

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES IN COMMUNITY CONTEXT

by

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Soli Deo Gloria

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that:

“Educational support services in community context”

is my own work, both in conception and in execution and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

E M A Ebersohn

Date

ABSTRACT

Along with the changes in the political and economical spheres in South Africa over the last decade, there has also been a shift towards a more democratic education system. The foundation for these changes has been laid by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and has important implications for education and the concept of inclusive education. The relevant clauses in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa are those that contain principles of basic rights, equality and non-discrimination. The aim is to rectify the divisions of the past and establish a society based upon democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights. This also entails the acceptance of an inclusive education policy that will ensure optimum provision for and inclusion of the full *spectrum of educational needs within a single education system.*

Learners with special educational needs in an inclusive classroom are no longer regarded as the responsibility of a particular person outside the classroom, but of all educators. Educational Support Services need to make a paradigm shift in supporting teachers to assist learners with special educational needs. In the learning process educators play a distinctive role and if they do not function effectively, it could form a barrier to learning. Teachers have certain skills and abilities to assist learners with special educational needs and these need to be developed, as educational support services are not in a position to assist teachers and learners individually. As the implementation of the inclusive policy is inevitable, it is of the utmost importance to determine the needs of educators and how to support them to effectively assist learners with learning disabilities. The aim of this study is to establish how educators can be supported to effectively assist learners with special educational needs, specifically learning disabilities, within an inclusive classroom. Criteria as well as guidelines for a social-perceptual education program for learning disabled learners are also recommended.

Sixty Educators from four different primary mainstream schools in the lower Umfolozi district, Empangeni region, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South-Africa, participated in the study. The schools represented the diversity of the South-African population as well as the diversity within the learner population. All the participants completed a questionnaire on special educational needs and 20 participants from the sample group participated in a focus group interview. Results of the quantitative data were explained by means of descriptive statistics. It was clear that educators were not effective in assisting learners with special educational needs in an inclusive classroom. From the qualitative data analysis process findings, four main patterns of concern emerged, namely, the need for on-going training, reduction of the educator–learner ratio, provision of psychological services and support regarding the social and emotional problems of learners *with learning disabilities*.

As a result of this research a basic introductory study, providing certain criteria and guidelines for a social-perceptual education program, has been done. This program has value for further government implementation of training programs in inclusive education. It will also assist educators working with children with special educational needs in an inclusive classroom in mainstream education.

SAMEVATTING

Samehangend met die veranderinge binne die politieke en ekonomiese sfere in Suid-Afrika oor die afgelope dekade, was daar ook 'n verskuiwing na 'n meer demokratiese onderwysstelsel. Die grondslag vir hierdie veranderinge is gelê deur die Konstitusie van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika en het belangrike implikasies vir onderwys en die konsep van inklusiewe onderwys. Die relevante klousules in die Konstitusie van die Republiek van Suid-Afrika is die wat handel oor die beginsels van basiese regte, gelykheid en non-diskriminasie. Die doel is om die ongelykhede van die verlede reg te stel en 'n samelewing daar te stel wat gebaseer is op demokratiese waardes, maatskaplike geregtigheid en fundamentele menseregte. Dit behels voorts ook die aanvaarding van 'n inklusiewe onderwysbeleid wat die voorsiening en insluiting van die volle spektrum van onderwysbehoefte binne 'n enkele onderwysstelsel sal verseker.

Binne 'n inklusiewe klaskamer word leerders met spesiale onderrigbehoefte nie meer beskou as die verantwoordelikheid van 'n betrokke persoon buite die klaskamer nie, maar wel as die verantwoordelikheid van alle opvoeders. Daar moet 'n klemverskuiwing plaasvind binne die Onderwysondersteuningsdienste ten einde die nodige steun aan onderwysers te verleen om leerders met spesiale onderrigbehoefte te help. Onderwysers vervul 'n eiesoortige rol binne die leerproses en indien hulle nie doeltreffend funksioneer nie, kan dit die leerproses benadeel. Onderwysers beskik oor sekere vaardighede en vermoëns om leerders met spesiale onderrigbehoefte by te staan, en hierdie vaardighede en vermoëns moet ontwikkel word aangesien onderwysondersteuningsdienste nie in 'n posisie is om onderwysers en leerders individueel by te staan nie. Aangesien die implementering van die inklusiewe beleid onvermydelik is, is dit van die uiterste belang dat daar vasgestel moet word wat die behoeftes van leerkragte is en hoe hulle ondersteun kan word ten einde hulle in staat te stel om leerders met leergestremdhede by te staan. Die doel van hierdie studie is om vas te stel

hoe leerkragte bygestaan kan word ten einde hulle in staat te stel om leerders met spesiale onderrigbehoefte, veral die met leergestremdhede, te help binne 'n inklusiewe klaskamer. Kriteria sowel as riglyne vir 'n sosio-perseptuele onderrigprogram word ook aanbeveel.

Sestig leerkragte van vier verskillende primêre hoofstroomskole in die Laer-Umfolozidistrik, in Empangeni in KwaZulu-Natal, Suid-Afrika, het aan die studie deelgeneem. Die skole was verteenwoordigend van die diversiteit van die Suid Afrikaanse bevolking sowel as die diversiteit binne die leerderbevolking. Alle deelnemers het 'n vraelys voltooi met betrekking tot spesiale onderrigbehoefte en 20 deelnemers van die monstergroep het ook aan 'n fokus groeponderhoud deelgeneem. Resultate van die kwantitatiewe data is deur middel van beskrywende statistiek verduidelik. Dit het duidelik geblyk dat leerkragte binne 'n inklusiewe klaskamer nie doeltreffend is in die ondersteuning van leerders met spesiale onderrigbehoefte nie. Uit die navorsing het die volgende vier behoeftes duidelik na vore gekom, naamlik, die noodsaaklikheid van voortgesette opleiding, vermindering van die leerkrag-leerder ratio, die voorsiening van sielkundige dienste en ondersteuning met betrekking tot die maatskaplike en emosionele probleme van leerders met leergestremdhede.

As gevolg van hierdie navorsing is 'n basiese inleidende studie gedoen wat sekere kriteria en riglyne voorsien vir 'n sosiale-perseptuele onderrigprogram. Die program is waardevol vir verdere implementering van opleidingsprogramme vir onderwysers in inklusiewe onderwys wat leerlinge met spesifieke leerprobleme onderrig.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation for the study

Over the past few years, international interest in inclusive education of learners with special educational needs (SEN) has grown enormously. Increasingly learners with SEN have been offered placement in mainstream schools with varying degrees of support.

South Africa is in the throes of massive transformation – political, social and economic. The pressure of forces in the environment is threatening academic disciplines and educational institutions, as the push to reform and be accountable in a complex world becomes more urgent.

The National Disability Strategy, as cited by the Education White Paper 6 (2001, p.10) condemns the segregation of individuals with disabilities from the mainstream of the society. It further emphasizes the need to include individuals with disabilities in the work place, social environment, political sphere and sport arenas (Education White Paper 6, 2001, p.10). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996, p. 6) protects the rights of *all* children, including learners with special educational needs. This includes the right to a basic education. Learners should not be devaluated or discriminated against by being excluded because they may have some form of disability. It is of the utmost importance for learners to receive an appropriate education, along with others in the mainstream, which is consistent with their needs.

Inclusive education in South African schools is inevitable as is evident in the Education White Paper 6 (2001) which outlines the policy framework. Specific attention is given to the situation of learners who experience barriers to learning

and development because of the inability of the education system to accommodate the diversity of learning needs.

The consequences of the complexity of adapting to changes that reform demands, is that individuals and groups, in this case educational psychologists and educational support services, are required to transform their approach to problems and adopt new ways of solving them. As a result of the inclusion policy, the teacher in the mainstream classroom needs ongoing training to gain new skills to cope with the diversity in the learner population. The Education White Paper 6 (2001) states that classroom educators will be the primary resource for achieving the goal of an inclusive education and training system.

The South African society faces many development challenges. “Reconstructing education from what it has been to a system that brings equity to the education of all children is one of the most urgent of those challenges” (Donald, Lazurus & Lolwana, 2002, p.18). We need to address the needs of learners in a new education policy. We have to see and deal with social issues and special needs in education as part of a broader net of developmental challenges, challenges which relate to our society as a whole, as well education itself (Donald et al., 2002).

The historical and existing division between Educational Support Services (ESS) and Special Needs Education has resulted in the promotion of ESS as services which were provided outside ordinary education provision, used only when needed. This has isolated learners with special educational needs. The nature of the services has tended to reflect highly specialized interventions directed at a limited number of individuals in predominantly urban areas, and problems in the education system itself have seldom been addressed by these services (National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) 1998).

Over the past few years the major emphasis has fallen on structural changes in the education system. Eighteen different education departments were brought under one ministry with one policy. Areas such as qualification structures, curricula, support services and teacher education were addressed in these structural changes (Donald et al., 2002). Donald et al. (2002, p.19) state that although structural changes are fundamental on their own, these changes will not be enough. It is important that the process of education must be a central goal.

The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and NCESS (1998) states the following: "If we accept that 'special needs' include both learner and system needs, the role of educational support services is to address these needs." ESS can play a fundamental role in ensuring that all learners have equal access to the education system and are able to participate optimally in the learning process. It is thus clear that educational psychologists have an important role to play in Educational Support Services in the new education system, where the inclusion of learners with special needs is the policy.

Inclusive education is the ultimate acceptance of diversity. The educator in the classroom is the key to the success of this inclusion policy. When addressing special educational needs, inclusive education places more responsibilities on mainstream teachers than on special education teachers. In the past, teachers in historically advantaged schools have been able to rely on special schools and classes for learners with learning difficulties of various kinds. On the other hand, it is a disappointment for teachers in historically disadvantaged schools who expected to have the same system for special education in the new education system.

The current social and educational conditions in South Africa hold challenges for this century. We need to make a paradigm shift in the way ESS supports teachers to assist learners with special educational needs (SEN). Teachers do

have strengths which we need to explore and develop as ESS is not in a position to assist teachers or learners individually. The ratio between the learners and educational psychologists is of great concern at present:

Table 1.1 below indicates the ratio of Educational Psychologists to learners in the Empangeni District, Zululand.

Table 1.1 Ratio of educational psychologists to learners

Learners	Educational Psychologists
520 Primary Schools	
230 Secondary Schools	
75 000 learners	15

The above table reflects the budget figures. The actual figure at present is two educational psychologists for every 75 000 learners. (Figures from the Department of Education, Empangeni, District Office, 2005) When looking at these figures it is clear that ESS is not in a favourable position and finds it difficult to support each and every school.

Learners with special educational needs are no longer regarded as the responsibility of a particular person outside the school, i.e. remedial teacher only, but of all the educators at every mainstream school. By working as a team, educators share the responsibility and can then become beacons of the evolving inclusive education system (Education White Paper 6, 2001). In this study it is stressed that when learners with learning disabilities are placed in a mainstream school the regular educator needs support training and guidelines to be able to effectively assist the learners with their special needs.

1.2 Problem statement

In the light of what has been presented above, the research questions can be formulated as follows:

1.2.1 What is teachers' understanding of "special educational needs"?

1.2.2 What solutions do teachers have to support learners with SEN?

1.2.3 How effective are teachers in coping with different special educational needs and how can teacher's best be supported and empowered in order to support learners with special educational needs with special reference to learning disabilities?

1.3 Aims of study

The aims of the study are:

1.3.1 To determine teachers' understanding of the term "special educational needs".

1.3.2 To find out what solutions teachers have to support learners with SEN.

1.3.3 To establish how teachers can be supported and empowered to better serve learners with SEN in an inclusive classroom and to set criteria for a social-perceptual education program for teachers depending on the results of the study.

1.4 Operational definition of terms

1.4.1 Educational Support Services

“Educational Support Services (ESS) include all human and other resources that help to develop and support the education system so that it is responsive to the different needs of all learners and the system” (National Commission on Special Needs in Education, 1998).

1.4.2 Inclusive education

“Inclusive education is the term used to describe educational policies and practices that uphold the right of learners with disabilities to belong and learn in *mainstream education*” (Engelbrecht, 2001, p. 4).

1.4.3 Specific learning disability

“Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations” (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1999, p.105).

1.4.4 Social perceptions

Johnson & Myklebust (1967, p.34) define social perceptions as follows: “...the ability to immediately identify and recognise the meaning and significance of the behaviour of others”.

1.5 Paradigmatic perspective

A paradigmatic perspective is included because of the inclusion of a qualitative approach for this study. Katzin (2000, p.4) states that the paradigmatic perspective of a researcher refers to “the world-view that defines the nature of the world, the individuals place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts”. Post-modern research focuses on divergent realities where each person constructs his or her own reality and knowledge, according to his/her unique contexts and social interactions (Neimeyer, 1997). Constructivism is a dominant approach within the post-modern paradigm. According to Donald et al. (2002) the main assumptions are that knowledge is a construction of a person’s experiences, action and context. Gravett (2001) states that human beings are seen as active agents in the construction of meaning in their own development and learning. According to this view each person lives in a constant changing world of experiences and each person’s reaction thereto differs. This reality is a creation of thought and language, which grows from social interaction.

The implication of this paradigm on the research project is that human beings are seen as primary instruments of data collection and analysis. Working from this paradigm researchers want to uncover the complexity of human behaviour in a contextual framework and present a holistic interpretation of what is happening. Burden (1996) adds that when placing the constructivist paradigm within the educational context, the emphasis falls on process over product, intervention over labeling and the real world over an ideal world where inconvenient variables can be held constant or ignored. Educators, learners and other role players are actively busy giving meaning to their lives within and through their social context, they are not passive objects influenced by forces around them (Gravett, 2001).

The comprehensive transformation that has taken place in the Department of Education over the last few years has had an influence on all systems in the

educational context. These changes and their effects, especially on educators, need to form part of this study. Working from the transformatory approach to learning and change means that change is seen as an essential part of an educators professional development. Change is a positive aspect where learning is embraced as an important part of living in a rapidly changing world (Askew & Carnell, 1998, p.151). *Educators are thus seen as professional learners and they are engaged in a life-long learning process. This process of learning includes learning a new set of beliefs, attitudes and knowledge and happens as a result of continuous reflection (Gravett, 2001). The development of understanding, increased insights into practice and actions that will lead to change are a result of this learning process (Askew & Carnell, 1998, p.152).* In this study the focus is on gaining new knowledge by educators.

1.6 Research design and process

The research design and process will now be discussed briefly. A detailed discussion of the design and methods of research of this study will be given in chapter three.

1.6.1 Research design

As the aim of this study is to gather information on educators' understanding of 'special educational needs', their solutions to support learners with SEN in the inclusive classroom and how teachers can best be supported in order to support learners with SEN. In order to gather this information, the mixed method where both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used, has been selected. McMillan and Schumacher (2001, p.15) distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research paradigms as follows: "Quantitative research presents statistical results represented by numbers and qualitative research presents facts in a narration with words". The logic of quantitative research is deductive and represents the testing of hypothesis in research (Garbers, 1996). The

quantitative approach is imbedded in the positivistic paradigm which is naturalistic. The qualitative methods stem from an interpretive paradigm with their focus on constructivist and phenomenological approaches.

There are different views on the combining of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Mouton and Marais (2002) state that combining the two approaches is problematic. Creswell (2003) avers that he prefers using only one research method in a study. However, he admits that sometimes reality requires both methods. "Since there is only partial overlap, a study using both, is fuller or more comprehensive" (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont, 2002, p.364). Mouton and Marais (2003, p. 363) state the following:

"... phenomena that are investigated in the social sciences are so enmeshed that a single approach most certainly cannot succeed in encompassing human beings in their full complexity. It would, therefore, be futile to behave as though one approach would be fully accepted and another entirely rejected".

For the purpose of this study the two-phase model of Creswell (2002) will be used. This implicates that distinct quantitative and qualitative phases will be implemented. The participants will consist of educators in primary mainstream schools in Kwa-Zulu Natal. Educators will teach all learners including learners with learning disabilities. The subjects will be from different schools in the Lower Umfolozi district, Empangeni region. Schools will be from both urban and rural areas in this region, and will include educators from different cultures. A convenience sample of 60 teachers will serve as representation of the target population in the schools in the Empangeni district. Mouton (2001) states that it is necessary to select a sample on the basis of one's own knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of one's research aims.

1.6.2 Data collection and analysis

In the literature study the focus will be on relevant theoretical background knowledge of inclusive education and the changing roles of educational support service professionals. The theory of learning disabilities, their etiology and prevalence will be discussed. *Social perceptions and social skills of learners with learning disabilities* will also be discussed.

