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DISSERTATION TOPIC: Assessment of Teacher's skills at Inclusive  
Schools in uMhlathuze district.

## DECLARATION

I declare that *assessment of teacher's skills in inclusive schools* represents my own work both in conception and in execution and that the resources that I have used are indicated by means of complete reference.

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D.N. LANGA

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DATE

I hereby declare that this dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval.

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DATE

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This work is dedicated with much love and appreciation to:

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## **List of Acronyms**

PGSES	Psychological Guidance and Special Education Services
LSEN	Learners with Special Education Needs
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statements
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
IEP	Individualized Education Programme

## **ABSTRACT**

The main aim of the present study was to investigate whether or not teachers possess the skills which are needed to deal with learners in inclusive classrooms. The study also aimed to evaluate data regarding teachers' qualification, in-service training programmes as well as their experience in the inclusive schools.

The objectives of the study were:

- To investigate whether or not teachers had the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education.
- To find out if there were any teacher in-service training programmes on inclusive education.
- To determine whether or not there was a relationship between teachers' skills for handling children in inclusive classroom and the following teachers' characteristics:
  - Gender
  - Qualification and
  - Experience

One hundred and seven (107) questionnaires were completed by teachers in special schools and full service schools in KZN. To collect data a questionnaire which consisted of closed-ended questions was administered to teachers. A Chi-Square one-sample tests and K-independent samples as well as computer statistical programme called Statistical Packages of Social Science was used to analyze data.

The findings of the study indicated that teachers had basic knowledge of how to handle learners with different learning needs and they felt comfortable with the skills they possessed. With regard to the availability of in-service training programmes, the results revealed that teachers benefit a lot from both Psychological Guidance and Special Education Services (PGSES) and Outcomes Based Education (OBE) workshops provided by the Department of Education.

The findings also suggested that there was a relationship between teachers' skills for handling learners with special needs in education and their qualifications, gender and experience.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 1

#### OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Motivation for the study	1
1.3	Statement of the problem	5
1.4	Aims of the study	5
1.5	Hypotheses	5
1.6	Definition of terms	6
1.6.1	Assessment of teacher's skills	6
1.6.2	Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN)	6
1.6.3	Inclusive schools	6
1.7	Research Methodology	7
1.7.1	Target Population	7
1.7.2	Sampling procedure	7
1.7.3	Data collection method	7
1.7.4	Data analysis	8
1.8	Ethical consideration	8
1.9	Summary	8

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	Introduction	9
2.2	Skills needed to assist learners with special needs in education	10
2.3	The teacher's in-service programmes	12
2.4	Association between skills for handling children in the inclusive classroom and teachers' characteristics such as gender, qualifications and experience.	13
2.5	Summary	20

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1	Introduction	21
3.2	Research design	21
3.3	Sampling design	22
3.4	The method of data collection	23
3.5	Validity and reliability of the instrument	
3.6	Method of scoring and data analysis	24
3.7	Procedures for administration of the research instrument	
3.8	(Ethical considerations)	26
3.9	Summary	26



## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1	Introduction	27
4.2	Gender responses to aim no 1	27
4.2.1	Hypotheses 1	27
4.3	Gender responses to aim no 2	28
4.3.1	Hypotheses 2	28
4.4	Gender responses to aim no 3	29
4.4.1	Hypotheses 3	30
4.5	Qualification responses to aim no 1	30
4.5.1	Hypotheses 1	31
4.6	Qualification responses to aim no 2	32
4.6.1	Hypotheses 2	33
4.7	Qualification responses to aim no 3	34
4.7.1	Hypotheses 3	34
4.8	Teaching experience responses to aim no 1	35
4.8.1	Hypotheses 1	35
4.9	Teaching experience responses to aim no 2	36
4.9.1	Hypotheses 2	36
4.10	Teaching experience responses to aim no 3	37
4.10.1	Hypotheses 3	38
4.11	Summary	39

## CHAPTER 5

### LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1	Introduction	40
5.2	Discussion of results in relation to the study aims	41
5.2.1	To investigate whether teachers have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education	41
5.2.2	To find out whether there is any in-service training programmes on inclusive education	42
5.2.3	To determine whether there is any association between teachers' skills for handling learners with special needs in education and teachers' characteristics such as gender, qualifications and experience	42
5.3	Limitations of the study	44
5.4	Recommendations	44
5.5	Conclusion	

References	46
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### LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: A letter to the teacher	52
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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Some learners may require more specialized forms of support in order to be able to develop to their full potential. Inclusive education tries to provide various kinds of support to all learners, teachers and community members who may require assistance. Teachers are the primary resources to be harnessed in achieving the goal of an inclusive education and training system. This means that teachers need to improve their skills and knowledge (White Paper 6, 2001). Hence this study examines the readiness of teachers in terms of skills to provide this kind of education. Inclusive education embraces diversification, which assists challenged learners to feel that they belong to a school which accommodates everyone. That, in return, makes it easier for them to integrate with the community at large and in the world of work.

### **1.2 Motivation for the study**

In South Africa the Department of Education (DOE), at a national level, has declared that the education system should promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive education. Learners with special needs in education are included in the mainstream schools. An area of concern is whether or not teachers are ready, in terms of the skills that they have, to offer inclusive

education. Within the school context, appropriately trained teachers are a major source of support for learners with special education needs. It is important that teachers are well equipped to respond to the specific needs of these groups of learners (Mukherjee, Lightfoot & Slopper, 2008). One of the research studies conducted in South Africa on teacher preparedness for inclusive education indicated that a large percentage of teachers were insufficiently trained on inclusive education in this country (Hay, Smit & Paulsen, 2011).

The abovementioned researchers argue that the teachers are failing to implement inclusive education effectively because of inadequate provisioning of skills. There is also a lack of educational and teacher support.

The skills to teach learners in inclusive schools are acquired through training at institutions of higher education. For teachers to be eligible to teach these learners they must have attained a particular qualification. However it seems as if teachers are either not motivated or adequately informed to pursue these qualifications so as to equip themselves to teach the learners with special educational needs.

A study by Giangregio, Baumgart and Doyle (2005) revealed that providing inclusive education experiences for learners with disabilities can have a positive impact on learners without disability labels, in part by providing the school environment with new opportunities which facilitate learning. It also achieves a

positive impact by placing learners in the mainstream that affords them the opportunity to participate in shared educational experiences while pursuing their individual appropriate learning outcomes. An environment is thus created which provides the necessary accommodation of their different challenges. The learning experiences then take place in settings predominantly frequented by people without disabilities. The educational experiences are designed to enhance individually determined valued life outcomes for learners and therefore seek an individualized balance between the academic and social aspects of schooling. Inclusive education exists when each of the previously listed characteristics occur on an ongoing basis.

Williams (2002) argues that in South Africa there are many teachers with inadequate qualifications who may lack confidence in their ability to teach a learner with special educational needs. In the present study the researcher argues that lack of experience in the area of special education is a significant factor that may contribute to educators' fears in dealing with learners with special needs (LSNE).

