Challenges facing educators in the implementation of inclusive education

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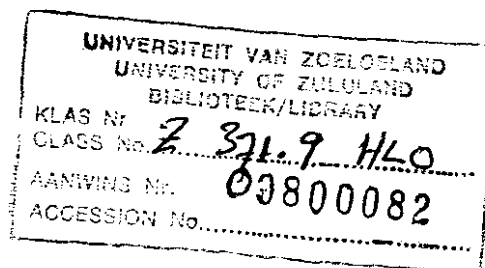Durban
March 2007

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation *"Challenges facing educators in the implementation of inclusive education"* represents my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

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B C HLONGWANA
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MARCH 2007

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to:

➤ My late Mother, STEPHANIA, my wife, MABEL KHUPHUKILE for their sincere love in spite of difficulties during the course of my study. You will always be remembered, for what I am is because of your encouragement and support. Without you I would not be where I am today.

➤ My children, NOMKHOSI, BONGA, SIYANDA AND BUSISIWE.

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SUMMARY

The aim of this investigation was to establish the challenges facing educators in the implementation of inclusive education.

From the literature study it emerges that inclusive education constitutes a challenge to the education system in South Africa, in particular to mainstream educators. Successful implementation of inclusive education requires educators to have a positive attitude, be flexible and 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 wide range of diversity among learners in an inclusive classroom. They must be able to select appropriate teaching strategies to achieve specific outcomes. Effective inclusion will only stay a dream if educators do not have the necessary training, support systems and appropriate resources.

For the purpose of the empirical investigation a self-structured questionnaire, to be completed by educators from primary schools, was utilised. The data obtained from the completed questionnaires were analysed and commented on by means of descriptive statistics.

In conclusion a summary was presented on the findings of the literature review and empirical investigation and the following are some of the recommendations that were made:

➤ Opportunities for in-service training regarding inclusive education must be made available to mainstream educators.

➤ The Department of Education must provide adequate support to educators concerning all aspects of inclusive education.

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ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The predominant objective of an education system is one of providing quality education for all learners in order to enable them to realise their full potential and thereby fully contribute to and participate in society (Prinsloo, 2001:344). The recognition that education is a fundamental right and therefore needs to be freely available to all learners underpins the notion that the education system should provide for and sustain such learning for all learners (RSA, 1996:29). Key components of the New South African Education Policy are aimed at meeting the needs of all learners and actualising the full potential of all learners (RSA, 1996:10). If these objectives are realised barriers to learning and development would essentially be removed.

Since 1994 the South African Government has been committed to transforming the educational policy to address the imbalances and neglect of the past and to bring the country in line with international standards of recognition of human rights, which led to the movement towards inclusive education. Inclusive education promotes a single system of education dedicated to ensure that all learners are empowered to become caring and competent citizens in an inclusive, changing and diverse society (Hall & Engelbrecht, 1999:230).

Inclusion is a new way of thinking about specialised education. The shift from special education to inclusive education signals a dramatic philosophical change (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:7). Inclusion is a belief in the inherent right of all persons to participate meaningfully in society. Inclusive education implies acceptance of differences and making room for persons who would otherwise be excluded. This practice of educating children who have disabilities (impairments) together with non-disabled peers

means creating learning communities that appreciate and respond to the diverse needs of the members (Engelbrecht, Kriegler & Booysen, 1996:7).

Special education with the emphasis on the continued existence of special schools, as well as remedial programmes in ordinary schools, educational support services, education and training policies, legislation and governance and outcomes-based education (OBE), are the focal points of transformation to a system of inclusive education in South Africa.

1.2   ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

Inclusive education at present seems to be a problem for many educators because of a lack of knowledge of the benefits of inclusion (Hay & Paulson, 2001:215). At this stage the most acceptable option for placement of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning, seems to be a progressive move towards inclusion, as this will enable the education ministry to prepare mainstream education for the successful implementation of inclusive education in South African classrooms (Engelbrecht, Kriegler & Booysen, 1996:15).

Educators' attitudes in mainstream schools, together with their training, have practical implications for learners who are experiencing learning difficulties (Schechtman & Or, 1996:146). Factors such as the number of learners in class and the academic pressure and standards of the school influence the amount of time and attention an educator can afford a learner who is experiencing learning difficulties in the mainstream school (Goddeen & Maurice, 1999:9). Learners experiencing learning difficulties place high demands on educators. The educator also has high expectations of the way he deals with these learner demands. This leads to more pressure and stress for the educator.

It appears that the degree of acceptance of inclusive education goes hand-in-hand with the way in which the policy of inclusion has been presented to educators (DNE, 1997c:54-60). Educators who experience the policy as

being forced onto them appear to reject it totally. Educators who participated in the process of transformation seem to be more accepting. Information on the movement towards inclusive education will improve acceptance. From an educator's point of view, it appears that inclusive education shows a vacuum in the training of mainstream school educator's recommendation (Hall & Engelbrecht, 1999:230).

The education paradigm is apparently still based on the traditional methods of teaching, where the learner has to perform and progress according to predetermined standards, rather than an outcomes-based education and continuous assessment (DNE, 1997c:13-25). Educators find it difficult to accommodate a paradigm shift within their traditional frame of reference.

A comparison of three studies done in Gauteng and the Western Cape to determine teacher attitudes towards inclusion indicated the following patterns (Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht, 1999:47):

➢ Inadequate knowledge, skills and training of educators to implement inclusive education effectively.

➢ Lack of educational and educator support.

➢ Inadequate provision of facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices.

➢ Potential effects of inclusive education on learners with special educational needs as well as other learners in the mainstream.

From this the deduction can be made that few educators have made the paradigm shift towards inclusive education.

Donald (1992:51) says the successful implementation of inclusive education seems to be dependent on the availability of financial resources and this creates a negative feeling towards inclusive education.

Thomson (1998:10) emphasises the fact that the effective implementation of inclusive education depends on high quality professional preparation of educators at pre-and in-service levels to equip them for and update their knowledge in meeting the needs of a diverse classroom population worldwide, which are:

➢ Large classes.
➢ Negative attitude to disability.
➢ Examination oriented education system.
➢ Assessment dominated by a medical model.
➢ A lack of parent involvement.
➢ A lack of clear national policies.

Collaboration between parents and educators improves parents' understanding of the movement towards inclusion and can influence views more positively. Parents who respect diversity and are willing to become involved can sway a community recommendation (Ainscow, 1992:2).

Educator training plays a significant role in terms of classroom research, support for educators and learners, as well as providing in-service training). The collaboration between special and mainstream school educators is necessary for information and skill sharing. Early intervention, support and sharing of knowledge can only be done successfully when collaborative structures are in place (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997:101; Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Eldman & Schattman, 1993:367).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In essence the questions to be investigated in this study focus on, *inter alia,* the following:

➢ What are the main challenges facing educators in the implementation of inclusive education in South African classrooms?

➤ Are educators sufficiently equipped for inclusive education?

➤ Do educators require assistance concerning inclusive education and if so, what is the nature of the assistance required?

1.4 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS

The study on the effective implementation of inclusive education in mainstream classrooms will cover a wide spectrum of concepts. To ensure a clear understanding of the problem to be investigated it is deemed necessary to explain the following concepts.

1.4.1 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 is involved where a responsible adult leads, supports and accompanies a child to self-actualisation and ultimate adulthood (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:71). Education is the practice the educator is concerned with in assisting the learner on his way to adulthood. Education can therefore be defined as the conscious, purposive intervention by an adult in the life of a non-adult to bring him to independence (Van Rensburg, Landman & Bodenstein, 1994:366). 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 (1993:5) say education refers to the help and support that the learner receives from an adult with a view of attaining adulthood.

1.4.3 **Educator**

Educators play a major role in the holistic development of their learners. Both learners and parents regard educators as the most important factor in the learners' becoming towards adulthood. An educator is one who educates and who takes the responsibility of leading the learner to adulthood. Lefrancois (1997:11) sees the primary educators as the parents who from the earliest moment of the learner'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 educators' efforts as they together purposefully lead the learner in every aspect of his becoming and through each stage of development.

According to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:73) the 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 educator of a subject, but seeks to impart to the learner qualities which will enable him to reach responsible adulthood successfully.

1.4.4 **Attitudes**

Attitudes play various roles in an individual's life. Baron and Byrne (1991:138) describe attitudes as the internal representation of various aspects of the social or physical world; representations containing affective reactions to the attitude object and a wide range of cognitions about it. Attitudes reflect past experience, shape ongoing behaviour and serve essential functions for those who hold them.

1.4.5 **Perception**

Sekular and Blake (1990:8) define perception as each individual's personal theory of reality, a kind of knowledge gathering process that defines one's view of the world. Mader and Mader (1990:36) view perception as the process by which one selects, organises and interprets external and internal

stimuli. The external stimuli are the sensations that bombard a person almost constantly, that come to him through sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste (Sekular & Blake, 1990:19). 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 that involves the organising and interpreting of information received through the senses.

Vrey (1990:19) defines perception as a unitary process in which sensation and therefore sensing and finding meaning occur simultaneously.

1.4.6 **Inclusive education**

Inclusive education is defined as the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals by reconsidering and restructuring its curricular organisation and by providing and allocating resources to enhance equality of opportunity (Alizan & Jelas, 2000:52). Through this process the school builds its capacity to accept all learners from the local community who wish to attend and in so doing reduces the need to exclude learners (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996:6).

According to Engelbrecht (1999:19-20) inclusive education can be defined as a system of education that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners. A mere definition will not suffice in conveying the actual meaning of the concept for everyday teaching and learning.

The National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the DNE report on the National Commission on Education Support Services (NCESS) provide sufficient clarity in this regard (DNE, 1997a:55). The separate system, which presently exists as "special" and "ordinary", needs to be integrated to provide one system, which is able to recognise and respond to the diverse needs of the learner population. Within

this integrated system a range of options for education provision and support services should be provided. According to Brodin (1997:31) learners should have the ability to move from one learning context to another, for example from early childhood education (ECE) to general education and training (GET), from a specialised centre of learning to an ordinary centre of learning, or from a formal to a non-formal programme. The system of education should be structured in such a way that irrespective of the learning content, opportunities to facilitating integration and inclusion of the learner in all aspects of life should be provided (Lloyd, 2000:141).

1.4.7 Learners with special education needs (LSEN)

Various terms are used to describe learners who are experiencing learning problems in schools. Presently the common term is "learners with special educational needs" (LSEN). This term is used in recent educational documents such as the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI, 1992:130), the "Policy Framework for Education and Training" of the African National Congress (ANC, 1994:104), the Draft White Paper on Education and Training (DNE, 1994:16)m the Consultative Paper on Special Education (DoE, 1995:6) and the "Report of the International Commission on open learning in South Africa" of the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE, 1994:64). The ANC document (1994:104) defines the concept as follows: "Special educational needs include special academic and learning problems, physical health problems, emotional concerns and particular social needs".

According to the Report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Commission on Education Support Services (NCESS) learners whose education requires additional planning and modification in order to assist them to learn, are described as learners who are experiencing barriers to learning (DNE, 1994:16).

Donald (1992:8) indicates that the concept LSEN is a comprehensive one that refers to a wide spectrum of learners ranging from those who suffer from

severe and multiple physical disabilities that would normally be taught in a special school, to those with mild or hardly discernible problems who can be found in mainstream education but who require additional educational assistance.

According to Goodman (1992:27) it has become the current practice worldwide to keep LSEN within mainstream education as far as possible and to deal with their problems in the context of the classroom. Gable, McLaughlin, Sinolar and Kilgore (1993:9) are of the opinion that LSEN around the world will increasingly have to be accommodated in regular classes. Moreover, South African educators will have to take account of the differences between learners in language, culture, and environment and experience (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 1993:19).

1.4.8 **Learning impaired**

According to Naude and Bodie (1990:48) learning disability means that the learner has a problem in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. The term learning disability includes handicaps of perception, brain injury, dyslexia and development aphasia. It excludes learning difficulties that are due primarily to visual, auditory or motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbances or environmental disadvantages.

The Association of Children with Learning Impairments define learning disability as a chronic condition of presumed neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration and/or demonstration of verbal and/or non-verbal abilities (Lerner, 1993:9). Specific learning disabilities exist as a distinct handicapping condition and vary in the manifestations and in degree of severity. Throughout life, the conditions can affect self-esteem, education, socialisation and/or daily living activities.

Different definitions serve different purposes, including identification, assessment, institutions and research. Different people depending on the context in which it is used could therefore interpret learning disability differently. It should therefore be acknowledged that the various attributes of learning impaired cannot be forced into a single encompassing definition.

