

**PERCEPTIONS OF SOME PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS
TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF LEARNERS WITH
DISABILITIES IN THEIR MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS
IN MANYATSENG**

BY

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DECLARATION

Perceptions of some primary school educators towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms on Manyatseng is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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MM MEREKO

FEBRUARY 2008

DEDICATION

To my son, Teboho Douglas Kabelo and daughter in law, Marie; your support and trust in me kept me moving on the troubled waters.

To my grandchildren, Palesa Margaret and Katleho Ephraim, your presence though disturbing at times but strengthened and inspired me to make my dreams become true.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how primary school educators in Manyatseng construct their meaning of their perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms.

To arrive at the findings, the researcher used qualitative study to conduct the research. Literature was also reviewed to find out what the previous findings in other countries are with regard to the above mentioned research question. The Free Attitude Interview was also employed to obtain information concerning ideas, opinions, feelings and experiences of the four selected respondents.

Grounded on the above findings and conclusions, the study recommends that efforts should not be spared to enable educators to adapt positive meaning making strategies. These strategies may be accompanied by enhanced positive feelings about their capability which may in turn also impact positively on their perception. The research further argues that this goal may be achieved through in service training, support services and empowerment, therefore further research needs to be conducted that will elaborate clearly, what the implications of perceptions in education are in teaching and learning, what are the most effective means of transferring strategies of meaning construction to educators with negative perception, how to strengthen and further sustain the positive meaning making strategies among educators who perception, how to strengthen and further sustain the positive meaning making strategies among educators perceive inclusion positively. Recommendations relating to educator empowerment through training and support are made as well as suggestions for further relevant research based on the concept generated in this research.

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CHAPTER ONE: AN OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter One provides a brief overview of the problem that was investigated, namely, primary school educators' perceptions regarding the inclusion of learners with learning disabilities in their mainstream classrooms in Manyatseng area. The chapter includes the background to the problem in which the researcher has indicated the reasons for

undertaking the research. The statement of the problem, demarcation of the research and research question are provided. An indication of the purpose of the study as well as theoretical framework, definitions of operational concepts as well as related literature is made. Reference is also briefly made to the methodology and design which is Free Attitude Interview technique that were employed in order to investigate the research problem. An overview of the selection of respondents and instrumentation as well as the procedure that the researcher followed for data collection is provided. Finally, an analysis of the data, presentation of the results and interpretation, the significance of the study and summary of chapters as well as the conclusions and recommendations are provided.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The researcher indicated that the reasons that prompted her to conduct a study on primary school educators' perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms were based on personal experience and supported by the literature study.

Most educators do not approve of the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms, since they cannot cope with their demands in the learning situations. These learners are often seen as problems that cannot be solved.

According to Stainback and Stainback (1996; DoE; 2001 Hutchinson, 2002) some learners were excluded from regular classrooms and communities in the past because they were perceived to be a threat to the school.

When educators hear that their schools are moving towards inclusiveness, they often react by stating that they would not be able to cope in their classrooms as they are not qualified to teach learners with disabilities (Ainscow, 1999; Camborne, 2002).

Learners with disabilities are viewed as obstacles to the smooth operation of schools and classrooms because they lack the skills to meet academic and disciplinary demands

(Stainback and Stainback, 1996 ; Ainscow, 1999).

In the school where the researcher is employed learners with disabilities are perceived as presenting problems that have to be overcome, or possibly, referred elsewhere for separate attention.

Stainback and Stainback (1996) indicated that it was thought that the presence of learners with disabilities would harm other learners' learning or even have a corrupting moral influence.

In most schools in Manyatseng educators' perceptions of learners with disabilities may remain critical barriers to learning since educators are uncertain about the relationship between the various categories of exceptionality and specific learner characteristics that they must deal with in their classrooms.

According to White Paper No 6 (DoE, 2001) learners with disabilities have experienced great difficulty in gaining access to education in the past. Very few special needs schools existed and they were limited to admitting learners according to rigidly applied categories. (Stainback and Stainack,1996; Hutchinson, 2002). Learners who experienced learning difficulties because of severe poverty did not qualify for educational support. The categorisation system that existed allowed only those learners with organic, medical disabilities access to support programmes (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker and Engelbrecht, 1999).

In some schools educators seem to fear the presence of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms. They see this as a burden rather than an opportunity to challenge their current teaching methods in ways that are likely to benefit all learners in such a setting. (Apple, 2001).

Inclusive education raises additional issues. An outcomes-based approach has the flexibility to accommodate inclusive practices (Engelbrecht *et al.*, 1999). However, educators are human beings with individual attitudes to difference and ability, formed in

a context of prevailing social attitudes. Many may initially resist the notion of inclusion. International research suggests that educators with little experience of learners with disabilities are likely to have negative attitudes to inclusion (Coates, 1989; Mittler, 1995; Carrington and Brownlee 2001).

The researcher realises that most educators whose professional education took place in a climate which viewed intelligence as fixed and unmodifiable are likely to have limited expectations about the capacity or propensity for learning of learners with disabilities and to be pessimistic about their progress (Engelbrecht, *et al.*,1999; Forlin, 2004).

On the basis of (Engelbrecht, *et al.*,1999; and Forlin, 2004 s') above argument, the researcher is concerned that since educators are the people who make learning possible their own attitudes, beliefs and feelings with regard to what is happening in the school and in the classroom are of crucial importance. It is generally accepted that change is challenging and may be perceived as either a threat or an opportunity.

To support the inclusion of learners with disabilities educators have to be sensitive, not only to the particular needs of individual learners, but also to their own attitudes and feelings. They may need training in how to identify and address special educational needs (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999; Forlin, 2004).

Many educators still tend to think that it is correct to use one approach to teaching. In reality, all educators are faced with a group of learners of which each has a unique character, interests, style and pace of learning and working. One approach in teaching is therefore not possible.

People in different social contexts see disabilities and difficulties in different ways. These different perceptions relate not only to local contexts, like family, classroom, school and church, but also to broader social contexts (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2002). Apart from labelling, some of the most important factors influencing how people see disabilities are the values and accepted economic and social roles that apply in a

particular social context (Donald *et al.*,2002).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to investigate primary educators' perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms.

Social stratification has been part of South Africa since time immemorial. This was manifest in many forms such as race, gender, colour and ethnicity. After 1994 it was realized that learners with disabilities still suffered the exclusion and discrimination of pre 1994 apartheid period. The government had to come with an intervention strategy in this regard in the form of White Paper no. 6 (DoE, 2001) which aimed at dealing with this social injustice and human rights issue once and for all. Educators especially at primary schools did not support this policy because of their lack of skills in dealing with learners with disabilities. Their perception of learners with disabilities was at the basis of difficulty of the successful implementation of inclusive education as outlined in (White Paper no. 6 DoE 2001).

1.3.1 Demarcation of the research

The respondents selected for this investigation are primary school educators from some of the Manyatseng primary schools. Manyatseng is the geographical area of interest to the researcher because, as a resident of this place, it is known to her.

1.3.2 Research question

Given the above-mentioned problem (see the discussion under the “**background**” to the study for details), the research question envisaged is:

How do educators perceive the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms?

1.3.3 Aim and objectives of the research

The aim of this research was to investigate, by means of a literature study and an

empirical investigation, the perceptions of educators towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms.

In order to attain this aim, the following objectives are envisaged for this investigation:

To investigate how educators in mainstream schools perceive learners with disabilities, investigate whether mainstream educators already have any learners with disabilities in their classrooms, and to investigate the possible advantages experienced or foreseen by mainstream educators relating to the inclusion of them in their classrooms.

1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.4.1 Theoretical framework

The researcher aligns herself with the constructivist perspective which dictates that research as an aspect of reality is constructed in the interaction between the researcher and the researched. This framework implies that the reality or perceptions of educators in Manyatseng in particular are constructed in discourses depending on both positions of the researcher and the researched. What these notions entail is the meaning of non-essential reality which is created through perceiving and sense making or meaning construction.

In essence, positivism uses traditional scientific method to establish ‘the truth’ about human behaviour (Donald; *et al*, 2002; Carrol, Forlin and Jobling, 2003). Underlying this method is the assumption that knowledge (or ‘the truth’) is put out there somewhere and all that has to be done is discover and prove it (Carrol, *et al*, 2003). This has led to what Freire (1970) called the ‘banking’ approach to education. According to this approach, teaching attempts to deposit knowledge in learners through direct instruction since they are seen as needing to be ‘filled up’ with knowledge - the ‘chant-and -drill’ or ‘talk-and-chalk’ approaches seen in many schools (Donald *et al*, 2002).

Thus in this study the researcher attempts not to break up the process of perception, but attempts to understand that in reality, and in their totality as a reflection of a particular way of understanding and of making sense of the world.

Constructivism challenges reductionist thinking. A good example is the constructivist position on the age-old 'nature-nurture' controversy (Donald *et al*, 2002). This controversy has centred on whether it is primarily nature (what we have inherited at birth) or nurture (what we experience or what happens to us during our lives) that determine who we are (Carrol *et al*, 2003). This debate has been, and still is, relevant to theories of psychological development. Although there are no psychologists who would say it is totally one or the other, whole theories have been built around one predominant view determined by the perspective they choose to assume (Donald, Lazarus *et al*, 2002). In a similar way, in this study the researcher assumes a particular view to analyze perspective theorists and understand the educator's way of knowing.

Whether one sees the development of human beings as more influenced by nurture, or by both in some combination, the researcher is still seeing development as something that happens to humans (Stainback and Stainback, 1996). Constructivism shifts the emphasis to a more active position where human beings are seen as active agents in their own development. In other words, human beings are shaped by both nature and nurture, but they are also active in shaping their own development. (Cambourne, 2002.). This is especially true in this study which attempts to understand the educator's meaning construction of inclusive education. The manner in which they do it is performative as it prescribes how they will implement it. The researchers feeling in the same breath is thus mater-cognitive as it takes a step away from educators and this in turn constructs meaning as understood by the researcher.

Another related and equally dominant strand of constructivism is the idea that knowledge is not passively received but rather actively constructed (Kukla, 2000). Thus, the work of developmental psychologists like Piaget (1953) and Bruner (1964) have shown how knowledge is not simply 'taken in' by people. It is actively built up constructed and developed to progressively higher levels in each learner (De Corte. 1995; DoE, 2004). Through engaging in experiences, activities and discussions which challenge them to make meaning of their social and physical environment, learners are actively engaged in building progressively more complex understandings of their world. The same goes for educators who act out how they perceive inclusive education and that perception being

the object of study of the researcher in this dissertation. The researcher's understanding is fluid and dynamic depending on the view she assumes. Hence the finding in the qualitative study will reflect this constructivist lens.

A further influence has come from Russian theorists (Vygotsky, 1978) who maintained that knowledge is a social construction which is developed and learned through social interaction.

Finally, we need to accept that human beings cannot be understood as objects who are passively influenced by forces around them. The learners, educators, parents and others with whom the researcher works with are active agents who are making meaning of their lives within and through their social context. The same applies to the researcher herself who attempts to make sense of what she sees and understands the educators to be saying.

1.4.2 Definition of operational concepts

1.4.2.1 Perception

The Penguin Complete English Dictionary (2006) defines the concept perception as an awareness of one's surroundings that is produced by the operation of the senses. The researcher aligns her self with Donald *et al.* (2002), who describe **perception** in the social sense as how people 'see' or understand the meaning of things. And she takes definition further to include the understanding of things that one has and sees to interpret the construct meaning which enables one to create reality.

1.4.2.2 Disability

Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia (2007) defines disability as a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired or distorted relative to the usual standard or spectrum of an individual of their group. The term is often used to refer to individual functioning including physical impairment, sensory impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment, mental illness and various types of chronic disease. This usage has been described by some disabled people as being associated with a medical model of disability.

As mentioned above, disability in this study refers to any form or condition whether being physically, mentally or emotionally which may hamper any learner's ability to perform according to the expected standards in learning.

1.4.2.3 Mainstream

The Penguin Complete English Dictionary (2006) defines the concept mainstream as the prevailing influences, values and activities of a group or society. Oxford Dictionary of English (2005) defines mainstream as the ideas, attitudes, or activities that are shared by most people and are regarded as normal or conventional.

According to Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia (2007) **mainstreaming** is the term that refers to the practice of educating learners with special needs during specific term period based on their skills. According to (Donald, *et al.*,2002), **mainstreaming** refers to the placement of a child with 'special needs' in the mainstream or regular school setting. Mainstream is in this study therefore refers to a school setting in which the majority educators believe that it is meant to accommodate "normal" learners.

As it is seen, in a broader community or even local context, certain attitudes, behaviours, and abilities will more valued than others. How a disability or difficulty is seen, and how it should be addressed, relates very closely to the social context in which it occurs. (Donald, et al.; 2002). Accepted values and roles in any social context are likely to have different positive and negative effects on how a disability or difficulty is seen and treated. The educator's task is to understand this and, as far as possible, to build on the positive effects and to modify the negative effects in any particular social context (Donald, et al.; 2002).

Developing policy and practice around inclusive education is one of the most complex and urgent issue facing education in many of the world's developing countries. The policies of the White Paper No. 6 (DoE, 2001) now demand that all children should receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment that is consistent with their needs and services have been developed for this purpose. This means that

learners with specific learning needs should, wherever possible and with the appropriate support, be educated along with others through the regular school system (Engelbrecht et al.; 1999; DoE, 2001).

1.4.3 Related literature

According to Bryan and Bryan (1986) the presence of a disabled child introduces stresses and strains for those responsible for them; hence parents and educators may hold attitudes towards these children that differ from those they hold towards non-disabled youngsters. These attitudes are of no small moment because they are likely to affect domestic educational practice, and others.

Parents are not the only important sources of influence upon the child's life; educators also play a crucial role. Educators perceive learning-disabled learners as less desirable than their non-disabled counterparts, and educators' attitudes often mirror those of parents. As in the case of parents, educators' negative attitudes are not limited to the learning-disabled learner's academic performance or potential but extend to other areas as well. Educators in fact, associate a host of negative behaviours with learning disabilities (Bryan and Bryan, 1986; Shama, Forlin, Loreman, and Earle, 2006).

One of the earliest studies of educators' perception conducted by Myklebust, Bosbes, Olson and Cole (in Bryan and Bryan, 1986) has found that educators perceived learning-disabled children as less competent than their non-disabled classmates in auditory comprehension (following directions, understanding class discussion); spoken language (vocabulary, sentence length); orientation (time concepts); social behaviours; and motor abilities (general co-ordination) (Shama et al., 2006). In two subsequent studies, McKinney (in Bryan and Bryan, 1986) found learning-disabled children to be more introverted, more distracted, and less task-oriented than non-disabled children.

The report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS), (1997) states that negative and harmful attitudes towards differences in our society remain a critical barrier to learning and development. Barriers resulting from fear and

lack of awareness may arise from the feelings of educators themselves. For example, learners with high ability are often regarded as a threat and therefore face denial of their significant abilities (DoE, 2001). Very often educators fear the inclusion of a child with a disability in their class and respond negatively to their attendance.

It has been documented repeatedly that educators' perceptions of learners are a strong force in determining the nature of the interaction between educators and learners and, in turn, the learner's achievements (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968 Good, 1970; Parkey, 1970; Brophy and Good, 1974; all in Schultz and Carpenter, 1995).

Based on a comprehensive literature review of educators' attitudes towards learners with disabilities, Clark (in Schultz and Carpenter, 1995) concluded that educators typically are uncomfortable with learners who have disabilities and usually have negative attitudes about their placement in regular classes.

In the United Kingdom a small survey that attempted to gauge the opinion of educators and head educators at primary school's about the necessary conditions for greater inclusion was conducted (see Chapter 2 for more details)

Another study on the inclusion of the blind learners in mainstream classes was also conducted in Canada, Harare, Zimbabwe where the overall study established that the majority of educators have negative perception towards the inclusion of blind learners in their mainstream classes. In South Africa three studies towards inclusion of the very same learners have been carried out (see Chapter 2 for details).

Against the background of these findings the researcher will be able to use the information gathered through informal interviews to compare educators' perceptions from literature study to those of primary educators in Manyatseng area.

1.5 METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

A literature study of educators' perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with learning disabilities; learning disabilities and an empirical study has been employed in

this investigation. The qualitative research method has therefore been applied.

According to Wiersma (2000), qualitative research, in its purest sense, follows a naturalistic paradigm, namely that research should be conducted in the natural setting and that the meaning derived from research is specific to that setting and its conditions. The approach is that of a holistic interpretation of the natural setting.

1.5.1 Respondents

Four respondents from the four primary schools in Manyatseng were selected. The following criteria were used to select these respondents: Gender (two males and two females), age, experience and qualifications. Names and particulars of respondents are disguised for ethical reasons (for more details see Chapter 3).

1.5.1.1 Respondents' profiles

Mr N. Pere has been the principal of Tebang Public School for the past four years. He is married and has two sons. He obtained the following certificates; Primary Educators Certificate at Mphohadi College of Education B.A. and B.A. Hons management degrees from the University of South Africa (UNISA). He has just obtained a Masters Degree in Management from the University of the Free State. This respondent was chosen because of his experience as the head and manager of the school.

Mr H. Semanamana is a young man who has just got married. He obtained Primary Education Diploma in 1994 from the former Vista University Distance Education Campus in Pretoria (VUDEC) in Pretoria. He has taught at different farm schools until he was offered a post in one of the primary schools in Manyatseng. This respondent was chosen because of his experience and knowledge of working with learners who have been disadvantaged for a long time.

Ms M Litho is a single mother of three children – two girls and a boy. She has been teaching for ten years. She started her primary education at Spitskop and completed high school education at Tshepang Secondary. She obtained the Primary Educators Certificate at Bonamelo College of Education in Qwaqwa. She also obtained the Primary Education Diploma from the former VUDEC. The respondent was selected because of her experience of working with learners in the foundation phase.

Ms Bolokoe is a widow with twenty years' teaching experience. After years of struggle, she succeeded in obtaining the Primary Education Diploma and the Further Diploma in Education in Cognitive Studies from the former VUDEC. The respondent is currently pursuing her B.Ed. Hons in Special Needs at the University of the Free State. The respondent was selected because of her knowledge in her field of study.

1.5.2 Instrumentation

The researcher employed the Free Attitude Interview (FAI) as data collection technique. The term Free Attitude Interview is a translation of the Dutch term: 'Vrije Attitude Gesprek' as used by Vrolijk, Dijkema and Timmerman, (1980). FAI developed its

characteristic form during an industrial psychological research, (the so called Hawthorne Research) in the United States of America in the late 1920s. The researchers discovered that when they gave the interviewees the freedom to speak, the information obtained became more relevant than when they use a structured questionnaire (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997). This open type of interview provided them with the type of information that could be used to solve problems in the labour situation. The psychologist Carl Rogers affirmed the method in 1941 stressed the importance of the interview technique as a means of reflecting the respondent's feelings in a therapeutic context (Meulenberg – Buskens, 1997).

The FAI Technique, also described as a non-directive controlled- depth interview, can be used as a qualitative research interview (Meulenberg – Buskens, 1997).

1.5.3 Data collection procedure

The researcher wrote letters to the respondents to obtain their permission for conducting interviews. Place and time were confirmed by both the respondents and the researcher. There was no need for the researcher to obtain permission from the Department of Education to avail the respondents for interview purposes since the interviews were conducted after working hours (see appendix 1).

1.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA

1.6.1 Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis

1.6.1.1 Level of text

The main focus was on aspects of text analysis that relate to the ideational function of language and to the ideational meanings of constructing social reality. The emphasis was therefore on the role of discourse in signification and reference, where the former comprises the role of discourse in signification and reference, where the former comprises the role of discourse in constituting, reproducing and restructuring knowledge and belief systems. Text may be opened to different interpretations depending on context and interpreter, which means that the social meaning (including ideologies) of discourse cannot simply be read from the text without considering patterns and variations in the social distribution, consumption and interpretation of the text (Foucault, 1980;

Fairclough, 1992; Duncan, 1993).

1.6.2 Discursive practice

Discursive practice involves processes of text production, distribution, and the nature of these processes varies between types of discourse according to social factors. Texts are also consumed different social contexts. (Fairclough, 1992; Duncan, 1993). Some texts influence people to change their attitudes, beliefs and practices. Some texts (official interviews and great poems) are recorded, transcribed, preserved, re-read, others are transitory and unrecorded (Fairclough, 1992; Duncan, 1993).

1.6.3 Social instruction

Social practice has various orientations (economic, political, cultural, ideological) and discourse may be implicated in all of these without any of them being reducible to discourse. (Fairclough, 1992; Duncan, 1993).

1.6.4 Presentation of results and interpretation

The interviews were audio-recorded and transcripts and the transcripts were coded in order to look for common patterns of problems and opinions. The results of this investigation are reported in the form of detailed description of the interviews followed by identification of typical problem areas and opinions regarding solutions to these problems. The results are finally interpreted Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis (TODA) in an inductive manner and linked to findings described in the literature study.

1.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The focus is on teaching, supporting all learners, educators, parents, the community and the system as a whole, so that full range of learning needs can be met. The emphasis being on the adaptations of teaching strategies and support systems available in the classroom (Stainback and Stainback, 1996).

1.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: This chapter serves as orientation to the study. It gives an overview of the research question that was investigated as well as the reasons for undertaking the

research. The research methodology and design were also briefly described.

Chapter 2: This chapter explains important concepts through literature review. The researcher explains the operational concepts pertaining to the problem statement and explores the research question through literature study in order to gain insight from the findings of the previous researchers.

Chapter 3: In this chapter the researcher gives a clear indication of the methods and design (i.e. the technique) that were employed to collect data.

Chapter 4: Results from data analysis are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5: The chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations.

1.9 Conclusion:

In conclusion this chapter has provided a brief overview in a nutshell the dissertation which is elaborated from chapters 2 to 5. This first chapter has managed to briefly provide the factors that made the study to be necessary, as well as the literature couching the empirical data collected, as well as the methodology operationalised therein. Finally ways of interpreting what makes the study to be important as well as summary of the chapters are alluded to.

The next chapter contains a literature study on inclusive education and learners disabilities in different countries as well as in the South African educational context.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts by unpacking the theoretical framework, a constituting lens through which the study is looked at. It also includes the definitions and discussion of operational concepts in the context of the theoretical framework. The chapter focuses on the question that the research as a whole is responding to, namely how some primary school educators perceive the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms. The literature is hereby reviewed to find out what previous findings in other countries are with regard to the question. The researcher therefore interrogate the related literature from Canada, United Kingdom, south western areas of the United States, Zimbabwe and South Africa by way of developing constructs.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study the researcher aligns herself with social constructivism as a lens for looking at the problem identified in chapter 1 of this study. In the socio-constructivist paradigm a new shift has occurred: learning is perceived as an interactive, social process rather than an individual information-processing activity (Mc Mahon, 1997; Donald et al, 2002). In this perspective the focus is on the meaning-making activity of an individual, always interacting with others in a particular situation. Social constructivism does not take place only internally, nor is it passive development of behaviours that are shaped by external forces (McMahon, 1997). Meaningful learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities. According to social constructivists knowledge is a human product that is socially and culturally constructed (Ernest, 1999; Prawat and Floden, 1994; Donald et al, 2002). Individuals create meaning through their interactions with each other and the environment they live in (DoE, 2004).

2.2.1 Justification of using Social Constructivism as a theoretical framework for the study

It is important to note that Manyatseng people form part of people that were regarded and taught to regard themselves as of inferior human quality by law for the better part of their lives. Considering that their skin colour prevented them from active and meaningful

socio-political, economical and educational participation, it could be labelled as a “disability” then. There were separate schools for learners depending on their classification as “normal” or “disabled”. This mindset was nurtured in different ways to become a part of their reality.

The study believes it is unfair to put all the blame on the attitudes or perceptions of educators on learners with disabilities or their resistance towards inclusive education squarely on them. Therefore social constructivism as a lens in this study takes it into account that these educators learnt the identified behavioural problem because of the prevailing circumstances. The study does not believe it is in their nature to discriminate against the folk with disabilities. Social constructivism goes beyond the symptoms of the problem and seeks to address the underlying causes thereof. In this way it portrays the Manyatseng educators as very kind, caring and loving of their people. Social constructivism also aims at empowering the educators by deconstructing and reconstructing the mindset of the affected educators to make them see potential in every human being despite whatever challenges. Hence every part of the study, from the type of literature reviewed, method of data collection, analysis and interpretation thereof is largely sympathetic to the Manyatseng educators.

2.2.2 Historical background

Social constructivism evolved from other paradigms such as cognitive developmental constructivism and radical constructivism. The protagonist of cognitive developmental constructivism is Piaget who maintained that the development of learners plays a dominant role in their construction of meaning and knowledge (DeCorte, 1995; DoE, 2004). Both the social and radical forms of constructivism are built upon the views of Heger and Vico who spoke of different forms of knowledge and meaning (Spivey, 1997; DoE, 2004). However, the two positions differ on the function of cognition. From the social perspective, cognition is the process by which learners in social and lingual settings eventually construct mental structures that correspond to a matched external structure located in the environment (Cobb, 1996; DoE, 2004)).

2.2.2.1 Constructivism

Constructivism is based on the premise that we all construct our own perspective of the world. Learners construct their own reality (or at least interpret it) based on their perceptions of experiences. An individual's knowledge is therefore a function of prior experiences, mental structures and beliefs that are used to interpret objects and events. What someone knows is grounded in perception of the physical and social experiences which are comprehended by the mind (DeCorte, 1995; DoE, 2004).

According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2004) the following are some of the basic principles of constructivism: Learning is a discovery and construction of meaning and therefore it must be based on the experience and issues that need personal interpretation. And an understanding of the whole concept is required in constructing meaning. Therefore the learning process must focus on primary concepts. Such as the application of the acquired knowledge in new situations is more important than mere knowledge acquisition (DoE, 2004).

The researcher attempts to understand that each educator constructs and interprets his or her environment in his or her own way based on perception and experience.

Another important factor is that knowledge is a process that is built in time, through interaction with others. Knowledge constructed develops through understanding, personal interpretation and the ability to apply the acquired knowledge in new situations (McMahon, 1997).

2.2.2.2 Social constructivism

Socio-constructivist emphasizes the important of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society and constructing knowledge based on this understanding (Derry, 1999, McMahon, 1997). This perspective is closely associated with many contemporary theories, most notably the developmental theories of Vygotsky and Brunner, and Bandura's social cognitive theory.

As one of the protagonists of social constructivism Dewey (1933) argued that education

depends on action, since knowledge and ideas emerge only from a situation in which learners have to draw them from meaningful and important experiences. These situations have to occur in a social context, such as a classroom, where learners join in manipulating materials and thus, create a community of learners who build their knowledge together (DoE, 2004).

Bruner's (1964) ideas on social constructivism in learning are more relevant and fundamental in learning because they are founded on his assumptions about human perception and information processing. Learning is most meaningful to learners when it involves discoveries that occur during exploration motivated by curiosity (Laurillard, 1993). Opportunities to manipulate objects actively and transform them through direct action are valuable for inducing curiosity, e.g. activities that encourage learners to search, explore, analyse or otherwise process input, rather than merely respond to it. This is basically the very same process or procedure in "natural" or informal learning (Laurillard, 1993).

The above argument is taken further to indicate the importance of the learners understanding the principles underlying the meaning and structure of a particular subject. Special value is attached to perception, which he sees as interpretation of sensory stimuli as well as the meaning given to these stimuli (DoE, 2004). This meaning will be determined by the context of the stimuli and learners' previous experiences with similar stimuli. Learners will understand the facts, concepts and principles better if they are given the opportunity to discover them themselves. If the information is rearranged and incorporated into the learner's cognitive frame of reference, the existing frame of reference will serve as a foundation in future learning (Engelbrecht, 1999, *et al.*; DoE, 2004).

In the Social Constructivist approach, the child is seen as an active explorer and strategist, constantly discovering new and more effective ways of coming to terms with the world of knowledge and information (Palincsar, 1998). He again clarifies how there is a gradual development from representation of the world in action patterns (inactive representation); to representation in imagery (iconic representation); to representation in

symbols (symbolic representation) (DoE, 2004). The use of language allows a progressive release from immediacy so that this tool shapes arguments and even supersedes the child's earlier modes of information processing (Donald *et al*, 2002).

Bruner's views on learning are supported by De Corte (1995) who says learning involves an active, self-guided search for understanding during which learners construct their own knowledge. They become sense makers and educators become cognitive guides who help learners (DoE, 2004). Therefore the perfect mode of instruction includes learner participation in meaningful academic tasks while the educator provides needed support and guidance (DoE, 2004). In addition, discussions of meaningful academic tasks replace lecturing as the dominant form of educator-learner interaction. For De Corte (1995) learning is a constructive, cumulative, self-regulated, intentional situation and collaborative process of building knowledge and meaning (DoE, 2004).

It is clear from the above statement that all learners should be included in the mainstream classrooms where construction of knowledge can be mediated through appropriate guidance by educators, peers and educational media (DoE, 1997). Learning environments should also allow for the flexible adaptation of instructional support, especially in terms of the balance between self-regulation and external regulation, to take into account individual differences in cognitive, affective and motivational attitudes (DoE, 1997). The success of the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classroom depends entirely on educators' positive attitudes and perceptions (DoE, 1997).

2.2.2.3 Objectives of social constructivist research

The objectives of social constructivism are as follows: Cooperative learning: Is an effective strategy that provides opportunities for learners with disabilities to participate and build relationships with their non-disabled peers (DoE, 2004). Cooperative learning involves structuring tasks so that learners work together in small groups to achieve shared academic goals (Barry and King, 1997). Learners are accountable and responsible for their own achievement, as well as for the performance of the other members in their group. Learners also practice social roles as they solve problems, learn new material or create projects and documents (Barry and King, 1997; DoE, 2004). Incentives are built

into cooperative learning activities to encourage learners in the group to work together to teach one another components of the lesson. Cooperative learning is a powerful tool in teaching learners to respect and get along with others and for improving the social academic climate of the classroom (DoE, 2004). Collaboration and teamwork: Effective learning is not a purely 'solo' activity, but essentially a distributed one. That means that learning efforts are distributed between the individual learner, his partners in the learning environment and the resources and tools that are available (Salmon, 1993). Thus, this situated perspective strongly stresses the importance of collaboration in productive learning, reflected in activities such as exchanging ideas, comparing solution strategies and discussing arguments. Participatory knowledge construction occurs when learners explore issues, take positions, discuss these positions in an argumentative format and reflect on and re-evaluate their positions in negotiations (Barry and King, 1997; Ernest, 1999)

By using the objectives of social constructivist such as co-operative learning, educators are being empowered as well as transformed, since this strategy combines or unites all learners including those with disabilities in one social setting for example the classroom.

Strategies such as group work, collaboration and teamwork provide opportunities for learners with disabilities to participate in classroom activities thus building sound relationships with their peers (Jonassen, 1994). On the basis of this educators are empowered to use effective methods. In accommodating all learners since they are agents of change the use of the above mentioned strategies make it possible for inclusion to be implemented.

There are four objectives in social constructivism which can also be regarded as the critical component elements thereof (Barry and King, 1997). These objectives are a guiding light towards the successful implementation of social constructivist learning. Firstly, special constructivism is built on cooperative learning, which provides opportunities for learners with disabilities to participate and build relationships with their non-disabled peers (Barry and King, 1997; Palincsar, 1998). It involves structuring tasks so that learners work together in small groups to achieve shared academic goals (Barry

and King, 1997). Learners are accountable and responsible for their own achievements, as well as for the performance of other members in their groups. They also practice social roles as they solve problems, learn new material or create projects and documents (Palincsar, 1998).

Secondly, incentive should be built into cooperative learning activities to encourage learners to work together in the group each one another. In this way they learn to respect and get along with others and this improves the social academic climate of the classroom (Laurillard, 1993). Collaboration is the third objective which denotes learning as essential a distributed activity. Thus learning involves sharing of ideas, resources, comparing solutions and discussing arguments (Salmon, 1993). All the above objectives are primarily dependent on participation which requires every learner to contribute in the process. This fourth objective stresses on exploring issues, taking positions, discovering these positions in an argumentative format and reflecting on and re-evaluate their positions in negotiations (Gruender, 1996).

2.3 FORMATS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

This study has adopted and employed constructivism as its basis. This decision is informed among other things by the fact that social constructivism starts neither with the external world as its fundamental concern nor with the individual mind, but with language (Gergen, 1995; Richards, 1995). Meaning in language is (i) achieved through social independence, (ii) context dependant, and (iii) primarily serves communal functions (Gergen, 1995; Richards, 1995). Piaget's (1953) theory of cognitive development constructivism is rejected by the study because of its stand that humans construct "their own" knowledge. Such an argument projects man as an isolated subject or object independently of others or that each person lives in a world of his/her own experiences, thereby implicitly accepting the Cartesian dualism between ontological reality and learners' experiential world (Cobb, 1996).

Social constructivism views knowledge as a social product which is developed by the dialect real interplay of out just one, but many minds (Prawat and Folden, 1994), Know inactively built up by the organising subject. The special contribution of social

contribution also relates to participatory co-construction of meaning to build common shared and agreed-upon statements after a process of recognition. Co-instructors can influence the nature being built (Spivey, 1997).

2.4 STEPS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Lather (1986) is concerned with the methodological implications for critical theory exploring issues in developing an area of emancipation research. Lather (1986) defines the concept of 'research as praxis', examines it in the context of social science research, and discusses examples of empirical research designed to advance emancipator knowledge. The primary objective of research as praxis is to help researchers involve the researched in a democratised process of inquiry characterized by negotiation, reciprocity, and empowerment.

As a qualitative study, this dissertation is also grounded on critical emancipatory theory. The theory of social constructivism has been identified as providing a relevant lens for looking at the various factors alluded to in chapter one. All approaches belonging to critical emancipatory theory are guided by the following steps in their successful implementation: Negotiation, reciprocity, empowerment action and substance.

According to Fay (1995) the researcher should respond to their experiences, desire and needs of oppressed people by initially understanding the world view of research participants. Dialogue is centred in actively involving respondent in the construction and validation of meaning (Comstock, 1982). Critical inquiry is fundamentally dialogical and mutual educative. This allows for both the researcher and researched to educate each other for their better understanding and benefit.

This process leads to the empowerment of the researched as they begin to see through their cultural contradictions in incomplete ways that never the less provide entry points for the process of ideology critique. Empowerment results in better still understanding with the motivation and ability to react critically to accounts of their world. Lastly critical theory process is self-sustaining in its critical analysis and enlightened action (Comstock, 1982). The above discussion serves as the practical application formulae and

justification or relevance of social constructivism in this investigation.

2.5 NATURE OF REALITY AS SEEN BY SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST RESEARCH

Reality is not fixed; it is multiple, distributed and constructed (Kukla, 2000). It follows that the casual links are mutual (that is, constructed) and that in terms of what an event of actions means, the event is not in-directional but multi-directional (De Corte, 1995; DoE, 2004). This perspective also has implications for how one looks at data or information that is gathered in the process of research. The qualitative researcher seeks patterns which emerge from the data. The quantitative researcher makes a guess or forms a hypothesis which is then used to test the data.

Since reality is not fixed but multiple, the researcher looks at the meanings constructed by both herself and the respondents, to identify similarities and differences of data collected on the basis which findings are made in chapter 4.

2.6 RHETORIC

Habermas (1987) noted that there is experience with other human beings through language. Language, according to Habermas (1987) and the Frankfurt School, becomes another essential basic cognitive interest around which society becomes organised (Ivey, 1986).

Had it not been through language this research could not have been done, the researcher is able to gather information by involving respondents to speak for themselves, to raise their perceptions towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. The researcher therefore aligns herself with Habermas (1987) and Ivey (1986) on this point of language or culture as a critical element in meaning and reality making.

Interpretative or hermeneutic approaches, such as the social constructivist strategies, see language as the most important tool for searching and understanding particular human issues (Habermas, 1987). This category of approaches aims to allow human beings in research to speak for themselves. Respondents are not treated as mute objects as in the

case of more positivistic approaches (Habermas, 1987). In the latter, the researched are described from outside and if they are allowed to speak it serves merely as responses to prepared, pre-designed and imposed questions. (Habermas, 1987; Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002).

2.7 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER IN SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST RESEARCH

I, the researcher is the interpreter and therefore the primary instrument of data collection. First the researcher initiated the interviews and identified the respondents from whom data can be gathered. As a qualitative researcher I looked to understand a situation as it is constructed by the respondents, and attempts to capture how (the respondents) they interpret the world. Respondents were interviewed in their own settings where they are comfortable and relaxed. The researcher and respondents were able to reflect on the meaning together. My task as a qualitative researcher is to find patterns within those words (and actions) and to present them for others inspection, while at the same time staying focused to the construction of the new world as the respondents originally experienced it.

2.8 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RESEARCHER

Transformation of the personal into scientific took place when I the researcher met the fellow researched. Soon I the researcher and the researched agreed on the objectives and proceeded to realise them, a friendship was built. In the course of this process the contractual relationship developed into a relationship of mutual trust. The researcher and the researched were equal so that we can understand and respect each other. Equality, therefore allowed some access to the inner world of the respondents. I the researcher as an instrument of inquiry provided the basis on which the trustworthiness can be built. Mutual trust not only ensures cooperation of the respondent, but also improves the quality of data collection. As soon as the respondent began to disclose information that we regard it as highly confidential, the researcher showed the worthiness of the discussion without condemning or opposing the information.

2.9 THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL VALUES ON SOCIAL

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Hongwane (2007) argues that human inquiry practitioners assert, in contrast to the positivist world-view, that researchers can only truly do research with persons if they engage with them as persons, as co-subjects and thus co-researchers: hence co-operative inquiry, participatory research, research partnerships, and so on. Hongwane (2007) takes this argument further to indicate that while understanding and action are logically separated, they can not be separated in real life, so a science of persons should therefore be an action science (Matobako and Helu, 2002). This is against the traditional researchers (positivists) who cling to the guardrail of neutrality and their emphasis on description or reanimation of a slice of reality. Critical researchers often announce their partnerships in the struggle for a better world, they often regard their work as a first step towards forms of political action that can redress the injustice found in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself. Critical researcher enters into an investigation with their assumptions on the table. This is essential for this study as indicated earlier on that social constructivism promotes reciprocity in research. Humans negotiate with humans and for it to be effective it is done on the basis of equality (Hongwane, 2007; Matobako and Helu, 2002).

2.10 CRITIQUE OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Social constructivism as a theory is not without fault, just like any other theory it has its own shortcomings which the researcher needs to take note of and improvise creatively to ensure effectiveness and successful implementation. Considering the massive work involved in effecting critical research against the target population (excluded and marginalised cultures) it stands to reason that such a project needs time and financial support. This is further complicated by the empowerment part of the whole project which is not a one day issue. Such constraints will always lead to the scratching of the surface only without going deeper to the root of the story. Bacon (1993) also points out that all listed prime authors of critical thinking and critical pedagogy are males. This being the case then excludes the voices and concerns of women and other groups.

2.11 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

2.11.1 Primary school educators

According to Donald *et al.* (2002) primary school educators are, apart from being mediators of learning, also scholars, researchers and life long learners. They are leaders, administrators and managers. They are supporters, interpreters and designers of learning programmes and materials, as well as assessors of learning and specialists. Educators are professionals. They assist learners in becoming and in knowing what they ought to become and ought to know. They guide and direct the development of learners, teach, instruct and provide authority and security in the school life of learners (Pitout, Du Plessis, Jacobs and Russell, 1993). According to the researcher primary school educators are seen as secondary educators, whereas parents are viewed as primary educators. Educators cannot and should not replace parents, but should provide parents with professional assistance in helping the generation of today to master skills, attitude and norms which learners need in their adult life.

2.11.2 Perception

Oxford Dictionary of English (2005) defines perception as the way something is regarded, understood or interpreted.

2.11.3 Primary school educators' perceptions

Primary school educators in different social contexts see disabilities and difficulties in different ways. These different perceptions relate not only to local contexts like family, classroom, school and church, but also to broader social contexts (Donald, *et al.* 2002). Educators whose professional education took place in a climate which viewed intelligence as fixed and unmodifiable are likely to have limited expectations about learners' capacity or propensity for learning and to be pessimistic about their progress (Engelbrecht, *et al.*, 1999).

The Dictionary of Contemporary English (Longman, 2004) defines perceptions as the way you think about something and your idea of it is like, the way you think that you notice things with your sense of sight, hearing etc. and the natural ability to understand or notice things quickly.

Perception is directly associated with movement and emotional processes. It is an inseparable part of the sensory-motor acts that are responsible for the effective relation of the child to the surrounding reality (Vygotsky in Zaporozhets, 2002).

Perception is primarily influenced by experiences from the community and surroundings in which one lives. It is a process which informs one's interpretation and meaning construction of one's world (Oxford Dictionary of English 2005).

According to the researcher's understanding the concept of primary school educator's perceptions refers to what educators received by way of their senses. They experience the world with their senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. These senses are their links with the world and make them aware of what is going on outside them. The process of becoming aware of their world through their senses is called perception.

2.11.3 Inclusion of learners with disabilities

Inclusion of learners with disabilities is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners and reducing exclusion from education to afford all the human right to education, the right to equal opportunities and the right to social participation (UNESCO, 1994).

According to the Dictionary of Contemporary English (Longman, 2004) inclusion means the act of including someone or something in a larger group or set, or the act of being included in one. According to Knight (1999), inclusion is a concept that sees children with disabilities as full time participants in and members of their neighbourhood schools and communities. Salend (2001) describes inclusion as an attempt to establish collaborative, supportive and nurturing learner communities that are based on giving all learners the services and accommodation they need to learn, as well as respecting and learning from each other's individual differences.

The researcher sees inclusion as providing educational services and appropriate support to learners with a full range of abilities and disabilities in the general education classroom.

2.11.4 Learners with disabilities

Ross (1998, in Engelbrecht, Kriegler and Booysen, 1996) proposed the following: ‘A learning disabled child is a child of at least average intelligence whose academic performance is impaired by a developmental lag in the ability to sustain selective attention (Engelbrecht, et al, 1996). Learners with disabilities probably present more diverse learning characteristics than any other special group. They exhibit deficits in one or more psychological processes for understanding language. The language, arts, mathematics and even thinking skills may be impaired.

According to the researcher’s understanding, learners with disabilities are learners who do not achieve at their capacity. Their abilities and performances seem to fluctuate both within and across skill and content areas.

2.11.5 Mainstream classrooms in Manyatseng

The concept refers to placement of learners in classrooms using the same curriculum, regardless of their abilities or disabilities (Engelbrecht, et al, 1996).

2.11.6 Mainstream classrooms

According to Oxford English Dictionary 2005 mainstream means the ideas, attitudes or activities that are shared by most people and regarded as normal or conventional,

Choate (1993) defines the mainstream classroom as the inclusion of learners with special needs in the general education process. This means that learners with physical, emotional, mental and sensory needs are taught in the same classes as learners without disabilities. Mainstreaming is both a concept and a process. Conceptually, mainstreaming is a commitment to educating learners with special needs in the same programmes as learners without needs (Donald, *et al*, 2002). Procedurally, it is the placement of learners with handicaps in the least restrictive environment in which their unique needs can be met. From a conceptual and procedural point of view, mainstreaming is much more than the physical integration of learners with and without disabilities (Engelbrecht, *et al*, 1999). Mainstreaming is planning for implementing procedures to effectively integrate learners with disabilities – instructionally, socially and temporarily in a meaningful and educationally appropriate manner (Choate, 1993; Engelbrecht, *et al*, 1999; Donald, *et al*, 2002)

2.12 RELATED LITERATURE

2.12.1 Perception of Educators In Canada

Research on Canadian educators and principals' perceptions and beliefs about teaching in heterogeneous classrooms has increased markedly and conceptualisation in this area has been changing rapidly. Investigators have described one set of educator beliefs and assumptions as lying along a continuum (Stanovich and Jordan, 1998). One end of this continuum is characterised by the idea that any learning or behavioural problems a learner exhibits, exists within the learner. That set of beliefs is labelled as 'pathognomonic', meaning attitudes that are derived from the assumption of the presence of a specific disease entity (Stanovich and Jordan, 1998). Examples of pathognomonic behaviours include limited or no interventions, little interaction with resources, educators lacking to demonstrate a link between assessment and curriculum and minimal parental contact (Stanovich and Jordan, 1998). Educators holding pathognomonic beliefs believe

that the heterogeneity in their classrooms has been imposed on them and think that systemic measures should be employed to reduce such diversity.

At the other end of the continuum is a cluster of beliefs labelled as ‘interventionist’, which holds that the learners’ learning problems result from the interaction between the learner and the instructional environment (Stanovich and Jordan, 1998).

2.12.2 Perceptions of educators in United Kingdom

Within the United Kingdom successive governments have affirmed a commitment to reduce the number of learners educated in segregated special schools and to move more of these learners into mainstream education. The findings discussed in this section are from a small survey that attempted to gauge the opinion of educators and head educators at primary schools about the necessary conditions for greater inclusion (Rose, 2001).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with twenty primary school educators and the head educators of seven primary schools. The established sample consisted of educators who had had a minimum of three years teaching experience and who were therefore unlikely not to have taught learners with disabilities (Rose, 2001)

All educators and head educators were asked their views on the main implications of inclusion. From their responses, recurring themes emerged which can be categorised under the following five headings.

2.12.2.1 Lack of classroom support

All interviews mentioned the importance of classroom support and the provision of additional staff as critical factors to enable inclusion to succeed. Head educators expressed similar concerns, feeling that additional staffing was needed for the sake of the individual child and for the class (Thomas, Walker and Webb, 1998). The data of this study show that both educators and head educators believe that learner support assistance will be needed to enable the disabled learner to access lessons and such an arrangement would require constant attention. The classroom support should therefore take the form

of direct intervention with the child and a constant physical presence to ensure that the learner remains on task (Giangreco, 1997)

2.12.2.2 Lack of training

The need for additional training and concern for professional experience was a consistent theme expressed by educators and head educators. They were concerned about their lack of knowledge, experience and the skills they would need to accept learners with disabilities into their classrooms (Ainscow, 1999). When asked about their current state of readiness to address learners with special needs, educators as well as head educators confirmed that they needed additional training (Garner, 2000).

2.12.2.3 Issue of time

The perception that the management of learners with disabilities took an inordinate amount of time when compared to that of their peers was supported by 25 per cent of interviewed educators (Thomas, *et al.*, 1998).

2.12.2.4 Physical access to buildings

Several educators commented on the difficulties of access presented by the classrooms, the lack of suitable toileting facilities and the difficulties which will be experienced. Jenkinson (1997) reported that educators' and parents' common perception was that inclusion for all learners would not be achieved without significant capital investment in buildings and resources.

2.12.2.5 Parental concerns

Head educators in the sample expressed concerns that parents of other learners in the school may voice anxieties about an influx of learners with more complex needs (Rose, 2001). Firstly, parents would perceive that learners with disabilities would demand additional attention that would take the educators away from parents' own children. Secondly, some learners, particularly those with emotional and behavioural difficulties might provide a bad influence on others in the class or cause them physical harm. Others

would not easily accept these learners coming into school, fearing some measure of discrimination (Booth, Ainscow and Dyson, 1997).

This study has identified a perception amongst British primary school educators and head educators that a number of conditions have to be met to facilitate a more inclusive education system. Whilst based upon limited experience of inclusive education, it is clear that learners with disabilities are seen as presenting a major challenge (Sebba and Sachdev, 1997).

2.12.3 Perceptions of primary education in Harare, Zimbabwe

Overall, the study (Mushoriwa,1998) established that the majority of educators have a negative attitude towards the inclusion of blind learners in mainstream classes and that male and female educators were equally rejecting the idea (Mushoriwa,1998). They both commented that it is difficult to promote inclusive practices in situations where mainstream classes are large and resources, including aids, equipment and support staff, are rare. These recurring themes emerged from educators' responses:

2.12.3.1 Social aspects

The main reason given was that learners in mainstream classes may shun blind learners, since they may be a bother in terms of seeking assistance from them, for example when moving about the school. In the end, educators suggested that such a child would likely be less well adjusted socially (Mushoriwa, 1998). The inclusive education does not automatically make a sighted child of social rejection by the child's peers who may be less appreciative of a blind child. According to the educators, these two aspects will negatively affect the social development of the other learners because of lack of full classroom interaction (Booth and Ainscow, 1998).

The above shows that the majority of educators felt that blind children are not socially accepted in mainstream classrooms and that such social rejection has serious repercussions for the social, psychological and intellectual development of the child (Booth and Ainscow, 1998).

2.12.3.2 Academic aspects

The majority of educators felt that inclusion will limit the learners' level of academic performance because, being socially rejected, they may have problems in discussing and sharing ideas with others. This negatively affects performance and in the end, they may lose confidence in their own abilities (Norwich, 1994). Educators also felt that inclusion will not make learners in mainstream classes benefit from specialised instruction of a blind learner (Keary, 1998). This is so because these learners use a different mode (Braille) in their reading and therefore may not grasp concepts at the same pace. Another reason given by educators for poor performance of blind learners in mainstream classes is the lack of individual attention by educators as a result of large class sizes (Norwich, 1994).

2.12.3.3 Provision for learners with special educational needs

It was noted that although mainstream educators understand the problems associated with blindness they do not make appropriate educational provisions for blind learners in mainstream classes because of heavy workload and lack of resources (Giorcelli, 1995). The majority of the educators indicated that educators are not happy to have blind learners in their classes and they are not prepared to teach them. These learners are seen as a burden and as interfering with the normal flow and routine of mainstream class activities (Giorcelli, 1995).

2.12.4 Perceptions of primary educators in the United States of America

This study (Busch, Pederson, Espin and Weissenburger, 2001) reports the perceptions about learners with disabilities by a first year educator. The following recurring themes emerged from her responses during the interview:

The educator considered the school climate to be supportive to both learners and staff. She reported that the support and collegiality between the mainstream and special education departments should be allowed for joint problem solving (Bernstein, 1983; Knight, 1999). Consequently, resolving learners' academic and behavioural problems was viewed as the shared responsibility of both mainstream and special educators. She commented that first year educators should be assertive in finding the support they need to do their job well (Salend, 2001).

2.12.4.1 Accountability

The interviewee saw marked differences in accountability between mainstream and special educators in her school. She perceived that special educators felt accountable for what was written on the Individualised Education Program (IEP), whereas mainstream educators felt accountable for moving learners through the district's curriculum (Mittler, 1995). She believed that these differences in accountability affected the extent to which special and mainstream educators felt responsible for individual learners and parents (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000). That is, formulating and monitoring progress toward IEP goals and objectives compelled special educators to focus on the achievements of individual learners. In contrast, mainstream educators were often felt to move through the curriculum despite an individual learner experiencing difficulties (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000).

The interviewee speculated that the differences in accountability and assessment were most likely influenced by learner numbers. With a limited number of learners on their case loads, special educators could focus on individual needs. However, the large number of learners taught by mainstream educators often precluded intensive focus on learners with individual needs (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000; Salend, 2001).

First year educators believed that mainstream educators wanted to include learners with disabilities in their classrooms, but did not know how to do so. That is, they did not know how to effectively integrate a learner with disabilities into a classroom of between 20–28 other learners without disabilities. Further, she thought that mainstream educators worried about negatively affecting learners' self-esteem (Gruender, 1996; Mittler, 2000). For example, she believed that mainstream educators rarely called on learners with developmental disabilities for fear that the learner would not know the answer and would feel embarrassed. She concluded that it would have been helpful for mainstream educators in her school to have had the opportunity to learn more strategies and techniques for including learners with disabilities (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000; Salend, 2001).

2.12.5 Perception of primary educators in South Africa

This is a comparison of three studies (Hay, Smit and Paulsen, 2001) conducted in Gauteng and the Western Cape during 2000 to determine educator's attitudes towards inclusion. The following patterns were found:

Inadequate knowledge and training for implementing inclusive education effectively, lack of educational and educator support and Inadequate provision of facilities, infrastructure and assistive devices (Wearmouth, Edwards and Richmond, 2000) and the findings were as follows:

2.12.5.1 Educator preparedness

Regarding educator preparedness for integrated classrooms, the most common response was that respondents had not had sufficient training to deal with these classes. Almost all respondents suggested more training needs to be given to educators to prepare them for inclusive classrooms and regarding support services, respondents indicated that they did not receive regular support from the regular support services (Hay, Smit and Paulsen, 2001).

Overall findings show that educators lack knowledge about issues related to inclusive education. They further felt unprepared and unequipped to teach integrated classes and ascribed this to a lack of training, time, facilities, teaching experience and large classes (Hay, Smit and Paulsen, 2001). The following constructs were developed from the findings of the literature studies:

In the United States of America, United Kingdom and in the Free State, South Africa both male and female educators were concerned about their lack of knowledge, experience and skills necessary to accept learners with disabilities into mainstream classrooms. Educators as well as head educators in the United Kingdom confirmed that they needed additional training.

Educators in the United Kingdom, United States of America, Zimbabwe as well as some educators in the Free State, South Africa felt that for the sake of the individual child and

the class additional staff is needed as well as the resources. Head educators in the United Kingdom expressed similar concerns as educators, believing that learning support assistants would be needed to enable learners with special educational needs to access lessons.

First year female educators from the United States of America reported that the support and collaboration between the mainstream and special education educators are shared responsibilities (Busch, et al, 2001). In Harare, Zimbabwe both male and female educators commented on the difficulty of promoting inclusive practice in mainstream classes with limited support staff. (Busch, et al, 2001).

Educators in the United Kingdom and in the Free State, South Africa perceived the management of learners with special educational needs as time consuming. Several educators in the United Kingdom commented on the difficulties regarding access to the school buildings. Head educators in the United Kingdom expressed concern that parents of other learners may perceive that learners with special educational needs would demand more attention from educators. Educators in Harare, Zimbabwe suggested that the inclusion of learners with special educational needs can increase the amount of social rejection by their peers (Mushoriwa, 2000). The majority of educators in Harare, Zimbabwe felt that inclusion will limit the learner's level of academic performance because of being socially rejected.

2.13 CONCLUSION

This chapter unpacked the theoretical frame work a constituting lens through which the study is looked at. The definitions and discussion of operational concepts in the context all the theoretical frame work are included. This chapter focuses on the research question as a whole is responding to, namely how some primary school educator in Manyatseng perceive the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classroom. The literature is reviewed to find out about the findings with regard to the research question. The next chapter contains a discussion of methodology and design.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the methods used in this study, the research approach, research paradigm, research design, ethical consideration, validity and reliability of the study, data collection and procedure, data analysis technique, respondents' profiles and finally the instrumental technique.

3.2 Research Approach

These are general two approaches which may be used in all three research paradigms - the positivistic, the phenomenological and critical paradigm, (Ivey, 1986). These approaches are the quantitative approach - Mahlomaholo (1998) postulates that the positivistic paradigm always applies the quantitative approach, because it uses methods and procedures of research usually applied in the natural sciences. This study is qualitative since it deals with emotions perceptions or attitudes, which the researcher believes should not be quantified. This is also explained fully under: Sampling of the same chapter three. Qualitative studies do not have a universalistic intent on its results and findings as it is believed knowledge is basically local but usually projected universally (Ivey, 1986). The study is confirmed to the area of Manyatseng as indicated in its title.

3.3 Research Paradigm

This study uses the critical paradigm for the three indicated by Mahlomaholo (1998) above. Critical researchers strongly argue that human beings are dynamic and their experiences cannot be treated in the same manner as if they were objects in a natural science laboratory (Harvey, 1990). Human beings, they argue, should be studied through particularly human methodologies which would respect and balance their subjectiveness. And to add to this dimension, critical theory maintains that all research is value laden. According to this perspective, all research is mounted on particular ideological orientations (Harvey, 1990). Critical paradigm is important for this study because it restores the quality of subjectiveness to the researched as they are allowed to speak for themselves or their own behalf. The aim of this paradigm is not to control the variables,

to formulate general and universal laws for purpose of prediction, but to liberate and emancipate the oppressed.

3.4 Research Design

This study being qualitative restricted the researcher in dealing with the researched in the same way as quantitative studies do-calling respondents sample and their selecting sampling. Manyatseng as an area of focus, consists of only four primary schools the numbers compelled the researcher to involve all schools in the investigation. In Manyatseng there are no special schools, and the people can not afford the exorbitant prices paid at such schools in the country. All learners –without or with disabilities attend in the same schools. These schools qualified for participation in the investigation for the above mentioned reasons.

3.5 Ethical Consideration:

Struwig and Stead (2001) argue that a study cannot be conducted without ensuring the voluntary agreement of participants to take part in the research. The participants should be informed about the research process. This has been duly attended to as it forms the cornerstone on treating respondents with respect and humanity in critical research. And the important issue to be dealt with was confidentiality. It was indicated to the respondents that the information they would share with the researcher would not be used for any other purpose either than for this research and that they will appear in the study with acronyms to protect their privacy. It was also explained that the project did not have any principal benefits.

3.6 Validity And Reliability

Mahlomaholo and Nkoane (2002) are both in agreement that in critical emancipatory research, attention is focused more on the data quality; how the data relates and fulfils the emancipatory purpose of the research. Validity and reliability cannot be emphasised at the expense of the respect and humanity of the researched. The approach is unlike the positivistic paradigm which values reliability, validity, objectivity, consistency, predictability, causality, the making or formulation of universal lens (Mouton, 1988). The major functions of research are emancipation and empowerment which are supported

in democracy.

3.7 RESPONDENTS

Four respondents from Manyatseng primary schools were selected for this investigation. The researcher selected them for their dedication in they are work their love for learners and fortunately their further studies are in line with inclusive education. The researcher found her selection relevant since they are lightly to implement inclusion in their schools. Manyatseng has only four schools therefore they are all represented.

3.7.1 Respondent A

Respondent A is a male educator and the principal of one of the primary schools in Manyatseng. He has been in this position for four years. Respondent A is married and has two young sons. The elder one is at primary school (Grade 4), while the younger one is attending a pre-school in town. He commenced his primary education at Le-Roux Public school in Qwaqwa. He obtained his Primary Educators Certificate at Mphohadi College of Education in Kroonstad. The respondent taught at different schools until he was appointed as principal of one of the primary schools. The respondent furthered his studies through UNISA obtaining a B.A. and B.A. Hons degrees in Management. He has just obtained a Masters degree in management at the University of the Free State. The researcher selected respondent A because of his experience as the head and the Manager of the school. As he is the one who admits learners in his school, he might have a positive influence to his staff towards inclusive education.

3.7.2 Respondent B

Respondent B is a male educator who is married and obtained the Primary Education Diploma from the former VUDEC in 1994. He commenced his primary education at Tebang public school and furthered his high education at Le-Reng secondary school. He obtained his Primary Educator Certificate at Sefikeng College of Education in Qwaqwa. He also taught at different farm schools until he was appointed at one of the primary schools in Manyatseng. The respondent was selected because of his experience in teaching and his dedication to dealing with poor, struggling learners in one of the farms schools where collected food and clothes donations for the needy learners.

3.7.3 Respondent C

Respondent C is a female educator and a single mother of three children, two girls and a boy. She has ten years' experience in teaching. She loves and enjoys working with young learners especially the foundation phase. Respondent C has a sad history of losing both parents at a relatively young age. Since she was the eldest child, she was responsible for bringing up her two younger brothers and a little sister. This experience inspired and developed her love for children. She commenced her primary education at Spitskop with her grandmother's help and inspiration and furthered her secondary education at Tsepang secondary. She could not further her teaching career due to financial constraints, but was fortunate enough to get a position on a farm school and intended raise funds to continue with her studies. She was then encouraged by one of the School Management and Governance Developer in the district to attend a special one year course at Bonamelo College of Education in Qwaqwa. After obtaining a Primary Educator's certificate, she studied with the former VUDEC to obtain her Primary Education Diploma. The researcher selected Respondent C, because of her experience of working with learners in the foundation phase. It is in this phase where most learners' needs are identified.

3.7.4 Respondent D

Respondent D is a widow and female educator with more than twenty years' teaching experience. She is the eldest of the four children in their family who was also the breadwinner of her family. The respondent attended primary school up to Grade 8, but could not further her studies because of her responsibilities at home. She was offered a teaching position at one of the private schools in Manyatseng. After years of hard work, she furthered her high school education through correspondence to eventually complete Grade 12. She continued her studies with VUDEC where she obtained the Primary Education Diploma and Further Diploma in Education in Cognitive Studies (FDECS). The respondent was selected because of her experience of teaching. The respondent is currently pursuing her B.Ed. Hons.in Special Needs at the University of the Free State.

3.8 INSTRUMENTAL TECHNIQUE

The researcher employed the FAI as a technique to collect data. This technique has the richness of yielding information from the respondents. The technique involves asking one question to encourage the conversation with the respondents. This technique is very effective, scientific and user-friendly since it allows an opportunity for freedom of expression in more relaxed atmosphere but stays focused.

3.8.1 Theoretical origin

The term FAI is a translation of the Dutch term 'Vrije Attitude Gesprek' as used by Vrolijk, Dijkema and Timmerman (1980). The researchers discovered that when they allowed the interviewees the freedom to speak, the information obtained become more relevant than when they would use a structured questionnaire. This open type of interview provided them with the type of information that could be used to solve problems in the labour situation. The psychologist Carl Rogers, affirmed the method again in 1941. He stressed the importance of the interview technique as a means to reflect the respondent's feelings in a therapeutic context (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997)

3.8.2 The nature and purpose of the instrument

The FAI is technique is described as a non-directive, controlled depth interview and can be used as a qualitative research interview. The interview is a verbal technique to obtain information (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997). If conducted well, the FAI is considered as an appropriate technique for accessing the information from respondents if conducted well. It is a face to face conversation which opens the space to interview and allows the researcher to respond flexibly and sensitively. It is therefore for the researcher to access and negotiate issues of reliability and validity during the research process. The FAI can be characterised as a personal method to obtain information concerning an opinion, while the interviewer stays non-directive. The FAI technique can be used in a two person interview where the interviewer summarises and reflects. Within the framework of the opening question, the interviewee has freedom to explore own ideas and to suggest new topics, which may be relevant to the opinion expressed. The interviewer is allowed to ask new probing questions during the interview. In order to conduct the FAI successfully the interviewer needs to respect the respondent and be interested in hearing the respondent's opinion (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997; Apple, 2001; Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002).

3.8.3 The Structure of the interview

In qualitative research the number of respondents does not reduce the usefulness and validity of the findings presented in chapter 4 since quality of the produced information is more important than the number of respondents. Duncan (1993) convincingly argues that large sample sizes can yield information that cannot be managed and adequately analysed. Interviews took place in the respondents' homes where they were comfortable and could manage any disturbances which may occur. The interviews were conducted in the afternoons as confirmed by the respondents and the researcher so as not to disrupt or inconvenience both the respondents and the researcher during their working hours. In order to ease the respondents' anxiety, the researcher orientated and familiarised each one of the respondents about the topic and purpose of the study.

3.8.4 How the FAI is used

The techniques mentioned in the following require a certain amount of skill. Knowledge about them remains important knowledge if the know-how; the skill to use them, is lacking (Meulenberg - Buskens, 1997). The necessary skill can be acquired by practice. Even genuinely felt respect and interest for the respondent have to be communicated well in order to be effective. Seidman (1991) states: 'Technique is not everything but it is a lot'. The FAI is free to question. This technique is described as non-directive because the interviewee is free to talk about anything, as long as it is within the framework of the initial question. Various techniques complement each other in achieving this goal.

3.8.5 Information

The interviewer always starts the interview by giving a little information about herself and the frame of reference of the interview. It is often necessary to give some information explaining the background of the exploratory question, but it is imperative to keep this introduction as clear as possible (Meulenberg - Buskens, 1997). It is not advisable to give this kind of information later during the interview. This will interrupt the interviewee's way of exploring and formulating and it will disturb the structure of the interview.

3.8.6 The exploring question

The initial question, exploring question, is the only substantive question and has to be formulated in an open and vague enough way. The formulation of this question may not contain any suggestion. It should be an exploring question (Meulenberg - Buskens, 1997; Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002).

This exploring question in fact covers the interviewer's opinion or hypothesis, formulated in a questioning way. For the interview to be a real FAI, it is important that the interviewer asks only one exploring question and only at the beginning of the interview session (Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002). This type of qualitative interview can be called an open-ended questionnaire. In this type of interview the interviewer will inevitably influence the interviewee's exploring of the interview topic.

3.8.7 Reflective Summary

During a reflective summary the interviewer returns the interviewee's opinions and feelings in own words. It is not a good idea to repeat literally what the interviewee has said. A reflective summary has a structuring function, since it structures (orders) interviewee's information (Meulenberg - Buskens, 1997). This is very important for the interviewee and the interviewer.

The open structure of the FAI allows the interviewee more freedom of expression than in a normal, social conversation. A reflective summary has to stimulate the interviewee to give more information; it has to be an invitation. The reflective summary has to be in a tentative and asking way. It is recommended that the tone of the interviewer's voice should rise at the end of the utterance. This will have an evocative effect (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997; Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002).

The interviewer has to reflect not only the interviewee's actual words, the manifest aspect, but also the feeling behind it. The real meaning, the ultimate message, which is sometimes the latent aspect, has to be captured in as concrete a way as possible (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997). Concrete means that the interviewer's reflective summary should reflect the nature as well as the intensity of the interviewee's feelings. It is not

important for the interviewer to use perfect formulations in her reflections. Stumbling may actually produce very good results as it forces the interviewee to take over and reformulate opinions or feelings (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997; Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002).

3.8.8 The clarifying question

The interviewer cannot actually ask for too much. It is a well known social fact that people (and inexperienced interviewers) think too soon that they have understood somebody else. Inexperienced interviewers also tend to define their 'new' questions as clarifying questions. A 'real' clarifying question should always remain within the information already given by interviewee (Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002). It should refer to an internal rather than an external frame of reference. The clarifying question has to be handled with care. Some interviewees may find it intruding, even threatening, possibly because it is not a type of the fact that it is not a type of question often asked in normal social contact. However, respondents actually often delight in it (Meulenberg - Buskens, 1997; Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002).

3.8.9 Pause or silence

A silence or pause can be very effective, giving both the interviewer and interviewee time to think. The effectiveness of a good, silent 'listener' should not be underestimated. In 80 per cent of the cases, the interviewee will resolve the silence within ten seconds (Meulenberg - Buskens 1997).

3.8.10 How scientific is the approach?

As Meulenberg-Buskens (1997), argues that quality in social research could refer to the relevance of a study, so is the study of which quality is determined on the basis of data collected and issues of transformation. The degree in which it yielded useful and applicable information, enhancing values such as democracy and social justice and empowers people like the respondents as well as the researcher in this study. FAI also informs respect for human beings in its social usefulness.

The successful use of FAI by many researchers at both masters and PhD level - Sematle (2001), Hongwane (2007) and Matobako and Helu (2002) confirm its technical quality as a piece of work, degree to which it conforms to methodological consistency (Kuhn, 1970 in Meulenberg - Buskens, 1997).

3.9 DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURE

The researcher contacted the selected respondents in writing to obtain their permission for conducting interviews (see Appendix 1). Place and time were confirmed. The FAI technique was employed as a useful tool for accessing data from the respondents, as advocated by Meulenberg-Buskens (1997). Since the researcher was interviewing the respondents, a tape recorder was used to prevent the information from being forgotten. The use of a tape recorder was discussed with the respondents and none of them had a problem in that regard.

The selected respondents were interviewed individually at their respective settings. Interviews mainly took place in the afternoons so as not to disrupt the normal activities at the schools. The researcher spent one hour with each respondent. The findings, discussions and interpretations are reported in Chapter 4. The questions were open-ended and based on how they construct meaning of their perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms. The questions focused on their reasons for advancing particular meanings (see Appendix 2).

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUE

Textually Oriented Discourse Analysis (TODA) was used in the analysis of data. Mahlomaholo (1998) defines TODA as a technique that looks at what the respondent says as text. That text is therefore, used by the researcher as evidence to substantiate conclusions drawn about the discursive practices informing the construction and production thereof as well as well as the very basic and deep special structured issues grounding both discursive practices and the text. Lastly discourse is also analysed according to social practice (Fairclough, 1992).

The data collected through interviews were transcribed and then analysed as text to extract the meaning constructed by the four educators. The data was analysed through Textually Orientated Discourse Analysis (TODA) as formulated by Fairclough (1992). This technique is useful for interpreting the respondents' discourses. The text (words) of the respondents are questioned in order to disclose the influence of the ideology carried by the respondents. This approach focuses on the actual text of what the respondents said in the interviews, in order to make statements about the discursive practices informing their discourses.

3.10.1 Text

Text is not a discourse, but rather one of its aspects. Interestingly, while discursive and social practices are fluid, dynamic and continuously changing, written texts have an inherent significance in their very materiality. According to Fairclough (1992) texts are analysed in terms of a diverse range of features relating to form and meaning (e.g. properties of dialogue and text structure, vocabulary and grammar) pertaining to both the ideational and interpersonal functions of language. Fairclough (1992) commented that individuals working in a variety of disciplines had recently started to recognise the ways in which changes in language use are linked to wider social and cultural processes. Hence they were beginning to appreciate the importance of using language analysis as a method for studying social change. However, a method of language analysis that is both theoretically adequate and practically usable does not yet exist. Fairclough's (1992) main objective therefore was to develop an approach to language analysis which could contribute to filling the gap – an approach which would be particularly useful for investigating change in language, and useable in studies of social and cultural change.

To achieve this, it was necessary for Fairclough (1992) to combine methods for analysing language developed within linguistics and language studies and the social theory of language. Among the former he included work within various branches of linguistics (vocabulary, semantics, grammar), pragmatics, and above all the 'discourse analysis' that had been developed earlier by linguists (the various sense 'discourse' and 'discourse analysis'). He included the work of Foucault (1980); Habermas (1987)

According to Fairclough (1992) there was traditionally a lack of interest in language on the part of other social sciences, and a tendency to see language as transparent. While linguistic data such as interviews were widely used, there has been a tendency to believe that social content of such data can be interpreted without attention to the language itself. These positions and attitudes are now changing and have been accompanied by a 'linguistic turn' in social theory, which has resulted in language being afforded a more central role within social phenomena.

Attempts to synthesise language studies and social theory had limited success. According to Pecheux's (1982 in Fairclough, 1992) synthesis centre around discourse analysis and the concept of discourse. Discourse is a difficult concept, largely because of the many conflicting and overlapping definitions formulated from various theoretical and disciplinary standpoints (Dijk, 1985; McDonell, 1986 in Fairclough, 1992). In linguistics, 'discourse' sometimes refers to extended samples of spoken dialogue, in contrast to written 'texts'. In this sense text analysis and discourse analysis do not share the traditional limitation of linguistic analysis to sentences or smaller grammatical units; instead they focus on a higher level of organisational properties of dialogue (e.g. turn-taking, or the structure of conversational openings and closings) or written texts (e.g. the structure of a crime report in a newspaper) (Fairclough, 1992; Duncan, 1993). More commonly, however, 'discourse' is used in linguistics to refer to extended samples of either spoken or written language. In addition to preserving the emphasis on high level organisational features, this sense of discourse emphasises interaction between speaker and addressee or between writer and reader, and therefore the process of producing and interpreting speech and writing, as well as the situational context of language use (Fairclough, 1992). 'Text' is regarded here as one dimension of discourse: the written or spoken 'product' of the process of text production. Finally, 'discourse' is also used for different types of language used in different social situations (e.g. newspaper discourse, advertising discourse, or the discourse of medical consultations) (Fairclough, 1992).

On the other hand, 'discourse' is widely used in social theory and analysis, for example in the work of Foucault 1980, to refer to different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice. Fairclough's (1992) attempt to combine language analysis and social

theory centres on a combination of the more social-theoretical sense of discourse, than on the text-and-interaction sense of linguistically oriented discourse analysis. The concept of discourse and discourse analysis is three dimensional (Fairclough, 1992; Duncan 1993). Any discursive event (i.e. any instance of discourse) is seen as simultaneously being a piece of text, an instance of discursive practice and an instance of social practice. The text dimension attends to language analysis of texts (Fairclough, 1992). The 'discursive practice' dimension, lie 'interaction' in the 'text-and-interaction' view of discourse, specifies the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation, for example which types of discourse (including 'discourses' in the more social- theoretical sense) are drawn upon and how they are combined (Foucault, 1980; Duncan, 1993). The social practice dimension attends to issues of concern in social analysis, such as the institutional and organisational circumstances of the discursive practice, and constituting or constructive effects of discourse referred to above (Foucault, 1980).

3.10.2 Discursive practices

Fairclough (1992) proposed that language use should be regarded as a form of social practice, rather than a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables. This has various implications. Firstly, it implies that discourse is a mode of action – a form in which people may act upon the world and especially upon each other – and also as a mode of representation. This view of language use has been made familiar, although often in individualistic terms, by linguistic philosophy and pragmatics (Levinson, 1983 in Fairclough, 1992).

Secondly, it implies that there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure (Foucault, 1980, with such a relationship existing more generally between social practice and social structure (Fairclough, 1992; Duncan, 1993). The latter is both a condition for and an effect of the former. On the other hand, discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure in the widest sense and at all levels – by class and other social relations at a social level, by the relations specific to particular institutions such as the law, educational systems of classification or by various norms and conventions of both a discursive and a non-discursive nature (Foucault, 1980; Fairclough, 1992). Specific discourses vary in their structural determination according to the particular

social domain or institutional framework in which they are generated. On the other hand, discourse is socially constituting. This is the importance of Foucault's concept. Discourse contributes to the constitution of all those dimensions of social structure by which it is directly or indirectly shaped and constrained, namely its own norms and conventions, as well as the relations, identities and institutions behind them (Foucault 1980). Discourse is a practice not just of representing the world, but of signifying the world – constituting the world in meaning.

Three aspects of the constructive effect of discourse can be distinguished. Discourse contributes firstly to the construction of social identities and subject positions for social subjects and types of 'self' (Henriques et al., 1984; Weedon, 1987 in Fairclough, 1992). Secondly, discourse helps to construct social relationships between people. Thirdly, discourse contributes to the construction of knowledge and belief systems. These three effects respectively correspond to the three functions of language and dimensions of meaning that co-exist and interact in all discourses. Fairclough (1992) called this 'identity', 'relational', and 'ideational' functions of language.

The identity function relates to the ways in which social identities are set up in discourse, while the relational function relates to how social relationships between discourse participants are enacted and negotiated (Fairclough 1992). The ideational function refers to ways in which text signify the world and its processes, entities and relations. The identity and relational functions are grouped together by Halliday (1978, in Fairclough, 1992) as the 'interpersonal' function. Halliday (1978) also distinguishes a 'textual' function which can be usefully added to Fairclough's list. This concerns how bits of information are foregrounded or backgrounded, taken as given or presented as new, picked out as topic or theme, and how a part of text is linked to preceding and subsequent parts and external social situations (Halliday 1978; in Fairclough, 1992).

Discursive practice is constitutive in both conventional and creative ways. It contributes to reproducing existing society (social identities, social relationships, knowledge and belief systems), yet also to transforming society (Fairclough, 1992; Duncan 1993). Discursive practice involves processes of text production, distribution and consumption

and the nature of these processes varies between different types of discourse according to social factors. For example, texts are produced in specific ways in specific social contexts and also consumed differently in different social contexts (Fairclough, 1992; Duncan 1993). Some texts have a simple distribution, such as a casual conversation belonging only to the immediate context of the situation in which it occurs, while others have a complex distribution (Fairclough, 1992).

3.10.3 Social practices

The third dimension of Fairclough's (1992) model is social practice. While social practice embraces more than discourse, Fairclough (1992) places 'discourse practice in relation to social practices and specifically ideology and hegemony'.

Fairclough (1992) defines ideology as construction of reality which is built on various dimensions of the forms or meanings of discursive practices and contributes to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination.

In discursive events, such as public policy, language is ideologically invested for the purpose of constructing and stabilising assumptions about social identities and relations. The naturalisation of these identities and relations serves to support a wider system of values and beliefs (Fairclough, 1992). With respect to public policy, it is the system of values and beliefs required by the State for the purpose of enabling and legitimising regimes of capital accumulation. Within this third dimension, policy documents are read against the ideological dimensions of their language, and specifically their value, as a means of legitimating the reproductive requirements of capitalism through manufacturing consent or 'mobilisation of bias' (Schattschneider, 1960 in Fairclough, 1992).

The inter-textual relationship between the information policy documents in this analysis is an explicit one. Each successive document responds to previous documents and anticipates future ones within the inter-textual chain. Collectively, they tell a complete story of community information centres. Individually, they represent discursive events within the policy process of problem identification and resolution and policy implementation (Fairclough, 1992; Duncan 1993).

With the above discussions in mind, discursive practices for this study were patterns of meaning construction that informed respondents' meaning-making strategies. I also looked for particular patterns of meaning construction among the interview transcripts of male and female educators, their experiences in teaching, their ages and qualifications, and their perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities (i.e. with special educational needs) in mainstream classrooms (see Chapter 4).

Conclusions were drawn on the basis of the findings about meaning construction of male and female educators. It should again be emphasised that the evidence to verify the findings was supplied on the basis of the actual words (texts) of the respondents. Furthermore, the findings and discourse were compared in terms of all the factors from the particular themes that emerged from the conversations with the respondents.

One point that needs to be emphasised once more is that in order to verify the findings of this study, the interviews with the respondents have been included in the original (see Appendix 2) form and in the text.

Lastly, this methodology was chosen specifically because it respects human subjectivity and also because of the objective to study the construction of meaning among humans. No other method is able to access this typically human factor more appropriately than discourse analysis (Mouton, 1988). Findings and interpretations in Chapter 4 attest to this fact.

Using this technique produced results that could be scrutinised without destroying their fluidity and multiplicity.

3.11 CONCLUSION

In chapter research approach, research paradigm, research design, validity and reliability, ethical considerations instrumental technique used were discussed in detail. The next includes chapter analysis, discussion and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents data analysed and interpreted by means of qualitative strategies as discussed in Chapter 3. This implies that the chapter introduces the researcher's interpretation of the four primary school educators' perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms. The four respondents were divided according to gender (two males and two females).

This chapter therefore focuses on the meaning construction of both male and female respondents. The point is to show how different and/or similar the two groups construct meaning of their own perceptions about the inclusion of learners with disabilities in the mainstream classrooms. Furthermore, to avoid repeating the discussions in Chapters 1 to 3, only the relevant chapter or paragraph where more details are supplied in earlier chapters will be referred to in this chapter. This chapter will relate and interpret the findings in the context of the argument and theory informing this study. As discussed in

Chapter 3, the procedures followed in this analysis and interpretations are those of discourse analysis although attention will be given almost exclusively to the discursive and social practices informing the production, dissemination and consumption of particular identified meaning constructs, as suggested by Fairclough (1992).

Reading through the four texts, the researcher identified nine themes. The nine themes were siphoned out from all texts, and reconciled. They were found to point in one direction even though necessarily similar ways. Themes are as follows: Lack of training, educators' and perceptions towards inclusive education, lack of educational support, time, discrimination and labeling, parental involvement, access to buildings, social aspect, educators' fear of the inclusion of learners with disabilities..

The theory had mapped out the discursive practices informing the construction of analysed text. The researcher's theory (see Chapter 1 – 3) and first-hand knowledge or experience of the social structure in South Africa helped to illuminate these connections (between discursive practice and text) and contracts between male and female respondents corpora respectively. Details supplied in subsequent sections provide further substance to this.

Lastly, it needs to be pointed out that particular extracts will be referred to according to the labels, RM5, RM3, RF2 AND RF4, in this chapter.

4.2 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

All four educators were asked about their views towards the inclusion of learner with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms. Recurring themes categorised under the following ten headings emerged from their responses.

4.2.1 Lack of training

When the respondents were asked by the researcher about their perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms, they responded as shown below:

RF2: Well I think specific problems need specific training so that you can understand and cope with it. I think it's hard to know how to deal with certain types of children. For instance, a deaf and a dumb child. I have never had to deal with deaf and dumb children, and I think you need a special training to be able to handle such cases.

RM5: I think maybe it is a good opinion, but my only problem is that these learners were taught by well trained educators in the special schools. The educators have the know-how, to deal with challenges coming from that situation. And, another thing, I think the classes in special schools are not as overloaded as ours. So I will say that we are not ready to implement that policy. How can government bring these changes while we are still struggling with the NCS. This will really create a lot of problems for us educators. But I am also asking myself how can you put a child with eyesight problem (let's say a blind child) in the same class with a child who cannot hear. Does this mean we must go back to learn the sign language?

RF4: I don't have any problem towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in my class, except that if we are thinking in terms of inclusion, we would have to be looking at fairly significant whole-staff training issues. When there is inclusion into a particular class, we automatically think that it is the responsibility of that class educator, whereas it is a multi-dimensional matter.

RM3: I suggest that the Department of Education should provide schools with all the necessary facilities to accommodate learners with disabilities. Secondly, in order to accept these learners, the Department of Education should motivate educators from all angles, supply them with adequate thorough training.

It is clear from the above text that educators are concerned about their lack of experience, knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands of dealing with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms. Garner (2000) was concerned that inclusion would fail unless a significant change was made to the current structure and content of initial educator

training. This supports the respondents' views that the current state of many educators' knowledge and understanding and practical skills to manage children with disabilities are inadequate for supporting inclusion. However, other writers (e.g. Ainscow, 1999) have suggested that experience may well be an important part of training and that it is easier to identify and tailor training needs to personal circumstances once the process of inclusion has begun (see Chapter 2.1.2.2.2).

4.2.2 Lack of support

All four respondents mentioned the importance of support. They felt that special school educators should be distributed to different schools as mentors to guide and help their colleagues who have never experienced working with learners with disabilities. They added that they also lack facilities and equipment in order to accommodate these learners in their classrooms.

RF2: We need support from capable people like physiotherapists especially for learners who experience physical problems. Secondly, learners with behavioural problems need counseling from people like social workers. It is the Department's responsibility to assist in this regard.

RM5: Appropriate support without the school having to fund it. I mean experts from other fields who can support for example, learners with emotional and behavioural problems.

RF4: If there is a limited number of learners in a class per educator with good levels of support, classroom and teaching support, then it is possible that inclusion could be beneficial to the child. I also have a concern for all the other learners in the class as well, because if a educator is having to spend so much time with one child, it can be at the expense of other learners. So I think the support has to be thought out very carefully before the child is offered a place.

RM3: The Department of Education should supply schools with health care services. They should also employ at least two educators who are qualified in special

needs for the disabled learners. Disabled educators should as well be employed.

From the above texts it is clear that all four educators believed that learning support would be needed to enable learners with disabilities to be accommodated in mainstream classrooms. It is also clear that these learners are perceived as problems, both to educators as and other learners in mainstreams classes.

4.2.3 Time

The perception that managing learners with disabilities demand a lot of educators' time was significant. All four respondents felt that they have limited time to attend to all learners in the classroom, and that the inclusion of learners with disabilities will cost them extra time.

RF2: It is obvious that if you have got learners like these in your classroom you will need more time to attend to them in particular.

RM5: Time is very important, in fact time is money. What will happen if you have say, five mentally retarded learners in your classroom. Because they learn so slowly you must be patient with them and pay individual attention and the time is running against you because you have a work schedule to complete and revision is needed. I think another important thing to mention is that our classes are already overloaded. When are you going to get the time to focus your attention to these particular learners? We are already struggling with the normal learners to finish in time.

RF4: The problem with learners with disabilities is that they demand more time and more attention from us and that is not always possible. As a result my work suffers a lot because I cannot work at my normal rate as it is required by LFs (Learning Facilitators). I work slowly trying to accommodate them in my lessons. This means doing some catch ups by giving extra classes in the mornings before school or after school and even during holidays. During that time their concentration span do not allow them to listen because they are exhausted.

RM3: We have a girl in grade 2 who is on a wheelchair. She is a slow learner but is catching up very slowly. The other one is a boy in grade 3. This learner can hardly catch up a thing. His language is not clear. Unfortunately, dealing with these learners demand a lot of time and skills which we do not have.

It is clear from the above text that more time is needed to cater for all learners including those with disabilities. Concerns about time management centered upon the importance of supporting all learners and meeting their individual needs. Similarly, closer liaison between educators and support staff working with other agencies, imposes significant time demands upon educators (see Chapter 2.12.1.3)

4.2.4 Discrimination and labeling

Respondents felt that learners with disabilities may not be socially accepted in mainstream classes.

RF2: Normally these learners are inferior. Now including them in the mainstream classrooms will punish them. However, it is their democratic right to be in mainstream classrooms to obtain the same quality of education, by using the same sources and facilities as their peers.

RM5: I agree it is not right to discriminate against them because they did not choose to be born like that. Actually I am not saying we must avoid them or despise them, because they are human beings like us. But this is very difficult you know. Let the government do everything that is necessary and thereafter we admit these learners. It cannot help us taking them now only to frustrate them. And the learners need to be considered too because they are not used to attending together with such learners. They should be trained as well not to call them names and laugh at them.

RF4: I don't think that including say for instance, a blind learner in your class who may need assistance from his or her colleagues is advisable. I am sure that she or he may be a bother to others.

RM3: By separating learners with disabilities from their peers would be a discrimination in the true sense of the word, hence, learners are very observant, irrespective of being with disabilities or not. Calling them by names and mockery will follow. They will be humiliated by their peers. They will also be frustrated and feel unaccepted.

The above texts indicate that the inclusion of these learners in mainstream classes is viewed as dumping them in a place where they will be labeled and discriminated against. According to the texts Respondent RF2 felt that it is these learners' democratic right to be in mainstream classrooms to obtain the same quality of education, by using the same resources and facilities as their peers.

Stainback and Stainback (1996) confirm the above views by arguing that including learners with significant disabilities in general education classrooms heightens the awareness of each interrelated aspect of the school as a community.

It is clear from the above statements that learners with disabilities are seen as unable to operate in a society such as a school, and may have to live with discrimination and unfair labeling by better-abled people, including educators. Communication about learners with disabilities has on most occasions focused on their helplessness or threat to other learners and educators. Traditional accounts highlight disability as an illness, with the disabled person depending on health professionals and other well-meaning people. In this case those people are special educators. Alternatively, learners with disabilities are portrayed as a disadvantage to other learners and therefore need to be excluded from the mainstream classroom and placed at a special school or classroom where according to the respondents, they belong.

4.2.5 Parental involvement

There was a concern about approval of the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms.

- RM3:** Parents cannot be left out in as far as inclusive education is concerned. They must be fully informed about the inclusive education. They must be in the know how about the changes which are taking place in the schools where their children attend. This kind of education will make some of the parents delightful since their children are going to be under their care on daily basis. They will organise their transport to school. Parents will be able to come to school to report their children's physical problems. Discipline of both learners with and without disabilities will be easily maintained.
- RF4:** I think that parents' involvement in this regard is very crucial since they are responsible for their children's education. They should not be excluded in the planning of any change taking place in education. Their support and inputs are very important.
- RF2:** Without parents' involvement education will be a disaster. The success of education depends entirely on their support and active participation in any decision making in education, therefore, the Department of Education should always take them into consideration and not look down to them.
- RM5:** All stakeholders must be involved including parents. Parents are an important part of the education of a learner. Parents are not cooperating with us. We call meetings and they do not show up. I don't believe they even supervise their children's work. So sometimes we have a situation where a learner collapses. Later we will discover that the learner is maybe suffering from epilepsy or pregnant for that matter. Parents need to inform us about the medical records of their children so that we prevent dangerous situations like the one that I have told you about now. It will be very good if parents will tell the school how best they deal with these learners with barriers because they stay with them and definitely know how to treat them best under certain circumstances.

The above responses indicate that the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms is not the responsibility of educators alone. Educators have to be supported

by parents, the rest of the school, the Department of Education and the wider community. It is a task that calls for team work and joint responsibility (see Chapter 2.12.2.5).

4.2.6 Social aspects

RM5: You know that these learners are always put aside, they always feel isolated because they are always grouped together. This makes them to lose self confidence and feel inferior. If they can be accepted back to the mainstream classrooms they can feel better and raise their self-esteem.

RM3: Learners with disabilities will not only benefit from the normal ones but also enjoy the company. Learning and working together of these two parties will result into a number of advantages, for example, learners with disabilities will be fully supported, both parties will get to know each other very well, team work will be formed, learners without disabilities will help disabled learners to do things which they are unable to do and both parties will solve problems together.

RF4: Oh! Yes, including learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms will surely bring a tremendous change of perceptions and attitudes to both normal learners and educators. Their inclusion in mainstream classes will instill cooperation, understanding and confidence in both learners with disabilities and those without disabilities.

RF2: Ja, the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms will prevent them from going to special schools away from their parental care, simply because they could not be accommodated in nearby mainstream schools. On the other hand, circumstances and conditions will enable us educators to develop and apply various strategies of teaching in the inclusive classrooms.

The above responses show two distinct aspects, namely frustration and incapability to deal with undesirable behaviour of some of the learners with disabilities in the classroom. It is clear that emotional and behavioural problems may often go unnoticed by parents for too long. Emotionally disturbed learners have problems which may affect their ability to learn in school, as well as their quality of life. Unlike with other disabilities, these

youngsters are often blamed for their condition. This also affects their interaction with others including educators.

4.2.7 Educators' fear of the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms

Fear and lack of awareness about disability among some parents and educators remain significant barriers to learning and development of learners with disabilities. Educators often fear the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their classrooms and respond negatively to their attendance (DoE, 1997). Negative perceptions and attitudes towards disabilities are picked up by other learners who further alienate the learners with disabilities (DoE, 1997).

RM3: Educators should develop experience of courage and do away with emotions of fear. Hence, fear can give them cold shivers.

RF4: I don't feel comfortable with the inclusion of these learners in my classroom because I don't know how to handle them, since I don't have adequate experience, knowledge and skills to meet their individual needs.

When expressing their feelings in this regard, RM3 and RF4 seemed to be sympathetic. However, they indicated that they could not really meet all these learners' needs due to inadequate knowledge, experience and skills to deal with learners with disabilities (see Chapter 2.12.3.1).

4.2.8 Educators perceptions and attitudes

RF2: Well from my point of view, I would suggest that only learners with mild disabilities should be included in our mainstream classrooms. What I am saying is that the physically disabled learners should be prepared for affirmative action in democratic countries like South Africa, so that even their colleagues should learn that these learners are also capable of doing some of the things that their peers can do.

RM3: In most cases learners with disabilities have potential and they must be helped to

develop them.

RF4: (Raising her shoulders) I am not against the idea of including learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms but this is a process that should be gradually implemented. Nnete ke hore we are not yet ready. We lack knowledge and skills necessary to implement this.

RM5: YES, I am qualified as you indicate but I was never trained to teach this kind of learners you are talking about now. I want to be honest with you, I can't teach a class with learners with hearing and eyesight problem, let alone a learner with severe behavioural problems. This to me means the government must send all educators back to tertiary institutions and train us on how to handle the situation they are putting us in. OBE took time to run smoothly at schools simply because the government has tendency of imposing decision on educators (they always use the top down approach). They did not prepare us for this unknown animal so that we do not run away when it comes to our schools. Why do you see many people running away from teaching to other department and the private sector. Some of our schools did not have even the basic things needed to implement OBE since it involves a lot of paper work.

4.2.9 Access to buildings

Respondents commented on the physical access to school structures that prevent some learners' access to classrooms.

RF2: You know what? This Department seem to forget that most school buildings have not been modified yet, to allow learners on wheelchairs to have access in mainstream schools. Buildings where tuition is taking place must be modified more, especially for learners on wheelchairs.

RM5: These learners are demanding, they use wheelchairs and we have steps that lead to our classrooms. At garages you can see there are toilets specifically meant for the disabled. We do not have that in our schools. I can mention a lot of other things that will create problems. But you see the special schools have all the required equipment to deal with these learners.

RF4: Yes before learners who are physically disabled can be accommodated in our classrooms, the building should be rearranged especially in terms of learners with wheelchairs and blind learners. All obstructions in the classrooms should be removed.

RM3: At school level we will have to construct ramps for wheelchairs that is, entrances to the toilets, classrooms and school halls.

The concerns expressed here are genuine and relate specifically to learners with physical problems. However, similar concerns may be voiced with regard to the need for adapting buildings to provide a suitable environment for learners with sensory impairments. (see chapter 2.12.1.4).

It is clear from the respondents' discussions that the vast majority of learning centers are physically inaccessible to a large number of learners and communities. Inaccessibility is particularly evident in those centers that are inaccessible especially to learners who are using wheelchairs or other mobile devices.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.3.1 Comparing and contrasting perceptions of male and female educators

From the constructs developed during the literature study and the proceeding subsections it has become clear to the researcher that educators differ on how they construct meaning of their own perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms.

It was obvious from their discourses that their perceptions are informed by their individual differences which are social concern. According to the analysis of decision making proposed by McKeachie and Doyle (1966) the observed decisions may result from (i) differences in motivation, (ii) differences in the amount of information (perception memory) on which to base estimates of the probability of success, (iii) differences in the ability to use past experience in constructing or deducing a role or

principle which applies to the current situation, (iv) differences in the ability to apply the rule in this situation and, (v) differences in the ability to apply the rule in this situation and, (5) differences I the ability to shift from one possible solution to another when necessary.

Because other people constitute a significant part of every human being's environment, it became clear to researcher that educators' reactions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms depend to a large extent on how they perceive and judge them. Sometimes the basis for perception of other people is actual experience with them.

4.3.2 Perceptions and values

People in different social contexts see disabilities and difficulties in different ways. These different perceptions relate not only to local contexts, (like family, classroom, school and church), but also to broader social contexts. Apart from labelling, some of the most important factors influencing how people see disabilities are the values and accepted economic and social roles that apply in particular social contexts.

In a broader community or local context certain attitudes, behaviours and abilities are valued more than others. How a disability or difficulty is seen, and how it should be addressed relate very closely to the social context in which it occurs (Donald et al., 2002).

The researcher identified the following factors that influence perceptions of primary school educators towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities from respondents' discourses.

- 1 Lack of training.** All four respondents were concerned about the lack of knowledge and skills they required to address the specific special needs of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. It is clear that there is a need for educator development. Educators need preparation strategies to respond to learners who experience difficulties in learning, including those with disabilities. They should be provided with opportunities to consider new possibilities that may extend

their teaching repertoire. In encouraging educators to explore ways in which their practice might be developed in order to facilitate the learning of all learners. Workshop sessions led by highly skilled teams of resource people should be in place to allow educators opportunities to experience a variety of active learning approaches. This will encourage them to consider life in the classroom through the eyes of learners and at the same time, allow them to relate these experiences to their own practice in school.

Pre-and in-service training programmes need to provide educators with meaningful understanding of the principles and elements of inclusive education. The demands on educators' time and dedication call for a different classroom organisation (Scruggs and Mastropieri, 1996).

They should be encouraged to form teams or partnerships where members agree to assist one another in exploring aspects of their practice. It can be facilitated by helping educators to develop the necessary skills to organise classrooms that encourage the social process of learning.

Educators' perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms were also influenced by time issues. Educators felt that, regardless of the strength of their commitment to collaboration, the realities of time schedules are inescapable. The existing organisational arrangements in school can frustrate the good intentions of educators who are willing and learning to work together. Educators commented that due to a heavy workload and large class sizes, there is no time for individual attention in classrooms to meet learners' special needs.

- 2 Access to buildings:** Most existing school building structures need modification to accommodate all learners, especially those using wheelchairs.
- 3 Educational support:** Educators lack educational support in classrooms. Collaborative management structures need to be established through multi-disciplinary efforts. Parents, educators and learners in both the formal and informal

sectors of the education and training system should participate in these efforts. Educators with additional expertise, acquired through recognised in-service training, could form a core support team at school to render support to both educators and parents. Thus, educators have to be empowered to become agents for change in the areas where it is necessary.

More support educators working and co-teaching in the classroom together with more time for educators to organise their intervention and greater opportunities for educators to learn from one another are needed (Phillips and McCullough, 1990 in Molto, 2003). Early partnerships are crucial.

4. **Educators' fear of the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms:** Fear and lack of awareness about disability among some parents and educators remain significant barriers of learning and development of learners with disabilities. Educators often fear the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their classrooms and respond negatively to their attendance (DoE, 1997). Negative perceptions and attitudes towards disabilities are picked up by other learners who further alienate the learners with disabilities (DoE, 1997).

It is taken for granted that the mainstream classroom would be the ideal place for teaching all learners because of its potential capacity to offer full learning experiences within a peer group. However, experts warn that the success of inclusion depends on the predisposition of schools and the will of educators implement the necessary instructional adjustments.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter includes data analysed and interpreted, a discussion of the findings of the researcher while doing participation, observation and in depth interviews. The findings of the interviews are reported according to the interview questions being used during the interviews.

In the next chapter these findings will be interpreted in an inductive manner and on the hand of the literature study performed in Chapter 2 in order to make particular conclusions, critique, recommendations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, CRITIQUE, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This chapter summarises and highlights the major findings of this research. Furthermore the research is criticised, with the focus on its limitations. Finally the chapter makes suggestions and recommendations for future research.

5.1 SUMMARY

5.1.1 Aim and goals restated

The aim of the study was to find out how primary school educators perceive the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms.

5.1.2 Social constructivist research

Social constructivism was used as a lens to conduct this study. The study attempts to understand the educator's meaning construction in inclusive education. The researcher used Fairclough's; (1992) methods of analysis (TODA). TODA allows open-ended discussion, it allows respondent to say everything in his or her mind without being influencing by the researcher. TODA takes into consideration the depth and quality of data then giving more attention to quantity, (Fairclough, 1992).

5.1.3 Qualitative procedures highlighted

Four primary school educators were selected for interviewing. These educators were classified according to gender, age, experience, qualifications, and position. Two educators were male and two were female (M denotes Male educators while the other letter stands for Respondent. F denotes Female educators and the numbers reflect to the number of the respondents). Accordingly, this group of educators were identified as RM5, RM3, RF2 and RF4 respectively. Each interview session lasted one hour. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed (see Appendix 2). About ten minutes were spend with each respondent prior to the actual interview commenced to allow the respondent to settle down. This involved explaining the purpose of the interview and creating a comfortable atmosphere. All respondents were familiar with the researcher, since we come from the same township.

5.1.4 Qualitative findings in a nutshell

Analysis and interpretation of the interviews showed that the male respondents' perceptions towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms differed to those of female respondents to some extent.

Educators' perceptions of the challenges of inclusion were inevitably affected by progress. Most educators commented about their lack of knowledge and skills required to meet the learners' special needs. They still experience difficulties in terms of including learners with disabilities, because of an inability to address some of the concerns.

The responses from the respondents showed that they were inclined to negativity. It was clear that if the barriers (such as lack of support, time issues, access to buildings and discrimination and labeling) were addressed, their perceptions may change from negative to positive.

It was clear that the above factors contributed towards their self-confidence, that is, they felt threatened. The number of learners in a classroom together with a heavy work load also contributed to the respondents' perceptions. It also emerged that the respondents' attitudes affected the way they perceive, value, judge, teach and interact with learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. This applied equally to male and female respondents.

5.2 CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the findings from TODA procedures that both groups of respondents seemed to operate within a discourse that defines inclusion negatively.

This discourse emerged from the findings reported in Chapter 4. It should be emphasized, however, that the distinction between male and female respondents in terms of perception was not totally exclusive. Contradictions, inconsistencies and overlapping meaning construction within the identified discourse exist between male and female

respondents. The role of this research was therefore to find and create meaningful and coherent patterns from the above fluidity and contradictions. The interpretation of the meaning construction strategies provided in this research is the integration theory, methodology and empirical data. This therefore does not preclude the possibility of other interpretations given different theoretical basis, methodology and empirical data.

5.3 CRITIQUE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Fairclough (1992) and Duncan (1993) showed that modern day researches in the social sciences are using discourse analysis increasingly as a research strategy. This study supports that the main reason for this increase is that, unlike quantitative research, discourse analysis research recognizes and respects the status of human beings as dynamic subjects and full-fledged humans (Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002). Their voices are given audience and amplification. Nobody speaks on their behalf because there are not ready-made grids or pigeonholes into which they and their meaning construction strategies can be fitted (Mahlomaholo and Nkoane, 2002). This strategy therefore significantly enhances the emancipation and empowerment of the researched

The researcher acknowledges that it is possible to produce interpretations other than the one presented in this study, because the unit of analysis herein is meaning construction. Research on meaning (and its construction) is always about the researcher's interpretation of other people's interpretation of their world, and this is always fluid, changing and removed from direct experience (Duncan, 1993). The interpretations of other people are always expanding and contracting, thus eluding fixed and static assessment.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, it is recommended that, as suggested by Skrtic (1999) earlier, inclusion should be more than a model for special education service delivery. It should be a new paradigm for thinking and acting in ways that include all persons in a society where diversity is becoming the norm, rather than the exception. The challenge, therefore, is to extend the foothold of inclusion to more schools and communities, while simultaneously keeping in mind that the primary purpose is to facilitate and assist the learning and adjustment of all learners, the citizens of tomorrow.

Respondents in this study were able to construct meaning of how they perceive inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms, even though their discourses signaled negative perceptions. If their needs could be heard by those able to speed up the process of training educators in field as well as those still at colleges and universities, their negative perceptions may likely to change to positive ones.

According to Stainback and Stainback (1996) inclusive schooling is the practice of including everyone, irrespective of talent disability, socio-economic background or cultural origin, in supportive mainstream schools and classrooms where all learners' needs are met. By educating all learners together, persons with disabilities have the opportunity to prepare for life in the community.

It is therefore imperative for educators to realise that their perceptions of learners are a strong force in determining the nature of the interaction between them (educators) and learners and in turn, the learners' achievements.

As more learners with disabilities and those who have experienced some form of learning breakdown are accommodated in ordinary classrooms, teaching is likely to become more demanding. This can be addressed by breaking down the barriers between remedial and mainstream teaching in favour of sharing expertise. In this way educators can gradually acquire the skills and confidence to work directly with learners with special needs, using special education personnel as resources.

Since educators are the people who make learning possible their own attitudes beliefs and feelings with regard to events at school and in the classroom are of crucial importance. It is generally accepted that change is challenging and may be perceived either as a threat or an opportunity. Educators need the time and psychological space to re-examine their general understanding of teaching and learning. They may need support to be able to focus on the positive aspects of change.

To support the inclusion of learners with disabilities educators have to be sensitive, not only to their own perceptions, attitudes and feelings, but also to the particular needs of

individual learners. Educators may need training to identify and address special educational needs. Other than practical skills, educators also need to develop a critical understanding of common stereotypes and prejudices related to disability and be able to reflect on how these have influenced their own perceptions (Stainbach and Stainback, 1996). Clarity about their own strengths, vulnerabilities and needs is a necessary step to prepare educators for inclusion. Only when this has been achieved will they be in the position to work as agents who can influence the attitudes of the school community (staff, parents and other learners) regarding learners with disabilities. Inclusion requires that these learners should not simply be thought of with pity, but viewed more positively in terms of their abilities rather than their disabilities (Engelbrecht et al 1999).

5.4.1 Training

Systems which are designed specifically to promote inclusion should involve educator training that enhances both skills and positive attitudes. Ownership by the whole school community, including parents, is critical. Furthermore, the importance of defining professional roles within schools will ensure that all take responsibility for the management of learners. This will be necessary before inclusion can be achieved.

5.4.2 Support

In order to improve educators' perceptions and attitudes support teams should be established at schools, at district and national level. Different role players, such as the Departments of Health and Social Welfare, ministers of different churches, parents, learners and educators should be involved to support learners with special educational needs holistically. As indicated in the White Paper No6 (DoE, 2001), the Department of Education in collaboration with the Free State Department of Education, intends to strengthen the education support services.

5.4.3 Educators preparation

Determining the level of preparedness of educator will play a major role in successfully planning the implementation of inclusive education. Educators are the key role players in determining the quality of implementation of any new education policy (such as inclusion, Fullan, 1993). It appears that the empowerment of education is again

neglected in the South African policy documentation about inclusive education. If the implementation of changed policies fail in a developed country such as Britain where educators generally are adequately trained (Wearmouth et al, 2000), this could also be true in South Africa where a large percentage of educators are insufficiently trained. This implies that current practices and needs of inadequately trained educators (such as in South Africa) deserve serious consideration when implementing new policy.

The study therefore advocates inclusive education aimed at empowering and thus changing educators' perceptions towards learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

To achieve the above mentioned objectives this study proposes that all researchers interested in improving educators' perception of inclusive education in South Africa should embark on research to produce knowledge that will lead to implementation of inclusive education.

Furthermore, research could also be conducted regarding appropriate strategies and programs that would help to empower educators.

It is suggested that further research should be conducted (i) by researchers from different theoretical frameworks methodologies and instrument, sample and interpretation strategies, (ii) in another setting other than Manyatseng. Such research may also analyse data not on the basis of the social-constructivism position meaning construction.

To achieve greater unity and coherence, further research may also confine itself to any of the many disciplines that informed the present study.

5.6 FINAL WORD

Investigating the meaning construction by means of the Free Attitude Interview technique was quite overwhelming. Investigating learning perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of educators towards inclusion of learners with disabilities in their mainstream classrooms was both interesting and challenging. Compared to findings from other countries, it was surprising to see the similarities of educators' experiences and the shortcomings in

education policies in terms of implementation of inclusive education..

The Department of Education needs to speed up the process of empowering educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement inclusive education successfully. I (the researcher) would also recommend further research on educator perceptions in order to develop positive attitudes.

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APPENDIX 1

M217 Metampelong
Ladybrand
9745
12 March 2008

Dear... .. .

REQUEST TO CONDUCT INTERVIEW

You are humbly requested to share your views with the researcher (Mrs.M.M Mereko) by giving your opinions about the inclusion of learners with disabilities in your mainstream classroom.

Please note:

- 1 The interview will be conducted at the place of your choice (at school or your home).
- 2 There are no remunerations for participation in this interview.
- 3 This interview is voluntary and not by any means binding.

I thank you in advance

Yours faithfully

Interviewer:

Interviewee:.....

APPENDIX 2

TRANSCRIPT OF RM5 FROM S PRIMARY SCHOOL ON 5 MARCH 2008 AT 17Hoo. THE INTERVIEW WAS CONDUCTED AT HIS PLACE.

I (The researcher): You know that historically South African society was divided according to race, skin colour, ethnicity and the like. In education, this division or separation was taken further to identify learners as with or without barriers. Hence the special schools and mainstream schools. This democratic government has realised correctly or incorrectly that this practice was unfair, unjust, discriminatory and unlawful. The government then came with policy (White Paper 6) on Inclusive education, that these learners are just normal human beings they should be admitted back to mainstream schools. What are your feelings on this move?

RM5: (Keeps quiet for a short time and sighs) Ehm... I think maybe it is a good opinion, but my only problem is that these learners were taught by well trained educators in the special schools. The educators have the know how, how to deal with challenges coming from the situation. And another thing. I think the classes in the special schools are not as overloaded as ours. So I will say that we are not ready to implement that policy. How government bring this changes when we are still struggling with NCS. This will really create a lot of problems for us educators. But I am also asking myself who can you put a child with eyesight problem (lets say blind child) in the same class with a child who cannot hear. Does this mean we must go back to learn the sign language? Maybe a learner who is on a wheelchair may be alright, but who will always push the learner to the shop, to the toilet and everywhere. When we are outside playing soccer or what... what is the learner going to do? At the end we will be accused of discriminating against the learner. My feeling is that this policy will not succeed because we are not well equipped for the inclusion of these learners.

The researcher: if I hear you well you keep on touching upon you cannot deal with such problems, you are not ready to implement this policy, you must go back to train in sign language. But are you not a qualified educator at university?

RM5: YES, I am qualified as you indicate but I was never trained to teach this kind of learners you are talking about now. I want to be honest with you, I can't teach a class with learners behaving and eyesight problem, let alone a learner with severe behavioural problems. This to me means the government must send all educators back to tertiary institutions and train us on how to handle the situation they are putting us in. OBE took time to run smoothly at schools simply because the government has tendency of imposing decisions on educators (they always use the top down approach). They did not prepare us for this unknown animal so that we do not run away when it comes to our schools. Why do you see many people running away from teaching to other department and the private sector. Some of our schools did not have even the basic things needed to implement OBE since it involves a lot of paper work.

The researcher: If I hear you correctly do you mean that your schools are not well equipped for the inclusion of learners with disabilities?

RM5: We are struggling even now before the learners with disabilities join us, what more when they come now? These learners are demanding, they use wheelchairs and we have steps the lead to our classrooms. At garages you can see there are toilets specifically meant for the disabled. We do not have that in our schools. I can mention a lot of other things that will create problems. But you see the specials schools have all the required equipment to deal with these learners.

The researcher: Somewhere in your comments you said something on time not allowing learners with disabilities to be included in your mainstream classrooms.

RM5: Time is very important, in fact time is money. What will happen if you have say five mental retarded learners in your class. Because they learn so slowly you must be patient with them and pay individual attention and the time is running against you because you have a work schedule to complete and revision is needed. I think another important thing to mention is that our classes are already overloaded. Where are we going to get the time to help these learners from? We are struggling with the normal

learners to finish in time. That is why at secondary schools educators organise weekend classes and winter and spring school classes so that they can push to finish the work in time for revision I think we will be having a lot of problems really. You know that in the Grade 12 exams they are strict about time, if it is a two hour paper it is that, how are we going to accommodate learners with disabilities that cannot write faster like others?

The researcher: If we do not include these learners with disabilities into mainstream classrooms and keep separately, are we not discriminating against them?

RM5: Ja eh... I agree it is not right to discriminate against them because they did not choose to be born like that. Actually I am not saying we must avoid them or despise them, because they are human beings like us. But this is very difficult you know. Let the government do everything that is necessary and thereafter we admit these learners. It cannot help us taking them now only to frustrate them. And the learners need to be considered too because they are not used to attending together with such learners. They should be trained as well not to call them names and laugh at them.

The researcher: Do you think parents must be involved in the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms?

RM5: All stakeholders must be involved including parents. Parents are an important part of the education of a learner. Parents are not co-operating with us. We call meetings and they do not show up. I don't believe they even supervise their children's work. So sometimes we have a situation where a learner collapses. Later we will discover that the learner is maybe suffering from epilepsy or pregnant for that matter. Parents need to inform us about the medical records of their children so that we prevent dangerous situations like the one that I have told about now. It will be very good if parents will tell the school how best they deal with these learners with disabilities because they stay with them and definitely know how to treat them best under certain circumstances.

The researcher: From a social point of view do you think these learners can benefit from attending together with their peers.

RM5: You know that these learners are always put aside, they always feel isolated because they are always group together. This makes them to loose self-confidence and feel inferior. If they can be accepted back to the mainstream classrooms they can feel better and raise their self-esteem.

RM3:

RM5's Perception of inclusive education.

I whole heartedly agree with this noble idea of having learners with different disabilities into mainstream schools. Their being disable should not come as a nightmare to educators. Around 90's when Mandela was released form prison, his counter parts were in a great fear that life would be dangerous on their side. Instead, democratic government resulted into peace and reconciliation. How wonderful it was, the different races of South Africa irrespective of colour, culture and creed, became the called Rainbow Nation. Ways and means have been made by the Government to accommodate disable people at many areas e.g. shopping centres, banks, hospitals etc. To my opinion, the government should help schools in this regard.

I therefore, suggest that the Department of Education should provide schools with all the necessary facilities to accommodate disabled learners. Secondly, in order to encourage educators to accept learners with disability, the Department of Education should:

Firstly: Motivate educators from all angles, supply educator with adequate training, supply schools with Health Care. Secondly: Employ one or two Educators who qualified in special needs for disabled learners, e.g. for the blinds, deaf, weak limbs etc. Thirdly: Disabled Educators should as well be employed. My upper most feeling is that the inclusive education be introduced to normal school on condition the above requirements are been met with, otherwise Education for the disable learners will be disastrous. Lastly: Educators should develop experience of courage and do away with emotions of fear. Hence fear can give them "cold shivers".

The researcher:

According to your feelings about Inclusive Education, you have set up conditions and requirements whereby the Department of Education should adhere to. Employing specialised educators to a post of a class including deaf, blind etc. Do you think that Educators who are currently in the system cannot carry out the task?

RM3: Certainly yes, they can fulfill the job to certain extend if they have qualified of a good Educator: i.e. an educator must be a student and a master of his craft, an educator must be patient and sympathetic, an educator learns even from young, he or she must be a lover of learners.

Even so, the Department of Education should ready itself to be considerate to the requirements and suggestions as I have mentioned before in order to succeed in having learners with disability in mainstream schools.

Alternatively, the school itself should employ relevant Educator with permission from the Department of Education.

The researcher:

Quite repeatedly, I hear you involving the Department of Education to help this issue of Inclusive Education on you own, how possibly can you help learners with different disabilities in your school, should you have any?

RM3: For sure we can:

First; we will identify their different disabilities. Secondly; we will focus on their individual needs, e.g. wheelchairs for those who cannot walk. We will direct our application to e.g. Social works, certain companies, municipality, clinics, etc. At school level: we will construct paths for the wheelchairs i.e. Entrance at the toilets, classrooms, school halls. Short sighted learners: we will consult the clinic and doctors, we will place them at the suitable place where they will see well at the chalkboard, apply for spectacles; lastly: look for an educator who qualifies in teaching learners with special needs.

The researcher:

Have you perhaps accommodated any learners with disabilities, at your schools and how is their progress? Can you mention gender as well.

RM3: Yes we do. We have a girl who is on a wheelchair. Although she is slow but she is coping. She often goes out of classroom to relief herself at the toilets. The second one is a boy in Grade 2, this learner can hardly catch up a thing, his language is not clear, unfortunately, dealing with these learners demand a lot of time which we do not have. The third one is a girl, this one is energetic, playful but seems not to understand anything; she is in Grade 3 due to age, she swears a lot, she always gets off the classroom without permission, she is bully and she cannot read or write. Lastly, the above mentioned learners are being taught by ordinary educators who are experiencing a lot of problems.

The researcher:

If we do not include these learners with disabilities into mainstream classrooms and keep them separately are we not discriminating them?

RM3: Most certainly. This would be discrimination in the true sense of the world. Hence learners are very observant, irrespective of being with disabilities or not. This kind of practice is going to demotivate them, calling them by names and mockery will follow. They will be humiliated by normal learners, they will be frustrated. Finally, they will feel unaccepted and the normal learners will definitely ridicule them

The researcher:

Do you think parents must be involved in the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools?

RM3: It goes without saying; parents cannot be left out in as far as inclusive education is concerned. Firstly, they must be fully informed about the inclusive education, they must be on the know about the changes which are taking place in the schools where their children attend, this kind of education will make some of the parents delightful because they are going to be under care on daily bases. They will organise their children's' transport to school and report their children's' physical problems. Parents' regular visits

to school help them know their children's progress. Lastly, discipline of both normal learners and those with disability will be easily be maintained.

The researcher:

From social point of view, do you think that these learners can benefit from attending together with their peers?

RM3: oh! Yes, no doubt, learners with disabilities will not only benefit from the normal ones but also enjoy the company. Learning and working together of these two parties will result into a number of advantages, e.g. learners with disability will be fully supported, and both parties will get to know each of them very well. Team work will be formed, normal learners will help disabled to do things which they are unable to do, and both parties will solve problems together. In most cases learners with disability have potential, and they must be helped to develop them.

In conclusion I strongly recommend that learners with disability be accommodated in mainstream schools. Let us not pity them but accept them as creation of God. Let them benefit like many others.

RF2 and RF4's Perceptions and attitudes

RF2: Well from my point of view, I would suggest that only learners with mild disabilities should be included in our mainstream classrooms. What I am saying is that the physically disabled learners should be prepared for affirmative action in democratic countries like South Africa, so that even their colleagues should learn that these learners are also capable of doing some of the things that their peers can do.

RF4: (Raising her shoulders) I am not against the idea of including learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms but this is a process that should be gradually implemented. Nnete ke hore we are not yet ready. We lack knowledge and skills necessary to implement this.

Time

RF4: The problem with learners with disabilities is that they demand more time and

more attention from us, and that is not always possible. As a result my work suffers a lot because I cannot work at my normal rate as it is required.

Discrimination and labeling

RF2: Normally these learners are inferior. Now including them in the mainstream classroom will punish them. However, it is their democratic right to be in mainstream classrooms to obtain the same quality of education, by using the same sources and facilities as their peers.

Lack of training

RF2: Well I think specific problems need specific training so that you can understand and cope with it. I think it's hard to know how to deal with certain types of disabled children. For instance, a deaf and dumb child. I have never had to deal with a deaf and dumb children and I think you need a special training to be able to handle such cases.

RF4: I don't have any problems towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in my class, except that if we are thinking in terms of inclusion, we would have to be looking at fairly significant whole-staff training issues. When there is inclusion into a particular class, we automatically think that it is the responsibility of that 'class' teacher, whereas it is a multi-dimensional matter.

Parental involvement

RF4: I think that parent's involvement in this regard is very crucial since they are responsible for their children's education. They should not be excluded in the planning of any change taking place in education, their support and inputs are very important.

RF2: Without parent's involvement education will be a disaster. The success of education depends entirely on their support and active participation in any decision-making in education therefore the Department of Education should always take them into consideration and not to look down to them.

Social aspects

RF4: Oh! Yes, including learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms will surely bring a tremendous change of perception and attitudes to both ‘normal’ learners and educators. Their inclusion in mainstream classes will instill co-operation, understanding and confidence in both learners with disabilities and those without disabilities.

RF2: Ja, the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream classrooms will definitely prevent them from going to special schools away from their parental care, simply because they could not be accommodated in nearby mainstream classrooms. On the other hand, circumstances and conditions in mainstream classrooms will enable us educators to develop and apply various strategies of teaching in the inclusive classrooms.

Fear of inclusion

RF4: I don’t feel comfortable with the inclusion of these learners in my classroom because I don’t know how to handle them since I don’t have adequate experience, knowledge and skills to meet their individual needs.

Access to buildings

RF2: You know what? This Department seems to forget that most school buildings have not been modified yet to allow learners on wheelchair to have access in mainstream schools. Buildings where tuition takes place must be modified more, especially for learners on wheelchairs.

Educational support

RF4: I feel that we really need support from capable people like physiotherapist especially for learners who experience physical problems. Secondly, learners with behavioural problems need counseling from people like social workers. It is the Department’s responsibility to assist us in this regard.