Nkabinde and Ngwenya (2006) in their study, *Interviews with African Parents of Children in South Africa*, suggested the involvement of parents in inclusive schools. These researchers reported that to be black and disabled in South Africa means to be trapped between community ignorance and systematic neglect. African learners with disabilities have fewer opportunities and usually

suffer the stigma associated with being disabled. Societal beliefs about disabilities may either reinforce stereotypes about this population or a more humane community may help to reduce negative attitudes. Since learners with disabilities cannot advocate on their own behalf, parental education and involvement is important.

In contrast, it is surprising that in Europe exclusion from school has become a subject of increased national interest (Imich, 2004, p.3). The exclusion procedures are based on the Educational Act of the country, section 22-26. Under this legislation, it is only the principal who is responsible for all issues related to learners' behaviour. In other words, while exclusion from school is promoted in Europe, only the principal has the power to exercise this option. It is also the responsibility of the principal to inform the parents about the reasons for exclusion. Learners could be excluded permanently or temporarily from a school.

Studies conducted in South Africa (William, 2002 & Hay *et al.*, 2011) reveal that teachers have a negative attitude with subjects from inclusion. Not much research has been done especially in KwaZulu-Natal to find out whether teachers possess the necessary skills to teach learners with special educational needs (LSEN). Therefore in-service training can focus on the specific skills necessary to accommodate the exceptional learner within the inclusive school. The challenge is to educate teachers in ways that promote and sustain understanding and acceptance of a range of disabilities, and provide them with the skills to support

learners with special needs in inclusive classroom settings (Campbell, Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2003, p.377).

Commenting on conditions required for effective inclusion, teachers raised concerns about their own lack of experience and the skills they would need to accept LSEN (Rose, 2001, p.152). Thomson (as cited by Hay *et al.*, 2011) maintains that effective implementation of inclusive education depends on a high quality of teacher-preparedness. Since the government declared that inclusive education is to be implemented in South African schools, it is the purpose of the present study to investigate whether teachers are coping well in inclusive schools.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Teachers' skills need to be explored because the way that teachers teach may promote or impede the learning of LSEN. The relationship between teachers' characteristics and teachers' skills also need to be investigated.

The present study tried to address the following questions:

- 1.3.1 Do teachers have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education?



- 1.3.2 Are there any teacher's in-service training programmes available to equip teachers with knowledge and skills on inclusive education?
- 1.3.3 Is there any relationship between skills for handling learners in inclusive classroom and teachers' characteristics, such as gender, qualifications and experience?

#### **1.4 Aims of study**

The aims of the present study are:

- 1.4.1 To determine whether teachers have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education.
- 1.4.2 To find out if there are any teachers' in-service programmes available to equip teachers with knowledge and skills on inclusive education.
- 1.4.3 To determine whether there is a relationship between teachers' skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms and the following teachers' characteristics:
- Gender
  - Qualifications and
  - Experience

## **1.5 Hypotheses**

The hypotheses were formulated as follows:

- 1.5.1 Teachers do not have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education.
- 1.5.2 There are no teachers' in-service programmes available to equip teachers with knowledge on inclusive education.
- 1.5.3 There is no relationship between the teachers' skills for handling children in inclusive classroom and the following teachers' characteristics:
  - Gender
  - Qualifications and
  - Experience

## **1.6 Definition of terms**

### **1.6.1 Assessment of teachers' skills**

The word 'assessment' can have different meanings in various situations. In this context assessment of teachers' skills refers to the process of gathering information on skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms. This process will help the researcher to find out if teachers do have the necessary skills to assist learners with special educational needs (LSEN), and also to determine whether there are any in-service training programmes on inclusive education.

### **1.6.2 Learners with special educational needs (LSEN)**

Green, Naicker and Naude (2005) state that this concept refers to all learners who require any modifications or adaptations of the curriculum and/or specially adapted teaching and learning strategies in order to be more effective. In the present study LSEN refers to learners with intellectual, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

### **1.6.3 Inclusive schools**

According to Education White Paper 6 (2001), inclusive schools are those schools attended by learners with or without learning disabilities. An inclusive school is also defined as a movement designed to construct classes so that all learners representing the range of diversity present in our communities are provided with an appropriate and meaningful education (Giangreco, Baumgart & Doyle, 2005). In this study the term refers to those schools that the government has declared as full service schools.

## **1.7 Research Methodology and design**

### **1.7.1 Target population**

The researcher conducted the research at schools that the government has declared as full service schools for inclusive education service. The researcher targeted male and female teachers who have skills, knowledge and experience in teaching.

### **1.7.2 Sampling procedure**

Eight primary schools from both rural and urban areas in KwaZulu-Natal were selected and the estimated number of 25 teachers in each school was drawn purposively. The total number of teachers was 224. The researcher chose the purposive sampling method in this case as teachers in these institutions are the ones more knowledgeable and could offer informed responses on whether teachers are appropriately skilled. Stratified sampling procedure was used to select participants on the basis of a variable such as gender, experience, knowledge and qualifications.

### **1.7.3 Data collection method**

A questionnaire was designed and used to collect data in this study. A questionnaire was used as it was convenient in terms of time and venue and it also allowed for privacy. Teachers used their break times as well as time after school to complete questionnaires. The questionnaire provided fixed response items and close-ended questions. Teachers struggle with the curriculum and have limited time; for this reason close-ended questions were utilized as they were easier for the respondents to fill out and for the researcher to administer and score. Section A of the questionnaire covered biographical data such as age, gender and qualifications, while Section B had fixed response items that assessed teachers' skills and characteristics. Hay et al (2011) as well as other researchers (Giangreco, Baumgart, & Doyle 2005) in their study also used a questionnaire as a method of collecting data. Their main focus was on the transformational experiences of teachers educating students with disabilities.

#### **1.7.4 Data analysis method**

The Data was analyzed by using Chi-Square one-sample tests. Data was also analyzed by means of a computer statistical programme called Statistical Packages of Social Sciences (SPSS).

#### **1.8 Ethical consideration**

The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of the current study. All subjects involved in the study were given the consent form to sign that they agree to be part of the study. They were also informed that participation is voluntary which means that they can withdraw at any time. Issues of confidentiality and privacy were taken care of by not writing their names on the questionnaire.

#### **1.9 Summary**

The motivation to conduct a study on teachers' skills, the statement of the problem, aims of the study, hypotheses as well as definition of terms used in this study were dealt with in this chapter. The chapter also looked at research methodology, which included the target population, sampling procedure, data collection method as well as the data analysis method. The following chapter will focus on the literature review.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Jansen (2007) on the subject: '*Why OBE will fail Mimeo*', argued that curriculum 2005 was perhaps implemented too hastily and, without adequate teacher training, teachers' beliefs about the old curriculum were not taken into consideration. The fear therefore exists that the same mistake may be made with inclusive education. Against this background, the objective of this investigation was to undertake an assessment of teachers' skills in inclusive education, which could be used by the Department of Education as well as by other stakeholders to facilitate the successful implementation of inclusion.

A limited number of studies on inclusive education and teachers' preparedness to cater for learners with special educational needs have been conducted in South Africa and in other countries abroad (Mary, 2001; Mukherjee, Hightfoot & Slopper, 2008; Heiman, 2001). No studies have focused on actual assessment of teachers' skills to handle LSEN in inclusive schools. This study is aimed at investigating the following: whether teachers have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education; to find out if there are any teachers' in-

service training programmes on inclusive education, and to determine whether there is any association between teachers' skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms and teachers' characteristics, for example, gender, qualifications and experience.

