

**EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS
OF
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION
FOR THE
HEARING IMPAIRED CHILD**

by

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DECLARATION

" I declare that this dissertation *"Educators' perceptions of inclusive education for the hearing impaired child"* represents my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references."

.....

N MAKUNGA
Durban
January 2002

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SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to investigate the perceptions of primary school educators concerning inclusive education for learners with hearing impairments.

The orientation to the study is followed by a chapter to explain the design of the research, substantiating the choice of format, methods of data collection and analysis. A qualitative research method was chosen on account of its explorative, descriptive and contextual nature. Data was collected by means of interviews with mainstream educators with learning impaired learners in their classrooms. This was followed by a literature review to compare and complement the qualitative data analysis.

The results from the qualitative research showed that the black primary school educators generally have negative perceptions of the inclusion of hearing impaired learners. The challenge facing many mainstream educators is that they have not been trained to cope with the diversity of learners now entering school. They have, for example, not been trained to meet the special educational needs of hearing impaired learners. Educators often feel that they are obliged to implement policies, such as inclusion of all learners, about which they were not consulted. They do not have a clear understanding of the demands of changes they must implement and lack adequate time to prepare for the implementation.

Many mainstream educators lack confidence in their own abilities to teach learners with diverse needs. They fear failure, and are concerned about the educational needs of the "normal" learners in the inclusive classroom. Educators' perceptions are also influenced by the availability of sufficient

support and resources and the amount of time required of the educator to address the special educational needs of the diversity of learners. Lack of knowledge and experience of exceptional children, such as the hearing impaired have a negative influence on educators' perceptions of mainstreaming.

The study concludes with the findings from the qualitative research and the literature review and the following recommendations were made:

- In-service and pre-service training courses in special education must be offered at all educator training institutions.
- The development of both the curriculum and the school must include a variety of strategies to facilitate the learning and teaching of all learners.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is commonly recognised that an impairment or disability results from physical, environmental or biological factors which prevents an individual from functioning effectively without specialist intervention or modification of the environment (Etheridge, 1995:11). This is especially true for the child with an impairment, such as a hearing impairment, in the education system. In the previous South African education system learners with impairments and therefore special educational needs were identified and labelled as those children who did not fit in the main stream education. This educational practice was referred to as segregation in education on disability and ability grounds (Peter & Green, 1999:12).

With the change of government and a new education dispensation a Bill of Rights, which entrenches the right of all learners to basic education and equal access to educational institutions, was introduced (RSA,1996a:23). It stipulates that no unfair discrimination may take place against anyone or any on the following grounds: race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or culture. All learners, regardless of their disabilities or impairments should be included in the mainstream education.

The South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 that was passed in November 1996 categorically states that "a public school must admit learners and serve

their educational requirements without unfairly discrimination in any way” (RSA, 1996b:6). This implies that depending on the wishes, and based on the rights of all learners and their parents, no learners may be turned away from any public school if it is *at all possible* to accommodate the learner. This means that schools may legally be obliged to provide appropriate educational support services and make structural adjustments to accommodate learners with special educational needs should they want to attend a regular public school (Bothma, Gravett & Swart, 2000:200).

Inclusion of all learners in mainstream education will help to do away with the labelling of learners with disabilities or impairments. In special education institutions or classes learners are labelled, categorized and stigmatized by being sent to special schools and/or special classes in mainstream education. Du Toit (1997:15) states that the concept normalisation is included in the legislation in order to deal with the disabled. Learners with disabilities or impairments will be able to live in the normal family home together with their parents, sisters and brothers and attend a mainstream school. They will be educated to behave themselves as normally as possible and have the opportunity to live and work in a ordinary environment. Kapp (1991:72) maintains that in segregated education the handicapped child is alienated from the mainstream of normal social life of which he is part and this inevitably leads to a degree of labelling. An educational policy of inclusion also implies a paradigm shift, not only for education, but for life as a whole. The ultimate purpose of inclusive education being to contribute towards building an inclusive society in which all its members are valued, respected and able to fulfil their full potential (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:59,61,64).

1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

International research on educators' perceptions of inclusive education indicates that educators in ordinary classrooms generally express negative perceptions and attitudes to mainstreaming policies (Gans, 1987; Webster & Ellwood, 1996; Mittler, 1995). According to Siegel (1992:33) it is generally assumed that educators who hold negative perceptions would reject learners with special educational needs, such as the hearing impaired learner, if mainstreaming were to take place. This would necessarily impede the integration process and defeat the purpose of inclusive education. Webster and Wood (1989:172) state that the perceptions and attitudes of educators are expected to influence the extent to which handicapped children (including the hearing impaired child) become not only physically integrated but integral members of regular classes, benefiting academically, socially and emotionally from the experience.

Wood, Wood and Griffiths (1996:5) say that meeting the special educational needs of the hearing impaired learner in an ordinary school is much more than a process of opening the school doors to them. Some of the practical arguments about the educational needs of the hearing impaired child are what kind of syllabus they should follow and what methods of communication would be appropriate for them. Kapp (1991:338) is of the opinion that hearing impaired learners who are placed in mainstream education are being "dumped" in an educational environment without taking their special educational needs into consideration.

Research has found that there are a number of factors which may influence educators' perceptions of inclusive education and thus also the inclusion of

hearing impaired learners in the mainstream classroom. These factors may *inter alia* be the following (Engelbrecht, Eloff & Newmark , 1997:82; Webster & Ellwood, 1996:3-14; Schectman & Or, 1996: 138):

- Lack of knowledge and experience of impaired children.
- Educators have not been trained to cope with the diversity of learners in a class.
- Educators feel that they are obliged to implement the inclusion policy about which they were not consulted.
- Often the educator does not have a clear understanding of the demands of changes they must implement.
- Lack of sufficient time to adequately prepare for the implementation of a new policy.
- Many educators lack confidence in their own abilities to teach learners with diverse needs .
- Educators perceptions can be influenced by past experiences of teaching diverse learners .
- The availability and provision of sufficient support and resources.
- The burden of additional responsibilities and the amount of time required to address the needs of a diversity of learners.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem that will be investigated in this study pertains to the special needs and problems, difficulties, uncertainties, and adjustments that is created for educators with the inclusion of hearing impaired children in mainstream education. The following are questions that require answers in order to justify the inclusion of hearing impaired children in mainstream education:

- What are the main challenges facing educators in the inclusion of hearing impaired children in the mainstream classroom?
- Are the special needs of the hearing impaired child adequately met in a mainstream classroom?
- Are educators in the mainstream classroom efficiently equipped to meet the special needs of the hearing impaired child ?
- Is sufficient professional support available to assist educators to meet the special educational needs of the hearing impaired child?

1.4 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS

The study on educators' perceptions of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner will cover a wide spectrum of concepts. To ensure a clear understanding of the problem to be investigated it is deemed necessary to explain certain concepts.

1.4.1 The gender issue

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

1.4.2 Education

Education is a process in which the practice of education is involved where a responsible adult leads, helps, supports and accompanies a child to self-actualization and ultimate adulthood (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:71). According to Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein, 1994:366) education in its pedagogic form, may be defined as the conscious, purposive intervention by an adult in the life of a non-adult to bring him to independence. Education as pedagogic assistance is the positive influencing of a non-adult by an adult, with the specific purpose of effecting changes of significant value. Du Toit and Kruger (1991:5) say education refers to the help and support which the child receives from an adult with a view of attaining adulthood.

1.4.3 Educator

An educator is one who educates, who takes the responsibility of leading the child to adulthood. Lefrancois (1997:11) says the primary educators are the parents who from the earliest moments of the child's life are involved in his education. While the parents retain this responsibility, the secondary educators (school teachers and other concerned adults) supplement the primary educator's efforts as they together purposefully lead the child in every

aspect of his becoming and through each stage of development. A professional educator (pedagogue) is a scientifically schooled educator practising education on a post-scientific level; he chooses education as an occupation and a vocation. Vanden Aardweg and Vanden Aardweg (1990:73) say an educator is concerned with the educand as a totality and not simply with the teaching and learning of a specific subject or subjects. An educator is more than a mere teacher of a subject but seeks to impart to the child qualities which will enable him to reach responsible adulthood successfully.

1.4.4 Hearing impaired

According to Moores (1997:8) a great deal of confusion among professionals working with children with hearing losses may be traced to an unfortunate inability to reach consensus on terminology. For most people the term *hearing impaired* covers the entire range of auditory impairment, encompassing both the deaf person and the one with very mild hearing loss. For others the term *hearing impaired* refers to *the hard of hearing*. Webster and Ellwood (1996:15) note that the term *deaf* is mostly used to describe impairment, disability and handicap. Strong (1988:211) says the terms deaf and deafness are restricted to describing the disability caused by the impairment. With the above definitions in mind the researcher distinguishes between a deaf person and a hearing impaired person as follows:

- A deaf person is one whose hearing is impaired to an extent that precludes the understanding of speech through the ear alone, with or without the use of a hearing aid. Learners who are deaf require special class/school placement and they require special speech, hearing, language and educational assistance.

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

1.4.5 Inclusive education

Inclusive education can be defined as a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners (Engelbrecht, Green , Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:19). According to Jenkins and Sileo (1994:84) the term 'inclusive education' means that children who were previously taught in special schools are now allowed to go to any regular school and attend classes with their 'normal' peers. In other words, those children who were previously excluded from the schools in the mainstream are now included.

Inclusive education means that schools should accommodate *all learners* regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions (UNESCO, 1994:59). According to Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:200) the South African government's policy on inclusive education stipulates that all learners, irrespective of race, gender, class, religion, disability, culture or sexual preference have a right to access a learning environment, in a single system of education that values, respects and accommodates diversity. All learners have the right to access a learning environment that values, respects and accommodates diversity and that provides education appropriate to the learners' needs within an integrated system of education (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996:55).

The ultimate goal of building an inclusive school is to contribute towards the development of an inclusive society where all members of society are able to fulfil their potential and participate optimally, and where respect for and valuing of diversity in the context of social integration is an active value (Farrell, 1997:159; Dyson, 1997:155).

The principle of social integration in a school context implies the facilitation of opportunities for learners and other members of the learning community (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:47):

- to learn and work together in a cooperative environment;
- to address prejudice wherever necessary;
- to view difference as a rich resource to benefit all; and
- to nurture respect for oneself and others.

1.4.6 Impairment

An impairment is a physical or psychological abnormality which is clearly recognizable, such as an amputated or defective limb, or a disease affecting some organ mechanism or system of the body (Du Toit, 1992:12).

