that all centres of learning reflect an inclusive ethos and engage in whole school and centre development to address the diverse needs of all learners including the hearing impaired learners.
- ✓ Facilitate a move away from supporting individual learners to supporting the system to be responsive to diversity.
- ✓ Facilitate ongoing campaigns to raise public awareness and address discriminatory attitudes within and outside the education system.
- ✓ Provide a holistic approach to institutional development to facilitate a positive culture of learning and teaching; all aspects of learning have to be developed including strategic planning and evaluation, organisational leadership and management, staff development and other related mechanisms.
- ✓ Develop health promoting centres of learning for the implementation of inclusive education.
- ✓ Establish a centre based learning support team that would ensure that support is accessible to educators, learners, parents and communities.
- ✓ Put in place centres of learning with ongoing anti-discrimination and human rights programmes.

- ✓ Ensure that teaching materials and learning materials accommodate the diverse needs of the learner population.
- ✓ Provide a flexible curriculum which is responsive to differences in the learner population and ensures that all learners can participate effectively in the process.
- ✓ Establish a centre for early identification of learners at risk, continuous assessment, timely intervention, and parent and learner involvement in the curriculum.

### 5.2.2 Utilisation and development of human resources

#### (1) Rationale

Successful implementation of inclusive education will depend upon South Africa's utilisation and development of its human resources. In South Africa there has been a history of inadequate and ongoing teacher development. This has led to insecurity, low self-esteem, and a lack of innovative practices in the classroom to meet the needs of a diverse learner population.

The policy of inclusion, however, makes it necessary for teacher training institutions to re-assess the basic training given to prospective educators. Subjects such as orthopedagogics must be a compulsory subject in the basic training programmes, for all educators. This will enable educators of the future to be ready for the demands that the South African school population will make on them.

#### (2) Recommendations

The recommendations are that the Department of Education must:

- ✓ Develop a flexible and integrated system.

- ✓ Appoint remedial educators and educators with diplomas in specialised education who have already undergone training and who can provide a valuable service in mainstream schools where trained experts fulfil a supportive role.
- ✓ Provide training in special educational needs in a structural manner to ensure that all educators receive equal training.
- ✓ Ensure that all human resources in our institutions and communities are used optimally and in a structured manner.
- ✓ Facilitate involvement of experts from educational practice, representing the various population groups, in the training of educators. Such experts could act as guest lecturers, offering lectures at various training institutions and could include subject educators from schools for special education or educators from a specific cultural group. In this way educators would receive first-hand knowledge from educational practice.
- ✓ Facilitate ongoing in-service and pre-service training courses on hearing impaired learners at all training institutions, thus enabling educators to deal with the problem in the classroom.
- ✓ Facilitate the training of the Centre-Based Learning Support Team (CBLT) as well as coordinators and intersectoral partnerships; rationalisation of current educational support personnel for new roles; education management development; NGO involvement, and parent empowerment and development.

### 5.2.3 **Governance and funding**

#### (1) **Rationale**

Despite the introduction of compulsory education in South Africa many learners continue to remain outside the formal education system, many being those with disabilities who have been prevented from entering ordinary schools.

Research carried out by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and the National Committee on Education Support Services showed a very low enrolment of learners with special needs, including hearing impaired learners in ordinary schools, and the existence of only a few community projects offering limited provision.

Inclusion seems to promise that it will enhance not only the attainments of learners with disabilities but, by drawing the attention of schools to individual differences, the attainment of all learners will be enhanced, thereby developing the country's economy by providing a workforce with appropriate skills.

#### (2) **Recommendations**

The Department of Education must:

- ✓ Ensure an inclusive system which will require a funding strategy that is directed towards the provision of support services for all. This will be operationalised through a funding model that is directed towards the development and maintenance of an effective support system at all levels of the learning system.
- ✓ Develop the active participation and commitment of all stakeholders in governance structures, the infused capacity of all sections in provincial and national education departments to meet the diverse range of learners and system needs.