## **2.2 Skills needed to assist learners with special needs in education**

A study conducted by Marry (2001) on "Inclusive Education, Pre-school; Parent-Teacher relationship" questioned early childhood professionals and parents of children with and without disabilities, both at the beginning and at the end of the full school year regarding their hopes and concerns about inclusion. The results suggested that both groups showed an agreement about the benefits and the concerns related to inclusion.

The study further revealed that the differences emerged at the sub category. Both parents and teaching professionals or staff indicated some concern about general education pre-school teachers' preparation to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs.

A study by Mukherjee, Lightfoot and Slopper (2008) on the subject: *'Inclusion of learners with chronic health conditions in mainstream school: What does it mean for teachers?'* investigated the support needs of learners in the mainstream schools with a chronic illness or physical disability. Research was carried out in



three local education authorities covering both rural and urban areas. In-depth qualitative data were collected from 33 learners in secondary school, 58 parents of primary and secondary school learners and 34 primary and secondary school teachers. Overall, the data from learners suggested variability in the support offered by teachers within the same school and highlighted the importance of teachers; awareness and understanding of areas where learners need support from teachers were identified. The results showed that teachers lack skills for dealing with learner absence, taking part in school activities and having someone to talk to about health-related worries.

Data collected from teachers and parents indicated that school staff needed assistance in obtaining health-related information; ensuring that health-related information is passed between and within schools; providing emotional support; the provision of medical care and coordinating support for this group of learners.

Gemell-Crosby and Hanzlik (2009) analyzed questionnaire responses from 71 pre-school teachers and found that comfort with inclusion was closely linked with levels of support and in-service training, but that positive attitude was also an important component of success. Pankake and Palmer (2011) conducted an ethnographic study with participants' interviews and observations. Their results also suggested that staff development was important, but that it should be closely tied to the practical daily concerns teachers encounter in the classroom. Carr (2007) supported the idea of parents reporting their concern regarding teacher

preparation for successful teaching in an inclusive setting, especially when learners with moderate to severe disabilities are introduced into the classroom.

Teachers had noted that inclusive education had a positive impact on learners with and without disabilities. The teachers were, furthermore, concerned about the academic achievements of learners with disabilities in the inclusive classes (Grider, 2005). They stressed the need for additional tools and skills for coping with the social and emotional problems that accompany inclusive schooling.

Another study (Vaughn, Schumm, Jallard, Slusher & Samuell, 2010) reported that teachers in both general and special education frameworks expressed concern regarding various aspects of teaching inclusive classes, including their status and reputations as successful teachers, additional help in the classrooms, provision of special services and the stigma that may be attached to such classes.

Other researchers (Jordan, Stanovich, & Roach, 2007) described the difficulties that inclusive teachers must overcome. Their findings indicated that many teachers were still suspicious of change and complained about lack of communication between educators and insufficient time for teaching and supporting the learners. In support of this view, the study by Monda-Amaya (2008) revealed that teachers reported that they were not adequately trained to

implement inclusive practices and that they needed at least one additional hour preparatory time for lessons.

Green et al (2005) concluded that teachers needed to have skills in education that make possible consideration of learners' perspective. Teachers also need time and psychological space to re-examine their general understanding of teaching and learning of LSEN.

### **2.3 The teachers' in-service training programmes**

Various authors have investigated the need for teachers' in-service programmes. The results showed that there is a need for in-service programmes that will prepare teachers for inclusion (William, 2002; Hay, et al, 2011; Thomson, 2008; Gallagher et al, 2007).

The in-service training needs identified by the teachers in this study (Gallagher, et.al2007) reflect the need for training relative to pre-service programmes. These researchers also investigated the in-service training need of professionals working with children with disabilities and their families. The findings revealed that the professionals agreed that there was a need for training in order to work with children with disabilities and their families. Furthermore, professionals suggested pre-service programmes, such as typical development, administrative

and team process and technology. Technology emerged as the priority area for the respondents.

Other researchers (Campbell, et al, 2003) highlighted the point that the placement of learners with special needs in education into inclusive school raised the challenges to teachers to question their skills. These challenges led to original design which called for the utilization of a learning centre approach to individualized instruction coupled with the use of behaviour modification techniques. In addition, an in-service training component was designed to train teachers in the school each year to be more effective in individualized instructional techniques.

According to Campbell, et al, (2003) the in-service training workshop for an additional 10 teachers was continued into the second year and was expanded to include the development of teacher-made instructional material as well as the understanding of precision teaching. Each teacher in the in-service programme attended several workshops, and spent 1 week in the two-model classroom working as helpers in order that they might observe directly the procedures being used (Campbell, et al, 2003). After teachers had attended several workshops the improvement in their skills was evaluated through the semantic differential for two factors. The teachers' attitude towards LSEN, such as hyperactive, average child, special education, inattentive speech deficit, bright child, mental retardation and handicapped child was also noticed. Results also indicated that attitudinal

changes did occur. They tended to be in the negative direction, though of small magnitude. Teachers who participated in the in-service training were interviewed; the findings showed that teachers regarded the training as helpful to their teaching and that they had incorporated techniques observed in the model classes into their own teaching procedures. Participants in the in-service training apparently exhibited changes in their teaching behaviour and in their willingness to apply what they had learned.

Thomson (2008), concurs with the above study by emphasizing that the effective implementation of inclusive education depends on high quality professional preparation of teachers at pre and in-service level to equip them for and update their knowledge in, meeting the needs of a diverse classroom population. Thomson (2008, p.10) furthermore states that there are major obstacles that hamper the implementation of inclusive education world-wide. He identifies the following obstacles: large classes; negative attitude to disability; lack of support services; rigid teaching methods; lack of parental involvement; and lack of clear national policies. Seemingly, there is a need for in-service training so that these obstacles could be overcome. Supporting the view of the need for in-service training, William (2002) maintains that the educators need a support system and training to teach LSEN and this was supported by 100% of the educators. The above results indicate that the teachers believe that without knowledge or training in the full service school, they will not be able to face the challenges of inclusion.

Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello and Spagna (2004) conducted a study called *Moving Towards Inclusive Practices*, which revealed that the school teachers were positively disposed towards the philosophy of mainstreaming. Therefore in-service training can focus on specific skill acquisition necessary to accommodate the exceptional learners within the mainstream. Although the aim of their research was not focused on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education, the results are significantly applicable to the present study, for the following reasons: firstly, the findings revealed that for inclusive education to be effective, in-service training was essential. Secondly, teachers' attitudes towards LSEN have improved. Thirdly, the findings also indicated that the teachers' skills have improved (Burstein, et al, 2004).

These findings are encouraging, since they show evidence that in-service training really works as it helps teachers to handle LSEN. The researcher believes that if results continue to be as positive as they have been in the past, even in this study, the training of teachers may provide a solution to the problem of dealing with the LSEN.

## **2.4 Association between skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms and teachers' characteristics such as gender, qualification and experience**

The influence of the gender factor and teachers' skills has been revealed in teachers' attitudes towards LSEN. In terms of gender influence, Hay et al (2011) in their study of teachers' preparedness indicated that females are more compassionate towards LSEN than males. Another study, namely by Williams (2002), reveals that men and women differ in their attitudes towards LSEN and towards inclusion. The findings confirm that women hold more positive attitudes than men do. Contrary to this study, Bunning (2007) found that male educators have a more positive attitude than female educators do.