During the quantitative phase of the research a questionnaire with close-ended questions will be included in the data collection. Sixty educators from four different schools will complete the questionnaire. The research instrument, which will be used in this study, is a Likert-type scale which is based on semantic differentiation. A teachers' ordinal rating scale will be as follows: an endorsement of the first category (ineffective) will get a weight of 0, the second category (effective) will get a weight of 1 and the third category (very effective) will get a weight of 2. Descriptive statistics will be used to explain the raw data.

Focus group discussions will be held with 20 of the participants from the study sample. Qualitative data analysis will be used to analyse the data gathered from the focus group interview. The data will be reduced to categories and main themes. Qualitative data analysis will be used to analyse the data gathered from the subjects during the focus group interview.

1.7 Plan of study

Chapters will be divided in the following manner:

Chapter two: Relevant literature will be reviewed with the aim of expanding upon the context and background of the study as well as further defining the problem. Focus on the learner with learning disabilities and their social perceptions.

Chapter three: Research design, methods and instruments to be employed in gathering the relevant data.

Chapter four: Results, presentation of data, the analysis and interpretation thereof will be discussed. The implementation of this study will also be discussed. This chapter will include information and guidelines for a social-perceptual education program for the teacher in the inclusive classroom.

Chapter five: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations to address the stated problem.

1.8 Résumé

This chapter covered the motivation for the study and problem statement. The research questions and aims of the study followed these. Salient concepts of the study were clarified. The methodology of the study was discussed. This chapter concluded with a study plan. In chapter two a literature review on the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa will be presented as well as the theory on learning disabilities.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the literature review on the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa. The concept of moving towards inclusive education will be discussed, looking at the philosophy that inclusion is based upon. The value and implications for educators of inclusive education will also be discussed in this chapter. Special educational needs with specific reference to learners with learning disabilities and their social perceptions will also be discussed.

In Chapter one it was indicated that educators need support in the new inclusive education system of inclusion in South Africa. Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht (1999) state that support for teachers in their demanding roles is vital. Engelbrecht et al. (1999, p. 57) are of the opinion that “many classroom teachers feel that they do not have sufficient training and support to meet many of the challenges...”.

2.2 Implementation of inclusive education in South Africa

Inclusive education emerged as a sequence of international discussions on how to respond to learners experiencing different special needs in schools. In South Africa the move towards inclusive education has been initiated based upon a fundamental belief in the rights of all citizens, entrenched in the Bill of Rights.

The bill protects the rights of all people “including learners with special educational needs against discrimination” (Department of Education, 1996, p. 2).

2.2.1 The South African education system and the move towards inclusive education

2.2.1.1 Historical background and transformation of education in the democratic era

Previous provision of education in South Africa was dominated by the National Party's policy of 1948 (Decker & Lemmer, 1994). This policy introduced apartheid education as a result of which only the minority White population benefited from good education. The curriculum acquired a Christian National orientation while English and Afrikaans schools were largely separated. In terms of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, Bantu education became the responsibility of the Department of Native Affairs. Provision was then made for five state departments of education each with their own director:

- Department of National Education – general education policy.
- Department of Education and Training – Blacks.
- Department of Education and Culture: House of Assembly – Whites.
- Department of Education and Culture: House of Representatives – Coloureds.
- Department of Education and Culture: House of Delegates – for Indians.

These departments functioned in the four different provinces existing at the time, Transvaal, Orange Free State, Natal and Cape Province. Education as it existed at that time did not offer equal opportunities to *all* learners in South Africa.

Discriminatory policies allowed minority sections of the population to advance at the expense of the majority Black population. Black schools were largely characterised by the lack of poor provision and distribution of financial, physical and other resources. Large learner-teacher ratios, high dropout rates among disadvantaged groups and poor quality education were also evident (Decker & Lemmer, 1994). A great shortage of fully trained-teachers and classrooms resulted in overcrowded classrooms. Physical amenities, such as books, paper and often electricity, telephones and water were inadequate (Engelbrecht, Kriegler & Booysen, 1996).

The situation in education during this era was perceived as being unequal. Resistance gradually escalated and it became obvious that educational reform was a priority. The resistance towards the unequal education system of apartheid culminated in the Soweto schools uprising of 1976 and this resulted in an era of educational reformation. According to Decker and Van Schalkwyk (1989) the government at the time responded by launching reform initiatives. The provision of more educational opportunities for Africans, the phasing out of disparities in financing, the reformation of the curriculum and the training of more qualified African teachers were some of the initiatives. Within this context of reforming from the apartheid order to the democratisation of the country, Engelbrecht et al. (1996) stress that the general curriculum needed to be transformed in order to provide for inclusive education.

2.3 The philosophy of inclusion in South Africa

Donald et al. (2002, p. 23) explain that the term inclusion ...”refers to a broad philosophical and principled position that all children should have the same educational rights”. Inclusive education should therefore meet the educational needs of all learners. According to Guetzloe (1994, pp. 29-32) “inclusion should be defined as a philosophical position, attitude and value statement, rather than a point on the continuum of educational services”. Furthermore, inclusion is aimed at the empowering of learners “to become caring, competent and contributing citizens in an inclusive, changing and diverse society” (Engelbrecht, et al., 1999, p. 6). In November 1996, Act No. 84 of 1996, the South African Schools’ Act was passed which states that public schools must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfair discrimination in any way (South African Schools Act 1996).

The movement towards inclusive education involves much more than the placement of learners with difficulties or barriers in mainstream schools. It is thus clear that the underlying philosophy of inclusion is a belief in the inherent right of all individuals to participate meaningfully in their communities (Du Toit, 1996).

2.4 Value of inclusive education in South Africa

The South African Constitution states that every person shall have the right to basic education and to equal access in educational institutions (The South African Constitution, 1996).

According to the Salamanca Statement “Inclusive education is the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all” (The Salamanca

Statement 1994, p.6). Learning communities in South Africa should accept diversity and appreciate and respond to the diverse needs of their members. Inclusive education in South Africa can contribute towards reconciling the South African community to become a community that accepts values and respects differences.

2.5 Perceptions of educators regarding inclusive education

According to literature, educators have different attitudes towards inclusive education, both positive and negative. Waldron (1992) indicates that educators with positive attitudes feel sufficiently trained to do their work, are satisfied coming to school, and have fulfilling lives outside the school.

In contrast, the number of changes in education and the broader society has resulted in teachers feeling overwhelmed and frustrated. The perception of the whole process is distorted and this has resulted in a number of misperceptions and negativity (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001).

The negative attitude of educators can be detrimental to the implementation of inclusive education and will have a negative influence on the rest of the school community. Some of the problems and shortcomings experienced by educators which cause negativity are discussed in the following sections:

2.5.1 Inadequate knowledge, skills and training of educators in the effective implementation of inclusive education

In order to improve, change or even eliminate teachers' negative perceptions, the training of all teachers is essential (Bruno, Gerard & Tracy, 1996).

In their study, Swart, Eloff, Engelbrecht, Pettipher, Oswald, Ackerman and Prozesky (2000) indicate that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge, experience and skills to address the variety of special educational needs. In the

process of change “many teachers have become demoralised” (Donald et al., 2002, p. 26) and they feel ineffective. Lack of knowledge, experience and training in teaching learners with disabilities appear to be a major contribution to negative attitudes (Salend, 2001).

Furthermore, Mittler (1995) avers that teachers with little experience of learners with disabilities have negative attitudes towards inclusive education. Morrow (1994) is of the opinion that teachers are key agents in any schooling system and the reconstruction of education in South Africa will require teachers to accept their responsibilities as teachers. It is vital to understand the importance of teachers’ perception. Swart et al. (2002) emphasise that an understanding of teachers’ perceptions, their attitude towards inclusive education and the changes needed are important in the management and accomplishment of meaningful transformation in South African education.

Educators have to be empowered to become change-agents in areas where special educational needs are identified (Committee for Teachers Education Policy, 1994).

2.5.2 Priority of training

The educator is the one role player that is of crucial importance in the teaching – learning situation. It is educators who make learning possible and have a direct influence on the effectiveness of an education program or system as a whole (Wilson & Ramphela, 1989).

Several studies indicate that educators’ attitude towards inclusive education is negative as a result of a lack of training (Marshall, Ralph & Palmer, 2002; Sadek & Sadek, 2000; Bothma, Granette & Swart, 2000). Hoover (1984) has done a study with specific attention to children with learning disorders in mainstream education. The educators, the participants, involved in the study did not have

experience in teaching learners with learning disabilities. They were randomly assigned to work in a specific special education room. The results of the study revealed that due to their lack of training and experience, the educator subjects in this study appeared to have a negative attitude. On the contrary, educators who were trained and experienced in the form of special education involved in the study, tended to be more positive.

The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Commission on Education Support Services (NCESS) (1998) state that many educators express a fear of teaching learners with disabilities and would prefer not to have them in the mainstream class. However, the findings of a study by Davies and Green (1998) indicate that teachers are influenced by the nature of the special needs and that teachers are more receptive to special needs in children if they are in contact with special educators who favour integration. Engelbrecht (1999) furthermore asserts that educators are most probably unable to cope efficiently with learners with special educational needs unless they have the knowledge, skills and confidence to do so. The literature generally confirms that educators are not sufficiently trained in identifying and assisting learners with special needs. Educators are disadvantaged by the poor quality of their training (National Education Policy Investigation 1993). Skuy and Partington (1990) state that a significant number of educators are notoriously under qualified. The qualifications of educators are a major cause of concern in previously disadvantaged schools. The low level of qualifications gives rise to negative attitudes because of lack of knowledge and uncertainty.

In the light of the above, the need for further training, in-service training and continuous learning is clear.

2.5.3 Insufficient resources

It appears that services and resources, especially in the rural areas, are limited or non-existent (Donald, 1996). According to the Education White Paper 6 (2001) the physical environment of most ordinary schools contains barriers to learning and lack adequate instructional resources. In most cases the accessibility planning has not been done. Some schools do not even have the most basic equipment such as space, desks, chairs and electricity.

Development of collaborative relationships among educators for the sharing of expertise is very important to ensure the successful implementation of inclusive education in South Africa (Thousand & Villa, 1990). According to Engelbrecht (1999, p.166) the power of collaborative teams lies in their capacity to merge the unique skills of special school teachers with the unique skills of mainstream teachers. Educators at many schools are unable to visit special schools so as to observe and gain practical experience from their colleagues because of a lack of consultation and collaboration. The sharing of resources and expertise across schools would be one way of eliminating the inequalities in inclusive education (Evans, Lunt, Wedell & Dyson, 1999).

2.5.4 Lack of educational and teacher support

The provision of teacher support within the system is crucial to progress. In such a support system the role of the educators and of peer support among learners is of paramount importance. According to the Education White Paper 6 (2001) inappropriate and inadequate support services may arise from different learning needs. The perceived lack of educational and teacher support relates strongly to insufficient and inadequate training of teachers.

A community-based approach to support as a strategy in developing an inclusive education and training system is recommended in the report of the NCSNET and NCESS and the Draft White Paper 5 (Department of National Education, 2000). The reports of NCSNET and NCESS further state that there are too few specialised educational support service professionals in the education system as a whole. Therefore, the recommendations of the NCSNET and NCESS necessarily implicate accessing additional resources in the community to develop and support education provision through a structured community participation approach. This further implicates optimising the strengths of existing community support systems and expertise.

Engelbrecht and Green (2001) state that community-based educational support would include all the human resources and services that could support the system, working collaboratively in addressing priorities. Psychologists will be one of the many specialist professions to be included in future human resources restructuring. "Education should be seen as a process of operating a classroom or a school as a supportive community" (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001, p. 48). This approach will ensure that a school develops the capacity to accept all learners from the local community and reduce the need to exclude learners.

The following are recommended sources to facilitate community-based support within inclusive schools and communities:

- School-based support teams.
- District support teams.
- Special schools as resources.
- School governing bodies
- Twinning or clustering of centre of learning.
- Utilizing local community resources
- School-based staff development programs.
- Learner-to-learner support.

- Holistic, integrated services.

In literature it is found that teachers who are negative and most in need of support programs do not want to venture into new ideas and contexts. Education support programs should be conducted in the form of continuous in-service training, workshops, seminars, collaborative work and team work to provide adequately for teachers support teams. Swart et al. (2002) are of the opinion that successful implementation of inclusive education will depend upon the extent to which the existing resources and skills of already practicing and committed teachers are optimally utilised. The teachers will need time, continuous support and in-service training. According to the White Paper 6 on Education (2001) the ministry of education in South Africa is of the opinion that strengthening of educational support services is the key to reducing barriers to learning. When support services are effective, educators will have the courage to work with learners with disabilities and therefore their attitude will change positively.

2.5.5 Lack of consultation

Collaborative consultation is based upon people working together in selecting and providing the most effective combination of expertise and a sense of "shared ownership" in a successful outcome (Waldron, 1992, p.105).

The degree of contact with special educational teachers is one of the factors that affects the attitude and success of teachers. In order to develop positive attitudes amongst educators, a sound and continuous form of contact should exist between mainstream teachers, specialised professionals and special educational teachers. A lack of consultation encourages misunderstandings and uncertainty in the teaching of learners with disabilities. Donald et al. (2002) encourage educators to establish contact with members of the supporting professions e.g. psychologists and support services, which will help to build an effective network in addressing the complex issues of inclusive education.

2.6 Changing role of educational support services

2.6.1 Introduction

The National Department of Education in South Africa is committed to addressing diversity within the learner population. The current policy in South Africa acknowledges the Salamanca "Framework for Africa" (Unesco, 1994) which states that inclusive schools must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of learners and that the state should offer a continuum of support services to support the development of inclusive schools.

Professionals within educational support services have operated from a medical deficit approach to disability and learning difficulties in the past (Engelbrecht et al., 2001, p.18). This approach resulted in educational difficulties already explained, and an individualistic approach which has ignored systematic and social-economic factors (Donald et al., 2002). Engelbrecht et al. (2001) assert that the medical deficit approach led to direct support services delivery to only a few advantaged schools and the exclusion of environmentally disadvantaged learners.

Within the South African context and the commitment of the Department of Education to deliver support services to learners in all the different communities and schools, it is vital that educational support professionals reinterpret their roles. In order to address the complex challenges facing the educational support professionals, they will have to move away from an ideology based upon positivism assumptions that the professional knows best, to an approach that values different kinds of socially constructed knowledge, combining the unique knowledge and skills of everyone involved (Engelbrecht et al., 2001, p.19). It is a move to a holistic approach which is directed at health promotion, developmental

and preventative action in relation to individuals, schools and communities. These issues and support services should be dealt with within collaborative frameworks.

In order to move away from a curative problem-orientated approach, a holistic framework based upon the development of health-promoting and inclusive schools in an integrated approach to whole-school development is appropriate (Engelbrecht et al., 2001, p.22). A health-promoting school is a school which aims at achieving healthy lifestyles for the whole school population as defined by the World Health Organisation. Lazarus, Davidoft and Daniels (2000) state that supporting environments conducive to physical, psychological, social, environmental, economical and spiritual wellbeing need to be developed in order to promote a healthy lifestyle in a whole school approach. Educational support services are needed within this framework and the professionals can play an important role in building a positive teaching and learning environment. According to Engelbrecht (2001) it is vital that the educational support services emphasize intersectional and interdisciplinary collaboration in bringing together different systems and co-ordinating support within an eco-systematic framework.

Professionals in education support services are challenged to extend the nature of their professional capacities beyond their traditional role of solving problems of learners to increasing their involvement in multiple areas and levels of support. The Education White Paper 6 (2001) recommends a community-based approach to help with the establishment of support teams at institutional and district levels to facilitate the approach of whole school development.

The involvement of professionals in the educational support services include primary, secondary and tertiary prevention, specific direct and indirect intervention, facilitating change, counselling, crisis intervention and lifespan development (Engelbrecht et al., 2001, p.22).

The new policy of the Department of Education encourages educational psychologists and school counsellors to view themselves as consultants, facilitators, collaborators and mental health specialists who help educators to foster competent learners. A discussion of the role of collaborators and consultants will now follow.

2.6.2 Role as collaborator

Collaboration emphasizes a close working relationship between educators in mainstream education and special educators (Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2001, p.45). Effective comprehensive planning teams are collaborative and interactive. Professionals work together in order to accomplish a common goal and to share their expertise and perceptions with others (Cook & Friend, 1993). One of the key members of this team is the support facilitator e.g. educational psychologist, who promotes the team process, co-ordinates services for the learners and their families and provides follow-up services to ensure that goals are being met (Salend, 2001, p.126). Smith et al. (2001) further state that collaboration in inclusive education can bring more ideas and experiences to help learners achieve success.