1.4.7 Disability

According to Wolfendale (1992:79) and Fufeld (1976:11) disability is a defect in physical make up or functioning that can be specified and described

objectively. Tauney and Gart (1984:1) say the term disability refers to "an inference in function" and is therefore the commonly use term that indicates what the individual cannot do. It may be absolute, for example blindness, or partial like stiffness and pains in joints following arthritis. Disabilities may be congenital or acquired (Bryan & Bryan, 1992:14). From the above it became clear that the definitions of "impairment" and "disability" overlap and a clear distinction between the two terms is not possible.

1.4.8 Handicap

A disability inevitably produces complications in the development of a child, but it is only when these complications *limit* the child's development that we can view the individual as handicapped (Cohen & Cohen, 1989:19). According to Kapp (1991:27) a handicap refers to an identifiable deficiency in the child's given potential, such as sensory, neural, intellectual or physical deficiencies.

1.4.9 Perception

Sekuler and Blake (1990:8) define perception as each individual's personal theory of reality, a kind of knowledge-gathering process that defines our view of the world. Mader and Mader (1990:36) view perception as the process by which we select, organise and interpret external and internal stimuli. The external stimuli are the sensations that bombard us almost constantly, sensations that come to us through sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste. The internal stimuli can either be physiological (nervous system) or psychological (motivation, interest and desire).

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:167) describe perception as the act of receiving information through the senses (sight, sound, touch and smell). It is an activity which involves the organising and interpreting of information received through senses.

Vrey (1990:19) defines perception as a unitary process in which sensation hinges on meaning and meaning on sensation, and therefore sensing and finding meaning occur simultaneously. Crain (1992:59,79) emphasizes that perception does not end in awareness, but extends further to interpretation and giving meaning to sense impressions of a particular object or event.

1.4.10 Theory of inclusion

Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:554) describe the concept 'theory' as a plan or scheme existing in the mind only, but based on principles verifiable by experiment and observation; a proposed explanation designed on account for any phenomenon. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:230) say to construct a theory certain facts are verified, reaffirmed under various conditions and universally agreed upon. The scientist (educationist) attempts to develop from particular observations theory (generalization) that will explain the facts and lean toward one perspective or the other. The most useful theories are those that adequately and simply explain the greatest number of relevant facts.

Against the background of the wider notion of inclusive education in a participatory democracy internationally, a growing understanding of the contextualisation of education, as well as of schools as a reflection of society,

has influenced far reaching educational reforms. The latter implies that the traditional segregation of learners with special educational needs in separate schools was challenged. Educators questioned how services might be organised differently to accommodate learners previously excluded in the mainstream (Booth & Ainscow, 1998:34). The actions of educators were also guided by the new approach to disability, one which increasingly focussed on *abilities* rather than *disabilities*, and on social justice and equity rather than isolation and neglect. Dyson (1997:65) proclaims that mainstream schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combatting discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Inclusive schools provide an effective education to the majority and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.

As schools become more inclusive, it becomes clear that the change from segregated school settings towards inclusion affects not only certain systems in the schools, but also the whole school system (Bailey, 1995:34). In order to accomplish systematic change, a systematic way of addressing both the practical and the personal components of change should be developed. The values, opinions, attitudes and concerns of educators, learners and parents alike are deeply imbedded in the systematic structure of schools and when dealing with change in a system such as a school, this should be considered (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996:66).

An inclusive theory for schools raises crucial questions about the changes necessary if schools are to become fully inclusive, as well as the limits there might be to inclusion. In this context a community-based approach means

membership of the school should be open, positive and a reflection of the diversity of the community it serves.

The above theory forms the foundation on which this study is based.

1.5 AIMS OF THIS STUDY

The aims of this study are:

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

1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH

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

- A literature study of available, relevant literature.
- A qualitative study comprising interviews with primary school educators with hearing impaired learners in their mainstream classes.

1.7 FURTHER COURSE OF THE STUDY

In chapter 2 the method of research followed in this study will be explained.

The interview responses from the mainstream educators with hearing impaired learners in their classes will be analysed and presented in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 will focus on a literature review of the perceptions of educators with regard to inclusive education with emphasis on the inclusion of hearing impaired learners.

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

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Research methodology refers to a plan for selecting respondents (subjects), research sites and data collecting procedures to answer the research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:162). The method of research shows which individuals will be studied, and when and where and under which circumstances they will be studied. The aim of sound research methods is to provide results that are judged to be credible. Credibility refers to the extent to which the results approximate reality and are judged to be trustworthy and reasonable. Silverman (1997:56) says credibility is enhanced when the research design takes into account potential sources of error that may undermine the quality of the research and may distort the findings.

In this chapter the qualitative method of research utilised in this study will be focussed on. The method of research, validity of the research and the role and reciprocity of research ethics will be discussed.

2.2 AIMS OF THIS QUALITATIVE STUDY

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participants' perspective. Understanding is acquired by analysing the many contexts of the participants and by narrating participants' meanings for these situations and events (Berg, 1995:7). Participants' meanings include

their feelings, beliefs, thoughts and actions. The aim of the researcher in this study was to understand educators' perceptions of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner. The qualitative technique will allow the researcher to share in the perceptions of the educators' concerning inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner. Qualitative research will also provide the researcher with a mean of accessing unquantifiable facts about the perceptions of the educators.

2.3 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for this study can be specified as a single case studies programme evaluation, based on qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual research.

2.3.1 Qualitative

According to Lyman (Morse & Field, 1996:8) qualitative methods are particularly useful when describing a phenomenon from the *emic* perspective which is the perspective from a 'native point of view'. The perceptions of educators of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner was described from a local (indigenous) perspective. Qualitative research is usually conducted in a naturalistic setting, so the context in which the phenomenon occurs is considered to be part of the phenomenon itself (Mouton, 1996:45). Therefore no attempt is made by the researcher to place experimental controls upon the phenomenon being studied or to control the 'extraneous' variables. In this study the researcher aimed to explore all accessible aspects of the problem and the intervening variables arising from the context of the study are considered a part of the problem (Morse & Field, 1996:9).

Struebert and Carpenter (1995:12) emphasize the following six significant characteristics of qualitative research:

- A belief in multiple realities.
- A commitment to identify, an approach to an understanding that will support the phenomenon under investigation.
- Commitment to the participant's point of view.
- To conduct inquiry in such a way that it does not disturb the natural context of the phenomena of interest.
- Acknowledge the participation of the researcher in the research.
- Conveyance of the understanding of phenomena by reporting in a literature style rich with the participant commentary.

In this study the researcher strived to acknowledge all the above characteristics and therefore chose qualitative research, rather than quantitative research methods.

2.3.2 Explorative

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:42) the purpose of exploratory research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person. In this study the goal was to gain insight into the perceptions of educators with hearing impaired learners in their class. Mouton (1996:103) says the aim of exploratory research is to establish the 'facts', to gather new data and to determine whether there are interesting patterns in the data.

The purpose of the current study is to establish whether educators' perceptions of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner have any significant effect on the successful implementation thereof. The researcher will remain open for any new ideas and suggestions and will seek to explore as comprehensively as possible in order to achieve the best results. Preconceived notions tend to send research in a specific direction and should therefore be avoided (Mouton, 1996:45).

2.3.3 Descriptive

Descriptive research is primarily concerned with the nature and the degree of existing situations and the purpose is to describe things as accurately and precisely as possible, things the way they *are* or *were* (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:281). The descriptive method seeks to describe the situation as it is, thus there is no intervention on the part of the researcher and therefore no control (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:59). In this study the researcher seeks to describe educators' perceptions of inclusive education for hearing impaired learners.

2.3.4 Contextual

In a contextual research strategy the phenomena are studied in terms of their *intrinsic and immediate contextual significance*. Presenting the context is essential to understand the study and for extending the understandings acquired to future research or practices (Mouton, 1996:133). In this study a contextual strategy will be followed due to the importance of focussing attention on educators' perceptions of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner in order to gather in-depth information on the educators' real

perceptual experiences. The goal is therefore not to generalise the findings to a specific population, but to keep it contextually specific and true to this specific study.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:352) the presentation of participants' language is imperative, because this is the data, just as in quantitative research statistical tables are the data. Most qualitative studies present data in two ways, namely:

- short illustrative quotations; and
- entire paragraphs of field notes and interview transcripts.

In this study the researcher will try to integrate quotations from the interviewees into the analytic interpretations which will be offered in the next chapter.

2.4 SAMPLING

Qualitative researchers view sampling processes as dynamic, *ad hoc* and phasic rather than static or *a priori* parameters of populations (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:401). While there are statistical rules for probability sampling and sample size, there are no guidelines for purposeful sample size and samples can range from one to forty (Morse & Field, 1996:45). Purposeful sampling is mostly used in qualitative research. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:95) describe purposeful sampling as "selecting information-rich cases for study in-depth" when one wants to understand something about cases without needing or desiring to generalize to all such cases.

In purposeful sampling the researcher searches for information-rich key informants, groups, places or events to study. In other words these samples are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating (Mouton, 1996:67). The sample for this study was selected purposefully because only the perceptions of educators with hearing impaired learners in their classes are relevant to the research problem.

Primary schools in the Libode area in the Transkei were targeted. These schools were visited to establish if there were hearing impaired learners in mainstream classrooms. Letters to seek permission from educators to partake in the research project were delivered to them (Annexure A). After receiving the educators consent individual appointments were made with the educators to conduct the interviews.

2.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

2.5.1 Literature study

Neuman (1997:89) explains the importance of a literature review as an integral part of the research process as follows: "Scientific research is not an activity of isolated hermits who ignore others' findings. Rather, it is a collective effort of many researchers who share their results with one another and who pursue knowledge as a community." Unlike in many quantitative studies researchers in qualitative studies locate and criticize most of the literature for the study during data collection and analysis. They do a continuing literature review because the exact research focus and questions evolve as the research progresses (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:143). This

approach to reviewing the literature merely reflects the discovery orientation and inductive approach typical of qualitative research.

In this study the researcher will endeavour to continue to read broadly in the literature as data is collected. The aim of this continuous literature review is not to provide the researcher with preconceived ideas but to lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

2.5.2 Interviews

Morse and Field (1996:26) describe interviews in qualitative research as open-response questions to obtain data of participants: how individuals conceive of their world and how they explain or 'make sense' of the important events in their lives.