Experience is highly associated with teachers' skills in handling LSEN. Within the school context, teachers are a major source of inspiration for young people. Therefore it is important that teachers should feel well equipped to respond to the specific needs of the groups of learners (Mukherjee, Highfoot & Sloper, 2008). Another study indicated that individuals with more than 6 years experience were better prepared to support families of LSEN than professional teachers with 3-5 years experience (Gallagher et al, 2007).

According to Engelbrecht and Forlin (2008, p. 2), regular education teachers have received relatively little formal training to work with LSEN. The importance

of qualifications cannot be overestimated in making inclusion to be effective, therefore effective training to develop teachers' knowledge and skills is needed. In parallel to this idea, Hay et al (2011) raise a question that queries the relevance of qualifications to inclusion. They reason that if the implementation of changed policy failed in a so-called developed country such as Britain, where educators are generally adequately trained, this could also be true of South Africa where a large percentage of teachers are not qualified or insufficiently trained to implement inclusive education. This implies that teachers in South Africa must be qualified to accommodate diverse needs of all learners.

A comparison of three studies was done in Gauteng and the Western Cape to determine the teacher attitude towards inclusion. In this study, teachers indicated the following ideas about inclusion (Swart, Pettipher, Engelbrecht, Eloff, Oswald, Ackerman & Prozesky, 2010)

Skills and training to implement inclusive education effectively is important, since there is a lack of educational and teacher support and inadequate knowledge.

There is also inadequate provision of facilities and infrastructure. From this the deduction can be made that few teachers have made the paradigm shift towards inclusion.

Engelbrecht and Forlin (2008) cited three studies of regular education teachers (with relatively little formal training to work with learners with special needs) who



responded negatively to inclusion. Relevant pre-service training can go a long way in shaping positive attitudes towards LSEN (Bagwandeen, 2004; Engelbrecht & Forlin, 2008). They express the hope that pre-service training will be developed around a philosophy that incorporates a clear vision of inclusion and promotes acceptance of all learners regardless of ability (Engelbrecht & Forlin 2008:89).

A study by (Hay et al, 2011: 5) conducted in South Africa questions the state of readiness of teachers for inclusive education, i.e. has the teacher been prepared with regard to skills, the cognitive and emotional level for the anticipated inclusive education? An eventual sample of 2 577 Free State teachers was utilized from the total of 12 education districts. Through a comprehensive questionnaire an effort was made to ascertain the knowledge, skills and attitude of teachers towards inclusive education. This measure was utilized to determine their level of readiness for inclusion. The questions included issues relating to the respondents' previous experience and training in working with LSEN, aspects related to support received and referrals of learners with special needs and the respondents' previous experience and training in the LSEN. Respondents were asked to indicate the amount of experience they had in teaching fourteen different categories of LSEN. The results showed that most respondents rated themselves as having no experience and only 417 respondents who work with gifted learners indicated that they had moderate experience.

In Hay's et al ( 2001), respondents were also asked to indicate if they had substantial training in teaching or working with LSEN, and only 8.8% of respondents indicated that they had substantial training in this regard. When the respondents were asked to indicate whether or not he or she felt equipped to teach both regular learners and LSEN in a full service school, once again a significantly low number of 9.5% of the respondents reacted positively. The reasons why respondents did not feel equipped vary, but the response most given was that respondents had not had sufficient training to deal with these classes. Almost all of the respondents suggested that more training needs to be given to teachers to prepare them for inclusive classrooms.

Teachers who had participated in at least one course in special education expressed a more positive attitude towards inclusion than the other teachers did. This has also been found in prior studies (Cardon, 2007; Reber, 2005; Croll & Moses, 2000), where it was noted that after training has been done, teachers' negative attitude and doubts tended to change with direct experience of inclusion. Regular teachers who had received preparation in teacher training programmes as well as on-going consultative support by a specialist in learning disabilities showed an improved attitude towards inclusion and towards the learners in comparison to the teachers' progress in the control group (Cardon, 2007).

A recent study by Heiman (2011), required 116 school teachers in central Israel to define inclusion and to discuss the major difficulties that they encountered in inclusive classes, as well as benefits of effective integration. The great majority of the teachers expressed the need to increase their knowledge about the requirements of learners with learning disabilities and evidenced their readiness to adjust their teaching methods. They also stressed the need for professional guidance and adequate tools and conditions.

The findings of the above investigation indicated that many teachers were still suspicious of change and complained about a lack of communication between educators and insufficient time for teaching and supporting the learners. The above study, as part of a municipal project in the central area of Israel, invited each of twelve middle schools to send two teachers with previous training in special education, but already teaching inclusive classes, to take part in one-day-a-week two-year theoretical training programs. The programme was designed to broaden the teachers' knowledge of the nature of learning disabilities and to equip them with appropriate instructional strategies for dealing with this population. According to the above-mentioned author (Heiman, 2001), the goal of the study was to ascertain the views and perspectives of teachers regarding inclusive schools prior to the training programmes, especially in view of their on-going experience.

The sample of Heiman (2001)'s study consisted of teachers from twelve middle schools in central Israel, all located in urban, middle-class neighborhoods. Although their original research plan called for two teachers from each school to volunteer to take the course, a large number of teachers were interested in participating and 116 teachers (104 females and 12 males did so). All of them were general education classroom teachers. Most of the participant from two to thirty three years of teaching experience ( $M = 11.79$ ,  $S.D = 8.16$ ) and had either a teacher college certificate or a bachelors or masters degree in education. None were special education teachers and none had taken more than an elective course in special education, but all were at the time of the project, teaching classes that included students with learning disabilities. Heiman (2001) further states that teachers were also asked about their educational backgrounds in general and whether they had taken at least one course in special education during their academic studies. Most teachers had taken, at most, one or two courses in special education. On the other hand, for the secondary school teachers, more attention was required in the affective dimension, prerequisite to skill development.

Based on the discussion of the results above, the researchers created an image of the average respondent and his preparedness for inclusion. The average respondent is a teacher in a primary school with appropriate 3-5 years of experience. These teachers did not hear of inclusion, whole school approach or mainstreaming (and were also not able to define these concepts), but know

about outcomes-based education. These teachers have no previous experience in this regard; he/she therefore does not feel prepared to deal with LSEN.

These studies concurred with the researcher's view that there is a relationship between teachers' skills for handling LSEN and teachers' characteristics, such as gender, experience and qualification.

## **2.5 Summary**

Information on teachers' skills in inclusive schools and different sources supporting and contrasting the views of teachers' skills and variables such as gender, qualifications and previous experience were discussed in this chapter. The next chapter deals with the methodology, methods of scoring and data analyses employed in the current study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

In this chapter the research design, method of data collection, population and sample, method of scoring and data analysis are discussed. This chapter also describes the reason behind the methodology used and how the research was conducted. In particular, the research seeks to determine whether teachers have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education, to determine whether there are any teachers' in-service training programmes on inclusive education in Empangeni district, and to investigate whether there is any association between skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms and teacher's characteristics such as gender, qualifications and experience.