The implementation of inclusive education will require close collaboration between educators as they need to adapt to the new curriculum. Campher (1997) state that a collaborative team can bring about changes to the curriculum and create a positive and caring educational environment. Educators of successful teams develop good interpersonal and communication skills, as well as problem solving and conflict resolution skills which will ensure effective collaboration (Salend, 2001).

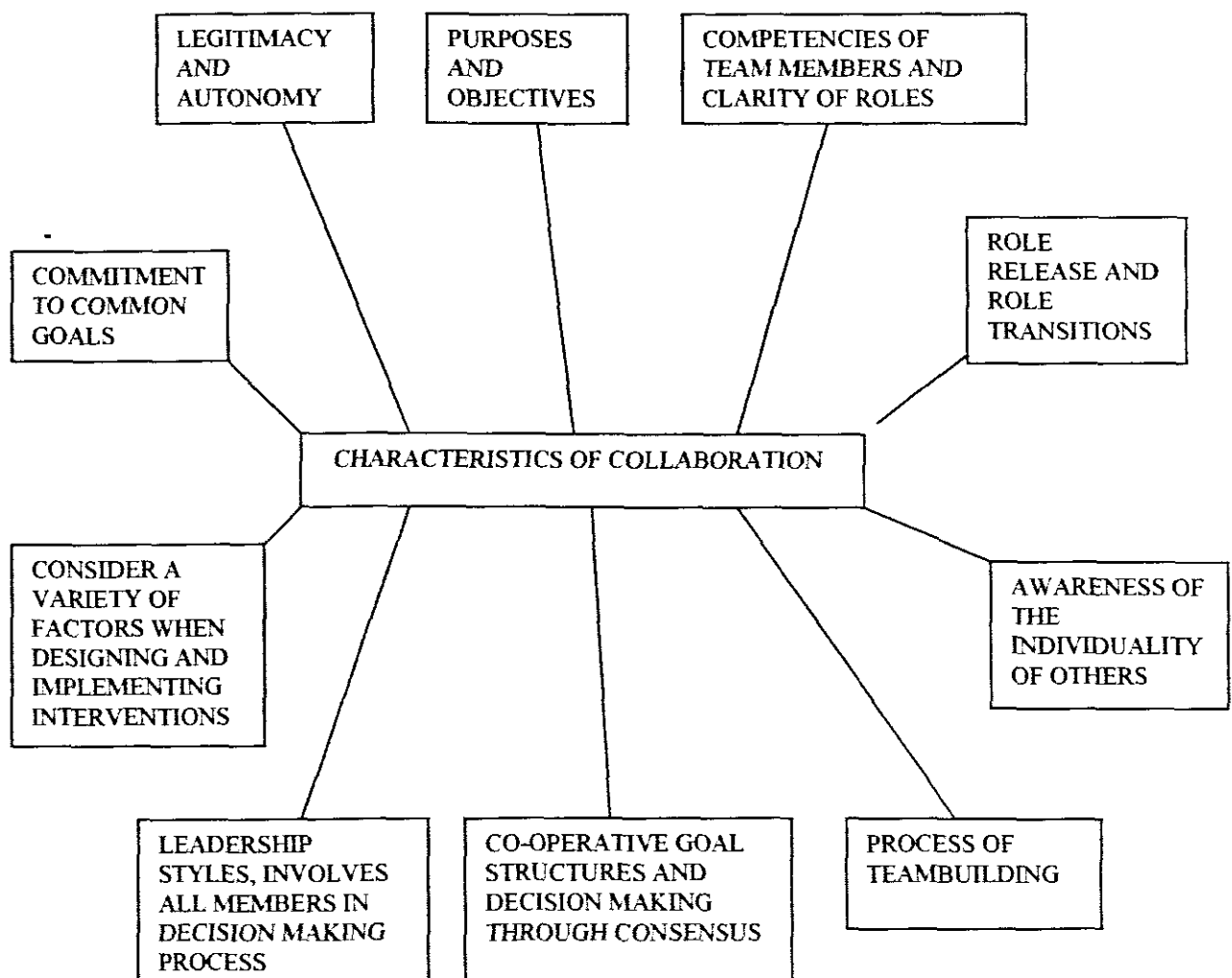
Engelbrecht et al. (2001, p.24) state that educational support professionals and educators previously participated in a system that divided and separated learners with special educational needs. Engelbrecht et al. (2001, p.24) further assert that

in order to adopt a collaborative team approach, a change in existing job roles and responsibilities is required. Support professionals need an evolutionary way of thinking and behaving in their roles to support learners.

Effective collaboration is based on the ongoing participation of two or more individuals who are committed to working together to achieve a common goal (Friend & Cook, 1996). These role players contribute different skills and create, strengthen and maintain these relationships.

Figure 2.1 illustrates that characteristics of effective collaborative and interactive teams (Salend, 2001, pp.126-127).

Figure 2.1 Characteristics of effective collaborative teams

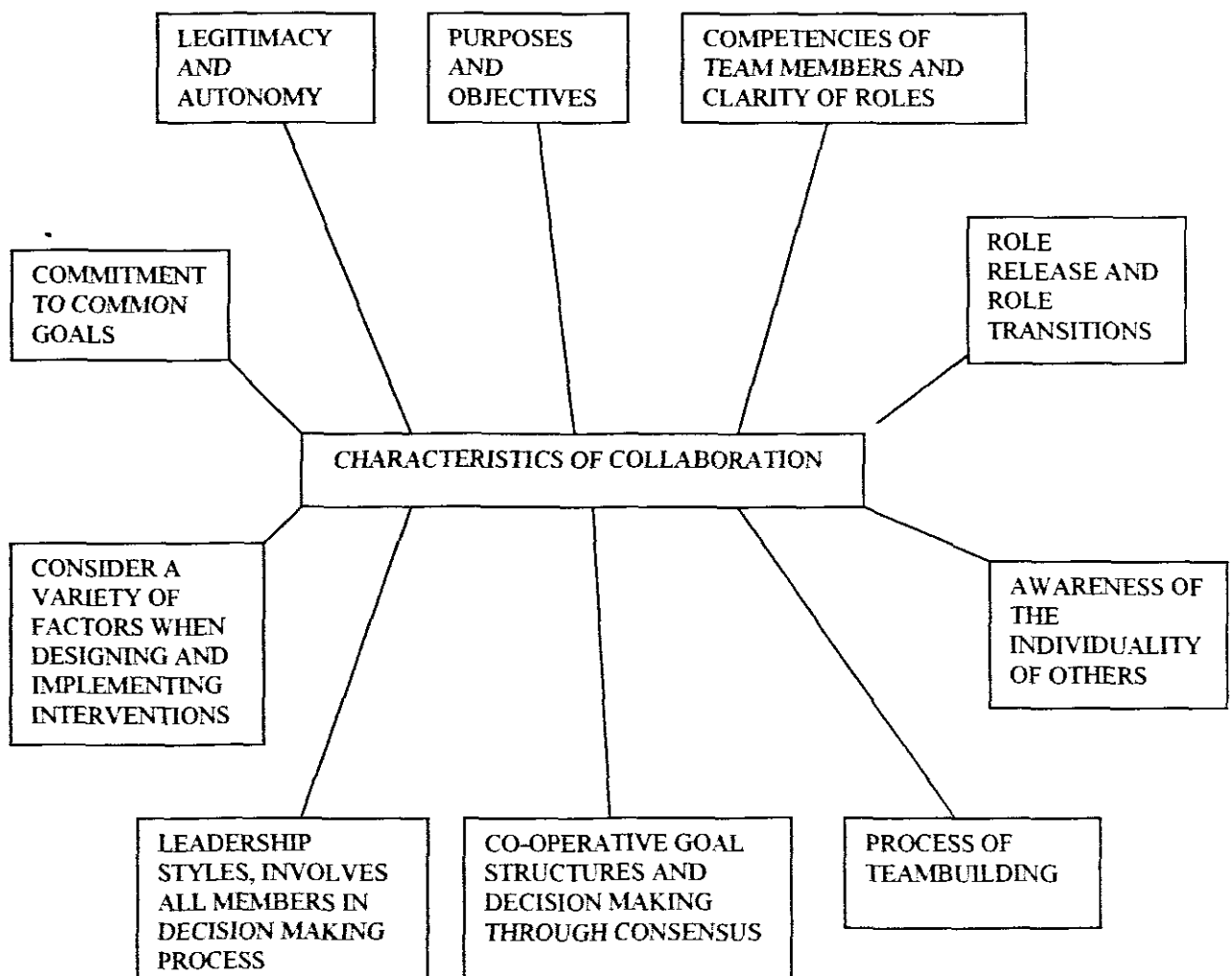


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Figure 2.1 Characteristics of effective collaborative teams



Friend and Bursuck (1999) aver that educators should work collaboratively with other colleagues. According to Engelbrecht (2001) few educators and support professionals have had the opportunity to receive instruction and experience in group collaborative skills. Role change does not go without difficulties and it is important to acknowledge these difficulties. Collaboration is based upon the belief in the value of shared decision making, trust and respect among participants (Friend & Bursuck, 1999). Educators and support professionals need to realize that patience, perseverance and time is needed to ensure successful and competent collaboration within a changing educational approach.

Engelbrecht et al. (2001, p.25) assert that the participation of educational support professionals in collaborative relationships can make a major impact in establishing health-promoting and inclusive schools by providing more holistic and co-ordinated support.

2.6.3 Role as consultant

Donald et al. (2002, pp.26-27) aver that health promotion involves also promoting all these dimensions of development that together contribute to positive, competent and confident individuals in society. This includes the physical, cognitive, emotional, social, moral and spiritual aspects of development. The shift from a curative approach to a health promotion approach also implies a shift to a preventative approach. Health promotion is an integrated and inclusive approach which involves collaboration between school and community. The need for help in the process of health promotion, from educational support services, is acknowledged. Regular and adequate consultation from support service professionals is essential for educators, parents and community (Donald et al., 2002).

Smith et al. (2001, p.45) state that consultation is a support model where special education professionals work within the general education system in a consulting

role. Salend (2001, p.136) recommends that the following four steps be followed to ensure an effective consultation process:

- Goal and problem identification.
- Goal and problem analysis.
- Plan implementation.
- Plan evaluation.

Salend (2001) avers that although consultation is effective, professionals may resist its use. The negative attitudes of educators towards consultation are often associated with frustration, professional pride and different perceptions of the process. Overwhelming case loads and insufficient time for team members to meet are also barriers in the effectiveness of consultation. It is obvious that educational support professionals, i.e. educational psychologists, have an important role to play in ensuring effective consultation. Engelbrecht et al. (2001) assert that the credibility of educational support professionals as consultants depend to a large extent on how expertise is shared with the teachers and other role players.

According to Engelbrecht et al. (2001, p.26) several consultation approaches can be incorporated in the role of educational support professionals as consultants.

The different models are:

- Behavioural consultation.
- Clinical consultation.
- Organizational consultation and facilitation.
- Mental health consultation.

Learners experience emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties because of personal and contextual stressors they are faced with. The educational support

professionals assume key roles as consultants in the development and implementation of school-based mental health programs.

2.7 Special educational needs with specific reference to learners with learning disabilities and their social perceptions

2.7.1 Introduction

The educator in mainstream education is not well equipped or trained to manage the needs and problems of learners with special educational needs. Therefore it is important to discuss learning disabilities and the social perceptions of learners with learning disabilities for the purpose of this study.

Learners with learning disabilities have learning problems, often accompanied by social and emotional difficulties. These social problems are usually more serious and create more anxiety within the learner than the learning problem itself.

Social problems result in emotional problems. It appears at times that the child with learning disabilities is emotionally more disabled than academically. The question could be asked, as did Chandeler and Jones (1983, p. 432) "Learning disabled or emotionally disabled: does it make any difference?"

The manifestation of poor social perceptions as observed in the child with learning disabilities presents in different ways. The following manifestations are common: frustration, aggression, social withdrawal, task avoidance, poor self-concept and anxiety. Research also indicates that these students have problems relating to and being accepted by their peers (Engelbrecht, 1999; Salend, 2001). The inability of the learning disabled learner to socialise effectively within the school and peer group should be seen as a serious concern. Often learners with poor social perceptions who experience social problems are regarded as

problem makers, stubborn, disrupting order in the classroom and even juvenile delinquents.

The cause of poor social behaviour is often not investigated and instead the symptoms are usually focussed on. The influence of the interaction between the children, parents, educators and their relation to social problems are quite often not taken into consideration.

Before exploring the manifestations of social problems the etiology of learning disabilities will be discussed.

2.7.2 Etiology of learning disabilities

Smith et al. (2001) state that there are far more students with learning disabilities than with any other disability in today's schools. A report from the University of Stellenbosch, Department of Education (1997), shows that in the 1995-1996 school year 51.2% of the students with disabilities between the ages 6 and 21 were learning disabled. Furthermore the report shows that the ratio of learners with learning disabilities was four boys to one girl (Smith et al., 2001, p. 96).

Experts in this field generally agree that learning is hindered in children with learning disabilities because of neurological abnormalities causing a problem in how the brain processes information (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1999).

The U.S Department of Education defines a specific learning disability as:

"The term 'children with specific learning disabilities' means those children who have a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. Such disorders include

such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Such terms do not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicap, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage” (Vaughn, Boss & Schumm, 2000, p. 134).

The literature suggests several causes for learning disabilities:

2.7.2.1 Genetic factors

Studies have shown that learning disabilities are more evident in some groups of families than other. Some studies have cited the large number of relatives with learning problems amongst children identified with learning disabilities. In one study it was found that 116 children from a group of 276 children experienced learning problems. The study further found that 88% of the 116 children had relatives who had a learning problem of some nature (Wallace & McLoughin, 1979; Smith et al., 2001).

2.7.2.2 Causes occurring before birth

Learning problems have been linked to injuries to the embryo or fetus caused by the mother. The mother's use of cigarettes, drugs and alcohol during the development of the fetus has damaging effects on the brain of the fetus. Through the mother, the fetus is exposed to toxins, causing malformations in the development of the brain and central nervous system. Malnutrition of the mother as well as measles, meningitis and other illnesses can be related to learning disabilities (Siegel, 1982; Smith et al., 2001).

2.7.2.3 Causes occurring after birth

The environment in which the child develops and functions determine whether the child will reach his/her full potential. Toro, Weissburg, Guare and Leibenstein (1990, p.118) state that the child with learning disabilities "...comes from disadvantaged background compared to their non disabled peers." Health problems, such as high fever, encephalitis, meningitis, stroke, diabetes and paediatric AIDS have been linked to learning disabilities. Malnutrition and poor postural health care can also lead to neurological dysfunction (Hallahan, Kauffman & Lloyd, 1999). Research in South Africa has shown that malnutrition in the early developmental years of the child is associated with an abnormal function on the electro-encephalograph (Greeff, 1982, p.13). Recent studies of the Medical Research Council have shown that lead ingestion can be linked to neurological dysfunction.