In this study educators with hearing impaired learners in their mainstream (ordinary) classes were asked to describe their experience(s) with these learners. In this interview all the participants are asked the same question, thus reducing interviewer bias. The aspects taken into consideration by the researcher in the selection of this interview strategy are that it:

- ▶ is centred on the interviewee's (educator's) experience of teaching hearing-impaired learners(s) in a normal classroom setting;
- ▶ seeks to understand the meaning of the experiences of educators who teaches hearing-impaired learners in mainstream classes;
- ▶ is qualitative;

- ▶ is descriptive;
- ▶ is specific;
- ▶ is presuppositionless;
- ▶ focussed on certain themes;
- ▶ is open for ambiguities and changes;
- ▶ depends on the sensitivity of the interviewer;
- ▶ takes place in an interpersonal interaction; and
- ▶ may be a positive experience.

In this study individual interviews will be conducted between the researcher (interviewer) and an interviewee to collect the necessary information (data) concerning the experiences of educators teaching hearing-impaired learners in a mainstream class. According to Silverman (1997:113) empirical data can be obtained by means of interviewing people and asking questions about their perceptions, activities, roles, feelings, motivations, concerns, thoughts, future expectations, etc. All interviews are an interpersonal interaction between interviewer and interviewee.

In qualitative research the interviewer is the primary research instrument and therefore plays a significant role in the collection and analysis of the data. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:163) maintain that the personal characteristics of the interviewer, such as age, experience in interviewing, educational level and gender, may influence the responses of the interviewee.

The empathy, sensitivity, humour and sincerity of the interviewer also play an important role in interviews.

An important factor to consider in conducting interviews is deciding at what stage the collected data will be sufficient. According to Mouton (1996:164) the following criteria will indicate that enough data have been obtained:

- When resources are exhausted.
- When the data collected do not provide any new information.
- When data shows similarities.
- When new data is irrelevant to existing knowledge.

2.6 DATA ANALYSIS

In qualitative studies data analysis is an ongoing cyclical process integrated into all phases of qualitative research which means that categories and patterns emerge from the data rather than being imposed on data prior to data collection (Creswell, 1998:142). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:502) qualitative analysis is a systematic process of selecting, categorizing, comparing, synthesising and interpreting to provide explanations of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, qualitative data analysis varies widely because of the different research foci, purposes and data collection techniques.

All the data from the interviews with the purposefully selected primary school educators will be transcribed and then analysed. When conducting the

analysis the researcher will give consideration to the following factors concerning the data obtained during the interviews:

- the words;
- the context;
- the internal consistency;
- the frequency or extensiveness of comments;
- the intensity of comments; and
- the specificity of responses.

Although the process of qualitative data analysis varies, several general principles and common practises guide most researchers. The following general rules in qualitative data analysis were taken into account by the researcher in this study (Creswell, 1998: 143; Merriam, 1998:183):

- Data analysis begins as soon as the first set of data is gathered and runs parallel to data collection because each activity (data collection and interim analysis) informs and drives the other activities.
- Data analysis, like data collection, proceeds in a relatively orderly manner and requires self-discipline, and organised mind and perseverance.
- Attending to data is a reflective activity that usually produces a set of analytical notes or memos that guide the analysis process.
- It is difficult to process large amounts of diverse data all at once and the analyst concentrates on sets of smaller and similar data at anyone time.

- Data segments are categorized according to an organizing system of topics predominantly derived from the data themselves. The categories are preliminary and tentative in the beginning, and they remain flexible, not rigid schemes.
- The main intellectual tool is comparison. The technique of comparing and contrasting is used in practically all intellectual tasks during analysis; identifying data segments, naming a category (theme), and grouping each data segment into a topical category. The goal is to identify similarities and distinctions between categories to discover patterns.

2.7 ENSURING TRUSTWORTHINESS

2.7.1 Validity

Validity refers to the degree to which explanations of phenomena match the realities of the world (Merriam, 1998:91). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997: 404) validity addresses these questions:

- Do researchers actually observe what they think they observe?
- Do researchers usually hear the meanings that they think they hear?

Validity of qualitative designs is therefore the degree to which interpretations and concepts have *mutual meanings* between the participants and the researcher. The researcher and participants agree on the description or composition of events, especially the meanings of these events.

In qualitative research claims for validity rest on the data collection and analysis techniques (Berg, 1995:5). Qualitative researchers commonly use a combination of any of nine possible strategies to enhance design validity: prolonged field work, participants' verbatim language, low-inference descriptors, multiple researches, mechanically recorded data, participant researcher, member checking, participant review and negative cases. The following table (Table 1) summarises the strategies utilised by the researcher to enhance validity.

Table 1: Strategies to enhance validity

Strategy	Description of application
Prolonged and persistent field work	Allows interim data analysis and corroboration to ensure the match between findings and participant reality
Participant language; verbatim account	Obtain literal statements of participants and quotations from documents
Low-inference descriptors	Record precise, almost literal, and detailed descriptions of people and situations
Mechanically recorded data	Use of tape recorders
Participant researcher	Use of participant recorded perceptions in anecdotal records for corroboration
Member checking	Check informally with participants for accuracy during data collection.
Negative cases or discrepant data	Actively search for, record, analyse and report negative cases of discrepant data that are an exception to patterns or that modify patterns found in data
Participant review	Ask each participant the review the researcher's synthesis of all interviews with the person for accuracy of representation

2.7.2 Disciplined subjectivity

Disciplined subjectivity refers to the researcher's rigorous self-monitoring, that is, continuous self-questioning and re-evaluation of all phases of the research process (Morse & Field, 1996:66). Emotions in field work are essential in data collection activities because of the face-to-face interaction and feelings also serve several useful functions throughout the research process (Neuman, 1997:123).

According to Mouton (1996:109) researchers combine any of six possible strategies to monitor and evaluate the impact of their subjectivity and perspective. In this study the researcher aimed to minimize researcher bias in accordance with the six strategies (Table 2) as identified by McMillan and Schumacher (1997:409).

Table 2: Strategies to minimize researcher bias

Strategy	Description of application
Peer debriefer	Select a colleague who facilitates the logical analysis of data and interpretation when the topic is emotionally charged or the researcher experiences conflicting values in data collection
Field lag	Maintain a log of dates, time, places, persons and activities to obtain access to informants and for each data set collected.
Field journal	Record the decisions made during the emerging design and the rationale; including judgements of data validity
Ethical considerations	Record the ethical dilemmas, decisions and actions in a field journal
Formal corroboration of initial findings	Conduct formal confirmation activities such as a survey, focus group or interviews

2.8 ETHICAL MEASURES

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:102) research ethics are about acquiring and disseminating trustworthy information in ways that cause no harm to those being studied. Throughout the process of data collection the problem of persuading participants to co-operate with the researcher is ever present. While lack of co-operation can be detrimental to a research project, participants have the *right* to refuse to participate and this must be respected by the researcher. Generally accepted ethical rights of participants that should be respected by the researcher are the following (Neuman, 1997:143: McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:418-421):

- Written consent of all respondents to take part in the research must be acquired as well as approval to use the data obtained.
- The anonymity of all participants and institutions (schools) involved in the research must be protected.
- The privacy of a respondent implicates that an individual's private behaviour or thoughts will not be misused to put him or her in a position of embarrassment.
- The quality of research emphasises the integrity of the researcher. There should be a continuous awareness of personal values and beliefs.
- The necessary planning must be done to prevent any possibility of physical or psychological harm to respondents.

- The respondent or any participant in the research has the right to withdraw at any time from the research, despite any prior consent.

2.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter the various aspects regarding the research methodology to be used in this study were discussed. The research design was explored as well as the evaluative research cycle. Attention was also given to strategies to enhance trustworthiness and ethical measures relevant to this study.

The ensuing chapter will focus on the analysis of the research data.

CHAPTER 3

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research methodology to be followed in this study was explained in chapter two. In this explanation attention was given to the qualitative method of research and the way in which qualitative data was collected.

In this chapter the data obtained will be analysed and the results thereof will be interpreted. After giving a brief explanation of qualitative data analysis, the responses from the interviews with educators will be discussed.

3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of data means the breakdown of the whole into its constituent elements (themes, sub-themes and categories) or parts thereof so that the hierarchy of ideas is clarified, and/or relations between ideas are expressed more explicitly. Analysis of qualitative data involves the identification of themes, sub-themes and categories, the systematic exposure of the connection and interconnection between them and the arrangement and structure which hold the whole together.

3.2.1 Qualitative data

Qualitative data obtained by means of interviews can be voluminous and sitting down to make sense out of pages of interviews and field notes can be

overwhelming (Creswell, 1998:150). According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:533) and Streubert and Carpenter (1995:45) data analysis in qualitative research is eclectic, in other words there is no 'right way' with regards to the interpretation and presentation of data.

The analysis of qualitative data is based on data 'reduction' and 'interpretation'. Voluminous amounts of information have to be reduced to certain patterns, categories and themes and then interpreted according to some schema. However, despite the variation, usually two aspects of a study are presented as data:

- the context; and
- the quotations of the participants' (respondents') language.

The actual statements of the people interviewed (or observed) represent their constructions of their life-world, their experiences, perceptions and the meanings they give to social situations and events. The researcher's task is to arrange these views in a logical manner, making the interviewees' meanings as clear as possible.

3.2.2 Interviews

The researcher was unknown to the respondents selected for this study. This eliminated any bias or influence from the interviewer during the interviews. Initially, respondents were hesitant to describe their perceptions of inclusive education to the interviewer. However, as the interview progressed, the

respondents (primary school educators) began to feel more at ease as a better rapport developed between interviewer and interviewee. The educators were more willing to discuss their perceptions and experiences of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner. The respondents that were purposively selected were black primary school educators with one or more hearing impaired learners in their class.

The study was directed at a rather controversial educational issue, namely the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (LSEN) in an ordinary (mainstream) classroom. In this research the specific focus was on hearing impaired learners only. The question asked to respondents (primary school educators) were based on the aim of the research, namely how do educators perceive the inclusion of hearing impaired learners in a mainstream class.

3.2.3 Reduction and interpretation of data

The data obtained consisted of recorded responses from the ten black primary school educators to the question asked by the interviewer. In order to obtain answers to the research questions (cf. 1.3) it is necessary to interpret the educators' responses. This was done by analysing the responses of the educators by means of the identification of themes, sub-themes and categories. This method of data analysis is inductive because the identification of one theme led to the identification of a further theme or category.

The responses of the educators will be included in the discussion of the themes. The answers given by the respondents during the interviews are directly quoted in the discussions in order to give the perceptions of the

educators first hand. The fact that the quotations are often not a hundred percent grammatically and/or linguistically correct, might be because the interviews were conducted in English which is a second language to the respondents (black primary school educators).