- ✓ Develop a funding partnership between state and external funding sources, conditional funding, earmarked funding and funding accountability.
- ✓ Ensure that a funding framework for general, further and higher education and training will have to cater for expansion of provision to hearing impaired learners and other target groups who experience severe learning difficulties and who have been excluded from learning.
- ✓ Ensure that funding policies should provide for the creation of partnership with parents that enable them to participate in the planning and implementation of institution-based inclusion activities.
- ✓ Develop funding policies which would also have to cater for new modes of learning, barrier-free access, learner support, curriculum and assessment development, as well as capacity development among all sites of learning, educators, education support personnel and education managers in special schools and settings and ordinary schools. These funding policies should:
  - ✓ provide for research and the development into the applicability and roles of the proposed teaching assistants;
  - ✓ provide for research on and the development of a list of essential learning-related assistive devices for learning sites.
  - ✓ provide accessible transport which is necessary for the full inclusion into society of people with impairments, such as hearing impairments. There is a need to develop an accessible, affordable, multi-model public transport system that will meet the needs of the largest numbers of people at the lowest cost while at the same time planning for those high cost features which are essential to disabled people with greater mobility needs.

### **5.3 FURTHER RESEARCH**

As South Africa begins to implement inclusive education in mainstream classrooms, educators' attitudes as well as collaboration among educators, parents and learners have been recognised as critical features in effective implementation. The power of collaborative teams lies in their capacity to merge the unique skills of special school educators with the unique skills of mainstream educators, parents and learners.

#### **5.3.1 Recommendation**

The recommendation to the Department of Education is that further research of a quantitative and qualitative nature must be undertaken with the aim of developing well-planned strategies to be implemented in order to provide mainstream educators with the necessary skills to effectively manage inclusive schools, including effective staff development strategies.

### **5.4 CRITICISM**

Criticism that emanates from this study includes the following:

- ✓ It can be presumed that many of the school educators who completed the questionnaires drew their attitudes regarding inclusive education from the media and relevant policy documents. The probability therefore exists that the majority of educators indicated what is theoretical to their attitudes of inclusive education and not what is practical.
- ✓ The research sample comprised only educators from junior and senior primary schools. Dissimilar responses might have been elicited from educators, of secondary schools.

## **5.5 FINAL REMARK**

The aim of this study was to reach a better understanding of inclusive education and how it will prove useful to all interested stakeholders in education but more especially to educators and school governance.



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## **ANNEXURE ‘A’**

### **Questionnaire**

*STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL*

# **QUESTIONNAIRE**

*Educators' attitudes towards the  
inclusion of hearing impaired learners*

Mrs N T Msiya  
May 2004

Dear Educator

**QUESTIONNAIRE: EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF  
HEARING IMPAIRED LEARNERS**

At present I am engaged in a research project towards my MEd (Master in Education) degree at the University of Zululand under the guidance of Prof M S Vos. The research is concerned with *Educators' attitudes towards the inclusion of hearing impaired learners*

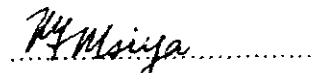
I have taken the liberty of writing to you, as one of the selected respondents, in order to seek your assistance in acquiring information about your experiences relating to the research.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information will be regarded as **CONFIDENTIAL**, and no personal details of any educator/respondent will be mentioned in the findings, nor will any of the results be related to any particular educator or school.

We deeply appreciate your co-operation.

Yours sincerely



Mrs N T Msiya

24 APRIL 2004

Date

### INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RESPONDENT

1. Please read through each statement carefully **before** giving your opinion.
2. Please make sure that you do not **omit** a question, or skip any page.
3. Please be totally **frank** when giving your opinion.
4. Please **do not** discuss statements with anyone.
5. Please **return** the questionnaire after completion.

Kindly answer **all the questions** by supplying the requested information in writing, or by making a cross (X) in the appropriate block.



## SECTION ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

### 1.1 My gender is?

Male

☐

Female

☐

### 1.2 My age in completed years as at 2003-12-31:

Age group	
20 - 25 years	
26 - 30 years	
31 - 35 years	
36 - 40 years	
41 - 45 years	
46 - 50 years	
51 - 55 years	
56 - 60 years	
61 - 65 years	
Older than 65 years	

### 1.3 My qualifications are:

Academic qualification(s) (e.g. BA, MEd, etc. ) .....

Professional qualification(s) (e.g. HDE, FDE, PTC, etc.) .....