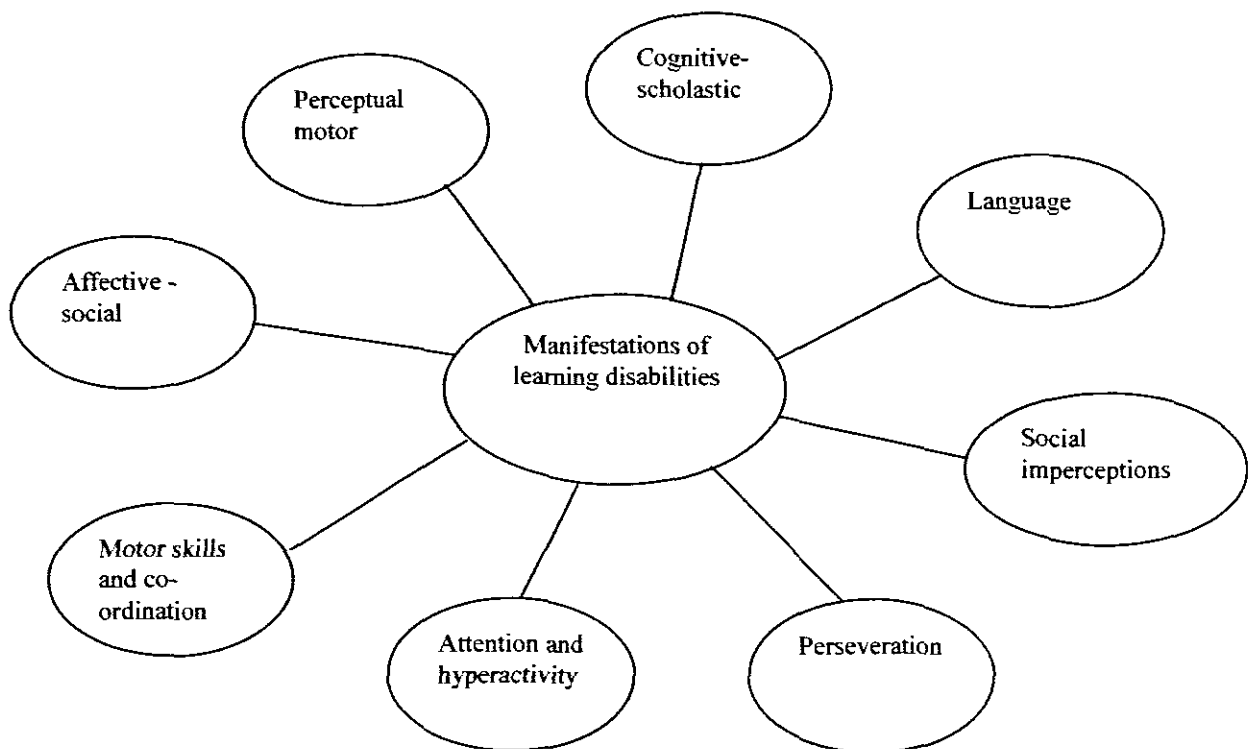
Hallahan, Kauffmann and Lloyd (1999) state that the widespread use of computerised neurological techniques such as computerised axial tomography (CAT) seem to identify a learning disability, but are not used for several reasons. Such procedures are expensive, are invasive and the documented presence of a neurological dysfunction does not affect how the child is taught.

2.7.3 Manifestations of learning disabilities

Learners with learning disabilities are a heterogeneous group. A single learner will not have deficiencies in all areas such as social interactions and emotional maturity, attention and hyperactivity, memory, cognition, motor skills and perceptual abilities. Every individual learner has his/her own combination of symptoms, manifestations and characteristics. Furthermore, any area could be a strength for a student with learning disabilities. It is important to have a good understanding of the manifestations of learning disabilities in order to make

appropriate referrals and identify effective intervention strategies. The different manifestations as displayed in figure 2.2 will be discussed in this chapter.

Figure 2.2 Manifestations of learning disabilities



2.7.3.1 Perceptual motor problems

Perception is the processing and interpretation of information gathered through different senses (Kapp,1989). The child with learning disabilities usually has perceptual problems (Suran & Rizzo, 1983). Perceptual disorders affect the ability to receive stimuli through sight, hearing or touch and to discriminate between and interpret sensations appropriately. Learners with learning disabilities may have gross and fine motor difficulties. Gross motor difficulties include awkward gaits, clumsiness, and an inability to catch or throw balls and follow a rhythmic sequence of movements. Fine motor problems include difficulty

cutting, pasting and holding a pencil (Salend, 2001). Literature indicates that the learning disabled child's cognition, motor functioning and language can be adversely affected by perceptual problems (Lapp, 1989; Salend, 2001).

According to Silver, (1990) and Salend, (2001) learning disabled children may also have social and emotional problems as a result of their perceptual problems. Research also indicates that because of their poor social perceptions and social skills these students avoid certain sport events and social gatherings. The avoidance of sport and social meetings may have a further negative influence on the development of their social skills. "Deficits in learning non verbal motor patterns are frustrating to children. They become embarrassed in many situations because they cannot perform as well as their friends" (Johnson & Myklibust, 1967, p. 282).

2.7.3.2 Language deficits

The child communicates by means of language and it is thus important that this aspect be discussed with regard to the learning disabled child.

Studies have found that more than 60% of students with learning disabilities have some type of language disorder (Smith et al., 2001). Some of these learners may use immature speech patterns, experience language comprehension difficulties and have trouble expressing themselves. The learning disabled child experiences difficulties with his/her social development as a result of language.

Matte and Bolaski, (1998) assert that these children often have difficulties processing non-verbal communication in social situations. They often do not know what to say, to whom and when. It seems that the learner with learning disabilities experiences difficulties in predicting the consequences of his/her behaviour.

It seems that the language deficits of the learning disabled learner not only affect their academic performance but also their communication, which in turn affects their social skills negatively.

2.7.3.3 Cognitive-scholastic difficulties

Cognition refers to the ability to reason or think (Hallahan, Kauffman & Lloyd, 1999). Lerner (1989, p.177) describes cognitive abilities as follows: "Cognitive abilities are clusters of mental skills that are essential to human functions. They enable one to know, to be aware, to think, to conceptualize, to use abstractions, to reason, to criticize and to be creative."

Learners with problems in this area may make poor decisions and frequent errors. They may have trouble getting started on a task, have delayed verbal responses, require more supervision or have trouble adjusting to change. Understanding social expectations may be difficult. They also may have trouble using previously learned information in a new situation (Smith et al., 2001). These children furthermore have metacognitive deficits which include the inability to control and direct their own attention and mental processes (Wong, 1991). They often lack strategies for planning and organizing, setting priorities and solving problems. An important component of metacognition is the ability to regulate one's own behaviour when one perceives that one is acting inappropriately or making mistakes. Nel (1985) states that the cognitive problem causes difficulties for the learning disabled learner with his/her relationship in the peer group. They do not feel part of their peer groups and think they are different from their peers.

2.7.3.4 Affective – social problems

Learners with learning disabilities may have social difficulties. They may show signs of poor self-concept, social withdrawal, frustration and anxiety (Salend, 2001).

Literature confirms that because of their poor social perceptions and social skills such learners have problems relating to and being accepted by their peers. This can often make it difficult for the learning disabled child to develop a strong sense of self worth (Smith et al., 2001; Salend, 2001; Gorman, 1999).

Learners need successful social relationships to build confidence and a feeling of self worth. Learners with learning disabilities however experience a deficit with successful social relationships. Salend (2001) states that the negative aspects of a learning disabled child are often emphasized more than their positive aspects. This may result in the child having a negative self image and resulting in poor academic performance. The literature suggests that a perception of low academic achievement is directly related to reduced acceptance, greater rejection and lower social status among peers. These children often uses inappropriate and non-compliant behaviour and run the risk of performing poorly in all academic areas, with high drop out, absenteeism and suspension rates (Salend, 2001). However, being sensitive to emotional issues, the teacher can take care to include students with learning disabilities in supportive situations and provide reinforcement for specific successes. Additional guidelines in this regard within the inclusive classrooms will be discussed in chapter four.

2.7.3.5 Perseveration

“A child with perseverative behaviour continues an activity once it has started and has difficulty in changing to another (Lerner, 1989, p.31). This activity can be verbal or non-verbal, visual or auditory. The learning disabled child finds it

difficult to reconstruct his/her attention from one issue to another (Gerber, 1985). The social functioning of the learning disabled child is often negatively affected by this manifestation and he/she finds it difficult to establish successful interpersonal relationships.

2.7.3.6 Social imperceptions

Osman (1982, pp.114-115) states that "while appropriate schooling is crucial, in the end what counts are the human qualities of an individual. A person's sense of himself and his ability to interact with others are the enduring elements that mean survival in the adult world."

Different terms are used in literature to define or describe the abilities and social aspects of a human being. Social cognition is used by Faber (1996) which includes the ability of an individual to understand social situations. Marlowe (1986) refers to social intelligence which includes aspects such as social interest, social skills, social assertiveness and the ability to understand how others feel.

It seems that social imperceptions as a manifestation of the learning disabled child affects the learning ability and academic performance of these children negatively. Social imperceptions can also create feelings of overdependence, aggression, withdrawal and guilt (Smith et al., 2001).

The problem of social imperceptions of the learning disabled child seems to be more serious than academic problems. Osman (1982, p.xiii) confirms this statement when noting the following: "These living disabilities become far more pervasive and anxiety-provoking for the child and his family than his problem with reading or maths". Osman (1982) furthermore asserts that we teach almost everything in life except how to get along with other people. It is important to attend to learners social needs, just as much as attention is paid to educational needs.

2.7.3.7 Attention deficits and hyperactivity

Research indicates that the number of learners with learning disabilities that have attention problems range from 41% to 80% (Smith et al., 2001). Attention is a critical skill in learning. Salend (2001) suggests that learners must be able to *initiate and direct their attention according to task demands in order to be successful learners*. Deficiencies in these areas can have an impact on different aspects of success in performance. Social problems may occur when the learner does not have the ability to sustain attention, interrupts and does not listen to others.

Hyperactivity is another motor problem found in some children with learning disabilities. According to Kapp (1989) hyperactivity results in constant movement and difficulty staying seated. Hyperactivity is seen as typical of learning disability by some researchers. Learning disabled children are more obvious because of the manifestation of hyperactivity in their behaviour. The excess movement of a hyperactive learner can draw sharp criticism when it negatively affects the learning environment. These children are often seen as lazy, rebels and not co-operative. They often develop a low self-esteem and poor socialization with peers (Bryan & Bryan, 1978, Salend, 2001).

2.7.4 Characteristics of children with poor social skills

Lerner (1989) asserts that children with learning disabilities often do not exhibit good social skills and are not able to predict the consequences of their inappropriate behaviour. Although children with learning disabilities have average to above average intellectual abilities they do experience problems in coping with social expectations on a daily basis. This deficit of social skills implicates sensitivity towards others and a poor perception of social situations. In terms of the learning disabled child's total life functioning, these social

problems have a more restraining affect on the child than his/her academic problems.

2.7.4.1 Lack of judgment

The development of social perception is similar to the development of academic skills, i.e reading and mathematics. A child learns to anticipate certain processes and will then thereafter establish whether it is congruent with his/her expected outcome. A learning disabled child can experience problems with this process. These children may find it difficult to predict the consequences of their behaviour (Carlson, 1987). The learning disabled child finds it difficult to distinguish social cues, for example improper reading of social cues of a non-verbal type from both adults and peers (Cruickshank, Morse & Johns, 1980).

2.7.4.2 Lack of empathy

The learning disabled child with poor social perceptions is not sensitive to the feelings of others. These children's behaviour and language will be inappropriate because they are not aware of the feelings of another person. According to Vaughn (1985) they have a more egocentric communication style which results in inappropriate behaviour in a specific situation.

2.7.4.3 Problems in socializing

Research indicates that children with learning disabilities present with more social problems in their peer group than the non-learning disabled child (Bryan, Pearl & Fallon, 1989; Ritter, 1989).

Parents of learning disabled children often complain that their children experience problems making friends. Carlson (1987) asserts that the learning

disabled child does not promote friendship. They make more unacceptable social choices than the non-learning disabled child.

2.7.4.4 Problems in establishing family relationships

The family is the framework within which the child must develop and therefore he/she needs to have the assurance of good relationships within the family. The role of the school in the child's life is of little meaning if the family does not function optimally. The child with learning disabilities experiences problems in establishing family relationships because of his/her lack of social skills (Green, 1990).

2.7.4.5 Social problems in the school

Social skills deficits create different problems for the learning disabled child in the school (Madge, Affleck & Lowenbraun, 1990). The learning disabled child is often ignored when he/she approaches friends and teachers. These children are often ignored by teachers because of their anti-social behaviour in the school (Brobeck, 1990). Aggression, acting out behaviours, irresponsibility, impulsiveness, lying, cheating, stealing, anxiety and frustration are problems typically associated with the learning disabled child with his/her lacking social skills (Kaufmann, Lloyd, Baker & Riedel, 1995; Rosenberg, Wilson, Maheady & Sindelar, 1992). Negative feedback is given more often than positive feedback by the teacher and peers, resulting in a low self-esteem (Gronlich & Ryan, 1990). According to Bender and Smith (1990) research indicates that the learning disabled learner presents with more behavioural problems than the non-learning disabled learner.

2.8 Résumé

It can be inferred through review of the relevant literature presented in this chapter that the role of the educator and educational psychologist has changed within the new democratic era in South Africa. The literature study makes it clear that there is a move towards inclusive education and the educator is not efficiently skilled to cope with the diversity of learners' educational needs. The social imperceptions of the learning disabled child were discussed. It can be deduced that the learning disabled learner not only has scholastic problems but presents with social and emotional problems as a result of his social imperceptions.

The following chapter will focus on the research design, methods and instruments to be used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research design selected for this study. The research methods followed throughout the study will also be discussed with reference to methods of sampling, data collection and data analyses. In addition validity, reliability and ethical issues will be presented. Mouton (2001) states that the research design is a plan or a blueprint of how a researcher intends to address the research problem. It addresses the planning of scientific inquiry – designing a strategy for finding out something. Leedy (1997, p.93) describes it “as the complete strategy attack on the central research problem”, while Bogden and Biklen (1998) view it as a reflection of the researcher’s plan of how he/she is going to proceed with the research.

According to the literature it is clear that the policy of inclusive education needs to be implemented. Inclusive education implies that educators have to teach children with special educational needs who are integrated in mainstream schools. Despite the fact that educators often work in teams and possess many skills, there may be areas for which they are not well equipped or trained. Learning disabilities are one of the areas in which the educators have a lack of training. Research has found that children with learning disabilities have additional social problems as a result of their learning disability and that in general there is more focus on the scholastic dysfunction than the social problems of these learners.

It is thus important to investigate the need of the educator within inclusive education with specific reference to the social problems of the learning disabled

learner. The Education White Paper 6 (2001, p.21) recommends that educators should be supported by special education personnel or support services on a regular basis.

Depending on the results of this study, criteria for a social perceptual education program for learning disabled children will be discussed in an effort to assist the teacher in the inclusive classroom.

3.2 Context of research

Neuman (2002, p.331) states that the meaning of the social action or statement depends in a mainly on the context in which it appears. Furthermore attention to social context implies that the same events or behaviour can have different meanings in different cultures or historical eras. Miles and Huberman (1994) believe that each circumstance has a remarkable situation consisting of a related time, geographical setting, social and historical situation – all of which impact on both the participants and the observer.

For the purpose of this study four primary schools in different areas in Richards Bay were selected. One school is situated in a rural area and serves Zulu speaking children, with Zulu speaking educators, the other school is situated in a predominantly Indian community which serves mainly Indian children. The teachers in this school are mainly Indian, English speaking teachers. The staff also consists of a few white Afrikaans speaking teachers as well as Black Zulu speaking teachers. The other two schools are in an urban area with predominantly white learners and White teachers, previously Model C schools. Teachers in these two schools are mainly white Afrikaans and English speaking teachers with only a few Indian speaking teachers.

The one school in the rural area that serves Zulu speaking children, caters for learners from Grade 1 to Grade 6. There are 754 learners and 18 educators at

this school. The educator-learner ratio is 1:42. All learners with or without disabilities are housed in the same school in an inclusive classroom setting.

The educator-learner ratio in the predominantly Indian school is 1:39. The school accommodates 663 learners with and without disabilities in an inclusive classroom setting. There are 17 educators on the staff of the school.

The one predominantly White urban school has 732 learners and 20 educators. The educator-learner ratio is 1:37. The second predominantly White urban school has 1090 learners and 32 educators. The educator-learner ratio is 1:34. Both schools are double medium (Afrikaans and English). These schools cater for Black, Indian, White and Coloured learners. All learners with or without disabilities are housed in the same school in an inclusive classroom setting.

It is also important to remember that the Education White Paper 6 (2001, p.11) states that "the education policy will systematically move away from using segregation according to categories of disabilities as an organizing principle for institutions".

It is clear that communities and schools previously separated under the old 'apartheid' system have still not sufficiently integrated into the new education system. The categories Black, White, Indian and Coloured as used in this thesis reflect categories currently used by the National Research Foundation for comparison, equity and redress purposes. The new Education Policy makes provision to integrate all learners from all different cultures and schools. The present National Minister of Education, Naledi Pandour, recently (May 2005) announced new legislation and policies to ensure that integration of all cultures take place in South African schools.

It is furthermore hoped that the study will reveal the needs of educators within inclusive education with a view towards establishing a support program to assist educators in teaching learners with learning disabilities.

3.3 Research problem

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

As explained in chapter two (cf. 2.6.1) with reference to Engelbrecht et al. (2001) educators in South African schools are currently expected to make major changes in the process of adapting to an entirely new curriculum. South Africa, as a democratic country, needs to change its policies in order to redress the imbalances of the past. There should be enough support programs for teachers to be efficiently equipped with more knowledge and new skills. As discussed in chapter two (cf. 2.5.1) Swart et al. (2000) indicate that teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and skills to address the variety of special educational needs. The need for support and training of educators in inclusive education was mentioned in chapter two (cf. 2.5.2).