3.3 RESPONDENTS

The respondents comprised ten black educators from ordinary (mainstream) primary schools for black learners in the Transkei. All ten schools are situated in the Libode area. Seven of the educators were females and three were males.

Research has found that the majority of educators in South Africa consist of female educators (Du Toit, 1997:14). In most primary schools the majority of educators are females. According to Mwamwenda (1998:67) a female educator represents a motherly figure and is more acceptable to younger children in primary schools as *in loco parentis*. Etheridge (1995:32) says that female educators have more empathy with learners with impairments.

3.4 THE EMERGENCE OF THEMES

A theme analysis describes the specific and distinctive recurring qualities, characteristics, subjects of discourse, concerns, etc. expressed during interviews. The researcher reflectively analyses aspects of human actions and events that illustrate recurring themes (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:455). The complexity and the interrelationships of the events and human lives are emphasized. In this study the themes were identified from the data obtained from the interviews with black educators from primary schools who have

hearing impaired learners in their ordinary classrooms. The themes that emerged from the interview data, provided an explanation of inclusive education for hearing impaired learners as perceived by their educators.

3.4.1 Educators' perceptions

(1) Perceptions of inclusion

All the educators interviewed expressed negative perceptions of the mainstreaming of learners with special educational needs and specifically the learners who are hearing impaired. From the interviews conducted a number of variables can be identified to account for the educators' negative perceptions concerning the inclusion of learners with hearing impairments in a mainstream classroom. The two most prominent variables mentioned in the interviews were:

- **The educators' feelings that they had neither the training nor the ability to educate hearing impaired learners.** Perceptions of inclusion may be closely tied to the educators' feelings of competency and effectiveness. They have doubts about their ability to be able to communicate with and to teach the child effectively. A factor that seemed to be important for the educators was the large class sizes. Having to cope with the normal day-to-day problems in a large class was sometimes more than they could cope with. They were also of the opinion that if they had wanted to teach learners with special educational needs they would have chosen to be trained for it. The perceptions discussed above are reflected in statements such as:

"I am not equipped or trained to teach these children."

"I am definitely not trained to teach a partly deaf learner."

"I think special needs need special training."

"Mainstream educators are not trained to cope with learners with special educational needs."

"As a mainstream educator I do not have the ability to help the learner with a hearing problem."

"If you want to do that sort of teaching you go and study that kind of education."

"I have enough problems with the regular learners in my class."

"As mainstream educators we are already overburden with large class sizes."

- **Lack of knowledge and experience in teaching hearing impaired learners also contribute to the negative attitude of the educators.** The educators feel that too much is asked of them when a child with special educational needs is allocated to them in a normal classroom. They think that the department is expecting them to be specialists in meeting the diversity of needs in an inclusive classroom. The educators believe that learners with hearing problems should be educated in separate educational facilities, that is, special schools or

classes with special educators and resources for their handicap. It also appeared that the educators who were interviewed will be more accepting of hearing impaired learners if a special educator is available for consultation. They also feel that relevant support services should be available to them and special educator consultation must be possible when needed. The following statements are indicative of mainstream educators' lack of experience and knowledge of educating hearing impaired learners:

"There is no expertise, remedial or special education to assist these learners."

".... they need special attention in the class."

"They will do better in a special school or even a special class in our school."

"I have no experience to teach learners who are hard of hearing."

"These learners require intensive education in a special school."

"They have to go to special schools that have the resources to teach them."

(2) Perceptions of learners' abilities

The educators' main concerns regarding inclusive education seemed to focus on the learners. All the educators taking part in the research were trained

for mainstream education and they expected to only teach "normal" learners in their classes. Normal learners have 'normal' abilities and do not need special attention. It seems that educators generally perceive learners with hearing problems as not having the same abilities as regular learners. These perceptions are supported by the following statements made by the interviewees:

"Because the learners need special attention their intelligence is below their ages."

"The hearing impaired learners tend to be very slow to catch and grasp the important information given by the educator in the class."

"The teachers find it difficult to achieve most of the specific outcomes of OBE as the hearing impaired learners have to move at their own slower pace."

"These learners are less competent"

"Their thinking skills are very slow in so much that they are often confused about the learning areas."

"These are learners with special educational needs and sometimes hours are spent to learn them."

(3) Perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education

It emerges from the interviews that educators have negative perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education in South African schools. Some of

the interviewees confuse the principles of inclusive education because they think that all learners with special educational needs will have to be accommodated in mainstream schools, irrespective of the availability of the necessary support services and resources. They also see inclusive education as the inclusion of learners with disabilities only and therefore often have pre-judgements about what these learners are capable of. Negative perceptions of and attitudes toward inclusion are because educators do not have a clear understanding of what the term 'inclusion' entails, as well as a lack of adequate time to prepare for the implementation thereof. The educators also feel that they have not been consulted before it was decided to implement inclusive education: they therefore have no choice but to accept the policy of inclusion for schools. Schools do not have enough resources and facilities to cater for learners with special physical educational needs such as hearing problems. Educators' negative outlooks on the implementation of inclusive education are confirmed by the following statements:

"My main concern is that the department comes out with new policies and makes a lot of promises without providing any guidance, support and resources."

"I strongly believe that inclusion will not work."

"I feel that the hearing impaired learner is just dumped in the normal class."

"It is not feasible to have hearing impaired learners in a mainstream class because it is too costly to provide for their special needs."

"Presently learners with learning deficits, such as hearing problems, are not specially catered for in our school."

"To worsen the problem there is no policy in the school for placement of these learners or extra resources. This provide major barriers for the implementation of inclusive education."

3.4.2 Language development

Being primary school educators the interviewees were generally concerned about the language development of the hearing impaired learners in their classes. Language as a communication medium plays a very important role during the learners' primary school years; it also plays a major role in the forming of relationships. To speak and communicate effectively all children need adequate language practice and sufficient interaction. Educators had the following to say in relation to the language of hearing impaired learners:

".... are dependent on others when participating in group learning activities."

"Learners lost interest in oral work because they cannot hear so well."

"The learners with hearing problems have problems in their forming of relationships"

"These learners cannot always hear words and sounds very clearly and then they have faulty pronunciation."

".... they speak very soft."

"They usually do not say much in class."

From the interviews conducted with the educators certain aspects were identified by them for being directly or indirectly influenced by language problems that were experienced by the hearing impaired child. This language related aspects affected by hearing impaired learners are:

- Communication.
- Reading.
- Writing and spelling.
- Thinking skills.

(1) Communication

The hearing impaired learner is likely to experience some degree of difficulty in expressing verbally what they know, think and feel. They are not always successful in negotiating and communicating their knowledge and feelings to others. The gap between knowledge and communication can hamper the teaching and learning of the hearing impaired learner in an ordinary classroom. The educators also feel that any problem of communication between educators and hearing impaired learners are likely to have consequences for his becoming. The communication problems with the hearing impaired learner are confirmed by the following statements of the educators:

"It is a difficult job to communicate when they cannot hear properly."

"Learners who are hard of hearing cannot hear commands made by the teacher and then don't do what is said by the teacher."

"In the classroom the hearing impaired children tend to have soft voices when they are talking."

".... they do not understand the activities in the classroom because they cannot hear properly."

"Some hearing impaired learners lack tolerance in listening to the other non-disabled learners."

(2) Reading

There appears to be consensus amongst the educators interviewed that most hearing impaired learners do not achieve the generally accepted levels of reading skills for their specific age group. Hearing problems play an important role in the early stages of reading, especially in the primary school. If learners with hearing problems experience difficulties in discriminating between vowel sounds, plurals and certain word-endings, they may find it difficult to read out loud. This would mean that hearing impaired learners cannot become good readers because they lack the "basics" out of which good reading develops. The following statements are evidence of the often poor reading skills of learners impaired by hearing problems:

"Learners who cannot hear well are not good in expressing themselves orally as they rather prefer written exercises."

"They have poor pronunciation as they cannot hear some of the syllables pronounced by the educator."

"... the pronouncing of words and articulation are difficult for them."

"... they don't want to read aloud in the class."

(3) Writing and spelling

It has been evident from the educators' responses that hearing impaired learners experience more problems with written work in class than the ordinary learners. They tend to make a greater number of grammatical errors and formulate sentences which seem to have no grammar at all. The sentences they use are usually short and simple with little variety, so that the same structure is often repeated in written work. It also seems as if the hearing impaired learner finds it difficult to write coherently but write sentence by sentence, often unconnected. Hearing impaired learners' writing has a higher proportion of spelling mistakes than the ordinary learners in the class. These perceptions are reflected in the following statements:

"Their written work is not up to standard."

"They write very short sentences and sometimes repeat the words in other sentences."

"They are slow to start writing and what they write something it do not make sense."

"This lead to poor spelling of words when the learner is writing."

"These learners battle with the spelling of words."

(4) Thinking skills

The hearing impaired learners are perceived as slow in thinking. Most of the educators felt that learners with hearing problems do not answer questions as briskly as their ordinary class mates. This might be because they cannot hear the educator clearly and therefore have difficulty in interpreting the questions. The following statements reflect the educators' perceptions of the hearing impaired learners' thinking processes:

"These learners are slow thinkers."

"Their hearing problems seems to have affected even their thinking skills in that they are unable to view the outside world as others do."

"Because they do not always hear properly these learners are unable to solve problems."

"They are too shy to ask the educator to repeat a question or a sentence. "

3.4.3 Self-esteem

According to the educators most of the hearing impaired learners have a negative feeling about themselves. They evaluate or assess themselves as not

being able to do things as well as the other learners in the class. A low self-esteem tends to make a learner more dependent on others. The hearing impaired learner with low self-esteem will rather withdraw from class activities than face the disapproval of the educator or other learners. The characteristics of the hearing impaired learner's low self-esteem is reflected in the following statements:

"They are unable to ask the teacher to repeat something for they are afraid the other children in class will laugh."

"They are not active in the classroom and they are also shy."

"They sometimes also tend to adopt deviant behaviour patterns due to low self-esteem."

"In the class they are very quiet."

".... learners who are hearing impaired have an element of being shy."

"They are always emotional as they think they are laughed at."

"They often have to continue their schooling with a low self-esteem and one notices their high failure and drop out rate."