#### **3.2. Research design**

The present study describes the existing status of events. The design is therefore descriptive in nature. Previous studies conducted locally (Williams, 2002; Nkabinde & Ngwenya, 2006; Hay et al, 2011), have used the descriptive research design . A number of researchers abroad (Burns, 2009; Heiman, 2001; Mukherjee, Lightfoot & Sloper, 2008) have also used this research design in their studies on inclusive education. Descriptive research design seems to be

frequently used in various studies on inclusive education. This design was deemed appropriate for this study since the researcher aimed at assessing recent teachers' skills in inclusive schools. In other words, a descriptive design assisted the researcher to assess recent teachers' skills in inclusive schools and also to answer the following question namely "do teachers have enough skills to face the challenges of inclusive education?" Another reason that persuaded the researcher to use the descriptive design is because it promised to limit costs and time.

### **3.3 Sampling Procedure**

The purposive sampling method was considered suitable for this study. The technique involved collecting data from information-rich participants about the phenomena under investigation (Welman & Kruger, 2002). This provided relevant data and current information about necessary teachers' skills and in-service programmes in the inclusive schools. Previous studies (Hay *et al.*, 2011; Williams, 2002) on teacher preparedness for inclusive education have made use of the purposive sampling method. In addition, Kampfner, Hovath, Kleinert and Kleinert (2001) targeted all special education teachers to be their participants in their study of "Teachers' perception of one state alternative assessment: implications for practice and preparation". Furthermore, Burns (2009) targeted female teachers for primary schools in his study of "A longer road to inclusion". This author also used the purposive sampling method to select his participants.

The researcher targeted teachers with experience in teaching. The experience ranged between 1-5years, 6-10 years, 11-15years, 16-20 years and 20 +. The researcher chose schools that the government has declared as full service schools for inclusive education (Daffodils Primary School, Protea Primary Primary) and special schools (Three Roses Primary, Phakama Primary School), Khaya lethu Remedial Centre, Xhakaza, Mziwengwenya and Bathokozile Primary school, (Pseudomies) These schools were selected because they include both male and female teachers with skills, knowledge and experience. Furthermore, selection of these schools limited the cost and time for conducting the whole study.

There were 8 primary schools which were identified for this purposes of this study from both rural and urban areas in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The sample consisted of 20 teachers from each school drawn purposively from the population of the above-mentioned schools in KZN. This resulted in a sample size of 115 respondents. The researcher selected schools with teachers who were knowledgeable about inclusive education.

In this context, 8 schools were considered to be appropriate and efficient for the targeted population. Stratified sampling was used to select the participants or subjects. Neuman (1997, p. 212) defines stratified random sampling as the procedure whereby the population is divided into subgroups or strata. In this



case, the sampling design helped the researcher to choose teachers on the basis of variables such as gender, experience, knowledge and qualifications. These authors (1997) emphasizes the importance of randomization from each stratum to ensure representativeness.

### **3.4 The method of data collection**

In this study a questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire enabled the researcher to collect information on teachers' skills. such as being able to identify learners with learning difficulties, refer a child with learning barrier to a specialist, work in a team with appropriate stakeholders, assess learners' progress, use the individualized educational programme (IEP), display creativity and independence use resources that are available, and collect information about the children in an inclusive school.

The questionnaire (Appendix 2) included fixed response items and open-ended questions. The instructions consisted of 3 sections. The first part was section A, which covered biographical data. Section B consisted of 37 fixed response items or statements, which assessed teachers' skills and characteristics.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability of the instrument**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researcher phrased the statements positively as well as negatively throughout the questionnaire. For example, statement number one, which reads: “teachers who have passed a course in special needs education are better equipped to assist learners who are highly gifted” contradicts statement number two, which states “teachers can assist learners who are mentally challenged, even though they have no qualifications in special needs education”. The respondent is expected to either agree or disagree with one of the two statements and not to respond positively or negatively to both the abovementioned statements.

### **3.6 Method of scoring and data analysis**

A five-point Likert Scale was used to score data in accordance with the following criteria: for positively worded statements, 5 was awarded for Strongly Agree, 4 for Agree, 3 for Unsure, 2 for Disagree and 1 for Strongly Disagree.

The highest score in the scale was used for measuring teachers’ skills to handle LSEN, namely:  $25 \times 5 = 125$  and lowest score is  $25 \times 1 = 25$ . The average was obtained by adding all the total scores of the respondents and the sum was then divided by the total number of respondents.

The respondents who obtained a score above average had reasonably sufficient skills to handle LSEN. Those respondents who obtained a total score below the average do not have enough skills to handle inclusive education. The respondents who scored below and above average were counted to get the frequencies (Williams, 2002).

The data was analyzed by using a Chi-Square one-sample tests and K-independent samples. This test helped the researcher to test the hypotheses and overall significance difference among various categories, more especially in the first and the second aim. In previous studies (Jett, Felton, Flounders and Meyer, 2004; Williams, 2002) the Chi-Square test of one sample was used for a similar purpose. It is also used for its reliability when investigating variables. Bailey (2002) used the same instrument to investigate 'how many members of the sample fall into classification of each descriptive categories for simple classificatory problem. Data was also analyzed by means of a computer statistical programme called Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS).

For the third aim, the chi-square for k-independent samples was employed to determine whether there is any association between skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms and teachers' characteristics such as gender, qualifications and experience.

### **3.7 Procedures for administration of the research instruments**

Permission to conduct research in schools (in KZN) was sought from the Department of Education district manager.

Once permission was granted, each school was contacted to explain the study. The researcher ensured complete confidentiality of the information. The questionnaire was personally distributed to the relevant schools by the researcher.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

The researcher had an ethical responsibility, among other things, to carry out research in a competent manner, to manage available resources honestly and to fairly acknowledge individuals who have contributed their ideas, time and their effort Leedy,( 2003). To meet these obligations, the researcher needed to consider numerous ethical issues and questions of proper ethical conduct. The professional code of ethic requires the researcher to make a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically when conducting research. The researcher is not only required to become familiar with ethical standards but also to practice applying them to real research situations.

Informed consent, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality are ethical standard that were taken into consideration when conducting this study. Although, according

to Leedy (2003) informed consent is not necessary when anonymous questionnaires are used to collect data, the researcher used some of the aspects of informed consent. In this study participants were given a brief written description of the nature of the study. They were also briefed about what participation would involve in terms of activities and duration. Participants were made aware that their participation was voluntary. The researcher's contact details and the study were made available to participants. The consent forms were signed by the participants.

As regards privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, participants were given assurance that their responses would be used for research purposes only. They were asked not to write their names or their place of work when responding to the questionnaire

### **3.9 Summary**

This chapter described the methodology that was used in this study. Methodology included the research design that was used during the study, validity and reliability of the instruments, procedure for the administration of the questionnaires, scoring and data analysis. The next chapter deals with the results of the study

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents data which was gathered for the study. Analysis and interpretation of data are in relation to the hypotheses formulated in chapter one. Data was collected from full service schools as well as special schools in KZN.

#### 4.2 Table 1: Gender responses to aim no I

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.560 <sup>a</sup>	4	.161
Likelihood Ratio	6.194	4	.185
Linear-by-Linear Association	.013	1	.911
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .34.

special needs in education.