The questions that are posed in this study are:

- What is teachers' understanding of “special educational needs”?
- What problems and solutions do teachers have to support learners with SEN?
- How can teachers' best be supported and empowered in order to support learners with special educational needs with specific reference to learning disabilities?

3.4 Research design and process

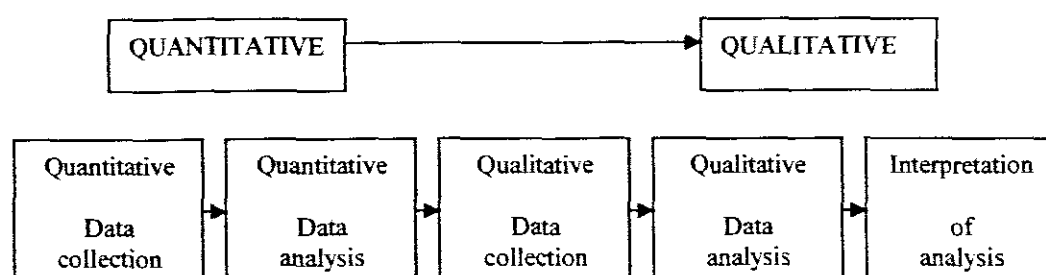
Merriam (1988) avers that research design is a plan for the assembly, organizing and integration of information and its results in a specific end product. "The selection of a particular design is determined by how the problem is shaped, by the questions it raises, and by the type of end product desired" (Merriam, 1998, p.6). The research design for the purpose of this study is described by Creswell (2003, p.18) as the mixed method where both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used.

3.4.1 Methodology of mixed methods

This mixed method is based on pragmatism. Creswell (2003, p.18) defines the mixed method as follows: "A mixed method approach is one in which the researcher employs strategies of inquiry that involve collecting data either simultaneously or sequentially to best understand the research problem. The data collection involves gathering both numeric information (e.g. on instruments) as well as text information (e.g. on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information."

The two phase model of Creswell used in this study is the "Sequential Explanatory Strategy" (Creswell, 2003, p.213) as shown in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Sequential Explanatory Strategy

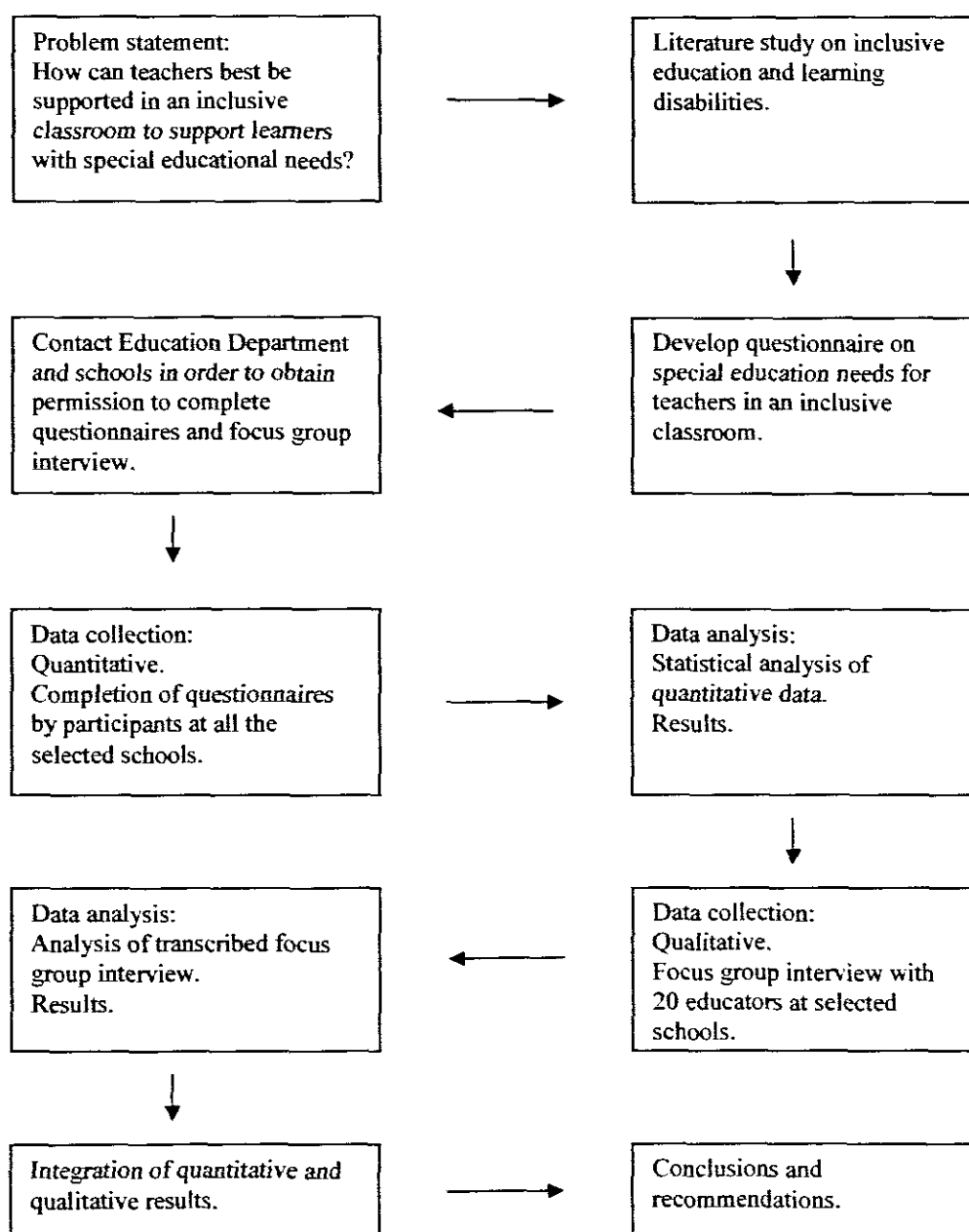


This model was selected as quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analyzed in this study. During the interpretation phase of the research the two methods are integrated. The purpose of the sequential explanatory strategy is to use the qualitative results to explain and interpret the findings of the quantitative results.

A descriptive approach will be used to explain the quantitative as well as the qualitative research results as it describes existing perceptions and needs, which is the goal of this study as applied to educators' perceptions and approach to inclusive education with specific reference to learning disabilities. A qualitative research method not only concerns itself with the current status of things but also focuses on a group of 60 educators teaching in four government primary schools. It is useful in order to describe existing reality. As inclusive education is a new initiative this research approach will be valuable in evaluating the situation in schools and the needs of educators. The aforementioned research design is therefore considered to be best suited for the present study. This study investigates educators' perceptions and approach towards inclusive education in their day to day interaction with learners with special educational needs, and their needs in teaching learners with learning disabilities.

3.4.2 Research process

The research process is presented in the schematic presentation in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Presentation of the research process

3.5 Data collection

Welman and Kruger (1994, p.127) state that “each data-collecting method and the use of a measuring instrument has its advantages and drawbacks. Also, what counts as an advantage for one may qualify as a drawback for another and vice versa”.

Different methods were used for the purpose of this study to collect data, namely, a literature review, a questionnaire, quantitative research and focus group interview, qualitative research.

3.5.1 Literature review

The literature review formed an important component of the research process. In this study a literature review was undertaken to integrate, synthesize and criticize important thinking and research on the particular topic under focus (Merian, 1998).

According to Silverman (1993:1) the aim of the literature review is “...to provide a set of explanatory concepts. These concepts offer ways of looking at the work which are essential in defining the research problem. Without a theory, there is nothing to research”.

The purpose of literature review is to provide a basis and a background for the study. As discussed in chapter two inclusive education constitutes a relatively new field. The study seeks to indicate that educators have a need for training and support in the implementation of inclusive education. Therefore, the literature review also served as a framework of reference whilst the data were being collected, processed and interpreted to form the database for analysis (Merian, 1998).

3.5.2 Questionnaire – Quantitative data collection

Questionnaires are used to obtain information from respondents related to the research problem (Welman and Kruger, 1994). A Likert-type questionnaire, designed to create a convenient and relaxed atmosphere for respondents was used to reveal teachers' effectiveness in coping with special educational needs in an inclusive classroom setting and their need for a support program relating to the social problems of learning disabled learners (Annexure D). Close-ended questions were included in the questionnaire.

Researchers who had studied attitudes towards inclusive education in particular and who used Likert-type questionnaires in similar studies include Avramidis and Burden (2000). A Likert-type questionnaire was used by Avramidis and Burden (2000) in an attempt to ascertain the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the general concept of integration of disabling conditions. Likert's statements and open-ended questions were used to assess the perceptions of secondary special education teachers working in an inclusive setting in Virginia. A Likert-type scale was used by Luseno (2001) because of its reliability in obtaining the total attitude score of each respondent.

The Likert-type questionnaire used in this study tested whether respondents were not effective (0), effective (1) or very effective (2) in teaching learners with different special educational needs in an inclusive classroom setting. Furthermore, the questionnaire also revealed educators' needs for support and training.

3.5.3 Focus group interview – Qualitative data collection

The qualitative research method included the focus group interview to collect data in this study. Morgan (1997, p.8) describes focus group discussions as follows: "The main advantage of the focus group in comparison to participant

observation is the opportunity to observe a large substantial degree of interaction on a topic in a limited period of time based on the researcher's ability to assemble and direct focus groups". A focus group interview was conducted with 20 primary school educators in order to determine what their perceptions and needs were regarding special educational needs in an inclusive classroom. The topic was introduced in the form of questions and encouraged the participation and airing of views of all members in an unbiased manner. Mouton (2001) indicates that asking questions and noting answers is a natural process for us all. A description of the participants is presented in Table 3.1. The questions that were put to the participants in the focus group were:

1. What do you understand by the term "learners with special educational needs?".
2. What problems have you had in supporting learners with special educational needs?.
3. What solutions do you have to support learners with special educational needs?.
4. How can teachers best be supported and empowered in order to support learners with special educational needs?.

3.5.4 Sampling

Sampling and selection are similar concepts according to Mouton (2001). When talking of sampling in every day life we refer to the process of selecting things or objects because it is impossible to select all things or objects. Welman and Kruger (1994) state that, from a practical point of view, it is simply impossible to conduct research on the whole population. Researchers have to obtain data from only a sample of these populations.

The study sample comprised educators of mainstream schools, who teach all learners, including learners with learning disabilities. The sample for this study was drawn from a population of primary school educators teaching in various schools in Lower Umfolozi District, Empangeni Region in the Kwa-Zulu Natal Province of South Africa. The primary schools included both urban and rural areas in this region, which included teachers from four different cultures i.e. Zulu speaking teachers, Indian English speaking teachers and White Afrikaans/English speaking teachers. The size of the population was kept in mind when the size of the sample was chosen according to criteria established by Huysamen (1994).

As mentioned in chapter one (cf. 1.6.1) the sampling method used is “non-probability sampling” in the form of purposive or convenience sampling. (Welman & Kruger, 1994). Mouton (2001) states that sometimes it is suitable to choose the sample on the basis of one’s knowledge of the population, its elements and the nature of the research aims: in short, based on one’s judgment and the purpose of the study. Schools and educators who were willing to participate in the study were selected. The nature of the sample, including the participants’ gender, age groups, qualifications and experiences is described in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Distribution of participants in study sample

Research Method	Quantitative		Qualitative	
Group	Questionnaire Group		Focus Group	
Gender	N	%	N	%
Female	53	88.3	18	80
Male	7	11.7	2	20
Total	60	100	20	100
Period	Years	Mean	Years	Mean
Age	24-50	36.3	24-46	34.6
Training Received	0-23	4.49	0-19	3.65
Teaching Experience	0-29	12.61	0-24	10.49

These specific schools were selected as the teachers were in need of support and training in order to assist learners with learning disabilities in inclusive education. Teachers from the specific primary schools had experienced problems concerning the implementation of inclusive education with specific reference to the social problems of learners with learning disabilities in their schools. Neuman (2002) avers that non-probability sampling is used to show the size of the sample in advance and has limited knowledge of the larger group from which the sample was taken. According to Welman and Kruger (1994) non-probability sampling is frequently used for reasons of convenience and economy.

Huysamen (1994) confirms that the advantage of non-probability sampling is less complicated and more economical than probability sampling. These schools were targeted through purposeful sampling, the educators were in mainstream schools (inclusive education) where all learners were included, as well as learners with learning disabilities. Teachers were not specifically trained to cope with the needs of learners with learning disabilities. These teachers are required to implement inclusive education and are in need of training and support to effectively deal with children with learning disabilities and their social problems.

They were thus able to provide the relevant information. Ryndah, Jackson and Billingsley (2001) maintain that information should be collected from information rich sources and therefore recommend purposeful sampling. The sample population of this study consisted of 60 teachers of four primary schools in the Empangeni District, Kwa-Zulu Natal. Questionnaires were given to the teachers to complete and were collected after completion. Twenty of the 60 participants took part in the focus group interview. The focus group interview is qualitative data collection, while the questionnaire is quantitative data collection.

The teachers had an average of 13 years teaching experience. They had little knowledge of inclusive education and learning disabilities. All participants of the study were reassured of the confidentiality of the process. They were assured that their names would not be disclosed and the questionnaires would be kept in a safe place after the data had been analyzed and the research completed. The participants were given numbers in this study to protect their privacy. This is in agreement with Mouton's (2001) statement that the clearest concern in the protection of the participants' interest and well-being is the protection of their identity. Participation was voluntary and the outcomes of the study would be discussed with the participants before publication.

3.5.5 Data analysis

"Data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data and making sense out of the data involves consolidating, reducing and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read – it is the process of making meaning" (Merriam, 1998, p. 178).

The questionnaire was used in collecting quantitative data. A Likert type rating scale with three responses was used namely: (0) Ineffective, (1) Effective and (2) Very Effective. Best and Kahn (1998) state that the simplest way to describe opinion is to indicate percentage responses for each individual statement. They

furthermore recommend that for this type of analysis by item, three responses are preferable to the usual five. In this study, a Likert type scale was devised by assigning the values 2, 1 and 0 to the statements, where 2 is very effective, 1 is effective and 0 is ineffective. The questionnaire consists of 20 items.

Data of the Likert type questionnaire was exported into SPSS version 12 (SPSS inc. Chicago, 111) for analysis. Descriptive analysis was achieved by frequency tabulations of categorical variables and calculation of means, medians and standard deviations in the case of quantitative variables. Bar charts were used to display categorical distributions graphically (cf. 4.4.1.2). Quantitative variables were checked for departure from normality using the skewness statistic. Chi square or Fisher's exact test was used for the comparison of categorical variables between independent groups. Comparison of quantitative variables between two independent groups was done with t-tests. ANOVA was used for comparison of quantitative variables between more than two independent groups. To assess correlation between two quantitative variables the Pearson's correlation coefficients were used. A two tailed p value of < 0.05 was considered statistically significant in testing the hypothesis.

Miles and Huberman (1994, p.10) define qualitative data analysis as a process consisting of three phases: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing or verification. These three processes are in constant interaction and are interwoven before, during and after data collection. The aim of data analysis in this study was to find meaningful shared themes in different people's descriptions of a common experience. Before the process of analysis could begin, the data from the focus group interview was transcribed verbatim and then analysed (cf. 4.4.2.1). The respondents involved were indicated by means of codes, using the following letters: E1, E2, E3 ect. The letter Q has been used to indicate questions asked during the interview. Data analysis of the focus interview in this study was done in three phases as explained in section 4.4.2. Reduction of

semantic units and categories were done from the data collected. Main themes were derived as discussed in section 4.5.

3.5.6 Procedures for conducting research

Permission for the study was obtained from the Regional Chief Director (RCO) of the Department of Education in the Empangeni Region, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. The Department of Education was informed about the research project at the three different schools. Copies of relevant documents, including the questionnaire, were made available to them.

The relevant school principals gave consent to conduct the research project at their schools. The aim of the research project and the questionnaire was discussed with the principals. A copy of the letter of approval issued by the Department of Education was given to the schools. Questionnaires were hand delivered to the educators at the schools. The nature of the research project as well as the procedure was explained to them. The questionnaires were collected after completion.

Focus group discussions were conducted with 20 of the 60 participants who volunteered. Data analysis of quantitative and qualitative data was done. The two research methods, quantitative and qualitative, were integrated. Finally conclusions and recommendations were made.

3.6 Validity and reliability

Research is concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner. Merriam (1998) states that research results are trustworthy when there has been some accounting for their validity and reliability.

Silverman (2001, p.175) avers that "validity means truth: interpreted as the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers." Neuman (2002) confirms that validity is used to indicate "true" or "correct" when an indicator is valid. It is valid for a particular purpose. The same indicator can be valid for one purpose but invalid or less valid for another purpose. For example, the measure of stress amongst teachers might be valid for teachers but invalid for measuring the stress of medical staff. According to Neuman (2002) validity is more difficult to achieve than reliability.

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency, whether a particular technique applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time (Mouton, 2001). According to Neuman (2002, p.138) "reliability means that the information provided by indicators does not vary as a result of the characteristics of the indicator, instrument or measurement device itself."

A pilot study was conducted in order to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was piloted with a group of 20 educators who were teaching in mainstream schools.

An internal consistency method of item analysis was used in a test run to check the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire. Internal consistency implies a high degree of generalisability across the items of the measurement (Welman & Kruger, 1994). There was a high reliability between the 20 items making up the total score ($\alpha = 0.913$). The individual factors had slightly lower reliability, however, it was still relatively high in the social/emotional and learning problems factors (0.868 and 0.855 respectively). The reliability of the other two factors was somewhat lower but nevertheless acceptable (0.676 and 0.667). This lower reliability may have been due to the small number of items comprising these scales. Items should be highly related to other measurement items to prove internal consistency among them (Best & Kahn, 1998).

3.7 Ethical considerations

According to Welman and Kruger (1994) ethical considerations play a role in three stages of a research project; recruiting of participants, during the intervention procedure and in the release of results.

A researcher has a moral and professional obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants (Neuman, 2002). The methods employed to control the ethical standards of this study will briefly be discussed.

3.7.1 Privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Researchers agree that settings and participants should not be exposed by means of identifying them in print, nor should they suffer any harm from embarrassment as a consequence of the research project (Punch, 1998). The participants in the research study were reassured that, in order to protect their privacy, their names would not be disclosed at any stage of the study. Furthermore, they were assured that the questionnaire and notes would be destroyed after the data analysis and completion of the research project.

3.7.2 Informed consent

"Never coerce anyone into participating, participation must be voluntary" (Neuman, 2002, p.450). Participants need to be well informed about their participation to enable them to make an informed decision (Neuman, 2002). Participants were reassured that they were under no obligation to participate. The research objectives were articulated verbally and the procedure, aim and requirements of participation expected were explained as well (Best & Kahn, 19980).

3.7.3 Providing a summary of findings

An agreement was reached that the outcome of the study would be discussed with them. All other interested parties e.g. the participants and the Department of Education and Culture would be informed of the findings and recommendations of the research project.

3.8 Résumé

This chapter focused on the research method used in this study. The research design, methods of research, methods of data collection and analysis, validity and reliability of the study have been described. Procedures and ethical considerations were discussed as well. The following chapter will encompass a presentation of the data collected, analysis of the data and the results.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The discussion in this chapter will focus on the context of the data collection, the analysis of the data and the results. Depending on the results of the study, criteria for a social perceptual program for learners with specific learning disabilities, as well as guidelines for such a program will be discussed.

4.1.1 Research problem

Educators need to implement inclusive education where they have to accommodate a diversity of learners' needs in a united system of education. The aim of this study was to determine educators' understanding of special educational needs and their need for support within the policy of inclusive education. Furthermore, the aim was to set criteria and guidelines for a social perceptual educational program whereby lacking social skills can be taught to the learning disabled child.

4.2. Hypotheses

From the aims stated in chapter one (1.3), the following theoretical hypotheses were formulated.

- (i) Educators have insufficient knowledge and understanding of "special educational needs".
- (ii) Educators do have solutions to support learners with SEN.
- (iii) Educators are in need of support with specific reference to learning disabilities.

4.3. Context of the study

As described in chapter three (3.3.2.) the data for this research was derived from a questionnaire completed by 60 educators in three different mainstream schools in urban rural areas, as well as focus group discussions. Participation in the study was voluntary and the fact that the data would only be used for research purposes was stressed.

4.3.1. Participants

The educators (N=60) were selected from four different schools in the Empangeni district, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. The schools were purposefully selected and the educators participated voluntarily. Table 3.1 in section 3.5.4 shows the distribution of participants in the study sample.

4.4 Results and discussion

What follows are the results of the various analyses done, in accordance with the aims of the study.

Data of the Likert type questionnaire were captured in MS Excel and exported into SPSS version 12 (SPSS inc. Chicago, Ill) for analysis.

Descriptive analysis was achieved by frequency tabulations of categorical variables and calculation of means, medians and standard deviations in the case of quantitative variables. Bar charts were used to display categorical distributions graphically.

4.4.1 Statistical analysis

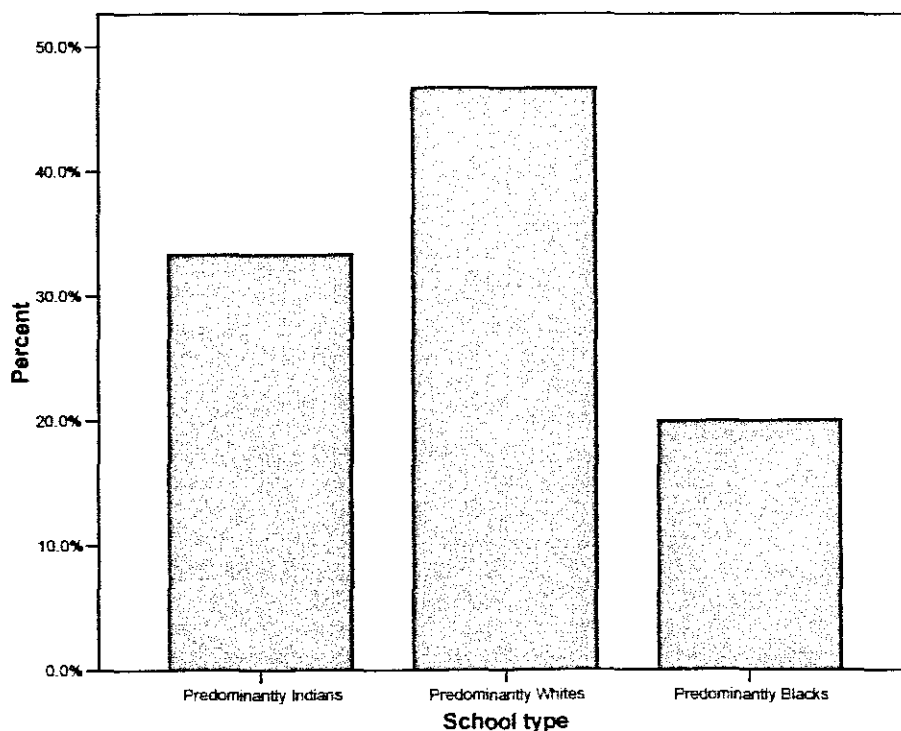
Quantitative variables were checked for departure from normality using the skewness statistic. Comparison of categorical variables between independent groups was achieved using chi square or Fisher's exact tests where appropriate. Comparison of quantitative variables between two independent groups was done with t-tests. ANOVA was used for comparison of quantitative variables between more than two independent groups. Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to assess correlation between two quantitative variables. Chronbach's alpha was used to assess reliability of the items comprising the total and factor scores.

Hypothesis testing decision rule: a two tailed p value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

4.4.2 Demographics

Sixty respondents from four different schools participated in the study. The proportions from the different school types are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 4.1: Distribution of study participants by school type



Predominantly white schools were represented most frequently in the study, comprising 46.7% of the respondents (n=28). Fewer participants were from predominantly Black schools (n=12, 20%).

Table 4.1 Gender distribution of participants

	Frequency	Perce nt
Female	53	88.3
Male	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0

The majority of participants were female (n=53, 88.3%) while there were only 7 males as shown in Table 1.

Table 4.2 Mean, standard deviation and range of age, years of training and years of teaching experience in study participants

	AGE	YEARS of TRAINING	YEARS of TEACHING EXPERIENCE
N	60	60	60
Mean	36.30	4.49	12.61
Std. Deviation	7.727	3.978	7.085
Minimum	24	0	0
Maximum	50	23	29

Mean age of respondents was 36.3 years (SD 7.73). The age range was 24 to 50 years. Years of training ranged from 0 to 23 years with a mean of 4.5 years (SD 3.98). The training in this context includes further training. Teaching experience was also variable, with a range from 0 to 29 years and a mean of 12.6 years (SD 7.09). These statistics are shown in Table 2.

4.4.3 Response of participants to questions on special educational needs

Twenty questions were posed to the respondents who had to respond on a scale of 0 to 2, with 0 being the lowest level and 2 being the highest.

Twenty different questions were grouped according to the following specific special educational needs:

Special educational needs:	Questions:
Learning disabilities	1,5,8,9,10,12,17,18
Social-emotional problems	2,3,4,16,19,20
Physical disabilities	6,7,11,15
Other needs	13,14

4.4.3.1 Total and factor scores

Participants were given a total score which was the sum of their responses to questions 1-20. The higher the score the greater their ability to deal with special needs learners. These were expressed as percentages out of the maximum possible score. Questions were also grouped into specific factors. Factor scores were calculated and expressed as percentages out of the maximum for that factor. Table 4.3 shows the summary statistics for both total and factor scores for all participants.

4.4.3.2 Associations between total and factor scores and demographic variables

Table 4.4 ANOVA: Comparison of mean scores between school types

Factor		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Total percent	Between Groups	398.810	2	199.405	.451	.640
	Within Groups	25229.836	57	442.629		
	Total	25628.646	59			
Social emotional factor	Between Groups	798.942	2	399.471	.566	.571
	Within Groups	40224.206	57	705.688		
	Total	41023.148	59			
Learning problems factor	Between Groups	354.227	2	177.114	.318	.729
	Within Groups	31768.222	57	557.337		
	Total	32122.449	59			
Physical needs factor	Between Groups	4261.905	2	2130.952	3.169	.050
	Within Groups	38329.241	57	672.443		
	Total	42591.146	59			
Other special education needs factor	Between Groups	229.167	2	114.583	.140	.870
	Within Groups	46635.417	57	818.165		
	Total	46864.583	59			

Total and factor scores were compared between the demographics variables of school type, gender, age, years training and years experience to assess if any association existed. Table 4.5 shows that there were no significant

differences in mean scores between the school types, except in the case of special needs factor ($F = 3.169$, $p = .05$)

Table 4.5 Post hoc Bonferroni tests for pairwise comparisons between school Types for physical needs factor

Dependent Variable	(I) School type	(J) School type	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Physical needs factor	Predominantly Indians	Predominantly Whites	-2.85714	7.59197	1.000
		Predominantly Blacks	-22.50000	9.46885	.063
	Predominantly Whites	Predominantly Indians	2.85714	7.59197	1.000
		Predominantly Blacks	-19.64286	8.94722	.097
	Predominantly Blacks	Predominantly Indians	22.50000	9.46885	.063
		Predominantly Whites	19.64286	8.94722	.097

Post hoc Bonferroni tests for the physical needs factor showed that no particular school types were significantly different from each other. The predominantly Indian school and predominantly Black school differed the most ($p = 0.063$) although not quite significantly so. The Black school had the highest score for this factor and the Indian schools the lowest score for this factor as indicated in Table 4.5.

Table 4.6 Descriptive statistics for total and factor scores by gender

Factor	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total percent	male	7	50.0000	13.84437	5.23268
	female	53	48.8208	21.69281	2.97974
Social emotional factor	male	7	57.1429	17.63084	6.66383
	female	53	56.2893	27.43999	3.76917
Learning problems factor	male	7	46.9388	15.89568	6.00800
	female	53	52.0216	24.19737	3.32376
Physical needs factor	male	7	51.7857	27.41328	10.36125
	female	53	41.5094	26.82896	3.68524
Other special education needs factor	male	7	25.0000	20.41241	7.71517
	female	53	24.5283	29.20854	4.01210

According to the results in table 4.6 it is clear that there was not much difference between males and females, except perhaps in the physical needs factor, where males scored higher by approximately 10 % than females.

Table 4.7 T-test for comparison of mean scores by gender

Factor	t	df	p (2-tailed)
Total percent	.196	10.396	.849
Social emotional factor	.080	58	.937
Learning problems factor	-.538	58	.592

Physical needs factor	.950	58	.346
Other special education needs factor	.041	58	.967

Scores were compared by gender using independent t-tests. The mean scores by gender are shown in Table 4.7. Results indicate that none of the mean scores differed significantly by gender.

Table 4.8 Pearson's correlation between age, years of training and teaching experience and factor and total scores

Factor		AGE	YEARS OF TRAINING	YEARS TEACHING EXPERIENCE
total percent	Pearson Correlation	.320(*)	-.068	.296(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.605	.022
	N	60	60	60
Social/ emotional factor	Pearson Correlation	.254	-.045	.221
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050	.731	.090
	N	60	60	60
Learning problems factor	Pearson Correlation	.310(*)	-.081	.279(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.536	.031
	N	60	60	60
Physical needs factor	Pearson Correlation	.236	-.064	.201
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.069	.627	.124
	N	60	60	60
Other special education needs factor	Pearson Correlation	.254	.011	.335(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	.932	.009
	N	60	60	60

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Age, years of training and teaching experience were correlated against each factor score in Table 8. Age correlated significantly positive with the total

score ($r=0.320$, $p = 0.013$) and learning problems factor ($r= 0.310$, $p = 0.016$). Years of training did not correlate with any of the factors, but years of teaching experience correlated significantly positive with the total score ($r=0.296$, $p = 0.022$), learning problems factor ($r = 0.279$, $p = 0.031$) and other special education needs factor ($r=0.335$, $p =0.009$). Thus as age and years of experience increased, so did the scores for these factors.

4.4.3.3 Reliability analysis of total and factor items

Table 4.9 Reliability analysis of total and factor items

Factor	No. of items	Chronbach's alpha
Total	20	0.913
Social - emotional factor	6	0.868
Learning problems factor	7	0.855
Physical needs factor	4	0.676
Other special education needs factor	2	0.667

There was high reliability between the 20 items making up the total score ($\alpha = 0.913$). The individual factors had slightly lower reliability, however, it was still relatively high in the social/emotional and learning problems factors (0.868 and 0.855 respectively). The reliability of the other two factors was somewhat lower but nevertheless acceptable (0.676 and 0.667). This lower reliability may have been due to the small number of items comprising these scales. The reliability analysis is shown in Table4. 9.

4.4.3.4 Summary of results

Participants as a whole scored relatively low on the total and factor scores. The scores were not influenced significantly by type of school or gender, but

there was a positive correlation between age of respondent and years of teaching experience and some of the factors as well as the total scores. Thus higher ages and more teaching experience was associated with higher scores. The questionnaire items had a high reliability overall.

4.4.4 Process of qualitative data analysis and reduction of focus group interview

Data analysis took place in three phases as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) and was then displayed. The conclusions were drawn and verified. The discussion of the process follows below.

4.4.4.1 Process of data analysis and reduction

An example of the transcript of data gathered is presented. The process is described as a method employed to “understand phenomena better by grouping and then conceptualizing objects that have similar patterns and characteristics” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p.249). An example of the data from participants is given below. The respondents involved are indicated by means of the following transcription codes.

Transcription Codes

Code	Meaning
E1, 2, 3 etc	Educator
Q	Indicates questions asked

Q: What do you understand by the term learners with special “educational needs?”

E1: Learners with learning disabilities. Learners who have extra problems in the basic school subjects. Learners who are most in need of aid and help in order to learn

E3: Learners with SEN are learners that cannot cope in a mainstream class due to factors like physical disability, behavioural problems or learning disabilities.

E4: Learners with learning difficulties who require special and individual attention.

E8: I think are those that who are not able to find e.g. uniform, books, school fund as required by the school. Sometimes they need more attention from the side of a teacher only to find that they are too many in the class.

E10: Those who do not cope in a class where average pupils get taught.

E6: My understanding is on those learners or kids who are orphans without guardians. These children who are not at school whereas they are compelled

to be at school. The learners with special educational need can also be those learners who have parents but they are unemployed. So the children have no school uniform and they have not yet paid for school.

Q: What problems have you had in supporting learners with special educational needs?

E5: Large classes make it difficult to give one-to-one attention. Inattentiveness to homework tasks.

E15: When a psychologist is needed it takes a long time to make an appointment to have the learners assessed so as to see their problem. Even after assessment there is no follow up by the psychologist or the social workers.

E16: Firstly, if the number of learners was reasonable there will be no problem in supporting, right now there are many problems like giving them more time, and helping them with their educational needs.

E19: Classes too large. Pressure to complete a certain amount of work in a certain time. In a remedial/special school/class the focus is on the individual learner and his/her problem area. Teacher training does not make provision for handling the learners with special educational needs.

E6: The problems are 1. Financial

2. Accommodation

E2: Classes are large – and cross cultural and very demanding with the needs of the group. No time to devote to pupils with special needs and they just get lost. It is so bad for their self esteem and self image. They become frustrated at not being able to cope and this more often then leads to behavioral problems.

Q: What solutions do you have to support learners with special educational needs?

E6: Solution is to bring back special ed classes with teachers who are trained to cope with special needs and have the facility and time to do so.

E7: I have taught special education for 20 years in mainstream education. These children progressed at their own pace and performed well. I therefore suggest special classes should be established in mainstream schools.

E11: Special programs to assist. Parental involvement. Extra classes.

E1: The best solution is to diagnose, know individual learner's needs, handle them with respect and empathy. Teacher's workshops should be organized. Get help from social workers and psychologists etc. Find solutions by consulting people who could offer help and knowledge and give advice on how to deal with such learners.

E8: The numbers in classes should be reduced. Teachers should be given a chance to work in a relaxed atmosphere.

E12: I think the solution is to train educators. If there can be a workshop whereby educators will be trained so that they are able to cope with these learners.

Q: How can teacher's best be supported and empowered in order to support learners with special educational needs?

E15: There should be educational psychologists at schools to help the teacher after they have assess the child. Ideas of how to teach the child and support the child and help the family to be able to handle the learners with learning problems. Training should be given to teachers to help the learners. If there are educational psychologists' posts, they should be available for the qualified.

E16: Teachers need to be developed about these learners

Teachers need to know how to identify a child with special educational needs. Teachers also need to be taught how to deal with these learners because sometimes you get irritated by the same learner who needs special treatment.

E20: Teachers could be given training to help alleviate the problems. Unfortunately, effective support to learners would require much training. It

would perhaps be more cost effective to have specialized people deal with the problems.

E21: Smaller classes. Specialized training. School psychological services must test learners – we feel helpless when we cannot cope with them.

E7: Teachers need special training in the field of special education. Without specialize skills being taught to them, they will not be able to cope.

The main ideas that emerged were written down in a process of discovery. Maykut and Moorehouse (1994) suggest that these ideas should be used to provisionally identify categories. It involves identifying recurring regularities in the data. The raw data transcribed above was then analyzed into semantic units and categories as illustrated in table 4.10.

TABLE 4.10 Categories of meaning derived from focus group interview

SEMANTIC UNITS	CATEGORIES
Special training for teachers in inclusive education to cope with learners who have SEN	Need for special training
Provide specialized professional i.e. educational psychologists, special trained teachers	Support
Number of learners in a class is too big. Educator – Learner rate	Physical facilities, i.e. special trained educators and finances
Learners with SEN needs to be treated specially. Special classes should be established	Separated facilities
To be trained on how to handle children with learning problems who have behavioural and emotional problems i.e. self-esteem	Capacity building
Educators not trained to support learners with special educational needs	Lack of specialized training
Relationship with professionals i.e. school psychologist, occupational and speech therapist must be established	Collaboration
Learners with no friends, aggression and depression. SEN learners or the laughter of normal kids	Social skills

4.5 Data reduction to derive the main themes

The clustering of categories in a dendrogram followed to derive the main themes. The dendrogram drawn from clustering categories from the focus group interview appears below:

- Training to assist learners with disabilities in class.
- Educator training does not include training for learners with special educational needs.
- Provide skills and knowledge to educators.
- Number of pupils per class too large.
- No time for individual attention.
- Present system not effective.
- Collaboration with other professionals, e.g. educational psychologists.
- Importance of service rendering by educational psychologists and other professionals.
- Social and emotional problems of learning disabled learners.
- Disruptive behaviour towards other learners.
- Financial problems.
- Lack of resources.
- Sufficient accommodation should be provided.

Dendrogramming of the main categories was undertaken in order to arrive at a deeper analysis of themes. The categories were reduced to the final themes as above.

4.6 Main themes that emerged from the data sources

The following are the main themes derived from the reduction of the data:

Focus Group with Educators

1. Ongoing training develops capacity building
2. Reduction of educator – learner ration is necessary
3. Provide psychological and other professional services
4. Support with social and emotional problems of learners with learning disabilities.

4.6.1 Ongoing training develops capacity building

Participants in the study expressed the need for further training in the field of special educational needs. They were of the opinion that ongoing training is essential to improve skills and knowledge. Therefore the Department of Educational should implement training in the field of special educational needs for educators to establish successful integrated educational practices in inclusive education.

4.6.2 Reduction of educator-learner ratio

The problem of too many learners per class was reported by the participants. They experience many difficulties in their daily teaching activities within an inclusive setting because of the diverse needs of all learners. Educators cannot provide in the needs of all learners because they cannot give individual attention. Consideration should be given to reducing the educator-learner ratio.

4.6.3 Provide psychological and other professional services

Participants expressed the need for the services of educational psychologists at schools. Educators do not have sufficient knowledge and experience with

learners with special educational needs. They need guidance and support to cope with learners' special educational needs

4.6.4 Support with social and emotional problems of learners with learning disabilities

Participants commented on the social, emotional and behavioral problems of learners with special educational needs. Educators experience difficulties in supporting these learners and were also concerned about the scorn suffered from other learners. Therefore it is important to train and guide educators to support these learners with social and emotional problems.

It is clear from the results of this study that the participants, the educators, experience different problems in an inclusive education setting. Furthermore they expressed the need for further training and support to enable them to efficiently support the learner with special educational needs. Problems educators experience are the social, emotional and behavioural problems of learners with learning disabilities.

The participants also emphasized the need for further training as well as the support and guidance of educational psychologists. The role of the educational psychologist needs to change as discussed in Chapter two (2.6) and therefore it seems that it would be appropriate to develop guidelines for a *social perceptual education program for learning disabled children*, which will enable teachers to support these learners. Before discussing the guidelines, the criteria of such a program will be outlined. The criteria for a social perceptual education program will be elucidated as follows:

4.7 Criteria for a social perceptual education program.

The criteria for a social perceptual education program will be discussed before the explanation of the guidelines.

4.7.1 Cognitive criteria

- Cognitive development criteria are divided into four interdependent phases. The primary school learner is changing from the concrete to the abstract level of thinking. The learning disabled child finds it difficult to move from the concrete level of thinking to the abstract level (cf. 2.7.3.4).
- The program should be suitable for learners with average to above average intellectual abilities, as the program is aimed at learning disabled learners with such abilities (cf. 1.4.3).
- The program should agree with the language development of the learning disabled child (cf. 2.7.3.2). Some learners are still in the concrete-operational phase of thinking and the contents and instructions of the program should therefore be concrete and simple.
- The learning disabled child sometimes experiences problems integrating new information with existing information (cf. 2.7.3.3). A social perceptual program should make provision for the repetition of new information. *Practicing and repetition on a regular basis is necessary to ensure the transfer and integration of new knowledge and to improve social functioning.*
- A learning disabled child finds it difficult to predict the consequences of his/her behaviour (cf. 2.7.3.2 & 2.7.4.1). A program should include activities to improve this deficiency.
- Learning disabled children are passive learners and often react impulsively (cf. 2.7.3.7). A program should provide activities to involve the learning disabled child actively.

- The learning disabled learner is dependant on specific guidance and often does not understand instructions (cf. 2.7.3.2). Therefore instructions should be clear and specific guidance should be given to complete activities.
- The learning disabled child's attention is distracted easily (cf. 2.7.3.7). Activities in a program should be varied so that the learning disabled child can focus on an activity.

4.7.2 Social criteria

The learner in the primary school finds him/herself in a situation where different factors have an influence on their social development. The peer group plays an important role in the development of the child. The learning disabled child experiences social problems which affect his/her socializing negatively (cf. 2.7.3.4).

- A program should teach the learning disabled learner communication skills. Positive relationships within the peer group are based on efficient communication and contributes to a positive self concept (cf. 2.7.3.4).
- The program should provide opportunities for the learning disabled child to learn to interpret body language i.e. facial expressions, body movements and voice tone correctly (cf. 2.7.3.2).
- The learning disabled child is often ignored by friends and adults when they approach them to make a conversation (cf. 2.7.4.5). The program should teach the child these social skills.
- Furthermore, it is important that the learning disabled learner finds the opportunity to discuss new information with the teacher and class friends. In this way there is more opportunity for practicing

communication skills and to identify any further deficiencies (cf. 2.7.3.2).

4.7.3 Affective criteria

- The learning disabled child is not always able to control his/her emotions. Temper outbursts and aggressions often occur and he/she does not know how to control it (cf. 2.7.3.4). Furthermore, the learning disabled child is not able to recognize emotional expressions and non-verbal behavior of others (cf. 2.7.3.6). A program should thus teach the learning disabled child to control his/her emotions.
- Learning disabled learners experience increased stress as a result of repeated failures in their social functioning (cf. 1.4.4 & 2.7.3.4). Stress management should also be included in the program.
- The program should include activities and guidelines to improve the self concept of the learning disabled child (cf. 2.7.3.4).
- The learning disabled learner should be given the opportunity.....
Opportunity should be provided in the program for the learning disabled child to copy emotions and act it out (cf. 2.7.3.4).

4.7.4 Normative criteria

There are normative boundaries, which provide a safe environment for children. The learning disabled child should be able to distinguish between the decent and indecent. When compiling a program the normative aspects should be taken into consideration.

- The program should make provision to teach the child disabled learner to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

- The program should allow correct values and norms to be learned by learning disabled learner.

4.8 Guidelines for a social perceptual education program

Group therapy, role play and discussions can be implemented in the training of the learning disabled learner.

4.8.1 Body image and self concept

Learning disabled children often have a negative concept of their bodies and a negative perception of themselves. This may affect their self-confidence and candidness in communicating with other people negatively. It is possible to *improve social perceptions and social skills by developing a positive body image and self-concept.*

The following examples can be used to improve the learning disabled learner's body image:

- body parts of the child can be pointed out in another child;
- motor activities can be used to make the child more aware of his/her body;
- a specific body image can be modeled and the child can imitate the position;
- a scrapbook can be used to paste pictures of people with different body images and facial expressions to discuss.

The following guidelines can be followed to improve the self image of the child with learning disabilities:

- the child should be aware of his/her negative and positive qualities and learn to build on the positive qualities: the child could make a list of

his/her positive characteristics, which he/she is good at, as well as which he/she is not good at and it can be discussed with the child;

- the child should learn to cope with his/her negative emotions: group discussions can be used to discuss what affects their emotions negatively and how they affect themselves negatively;
- the child must learn to assert himself/herself: video's/DVD's can be used to depict the behaviour of a person and the learner should then decide whether the person acts assertively or not. Discussions is also held:
- effective communication skills can be learned: the learners can think of subjects which are difficult to talk about and it could then be discussed in the group;
- learners must learn by thinking more positively about themselves: the child can be asked to complete a questionnaire on how he/she feels about herself/himself after which they are asked to replace all their negative statements with positive statements.

4.8.2 Sensitivity for the feelings of other people

The learner with learning disabilities is not sensitive to the feelings of others. He/she has problems in understanding and interpreting emotional expressions of others.

The following guidelines are suggested to improve the learner's sensitivity towards other people:

- Pictures of people with different facial expressions that represent different emotions, can be shown to the child. He/she must be instructed to identify and interpret the given facial expressions correctly. Emotions like happy, sad and tired can be depicted.

- The voice of a person can be played to the child on an audiotape, where after he/she should determine the mood of the person according to the voice tone. The learning disabled child often finds it difficult to anticipate the implications of a specific voice tone.

4.8.3 Body language

The child with learning disabilities often experiences problems recognizing the body language of others correctly. The following guidelines are suggested to assist the child to recognize body language more correctly.

- A series of pictures can be arranged in order to depict a social situation where body language is used. The learning disabled learner can arrange the pictures and tell the story. A power point presentation on the computer can also be used to depict a story. A scene on the play ground can be presented and the learner can then interpret the body language.
- Different gestures and body positions, i.e. pointing of finger, greeting by waving the hand, stretched arms, bent arms and leaning forward, can be presented on a video/DVD to learners. The learners then interpret the body language and a discussion can follow.
- Tell or read a story and let the learning disabled child complete the story. The story should include the interpretation of non verbal behaviour in order for the child to practice the observation of non verbal behaviour.
- Practicing through role play on a regular basis is important.

4.8.4 Establishing relationships with friends and adults

Children with learning disabilities and accompanying poor social perceptions often find it difficult to make friends. It is thus important to learn how to make friends in order to function satisfactorily in their peer groups.

The following guidelines can contribute improving relationships of the learning disabled child:

- Role play and video's/DVD's can be used to demonstrate non verbal behaviour. Different body positions, i.e. leaning forward, sitting backwards and folding arms can be demonstrated to explain the meaning thereof.
- The child must also practice conversations with friends and adults. Role play can be used to practice skills like greeting, active listening *and the interpretation of non verbal cues.*
- Reading a story from a book where the learning disabled child can identify himself/herself with a character that makes friends.
- In a group situation the child with learning disabilities learns to communicate with other members of the group. The child learns to understand himself/herself and others better. The teacher is the catalizer in the group. The group can function every day for twenty-minute sessions. Within the group the learner learns to listen actively and to observe the non-verbal behaviour of others in the group.

4.8.5 Anticipating the consequences of social behaviour

With their social imperceptions learning disabled children often find it difficult to predict the consequences of the behaviour of others as well as their own behaviour.

- The teacher can depict social situations by using video's/DVD's, modeling and role play which can be discussed. A social situation can also be presented by using mimicry. The child can be asked to discuss the consequences of specific behaviour. Practicing the new skills is important to enable them to implement these skills in social situations.

4.8.6 Controlling of emotions

Learners with learning disabilities experience many frustrations in social situations as a result of their poor social perceptions. These frustrations manifest in emotional outbursts, i.e. anger and aggression. The child often does not have control of these emotions.

The following guidelines can assist the learning disabled child in controlling his/her emotions:

- Relaxation therapy can help the learning disabled child to relax. Anxiety levels of these children are often high as a result of their failures in social situations.
- The educator can demonstrate by modeling an alternative reaction for an anger outburst. The teacher can act out the situation with words and motions. The learner then copies the desired behaviour of the teacher.

4.8.7 Normative judgment

Values and norms should be taken into account in the program. Learning disabled children often find themselves in problem situations as a result of their poor social perceptions. They often do not have the ability to judge values and norms correctly.

- Values and norms can be taught in a group situation. Examples of statements which can be discussed in the group are:

- I felt good after ...
 - Something that I can do good/well is ...
 - Someone else felt after I ...
- Discussions can be held regarding on the implications of unacceptable behaviour in social situations and negative behaviour as a result of uncontrolled emotions.
 - Behavioural modification can be of value to teach the child to control his/her behaviour. This technique focuses on the actual behaviour of the child rather than the cause of the behaviour, i.e. rewarding the child for positive behaviour.

4.9 Résumé

In this chapter analysis of data was presented. Data had been collected through different methods. The steps followed in data reduction have been described and the process followed in deriving main themes was demonstrated. Descriptive analysis was achieved by frequency tabulations and bar charts were used to display categorical distributions graphically. The focus of the study was on problems and needs of educators in inclusive education. It would appear that educators experience problems regarding learners with special educational needs, specifically learning disabilities. It became evident through the interviews that most of the participants had a need for support in dealing with these learners from educational support services. Most of the educators exposed their need for support of educational psychologists. Further more the result confirmed the hypothesis from the study (cf. 4.2).

On the evidence based from this study, criteria and guidelines for a social perceptual education program was set.

In chapter five a summary, conclusion and recommendations will be made.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter serves to provide an overview of the study with reference to the background, problem, aim, method and design of the research. Main themes that emerged and conclusions from the findings will be discussed. Limitations of the study and recommendations for further study will also be presented.

5.2 Overview of the study

5.2.1. Problem and aim

South African society faces many developmental challenges. Educational reconstruction is one of the most urgent challenges. Inclusive education in South African schools is part of the reconstruction process and its implementation in schools is inevitable. Inclusive education is the ultimate acceptance of diversity and the educator in the classroom is the key to success of the policy of inclusion. The mainstream educator is now responsible for the learner with special educational needs when they are placed in mainstream schools. The regular educator in mainstream schools is not efficiently trained to cope with the diversity of special educational needs and needs support, training and guidelines to effectively assist the learners with their special needs.

The aim of this study was to determine teachers' understanding of special educational needs, what solutions they have to support learners with SEN and how they as teachers can best be supported in an inclusive classroom. Criteria and guidelines for a social perceptual program for learning disabled learners was included in the aim of this study. These will depend on the results of the study.