### 1.4 Total number of completed years in the teaching profession as at 2003-12-31:

Number of years	
0 - 5 years	
6 - 10 years	
11 - 15 years	
16 - 20 years	
21 - 25 years	
26 - 30 years	
more than 30 years	

**1.5 My post level is:**

Principal

☐

HOD

☐

Deputy Principal

☐

Educator (Post level 1)

☐**1.6 Type of post held by me:**

Permanent

☐

Temporary

☐

Governing Body

☐**1.7 My school is situated in:**

An urban area

☐

A semi-urban area

☐

A rural area

☐**1.8 My school is classified as:**

Junior primary school

☐

Senior primary school

☐

Combined school

☐

Other (please specify) .....

**1.9 Number of hearing impaired learners in my class .....**

## SECTION TWO: EDUCATORS ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION

		Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
	In the mainstream class with hearing impaired learners:			
2.1	I must set an example in accepting hearing impaired learners			
2.2	It is not necessary to change my teaching methods			
2.3	I need more time to meet the needs of hearing impaired learners			
2.4	I experience negative feelings towards the hearing impaired learners			
2.5	The diversity of learners demands more effort of me			
2.6	Networking with educators in similar circumstances is essential			
2.7	The number of learners in class makes individual attention difficult			
2.8	I need more (special) training to assist hearing impaired learners			
2.9	I am unable to identify a hearing impaired learner			
2.10	I must be careful not to discriminate against hearing impaired learners			
2.11	I must avoid treating hearing impaired children more sympathetically			
2.12	All learners must be disciplined in the same manner			
2.13	More effort is required to better understand hearing impaired learners			
2.14	More patience is needed in educating hearing impaired learners			
2.15	The assistance of remedial educators are necessary			

### SECTION THREE: SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

		Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
	<b>The following facilities and/or strategies for the successful implementation of inclusive education are available at my school</b>			
3.1	A school-based support team to assist educators with hearing impaired learners			
3.2	In-service training opportunities for mainstream educators to better cope with learning impaired learners			
3.3	Sufficient funds to obtain special equipment (e.g. hearing aids)			
3.4	Opportunities for networking between special education and mainstream educators			
3.5	Educational support services for parents of hearing impaired learners			
3.6	A school governing body that effectively supports inclusive education			
3.7	A management team that has the knowledge to implement inclusive education			
3.8	Special life-skills programmes for the integration of hearing impaired learners			
3.9	Policy to eliminate discriminating attitudes toward the hearing impaired			
3.10	Procedures to deal with harassment of hearing impaired learners			

## **ANNEXURE 'B'**

**Letter seeking permission to conduct research**

P O Box 988  
UMKOMAAS  
4170

25 May 2004

Mrs Z P Mthuli  
Manager:Scottburgh Circuit  
Private Bag X 0515  
UMZINTO  
4200

Dear Mrs Mthuli

## PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

At present I am engaged in a research project towards my Med (Masters in Education) degree at the University of Zululand under the guidance of Prof M S Vos. The research is concerned with *Educators ' attitudes towards the inclusion of hearing impaired learners .*

For the purpose of the research a questionnaire was developed which I need to administer to educators in schools . A copy of the questionnaire is enclosed for your perusal and approval . The questionnaire should not take more than 30 minutes to be completed by the educators . All the information obtained from the questionnaires would be dealt with in the strictest confidence and anonymity is assured .

I request your kind written permission to administer the questionnaire to schools in the Scottburgh District .

Yours sincerely



Mrs N T Msiya

## **ANNEXURE 'C'**

**Letter granting permission to conduct research**

**KWAZULU-NATAL**  
**UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO NAMASIKO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE**  
**DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS EN KULTUUR**

# **SCOTTBURGH DISTRICT**

**Address/Kheli/Adres: Private Bag X0515, 4200**  
**Telephone/Ucingo/Telefoon: (039)90740149**

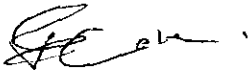
**Fax/Isikhalilamezi/Faks: (039) 9740461**  
**Enquiries/Imibuzo/Navrae: Mrs Z P Mthuli**

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30.06.2004

Prof. M S. Vos  
University of Zululand

Permission has been granted to Mrs N T Msiya to conduct research in the  
Scottburgh District towards a MEd degree at the University of Zululand



*pp.*

Mrs Z P Mthuli  
SEM