Table 1 above shows that the calculated (observed) value for  $\chi^2 = 6.560$  at the level of significance (alpha) = .161, when the degrees of freedom (df) = 4. Since the calculated value is greater than the value of alpha, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore the statement which says teachers do not have the

necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education is not shown to be tenable.

Although the results in hypothesis one may seem to suggest that teachers are well equipped in terms of skills to teach learners with specific needs, a study by Hay, et al (2011) on teachers' preparedness for inclusive education revealed that when teachers were asked to indicate if they had any substantial training in teaching learners with special needs, only 226 of 2577 respondents acknowledged that they had substantial training. Therefore it means that a number of teachers still feel that they are ill-prepared to teach inclusive classes.

#### 4.3 Table 2: Gender response to aim 2

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.562 <sup>a</sup>	2	.458
Likelihood Ratio	1.569	2	.456
Linear-by-Linear Association	.204	1	.652
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.21.

**Hypothesis 2:** There are no in-services training programmes on inclusive education available for teachers.

In the above table the calculated (observed) value for  $\chi^2 = 1.562$  at the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = .458, when the degree of freedom (df) = 2. Since the calculated value is greater than the level of significance, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis. We therefore conclude that there are no in-services training programmes on inclusive education skills available for teachers to assist their learners in an inclusive education situation.

Although the results indicate that teachers received in-service training, it does seem that these programmes are offered to teachers in special schools only. The researcher bases her argument on a case where a learner was excluded from the mainstream school because of being hyperactive, which teachers considered to be a disability (Educ Africa, 1998). This contradicts what White Paper 6 states, namely that inclusion is about supporting all the learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the development of good teaching strategies to the benefit of all learners (Department of Education 2001). Study conducted in South Africa by Hay, et al (2011) reveal that when respondents were asked to describe the nature and frequency of support that they received to assist learners with special needs, sixty three percent (63%) of the respondents reported that they received no support.



#### 4.4 Table 3: Response to aim 3 according to Gender

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.551 <sup>a</sup>	4	.635
Likelihood Ratio	3.110	4	.540
Linear-by-Linear Association	.421	1	.516
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 4 cells (44.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .67.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no relationship between teachers' skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms and teachers' characteristics such as gender, qualification and experience.

In the above table the calculated (observed) value for  $\chi^2 = 2.551$  at the level of significance (alpha) = 0.635 when the degrees of freedom (df) =4. Since the calculated value is greater than the value of alpha, the decision is therefore to reject the null hypothesis which states that there is no relationship between teachers' skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms and teachers' characteristics such as gender, qualification and experience.

This shows that teachers who are trained to assist learners with special needs in education are better in comparison to those who are not trained and who do not have experience in assisting learners with special educational needs. When respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they felt equipped to teach

both regular learners and learners with special educational needs, only 245 out of 2577(9.5%) felt equipped, and the reason why they did not feel equipped was because they did not have sufficient training to deal with such learners (Hay, et al , 2011).

#### 4.5 Table 4: Responses to aim 1 according to Qualification

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.897 <sup>a</sup>	12	.002
Likelihood Ratio	28.799	12	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.226	1	.268
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 15 cells (71.4%) have expected count less than 5.  
The minimum expected count is .11.

**Hypothesis 1:** Teachers do not have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education.

Table 4 shows that the calculated (observed) value for  $\chi^2 = 30.897$ , at the level of significance (alpha) =0.002, when the degrees of freedom (df) =12. Since the calculated value is greater than the value of alpha, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the statement is not shown to be tenable.

Similar results were also found by Chidney (2004) of Manchester city council, whose study revealed that in Manchester most schools have teachers with

advanced teaching skills. The high quality of their schools is reflected in classroom displays of high quality writing and examples of work in mathematics and scientific investigation. The Manchester City council established a small team of highly effective teachers employed by the Education Department and deployed in schools with significant additional needs. Their objective was to speed up the implementation of Inclusive Education. They managed and motivated pupils of different abilities, and those with challenging behaviour. The Manchester intervention team demonstrated that highly valued teachers with a challenging role, given additional support, stay in teaching. They produced what they called advanced skill teaching – an excellent teaching team which achieved the highest standard of classroom practice.

In another study on inclusive schooling by Heiman (2001), one hundred and sixteen middle school teachers in central Israel were asked to define inclusion and to discuss the major difficulties they encountered in inclusive classes. The majority of teachers expressed the need to increase their knowledge about inclusion. Teachers were concerned about being inadequately trained and being unprepared to meet the learners' diverse needs. Another study by Burns (2009) looked at effectiveness of special education personnel in the intervention assistance team model. In that study twenty five (25) public elementary schools were surveyed to determine if they used special education personnel as part of their assistance team model.

The schools were grouped according to their inclusion or non-inclusion of professionals. When two groups were compared for referrals to special education, results suggested that learners who attended schools with assistance model educators had a significantly smaller chance of being retained to special education than those who attended schools without this model. This seems to indicate that personnel with relevant qualifications and skills are better able to assist learners with special needs than those without the necessary qualifications.

#### 4.6 Table 5: Responses to aim no 2 according to Qualifications

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.405 <sup>a</sup>	6	.879
Likelihood Ratio	2.421	6	.877
Linear-by-Linear Association	.306	1	.580
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 6 cells (42.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.40.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no teacher in-service programme on inclusive education.

In the above table the calculated (observed) value for  $\chi^2 = 2.405$  at the level of significance (alpha) = 0.879, when the degrees of freedom (df) = 6. Since the calculated value is greater than the value of alpha, we therefore reject the null

hypothesis. The statement which says that there is no teacher in-service programme on inclusive education is therefore not shown to be tenable.

In the study “Perceived In-service Training Needs for Early Intervention Personnel” by Gallagher, et al (2007), the results emphasized that efforts to train competency of teachers should focus on teaching personnel for LSEN.

Teachers participating in the in-service training seminar received a questionnaire at the close of the session .The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine whether the teachers regarded the seminar as helpful to their teaching or whether they had incorporated techniques. Results suggested that a number of behaviour modification procedures that were learned during the in-service training were eventually used in the classroom by a majority of the participants. Although the results of this study suggest that there is in-service training in the inclusive school, they are not enough.

#### 4.7 Table 6: Responses to aim no3 according to Qualifications

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.435 <sup>a</sup>	12	.411
Likelihood Ratio	11.511	12	.486
Linear-by-Linear Association	.651	1	.420
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 15 cells (71.4%) have expected count less than 5.  
The minimum expected count is .22.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no relationship between teachers' skills for handling learners in the inclusive classroom and the teachers' characteristics, such as gender, qualification and experience.

In the above table the calculated (observed) value for  $\chi^2 = 12.435$ , at the level of significance (alpha) = 0.411, when the degrees of freedom (df) = 12. Since the calculated value is greater than the value of alpha, the decision is to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore we conclude that the statement which says there is no relationship between teachers' skills for handling learners in inclusive classroom and teachers' characteristics, such as gender, qualification and experience, is not shown to be tenable. Contrary to this finding, Hay et al (2011) found that female teachers are more compassionate towards LSEN than males.