3.4.4 The "normal" learners in the class

The educators were very concerned about the "normal" learners in their classroom. According to their responses these learners in the inclusive class

would be neglected, because the educators have to spend more time and effort with the hearing impaired learners. The educators also think that it is possible for standards to drop due to the neglect of the ordinary learners. It also did not seem fair to them to expect the "normal" learners to help the hearing impaired learners when they should be concentrating on their own work in class. These sentiments were reflected by statements such as:

"...it will be detrimental to them as well as mainstream learners."

"The other learners are going to get less attention because you are too busy helping the child with the hearing problem."

3.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter certain themes and sub-themes were identified from the data collected. These themes and sub-themes were discussed with reference to the interviews conducted with the educators and substantiated by the statements made by the interviewees.

In the next chapter a literature review of available and relevant literature on educators' perceptions of the inclusion of the hearing impaired learner will be given.

CHAPTER 4

PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR HEARING IMPAIRED LEARNERS

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CHAPTER 4

PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR HEARING IMPAIRED LEARNERS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter three the qualitative data was interpreted and evaluated. This data analysis comprised the perceptions of black primary school educators of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner. The major themes that emerged from the interviews with the educators are the following:

- Educators' perceptions of inclusion.
- Educators' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education.
- Educators' perceptions of the learners' abilities.

This chapter will present a review of relevant literature in order to establish educators' perceptions of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner. The aim of the researcher is to fulfill the purpose of literature study, namely:

- to study the findings of previous researchers;
- to seek for similarities;

- to make comparisons;
- to discover general trends of thought; and
- to evaluate different view points.

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:198) maintain that previous research serves as the most effective basis for any study, and the aim of the researcher should be to be familiar with as many previous research reports as possible. It is also important that only data directly related to the topic problem should be used as extraneous information can mask and hamper the investigation of the problem.

4.2 PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSION

When a learner with a hearing problem is placed in an ordinary classroom setting in a mainstream school, the educator is responsible for the learner's education. Wood (1993:115) says most of the time this mainstream educator has no specialist training or experience of hearing impaired children. Royce (1997:117) believes it would be unrealistic to expect educators in ordinary classrooms to make radical changes to their teaching styles or to devote great amounts of time to individual children with hearing problems, whilst somehow still managing to teach the rest of the class.

It is therefore not surprising that international research has found that generally educators have negative perceptions of mainstreaming efforts (cf. 3.4.1; Mittler, 1995; Sebba & Ainscow, 1996; Kisanji, 1998). Similar research done in South Africa by Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:200)

confirms the international finding with the following statement: " It is concluded that this group of teachers seem to harbour misconceptions about the South African policy of inclusive education and that their attitudes towards the policy seem to be negative". Contrary to previous research findings, the teachers in research done by Davies and Green (1998:97), were generally found to have positive perceptions of mainstreaming learners with mild to moderate levels of special educational needs. Although the finding was based on the responses from a relatively small sample of primary school educators, it suggests that there are educators with positive feelings towards inclusive education in South Africa (Donald, 1993:143; Haasbroek, 1975:17).

In studies conducted by Giangreco (1997), Artiles and Larsen (1998) and Bines (1992) it was found that positive perceptions of inclusion amongst educators significantly correlated with their successes with learners with special educational needs such as hearing impaired learners. Perceptions of and attitudes towards main streaming may be closely related to the educators' feelings of competency and effectiveness in educating learners with special educational needs (Forlin, 1997:25; Guilford, 1991:67).

Educators with negative perceptions of inclusive education will also have negative feelings towards the learner with special educational needs in the ordinary classroom (Monahan, Marino & Miller, 1996:319). Educators who hold strong negative attitudes about mainstreaming could reject learners with hearing impairments (Taylor, 1995:1702). According to Baker and Gottlieb (Gottlieb, 1980:6) and Sampson (1975:34) the attitudes of educators are expected to influence the extent to which handicapped children (e.g. hearing impaired children) become not only physical integrated in the ordinary class, but also become integral members of the class and as such benefit

academically, socially and emotionally from the experience of being included. Negative perceptions of inclusive education for hearing impaired learners would necessarily hamper the integration process and defeat its purpose.

Both Farrell (1997:158) and Webster (1986:67) are of the opinion that educators are generally positive about the *idea* of inclusion, particularly for learners with physical and sensory difficulties and rather less for learners with behavioural problems. However, when faced with the reality of having a disabled learner in the class, their perceptions of inclusive education became less positive (Meijer, Pijl & Hegarty, 1994:56).

From the interviews conducted by the researcher it emerged that all the educators taking part in the investigation have negative perceptions of the inclusion of hearing impaired learners (cf. 3.4.1). The following aspects seem to have an influence on educators' perceptions of inclusive education:

- Adequate training and competency.
- Knowledge and experience.

4.2.1 Training and competency

Educators' feelings that they are not adequately trained or have the abilities that are needed to cope with hearing impaired learners can be seen as one of the causes of their negative perceptions of inclusive education (Webster & Ellwood, 1996:53). According to Wood, Wood and Griffiths (1996:45) educators' perceptions of inclusive education are closely related to their feelings of competency and effectiveness. Educators feel that they are

adequately equipped (competent and effective) to teach learners with disabilities and/or handicaps if they have relevant training in that field (Moore, 1997:116-117). The training of educators also seems to be a problem for inclusive education in South Africa. On the latter issue Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:200) remark as follows : “.... the challenge facing many South African teachers is that they have not been trained to cope with the diversity of learners entering schools.”

International research has found that most educators of hearing impaired learners in mainstream schools who have not been trained to teach these learners, did not choose to teach such learners and would prefer not to teach these learners (Moore, 1997:116; Lipsky & Gartner, 1996: 783). One may then conclude that these educators' perceptions of inclusion will be negative and that their effectiveness will be less than expected (cf. 3.4.1(1)).

4.2.2 Knowledge and experience

Vrey (1990:207-208) points to the fact that an educator must have knowledge about a learner before authentic education is possible. It stands to reason that a hearing impaired learner is not educated in the same way as an ordinary or “normal” learner. Taylor (1985:1798) says the problem of individual differences in an inclusive classroom makes it virtually impossible for the educator to have sufficient knowledge of all the learners. Strong (1988:67) believes that once the educator knows the hearing impaired learner he will no longer see, for instance, skimmed homework or poor concentration as simply laziness, but as problems related to a hearing problem. It thus requires personal knowledge of the hearing impaired child by the educator in order for the education to be successful (cf. 3.4.1(1)).

Lack of knowledge and experience of hearing impaired learners in mainstream classrooms also effect the educator's perceptions of and attitudes towards inclusion (Davies & Green, 1998:97). Educators feel that it is expected of them to have the knowledge and experience to meet the diversity of needs in an inclusive classroom (Dean, 1996:56). According to Coates (1989:533) it appears that educators want other professionals to help them with the learners with special educational needs rather than assist them, the educators, to effect the change to inclusion themselves. Bayliss (1995:171) says that until schools develop an understanding of why a change to inclusion is necessary, most educators will perceive learners with special educational needs, such as the hearing impaired, not as their responsibility or problem. According to Webster (1986:34) it appears that educators are more willing to accept hearing impaired learners in their ordinary class if they can consult with an educator with knowledge of special education.

Educators that feel they lack knowledge and experience of hearing impaired learners are more accepting of them if the following suggested modifications are available (Giangreco, 1997:190; Rayman, 1984:49):

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

4.3 PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A review of the literature on educators' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education clearly indicates that there are numerous factors which may influence their perceptions as well as their attitudes (cf. 3.4.1(3); Monahan, Marino & Miller, 1996:317; Peresuh & Ndawi, 1998:210).

According to Farrell (1997:135), Kisanji (1998:65), Wade and Moore (1987:78) and Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:203) the following factors can, *inter alia*, be seen as contributing to educators' negative perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner:

- Educators feel that the government is expecting too much of them and putting too much pressure on them, without taking cognisance of their needs.
- There seems to be confusion about the principles of inclusion as educators think that all learners with special educational needs will have to be accommodated in an ordinary school, irrespective of the availability of the necessary support services.
- Some educators have the impression that all special and remedial schools, as well as special classes, are to be closed and thus leave no placement options open for learners with learning disabilities, except within mainstream schools.

- The educators in mainstream schools feel that they had neither the training nor the ability to work with learners with special educational needs.
- With the new inclusive policy ordinary educators are now challenged with the task to accommodate a diversity of learners and to address different barriers to learning.
- There has not been sufficient consultations with the educators before it was decided to implement inclusive education and they feel they have no choice but to accept and implement the policy.
- Educators feel they do not have adequate training or the necessary experience to educate learners with special educational needs in an ordinary classroom setting.
- A factor that seems to be very important to educators concerning successful implementation of inclusion is the large classes and the under-staffing of schools.

4.4 PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNERS' ABILITIES

Educators whose professional education took place in a climate which views intelligence as fixed and unmodifiable are likely to have limited expectations about the abilities of learners with special educational needs, such as hearing impaired learners (cf 3.4.1(2); Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:70). A more optimistic perception is the belief that intelligence (abilities) can be changed and modified, and that each learner has the potential of learning. Bryan and Bryan (1992:28,39,42) say that the school

environment should provide the opportunity for teaching and learning to take place through several modalities to develop a curriculum that caters for a diversity of intelligence, including the diversity of abilities of learners with special educational needs such as the hearing impaired.

Inclusion of hearing impaired learners in mainstream schools showed a remarkable change in some educators' perceptions of learners' abilities (Green, 1991:249). Educators have a diversity of learners in an inclusive classroom which means a diversity of abilities (Taylor, 1995:1753). However, educators also have individual and thus a diversity of perceptions about the different abilities of learners. International research reveals that educators with little experience of learners with disabilities are likely to have negative perceptions of inclusion (Coates, 1989:534; Mittler, 1995:06). Unfortunately many learners with disabilities often experience discrimination and/or inadequate educational programmes because they are *different* from the majority of learners in the inclusive classroom (Forlin, 1997:24; Artiles & Larsen, 1998:148).

Anderson, Greer and Olden (1987) maintain that responsible and good educators must be responsive to the different abilities of learners and the difference in their individual performances. The competent educator must have as many different methods of teaching as there are learners in an inclusive classroom, and if this is coupled with a respectable and positive attitude towards learners different abilities, the possibility exists that learners' motivation and achievements will increase (Cohen & Cohen, 1986:83; Chen, 1996:52).

The themes that emerged from the educators' responses pertaining to their perceptions of the hearing impaired learners abilities will be discussed under the following headings:

- Language development.
- Communication.
- Reading.
- Writing.
- Spelling.