1.4.9 **Physically impaired**

Physical disability may be defined as a physical health problem that requires intensive medical attention or hospitalisation (Prinsloo, 2001:344). This term includes many different kinds of physical disabilities and illness, for example children who are born with multiple physical defects, children who lose their limbs because of accidents, children with visual and auditory disabilities, children with chronic illness such as leukaemia, AIDS, etc (Ainscow, 1992:11). These learners have medical problems of a physical nature. They require medical services such as hospitalisation and possibly surgery. Many physical disabled learners are normally within the average ability range; some are very able while others have quite severe learning difficulties.

According to Saleh (1996:17) physical disabilities may be described by terms such as physical handicaps, orthopaedic disabilities and handicaps, neurological impairments, chronic illness, disabling illness and chronic physical disorders. These disabilities cannot be easily and completely cured, are long-standing and therefore place severe demands on the learner's abilities to lead a normal life.

Bender (1993:34) states that there are many forms of physical disability, which are classified as handicaps. Children with a loss of limbs causing them to be bed-bound, or who suffer from profound deafness, blindness, spasticism, spina bifida, polio, cerebral palsy and other disabling malfunctions generally need to attend special schools which can cater medically as well as provide educational services. However, there are also those children with physical disability who are able to attend ordinary school, but these cases are rare.

In planning educational programmes for physically disabled learners, the development of motor skills is an area to which much attention must be paid. Optimum growth must be promoted through an organised series of activities based on normal development. Consultation with an occupational or physical therapist is necessary (Siegel, 1992:49).

1.5 AIMS OF THIS STUDY

The aims of this study stems from the statement of the problem and can be formulated as follows:

➢ To study and report on relevant existing literature pertaining to challenges forced by educators in the effective implementation of inclusive education in the mainstream classroom.

➢ To undertake an empirical investigation into the challenges forced by educators in the implementation of inclusive education in the mainstream classroom by means of a self-structured questionnaire.

➢ In the light of the findings obtained from the literature and empirical study, to formulate certain recommendations, which could serve as guidelines for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH

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

➢ An overview of available, relevant literature in order to base this study on accountable theoretical grounds.

➢ An empirical survey comprising a self-structured questionnaire to be completed by educators in mainstream schools.

> ➤ An analysis of the responses from educators will be in the form of a response to one of three possible response categories (Agree, Disagree, and Uncertain).

1.7 FURTHER COURSE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 2 will be a literature review of the challenges facing educators in the successful implementation of inclusive education.

The methodology of the empirical research utilised in this study will be explained in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 4 the data obtained from the empirical research will be presented and analysed.

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

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the challenge of understanding the ways in which schools as teaching and learning environments either support or hinder the inclusion of all learners. This implicates the challenges faced by educators in ordinary classrooms to accommodate diversity and address special educational needs. This is in the context of a commitment to integrating learners (e.g. LSEN) who have been excluded from "ordinary" schools and fostering inclusion of all learners within schools, with an emphasis on accommodating the diverse needs of the learner population (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:46).

As more learners with special educational needs (LSEN) are accommodated in ordinary classrooms, teaching is likely to become more demanding. Coates (1989:533) points out that inclusive education constitutes a challenge to the education system as a whole and in particular to educators in mainstream classrooms. It requires educators to be flexible in their thinking and innovative and creative in their approaches to teaching and learning. According to Mercer and Mercer (1993:34) educators are expected to have the knowledge and skills to accommodate a range of diversity among learners in the inclusive classroom. This means to be able to use judgement in selecting appropriate teaching strategies from their professional repertoire.

2.2 EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.2.1 The concept experience

According to Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:383) the term experience is derived from the German verb *erfahren*, which means the acquisition of knowledge, getting to know, becoming aware of something. Du Toit and Kruger (1993:19) say experience is related to the emotional or

affective dimension of being human and indicates an evaluation of a fluid situation in broad categories of pleasant and unpleasant. Vrey (1990:42) maintains that experience influences involvement in every significant action as well as the quality of the relationship thus formed. The experience of a situation results in the integration of the specific experience and the meaning that has been attributed to it, giving the meaning an individual-personal dimension.

Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:83) see the following as essential components of experience:

➢ Experience determines the quality of relationships.

➢ Experience is emotional and is evaluated in terms of varying degrees of pleasantness and unpleasantness.

➢ The intensity of experiences determines the clarity and stability of the meaning assigned by a person.

➢ Experience inhibits or incites a person's involvement in every attribution of meaning.

➢ Experience is a meaningful event, involving the total person, who experiences certain feelings and also knows that he experiences them.

The educators' experiences of inclusive education in this study will have a denotative and connotative character, which makes an experience unique to the one who experiences. References will be made to experiences that are positive (pleasant) or negative (unpleasant) in the educators' relationship with learners with special educational needs (LSEN).

2.2.2 Evaluation of experiences of inclusive education

In research done internationally by Sebba and Ainscow (1996:5-9) it was reported that generally educators have negative experiences of inclusive education. In a similar investigation in South Africa by Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:200) they concluded that the educators in their research sample seem to harbour misconceptions about the South African policy on inclusive education and that their attitudes towards the policy were negative. However, in research done by Davies and Green (1998:97) it was found that the educators in their group reported positive experiences of mainstreaming learners with mild to moderate levels of special education needs. Although this finding was based on a relatively small sample of primary school educators, it suggests that there are some educators with positive experiences with regard to inclusive education in South Africa.

Goodman (1992:23) maintain that educators with negative experiences of inclusive education will also have negative feelings towards the learner with special educational needs in the mainstream classroom. Educators who hold strong negative feelings about inclusion could reject LSEN (Thomson, 1998:102). According to Baker and Gottlieb (1980:6) the experience of educators are expected to influence the extent to which LSEN become not only physically integral members in the ordinary classroom, but also become integral mentors of the class and as such benefit academically, socially and emotionally. Negative experiences of inclusive education would necessarily hamper the effective integration process and defeat the purpose of inclusions.

According to Sleeter (1995:124) educators experience negative feelings towards inclusion because of, *inter alia*, the following:

➢ Educators trained for mainstream education do not have the necessary knowledge and skills to accommodate LSEN in their class.

➢ Educators have limited expectations about the capacity or propensity for learning of LSEN and have doubts that their progress as compared to that of "normal" learners.

➢ LSEN need more effort, time and individual attention which is not always possible because of the large number of learners in class.

➢ The lack of effective formal support systems to assist educators in meeting the challenges presented by LSEN.

2.3 EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION

Dada and Alant (2002:213) state that the single most important element for successful inclusion is the attitude of educators as well as educator and administration support. In the past decades much has been written about the negative attitudes of educators towards children with special needs as well as the influence that training and exposure to these children has on attitudes (Wilson & Silverman, 1991:201). In a summary of 28 surveys of educators' attitudes towards inclusion Mastropieri and Scruggs (2000:27) reported little change in attitudes in the past ten years. Generally educators in mainstream schools are in favour of some degree of inclusion while their counterparts with a background in special education are being more positive. They were less positive, however, about inclusion of learners with severe impairments (disabilities).

In a study conducted by Siegel (1992:19) it was found that positive attitudes correlated with educators' success with LSEN. Attitudes towards inclusion may be closely tied to educators' feelings of competency and effectiveness in educating LSEN. According to Siegel (1992:19) educators who hold negative attitudes would reject learners with special educational needs in mainstream classrooms.

In research done by Engelbrecht and Forlin (1998:2) of regular educators who responded negatively to inclusion, it was found that networking is necessary in shaping positive attitudes towards LSEN.

Dada and Alant (2002:22) conducted an investigation into educators' attitudes towards LSEN using assistive devices in special schools in the Northern

Province. The results of the study indicated that educators at the three special schools were generally positive towards assistive devices.

Bouwer and Du Toit (2000:247) in their research found that educators' attitudes towards impairments (disabilities) were negative. According to these researchers educators' attitudes towards impairments (disabilities) have to be changed to handle LSEN effectively. The researchers state that the intermediary phase educators often feel helpless when their special needs learners fail to perform adequately. This situation of helplessness results in the educators' development of negative attitudes towards impairments (disabilities).

The findings of a research project done by Sethosa (2001:67) showed that educators should display positive attitudes with regard to learners with learning impairments (disabilities). Sethosa (2001: 67) claims that educators' attitudes towards impairments (disabilities) should be positive to the extent that they believe in their abilities to assist LSEN.

Shavelson (1983:215) states that educators' attitudes are vital because their behaviour is guided by their thoughts, judgement and decisions. He maintains that educators' negative attitudes towards impairments (disabilities) may serve as barriers to effective interaction with these learners.

According to Baker (1993:216) educators in the inclusive classroom setting have less positive attitudes in working with learners with learning impairments (disabilities). Schechtman and Or (1996:137) claim that in order to ensure positive teaching outcomes in an inclusive classroom, educators have to develop, positive attitudes towards learners with impairments (disabilities). According to Schechtman and Or (1996:137) the emotional aspects that underlie educators' attitudes about inclusion are ignored by the policy makers.

The following strategies serve to promote a positive attitude and thereby ensure educators' preparedness for inclusive education (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000:43).

➤ The educator serves as a model of how to interact with the learner who has a disability.

➤ Treat the learner with the dignity and respect that all learners are entitled to.

➤ Speak to the learner directly, never around the learner in his presence.

➤ When speaking about learners with disabilities, make reference to the learner first, and then the disability, only if it is necessary to mention the disability t all.

➤ Use words with dignity.

➤ Draw attention to the learner's achievements and strengths.

➤ Avoid a congregation of learners with disabilities in the class or in school.

➤ Teach about differences as part of the regular curriculum.

➤ When teaching about disabilities, speak about it matter-of-factly. Use proper terminology. If possible, invite experts into the classroom to speak, like parents of learners with disabilities who are also experts.

➤ Ensure as far as possible that expectations and routines are the same for all learners.

➤ Where individualisation is necessary, attempt to have it occur when other learners are receiving individual instruction.

➤ Structure social interaction in the classroom through planned activities.

➤ Promote social interaction outside the classroom.

➢ Integrate everyone: the special education educator and any support staff who may be in the classroom should work with all learners, not just the learners with the disability.

➢ Ensure frequent communication between the school and the home.

➢ Do things with, rather than for, the learner when he needs assistance.

➢ Foster and encourage independence.

➢ Encourage peers rather than an adult to assist the learner.

➢ Where necessary, have an affirmative behaviour plan in place.

➢ Be committed to integration and inclusive practices.

2.4 EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In research done internationally by Moores (1997:116) and Lipsky and Gartner (1997:783) it was reported that educators in mainstream schools that have not been trained to teach LSEN were found to have negative perceptions towards LSEN.

Lack of knowledge of LSEN in mainstream classrooms affects the educators' perceptions towards inclusion (Davies & Green, 1998:97). According to Coates (1989:534) educators with little experience of LSEN are likely to have negative perceptions of inclusion.

In a study done by Dada and Alant (2002:217) on educators' perceptions of the use of the communication board (assistive device) in an inclusive class in the Northern Province it was found that educators' perceptions were totally negative towards the use of the communication board.

It is interesting to note that in many instances the "working knowledge" derived from educators' perceptions, values and goals has not been taken into account in determining implementation of inclusive education (Bender,

Vail and Scott, 1995:87-93). Several international studies indicate that to some educators, inclusion and LSEN carry negative perceptions. These include feelings that there are insufficient resources, e.g. learning support materials that policies are confused and that inclusion has been imposed from the top (Giangreco, 1997:193-206).

In the research study to investigate educators' perceptions in an inclusive classroom conducted by Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001:258-259) it was found that educators have negative perceptions towards LSEN. The following reasons were cited for educators' negative perceptions:

➢ LSEN demand more time.
➢ LSEN have limited speech and poor communication.
➢ LSEN have short attention span.
➢ They display inappropriate social behaviour.

These researchers maintain that the safety of LSEN is quite stressful for educators to manage. The educators complained, saying that support from the education department is non-existent. Educators' perceptions of potential stressors in the work environment and the role of coping skills are major sources of negative perceptions towards the successful implementation of inclusive education in mainstream classrooms (Cecil & Forman, 1990:256; Male & May, 1997:256).

Negative perceptions of educators towards LSEN in mainstream classrooms entail many barriers. According to Sethosa (2001:347) educators perceive LSEN negatively because:

➢ It is difficult to identify LSEN.

➢ LSEN passes through the same hierarchy of stages of development but at a lower rate than the average child.

➢ LSEN falls behind the average learners in academic achievement.

Sethosa (2001:347) claims that educators have little knowledge and fewer skills to handle LSEN in mainstream classrooms.

Baker (1993:216) says that educators in the educationally inclusive setting have negative perceptions towards LSEN due to having less special training in working with learners with impairments (disabilities) as well as having no exposure to assistive devices.