#### 4.8 Table 7: Response to aim no 1 according to teaching experience

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.322 <sup>a</sup>	10	.787
Likelihood Ratio	7.857	10	.643
Linear-by-Linear Association	.822	1	.365
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 12 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5.  
The minimum expected count is .15.

**Hypothesis 1:** Teachers do not have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education.

According to Table 7, the calculated (observed) value for  $\chi^2 = 6.322$ , at the level of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = 0.05, when the degrees of freedom (df) = 10. Since the calculated value is greater than the value of alpha the decision is to reject the null hypothesis.

The results of the study indicate that teachers with experience in teaching learners with special needs are equipped in terms of skills to assist learners with diverse needs.

The study on the in-service training needs of professionals working with children with disability and their families reveals that individuals with more than six years experience were better prepared to work with families than personnel with 3-5 years of experience (Gallagher, et al, 2007). Thus the researcher concluded that the more the teacher is experienced in the inclusive classroom, the better they develop skills to handle learners with special needs.

#### 4.9 Table 8: Responses to aim number no 2. on teaching experience

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.811 <sup>a</sup>	5	.081
Likelihood Ratio	11.462	5	.043
Linear-by-Linear Association	.390	1	.532
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.87.

**Hypothesis 2:** There are no teachers' in-service training programmes on inclusive education.

In the above table the calculated (observed) value for  $\chi^2 = 9.811$ , at the level of significance (alpha) = 0.081, when the degrees of freedom (df) = 5. Since the calculated value is greater than the value of alpha, we therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the hypothesis is rejected.

The results of this study suggest that teachers in the inclusive schools have the experience of handling learners with special needs and that they also benefit from in-service training. The results are therefore contrary to that of Burstein et al, (2004), whose study reported that teachers had insufficient skills and training to adequately serve learners with special needs. The present study reveals that a negative perception by educators in general regarding inclusive practice was influenced by their contact with special educators and their classroom experience with students with disabilities; hence they ended up being positive about the inclusion of learners with special needs in the mainstream. This assisted



educators to develop skills in serving learners with special needs and eventually they valued special educators' expertise and support in their classrooms. This means that teachers who have experience in serving learners with special needs are better prepared to handle learners in the inclusive school than those without such experience.

In the survey conducted by Gallagher et al, (2007), sixty four percent of the respondents reported six or more years of experience working with children and families of learners with disabilities. These respondents also reported the need for training in several basic competency areas that are traditionally and consistently identified in needs assessment and in the literature assessment on programme implementation. This shows that even though teachers get in-services training in the inclusive schools, such programmes are not sufficient.

**4.10 Table 9: Responses to aim no 3 according to teaching experience**

<b>Chi-Square Tests</b>			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.559 <sup>a</sup>	10	.965
Likelihood Ratio	4.140	10	.941
Linear-by-Linear Association	.487	1	.485
N of Valid Cases	107		

a. 12 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5.  
The minimum expected count is .30.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no relationship between teachers' skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms and the teachers' characteristics, such as gender, qualification and experience.

The calculated value (3.559) is greater than the value of the alpha (.965). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the conclusion is reached that there is a relationship between teachers' skills for handling children in inclusive classrooms and the teachers' characteristics, such as gender, qualification and experience.

In the study on Exclusive from school, current trends and issues by Imich (2004) which was aimed at investigating the difficulties encountered by pupils with illness or disabilities, teachers were asked to identify the kind of support needed as it was expressed by learners themselves and by their parents. One hundred and twenty one (121) primary schools were approached. Each school nominated one teacher who had experience of handling learners with chronic illnesses or physical disabilities to participate in the research. Teachers were called special educational needs coordinators. The results showed that teachers' awareness of understanding of the child condition played a major part in the provision of appropriate help. Learners valued highly the support they received from teachers who were aware of their conditions, but they also reported difficulties with new educators who had not been informed about their condition. This suggests that teachers with experience are in a better position to assist learners with special needs than those without teaching experience.

#### **4.11 Summary**

The findings of this study are encouraging since they show evidence that teachers' skills are gradually improving as well as their attitude towards inclusion. There are many paths towards inclusive practices and challenges. It is through the combined effort of the mainstream and special schools' teachers that these challenges may be overcome (Burstein, et al., 2004). Although the success in special schools and in full service schools is noted, the results reported in this study highlight the need for further examination of teachers' skills in the mainstream schools. The next chapter deals with recommendations and the conclusion of the study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This study was prompted by the Department of Education's emphasis on quality education when the democratic government came to power in 1994 Department of Education (White Paper 6, 2001). Although teachers have strived to meet the diverse needs of all learners, they still need assistance on how to respond to the needs of these learners. They require expertise, adequate training and specialized developmental programmes.

The study was thus designed to investigate adequate orientation, training and developmental programmes in the inclusive schools.

The aims of the study were:

- To investigate whether or not teachers have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education.
- To find out whether there are any in-service training programmes in inclusive education.

- To determine whether there is a relationship between teachers' skills for handling children in the inclusive classroom and the teachers' characteristics such as gender, qualifications and experience.

This chapter discusses in detail the study aims, limitations of the study and recommendations based on the outcomes of the study.

## **5.2 Discussion of results in relation to the study aims**

### **5.2.1 To investigate whether or not teachers have the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education**

The results of this study suggest that teachers have basic knowledge and skills to handle learners with diverse challenges. The reason why most teachers felt that they had the necessary skills to assist learners with special needs in education could be, amongst others, the training they received, which has an outcomes-based approach. The new curriculum for schools, which is called the National Curriculum Statements, is designed in such a way that it allows teachers to make tailored education plans for learners according to their special needs. For example, learning outcomes do not prescribe content or method. Content and methodology could be made appropriate for all learners' needs (DOE, 2002,)

Two learners from the same class may have different learning capabilities. This implies that they may not be able to grasp the learning content at the same pace. If one grasps the learning content at a faster pace, the teacher may, through the training that he/she has received, be skilled to accommodate the pace of the slower learner. The teacher, as an educator, takes into consideration the fact that learners are unique beings with different capabilities, who each grasp information in his/her unique ways. The abovementioned argument justify the reason why teachers feel equipped to handle learners with special needs.

This is, however, contrary to the findings of other studies which show that teachers felt ill-prepared and unequipped to teach integrated classes and ascribed this to a lack of training and lack of teaching experience (Hay, et al 2011).

### **5.2.2 To find out whether there is any in-service training programmes on inclusive education**

The results of the present study reveal that there are in-service training programmes for inclusive education schools. This may be attributed to the fact that Psychological, Guidance and Special Education Services (PGSES) are units within the Department of Education which provide support to schools for learners who may need guidance because of mental, physical, emotional and social circumstances. These units are responsible for the training and provision of

guidance to teachers on how to deal with diversity in the classrooms. PGSES assists teachers with inclusive strategies for learning, teaching and assessment of such learners. In their study, Campbell, et al, (2003) demonstrated that raising awareness of one disability may lead to changes in attitudes towards inclusion in general.

**5.2.3 There is a relationship between teachers' skills for assisting learners with special needs and teachers' characteristics such as gender, qualification and experience.**

The results of the present study reveal that there is a relationship between teachers' skills in handling learners with special needs and their qualifications, gender and experience. Teachers who studied (Inclusive Education) tend to be more skilled in handling learners with diversified learning needs than teachers who do not have qualifications. In addition, the more experienced the teacher is, the more refined their skills will become.