5.2.2 Research design and method

The research design of this study is generally described as qualitative, contextual and descriptive in nature. Although educational change is not new in current literature, inclusive education and the needs of educators within the South African context, with its troubled past, history of inequality and imbalance, require ongoing research and intervention.

The sample, which was selected by means of non-probability sampling, consisted of 60 teachers in three different schools in the Empangeni district, Kwa-Zulu Natal. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire and a focus group interview with educators. A literature review was elucidated on relevant theoretical background knowledge of the research problem.

5.3 Conclusions of the research findings

5.3.1 Main themes that emerged from the data sources

A summary of the main themes follows:

5.3.1.1 Ongoing training develops capacity building

Accounts from the participants indicated the need for further training. This was mentioned in the context of assisting the educators to develop skills that would enable them to respond to the special needs of learners. Some participants remarked that their training as educators was not sufficient to assist all the learners with special education needs. Inclusive education would require that educators improve their skills and knowledge as well as developing new skills and knowledge. Ongoing training would make a critical contribution to inclusive education. Training should focus on supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole, so the full range of learning needs would be met (cf. 2.5.2; 4.5.1). This is reiterated in a participant remarked that pertain to the establishment of ongoing training: "The suitable

knowledge of how to deal with them is indeed a problem. When I am teaching I do not know how I have to help them. Workshops can be very helpful.”

Thirty four of the participants indicated that they needed more training in the field of special educational needs and specifically learning disabilities. Twenty participants expressed the need for workshops where they can be better equipped to assist learners with SEN.

Participants in the study remarked that ongoing training is of the utmost importance in improving their capabilities within the system of inclusive education.

5.3.1.2 Reduction of educator-learner ratio.

The large number of pupils per class was an issue reported by the participants as well as the understaffed schools. The concern raised was that a learner with an impairment demanded more attention, yet no provision was made for this by the department of education with reference to class sizes. Ainscow (1992) states that the educator-learner ratio should be such as to enable an educator to give effective attention and support to the needs of each learner.

5.3.1.3 Provision of psychological and other educational professional services

Participants referred to the need for educational support to assist them to cope with all learners in inclusive education. They specifically stated the need for the services of educational psychologists. A participant of the focus group stated: “There should be educational psychologists at schools to help the teacher after they have assessed the child. Ideas of how to teach and support the child as well as helping the family to handle the learner with learning problems.”

Smith et al. (2001) confirm the need expressed by the participants when stating that consultation is a support model where special educational professionals work within general education providing a consulting role for

teachers. Therefore, providing psychological and educational professional services in the process of inclusion implicates a shift from a curative approach to a health promotion approach where the psychologist is a consultant to teachers in schools.

5.3.1.4 Support with regard to social and emotional problems of learners with learning disabilities.

An issue raised by the participants in the study was the social-emotional problems experienced by learners with learning disabilities. The educators expressed their need for support in this specific field as they do not know how to deal with social emotional problems. One of the participants commented: *"Would it be helpful to have a specialized person who could see learners as they often have emotional needs"*. Comments from other educators included the disruptive behaviour, low self esteem and socializing problems of learning disabled children.

Guidelines set out in an educational program for educators to assist them with the social-emotional problems of learning disabled children will be appropriate in the process of inclusive education.

5.3.2 Summary of the results of the questionnaire

Sixty educators completed the questionnaire on their effectiveness of coping with learners with special educational needs (cf. 3.3.3). The results indicated that educators in general find it difficult to cope effectively with learners with special educational needs in an inclusive classroom. Participants were given a total score which was the sum of their responses. The higher the score the more effectively they coped with special needs learners. There were four different factors grouped in the questionnaire; learning problems, social-emotional, physical needs and other special educational needs (cf. 4.7.1).

The participants scored the lowest (24.6%) on the effectiveness of other special educational needs; Tourette Syndrome and epilepsy. Physical needs

were second lowest on the scale of effectiveness (42.7%), followed by learning difficulties (51.4%) and social-emotional problems (56.4%).

5.4 Criteria for a social perceptual education program

The following criteria was set:

5.4.1 Cognitive criteria

The primary school learner is changing from the concrete level to the abstract level of thinking. The learning disabled child finds it difficult to move from the concrete to the abstract level and therefore a program should link up with the concrete level of thinking of the learning disabled child.

A social perceptual education program for learners with learning disabilities should take the following aspects into consideration:

- Instructions should be concrete and simple;
- repetition and practicing of new information;
- predicting the consequences of the child's behavior;
- active involvement in the activities of the program;
- alternating activities in the program to maintain the attention of the child.

5.4.2 Social criteria

The school and the peer group play an important role in the social development of the learning disabled child. A social perceptual education program should make provision for the following:

- interpretation of non verbal cues;
- empathy for others and a sensitivity for the feelings of others;
- effective interpersonal communication;
- improvement of communication skills.

5.4.3 Affective criteria

A social perceptual education program should make provision for the following:

- managing stress;
- controlling of emotions;
- improvement of self image.

5.4.4 Normative criteria

The program should make provision for teaching the learning disabled child that certain behaviour is acceptable and other behavior not. Normative boundaries serve as a safety environment to the child and therefore normative aspects should be taken into consideration when compiling the program.

5.5 Guidelines for a social perceptual education program

A brief summary of the guidelines, on the basis of the criteria, for a social perceptual program is given. The following aspects are important:

- Enhancing the self image of the learning disabled child and improving the body image through motor activities and imitating specific body images.
- Controlling of emotions by using relaxation therapy and modeling.
- Develop sensitivity for the feelings of others through the interpretation of emotional expressions and voice tones.
- Predicting the consequences of their own behaviour of themselves and the behaviour of others by using modeling, role play and video's/DVD's.

- Using videos/DVD, role play and pictures to correctly interpret, depict and discuss non verbal cues.
- Establishing relationships with friends and adults. Role play, discussions and video's/DVD's can be used.

5.6 Limitations of the study

The following limitations were identified:

- The study was based on a small group of respondents in the Empangeni district, Kwa-Zulu Natal. The study sample cannot be regarded as representative of the Kwa-Zulu Natal population and cannot be generalized.
- As a result of the limited scope of the study, only guidelines in stead of a complete program for a social perceptual program for learning disabled learners could be presented. Learning disabilities were the only specific special educational need that was addressed and not any of the other special needs.
- Special school educators were not included in this study, only teachers in mainstream schools with a diversity of learners in an inclusive classroom.

5.7 Recommendations

The study succeeded in achieving its objectives. The following areas have been opened for further research:

- The study only included mainstream educators in the sample. There is a need to target educators in the existing special schools.
- Participants in the study stated that they were inadequately trained to cope with the diversity of learners with special educational needs. It is important to assist educators to deal with the change enabling them to take the process forward with confidence. The Education White Paper 6 (2001)

states that educators in mainstream education will be assisted so that educators can be better equipped to assist learners with special needs.

- The education policy, as maintained by the White Paper 6 (2001), will introduce strategies and interventions to assist educators to cope with the diversity of learning and teaching needs to ensure that transitory learning difficulties are ameliorated. While ongoing training courses take cognisance of and include skills that the new roles require, policy-makers must also ensure thorough training of educators.
- Psychological services were one of the many needs the participants expressed in this study. The educational psychologist can play an important role in the South African context if a preventative and promotive approach is implemented where the focus is on understanding and improving the context of the children, rather than curing the symptoms of individuals. Providing psychological services to educators needs the urgent attention of the Education Department. Findings of this research will be implemented for this purpose.

5.8 Résumé

In this chapter a brief summary of the findings of the analyzed data was presented. Conclusions drawn from the research and limits of the study were also discussed. Finally, recommendations for further research were suggested.

Educational change is a reality in South Africa and the implementation of inclusive education in all schools challenges all the systems involved. Existing roles and perceptions need to be reviewed and replaced with a totally new approach. Educators in mainstream schools cannot cope with the diversity of learners and their special needs in the inclusive classroom. Support from the whole community is essential to educators within the inclusive education system. Psychologists can play a very important role as

consultants and collaborators. There is a call for partnerships with different disciplines and other stakeholders in the community. “Izandla ziyagezana”, our African expression which means: “We need one another to be successful” is relevant to the education and healing of the whole country.

It is evident from this study that educators need support to implement inclusive education successfully. Learning disabilities were one of the special educational needs educators could not cope with. They also found it difficult to understand the social-emotional difficulties of the learning disabled child. Only guidelines were set for a social perceptual education program for educators to assist them in the inclusive classroom.

A paradigm shift should be made from an individualistic ideology to the acknowledgment of our interdependency on one another. It is intended that further research will be done in this area and that a complete program will be compiled for educators.

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Internet Websites:

Center for Studies on Inclusive education (CSIE), UK

<http://ep.open.ac.uk/wgma/CSIE/csiehome.html>

CHADD, Children and Adults with Attention Deficit disorder

<http://www.chad.org/>

Guide to Learning Disabilities (and others)

<http://www.fln.vcu.edu/ld/ld.html>

School Psychology Resources Online

http://mail.bep1.lib.md.us/~sandyste/school_psych.html

University of Maine: community inclusion projects

<http://130.111.120.13/~cci/ccid.html>

ANNEXURE A

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH

I am presently engaged in a study entitled *Educational support services in community context* as part of my dissertation in community psychology.

My basic concern is to examine the educator's understanding and needs of special educational needs of a learner with learning difficulties in inclusive education

This research will add to the existing body of knowledge on inclusive education.

I would appreciate your assistance by allowing me to conduct a research study in your school.

Should you have any further questions you can contact me at Private Bag X1001, Kwa-Dlangezwa, 3886, or phone (035) 902 6237. You may also contact my promoter, Professor SD Edwards at the University of Zululand, telephone (035) 902 6605.

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

EMA EBERSOHN

Date

ANNEXURE B

THE INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

To enable me to conduct my study, *Educational support services in community context*, ideas, perceptions and reports have to be amassed from educators. Your school has been identified as one of the school that can provide valuable information.

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

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

Interviewer’s Signature

Participant’s Signature

Date

Date

ANNEXURE C

MAIN THEMES DERIVED FROM FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

The themes identified in the data were coded according to the following list of codes, using the initial categories identified during discovery.

1. Need for special training

P. 74 and p. 75

E7: Teachers need special training in the field of special education. Without specialize skills being taught to them, they will not be able to cope.

E12: I think the solution is to train educators. If there can be a workshop whereby educators will be trained so that they are able to cope with these learners.

E16: Teachers need to be developed about these learners

Teachers need to know how to identify a child with special educational needs.

Teachers also need to be taught how to deal with these learners because sometimes you get irritated by the same learner who needs special treatment.

E20: Teachers could be given training to help alleviate the problems. Unfortunately, effective support to learners would require much training. It would perhaps be more cost effective to have specialized people deal with the problems.

2. Reduction of educator-learner ratio

P. 72

E2: Classes are large – and cross cultural and very demanding with the needs of the group. No time to devote to pupils with special needs and they

just get lost. It is so bad for their self esteem and self image. They become frustrated at not being able to cope and this more often then leads to behavioral problems.

E5: Large classes make it difficult to give one-to-one attention. Inattentiveness to homework tasks.

E16: Firstly, if the number of learners was reasonable there will be no problem in supporting, right now there are many problems like giving them more time, and helping them with their educational needs.

E19: Classes too large. Pressure to complete a certain amount of work in a certain time. In a remedial/special school/class the focus is on the individual learner and his/her problem area. Teacher training does not make provision for handling the learners with special educational needs.

3. Provide psychological and other professional services

PP.72-74

E1: The best solution is to diagnose, know individual learner's needs, handle them with respect and empathy. Teacher's workshops should be organized. Get help from social workers and psychologists etc. Find solutions by consulting people who could offer help and knowledge and give advice on how to deal with such learners.

E6: Solution is to bring back special ed classes with teachers who are trained to cope with special needs and have the facility and time to do so.

E15: When a psychologist is needed it takes a long time to make an appointment to have the learners assessed so as to see their problem. Even after assessment there is no follow up by the psychologist or the social workers.

E15: There should be educational psychologists at schools to help the teacher after they have assess the child. Ideas of how to teach the child and support the child and help the family to be able to handle the learners with learning problems. Training should be given to teachers to help the learners. If there are educational psychologists' posts, they should be available for the qualified.

4. Support with social and emotional problems of learners with learning disabilities

P.73

E2: It is so bad for their self esteem and self image. They become frustrated at not being able to cope and this more often then leads to behavioral problems.

E10: Laughter of normal kids is a problem

E12: Learners with problems in specific learning activities and specific learning disabilities

E18: Learners who are depressed, ADD, has no friends and attention seeking is a problem.

E19: Pupils who have emotional problems is difficult to cope with

ANNEXURE D

Questionnaire: Learners with special educational needs

Kindly rate yourself on a 3-point scale with regard to the following statements:

0 = Ineffective

1 = Effective

2 = Very effective

STATEMENT		SCALE		
To what extent are you able to cope with a child in the classroom who:		0	1	2
1	is fidgeting			
2	wets himself/herself			
3	is aggressive			
4	is emotionally unstable			
5	has a learning problem			
6	is visually impaired			
7	is hard of hearing			
8	has spelling problems			
9	has writing problems			
10	has attention deficit			
11	has speech disorders			
12	has serious limitations in working tempo			
13	has epileptic convulsions			
14	has symptoms of Tourette's Disorder			
15	has physical special needs			
16	is anxious			
17	is depressed			
18	is clumsy			
19	is anti-social			
20	is attention seeking			

Thank you for your participation in this study.

ANNEXURE E

Response of participants to questions on special educational needs

The following tables present the frequency distribution of responses on the different questions. The 20 different questions were grouped according to the following specific special educational needs:

Problem	Questions
• Learning disabilities	1,5,8,9,10,12,17,18
• Social-emotional problems	2,3,4,16,19,20
• Physical disabilities	6,7,11,15
• Other special needs	13,14

Table 1: Frequency distribution of responses to question 1

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	5	8.3
	1	40	66.7
	2	15	25.0
	Total	60	100.0

Table 2: Frequency distribution of responses to question 5

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	14	23.3
	1	24	40.0
	2	22	36.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 3: Frequency distribution of responses to question 8

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	8	13.3
	1	41	68.3
	2	11	18.3
	Total	60	100.0

Table 4: Frequency distribution of responses to question 9

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	13	21.7
	1	36	60.0
	2	11	18.3
	Total	60	100.0

Table 5: Frequency distribution of responses to question 10

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	20	33.3
	1	31	51.7
	2	9	15.0
	Total	60	100.0

Table 6: Frequency distribution of responses to question 12

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	22	36.7
	1	28	46.7
	2	10	16.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 7: Frequency distribution of responses to question 18

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	2	3.3
	1	40	66.7
	2	18	30.0
	Total	60	100.0

• **Social-emotional problems**

Table 8: Frequency distribution of responses to question 2

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	30	50.0
	1	17	28.3
	2	13	21.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 9: Frequency distribution of responses to question 3

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	9	15.0
	1	29	48.3
	2	22	36.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 10: Frequency distribution of responses to question 4

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	9	15.0
	1	31	51.7
	2	20	33.3
	Total	60	100.0

Table 11: Frequency distribution of responses to question 16

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	6	10.0
	1	39	65.0
	2	15	25.0
	Total	60	100.0

Table 12: Frequency distribution of responses to question 17

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	9	15.0
	1	29	48.3
	2	22	36.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 13: Frequency distribution of responses to question 19

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	4	6.7
	1	35	58.3
	2	21	35.0
	Total	60	100.0

Table 14: Frequency distribution of responses to question 20

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	10	16.7
	1	27	45.0
	2	23	38.3
	Total	60	100.0

- **Physical disabilities**

Table 15: Frequency distribution of responses to question 6

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	22	36.7
	1	21	35.0
	2	17	28.3
	Total	60	100.0

Table 16: Frequency distribution of responses to question 7

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	17	28.3
	1	25	41.7
	2	18	30.0
	Total	60	100.00

Table 17: Frequency distribution of responses to question 11

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	24	40.0
	1	29	48.3
	2	7	11.7
	Total	60	100.0

Table 18: Frequency distribution of responses to question 15

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	26	43.3
	1	22	36.7
	2	12	20.0
	Total	60	100.0

- **Other difficulties**

Table 19: Frequency distribution of responses to question 13

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	33	55.0
	1	25	41.7
	2	2	3.3
	Total	60	100.0

Table 20: Frequency distribution of responses to question 14

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	0	38	63.3
	1	14	23.3
	2	8	13.3
	Total	60	100.0