2.5 TRAINING

Vrey (1990:208) emphasises the fact that an educator must have knowledge about a learner before authentic education is possible. It stands to reason that an LSEN is not educated in the same way as an ordinary or normal learner. Verhoef (2005:67) believes that once the educator knows the special needs of a learner he will no longer see, for instance, skimped homework or poor concentration as simply laziness but as problems related to special needs. It thus requires personal knowledge of the special needs learner by the educator in order for the education to be successful.

In an investigation on educator preparedness for integrated classrooms conducted jointly by Vista University and the Free State Department of Education, Hay and Paulsen (2001:213-218) indicated that 9,5% of educators had little knowledge about teaching LSEN. The following findings from the above research are:

➢ Educators do not have sufficient training to deal with LSEN.

➢ LSEN need special attention in class.

➢ More time is needed for LSEN in an integrated classroom.

➢ Lack of facilities for LSEN, for example physical structure of classrooms, suitable toilets that also accommodate LSEN, etc.

➢ Educators lack knowledge of using assistive devices.

Weeks (2000:23) claims that educators need to have knowledge about teaching in inclusive classrooms in order to enable them to understand the diverse needs of LSEN, to identify their needs and to be able to give support in order for them to learn and develop optimally. This knowledge can only be gained by training educators in special education.

Formal training is necessary to secure professional development in a systematic way. Such training must draw on a wide range of practices but must also set the lessons of experience into theoretical and other contexts (Hegarty, 1987:124). The classroom is not only the arena where training is translated into practical action but also provide a valuable experience of learning in its own right. Educators need to have experience concerned with improving ordinary school provision for LSEN (Hegarty, 1994:124).

In an investigation on stress and coping skills of educators with a learner with Down's syndrome in an inclusive classroom conducted by Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001:256-259), it was apparent from the findings that despite an increase in the number of LSEN included into mainstream classes in South Africa, educators' experience of inclusive education is very limited. These researchers emphasise that the lack of effective in-service or pre-service training regarding the implementation of inclusion and special needs reinforces the high level of stress associated with adapting the curriculum to meet the LSEN.

The separate general and special education programmes in educator education have not provided the necessary experience to develop skills and dispositions to handle LSEN (Engelbrecht & Forlin, 1998:259).

Skills and competencies refer to the abilities, knowledge, expertise or technique a person has. Educators need to be trained with the necessary skills in order to make inclusive education successful. According to Downing (2002:11), the skills required for inclusive education are different. They involve being able to identify and assess LSEN, being able to adapt curricular content, teaching methods and assessment methods to assist LSEN and working in collaboration with colleagues, parents and the broader community.

According to Goddard (1995:260) the educator should be able to:

➢ Identify and assess the learner with learning and behavioural problems in his class by using informal diagnostic procedures.

➢ Implement screening tests such as reading and mathematical tests himself or in cooperation with the remedial educator or school psychologist.

➢ Adapt curricular content and teaching methods to assess LSEN.

➢ Collect relevant information in connection with the learner's problems by means of informal media such as observation, home visiting, etc.

➢ Record and then discuss the information concerning the learner objectively and scientifically with others (school principal, remedial educator, didactic assistance team or parents).

➢ Formulate the objectives of the aid, based on the findings, either on his own or in cooperation with others.

➢ Apply basic aid techniques on his own and evaluate the progress thereof.

➢ Work in collaboration with colleagues, parents and the broader community.

Hyam (2004:36) refers to the Government Gazette that outlines further roles and competencies of the educator to ensure preparedness for inclusive education:

Learning mediator: the educator will mediate learning that is sensitive to the diverse interests of all learners, including those with barriers to learning. This implies the planning of learning activities that are: relevant and meaningful to the learners, appropriate to their development levels and contexts, and based on sound knowledge of subject content.

Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials: the educator will understand and interpret learning programmes; design original learning programmes; identify and select relevant and meaningful resource material; adapt material to the needs of the learners; value the many skills the learners bring to the classroom.

Leader, administrator and manager: the educator will manage learning and make decisions and expectations according to the level of learners; carry out classroom administration efficiently; participate in decision-making; support learners and colleagues and respond to changing circumstances and needs; be responsible for teaching every learner in the class; see every learner as providing an opportunity to become a better educator.

Scholar, researcher and lifelong learner: the educator will keep informed of changes in the educational and other relevant fields through reflective study and research; have the ability to problem solve.

Community, citizenship and pastoral role: the educator will develop a sense of responsibility towards others; uphold the constitution and promote the values and practice of democracy; empower learners through providing a supportive environment; respond to the educational needs of the learners; respond to the other needs of the learners and colleagues.

Assessor: the educator will understand that assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process; understand the purposes, methods, and procedures of area / subject / phase of expertise; know about different teaching methods and use them according to the needs of the learners in the class, have an understanding and knowledge of his area of expertise.

It can be seen that the role of the educator is an inclusive classroom is multidimensional. It is challenging and complex because it encompasses all aspects of teaching and learning. The educator is the social and emotional centre of the classroom.

According to Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick and Scheer (1999:153) training in special education provides educators with the opportunity to increase their positive self-concept regarding LSEN. Through special training agendas, educators can team up to create an inclusive learning environment.

As mainstreaming and integration have become a universal agenda for school reform, most of the research on educators' special training towards inclusion reflects international tendencies. Mainstream educators are of the opinion that they do not possess special training, skills and time to ensure quality education for LSEN. This has also been the conclusion of studies conducted among educators in South African primary schools that have adopted the philosophy of inclusion since the promulgation of the New Constitution of 1996 (Harris, 1998:33; Wessels, 1997:110).

2.6   SUPPORT SYSTEMS

A research study to identify stressors for education in an inclusive classroom conducted in Gauteng and Western Province by Engelbrecht, Swart and Eloff (2001:258), indicated that despite an increase in the number of LSEN into mainstream classes in South Africa, educator support systems are very limited. According to the researchers this is caused by the lack of professional competency. The separate general and special education programmes in educator education have not exposed educators to the support systems needed to enable them to develop the necessary skills to handle LSEN (Engelbrecht & Forlin, 1998:259). Educators' confidence in their own ability to work with LSEN can begin to be addressed by the available support systems (Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick & Scheer, 1999:259).

Support systems are important elements in the process of preparing educators to facilitate effective interaction in an inclusive classroom (Dalton & Bedrosian, 1989:215; Mendes & Rato, 1996:215). Literature indicates that the manner in which a LSEN is integrated into the mainstream classroom is dependent on the type of preparation educators receive from the support system prior to implementation (Carney & Dix, 1992:216). Mendes and Rato (1996:216) maintain that support systems result in educators changing their

interaction patterns as well as negative attitudes towards learners with disabilities (impairments).

A review of the literature on educator stress (Forlin, 1998:259) highlights a lack of support systems while Mastropieri (1996:259) says that a lack of professional support systems to prepare educators to implement new practices in order to meet the needs of LSEN is a particular source of stress and therefore results in ineffective implementation of inclusive education.

A study on educator preparedness for integrated classrooms conducted by Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:214) in Gauteng Province, concluded that only 25% of the educators indicated that they received support from the services. The researchers further state that educators find it difficult to directly intervene with the source of the stress in a way that minimises the stressful situation in an inclusive classroom.

Bronwell (1997:259) says that expecting educators to manage their stress effectively in an unsupportive environment where clear role expectations do not exist causes a barrier towards effective implementation of inclusive education.

2.6.1 **School-based support team**

A school-based support team is an "internal" support team, which is coordinated by a member of staff, preferably someone who has received training in either life skills education, counselling or learning support (remedial). The team is conceptualised as comprising mainly educators in the school itself and, where possible and appropriate parents and learners (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:54).

According to Forman (1996:77) it is imperative that school-based support teams become an integral part of the educational system. The team's focus should be prevention, rehabilitation, social integration and equalisation of opportunities. The school-based support team is not there to remove the "problem" learner from the classroom but acts as a support system to

empower and prepare the educator to succeed within the bounds of the classroom. The purpose of this team is to support educators who are experiencing problems and are not adequately prepared to cope with LSEN in the mainstream class.

Key functions that relate to this include (DNE, 2002:117):

Various forms of classroom-based support, such as:

➤ Identifying LSEN and coordinating the curriculum.

➤ Collectively identifying educators' needs and in particular, barriers to learning at learner, educator, curriculum and institutional-levels.

➤ Collectively developing strategies to address these needs and barriers to learning. This should include a major focus on educator development and preparedness to deal with LSEN.

➤ Drawing in resources needed from within and outside the school to address these challenges.

➤ Direct learning support to LSEN; keep confidential notes about cases to enable follow-up work to be carried out in an efficient way.

➤ Training and ongoing support to educators to respond to LSEN.

Once the team is established the team members themselves need ongoing support and professional development enables them to support the educators in their schools. Educators involved in meetings need to have some time release from other responsibilities. The principles and practical aspects of the school-based support team need the full support of the staff and principal (Campher, 2003:74).

2.6.2 **Support from district level**

Support from district level can enhance educators' preparedness for inclusive education (Czapo, 1993:203). When there is a need for more specialist advice and intervention, the district support team (support professionals), who consist of a core of education support personnel, will be capable of offering support and advice. These teams can consist of school psychologists, special educators, guidance counsellors, speech and language specialists, occupational therapists and even doctors and nurses (Walter-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin & Williams, 2000:81).

In the past the role of the district support teams / support professionals was curative, fragmented and problem orientated. It has changed to being preventative, health promotive and developmental. There are several consultation approaches (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001:25; Walter-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin & Williams, 2000:81; Campher, 2003:61):

➢ Behavioural consultation as an efficient means of implementing behavioural intervention.

➢ Clinical consultation for identifying and assessing learner problems and describing specific strategies for resolution.

➢ Organisational consultation and facilitating within a whole school approach, assessing the entire system and assisting educators to resolve identified concerns.

➢ Mental health approach, which ensures the development of "health promoting schools". It includes accountability, legal and ethical practices and collaborative and consultative skills.

The main focus of the district-support team would be to ensure preparedness of educators, with a particular focus on curriculum and institutional

development, and to ensure that the teaching and learning framework and environment is responsive to the full range of learning needs.

Forms of support can include the following (DNE, 2002:89):

➢ Training and ongoing support of educators to respond to LSEN.

➢ Curriculum development to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are responsive to different needs.

➢ Provision of teaching and learning materials and equipment to facilitate learning for all learners.

➢ Organisational support, such as:

- Staff development for educators.

- Organisational development support for schools, for example, policy formulation and implementation.

2.6.3 **Support from special school educators**

According to Botha, Gravett and Swart (2000:203) services of existing structures through collaboration and teamwork must be addressed. Support and collaboration between ordinary school and special school educators can play a significant role in providing quality inclusive education in South Africa. Special school educators are encouraged to share knowledge with ordinary school educators who may otherwise not have access to this knowledge. Despite existing individual skills and knowledge of both ordinary and special educators and personnel, they do not have the necessary collaborative skill to share their expertise effectively. The historic division between ordinary and special schools hamper effective collaboration (Booyse, 1995:42).

Consultation and collaboration functions fall into the domain of communication and collaboration planning and include exchanging learners' progress information, sharing diagnostic information and sharing responsibility for

grading, participating in collaborative long and short-term educational planning and meeting with parents (Dettner, Thurston & Dyck, 1993:21; Idol & West, 1987:485). A common base of learner-related information for educators, who are jointly responsible for learners experiencing barriers to learning, provides a platform for other collaboration roles, such as problem-solving (Jenkins & Sileo, 1994:123).

Through the process of problem-solving, ordinary and special school educators use their collective expertise in an equal status relationship. This partnership allows for the proposal of alternative teaching strategies or supplementary instructional material by special school educators in consultation with the ordinary school educator. Collaborative problem – solving may also entail the periodic observation of learners who are experiencing barriers to learning in ordinary classes, in order to identify areas of difficulty or monitor the success of intervention strategies (Downing, 2002:63).

The collaborative teamwork approach will also include aspects of training and support in consultation with various role-players (Walter-Thomas *et al.*, 2000:120). Special schools should be available for training and support of educators, psychologists and other support personnel. Training should include visits to special schools, a rotation of personnel or an exchange scheme, possible internship and practical experiences, lectures, notes and information, participation in multi-disciplinary teams and research opportunities. Information could be made available on the internet or by having a telephone "help line" available for questions.

The collaborative roles of special and ordinary school educators include actively planning for skills transfer across settings, team teaching, directing small group instruction in ordinary schools, special education settings and training peer tutors (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997:138; Friend & Cook, 1996:239; Phillips & McCulloch, 1990:301). A network between schools could assist in accumulating valuable knowledge and expertise as well as providing support.

As more learners who are experiencing barriers to learning are accommodated in mainstream classrooms, educators have to find ways of providing efficient learning and support. Special school educators can support mainstream educators by providing a continuum of services (Hall, Campher, Smit, Oswald & Engelbrecht, 1999:165).

➢ Early identification of barriers to learning and development as well as learning support programmes.

➢ Study methods, life-skills, social skills and behaviour modification programmes are other valuable skills and strategies that need to be shared to improve learners' self-esteem.

➢ Assessment of academic progress of both learners at risk and ordinary school learners.

➢ Planning and coordination for specialised education where applicable.

➢ Support for ordinary school educators in the development of the curriculum to ensure that the diverse needs of the learners in the ordinary schools are addressed.

➢ In-service training for professionals, para-professionals, etc.

➢ Guidance and counselling for parents and care-givers.

➢ Assessment of barriers to learning.

➢ Specialised support, i.e. therapists and psychologists.

2.7 SUMMARY

Inclusive education constitutes a challenge to the education system in South Africa, in particular to mainstream educators. Inclusive education requires educators to have a positive attitude, to be flexible and critical, and be

creative, and innovative in their approach to teaching and learning. Educators are expected to have the necessary knowledge, skills, competencies and support to accommodate LSEN. This means that they must be able to select appropriate teaching strategies to achieve specific outcomes. It is extremely difficult for educators to manage these challenges if efficient support systems and appropriate resources do not exist.

In the next chapter the methods followed in the empirical research will be explained.

CHAPTER 3: PLANNING OF THE RESEARCH

CHAPTER 3

PLANNING OF THE RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter the conceptual and theoretical issues relating to the implementation of inclusive education were discussed. It is the aim of the researcher to establish further in quantifiable terms what are the challenges facing educators in the effective implementation of inclusive education.

This chapter will focus on the planning of the empirical research in discussing the questionnaire as research instrument and the processing of data.

3.2 PREPARATION FOR THE RESEARCH

3.2.1 <u>Permission</u>

With the aim of administering the questionnaire to primary school educators it was required to first request permission from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and Culture (KZNDEC). A letter to ask the necessary permission was drafted (Appendix 'B') and directed to the Pietermaritzburg Director (EMIES), being in the area where the research sample would be selected from. A copy of the questionnaire (Appendix 'A') was sent with the letter requesting the approval of the department. After permission was granted by the Superintendent General for the intended research to be undertaken (Appendix 'C') the researcher visited the principals of the randomly selected primary schools with the letter of approval in order to ask their permission to administer the questionnaire to the educators of the school.

3.2.2 <u>Selection of respondents</u>

Schools were selected from the list of primary schools in the Pietermaritzburg District. The district comprises predominantly semi-urban and rural areas. The target population was defined by the following considerations:

- ➤ Type of school : Primary school.
- ➤ Geographical area : Pietermaritzburg circuit.
- ➤ Population : All educators.
- ➤ Age of educators : 20-60 years and above.
- ➤ Gender : Male and female.
- ➤ Years of teaching : More than one year.

This provided the researcher with a randomly selected sample of 20 schools in accordance with the defined population. From each of the 20 schools eight educators were randomly selected by means of the lottery method in order to produce statistically reliable results. This provided the researcher with a sample of 160 educators as respondents, which can be considered an adequate sample for reliable data analysis by means of descriptive statistics. However, only 110 correctly completed questionnaires were received back from the respondents.

3.2.3 <u>Sampling</u>

According to De Vos (2001:191) a sample is the element of the population considered for actual inclusion in a study or it can be viewed as a subset of a population. A sample is a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons which comprise the subject of the study.

The major reason for sampling is feasibility (Huysamen, 1993:50). It is often impossible to involve all the members of a population in research because of time and money constraints. The use of samples may also result in more accurate information than might have been obtained if one had studied the

entire population. With a sample time, money and effort can be concentrated on the smaller group to produce better results (Schnetler, 1993:45).

Random sampling was employed in the selection of a sample for this study. In random sampling a sample of a population is drawn in such a way that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. The researcher used random interval sampling to select a sample of 20 schools from the list obtained from the department. The lottery method was used to randomly select eight educators from each of the 20 schools.

3.3 DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

3.3.1 Quantitative research

The purpose of research design is to provide the most valid and accurate answers possible to research questions. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:34) say that since there are many types of research questions and many types of designs, it is important to match the design with the questions.

Quantitative research methods collect data to be translated into a statistical format. The responses of respondents to the questions in a questionnaire are recorded in coded format, presented in frequency tables, graphs and/or chart formats, analysed and interpreted (De Vos, 2001:208). The simplest form of data analysis is univariate analysis, which means that one variable is analysed, mainly with the view to describing that variable (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:100). It can thus be stated that where information is required by a first time researcher, quantitative data collection and analysis seems to be the most suitable method. The researcher selected the quantitative approach because:

➤ it is more formalised;
➤ better controlled;
➤ has a range that is more exactly defined, and
➤ uses methods relatively close to the physical sciences.

3.3.2 **The questionnaire as research instrument**

Data is any kind of information researchers can identify and accumulate to facilitate answers to their questions. According to Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:504) a questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with some topic or related group of topics, given to a selected group of individuals for the purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:190) define the questionnaire as a prepared question form submitted to certain persons (respondents) with a view to obtaining information. Churchill and Peter (Schnetler, 1993:77) have shown that the measuring instrument has the greatest influence on the reliability of research data. The characteristics of measurement are best controlled by the careful construction of the instrument. There is, however, insufficient appreciation for the fact that a questionnaire should be constructed according to certain principles (De Vos, 2001:89).

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

According to Dane (1990:315-319) the length of individual questions, the number of response options, as well as the format and wording of questions are determined by the following:

➢ The choice of the subject to be researched.
➢ The aim of the research.
➢ The size of the research sample.

➤ The method of data collection.

➤ The analysis of the data.

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

3.3.3 **Construction of the questionnaire**

Questionnaire design is an activity that should not take place in isolation. The researcher should consult and seek advice from specialists and colleagues at all times during the construction of the questionnaire (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:198). Questions to be taken up in the questionnaire should be tested on people to eliminate possible errors. A question may appear correct to the researcher when written down but can be interpreted differently when asked to another person. There should be no hesitation in changing questions several times before the final formulation whilst keeping the original purpose in mind. The most important point to be taken into account in questionnaire design is that it takes time and effort and that the questionnaire will be re-drafted a number of times before being finalised. A researcher must therefore ensure that adequate time is budgeted for in the construction and preliminary testing of the questionnaire (Kidder & Judd, 1986:243-45). All of the above was taken into consideration by the researcher during the designing of the questionnaire for this investigation.

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

The aim of the questionnaire (Appendix 'A') was to obtain information regarding primary school educators' views on the barriers to the effective

implementation of inclusive education. The questions were formulated to establish the following:

➢ The requirements for the effective implementation of inclusive education.
➢ Educators' responsibilities in inclusive education.

The questionnaire was subdivided into the following sections:

➢ **Section one**, which dealt with the biographical information of the respondents, namely primary school educators, and consisted of questions 1 to 9.

Sections two and three of the questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions. The respondents were requested to indicate their responses to the statements pertaining to the implementation of inclusive education. The questions were grouped as follows:

➢ **Section two** contained questions on the requirements for the effective implementation of inclusive education.

➢ **Section three consisted** of questions relating to educators' responsibilities in inclusive education.

3.3.4 **Characteristics of a good questionnaire**

During the construction of the questionnaire the researcher had to consider the characteristics of a good questionnaire in order to meet the requirements necessary for the research instrument to be reliable. The characteristics of a good questionnaire that were considered by the researcher are, according to Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1988:190), Mahlangu (1987:84-85) and Norval (1990:60) the following:

➢ It has to deal with a significant topic, one the respondent will recognise as important enough to warrant spending his time on. The significance

should be clearly and carefully stated on the questionnaire and in the accompanying letter.

➤ It must be as short as possible, but long enough to get the essential data.

➤ Questionnaires should be attractive in appearance, neatly arranged and clearly duplicated or printed.

➤ Directions for a good questionnaire must be clear and complete and important terms clearly defined.

➤ Each question must deal with a single concept and should be worded as simply and straightforwardly as possible.

➤ Objectively formulated questions with no leading suggestions should render the desired responses.

➤ Questions should be presented in a proper psychological order, proceeding from general to more specific sensitive responses. An organised grouping of questions helps respondents to ignore their own thinking so that their answers are logical and objective. It is preferable to present questions that create a favourable attitude before proceeding to those that are more intimate or delicate in nature.

3.3.5 **Advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire**

(1)   Advantages of the written questionnaire

The written questionnaire as a research instrument, to obtain information, has the following advantages (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:110; Cohen & Manion, 1994:111):

➤ Affordability is the primary advantage of written questionnaires because it is the least expensive means of data gathering.

> It saves time. Data can be obtained from a large number of respondents simultaneously.

> Written questionnaires preclude possible interviewer bias. The way the interviewer asks questions and even the interviewer's general appearance or interaction may influence respondent's answers. Such biases can be completely eliminated with a written questionnaire.

> A questionnaire permits anonymity. If it is arranged such that responses were given anonymously, this would increase the researcher's chances of receiving responses which genuinely represent a person's beliefs, feelings, opinions or perceptions.

> They provide greater uniformity across measurement situations than do interviews. Each person responds to exactly the same questions because standard instructions are given to the respondents.

> The data provided by questionnaires can be more easily analysed and interpreted than the data obtained from verbal responses.

> A respondent may answer questions of a personal or embarrassing nature more willingly and frankly on a questionnaire than in a face-to-face situation with an interviewer who may be a complete stranger.

> Respondents can complete questionnaires in their own time and in a more relaxed atmosphere.

> The administering of questions and the coding, analysis and interpretation of data can be done without any special training.

(2)   Disadvantages of the written questionnaire

The researcher is also aware of the fact that the written questionnaire has important disadvantages. According to Van den Aardweg and Van den

Aardweg (1990:190) and Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:112) the disadvantages of the questionnaire are, *inter alia*, the following:

> It often happens that not all the questionnaires are returned (only 110 of the 160 questionnaires were returned, cf. 3.2.2).

> Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility of interviews. In an interview an idea or comment can be explored. This makes it possible to gauge how people are interpreting the question. If questions asked are interpreted differently by respondents the validity of the information obtained is jeopardised.

> People are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing.

> Questions can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straightforward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions.

> Answers to written questionnaires must be seen as final. Re-checking of responses cannot be done. There is no chance of investigating beyond the given answer for a clarification of ambiguous answers. If respondents are unwilling to answer certain questions nothing can be done about it because the mailed questionnaire is essentially inflexible.

> In a written questionnaire the respondent examines all the questions at the same time before answering them and the answers to the different questions can therefore not be treated as "independent".

> Researchers are unable to control the context of question answering, and specifically, the presence of other people. Respondents may ask friends or family members to examine the questionnaire or comment on their answers, causing bias if the respondent's own private opinions are desired.

➢ Written questionnaires do not allow the researcher to correct misunderstandings or answer questions that the respondents may have. Respondents might answer questions incorrectly or not at all due to confusion or misinterpretation.

3.3.6 **Validity and reliability of the questionnaire**

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

Kidder and Judd (1989:53-54) mention the fact that although reliability and validity are two different characteristics of measurement, they "shade into each other". They are two ends of a continuum but at points in the middle it is difficult to distinguish between them. Validity and reliability are especially important in educational research because most of the measurements attempted in this area are obtained indirectly. Researchers can never guarantee that an educational or psychological measuring instrument measures precisely and dependably what it is intended to measure (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1990:198). It is essential, therefore, to assess the validity and reliability of these instruments. Researchers must therefore have a general knowledge as to what validity and reliability are and how one goes about validating a research instrument and establishing its reliability.

(1)   Validity of the questionnaire

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

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

➢ Content validity, where content and cognitive processes included can be measured. Topics, skills and abilities should be prepared and items from each category randomly drawn.

➢ Criterium validity, which refers to the relationship between scores on a measuring instrument and an independent variable (criterion), believed to measure directly the behaviour or characteristic in question. The criterion should be relevant, reliable and free from bias and contamination.

➢ Construct validity, where the extent to which the best measures a specific trait or construct is concerned, for example, intelligence, reasoning, ability, attitudes, etc.

The validity of the questionnaire indicates how worthwhile a measure is likely to be in a given situation. Validity shows whether the instrument is reflecting the true story, or at least something approximating the truth. A valid research instrument is one that has demonstrated that it detects some "real" ability, attitude or prevailing situation that the researcher can identify and characterise (Schnetler, 1993:71). If the ability or attitude is itself stable, and if a respondent's answers to the items are not affected by other unpredictable

factors, then each administration of the instrument should yield essentially the same results (Dane, 1990:158).

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

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

(2)   Reliability of the questionnaire

According to Mulder (1989:209) and Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:512) reliability is a statistical concept and relates to consistency and dependability. Consistency refers to obtaining the same relative answer when measuring phenomena that have not changed. A reliable measuring instrument is one that, if repeated under similar conditions, would present the same result or a near approximation of the initial result. Van den Aardweg and Van den Aardweg (1990:194) and Kidder and Judd (1986:47-48) distinguish between the following types of reliability:

➢ Test-retest reliability (coefficient of stability) – consistency estimated by comparing two or more repeated administrations of the measuring instrument. This gives an indication of the dependability of the results on one occasion and on another occasion.

> ➤ Internal consistency reliability – this indicates how well the test items measure the same thing.

> ➤ Split-half reliability – by correlating the results obtained from two halves of the same measuring instrument, one can calculate the split-half reliability.

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

> ➤ Fluctuations in the mood or alertness of respondents because of illness, fatigue, recent good or bad experiences, or temporary differences amongst members of the group bring measured.

> ➤ Variations in the conditions of administration between groups. These range from various distractions, such as unusual outside noise to inconsistencies in the administration of the measuring instrument such as omissions in verbal instructions.

> ➤ Differences in scoring or interpretation of results, chance differences in what the observer notices and errors in computing scores.

> ➤ Random effects by respondents who guess or check-off attitude alternatives without trying to understand them.

When the questionnaire is used as an empirical research instrument there is no specific method, for example the "test-retest" method, to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Therefore, it will be difficult to establish to what extent the answers of the respondents were reliable. The researcher,

however, believes that the questionnaires in this investigation were completed with the necessary honesty and sincerity required to render the maximum possible reliability. Frankness in responding to questions was made possible by the anonymity of the questionnaire. In the coding of the questions it was evident that questionnaires were completed with the necessary dedication.

3.4 PILOT STUDY

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

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

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

➤ It provided the researcher with the opportunity of refining the wording, ordering and layout and it helps to prune the questionnaire to a manageable size.

➤ It permitted a thorough check of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, thus allowing an appraisal of their adequacy in treating the data.

➤ It greatly reduced the number of treatment errors because unforeseen problems revealed in the pilot study resulted in redesigning the main study.

➤ It saved the researcher major expenditures in time and money on aspects of the research which would have been unnecessary.

➤ Feedback from other persons involved were made possible and led to important improvements in the main study.

➤ The approximate time required to complete the questionnaire was established in the pilot study.

➤ Questions and/or instructions that were misinterpreted were reformulated.

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

3.5   ETHICAL MEASURES

The importance of ethical measures when conducting research is evident in the literature. The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the participants in research (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:102). The following ethical principles were taken into consideration by the researcher in this study (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:193):

➢ The respondents were informed of all aspects of the research that might influence their willingness to participate. The purpose of the research was articulated verbally and in writing to the participants.

➢ The respondents were informed in writing that the information obtained will be held confidential. Information will not be related to any respondents or school unless agreed through informed consent.

➢ Approval to conduct the research at selected schools was obtained from the relevant authorities before the questionnaires were administered to collect the research data.

➢ The participants were assured that they will remain anonymous.

In following the above the researcher respected the participants' confidentiality, privacy and anonymity in this research.

3.6   ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

If properly administered the questionnaire is the best available instrument for obtaining information from widespread sources or large groups simultaneously (Cooper, 1989:39). The researcher personally delivered questionnaires to the selected schools and collected them again after completion. This method of administration facilitated the process and the response rate. A satisfactorily return rate (68,75%) was obtained with 110 out of 160 questionnaires completed and collected.

3.7   THE PROCESSING OF THE DATA

Once data was collected, it had to be captured in a format which would permit analysis and interpretation. This involved the careful coding of the 110 questionnaires completed by the randomly selected primary school educators. The coded data was subsequently transferred onto a computer spreadsheet using the Excel programme. The captured data was summarised in frequency

tables using the same programme in order to analyse and interpret the results by means of descriptive statistics.

3.7.1 Descriptive statistics

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

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

➢ It indicates how many times a particular response appears on the completed questionnaires.

➢ It provides percentages that reflect the number of responses to a certain question in relation to the total number of responses.

➢ The arithmetic mean (average) can be calculated by adding all the scores and dividing it by the number of scores.

3.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATION

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

➢ Although anonymity was required in the questionnaire the possibility exists that, because of the primary school educators' cautiousness, they might not have been frank and truthful in their responses.

➢ The sensitive nature of items in the questionnaire might have elicited false or misleading responses and influenced the reliability of the results.

➢ The formulation of the questions in English, which is not the mother-tongue of most of the respondents, might have resulted in the misinterpretation of questions which could have elicited incorrect responses.

➢ To restrict the investigation to manageable proportions, the researcher limited the study to primary school educators of schools which are easily accessible.

➢ The number of completed questionnaires returned (68,75%) could have been higher to render more valid findings.

3.9   SUMMARY

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

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

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA

4.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, data which was obtained from one hundred and ten completed questionnaires will be analysed.   This data comprised biographical information, training in special education of the respondents, requirements for the effective implementation for inclusive education and the educators' responsibilities in the implementation of inclusive education.

4.2   DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The purpose of research is to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:42).   Descriptive research is one of the methods of research used to study a person or persons scientifically in the educational situation.   It attempts to describe the situation as it is, thus there is no intervention on the part of the researcher and therefore no control.   Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:355) state that descriptive studies do not set out with the idea of testing hypotheses and relationships, but want to find distribution of variables.   In this study nomothetic descriptive research was employed with the aim of describing the barriers for successful implementation of inclusive education.   The researcher was primarily concerned with the nature and degree of existing situations in schools.

4.2.1 Gender of respondents

Table 1: Frequency distribution according to the gender of the respondents

	Gender	Frequency	%
1	Male	18	16%
2	Female	92	84%
	Total	**110**	**100%**

Table 1 shows that most respondents (84%) in the research sample are females. The population that was targeted for the research may explain this finding. Ninety percent (90%) of the schools selected for the research sample are primary schools (cf. 4.2.8) that prefer the appointment of female educators. Research conducted by Brodin (1997:189) and Reay and Dennison (1990:42) have established that primary schools' preference for female educators may be explained by, *inter alia*, the following:

➢ A female educator represents a motherly figure and is more acceptable as an *in loco parentis* to younger children in primary schools.

➢ Female educators have more patience with, and show more empathy for younger learners and learners with special educational needs.

Statistics show that there are more females than males in the teaching profession (Perumal, 2006:83). Females may view teaching as an occupation that affords them time in the afternoons to attend to their household chores and spend time with their children, and assist them with their homework. Many females are not sole breadwinners and therefore may see teaching as a second or additional family income.

4.2.2 Age of respondents

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

	Age group	Frequency	%
1	20 – 25 years	0	0%
2	26 – 30 years	9	8%
3	31 – 35 years	23	21%
4	36 – 40 years	32	29%
5	41 – 45 years	25	23%
6	36 – 50 years	15	14%
7	51 – 55 years	6	5%
	Total	**110**	**100**

According to the frequency distribution in Table 2 the larger percentage of the respondents (29%) in the research sample is in the age group 36-40 years and close to sixty percent (58%) is younger than 40 years. The advantages of a large percentage of younger educators in schools are:

➢ They have more energy to spend that is often needed when teaching learners with special educational needs.

➢ They may have more years left in the teaching profession than an older educator and see it as worthwhile to improve their qualifications with possible inclusion of special education courses.

The finding that only 19% of the educators are older than 46 years may be contributed to rationalisation and redeployment, which sliced a path of destruction through schools, ridding them of their most valuable educators, demotivating others, affecting academic achievements and causing depression, anxiety and poor performance among educators (Garson,

1999:4). A heavy workload and low morale are also possible reasons for older educators to leave the profession.

The small percentage (8%) of educators younger than 20 years may be because (Sylvester, 1999:2):

➢ Young people do not consider teaching as a good career choice.

➢ Young educators seek better jobs with more security elsewhere.

➢ HIV/AIDS has resulted in the deaths of a significant number of young educators.

4.2.3 Qualifications of respondents

Table 3: Frequency distribution according to the qualifications of respondents

	Age group	Frequency	%
1	Degree and diploma and/or certificate	12	11%
2	Diplomas and/or certificates only	98	89%
	Total	**110**	**100**

From Table 3 it emerges that less than an eighth (11%) of the respondents in the research sample possess academic (degrees) and professional (diplomas) qualifications which is perceived by many to be the best qualification for educators.

The finding that the majority of respondents (89%) in the research sample have teaching diplomas and/or certificates may be because they are teaching in primary schools (cf. 4.2.8). The contents of teaching diplomas and certificates are more practical than theoretically orientated and thus more suitable for teaching younger learners in the primary school (Griessel, Louw &

Swart, 1993:71). Suitable qualifications together with experience are needed to meet the special needs of learners (LSEN) in a mainstream class. Inadequately qualified educators, who experience difficulties in teaching LSEN in the mainstream class, may develop a negative attitude towards inclusion. Van der Westhuizen (1995:95) says the poorly trained educators may experience difficulty to meet the demands made on them by the learners with special educational needs.

4.2.4 Years of service

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

	Completed years of service	Frequency	%
1	1- 5 years	13	12%
2	6 – 10 years	28	25%
3	11 – 15 years	21	19%
4	16 – 20 years	30	27%
5	21 – 25 years	10	9%
6	26 – 30 years	4	4%
7	More than thirty years	4	4%
	Total	**110**	**100**

Table 4 shows that the larger percentage (27%) of the respondents in the research sample have between 16 and 20 years' teaching experience while the majority (63%) have more than 10 years experience. Ainscow (1992:12) believes experience together with adequate training is needed for the responsibilities and the demands imposed on educators. Educators in an inclusive classroom may even have more responsibilities and demands imposed on them because of the learners with special educational needs they have to teach. Bergh (1996:120) maintains that the more experience and training an educator has, the more confidence he will have in teaching. With

4.2.6 **Type of post**

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

	Type of post	Frequency	%
1	Permanent	103	93%
2	Temporary	4	4%
3	Part-time	3	3%
	Total	**110**	**100**

The finding in Table 6 that more than ninety percent (93%) of the respondents are in permanent posts is probably because of the area selected for the research sample. All the selected schools are public schools in which the department of education employs educators on a permanent basis.

Being in a permanent teaching post has the following advantages for educators:

➢ More job security.

➢ They can join a medical aid benefit and retirement fund to which the employer contributes a percentage monthly.

➢ They are entitled to a housing subsidy which enables them to buy property.

4.2.7 **Employer**

Table 7: Frequency distribution according to employer of respondents

	Type of post	Frequency	%
1	Department of Education	110	100%
2	Governing Body	0	0%
	Total	**110**	**100**

Table 7 shows that all the respondents (100%) are employed by the department of education. The finding that none of the respondents in the research sample is employed by the governing body can be contributed to the following:

➢ The research was done in areas with low socio-economic status and according to Goddeen and Maurice (1999:3) parents living in these areas are too poor to supplement the financial resources of the school in order to create governing body posts for educators.

➢ The need does not exist at the schools in the research sample to employ educators to supplement the post provisioning norms at the schools.

4.2.8 **Type of school**

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

	School	Frequency	%
1	Primary school	100	90%
2	Secondary school	2	2%
3	Combined school (Primary and Secondary)	8	8%
	Total	**110**	**100**

According to findings in Table 8 the majority of the respondents (90%) are teaching in primary schools. This was an expected finding because mainly primary schools were selected for the random research sample.

4.2.9 **Training in special education**

Table 9:   Frequency distribution according to respondents having trained in special education

Training in special education		Frequency	%
1	Yes	42	38%
2	No	68	62%
	Total	110	100

Table 9 shows that the majority (62%) of the respondents that partook in the research indicated that they did not receive training in special education. In research done by Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2001:217) it was established that more training needs to be given to educators in mainstream classes to prepare them for inclusive education.

4.2.10 Requirements for the effective implementation of inclusive education

Table 10: Frequency distribution according to the requirements for the effective implementation for inclusive education

		Agree	Disagree	Uncertain	Total
The following are available at my school for inclusive education					
2.1	A record of all learners with special educational needs.	72 65%	24 22%	7 6%	110 100%
2.2	A school based support team to assist educators with LSEN.	77 70%	26 24%	7 6%	110 100%
2.3	A district support team to offer their services concerning LSEN.	66 60%	27 25%	17 15%	110 100%
2.4	In-service training opportunities for mainstream educators to cope with LSEN.	54 49%	40 36%	16 15%	110 100%
2.5	Sufficient funds to obtain special equipment for LSEN (e.g. hearing aids)	15 14%	80 72%	15 14%	110 100%
2.6	Opportunities for networking between special education and mainstream educators.	46 42%	37 33%	27 25%	110 100%
2.7	Access to an educational resource centre to obtain information on LSE.	30 27%	56 51%	24 22%	110 100%
2.8	A school governing body that actively supports inclusive education.	45 41%	45 41%	20 18%	110 100%
2.9	A management team that has the knowledge to implement inclusive education.	58 53%	36 33%	16 14%	110 100%
2.10	Special life-skills programmes for the integration of LSEN in the mainstream classroom.	35 32%	47 43%	28 25%	110 100%
2.11	Procedures to deal with harassment of LSEN.	46 42%	40 36%	24 22%	110 100%
2.12	A policy to eliminate discriminating attitudes towards LSEN.	57 52%	35 32%	18 16%	110 100%

Schools in South Africa are currently faced with enormous challenges with regard to their development. According to Engelbrecht, Naicker, Green and Engelbrecht (1999:67) the successful implementation of inclusive education is one part of the challenge. They point out that for the successful implementation of inclusive education there are certain requirements to be met. Some of these requirements were formulated as statements (Table 10)

to which respondents from the randomly selected sample (cf. 3.2.3) had to respond. The frequency distribution in Table 10 shows the responses to these statements.

A record for LSEN (2.1)

Most of the respondents (65%) in the research sample indicated that a record of all learners with special educational needs are available at their schools although more than twenty percent (22%) said no records of LSEN were available.

Records must be kept of LSEN for the following reasons (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:123; Verhoef, 2005:63):

➢ A record guides decision-making and assists in the mediating role providing directions for change, and adapting or formulating particular aspects of the curriculum which learners find difficult.

➢ Record keeping helps the educator to monitor progress of the learners in an inclusive classroom.

➢ Records provide authentic evidence for placement and grading of learners.

➢ The record provides an overview of the learner progress and/or barriers to learning and assists in meaningful interpretation of strengths and needs.

➢ Recording indicates ways in which learning might be enhanced for the class and particular LSEN.

A school-based support team (2.2)

Less than three quarters of the respondents (70%) agreed that a school based support team to assist educators with LSEN is available at their schools. Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000:319) state that an inclusive

education policy will place some of the responsibility for addressing the barriers to learning and development of LSEN on the shoulders of the school support team. A school support team comprises mainly educators in the school and should be coordinated by a staff member, preferably someone who has received additional training in for example, life-skills education, counselling or learning support (cf. 2.6.1). The functions of a school based support team will, *inter alia*, be to develop mainstream educators' competency in dealing with LSEN (Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht, 1999:54).

District support team (2.3)

The majority of respondents (60%) said that a district support team is available to offer their services concerning LSEN. The establishing and availability of a central-based district support team would ensure that support with regard to inclusive education is available to educators, LSEN and parents (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:325). Of concern, however, is the finding that a quarter (25%) of the respondents indicated that the services of a district support team are not available to their schools. These schools may have to cope without:

- ➤ specialist advice concerning LSEN offered by a district support team; and

- ➤ intervention methods and procedures.

The primary function of the district support team is to evaluate programmes, diagnose their effectiveness and suggest modification and to build capacity for the school (cf. 2.6.2).

In-service training (2.4)

Less than half (49%) of the respondents in the research sample said that in-service training opportunities for mainstream educators to cope with LSEN are available at their schools while more than a third (36%) said that in-service

training is not available. The latter finding is of concern because special training is needed for inclusive education (cf. 2.5). According to Nell (1996:39) successful inclusive education has major implications for the pre-service and in-service training of educators.

Sufficient funds (2.5)

The majority of respondents (72%) said that their school does not have sufficient funds to obtain special equipment for LSEN. According to Hall and Engelbrecht (1999:231) one of the main issues in the successful implementation of inclusive education seems to be the availability of financial resources. The majority of the schools lack financial support from the department of education. The department promised new conditional grants from the line budgets of provincial education departments and donor funds to constitute the main source of funding in the first eight years of the implementation of inclusive education (DNE, 2001:43).

Networking (2.6)

Less than half of the respondents (42%) indicated that opportunities for networking with educators of special schools exist. Networking is the key element for educators of sharing the responsibilities and demands of LSEN between special and mainstream educators. According to Dettner, Dyk and Thurston (1993:21) and Idol and West (1987:485) networking falls into the domain of communication. If networking is implemented effectively it may include, *inter alia*:

> ➤ exchanging learner progress;
> ➤ sharing diagnostic information;
> ➤ sharing responsibility for grading;
> ➤ participating in long and short-term educational planning, and
> ➤ meeting with parents.

A common base of learner related information for educators who are jointly responsible for LSEN provides a platform for networking between special and mainstream educators. Special schools have to operate as a resource centre in its circuit (DNE, 2001:21).

Educational resource centre (2.7)

Slightly more than a quarter (27%) of the respondents in the research sample indicated that access to an educational resource centre is available at their schools while fifty-one percent (51%) disagreed and twenty-two percent (22%) were uncertain. The finding means that seventy-three percent (73%) of the schools do not have access to an educational resource centre to obtain information on LSEN. This finding might be explained by the sample of schools elected for research and can be attributed to the following:

➢ Transport to educational resource centre is not available.

➢ Educational resource centres do not exist, which result in low morale and depression among educators.

➢ Educators are expected to use their pocket money for transport.

Supportive school governing body (2.8)

The formal link between schools, parents and the wider community is the school governing body that is required to take important decisions to ensure that schools run smoothly. Although no legal guidelines are provided concerning the role of school governing bodies on inclusive education it is important that a subcommittee clearly defines its role, and functions be established in supporting inclusion. The same percentage (41%) of the respondents was either in agreement or disagreement with the statement that their school has a governing body that actively supports inclusive education. The finding that more than forty percent (41%) of the respondents that

participated in the research responded negatively to this statement if of great concern for the effective implementation of inclusive education.

Knowledgeable management team (2.9)

According to Lazarus, Daniels and Engelbrecht (1999:60) the style and manner of the leadership and management practice of the school's management team (in particular the school principal) is a critical factor in ensuring that inclusive education is successfully implemented. Only fifty-three percent (53%) of the respondents in the research sample agreed that their school management team has sufficient knowledge about the implementation of inclusive education. This means that probably 47% of the respondents' school management teams do not provide a supportive framework for inclusive education. Literature on inclusive education acknowledges the key role played by educational managements in the effective implementation of inclusive education (Mercer & Mercer, 1998:34). A school management team that has the competencies to know how to accommodate LSEN in mainstream and address barriers to learning provide adequate support to education for inclusion.

Special life-skills programmes (2.10)

The larger percentage respondents (43%) that participated in the research said that there are no special life-skills programmes available in the schools for the integration of LSEN in mainstream classes. The successful integration of a LSEN in a mainstream class will also promote their integration in society and facilitate effective skills development. Davies and Green (1998:97) say that learners with special educational needs should be educated in the most normalised learning environment consistent with their needs.

Learning difficulties originate not only from within the learner but also from within the system. Hegarty (1994:126) points out that barriers to learning may be caused by the system that is unable to meet or adapt to the special needs of the specific learner. The latter implies that the school system fails to

adequately integrate the LSEN in the mainstream class. The education system must be flexible enough to accommodate the diverse needs of all learners as inclusively as possible (DNE, 1999:3).

Harassment procedures (2.11)

Less than half (42%) of the respondents in the research sample indicated that they have procedures to deal with harassment of LSEN at their schools, while more than one third (36%) disagreed. A policy to address harassment of LSEN should be part of the school's mission statement (Walman, 1993:88). Learners with special educational needs often face beatings from educators, teasing from fellow learners or anger from parents. According to Bender (1993:54) the community at times label these children as retarded or naughty when they may be dyslexic, hyperactive or have an attention deficit.

A policy to eliminate discriminating (2.12)

More than half of the respondents (52%) agreed that they have a policy to eliminate discriminating attitudes towards LSEN while thirty-two percent (32%) disagreed and sixteen percent (16%) were uncertain. This suggests that 48% of the schools do not have a policy to eliminate discrimination against LSEN. A number of groups of LSEN remain vulnerable to discrimination (Prinsloo, 2001:344). The new constitution emphasises respect for the rights for all, with particular emphasis on the rights of diversity (South African Constitution, 1995). Schools must develop a policy on diversity in order to accommodate the LSEN.

4.2.11 Educators' responsibilities in inclusive education

Table 11: Frequency distribution according to educators' responsibilities in
inclusive education

		Agree	Disagree	Uncertain	Total
In the mainstream class with learners with special educational needs (LSEN)					
3.1	I can easily identify a learner with special educational needs.	79 72%	22 20%	9 8%	110 100%
3.2	I feel at ease with LSEN in a mainstream class.	37 34%	55 50%	18 16%	110 100%
3.3	I have the ability to adapt my teaching methods for LSEN.	50 45%	35 32%	25 23%	110 100%
3.4	I possess skills to change teaching aids to accommodate LSEN in a mainstream class.	50 45%	28 25%	32 30%	110 100%
3.5	I have the ability to adapt assessment methods for LSEN.	50 45%	34 31%	26 24%	110 100%
3.6	More effort is required to better understand LSEN	97 88%	8 7%	5 5%	110 100%
3.7	I need more (special) training to meet the needs of LSEN	104 94%	5 5%	1 1%	110 100%
3.8	I must be careful not to discriminate against LSEN.	104 94%	4 4%	2 2%	110 100%
3.9	I am able to handle situations where LSEN are harassed.	75 68%	15 14%	20 18%	110 100%
3.10	The diversity of learners requires more effort from me (e.g. more time)	102 93%	6 5%	2 2%	110 100%
3.11	I must set an example in accepting LSEN in a mainstream class.	99 90%	5 5%	6 5%	110 100%
3.12	I am able to give individual attention to LSEN when needed.	79 72%	18 16%	13 12%	110 100%
3.13	Networking with educators in similar circumstances is essential.	93 85%	10 9%	7 6%	110 100%
3.14	All learners must be disciplined in the same manner.	82 75%	22 20%	6 5%	110 100%
3.15	The assistance of remedial educators is vital.	102 93%	33%	4 4%	110 100%

Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht (1999:70) say that since
educators are the people who make learning in the inclusive classroom
possible, it is important that they are aware of their responsibilities.

The statements in Table 11 focused on educators' responsibilities concerning inclusion and are substantiated by the following interpretations of the responses:

Identification of LSEN (3.1)

The majority of the respondents (72%) in the research sample confirmed that they can easily identify a learner with special educational needs while (20%) said that they experience barriers in identifying an LSEN. The Green Paper on special needs and evaluation support services points out that ordinary educators often experience barriers to accommodate LSEN (DNE, 1998b:36). Educators felt inadequately prepared and therefore unable to identify a learner with special educational needs (LSEN) in the classroom (DNE, 1999:10).

In their research Lomofsky, Roberts and Mvambi (1999:71) found that a number of African educators are already accommodating learners with a diverse range of needs. They work with learners of different ages and stages of development, cultural and linguistic diversity and a wide range of abilities and special educational needs. According to their findings a low percentage of educators (24,1%) were able to meet the needs of learner diversity. To support inclusive education, educators have to be equipped with skills in order to be able to identify LSEN in their classrooms (Saleh, 1996:92).

I feel at ease with LSEN (3.2)

Half of the respondents (50%) said that they do not feel at ease with LSEN in a mainstream class while one third (34%) agreed with the statement. Moore and Gilbreath (1998:10) indicate that barriers towards successful implementation of inclusive education are closely tied to educators' incompetency and ineffectiveness in educating LSEN.

Davies and Green (1998:97) suggest that often educators need other professionals to solve learner problems rather than have the professionals

help the educators to effect changes themselves. Sleeter (1995:156) makes the point that until schools develop an understanding of why change is necessary, most educators will experience barriers towards teaching LSEN. He also states that inclusive education might have a negative effect on both LSEN and their peers in a mainstream class.

Adapting teaching methods (3.3)

Less than half (45%) of the respondents agreed that they have the ability to adapt their teaching methods for LSEN in a mainstream class. Downing (2002:11) says that LSEN have a right to the equal understanding of learning material in an inclusive classroom, which often means a change in teaching methods. It is required from the educator to be responsive to the diverse needs of all learners, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning. Weeks (2000:23) claims that educators need to have knowledge about teaching in inclusive classrooms in order to enable them to understand the diverse needs of LSEN, to identify their needs and to be able to give support in order for them to learn and develop optimally. This knowledge can only be gained by training educators in special education (cf. 2.5).

Skills possession (3.4)

According to Schechtman and Or (1996:137) educators need to receive in-service training to gain the necessary skills needed to change teaching aids in order to accommodate LSEN in their classrooms. Policy-makers must therefore focus on skills and practical assistance rather than attending to educators' needs and emotional inhibitions. The research sample indicates that less than half of the respondents (45%) agreed that they possess skills to change teaching aids to accommodate LSEN in a mainstream class.

Coates (1989:533) points out that inclusive education constitutes a challenge to the education system as a whole and in particular to educators in mainstream classrooms. It requires educators to be flexible in their thinking and innovative and creative in their approaches to teaching and learning.

According to Mercer and Mercer (1998:34) educators are expected to have the knowledge and skills to accommodate a range of diversity among learners in the inclusive classroom. This means to be able to use judgement in selecting appropriate teaching strategies from their professional repertoire (cf. 2.1).

Booyse (1995:58) states that educators should be trained to develop skills to assist LSEN in an appropriate way, within the regular classroom.

Adapting assessment methods (3.5)

The larger percentage (45%) of the respondents that participated in the research said that they have the ability to adapt assessment methods for LSEN. Alizan and Jelas (2000:52) say that the success of inclusive education is dependent on the educators' knowledge of the pace and progress shown by LSEN. The extent of their willingness to make adaptations to accommodate LSEN is also a crucial factor. Adapting assessment methods entails that LSEN must be confronted with a differentiated learning experience, curriculum and education system, which will enable them to progress at their own pace and at their own levels while placed in mainstream classes (Downing, 2002:16).

The advantage of assessment is that it promotes efficient and effective teaching. Educators who understand the real meaning of educational assessment will employ it to gather only important, relevant information to serve as "markers" or milestones in decision-making about facilitation of learning in their classrooms (Alizan & Jelas, 2001:55).

More effort required (3.6)

The majority of the respondents (88%) in the research sample agreed that more effort is required to better understand LSEN.

According to Donald (1992:51) more effort is required by educators to better understand LSEN.

Brownel (1997:259) says that efforts to create more productive, caring, supportive and clearly defined approaches to inclusive education can be the best prevention against educators' reluctance towards the implementation of inclusive education.

Training (3.7)

The majority of the respondents (94%) agreed that educators need more special training to educate LSEN. According to Schechtman and Or (1996:137) educators need to receive in-service training to gain the necessary knowledge, skills and values to cope with learners of varying abilities and diverse needs. Policymakers must therefore focus on knowledge, skills and practical assistance rather than attending to educators' perceptions, needs and emotional inhibitions. According to Booyse (1995:59) the objective is not to train subject educators as specialised special needs educators, but to provide information about problems that may be encountered and how these may be solved.

Baker (1993:216) maintains that educators in the inclusive classroom setting have less positive attitudes in working with learners with disabilities (impairments) (cf. 2.3). An issue that seems to bear importance for most of the respondents was the unavailability of training sessions and the perception that schools are understaffed. Educators generally felt that having to cope with the normal day-to-day problems of the LSEN was nearly more than they were able to do. The concern aired was that an impaired learner demands much more attention, yet no allowance is made for this by the education department (Pretorius, 2000:6). Special schools with their skilled staff can offer training to the teaching staff in inclusive classrooms (Weeks, 2000:23).

Discrimination (3.8)

Successful inclusive education expects mainstream educators not to discriminate against LSEN but to accept these learners like any other normal child (Barton, 1993:20). The majority of the respondents (94%) supported this statement. The educator has the responsibility of creating and maintaining a classroom atmosphere which is characterised by joy, is free from fear and does not discriminate against LSEN (Lloyd, 2000, 134).

Lomofsky, Roberts and Mvambi (1997:71) maintain that inclusion requires that LSEN are not simply thought of with pity but viewed more positively in terms of their abilities rather than their impairments (disabilities). Care should be taken not to discriminate against LSEN in terms of their impairments (disabilities) but to look at the class as a whole in a total context (Ainscow, 1992:18).

Literature indicates that the manner in which a LSEN is integrated into the mainstream classroom is dependent on the type of preparation educators receive from the support systems prior to implementation (cf. 2.6).

Handling harassment (3.9)

More than two thirds (68%) of the respondents in the research sample indicated that they are able to handle situations where LSEN are harassed.

Diversity requires more effort (3.10)

The majority of respondents (93%) admitted that the diversity of learners in an inclusive classroom require more effort from them. According to Czapo (1992:25) educators are very concerned about the normal learner in their classrooms.

The general sentiment appeared to be that the normal learners in the system would be neglected due to the educators' time and effort being consumed by the LSEN in their classes.

Booyse (1995:51) points out that the standards would possibly drop due to the neglect of the regular learners in order to accommodate the learners with special educational needs (LSEN). Educators feel that it is unfair to expect the regular learners to support and carry the LSEN when their focus should be on their own education (Bender, 1993:43).

Accepting LSEN (3.11)

Successful inclusive education expects mainstream educators to accept LSEN like any other normal child (Barton, 1993:29). The majority of the respondents (90%) supported this statement. Meyer, Nagel and Synder (1993:19) say inclusion is unconditional and programmes must fit the child, rather than children fitting the programme. The inclusive classroom should foster acceptance, tolerance and caring in all learners.

According to Baker and Gottlieb (1980:6) the attitude of educators is expected to influence the extent to which LSEN becomes not only physically integrated in the ordinary classroom, but also become integral members of the class and as such benefit academically, socially and emotionally (cf. 2.2.2).

Attention to LSEN (3.12)

More than seventy percent (72%) of the respondents supported the statement that educators feel they would be able to give individual attention to LSEN in a mainstream class.

According to Clarke (1999:9) in the current prescribed class size of 38 learners to one educator, LSEN would not receive anywhere near the kind of attention they need. According to Pretorius (2000:16) educators generally felt that having to cope with the normal day-to-day problems of LSEN in these large classes was nearly more than they were able to do. The concern aired was that an impaired learner demanded much more attention, yet no allowance was made for this by the education department.

Networking (3.13)

The collaborative role of educators include actively planning for skills transfer to educators in similar circumstances, team teaching, directing small-group instruction in mainstream schools, special education settings and training, and peer tutors (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997:138; Friend & Cook, 1996:239; Phillips & McColloch, 1990:301). A network between schools could assist in sharing valuable information, knowledge and expertise as well as providing support. A high percentage of respondents (85%) indicated that there is a need to share information with other educators who are jointly responsible for LSEN.

Discipline (3.14)

Three quarters (75%) of the respondents said that all learners must be disciplined in the same manner. Lomofosky, Roberts and Mvambi (1999:72) maintain that educators have the responsibility of creating and maintaining a classroom atmosphere which nurtures the personal, cognitive and social development of all learners. Effective discipline is essential in creating and maintaining this atmosphere. Most schools follow a democratic system of discipline which encourages the participation of parents, learners and the community.

Ainscow (1992:18) states that care must be taken not to emphasise the individuals with impairments (disabilities) but to look at the class as a whole when disciplining learners. Czapo (1992:244) maintains that all learners must be disciplined in an appropriate manner within the regular classroom.

Remedial educators (3.15)

In most mainstream schools there are a significant percentage of learners with learning problems (Booyse, 1995:14). These learners require specialised help to ensure that their learning potential is realised and for this purpose intensive teaching, known as remedial teaching is necessary (Donald, 1993:141). Most of the respondents (93%) were in agreement that they could successfully educate LSEN with the help of a remedial educator. In spite of normal, intellectual, physical or sensory abilities the impaired child may be

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affected in such a way that his learning problems (barriers) cannot be rectified in the normal class situation. Remedial education is mainly given on an individual basis due to the uniqueness of each child and his specific learning impairment (disability) (Elliot, 1996:112).

Du Toit (1991:5) holds the opinion that remedial education improves the performance of LSEN. However, rationalisation of educational remedial services has led to massive cutbacks, both in terms of finances and manpower, which have had a detrimental effect on the education of LSEN in mainstream classrooms.

4.3 SUMMARY

In this chapter the researcher attempts to give some order to the range of information provided by the respondents (educators) in their responses to the questionnaire. Data collected regarding educators' perceptions on the implementation of inclusive education were organised in frequency distribution tables. The frequency of the responses to the questions was interpreted and commented upon.

The last chapter of this study consists of a summary, findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter a summary of the previous chapters and recommendations emanating from the study will be presented.

An empirical study consisting of a structured questionnaire as basis was used together with the literature study to investigate the challenges facing educators in the successful implementation of inclusive education that and to make recommendations that suggest guidelines to provide support for educators to meet the needs of LSEN.

5.2 SUMMARY

5.2.1 Statement of the problem

In this study challenges facing educators in the successful implementation of inclusive education were investigated. In the literature study and in the empirical investigation it was found that educators are faced with many challenges concerning the successful implementation of inclusive education. Educators feel they have to change their teaching methods in order to cope with more diversity in their classrooms. They feel inadequately prepared and equipped for inclusion of LSEN in mainstream classrooms.

5.2.2 Literature review

With the research it was necessary to establish a set of values, attitudes, beliefs, needs and teaching strategies with which one could measure the challenges that face educators in the implementation of inclusive education. This was necessitated by the fact that the new policy in specialised education

implies that LSEN have a right to mainstream schools where the classroom environment is recognised to meet the needs of all learners. One of the key areas which the educator has to take into account is how to accommodate and provide specific services to LSEN.

The literature review has indicated that educators in mainstream schools generally express negative attitudes towards inclusive education for the following reasons:

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

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

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

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

5.2.3 Planning the research

This study utilised a self-structured questionnaire as research instrument to obtain information concerning the challenges facing educators in the

implementation of inclusive education. The information sought for this investigation was not available from any other source and had to be acquired directly from the respondents, namely the educators in mainstream schools with inclusive classes. In a situation like this the most appropriate method of data collection is the questionnaire as it easily adapted to a variety of situations.

The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain information regarding the challenges facing educators in the implementation of inclusive education concerning the following:

➢ The requirements for the effective implementation of inclusive education.

➢ Educators' responsibilities in the successful implementation of inclusive education.

5.2.4 **Presentation and analysis of the research data**

The purpose of this chapter was to statistically analyse data collected from the questionnaires completed by 110 educators, which included school principals, deputy principals, heads of department and educators. Comments were offered and the findings interpreted. At the beginning an explanation and description was provided as to the method employed in the categorisation of the responses and the analysis of the data. This was followed by the presentation and discussions of the responses to the questions in the questionnaire.

5.2.5 **Aims of the study**

The researcher formulated specific aims to determine the direction of the study (cf. 1.5). These aims were realised through the literature review, which was made from various sources available nationally and internationally, together with an empirical study comprising a self-structured questionnaire.

5.3 FINDINGS

5.3.1 <u>Findings from the literature review</u>

From the available and relevant literature it was found that the effective implementation of inclusive education largely depends on the educators. The major responsibility for meeting the special educational needs of learners is placed on the shoulders of mainstream educators. This means that educators need to be prepared in terms of the following for the successful implementation of inclusive education:

> Mainstream educators generally have negative experiences of inclusive education because of lack of adequate training, knowledge, skills and support systems (cf. 2.2).

> Educators in mainstream schools generally have negative perceptions of inclusion because LSEN demand more time and suffer from impairments which affect their academic progress (cf. 2.3).

> One of the most important elements for successful inclusion is the attitude of educators towards inclusion. Positive attitudes correlated with educators' success with LSEN while educators who hold negative attitudes would tend to reject learners with special educational needs in the mainstream classroom (cf. 2.4).

> Educators need appropriate and professional training with adequate ongoing training. In-service training must be available to mainstream educators to empower them with the necessary knowledge. Teaching in an inclusive classroom requires special skills and competencies from mainstream educators (cf. 2.5).

> Adequate support must be available to assist mainstream educators in meeting the challenges that present themselves in the inclusive classroom. Educators need support from their principals, colleagues,

special educators, remedial educators, school-based support teams and district support teams (cf. 2.6).

5.3. 2 **Findings from the empirical study**

From the empirical study the following information was obtained:

➢ The larger percentage of respondents that participated in the research indicated that the following are available at their schools for the implementation of inclusive education (cf. 5.2.9).

- A record of all learners with special educational needs (65%).
- A school-based support team to assist educators (70%).
- The services of a district support team (60%)
- In-service training opportunities (49%).
- Opportunities for networking (42%).

➢ The majority of respondents (72%) said that they find it easy to identify LSEN (cf. 3.1).

➢ Half of the respondents (50%) indicated that they do not feel at ease with LSEN in their mainstream class (cf. 3.2).

➢ Less than half (45%) of the participants in the research said that they do not have the ability to change their teaching methods, teaching aids or assessment methods to accommodate LSEN in an inclusive class (cf. 3.3; 3.4; 3.5).

➢ More than eighty percent (88%) of the research sample indicated that more effort is required from them to better understand LSEN (cf. 3.6).

➢ According to 94% of the respondents they need more special training to meet the special needs of the LSEN (cf. 3.7).

> The majority of respondents (93%) felt that the diversity of learners in an inclusive class requires more effort from them (cf. 3.10).

> Ninety-three percent (93%) of the respondents in the research sample indicated that they need help from remedial educators to assist them with the learners in their class with special educational needs (cf. 3.15).

5.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 In-service training

(1)   Motivation

It is clear from the findings that the training of educators will need to change in order to make inclusive education a reality. Educators were of the opinion that they have limited knowledge of inclusive education. Their lack of knowledge and skills lead to negative attitudes and misconceptions concerning inclusive education and specific disabilities (cf. 2.5).

An important requirement, which became apparent from the literature study, is that educators should be involved from the very beginning of the process by participating in decision-making. The significance of asking educators' opinions and input on inclusion of learners with special educational needs before such change is implemented, needs to be stressed. The schools' management has to create a school environment that is conducive for inclusive education by creating opportunities for in-service training.

Villa, Thousand and Chappel (1996:259) maintain that the development of models of local school, provincial education departments, the community and university collaborative ventures in comprehensive in-service training to support educators in teaching LSEN, is a necessity. The researchers emphasise that through in-service agendas, a community and its educators can team up to create an inclusive learning environment and therefore collaborate to respond to the self-identified needs of educators, parents and

LSEN. As a result of the lack of collaboration across areas of expertise, educators tend to fall back on own initiatives within the relatively isolated context of own classrooms.

To promote the school as a learning community, professional development should be an ongoing, coherent and rigorous process. It should enable educators to become lifelong learners, through high quality, needs driven, research-based, in-service support programmes. Staff development should not only affect knowledge, attitudes and practices of educators and administrators, but must also alter the cultures and structures of the organisation.

Research has shown that educators can also benefit from therapeutic techniques where, through a self-exploration process, they can challenge existing beliefs, enhance insight into their own perceptions and raise the will to change. Two counselling methods are suggested, namely: clarifying processes and bibliotherapy. These affective courses can be included in the training of educators. Educators have shown that they actually value the affective courses more than the educator-instruction courses.

(2)   Recommendation

Training of educators should include the following:

➢ they should be instilled with an understanding that they are responsible for all learners regardless of their abilities;

➢ they should be able to identify and assess disabling conditions;

➢ they should be aware of how to make the classroom and the curricular adaptable as well as how to effect changes in their teaching methods to assist learners with special needs;

➤ they should be prepared and trained in cooperative approaches to meet the needs of learners. These could involve learner tutors, family members or others;

➤ they should be familiar with community and government agencies which can provide assistance to families and individuals;

➤ they should be aware of where and who to turn to in order to receive advice or assistance concerning the instruction of learners with special needs;

➤ they should be instilled with positive attitudes toward these learners, and

➤ they should obtain an optimistic picture of what can be accomplished.

Training programme content should involve the following aspects:

➤ Coaching.
➤ Collaborative problem-solving.
➤ Group problem-solving.
➤ In-service education.
➤ Demonstration of methods and materials.
➤ Case study discussion.
➤ Guest speakers.
➤ Conferences.
➤ Newsletters.
➤ Co-teaching which includes:
  - Parallel teaching.
  - Alternative teaching.
  - Station teaching.
➤ Understanding change.
➤ Managing change.
➤ Counselling methods

5.4.2 <u>Support for educators</u>

(1)   <u>Motivation</u>

Based on the literature study as well as the scientific data and the results obtained in chapter four in this study, the researcher has reason to motivate for increased support for educators in the change to inclusive education.

Educators spend many hours on preparation, hunting for resources, paperwork, extramural activities and discipline. They need the support from their colleagues, school management and the department of education as well as the broader community in order to make a success of inclusive education. The degree of support the educator receives is the most powerful predictor of positive attitudes towards full inclusion of LSEN.

If educators are not adequately supported, they:

➤ become demotivated;
➤ become negative towards change; and
➤ become unsure.

Without adequate support for educators inclusion will remain a theory and will not be put into practice in South African schools, no matter how many laws are made.

(2)   <u>Recommendations</u>

The following recommendations are made with regard to support for educators:

➤ There should be smaller classes in schools. The educator-learner ratio in a school should ideally be 1:30. This can be achieved by increasing the post provisioning norm in a school, thus increasing the number of educators in a school.

➢ School principals should organise and (re)deploy staff effectively, and schedule necessary time for educators to plan and learn new skills.

➢ The school environment should be one of collaboration where individuals are committed to working together.

➢ The principal's leadership style should be such that he actively embodies the democratic values of inclusive education, and supports educators by taking cognisance of their beliefs, feelings and perceptions.

➢ Governing bodies are supposed to stay informed as to the latest policies which support inclusive education, such as:
-   Whole school development.
-   Parent empowerment programmes.
-   Health promoting initiatives.
-   Community-based approaches to education.

➢ Weeks (2000:23) claims that the community-based involvement in this regard is essential. Special schools with their skilled staff can offer training to the teaching staff in inclusive classrooms.

5.5   FURTHER RESEARCH

(1)   Motivation

As South Africa begins to implement inclusive education in mainstream classrooms, educators' barriers and networking among educators and parents have been recognised as critical features in effective implementation. During the research and time spent collecting information on barriers towards successful implementation of inclusive education, the researcher became aware of many areas that need to be addressed for the education to be able to identify the barriers towards successful implementation of inclusive education. The power of networking teams lies on the shoulders of the

educators in order to unite the unique skills of special school educators with the unique skills of mainstream educators and parents.

(2)   Recommendations

The following recommendations could assist with further research on barriers towards successful implementation of inclusive education:

➢ An investigation can be undertaken to determine the role of department officials (i.e. district-based and head office based) in helping educators to cope with LSEN in mainstream classrooms so as to motivate educators and to assist them to experience career satisfaction, which is important for productivity, performance and educator morale.

➢ The difference between the challenges facing educators in urban, suburban and rural schools with regard to inclusion should be investigated.

5.6   CRITICISM

Criticism that emanates from this study includes the following:

➢ It can be assumed that many educators who completed the questionnaire draw their knowledge regarding inclusive education from policy documents and the media which manifest itself in the form of universal helplessness. This includes those educators who have difficulty realising that they can have an effect on the achievement of LSEN in mainstream classrooms.

➢ The probability therefore exists that many educators used the questionnaire to expose the barriers and their unpreparedness towards effective implementation of inclusive education.

➢ The research sample comprised only educators in one district and region. Dissimilar responses might have been elicited from educators in other regions situated in the rural areas of KwaZulu-Natal.

5.7   FINAL REMARK

The purpose of this study was to reach a better understanding of inclusive education and how it will prove useful to all interested stakeholders in education, but more especially to educators. It is trusted that this study will be of value to all educational authorities.

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APPENDIX 'A'

Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Barriers to the implementation of inclusive education

B C Hlongwana
June 2005

Dear Educator

QUESTIONNIARE: BARRIERS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

At present I am engaged in a research project towards my MEd (Masters in Education) degree at the University of Zululand under the guidance of Proff. G Urbani and M S Vos. The research is concerned with the barriers to the implementation of inclusive education in primary schools

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

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

We appreciate your co-operation

Yours sincerely

Mr B C Hlongwana

22/08/2005
Date

INSTRUCTIONS TO THE RESPONDENT

1. Please read trough each statement carefully before giving your opinion.

2. Please make sure that you do not omit a question or skip a page.

3. Please be totally frank when giving your opinion.

4. Please do not discuss statements with anyone.

5. Please return the questionnaire after completion.

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

SECTION ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1.1   My gender is?

		Code
Male		1
Female		2

1.2   My age in completed years as at 2004-12-31:

Age group		Code
20 – 25 years		1
26 – 30 years		2
31 – 35 years		3
36 – 40 years		4
41 – 45 years		5
46 – 50 years		6
51 – 55 years		7
56 – 60 years		8
61 – 65 years		9
Older than 65 years		10

1.3   My qualifications are:

		Code
Academic qualification(s) (e.g. BA, MEd, etc.		1
Professional qualification(s) (e.g. FDE, HDE, PTC, etc.		2

1.4   Total number of completed years in the teaching profession as at 2004-12-31:

Number of years		Code
0 –25 years		1
6 – 10 years		2
11 – 15 years		3
16 – 20 years		4
21 – 25 years		5
26 – 30 years		6
More than thirty years		7

1.5   My post level is:

		Code
Principal		1
Deputy principal		2
HOD		3
Educator (Level 1)		4

1.6   Type of post held by me:

		Code
Permanent		1
Temporary		2
Part time		3

1.7   My employer is:

	Code
Department of Education	1
Governing body	2

1.8   My school is classified as:
1.9

	Code
Primary school	1
Secondary school	2
Combined school	3

1.9   What is the average number of learners in your? ....

1.10   Do you have any training in teaching learners with special educational needs?

	Code
Yes	1
No	2

1.10   If your answer to 1.10 is "yes" please specify the type of training you have received:

....

....

SECTION TWO
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

		Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
	The following are available at my school for inclusive education:			
2.1	A **record of all** learners with special educational needs			
2.2	A **school based support team** to assist educators with LSEN			
2.3	A **district support team** to offer their services concerning LSEN			
2.4	**In-service training opportunities** for mainstream educators to cope with LSEN			
2.5	**Sufficient funds** to obtain special equipment for LSEN (e.g. hearing aids)			
2.6	**Opportunities for networking** between special education and mainstream educators			
2.7	Access to an **educational resource centre** to obtain information on LSEN			
2.8	A **school governing body** that actively supports inclusive education			
2.9	**A management team** that has the knowledge to implement inclusive education			
2.10	Special **life-skills programmes** for the integration of LSEN in the mainstream			
2.11	Procedures to **deal with harassment** of LSEN			
2.12	A **policy to eliminate discriminating** attitudes toward LSEN			

SECTION THREE
EDUCATORS' RESPONSIBILITIES IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

		Agree	Disagree	Uncertain
	In the mainstream class with LSEN:			
3.1	I can easily identify a learner with special educational needs			
3.2	I feel at ease with LSEN in a mainstream class			
3.3	I have the ability to adapt my teaching methods for LSEN			
3.4	I possess skills to change teaching aids to accommodate LSEN in a mainstream class			
3.5	I have the ability to adapt assessment methods for LSEN			
3.6	More effort is required to better understand LSEN			
3.7	I need more (special) training to meet the needs of LSEN			
3.8	I must be careful not to discriminate against LSEN			
3.9	I am able to handle situations where LSEN are harassed			
3.10	The diversity of learners demands more effort of me (e.g. more time)			
3.11	I must set an example in accepting LSEN learners in a mainstream class			
3.12	I am able to give individual attention to LSEN when needed			
3.13	Networking with educators in similar circumstances is essential			
3.14	All learners must be disciplined in the same manner			
3.15	The assistance of remedial educators are necessary for the special educational needs of LSEN			

APPENDIX 'B'

Letter seeking permission for distribution of questionnaires

Ngxolo Primary School
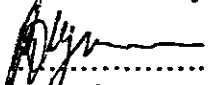P.O. Box 642
Underberg
19.07.2005

The Regional Co-ordinator: Research
Pietermaritzburg Co-ordinator
Pietermaritzburg X9044
Pietermaritzburtg
3200

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMANTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

I am presently conducting research on the above-mentioned topic as part of my Masters Degree in Education at the University of Zululand. My supervisors are Prof. G Urbani and Prof. M S Vos. As part of my studies, educators from schools in the Pietermaritzburg Region are requested to fill in a questionnaire pertaining to the above topic. My research will benefit principals as well as educators.

Your permission to approach the educators through their principals to complete the questionnaires will be greatly appreciated. You are assured that all information supplied by educators in the questionnaires will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence. A copy of my research will be forwarded to you on completion at the end of my studies.

Yours sincerely

B.C. Hlongwana

Persal : 60923661

APPENDIX 'C'

Permission from the

Department of Education

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS

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INHLOKOHHOVISI   PIETERMARITZBURG   HEAD OFFICE

Enquiries:				
Imibuzo:	**Sibusiso Alwar**	Reference: Inkomba: 0050/05 Verwysing:	Date: Usuku: Datum:	**22 August 2005**
Navrae:				

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to serve as a notice that **Mr B. C. Hlongwana** has been granted permission to conduct research with the following terms and conditions:

➢   That as a researcher, he/she must present a copy of the written permission from the Department to the Head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution.

➢   Attached is the list of schools she/he has been granted permission to conduct research in. however, it must be noted that the schools are not obligated to participate in the research if it is not a KZNDoE project.

➢   **Mr B. C. Hlongwana** has been granted special permission to conduct his/her research during official contact times, as it is believed that their presence would not interrupt education programmes. Should education programmes be interrupted, he/she must, therefore, conduct his/her research during nonofficial contact times.

No school is expected to participate in the research during the fourth school term, as this is the critical period for schools to focus on their exams.

SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL
KwaZulu Natal Department of Education