4.4.1 Language development

Language is a body of words and the ways of combining them mean that a person can express himself verbally (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:131). The importance of language cannot be underestimated as, to a great extent, all learning depends on a command of language. Vrey (1990:125) states that everything the child learns is to a certain extent dependent upon his knowledge and control of language, hence the enormous importance of language with regard to education. Linguistic competence is a prerequisite, not only for all school activities but for the whole of the child's mental development (Slavin, 1991:43).

Webster (1989:49) states that being hearing impaired does not only deprive the child of sound but could be better described as the deprivation of language. If the learner cannot hear the difference between phonemes,

morphemes, words and larger syntactic patterns, he cannot learn to recognize these patterns and to associate them with meanings (Wood, Wood & Griffiths, 1996:123). Hearing impairments of a very mild kind do much more than interfere with what children can hear of the language around them. According to Moores (1997:123-124) the deprivation of language also affects the hearing impaired learner's social relationships, emotional well-being and educational development. To this Webster and Wood (1989:59) add the following: "An inability to grasp a language and to communicate inhibits the child's intellectual development."

For the hearing impaired learner in an ordinary classroom, language competence tends to be the focus of much educational effort by the educator(cf. 3.4.2). According to Taylor (1985:1706) the linguistic skills of the hearing impaired learner not only directly affects his academic achievements, but also the nature of the learner's acceptance by a hearing society. After all, the language the child learns to speak can only be that which he hears from the people around him(Hearing impaired links page, 2001).

(1) Communication

Communication is a sharing, verbally, and non-verbally of experiences, happenings, knowledge, opinions and ideas and is affectively coloured(cf. 3.4.2(1)). People communicate by what they say and how they say it (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:45). Man has an inherent need to communicate, in which verbal communication plays a major role that depends on the command of a language (Abberley, 1987:34).

The spoken language of hearing impaired learners are not always on the same level of development as that of their peers and can vary from almost perfect to poor (Moore, 1997:270). One major problem of the hearing impaired learner's speech is often that of volume control. They cannot control their voice level so well because they cannot hear themselves correctly. With the result that they may talk very loudly. They are at times aware of this problem and as a result overcompensate and talk too quietly (Royce, 1997:118; Wood, Wood & Griffiths, 1996:106). A voice that is too loud or too soft can create difficulties in a busy classroom, both for the learning impaired child and those around him (Webster, 1986:121).

For many educators, the possibility of having a hearing impaired learner in the mainstream classroom gives rise to grave doubts about their ability to be able to communicate and to teach the child effectively. Royce (1997:127), Taylor (1995:1873-1875), Boviari, Carpenter and Upton (1995:123) and Interpreters for the deaf (2001) make the following suggestions, based on good observation of good practice, of how to utilise help in the classroom, and how educators may maximise the benefits of their teaching for the hearing impaired learner:

- **The classroom.** The background noise from an active classroom can distort or mask speech. The minimum of noise, therefore, is essential but not in terms of talk. Background noise can be reduced to the minimum by the use of classrooms away from roads, busy corridors, playgrounds, etc.
- **Extra adult support.** For the full integration of the hearing impaired learner in the mainstream classroom, the learning and

teaching situation needs to be as near as normal as possible. For the hearing impaired learner who may need additional support for his integration an extra adult maybe asked for support in the classroom.

- **Peer group support.** If extra adult help is not available or really necessary, a willing member of the learner's peer group may be called upon to help. In this case the hearing impaired learner will experience cooperation in learning, be more willing to ask for help and increase social interaction.
- **Educator support.** The hearing impaired learner needs to both *hear* and see the educator as much as possible. In order to maximise all the benefits in the class the hearing impaired learner:
 - ▶ should sit as near to the educator as possible;
 - ▶ needs to sit with the source of light at the back;
 - ▶ should sit with the better ear towards the educator; and
 - ▶ should be able to see the educator's face if visual clues such as lip reading are to be utilised.
- **Classroom interaction.** The hearing impaired child need to be a part of all activities in the classroom.

(2) Reading

The results of numerous international studies have consistently demonstrated that the reading comprehension skills of hearing impaired learners are considerably lower than those of normally hearing learners of comparable age (Strong, 1988:5; Hearing impaired links, 2001; Fusfeld, 1976:201). According to Webster (1986:93) there is no doubt about the deficits in reading skills when hearing impaired learners are compared with hearing learners on traditional reading tests. He says what is even more disheartening is that several researchers have concluded that some hearing impaired learners reach a plateau in their reading development.

Investigations into the performance of hearing impaired learners on standardized tests of reading comprehension suggest that they encounter difficulty in processing a language in print (cf. 3.4.2(2); Dean, 1996:76; Roston & Sewell, 1985: 45). According to Wood, Wood and Griffiths (1996:276-277) hearing learners understand passives, negatives and verb tenses better than hearing impaired learners. In their reading hearing impaired learners also ignore markers indicating negation, passive voice and verb tense and thereby read the sentences as simple active constructions. Royce (1997:134) says the possibility also exists that the hearing impaired learner may not have the same breadth or depth of verbal concepts or there may be a part of speech he does not easily recognise. The following approaches can be followed to help the hearing impaired learner (Webster & Ellwood, 1996:86; Walters, 1994:71):

- Use reading materials written around the learner's own experience.
- What the child is going to read must have been talked about.

- Use small groups for topic discussions where attention can be drawn to the language that the learner are going to meet in written work.
- Whole-word, language-experienced-based learning should be used.
- Particular attention must be paid to vocabulary and syntax.

The ability to function effectively in a complex literate society demands the ability to read and to express oneself in writing (Strong 1988:62; Anderson, Greer & Olden, 1987:23). In many ways reading may be considered more important for hearing impaired learners than for the hearing learners. Wade and Moore (1987:156) state that reading and writing are seen not as separate entities but rather as components of a larger and more complex process involving production, mediation and reception.

(3) Writing

Writing is not just a simple process of transcribing speech into printed symbols, nor can it be considered as the equal, but the opposite process to reading. Rayman (1984:54) says handwriting and spelling affect the ease with which a person writes. Wood (1993:25) states that the more central aspects which affect the meaning of what is written involve the vocabulary chosen, how sentences are constructed and how sentences are linked together to make a cohesive text. Hearing impaired learners find it difficult to fulfill these writing requirements because they have a much poorer grasp of the language system than their hearing peers (cf. 3.4.2(3); Wood, Wood & Griffiths, 1996:116).

Hearing impaired learners have difficulties in writing. The written language of hearing impaired learners has received more research attention than any other

aspect. Writing is easier to study, in the sense that it can be inspected visually. These studies have found that certain recognizable features can be detected in the writing of hearing impaired learners (Webster, 1989:96; Wood, 1993:23; Strong, 1988:76). Compared with the writing of hearing learners the hearing impaired learners:

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

(4) Spelling

Although spelling is the one area of language competency most dependent on auditory awareness, it seems to pose very few problems to hearing impaired learners when compared to normal learners (Webster, 1989:200; Guilford, 1991:91). According to Wade and Moore (1987:76) a possible explanation for this finding is that in just the same way as there are many possible routes to reconstruct the meaning of words, so are there many cue sources in relation to how words are spelt. Strong (1988:5-6) and Bryan and Bryan (1992:178) say that both reading and spelling depend on the redundancy of information in print and that there are more cues available than are strictly necessary. In reading, and perhaps in spelling too, hearing impaired learners may pay

attention to different cue sources in the text and therefore may tackle literacy tasks in qualitatively different ways from hearing learners. Royce (1997:63) and Webster (1986:89) maintain that hearing impaired learners might remember some word on a purely visual basis without any interference from the sound or letter components. However, Moores (1997:284-285) is of the opinion that it is more than likely that hearing impaired learners may attempt to copy, learn and write spelling patterns by using a variety of letter, sound and visual-whole features.

4.4.2 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the degree of positive or negative feeling that one has on the assessment or evaluation of oneself. It is what we feel about ourselves, and such feelings that are brought about as we compare ourselves to others (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:206). A person who is able to do things better than others, achieve the goals he has set for himself and will thus have a high self-concept. Du Toit and Kruger (1991:24) say self-esteem is one's self-judgement of one's own abilities, influence and popularity.

A learner's attitude to the facts of his own hearing impairment and, to the way he looks and communicates, will relate closely to the way in which he is accepted by others. Vrey (1990:76) says acceptance by parents, family, educators and peers bring self-acceptance. Self-acceptance enhances self-esteem. For the hearing impaired learner low self-esteem evolves from long-term experiences of failure, or of not understanding or functioning at the same levels as peers. This include being unable to make friends, join in conversation, follow jokes and repartee, the feeling of being left out of social occasions, missing events transmitted around school by rumour or announcement and an identification of wearing hearing aids. All these

contribute to a poor sense of self-worth and a low self-esteem (Webster & Ellwood, 1996:122). A sure sign that a hearing impaired learner is suffering from a low self-esteem is a refusal to wear a hearing-aid, especially the more visible aid or avoidance of special facilities for the hearing impaired (cf. 3.4.3; Webster & Wood, 1989:72).

According to Bryan and Bryan (1992:200) schools and educators can reduce the impact of being hearing impaired on the self-esteem of these learners in two major ways, namely:

- A more flexible organisation in the school, for instance, avoiding the placement of resources for the hearing impaired in the remedial department which is often associated with low-status learners.
- In aiming to teach social skills directly, for instance, where a hearing impaired learner makes friends with a ordinary group, it should be feasible to arrange 'reverse integration' whereby ordinary learners work in small groups in the special resource unit for the hearing impaired.

4.4.3 The "normal" learners in the inclusive class

Research has revealed that educators who with inclusive classrooms show much concern for the "normal" learners (Bothma, Gravett & Swart, 2000:202). The general sentiment amongst inclusive class educators appeared to be that the "normal" learner in the system would be neglected, due to the educator's time and effort being consumed by the learners with special educational needs in the class (cf. 3.4.4; Davis & Galloway, 1996:34).

According to Tomlinson (1982) and Upton (1991:71) educators also fear that the standards in the mainstream class would drop because they feel that 'normal' learners would be neglected in order to accommodate learners with special educational needs like the hearing impaired. Educators also feel it is not fair to expect from "normal" learner to support and help the learners with special educational needs instead of spending the time to focus on their own education.

4.5 SUMMARY

The inclusion of hearing impaired learners in mainstream schools constitutes a challenge to the education system in South Africa and in particular to the educators with a hearing impaired learner in the class. Inclusive education for hearing impaired learners requires educators to have a positive attitude, be flexible in their thinking and to be critical, creative and innovative in their approach to teaching and learning.

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

In the next chapter attention will be given to findings, shortcomings and recommendations regarding this study.

CHAPTER 5

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CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, SHORTCOMINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter the findings from the qualitative research and the literature study will be presented. This will be followed by the shortcomings of the study and recommendations that emanated from the quantitative research.

5.2 SUMMARY

5.2.1 Statement of the problem

The problem addressed in this study concerned the main challenges facing educators in the inclusion of hearing impaired children in the mainstream classroom. Special educational needs, problems, difficulties, uncertainties and adjustments were identified as some of the challenges educators had to deal within the inclusive classroom. Mainstream educators generally felt they are not adequately trained, nor do they have the necessary knowledge or experience to meet the special educational needs of hearing impaired learners. Educators' negative perceptions of inclusion are caused by their feelings of incompetency and the lack of sufficient professional support to assist them.

5.2.2 Research methodology

This study utilized an unstructured interview that was conducted by the researcher (the interviewer was the research instrument) in order to establish what the perceptions of educators are of inclusive education for hearing impaired learners. The information sought was not available from any other source and had to be acquired directly from the respondents by means of personal (one-to-one) interviews. With the aim of interviewing mainstream educators with hearing impaired learners in their classes, purposeful sampling was done in black primary schools in the Libode district in the Transkei.

The aim of the interviews was to obtain information regarding educators' perceptions of inclusive education for hearing impaired learners. The questions asked in the interviews were to establish how black primary school educators perceive inclusive education for hearing impaired learners.

5.2.3 Research results

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss the information obtained from the one-on-one interviews with the ten primary school educators. These ten educators were selected because of the inclusion of hearing impaired learners in their classes. At the outset an explanation and description were provided as to the qualitative method employed in this study and the ensuing emergence of themes from the interviews. This was followed by an interpretation of the context of the interviews which were substantiated with direct quotations of the interviewees. The following themes emerged from the data obtained from the interviews:

- Perceptions of inclusion.
- Perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education.
- Perceptions of learners abilities.
- Self-esteem of hearing impaired learners.
- The “normal” learners in the class.

5.2.7 Perceptions of inclusive education

Educators' perceptions and attitudes play a primary role in the successful implementation of inclusive education. In international and local literature it is reported that educators generally have negative perceptions of inclusive education. The perceptions of educators are expected to influence the extent to which hearing impaired children become integrated in the ordinary classroom as integral members of the class and as such benefit academically, socially and emotionally from the experience of being included. Negative perceptions of inclusion would hamper the process and defeat its purpose.

Mainstream educators feel that they are not adequately trained or have the abilities to cope with a diversity of learners which include the hearing impaired. Lack of relevant knowledge and experience of learners with special educational needs also affect the educator's perceptions of and attitudes towards inclusive education. Literature revealed numerous factors which may influence educators' perceptions of inclusive education.

These factors can be grouped as follows:

- Factors concerning the learners in the inclusive classroom.
- Factors related to the educators.
- Factors pertaining to the policy of inclusion.

An adequately equipped educator will be responsive to the different abilities of learners. The efficient educator will possess as many different teaching methods as there are learners in the inclusive classroom. The abilities of hearing impaired learners' which receive the most research attention are, language development, communication, reading, writing and spelling.

5.2.7 Aims of the study

The researcher formulated specific aims (cf. 1.5) to determine the course of this study. These aims were realised through an empirical survey together with a literature study. In the empirical survey qualitative research methods were followed and unstructured interviews were conducted with the ten interviewees. On the basis of the aims and findings of this study certain recommendations were formulated.

5.3 FINDINGS

5.3.1 Findings from the empirical investigation

The following are, *inter alia*, some of the significant findings that emanate from the interviews conducted with the black primary school educators:

- ▶ All the educators express negative perceptions of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner.
- ▶ The educators feel that they had neither the training nor the ability to educate hearing impaired learners.
- ▶ Educators perceive themselves as lacking the ability to effectively communicate with the hearing impaired learner.
- ▶ Educators feel they could not cope with the normal day-to-day problems in a large class as well as the special needs of hearing impaired learners.
- ▶ The educators believe that learners with hearing problems should be educated in separate educational facilities, that is, special schools or classes with special educators and resources for their handicap.
- ▶ Hearing impaired learners would be more readily accepted in an ordinary class if relevant support services and specialist educator consultations were available.
- ▶ Educators generally perceive learners with hearing problems as not having the same abilities as "normal" learners.
- ▶ The educators have negative perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education in South African schools.

- ▶ Inclusive education is perceived as the inclusion of learners with physical disabilities only.
- ▶ The educators also feel that they had not been consulted before it was decided to implement inclusive education and that they have no choice but to be obliged to carry out the policy of inclusion.
- ▶ Schools do not have sufficient resources and facilities to cater for learners with special educational needs.
- ▶ Educators perceive hearing problems as contributory factors to the lack of effective communication between them and the hearing impaired learners. These learners are not always successful in negotiating and communicating their knowledge and feelings to the educators.
- ▶ The general perception of educators is that most hearing impaired learners do not achieve the level of reading for their specific age group.
- ▶ Hearing impaired learners' experience more problems with written work in class than ordinary learners; they tend to make a greater number of grammatical errors and formulate shorter sentences which seem not to have any grammar at all.

- ▶ Hearing impaired learners are perceived as slow in their thinking when compared to their “normal” peers.
- ▶ According to the educators’ perceptions most of the hearing impaired learners evaluate or assess themselves as not being able to do things as well as the other learners in the class which results in a low self-esteem.
- ▶ Learners with no special educational needs in the inclusive class are neglected because educators have to spend more time and effort with the hearing impaired learners.

5.3.2 Findings from the literature review

The following are, *inter alia*, some of the meaningful findings that emanate from the literature:

- ▶ Most of the research done in South Africa is confirmed by international findings, namely that educators seem to harbour misconceptions about the policy of inclusive education and that they have negative perceptions of the implementation thereof.
- ▶ Educators with negative perceptions of inclusive education will also have negative feelings towards the learner with special educational needs in the ordinary classroom.
- ▶ The perceptions of educators are expected to influence the extent to which learners with special educational needs (e.g. hearing impaired learners) are integrated in the ordinary class. Negative perceptions of inclusion will definitely hamper the integration process and defeat its purpose.

- ▶ The feelings of educators that they are not adequately trained or have the abilities needed to cope with hearing impaired learners, can be viewed as one of the causes for their negative perceptions of inclusive education. The challenge facing many South African educators is that they have not been trained to cope with the diversity of learners entering schools.

- ▶ The problem of individual differences in an inclusive classroom makes it virtually impossible for the educator to have sufficient knowledge of all the learners.

- ▶ Mainstream educators are more willing to accept hearing impaired learners in their class if they can consult with other professionals with knowledge of special education and have smaller classes and appropriate resources.

- ▶ The following factors can, *inter alia*, be considered as contributing to educators' negative perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner:
 - The feeling that Government is expecting too much of the educators.

 - All learners with special educational needs will have to be accommodated in an ordinary school.

 - The misconception that all special and remedial schools, as well as special classes are to be closed.

 - Mainstream educators' feelings that they are not adequately equipped to meet the needs of learners with special educational needs.

- Mainstream educators are now faced with the daunting task to accommodate a diversity of learners.

- ▶ Educators with little or no experience of learners with special educational needs are likely to have negative perceptions of inclusion.

- ▶ The linguistic skills of the hearing impaired learner not only directly affect his academic achievements, but also the nature of the learner's acceptance by a hearing society.

- ▶ The spoken language of hearing impaired learners are not always on the same level of development as those of their peers and can vary from almost perfect to poor.

- ▶ The results of numerous international studies have consistently demonstrated that the reading comprehension skills of hearing impaired learners are considerably lower than those of their normally hearing learners.

- ▶ In their writing hearing impaired learners use shorter and simpler sentences, more 'content' words, fewer 'function' words and keep to a particular sentence pattern.

- ▶ Spelling seems to pose very few problems to hearing impaired learners when compared to normal learners.

- ▶ For the hearing impaired learner low self-esteem evolves from long-term experiences of failure, or of not understanding or functioning at the same levels as peers.

- ▶ Hearing impaired learners are perceived as slow in their thinking when compared to their “normal” peers.
- ▶ According to the educators’ perceptions most of the hearing impaired learners evaluate or assess themselves as not being able to do things as well as the other learners in the class which results in a low self-esteem.
- ▶ Learners with no special educational needs in the inclusive class are neglected because educators have to spend more time and effort with the hearing impaired learners.

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- ▶ The perceptions of educators are expected to influence the extent to which learners with special educational needs (e.g. hearing impaired learners) are integrated in the ordinary class. Negative perceptions of inclusion will definitely hamper the integration process and defeat its purpose.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 Utilization and development of educators

(1) Motivation

The findings from the study suggest that educators with little or no experience of learners with special educational needs are likely to have negative perceptions of inclusive education (cf. 3.4.1). It has also been found that adequate training, knowledge of special educational needs, and experience tends to change the perceptions of educators.

To support the inclusion of learners with special educational needs (e.g. hearing impairments) educators have to be sensitive, not only to the particular need of the learner, but also to their own attitudes and feelings (cf. 3.4.1 (1)). Educators may need special training in how to identify and address special educational needs. Over and above practical skills, educators need to develop a critical understanding of particular impairments. Inclusive education requires that learners with special educational needs are not simply thought of with pity but viewed more positively (3.4.1 (3)).

From the above it became clear that successful implementation of inclusive education in South Africa will depend upon the training, development and utilization of its educators. The policy for inclusive education makes it necessary for educator training institutions to reassess the basic training given to prospective educators. Subjects such as Orthopedagogics must be a compulsory subject in educator training. Adequate training will enable future educators to be ready for the demands of inclusive education.

(2) Recommendations

The recommendation is that in order for inclusive education to be successful the Department of Education must give urgent attention to the following:

- ▶ In-service and pre-service training courses in special education should be offered at all educator training institutions.
- ▶ A flexible and integrated support system must be developed for inclusive schools.
- ▶ Remedial educators and educators with training in special education must be available for consultation with mainstream educators to assist them with inclusion.
- ▶ Experts in special education representing all the population groups should be involved in the training of educators for inclusive education. This will ensure that educators receive first hand knowledge.
- ▶ A centrally based support team, consisting of a special group of professionals, must be established to assist educators with the implementation of inclusive education.

5.4.2 Curriculum and school development

(1) Motivation

Developing an inclusive school includes curriculum development that reflects the principles of inclusion (cf. 1.4.5). In the context of school development,

therefore, the tasks of the school, to pursue a variety of strategies to facilitate learning and development of all learners in the school community, must be pursued with the principles of inclusion in mind. This "variety of strategies" constitutes the curriculum and includes all the obvious aspects of the curriculum such as:

- » Learning programmes.
- » The medium of teaching and learning.
- » Classroom management.
- » Teaching practices.
- » Materials and equipment.
- » Assessment.
- » Quality assurance.
- » Curriculum development.
- » "Hidden curriculum" which constitutes the effect of norms and values of the school on the learning and development process.

In order to build an inclusive school which reflects the principles and values of inclusion, all aspects of the school's development need to be targeted. The

school should be developed as an "inclusive learning environment" with the focus on professional educator development and organisation development in order to equip the school to become more effective in its purposes and goals. This also means an inclusive school.

(2) Recommendations

In order for the curriculum and school development to be inclusive of all learners the following recommendations are applicable:

- ▶ All aspects of the curriculum must be developed to ensure that the diverse needs of the learner population are addressed. There ought to be provision for the special needs of the hearing impaired learner.
- ▶ There must be flexibility regarding the teaching and learning process. This must be done at national, provincial and school levels.
- ▶ Educators must develop their competence to identify and respond to learners' special educational needs so that they are able to provide a flexible programme for accommodating the diverse needs of learners.
- ▶ School management teams and governing bodies must have the competencies to know how to accommodate diversity and address barriers to learning and development. If they lack these competencies it must be developed through relevant training programmes.

5.4.3 Further research

(1) Motivation

As South Africa is in the beginning stages of implementing inclusive education, educators' perceptions have been recognised as, *inter alia*, one of the critical features for the effective implementation thereof. This statement is especially true of the inclusion of learners with special educational needs caused by a physical handicap such as a hearing impairment. It is generally assumed that educators who have negative perceptions would reject learners with special educational needs if mainstreaming were to take place.

(2) Recommendation

The recommendation is:

- ▶ Further research of a quantitative and qualitative nature must be undertaken with the aim of developing well-planned strategies to be implemented to equip mainstream educators with the necessary skills to teach the diversity of learners in an inclusive class.

5.5 SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings that emanate from the study include the following:

- ▶ The possibility exists that the educators interviewed drew their perceptions regarding inclusive education from the media.

- ▶ The educators' responses to the question of how they perceive inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner could have been affected and/or rooted in political judgements.
- ▶ Interviewer bias could have influenced the responses of the interviewees.
- ▶ The qualitative research method followed in the study only involved a relatively small sample drawn from the Transkei. A quantitative study with questionnaires administered to a much larger sample could possibly have produced more accurate findings.
- ▶ The scarcity of literature with specific reference to the mainstreaming of hearing impaired learners in South Africa.

5.5 FINAL REMARKS

This study reported on the research into the perceptions of educators of inclusive education for hearing impaired learners. It can be concluded that the educators involved in the research have negative perceptions about the policy and implementation of inclusive education in South Africa specially

where hearing impaired learners are concerned. If educators' perceptions of and their attitudes towards inclusion are not intentionally addressed, these perceptions and attitudes could become critical barriers to the successful implementation of the policy of inclusive education.

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ANNEXURE A



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PERMISSION FROM EDUCATOR TO BE INTERVIEWED

I, the undersigned.....

hereby give permission to be interviewed. I understand that all information I give will be treated with the highest confidence and that no details of the school or myself will be mentioned in the findings of the research. I also understand that the signing of this letter is not binding.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

ANNEXURE B

ANNEXURE B

EXTRACTS FROM THE TRANSCRIPTIONS OF INTERVIEWS

Interviewee A

Interviewee A is a male educator mainly responsible for a grade 6 class with 2 hearing impaired learners. He perceives the inclusion of hearing impaired learners in a ordinary classroom as follows:

Presently learners with learning deficits , such as hearing problems, are not specially catered for in our school.

Only in the junior primary classes teachers have some time to give individual attention to these learners.

In the SP classes the teachers do not have the time for specialized individual attention to learners with disabilities due to the large class size and the time table.

The hearing impaired learners tend to be very slow to catch and grasp the important information given by the teacher.

These learners are less competent than the others in the class.

These children continue with their disability unattended.

There is no expertise remedial or special education to assist these learners.

They often have to continue their schooling with a low self-esteem and one notices their high failure and drop out rate.

They sometimes also tend to adopt deviant behaviour patterns due to a low self-esteem.

I am no equipped or trained to teach these children.

Interviewee B

A grade 5 female educator with 2 hearing impaired children in her class gives her views as follows:

I strongly believe that inclusive education will not work. Teaching is stressful and demanding enough with normal learners because of socio-economic problems, disinterest in school work, low IQ and more weak learners.

Their thinking skills are slow in o much that they are often confused about learning areas. If you want to do that sort of teaching you go and study that kind of education.

Inclusion of learners with specialised needs will create problems in the class and will be detrimental to them as well as mainstream learners.

It is not feasible to have hearing impaired learners in a mainstream school because it is to costly to provide for their special needs.

Mainstream educators are not trained to cope with them.

I think special needs need special training.

Interviewee C

In this female educator's grade 3 class is 4 hearing impaired children and she perceives their inclusion as follows:

As mainstream educators we are already overburdened with large class size.

This is a difficult job coping without including learners who are experiencing learning barriers like when the cannot hear properly in the class.

These are learners with special educational neds and sometimes hours are spent to learn them.

Mainstream eductors are not trained to cope with learners with special educational needs.

To worsen the problem there is no policy for placement of these learners or extra resources.

This provide major barriers for the implementation of inclusive education.

All barriers must be remove before schools become fully inclusive.

My main concern is that the department comes out with new educational policies and makes a lot of promises without providing any guidance, support and resources.

Interviewee D

This interviewee is a grade 3 female educator with 2 hard of hearing learners in her class. She expresses her views about inclusion as follows:

Learners who are hard of hearing cannot hear the commands made by the teacher and then don't do what is said by the teacher.

Sometimes they do not understand some of the activities in the classroom and they also don't laugh for jokes made by the teacher.

These learners need special attention in class.

They are always emotional as they think they are laughed at and they become angry.

They are not active in the classroom and they are also shy.

Learners who cannot hear well are not good in expressing themselves orally as they rather prefer written exercises.

There is no expertise, remedial or special education to assist these learners.

These learners are slow thinkers.

My main concern is that the department comes out with new policies and makes a lot of promises without providing guidance, support and resources.

Interviewee E

This is a female educator for grade 5, has one hearing impaired learner in her class and gave the following perceptions:

In the classroom the hearing impaired child tend to have soft voices when they are talking and do not want to read aloud in the class.

They appear to be cheeky because they do not understand the commands given by the teacher.

They are dependent on others when participating in group learning activities.

They seem not to be happy as they do not laugh at the jokes in the classroom.

They are unable to ask the teacher to repeat something for them because they are shy.

They are also afraid the other children in the class will laugh.

They have poor pronunciation as they cannot hear some of the syllables pronounced by the educator.

This lead to poor spelling of words when the learner is writing.

Because the learners need special attention their intelligence is below their ages.

Interviewee F

This interviewee is a grade 6 female educator and has three hearing impaired learners in her classroom. Her perceptions on inclusive education for the hearing impaired learner are the following:

The hearing impaired learners tend to be very slow to catch and grasp the important information given by the educator in the class.

It is difficult to communicate when they cannot hear properly.

They seem to be unable to relate to the meaning of things in their environment.

Learners lost interest in oral work because they cannot hear so well.

Their learning problems seems to have affected even their thinking skills in that they are unable to view the outside world as others do.

In them the sense of life appreciation seems very cold.

These learners seem to do well when a lot of audio -visual material is continuously applied.

This means that they demand more than normal children.

Interviewee G

This is a female educator of a grade 4 class who said she has two hard of hearing learners in her class. She perceives their inclusion in the ordinary class as follows:

The learners who are hearing impaired have an element of being shy.

In an information giving situation they tend to retard the progress of the class.

They are not well motivated and they need special attention in the class.

I have enough problems with the regular learners in my class.

I feel the hearing impaired learner is just dumped in the normal class.

Even the pronouncing of words and articulation are difficult for them.

They usually do not say much in class.

A lot of individual attention has to be given to the and this consume much of the time of the teacher.

These learners battle with the spelling of words.

There written work is not up to standard.

Interviewee H

Interviewee E is a grade 6 male educator with the following perceptions of inclusion of hearing impaired learners (responsible for three hearing impaired learners):

The learners with hearing problems also have problems in their forming of relationships as they do not participate well in their groups as it is required by OBE.

These learners have different patterns and styles of learning from their non-disabled peers.

The teacher find it difficult to achieve most of the specific outcomes of OBE as the hearing impaired learners have to move at their own slower pace.

It is time consuming for the teacher because he has to pay special attention to the hearing impaired learners.

Because the learners need special attention their intelligence is below their ages.

Some hearing impaired learners lack tolerance o listening to the other non-disabled learners.

As teaching and learning depend on the learner' progress these activities are very slow when they cannot hear properly.

They have to go to special schools that have the resources to teach them.

Interviewee I

This grade four educator is a female with as many as four learners with hearing problems in her class. She has perceives their inclusion as follows:

The hearing impaired learners who are doing well, that means who are intelligent, do not want to help other learners.

Because they do not always hear properly these learners are unable to solve problems.

Learners who cannot hear well are not good in expressing themselves orally as they rather prefer written exercises.

They are slow to start writing and when they write something it do not make sense.

They write short sentences and sometimes repeat the word sin other sentences.

These learners are less competent because they are dependent on other for extra help.

These learners need intensive education in a special school.

The learners who cannot hear well are dependent on others when participating in group learning activities.

Their thinking skills are very low in so much that they are often confused about the learning areas.

Their oral abilities are impeded because they do not grasp some of the words pronounced to them.

Interviewee J

This interviewee is a male educator, responsible for a grade seven class with three hearing impaired learners. He perceives the inclusion of hearing impaired learners as follows:

Inclusion of hearing impaired learners place an enormous burden on the educator because to be successful in teaching them much more attention has to be given to them.

I have no experience to teach learners who are hard of hearing.

As a mainstream educators I do not have the ability to help the learner with a hearing problem.

They will do better in a special school or even a special class in our school.

More harm can be done to these learners if they are placed in a mainstream class because of incorrect teaching methods.

These are learners with special educational needs and sometimes hours are spent to learn them.