A number of studies support the idea (Thomson, 2008; William, 2002; Engelbrecht, et al, 2008) that there is a correlation between teachers' qualifications and teachers' skills. Other studies suggest that teachers who were employed in special schools expressed a more positive attitude towards inclusion than others, (Cardon, 2007; Reber, 2005, Croll & Moses, 2000). This shows that

teachers who had received preparation in teacher training and receive on-going support will improve in both their attitude and skills (Cardon, 2007).

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

One of the main concerns with the current study is that the research was limited to only special and full service schools in KwaZulu-Natal. These schools admit a limited number of learners; for example, a class may have +/- 15 learners. They also admit learners of particular ages. There are certain assessment tools that are used to decide whether learners are the candidates of their choice or not, unlike in mainstream schools, where learners are admitted on criteria set by the Department of Education. The use of assessment tools is prohibited to determine school admission for learners. Assessment tools negate White Paper 6, which stipulates that all learners must have equal access to an inclusive education system regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, class, language or disability (White Paper 6, 2001).

Timing also proved to be a limitation to the study. When teachers completed the questionnaire, they did not seem to want to give the best of their time. They complained that they had busy schedules because of the new curriculum which needed a lot of time for doing the administration and learners' portfolios. They were requested to complete the questionnaire at a time that best suited all of



them. They agreed to devote one hour after school to complete the questionnaire.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The findings of this study suggest the following recommendations: Current statistics show that about 64 200 learners have disabilities or suffer from some impairment and they are accommodated in about 380 special schools in this country. However, there are very few special schools and they are limited to admitting learners who live in severe poverty, or according to rigidly applied categories. These schools are expensive and inaccessible to learners who experience learning difficulties. On the basis of the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

- There must be at least one full service school per ward in each District.
- Professional development and support for teachers should be provided to enable mainstream schools to increase their capacity to support inclusion.
- Appropriate skills for all teachers should be identified and developed.
- Work to include all pupils for whom a place in the mainstream is possible.
- The Department of Education has to ensure that all schools are user-friendly to learners with different disabilities.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The findings of the study suggest that although efforts have been made by policy makers and the provincial education department to effect a paradigm shift towards inclusion in the special and full service schools, this is not enough. This research has revealed an essential insight in terms of understanding whether or not the implementation of inclusive education in the school is successful. Whilst a lot has been done in terms of policies affirming inclusive education, there must be redress in the schools that have already been built to ensure that no learner will be refused admission on the basis of their disability.

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## APPENDIX 1

### A letter to the Teacher

I am presently a second year MED Research Methodology student and am required to conduct research as part of the programme. I have chosen to assess the teachers' skills in the inclusive schools. Inclusive schools are those schools which learners with and without disabilities attend.

It would be greatly appreciated if you could complete the questionnaire, place it in the sealed envelope provided and return it to me. The questionnaire does not require names and information will be treated strictly confidential. However, there is consent required for which your signature is needed. Participation is voluntary, and you can choose at any time to withdraw your participation.

SIGNATURE OF INFORMED CONSENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time and co-operation. Feedback will be given about the outcome of the research.

## APPENDIX 2

### ASSESSMENT OF TEACHERS' SKILLS TO HANDLE LSEN

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

The questionnaire consists of 2 sections.

##### 1 SECTION A

This is a study of the assessment of teachers' skills to handle learners with special needs.

You are requested to fill in your personal information by making a tick (✓) in the appropriate space provided with information applicable to you.

##### 1. GENDER

Male		Female	
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##### 2. QUALIFICATION

PQV 13	
PGCE	
FED	
BED	
MED	
SPECIAL Ed	

##### 3. NUMBER OF YEARS IN TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1 –5 years	
6 –10 years	

11 –15 years	
16 –20 years	
21 and above	

## SECTION B

In this section there are different statements assessing the skills that teachers have to handle learners with special needs. Circle the response, which most closely represents your idea towards each statement. Answer all statements.

### NOTE THE FOLLOWING ABBREVIATIONS:

SA = Strongly Agree.

A = Agree.

US = Unsure.

D = Disagree.

SD = Strongly Disagree.

STATEMENT	SA	A	US	D	SD
1. Teachers, who have passed a course in special needs education are better equipped to assist learners who are highly gifted.	SA	A	US	D	SD
2. Teachers can assist learners who are mentally challenged though they have no qualifications in special needs education.	SA	A	US	D	SD
3. One of the skills for teachers of learners who are easily distracted is a caring attitude.	SA	A	US	D	SD
4. With or without specialized knowledge I am able to assist the learners who relieve themselves in class (do not ask to go to the toilet).	SA	A	US	D	SD
5. With or without specialized knowledge the teachers are unable to identify learners who are inattentive.	SA	A	US	D	SD

6. Teachers are equipped to teach learners who are lame.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
7. Teachers are not equipped to teach learners who do not listen to instructions.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
8. Teachers need additional skills to handle the learners with drooling saliva in an inclusive class.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
9. There is no need for additional skills to assist learners who cannot say the letters of the alphabet.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
10. I don't support the idea of in-service training to deal with Learners who are highly gifted.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
11. Teachers have the ability to assist learners who are blind in the inclusive class.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
12. Teachers do not have the ability to assist learners who are disobedient.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
13. Teachers have adequate knowledge of how to handle learners who need things explained repeatedly.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
14. Teachers feel competent to deal with learners who are overactive.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
15. Teachers do not feel competent to deal with learners who are nervous.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
16. Teachers have skills of handling learners who do not pay attention.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
17. Having a learner who does not concentrate does not give me any problem in my teaching.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
18. Teachers need to improve their skills in order to assist learners who are aggressive.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
19. Teachers who are well equipped to teach learners who read word for word may promote learning in the inclusive classroom.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
20. Teachers who are not well equipped to teach learners who are deaf may impede the learning in the inclusive classroom.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
21. I had taken at most, two courses in special education during my academic studies to assist a learner who needs things explained repeatedly.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
22. The knowledge that I obtained when teaching learners who are blind is helpful.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
23. I had not taken any special education course during my academic studies.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>

24. The skills that I obtained when teaching learners with short attention span is helpful.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
25. Teachers need to improve their skills to assist learners who are forgetful.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
26. Teachers do not need in-service training in order to assist learners who are forgetful.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
27. Teachers do not need in-service training in order to assist learners who do not concentrate when they are taught.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
28. I support the idea of in-service training to deal with learners who are weak-minded (idiot).	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
29. Teachers receive regular support through in-service training	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
30. Teachers and a school psychologist together should monitor the progress of the child who is lame.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
31. Exposing teacher to in-service training on how to handle a learner who involuntarily passes water (urinates) can make a difference in the inclusive classroom.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
32. Teachers who have gained knowledge from in-service training to teach mentally challenged learners are preferable.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
33. Teachers who received in-service training in special needs education may promote the learning of the delinquent learners.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
34. Lack of teacher's in-service training on special needs education may hinder the teaching of limping (a walking problem) learners	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
35. Lack of teachers' in-service training on special needs education may not hinder teaching of the dumb learners.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
36. Exposing teachers to in-service training can equip them with skills to assist stammering learners.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>
37. Teachers do not receive regular support through in-service training.	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME