THE ATTITUDES OF SOME PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS IN MANGAUNG TOWNSHIP TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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DECLARATION

I, **MAMAKHETHA PATRICIA NKONE**, student number 206069871, do hereby declare that this research project submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State, for the attainment of the degree MAGISTER in EDUCATION in the School of Teacher Education, Faculty of Management Sciences, is my own independent work; and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology; and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfilment (or partial fulfilment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

_____   _____

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT   **DATE**

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following: my parents, Ephraim Shadrack, the late Martha Moretloane Lesoro, and my son, Jacob Pitso Nkone.

Ke Mokoena wa Mmantsane a Monaheng!

Wa Nkopane a Mathunya!

Kwenana-nyane, kwena di a tshaba.

Kwena ho hlapa tse potlana,

Kwena tse kgolo di a seha feela.

Ke Mokubung wa mmamotlhamatsana

Mohiokakodi, motsebaa-tsa--ba bang!

Kubukubu, ntsha imarota re bone,

Kubu e kaa ka ntlo ya moseme

Ke Mofokeng wa Ma-Maotwana finyella.

Maotwana a kaalo ka dinaledi.

Ma-maja ditsebe-tsa-mmutla-o-le-tala,

Wa Mantsane Molelengwane

Motho wa seohole sa hiaheng

Motho wa matiya mmopa.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes and the perceptions of primary school teachers towards the implementation of inclusive education. Inclusive education is the new policy of education in South Africa. This approach is also used in the United Kingdom. In countries such as the United States of America, most of the teachers agree with the implementation of inclusive education in mainstream schools and allege that it is challenging and have lots of fun, as it brings equality among learners in terms of gender and race. Teachers feel that this gives them a chance to learn more about the personalities of the learners.

The study found that inclusive education fosters equality among learners, because all learners receive equal education, irrespective of their disabilities. According to the findings of our research, South African teachers do not understand the concept "*inclusive education*". What they need, is training and resources in order to be able to implement inclusive education successfully.

Key words: attitude, educators, implementation, inclusive education.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The policy of inclusive education stipulates that all learners have the right to access a learning environment that values, respects and accommodates diversity and that provides education appropriate to the learners' needs. Within the integrated system of education, the attitudes of teachers play a primary role in the successful implementation of an inclusive educational policy.

In Chapter One an overview of the study is provided by explaining the background to the problem under review, giving more detailed information about the problem to be researched, clearly demarcating the scope of the study, as well as providing certain research questions, and the aims and objectives to be investigated. The research methodology is explained, and has been employed to investigate the research problem, namely the attitudes of primary school educators in the Mangaung Township towards the implementation of inclusive education. Reference is also made to the selection of respondents.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The researcher's study of Inclusive Education over the past three years has been an eye-opener, which stimulated the researchers proposal for inclusive education. Exposure to teaching in the primary school environment where a multidisciplinary team is active aroused the interest of the researcher in investigating the attitudes of primary school educators toward the implementation of inclusive education. The researcher was further stimulated in this regard by reading about inclusive education practices in newspapers, watching TV learning programmes, and by attending education workshops.

According to Brandt and Hooker (1994), the following can be said about human learning:

- People learn what is personally meaningful to them.

- People learn more when they accept challenging but achievable goals.

- Learning is development (especially if learners have access)

- Learning is influenced by the total environment, so teachers need to attend to the physical, social and psychological aspects of the settings in which learning is supposed to take place.

Other theorists in this context suggest that understanding is the most important outcome of learning, and that knowledge is constructed when a human being is understood (Booth and Ainscow, 1998a).

Another related and equally dominant theory is the idea that knowledge is not passively received. It is actively constructed and developed to progressively

higher levels in each learner. Knowledge is a social construction, which is developed and learned within a social context (Bruner, 1990).

The movement towards inclusive education and human rights in South Africa has also spread to education, in particular to special education, which since 1997 has reflected the inclusive ethos of the transforming society. In the overview of the report, "Quality education for all", it is stated that the principles of human rights and social justice for all, as well as participation and social integration, will guide the broad strategies in order to achieve the following vision (Department of Education, 1997, DNE,1997).

The vision proposed by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCSNET/NCESS) is that of an education and training system that promotes education for all and fosters the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that enables all learners to participate actively in the education process so that they can develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society.

In the context of the South African policy of inclusive education, primary school educators in the Mangaung Township attending workshops on education expressed their feeling that most educators had a negative attitude regarding the implementation of inclusive education. According to the Department of National Education (1997), the problems experienced with inclusive education are the following:

- Educators are not yet familiar with the principles of outcomes-based education; nevertheless, they are expected to integrate inclusive education.

- Educators lack the knowledge to deal with learners with learning problems.

- Educators do not have the necessary knowledge and understanding of inclusive education.

- Educators perceive disabled learners as abnormal.

With reference to the literature study, it was found that Swart, Eloff, and Pettipher, . (2001) state the following reasons for the problems experienced with the application of inclusive education principles:

- The inadequate knowledge skills and training of educators in order to be able to implement inclusive education effectively;

- Educators need to be emotionally facilitated so that the necessary paradigm shift can occur; and

- Educators feel resentful of the way in which the new policy is being developed and imposed.

Many educators feel that they have no choice or input in the matter, and that their experience and professionalism are not recognized.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

One of the pillars of apartheid was exclusion. People were excluded from political, economical and educational participation on the bans of their gender, colour and ethnicity. Apart from these inhumane injustices, the folk with physical or learning disabilities had to suffer a double blow because they were categorized declared as misfits in normal society. As the results they were cast off from all social activities. In reality they became regarded as a liability more than responsibility to their families, society and government. With black community this was even worse. The poverty, lack of facilities and unemployment which was ravaging the black community could not be worse on the social outcast group, the disabled people. This was the pain of insurmountable…. without anybody to share with. More painful enough is that some were born "normal" due to accidents or diseases ended up in their unfortunate conditions. Those who were lucky enough were sent to special schools where they would meet their equals. What would the human race from their frightening and funny sight. With the dawn of democracy after 1994, the new got tried to live true to the stipulations of the freedom charter which proclaimed that all the inhabitants of South Africa are equal and doors of education should be opened for all. Discrimination was rejected in all its forms moderations. Informed by the same document, the constitution of the country also put it succinctly that the ignored disabled or challenged people were very normal and deserving of all that was due to a human being. Education White Paper 6 is the product of this philosophy. No time was to be wasted for this implementation of the policy on inclusive education. It is in the spirit of human nature that change will always be reinstated against inclusive education would not be an exception. The very important stakeholders the successful implementation of inclusive education reacted negatively towards these new developments. The fact that the dust of the storm of New Curriculum Statement (NCS) under social constructivist approach in education had not yet settled, could not help the situation Educators were still struggling with the new education system. Inclusive education as an

addition comes at a very wrong time, like a cool breeze on a snowy winter. Education see inclusive education as an addition to the already unbearable burden of NCS. It is the departments prerogative to address the concerns and fears of the educators because they are the food soldiers at the successful implementation of the new policy compounding the state of affair elaborated above, is the 14 year old weakness or impediment that has delayed even the meaningful economic development of our country: skills shortage. All educators in South Africa have not been trained or exposed to an inclusive kind of education. This on its own should really form part of the concoction of factors breading the negative attitude of educators towards implementation of inclusive education.

1.4 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The target population for this study was drawn from primary school educators in the Mangaung Township in the Bloemfontein area, selected randomly. The researcher selected the Mangaung Township because she knows this environment well. The primary schools selected are all Government-aided schools. The researcher decided to select primary schools, because the foundation for learners' education is laid at this level in their development.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

The study is based on the following research question:

■ What are the attitudes of educators in the Mangaung Township towards the implementation of inclusive education?

1.6   AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to give audience to the voices of educators who are involved in and struggling with the implementation of inclusive education. The respondents were given an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences, thoughts and actions with regard to inclusive education.

In order to achieve this aim, the following aspects were investigated:

- The attitudes of educators with a knowledge and understanding of the concept "inclusive education".
- The attitudes of educators without a knowledge and understanding of the concept "inclusive education".

1.7   LITERATURE REVIEW

1.7.1 Theoretical framework

Since a democratic dispensation was introduced in South Africa in 1994, the movement towards a more inclusive society has become stronger. Exclusion on all levels during the apartheid era contributed partly to the swing towards broad-based societal inclusiveness. In addition, the human rights movement experienced a strong international upswing after having been abused for many centuries. The human rights issue in education was probably the strongest protagonist for the development of inclusive education, when viewed within a global perspective (Forlin, 1999).

While the calls for establishing an inclusive education and training system that accommodates all learners was embraced, it was acknowledged that the establishment of an inclusive education and training system could not be achieved automatically or overnight, but only by taking certain definite and bold steps.

The Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education (United Nations' Education Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, 1994) reaffirmed the international trend towards inclusive education when it proclaimed that:

"Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they pride themselves on an effective education for the majority of learners, improved efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system."

In the South African Schools Act 1996 b, it is categorically stated: "a public school must admit learners and serve their education requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way Department of Education White Paper no.6 (DOE, 2001). This implies that, depending on the wishes of, and based on the rights of all learners, no learner may be turned away from any public school.

The attitudes of teachers play a primary role in the successful implementation of an inclusive education policy. The predominantly negative attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education can be ascribed to a number of reasons.

Engelbrecht, Eloff, Swart and Newmark (2003) state that teachers often feel that they are obliged to implement policies about which they were not consulted. Furthermore, teachers often do not have a clear understanding of the demands of the changes that they must implement and often lack adequate time to prepare for the implementation thereof.

Hay, Smith and Paulsen (2001) state that the implementation of inclusive education is a complex and multifaceted issue that will have to be planned with meticulous detail. Determining the levels of preparedness of educators will therefore play a major role in successfully planning the implementation of inclusive education."

Developing policy and practices around inclusive education is one of the most complex and urgent issues facing education in many of the world's developing countries. In almost all developed countries, laws now demand that all children receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment that is consistent with their needs, and services have been developed for this purpose (Green, 2001). In New Zealand, the Minister of Education introduced a new Special Education Policy as well as the Human Rights Act, which legislated against discrimination based on disability. This policy emphasizing that learners with special education needs must have access to the same educatory settings as other learners, and all schools must accept and value all learners. (Davies, 1999).

The attitudes of teachers in New Zealand towards inclusive education are positive. The teachers know and understand the concept of inclusive education, and their teaching and strategies cater for the needs of all children. Teachers share problems and proposals among themselves in meetings and during

informal discussions. They find inclusive education to be stimulating and interesting.

In Australia and Mexico, the departments of education have also adopted a policy of inclusive education. The attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education vary according to the types of disability and the extent of instructional adaptations to be made to accommodate the learners concerned. (Davies, 1999).

1.7.2 Rationale for inclusive education

The major impetus for the inclusive education approach was given by the World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994. Although the immediate focus of the conference was on special needs education, its conclusion was that: Special needs education – an issue of equal concern to countries of the North and of the South – cannot advance in isolation. It has to form part of an overall educational strategy and, indeed, of new social and economic policies. It calls for major reforms (UNESCO, 1994: iii-iv).

These reforms are the following:

(a)   In the old mainstream system, endeavours were made to get learners to fit into a particular kind of system or integrating them into the existing system, whereas inclusion is all about recognizing and respecting the differences among all learners and building on their similarities.

(b)   Mainstreaming and integration focus on changes that need to take place in learners so that they can "fit in". Here the focus is on the learner, whereas inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. The focus is on

the adaptation of the support systems available in the classroom Department of Education, White Paper no.6, (DOE, 2001).

(c)   This approach is furthermore about developing "inclusive" education departments under one ministry with one policy, thereby redressing the differences in resources and access to education controlled by these departments and making coherent sense of national education needs in areas such as curricula, qualification structure, support services, and teacher education. This can only happen, however, if ordinary schools become more inclusive – in other words, if they become more capable of educating all children in their communities.

The research conducted for this dissertation is based on the rationale of inclusive education, and the researcher therefore focuses on the attitudes of primary educators towards the implementation of inclusive education.

1.8   DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

For the sake of clarity, it is important that certain relevant concepts used in the study be clearly defined. Below are the definitions of concepts used extensively in this research.

(a)   Attitude

In the Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2003), "attitude" is defined as a way of feeling about something, especially as this will influence one's behaviour.

The International Encyclopaedia of Educational Technology (1989) defines "attitude" as a predisposition to respond in a certain way to a person, object, situation, event or idea. An attitude is more enduring than a mood or whim, as it

produces a consistent response. Attitudes are closely related to opinions and to prejudices. They can be formed because of some kind of learning experience, but may also be learned simply by following the example or opinion of a parent, teacher or friend.

According to Vlachou (1997), the concept "attitude" can be described as a complex social phenomenon, which includes ideologies, thoughts, feelings and experiences that are developed in specific contexts.

"Attitude" can also be defined as the way in which a person feels and thinks about a situation, and acts because of a certain situation, and it reflects how a person accepts different things emotionally or physically. Attitudes are often built up more slowly e.g. a child who is growing up in a happy home or rich family may have a favourable attitude toward life because of his background.

(b)   Implementation

In the Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary, (2003) "implementation" is defined as the action to put a plan or system into operation.

The International Encyclopaedia of Educational Technology (1989) on the other hand defines "implementation" as a focus on what happens in practice. It is concerned with the nature and extent of actual change, as well as the factors and processes that influence how the implementation perspective captures both the content and process of dealing with ideas, programmes, activities, policies, structures and policies that are new to the people involved.

"Implementation" can also be defined as putting into practice new policies and strategies designed to improve the quality of education for the people concerned.

(c)   Inclusion

In the Cambridge Advanced Learners' Dictionary, (2003) "inclusive" is described as a group or organization that tries to include many different types of people and to treat them fairly and equally.

According to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994), "Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning. Every child has unique characteristics, interest, abilities, and learning needs. Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs. Those who have special education needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs."

Regular schools with this inclusive orientation provide the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, and building an inclusive society aimed at achieving education for all. Schools should accommodate all children, even street children and working children. Children from remote and nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or religious minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups must also be accommodated, (UNESCO, 1994).

Girls with disabilities are doubly disadvantaged. A special effort is required to provide training and education for girls with special educational needs. Girls with disabilities should have access to information and guidance, as

well as to models that could help them to make realistic choices and prepare for their future role as adult women.

1.9 METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

This study has been conducted as a qualitative inquiry. A qualitative research methodology was selected as this allows for interaction with educators as conscious, self-directed and rational human beings (Coetzee & Graaff, 1996) It would also provide opportunities to obtain directly from them their own definitions of education as process and school as experience (Merriam, 1998). As Maykut & Morehouse (1994) point out:

"Words are the way in which most people come to understand their situations. We create our worlds with words. We defend and hide ourselves with words. The task of the qualitative researcher is to find patterns within those words and to present those patterns to others to inspect, while simultaneously staying as close as possible to the construction of the world as the participants originally experienced it" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994).

1.9.1 Respondents

Four respondents were selected for this study. These included a male and a female teacher who had studied inclusive education successfully and therefore possessed relevant information for this study. They have been called Ms. A and Mr. M. The third person, Ms. T, is a teacher at a fully inclusive school, but has no knowledge and understanding of inclusive education. Mr. S on the other hand, does not support the principles of inclusive education.

In this study, it is not important to have a large number of respondents, because qualitative research does not depend as much on the size of the sample as on the quality of the information provided by the respondents.

1.9.2 Instrumentation

The instrument used was the Free Attitude Interview technique (FAI). The reason for using this technique is to allow the respondents to feel free to give their opinion. The FAI as a qualitative research method can be defined as a multi-perspective approach to social interaction, aimed at describing and making sense of the reconstruction of this interaction in terms of the meaning that the respondents attach to it (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). "Constructivism", similar to interpretation, relates to the theory of meaning, although it implies a break away from the assumption that reality can be understood by interpreting the meaning that people in a specific setting attach to it.

The library has also been used as principal instrument of research. University and public libraries were utilized to find books and journals that bear some relevance to this study, taking our cue from the sage pronouncement of Francis Bacon: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

1.9.3 Data collection procedure

The data from the interviews was audiotaped and transcribed and the transcripts copied in order to search for common patterns or problems and opinions. The result was a study in which detailed descriptions of the interviews were included.

1.9.4   Presentation of the results

The transcribed extracts of the interviews were analyzed by using the constant comparative method. Data from interviews and reflective notes were simultaneously coded. Units of meaning were identified and compared. The process of constantly comparing units of meaning with categories was repeated with all the data collected. These results were finally interpreted in an inductive manner and recorded together with the results of the literature study.

1.10   SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

In this research project, the respondents were given an opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs, feelings, actions and experiences. This was done in order to assist them to follow their own pattern of thought as a basis for identifying their attitudes with regard to the implementation of inclusive education, particularly in primary schools. In order to encourage the respondents to make their best endeavours in this regard, the researcher treated them fairly and with dignity, respect and acceptance, since this study is aimed at empowering people. The contribution of the respondents can have a significant effect on others who have a negative attitude with regard to inclusive education.

1.10.1   For the school

The results of this study can be used to recognize and respond to the diverse needs of the school. By accommodating different styles and rates of learning and ensure quality education to all by means of appropriate organizational

arrangements, teaching strategies, the use of resources and partnerships with the parents involved.

1.10.2   For the educators

It is generally accepted that change is challenging and that it may be perceived as either a threat or an opportunity. All educators can teach all learners. Although some learners need additional support, however, the results of this study will encourage educators to develop new skills in curriculum differentiation, collaborative teaching and learning, collaborative planning and sharing, reflection on practices, as well as co-operation. Furthermore, for inclusion to work, educators' beliefs and attitudes need to be focused on working together and supporting each other. Communication and collaborative skills are essential.

1.10.3   The curriculum

This study will help educators and stakeholders to realize that it is important to note that the development of an inclusive school includes curriculum development that reflects the principles of inclusive education – e.g. all learners have the right to learn, irrespective of their age, gender, colour, etc. The task of the school is to pursue a variety of strategies to facilitate learning and development for all learners. Thus, the medium of teaching and learning, the teaching practices, the materials and equipment used, quality assurance and curriculum development, as well as the hidden curriculum, should all meet the needs of all learners.

1.10.4   For the parent

This study will help parents realize that they should create conditions for learning that will assist their children in the learning situation. This study will motivate parents and make them aware of the fact that their motivation plays an important part in their children's upbringing and their learning.

Parental involvement in the development of inclusive education is not only beneficial to the school. A close partnership between learners and their parents also enables them to develop their own skills and understanding, and to support their own children through the learning process in future.

1.11   SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

1.11.1   Chapter One

Chapter One serves as orientation and introduction with regard to the entire study. The background to the study is highlighted and the research question is formulated. The aims and objectives of the study are discussed. A literature review includes the definition of operational concepts important to inclusive education. The methodology and design used are also explained, including a consideration of the significance of the study.

1.11.2   Chapter Two

In Chapter Two, the theoretical framework, the historical background, and the objectives of constructivism (the appropriate theory that this research is based upon) are discussed. In the discussion, reference is made to social, radical, and cognitive theories of constructivism. Furthermore, the steps taken, as well as the nature of reality, rhetoric, contents and the symbolic arrangement of learning, the role of the researcher, structure-changing values, critiques, the constructivist's approach and the mission of constructivism are explained. Operational concepts are again discussed, and reference is made to the related literature, which includes all the elements of inclusive education and how inclusive education is implemented in the Northern countries, and in South Africa. This chapter furthermore looks at the various factors influencing teachers' attitudes in different forms, the preparedness of educators and the factors that ensure the success of implementing inclusive education.

1.11.3   Chapter Three

The focus in Chapter Three is on the research methodology and design, the data collection procedure, the theoretical origin, nature and purpose of the methodology used, namely FAI. The interview procedure is fully explained. The respondents' profiles are also explained, followed by an explanation of the procedure used for data collection and analysis. The procedure is tested with regard to the scientific basis for using it, and eventually followed by a conclusion.

1.11.4   Chapter Four

Chapter Four contains transcripts of the exact words used by the respondents during the discussion of their experiences. The aim of the researcher in doing this was to give an exact reflection of the respondents' opinions with regard to the implementation of inclusive education, also stipulating whether the respondents viewed it as a successful exercise or a failure.

1.11.5   Chapter Five

In Chapter Five, the entire study is summarized and reference is made to the aim of the study, the procedure followed, as well as the findings and limitations of the study. In conclusion, the researcher makes some suggestions and recommendations for future research.

1.12   CONCLUSION

At the end of the study, it will be important to identify the values and attitudes of mainstream and special needs educators in the Mangaung Township area with regard to the implementation of inclusive education.

In the next chapter, the literature study conducted by the researcher will be discussed in detail.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF EDUCATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 2, the focus falls on a literature review of the resources studied by the researcher. The following aspects are discussed: the theoretical framework of the study, the objectives and various formats of constructivism, the steps taken, the nature thereof, as well as reality and rhetoric. In addition, the role of the researcher is addressed together with value critiques. Operational concepts will be defined together with inclusive philosophy, and the inclusive problems facing South Africa. The chapter makes it clear that a paradigm shift is required, addressing teachers' preparedness to accept inclusive education, and analyzing the factors determining the success of implementing inclusive education.

2.2   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1   Historical background

The decision on how to teach is a problem facing teachers all over the world. The approach followed by teachers is often influenced by various factors. Many ideas come from formal research, but some are also formed during practical personal experimentation and reflection. Observation and discussions with parents, learners and colleagues also affect teaching approaches.

Various teaching approaches were researched over the past century (Naicker, 2005): page 55 to 60. In the seventies and eighties, direct instructions were identified as constituting the best method of teaching. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, many economical, political, social and educational changes took place all over the world. South Africa has been a nation at the cutting edge of change over the past years. In South Africa, many of these changes are taking place in the field of education, and it happens in a graceful manner without civil unrest. The entire education system, from primary schools to tertiary institutions, is being redesigned. On the educational front, teachers are still grappling with the new curricula that have been implemented. It is furthermore imperative to note that education is not and cannot be divorced from other sectors of society.

In a time of drastic change it is the learner who survives. On the other hand, the "learned" find themselves fully equipped to live in a world that no longer exists (Shotter, 1995).

Education in South Africa will continue to face many significant changes. One of these changes is towards constructivism in education (Kant, 1999). Kant elaborated on constructivism by asserting that human beings are not passive recipients of information.

It is not surprising to find that teachers as agents of change in the education situation have many concerns about the implementation of these new initiatives (Forlin, 1998). The reason for this is that change is difficult to bring about in schools and classrooms, as it requires simultaneous reforms in professional development, curricula, and learner support services, along with a change in teacher attitudes, beliefs, values and knowledge (Fullan, 1993)

The theory of constructivism is based on the premise that people construct their own perspective of the world, through individual experiences and schema. Educators therefore focus on preparing the learner to solve problems in ambiguous situations. They also believe that "learners" construct their own reality or interpret it, based upon their perceptions of experiences. This implies that an individual's knowledge is a function of his or her prior experiences, mental structures and beliefs, which are used to interpret objects and events. What someone knows is grounded in his or her perception of the social experiences that are comprehended by the mind. The concept of knowledge plays a vital role in the application of this theory in people's daily lives.

2.3 OBJECTIVES OF CONSTRUCTING

As is the case with many of the current/popular paradigms, one is probably already using the constructivist approach to some degree. For instance, teachers pose questions and problems, and then guide learners to find their own answers.

The constructivist approach borrows from many other practices in the pursuit of its primary goals, viz. helping learners learn – how to learn. According to constructivist learning, the following concepts are true:

- CONSTRUCTED: Learners are not blank slates upon which knowledge is etched. They come to the learning situation with already formulated knowledge, ideas and understanding. This prior knowledge will be recreated to take on a new form.

- ACTIVE: The learner is the person who creates new understanding for herself/himself. The teacher coaches, suggests and moderates, but also

allows the learner room to experiment, to ask questions, and to try out things that do not necessarily work. Learners reflect upon the learning process, and talk about their activities. Learners also help set their own goals to be achieved.

- REFLECTIVE: Learners control their own learning process and they lead the way by reflecting on their experiences. This process makes them experts of their own learning. The teacher helps by creating situations in which the learners will feel safe to question and reflect on their own processes, either privately or within group discussions. Teachers should also create activities that lead learners to reflect on their prior knowledge and experience.

- COLLABORATION: The constructivist classroom relies heavily on collaboration among learners. According to the theory of constructivism, learners learn about learning not only from themselves, but also from their peers. When learners review together and reflect on their learning processes, they can pick strategies and methods from one another (Bruner, 1990)

- INQUIRY-BASED: The main activity in a constructivist classroom is the solving of problems. Learners use inquiry methods to ask questions and investigate a topic, thereby drawing conclusions; and as exploration continues, they revisit those conclusions. Exploration of questions leads to more questions Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh, (2002).

2.4   FORMATS

According to the theory of constructivism, theories can use different formats.

2.4.1   Social constructivism

Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of culture and context in understanding what occurs in society, and construction of knowledge based on this understanding (Derry, 1999; McMahon & Patton, 1997). This perspective is closely associated with many contemporary theories, most notably the developmental theories of Vygotsky and Bruner, and Bandura (Shunk, 2001). Social constructivism is based on specific assumptions about reality, knowledge and learning. From the social perspective, cognition is the process by which learners in social and lingual settings eventually construct mental structures that correspond to or match external structures located in the environment (Cobb, 1995).

2.4.2   Radical constructivism

The radical form of constructivism is based on the views of Hegel and Vico, who dealt with different forms of knowledge associated with different societies, or the relativistic or situated nature of knowledge and meaning (Fay, 1996). In contrast to social constructivism, radical constructivism considers that cognition serves to organize the learners' experience; they have implicitly accepted the Cartesian dualism between ontological reality and the learners' experiential world (Cobb & Wood and Yackel; 1990).

As already mentioned, learning is a constructive, effortful and mindful process, in which learners actively construct knowledge and skills via reorganization of their already acquired mental structures in interaction with the environment (Leslie, Steffe, Gale, Hillsdale and Erlbaum, 1994).

2.4.3 Cognitive functioning

Cognitive functioning theorists recognize that much learning involves associations, by means of established continuity and repetition. They also acknowledge the importance of reinforcement, although they stress the importance of providing feedback about the correctness of response over and above its role as a motivator. Piaget (1996b) regards human cognitive functioning as a means of interaction with the environment which will ensure survival. In this respect, cognitive functioning shows a certain similarity to biological functioning and can thus be described in a similar way (Good and Brophy 1995).

2.5 STEPS

The movement toward emancipatory research is rapidly expanding in social sciences research. Patti Lather (2002) highlighted the importance of empirical research designed to advance emancipatory knowledge. Her objectives are to help researchers involve the researched in a democratized process of inquiry characterized by negotiation empowerment and reciprocity. She refers to research as the "praxis" – practical application of rules as distinguished from theory.

For praxis to be possible it must empower the respondents and it must not be manipulative nor managing in nature, for the following reasons:

(a) Autonomy

Respondents are autonomous beings and have a moral right to participate in decisions that claim to generate knowledge; doing research on persons involves an important educational commitment, for instance, to provide conditions under which respondents can enhance their capacity for self-determination in acquiring knowledge about the human condition.

(b) The need for reciprocity

- Reciprocity implies a mutual understanding and power.

- It operates at two primary points, i.e. researchers and researched theory; therefore, reciprocity is regarded as one of the conditions of emancipatory research.

To achieve operational reflexivity is to develop a critical self-awareness; the methodological implications of critical theory for the research approaches need some attention. In "research praxis", the following critical inquiry is suggested:

Firstly, critical inquiry can be viewed as a response to the experiences, desires, and needs of oppressed people (Fay, 1996) Its initial step is to develop an understanding of the world-view of research respondents.

Secondly, critical inquiry focuses on fundamental contradictions which help dispossessed people see how poorly their "ideologically frozen understanding serves their interests" (Comstock, 1982).

Thirdly, critical inquiry stimulates a self-sustaining process of critical analysis and enlightened action (Comstock, 1982). The researcher joins the respondents in a theoretically guided programme of action extended over a period.

In the context of the attempted research study, the attitudes of teachers are likened to those of the "oppressed people" (Fay, 1996). This research study accordingly attempts to develop an understanding of inclusive practices.

2.6   NATURE OF REALITY

Constructivism challenges reductionism thinking. An example of this is the position on the age-old nature/nurture controversy. This controversy has centred on whether primarily experience nature or nurture during our lives. Constructivism goes beyond both positions. This theory shifts the emphasis to a more active position where human beings are seen as active agents in their own development. Another related and equally dominant stand is the idea that knowledge is not passively but actively constructed (Piaget, 1996b). By engaging in experience, activities and discussions, which challenge learners to make meaning of their social and physical environment, learners are actively engaged in building a progressively more complex understanding of their world (Donald *et al.*,1997).

Learning is viewed as the cognitive activity of an individual to process and internalize information resulting in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Therefore, teachers need to facilitate task-based, individual and group work and all different forms of learner-centred approaches to facilitate them to investigate, solve and report jointly. Learners must become skilled in the processes of listening to and learning from others; agreeing and disagreeing with other views, defending own meanings and positions in a non-threatening and co-operative

environment. Learners learn more, and enjoy learning more, when they are actively involved, rather than merely being passive listeners.

It has become clear that teachers are the key elements in the successful implementation of the teaching process and the new policies. They are often expected to accept practices and cope with changes without considering their personal beliefs and rights. These changes must result in a fundamental alteration in the way teachers think about knowledge teaching, learning and their role in the inclusive classroom (Donald *et al.*,1997).

2.7   RHETORIC

Education, according to interactive constructivism, is a cultural process of construction or world-making. With regard to the theory of education, constructivism broadens our understanding of education in the post-modern society by highlighting the variety and contingency of viable versions of world-making that inform the post-modern life-world and discourses (Davey 1988c, 142).

Constructivism, more decidedly than many other approaches, argues that education is a culturally constructed reality that always involves a diversity of observer perspectives in its interpretation. This diversity constitutes a major challenge for theoretical reflection on the complex constructions that make up education as a reality co-constructed by observer, agents, and participants in cultural practices, routines, and institutions. The focus is on learning as a co-operative and constructive process, first engaged in and conducted by the learners themselves (Shotter, 1995).

As Dewey (1963) observed, interactive constructivists argue that learning is a process that always begins in the middle of things. It is firstly the constructive activity of children, learners, learners and teachers – as observers, agents or participants in their life-world or social life experience – that causes the role of the teacher in constructivist education to change to that of facilitator or assistant to the learning processes of his/her learners. This implies rather indirect forms of stimulating, informing and co-ordinating in the context of, e.g. co-operative problem-solving processes. "As teachers come to watch their individual learners with the view to allowing each one the fullest development of his/her thinking and reasoning powers…. The role of the child necessarily changes too. It becomes active as Patty Lather has mentioned in this paragraph... instead, the child becomes the questioner and experimenter" (Dewey, 1963).

The constructivist concept of cultural viability explicitly stresses an important presupposition of constructivist education: that in our (post)-modern and multicultural world learning takes place in a variety of cultural contexts and that it is not advisable for educators to grant privilege to or advance one cultural perspective over all others. This radical commitment to pluralism is constructive for a constructivist ethic in education. It is part of an equally radical commitment to democracy that interactive constructivism, again, shares with Dewey. Constructivist education is education for an open and pluralistic universe, based on the "democratic faith in human equality [that] is belief that every human being, independent of the quantity or range of his/her personal endowment, has the right to equal opportunity with every other person for development of whatever gifts he/she has." It also implies co-operation by giving differences a chance to show themselves because of the belief that the expression of difference is not only a right of other persons, but is a means of enriching one's own life-experience. Moreover, this is inherent in the democratic personal way of life (Dewey, 1963).

Theories of communication are of particular importance for constructivist education. Among other things, approaches and methods that stem from systemic (family) therapy and supervision have had an influence on ways of rethinking pedagogical communication. In this connection the distinction between "contents" and "relationship" in communicative processes has been particularly important.

2.8 CONTENTS – SYMBOLIC ARRANGEMENTS OF LEARNING

In the past, educational theories and practices were focused mainly on the level of contents and the symbolic orders and arrangements of learning, while being oblivious to the level of relationships. Learning, however, always takes place in the context of a lived relationship (Brooks and Brooks, 1993). It is also crucial for constructivist educators to understand that they do not only construct the symbolic order of learning together with their learners, but also the pedagogical relationship in which learning takes place (or does not take place). Constructivists regard learning as an important precondition for constructive and effective learning processes that educators should develop and cultivate a sense for the art of creating pedagogical relationships that allow for mutual respect and appreciation for the otherness of the other, and that would provide an atmosphere of mutual self-esteem, openness, self-determination and responsibility for both educators and learners (Gruender, 1996). To prepare teachers for this difficult yet crucial task requires, among other things, the introduction of new ways and methods of self-experience, self-perception and self-reflection as an integral part of teachers' in the learning program (Gruender, 1996).

Another important strategy is the presentation of multiple perspectives to learners. The constructivist view emphasizes that learners should learn to

construct multiple perspectives on an issue. They must attempt to see an issue from different vantage points (Bednarz, 1998). A central strategy for building constructivist learning environments such as situated learning, multiple perspectives and flexible learning is to create a collaborative learning environment (see the discussion on praxis, Section 2.5). Constructivists have presented the first challenge of reconceptualizing learning as a constructive process whereby information is turned into knowledge by means of interpretation, by actively relating it to existing bodies of knowledge and by processes of purposeful elaboration (Resnick, 1989).

Constructivism has provided ideas and principles about learning that have important implications for the construction and support of learning environments. The key constructivist principles are based on learning theory that can be used to guide curriculum structure. The examples of the principles are the following

- Structured learning is built around primary concepts.

- Instruction is adapted order to address student suppositions.

- Problems of emerging relevance to learners are posed.

- Learners' points of view are sought and evaluated.

Another important implication of constructivism for the construction of learning environment is the concept that learning is both a personal and social activity. Like other instructional theories, however, constructivism cannot be the panacea of education (a solution to all problems).

Apart from social interaction being an activity that children recognize (mostly at an unconscious level) as necessary for their own cognitive and psychosocial development, it is also an activity that most children simply enjoy. Giving learners

opportunities to interact in a meaningful way, with an educator, or with their peers in relation to learning, can therefore be very motivational

2.9 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

In this research, the role of the researcher is to create a conducive atmosphere, so that the respondents would feel free and at ease. As a qualitative researcher, the author will use the tools of her methodological trade, namely whatever methods or empirical materials are at hand. If new tools have to be applied or brought together, then the researcher will do so. The choice of tools and research practices is not determined in advance. The "choice" of research practice depends upon the questions that are asked.

According to Comstock (1982), the critical researcher's task is to stimulate research respondents into a self-sustaining process of critical analysis and enlightened action.

As far as this topic is concerned, one should be to the fact that the respondents might fear to air views on their attitudes of educators towards the implementation of inclusive education. The mentioned inclusive philosophy is a new concept to all educators, although the policy is already being applied. Many educators fear its implementation, because they feel inadequately prepared for the process. The respondents must, however, be granted the opportunity and freedom to talk and express themselves positively or negatively with regard to the implementation of this concept.

2.10   VALUES WHICH ARE CHANGING THE STRUCTURE

Over the past few years, more major policy documents on education have appeared than at any time in the past. The number of these, as well as the contents, reflect not only the changes with regard to education in the past, but also the concern and urgency that is felt about educational reconstruction for the future.

Although the focus has recently begun to shift from policy formulation to implementation, the major emphasis over the past few years has been on the many structural changes that needed to be made in the education system. The main change involved combining widely different education departments under one ministry with one policy; redressing the differences in resources and access to education controlled by these departments; and making coherent sense of national education needs in areas such as curricula, qualification structures and teacher education.

Unless the interactive process of education is tackled specifically, and with informed insight and action, equity is unlikely to be achieved. Reconstruction may then become no more than the exchange of one set of structures for another (Gilmour, Soudien, and Mehl, 1994). Transforming the process of education must be a central goal.

2.11   CRITIQUES

In education, constructivism is often discussed as a philosophy or instructional approach. As Catherine Fasnot observes, however, "Constructivism is not a

theory about teaching. It's a theory about knowledge and learning" Brooks and Brooks., (1993). The central claim in all versions is that human knowledge is acquired through a process of active construction, and that concepts are invented rather than discovered. The learners' prior knowledge and experiences therefore form the basis and resource on which all new knowledge is founded (Duit, Fraser,and Treagust, 1996.)

. In short, the constructivist view stands in opposition to the view that education is a process of information transmission.

Within the constructivist perspective, learning is a personal process of building an understanding of one's world and, in addition, social processes to make sense of experiences in terms of extended knowledge (Tobin, 2005). The way in which the information and experiences are learned can affect the way they are stored and later recalled (Anderson, 2001) the main achievement of constructivism has been to show unequivocally that the human mind is no empty vessel waiting to be filled, but an active organ. New experiences are interpreted in terms of pre-existing knowledge and organized into cognitive structures, which are used by individuals to make sense of the world.

If knowledge is defined as understanding that can be put to use, as it was suggested, then knowledge may be characterized as being similar to a set of tools, and like tools, can only be fully understood through use.

It is quite possible to acquire a tool, without being able to use it. Similarly, it is common for learners to acquire algorithms, routines, and decontextualized definitions that they cannot use and that, therefore, lie inert. People who use tools actively rather than just acquire them by construct, build an increasingly rich implicit understanding of the world in which they use the tools and of the tools themselves.

Knowledge, according to this view, is not fixed. It is not possible, in fact, to determine objective truth with any absolute certainty. What we choose to call knowledge is a consensus of beliefs, a consensus open to continual negotiation. The message for those engaged in education is, therefore, in one sense trivial – all learning requires the active engagement of the learner – but also terribly important as the metaphor that dominates education both in its thinking and its actions is one which sees it as a process of information transmission. Critics of constructivism object not to this message, but to the attempt to argue that it is some kind of universal theory (Anderson, 2001).

2.11.1   The constructivist approach

(Brooks *and Brooks*, 1993) advocate the constructivist approach. They admit that one common criticism of constructivism is that it subordinates the curriculum to the interest of the child. They also cite critics who contend that the constructivist approach stimulates learning only with regard to concepts in which the learners have a prior interest.

Some critics have contended that the constructivist approach only stimulates learning based on concepts in which the learners have a rekindled interest. Curricula are therefore not abandoned. Skilful teachers use knowledge of the Government curricular frameworks and grade level content standards to structure the scaffolding upon which they will guide learners to construct deeper understanding.

Constructivist writing typically begins with an intellectually dishonest and shallow critique of the "instructive". This critique is a thinly disguised rhetorical device by means of which the writer stakes an undeserved claim to the moral high ground

and tries to convince readers that the constructivist has something worth saying. For example, constructivism challenges the assumptions and practices of reductionism that have pervaded our educational practices for generations. In a deficit-driven reductionist framework, effective learning takes place in a rigid, hierarchical progression, which means that learning becomes an accumulation of isolated facts (Udvari-Solner, and Thousand, 1995).

Understanding of the instructive approach and its history enables one to see the constructivist critiques as being caricatures revealing stunning ignorance of the approach, whose failings constructivists claim to remedy.

Critiques of constructivism have argued that adopting a constructivist stance will inevitably result in the problem associated with solipsism (the belief that only one's own experience is worthwhile), a philosophical position that maintains that we, as human beings, can have a certain knowledge of anything outside of our own minds (Ryan, 2005). If constructivism is true, it means that each individual is continually defining a personal reality and all incoming stimuli are processed according to existing psychological templates. The question then arises: how can individuals ever escape from the internal universe they have created? Constructivism suggests that we are all forever trapped within our own reality.

The solipsistic critique of constructivism emerges from the vantage point of modernism, essentially charging that formal constructivism is highly problematic because it does not include a provision for an objective, knowable realism. However, constructivism could also be criticized from a social constructionist point of view, stating that it is obvious that humans all participate in socially constructed realities. One may accordingly ask: why are socially constructed realities so prevalent? Certainly, there is widespread agreement among members of particular cultures about what constitutes reality.

2.11.2   Mission of constructivism

The primary mission of constructivists, therefore, is to help learners "find their inner voices rather than help learners share in the bodies of knowledge that constitute our species' effort to understand itself and the world" (Cobb *and Wood,* 1990). This has four interrelated consequences, namely:

- ☙ Constructivists feel obligated not to require learners to test their knowledge constructions by using explicitly taught, culturally shared rules of evidence and logic, for such testing would subordinate the individual to external authority.

- ☙ What many constructivists see as "knowledge" includes learners' mere opinions, speculation, and plain error.

- ☙ The "hidden curriculum" in constructivism teaches two extremes, which are the following:

    i. Radical constructivism, which asserts that there are no truths. Everything is relative to how the individual constructs his or her reality (Zevenbergen, 1996).

    ii. Social constructivism, which, in practice, leads to group thinking (Zolkower, 1995)

    Constructivists are at least consistent in one regard. They do not "evaluate", judge and reject their own theory of learning.

There is little hard evidence that constructivist methods do actually work. Critics say that constructivists by rejecting evaluation through testing and other external

criteria have made themselves unaccountable for their learners' progress. Critics also say that learners of various kinds of instruction – in particular "PROJECTS FOLLOW THROUGH" – have found that learners in the constructivist classroom lag behind those in more traditional classroom in basic skills (Cobb& Wood 1990).

2.12   DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

2.12.1   Attitude

"Attitude" is a key concept in social psychology. In academic psychology parlance, attitudes are positive or negative views of "attitude objects", for instance a person, behaviour or an event. Research has shown that people can also be "ambivalent" (have two different feelings about something) about a target, meaning that they simultaneously possess a positive and a negative attitude towards it. There is also a great deal of new research emerging on "implicit" attitudes, which are essentially attitudes that people are not consciously aware of, but that can be revealed through sophisticated experiments by using people's response times to stimuli (how quickly they can make judgments about them). Implicit and explicit attitudes (i.e. the ones people report when they consciously ask themselves how much they like a thing) both seem to affect people's behaviour, although in different ways. They tend not to be strongly associated with each other, although in some cases they are. The exact relationship between them is not currently well understood (International Encyclopedia of Education Technology, 1989).

Unlike personality, attitudes are expected to change as functions of experience, and there are numerous theories of attitude formation and attitude change, including:

- The dissonance-reduction theory, which is associated with Lean Festinger;

- The self-perception theory, associated with Daryl Bem;

- The persuasion theory; and

- The prepositional attitude.

Jung distinguishes two major attitudes or orientations of personality, namely the attitude of extroversion and the attitude of introversion. The extroverted attitude orients the person towards the outer, objective world, while the introverted attitude orients the person towards the inner, subjective world. These two opposing attitudes are both present in the personality but ordinarily one of them is dominant and unconscious. If the ego is predominantly extroverted in its relation to the world, the personal unconscious will be introverted (International Encyclopedia of Education Technology, 1989).

2.12.2   Implementation

Implementing inclusion education is an effective and efficient manner that remains a very challenging task. Although we acknowledge the critical connection between teachers' attitude and the implementation of inclusion, very little data exist on teachers' attitude. Teachers need specific data which reflect the attitude of the educators who are in the position of implementing inclusionary programs.

- Tool: a useful piece of equipment, usually a specially shaped object designed to do a particular task, e.g. writing implements.

- Requirement: something needed in order to achieve something else (formal).

- Carry out or fulfil something: to put something into effect or action.

In computer science, an implementation is the practical application of a method or algorithm to fulfil a desired purpose. In political science, implementation refers to the carrying out of public policy. This process consists of rule making and rule administration (International Encyclopedia of Education Technology, 1989).

2.12.3   INCLUSION

Inclusion remains a controversial concept in education, because it relates to educational and social values, as well as to our sense of individual worth. Any discussion about inclusion should address several important questions:

- Do people value all children equally?
- Is anyone more or less valuable?
- What is meant by inclusion?
- Are there some children for whom "inclusion" is inappropriate?

There are advocates on both sides of the issue. They view inclusion as a policy driven by an unrealistic expectation that money will be saved. Furthermore, he argues that trying to force all learners into the inclusion mould is just as coercive

and discriminatory as trying to force all learners into the mould of a special education class or residential institution.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who believe that learners belong in the regular education classroom, and that good teachers are those who can meet the needs of all the learners regardless of what those needs may be.

In order to discuss the concepts of inclusion, it is first necessary to have a common vocabulary. The definitions have been edited for clarity and are discussed below (Naicker, 2005).

Inclusion expresses commitment to educating each child to the maximum extent appropriate in the school and classroom he/she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other learners). Proponents of inclusion generally favour newer forms of education service delivery. Full inclusion means that all learners/learners, regardless of handicapping conditions with varying degrees of severity, will be in a regular classroom/programme full time. All services must be taken to the child in that setting (Naicker, 2005).

In contrast, those who support inclusion believe that the child/learner should always begin in the regular environment and may only be removed when appropriate services cannot be provided in the regular classroom.

2.13   RELATED LITERATURE

2.13.1   Inclusive education

The idea of inclusive education has dominated the development of curricula and the development of the educational systems of many countries in the world. However, the rationale for inclusive education differs from one country to the next, even within the same educational systems (Booth and Ainscow, 1998b). Inclusive education does not simply refer to the placement of learners with special needs in mainstream schools, but it is also concerned with the conditions under which educators can effectively educate all children Barton, 1997. Sebba, and Ainscow, 1996, for example, state that inclusive education can be defined as a process by means of which schools try to respond to all learners as individuals, reviewing the organization and provision of their curriculum. Inclusive education in this sense is the practice by means of which schools provide experiences to children with special needs in the same school and classrooms they would attend if they did not have special needs. It is the process in which all children, regardless of their abilities and needs, participate in the same school (Thomas, 1997).

The main purpose of this process is the education of all children regardless of differences, problems, and difficulties. This can be considered as a school for all. Such a school accepts all children, understands their individuality, and responds to their individual needs. A school for all is a place where every child can develop according to his or her abilities, skills and talents. (Booth *and Ainscow*, 1998a) go a step further and view inclusive education through a wider lens. They affirm that inclusion and exclusion also imply participation and marginalization with regard to race, gender, class, sexuality, poverty and unemployment (Booth *and Ainscow*, 1998a)

Inclusive education, therefore, is related to participation and learning, to the acceptance of differences, to the school as a whole, to democracy and to society in general. Inclusive education means that all children have the right to attend the

school of their neighbourhood. It is not limited to certain groups of learners, but addresses all stakeholders (learners, parents, teachers and others) in its process. In this educational situation, all voices should be heard and accordingly, the school system, as well as learners as individuals, should be subject to change. The school culture, educational policy in general, as well as social justice is involved. The crucial thought is that it is a continuous process and not just a stage that we can reach at a certain moment.

Salend, 2001 describes inclusion as an attempt to establish collaborative, supportive, and nurturing communities of learners 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.

Even with the various explanations of teachers' attitudes towards implementing exclusionary services in an effective and efficient manner, it remains a very challenging task. It must be kept in mind that teachers' attitude toward innovative educational practices is one of the most important factors in determining the success of the practical application of this educational policy.

2.13.2   A paradigm shift

One of the major challenges facing educationists in South Africa with regard to the move from a segregated education model to an inclusive model revolves around paradigms and paradigm shifts (Naicker, 2005).

2.13.3   What is a paradigm?

A paradigm is a framework for identifying, explaining and solving problems. In a larger sense, the term has come to signify an all-encompassing framework for understanding and interpreting the world and all one's experiences. Generally, people understand the world according to the way in which they have been taught, thus becoming located in a particular paradigm (Naicker, 2005).

2.13.4   What is a paradigm shift?

Burrell, and Morgan (1979) explain a paradigm shift as a radical change in the way in which one views the world. In South Africa, for example, we had an education system called Outcome Based Education (OBE), inflexible, oppressive and segregated in term of disability and race. It was determined by time and calendar and by failing and passing at the end of the year. A shift is now taking place towards a new, liberating system of education that is outcomes-based, and inclusive in terms of disability and race, and which has a flexible approach to time and progression.

One cannot operate in the belief that by accepting the one approach, all other approaches are denied (Burrell, and Morgan, 1979). However, major structural changes and changes in thinking are required of educators in the South African context when moving from the old to the new paradigm. The entire education system has to be reorganized. The operational implementation policy structures within which curriculum services are provided, together with representatives from other sections, will implement policy as decided.

2.14   THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION

Quality in education can have different meanings to different people. One important perspective is that quality is dependent on interactions, on what actually happens between people in the process of education. The challenge is how to transform the process of what happens so that we can indeed achieve quality.

At the centre of transforming the process in education is the need to change the values, understanding and actions of individuals, parents, and members of the community, as well as of learners and professional educators. Transforming the process may certainly be facilitated by new laws, policies, and structures. Willing participation and engagement, as well as hard, ongoing questioning and learning from everyone involved are also required (Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana, 1997).

2.15   INCLUSIVE PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

Against the background of the wider concept of inclusion in a participatory democracy internationally, a growing understanding of the conceptualization of education, as well as of schools as a reflection of society, has influenced far-reaching educational reforms. This has a profound effect on special and mainstream education.

An inclusive philosophy has become central to the educational policies of a large numbers of developed and developing countries (Engelbrecht, and Hall, 1999).

In the United Kingdom context, the principle of inclusive education is strongly associated with the publication of the Warnock Report (1978) where the term was viewed as part of a wider movement of normalization in Western countries.

2.15.1   Beliefs of teachers in various countries

The position taken on inclusive education by the government, unions, parents, and other stakeholders, has a significant influence on the practice thereof in many schools. Qualified support is needed for the idea of inclusive education by a commitment to the mainstreaming of special needs learners provided with appropriate resources.

2.15.2   New Zealand

In New Zealand, the attitude of educators towards the implementation of inclusive education is positive. The educators argue that an inclusive environment can only be maintained through changes and through the wish of the school community to continue with the policy of inclusion. The support for teachers and the teaching strategies used, cater for the needs of all the learners (Burrel and Morgan, 1991).

Teachers describe teaching at an inclusive school as really challenging. They aired their views and feelings as follows:

"Although it is hard to work, meeting the needs of all children… stimulating and interesting working with different cultures… much different from the sort of white middle-class schools, though it is tough to find a way of reaching some of the learners, inclusive education is an adventure, a challenge, a place where dreams can come true... "(Burrell and Morgan 1979).

2.15.3   New Mexico

The New Mexico State Department of Education has taken a leadership position regarding inclusion and has made public school personnel aware of the spirit and intent of inclusion. In 1991, the department circulated a position statement to all public school personnel in New Mexico (Morgan, 1991). Their administrative policy on full inclusion states: "The New Mexico State Department of Education believes that all learners must be educated in school environments which fully include rather than exclude them. School environments include all curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular programmes and activities."

As it has been mentioned that New Mexico has accepted the policy, all children will be educated in supported, heterogeneous, age-appropriate, natural, child-focused classroom (child-centred) schools and community environments for preparing them for full participation in the diverse and integrated society. The State will therefore support, encourage and facilitate emerging local practices and the creative utilization if resources which address the inclusive education in the local school and community (Morgan, 1991)

In this regard the attitude of educators in New Mexico is positive towards the implementation of inclusive education, as it is being said that they primarily need to feel confident that the administrative support for them will exist and that appropriate support personnel will be able to provide equal opportunities and quality education for all learners (Morgan, 1991).

2.15.4   Australia

In every country there are learners depending on need provision and resources. It is mentioned that the Australian education system is "highly centralized". The teachers' attitudes vary according to the type of disability and the extent of

instructional adaptation to be made to accommodate the learners. It is also essential that consideration be given to all the elements of inclusiveness that are being included in the school environment physically, socially and instructionally. It is important, too, to differentiate between a value held about a policy and the teachers' feelings about their professional competence and preparation to put that policy into practice.

Australian teachers feel more positive about learners who require programmes focusing on social integration in their classrooms. In turn, they are more accepting of learners with physical disabilities than of those who require academic modifications; and they are more positive about accepting into their classrooms learners with academic needs. There is also a positive and strong correlation between teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of inclusive education and the level of teachers' belief that inclusive education is a good practice (Thomas, 1997).

2.15.5   South Africa

The situation with regard to inclusive education in South Africa has reached an advanced stage with the completion of policy development by the NCSNET and the NCESS at the end of 1992, and the release of White People 6 in 2001. Both international and national patterns and trends regarding disability have undergone major shifts, which have largely influenced the movement towards inclusive education in South Africa (Engelbrecht, Green & Naicker, 1999).

To recognize and respond to the diverse needs of all learners, the existing education system must be transformed from a system of separate education (isolating special education from regular education) to a single integrated system (Idol; 1997). As a result, the focus of education in South Africa has recently

shifted from changing a person to a systems-change approach (Department of National Education, 1997). The focus is no longer on accommodating individual differences among learners (Ainscow, 1996). The argument is that this change cannot proceed by way of legislation and policy alone, but needs to be carefully managed and understood in the running of the school. Unless teachers are prepared to take responsibility for the application of inclusive education, it will not be possible to implement. Unless the support necessary for inclusive education is provided, quality education for all will not be achieved (Swart, *et al*, 2001).

2.15.6 Justification of the inclusion of New Zealand, New Mexico and Australia in the study

South Africa does not exist as an island, but forms part of the global village. When dealing with educational issues it is better to look at other people, how they deal with same problems we are faced though circumstances are not always the same. For purposes of comparing and learning from others, implementation of inclusive education in New Zealand and New Mexico is looked with a focus on the attitude of the educators in both countries. New Zealand is an industrialized country with a well developed education system and infrastructure. This can help South Africa see where it is lacking. New Mexico is an under developed state which is struggling towards development. This state can therefore be matched with South Africa as they are likely to share common things together. Both can learn from each other. The inclusion of Australia helps to signify the observation or findings from New Zealand and New Mexico.

2.16 THE PROBLEMS FACING SOUTH AFRICA

For the past six years South Africa has paid diligent attention to the increasing challenge to schools when they want to make a difference and be fit for the

future, viz. to examine what they are offering their learners, how it is offered and whether it meets the needs of the learners and the public (Charlton, 1998).

The new constitution emphasizes respect for the rights of all, with particular emphasis on the recognition of diversity. This implies an inclusive approach to education in an inclusive and supportive learning environment. The new curriculum, with its outcomes-based approach, is well suited to inclusion (NCSNET/NCESS, 1997).

Educators in South Africa fully support the Inclusion. The following points are stipulated in the Charter:

- We fully support an end to all segregated education on the grounds of learning difficulties, as a policy commitment and goal for this country.

- We see the ending of segregation in education as a human rights issue, which belongs within equal opportunities policies.

- We believe that efforts to increase participation of people with disabilities in community life will be seriously jeopardized unless segregated education is ultimately ended.

One of the problems facing South Africa in realizing the ideals of inclusive education is the wide meaning of the concept "learners with special education needs". It includes not only the barriers of physical and intellectual disability, but also the barrier caused by economic and emotional deprivation in South Africa, as well as social exclusion. Idol (1997) mentioned, as various obstacles to learning, for instance, the following

- Developmental problems that could manifest as a delay in one or more aspects of development such as language or intellectual development or not being school-ready at the accepted age for new entrants.

- Learning problems that could manifest in all or certain school subjects.

- Circumstantial problems that could prevent learners from having a fair chance to make a success of their school career.

Quality Education for all National Commission on Special Needs in Education and National Committee on Education Support Services (NCSNET/NCESS). 1997, defines learners who experience difficulties with learning more inclusively as those affected by socio-economic difficulties, unemployment, the inability of families to meet the basic needs of their children, discriminatory attitudes towards learners who are labelled, inflexible and inaccessible curricula and inadequate training of teachers. Added to these are teaching strategies/styles that do not meet the needs of all learners, together with language and communication where the medium of instruction is not the home language of the learners.

Lack of parental recognition and involvement, as well as the absence of ongoing in-service training programmes, leads to insecurities, uncertainties, low self-esteem, and lack of innovative practices, which in turn affect the attitude of teachers.

2.16.1 Training of teachers

The necessity of training teachers to think and work in a new frame of reference places the focus on perhaps the single greatest problem facing the new education dispensation. A disturbing number of teachers in South Africa are confused and insecure because of a series of radical changes that have

transformed their working environment. Teachers who are not yet well acquainted with the principles of outcomes-based education (OBE) find it difficult to seek and find their own learning material (relevant to each child's interest, culture and level of development). They struggle to involve parents in the learning process, and they feel inadequate in themselves as persons and in training to deal with so much diversity amongst the large number of learners in their classrooms.

2.16.2   Factors influencing teachers' attitudes

Theorists have suggested that a number of factors that are in many ways interrelated might influence teachers. In the majority of integration attitude studies, various disabling conditions were considered. The nature of the disability or educational problem presented has been found to considerably influence the teacher's attitude. Following the typology (study as in a system of classification), these factors could be termed as "child-related variables". Moreover, other personality factors and their influences on teachers' attitudes have also been examined and they could be classified as "teacher-related" variables. The specific environment has also been found to influence the attitudes of teachers. These variables will be discussed later on in this dissertation (Morgan, 1991).

2.16.2.1   Child-related variables

The attitudes of teachers towards learners with specific educational needs are considered a very important teacher attribute to the success of inclusive education. Child-related variables that were found to influence teacher attitudes include the nature and severity of the child's condition that determined his/her specific educational needs Duncan and Briggs. (2005).

2.16.2.2   Teacher-related variables

The relationship between specific teacher-related variables such as gender, age, phase taught, years of teaching experience and teachers' attitudes towards inclusion has been examined (Avramidis and Norwitch, 2002). However, the changes in educational philosophy regarding inclusive education have resulted in teachers – even those who have experience – being unfamiliar with new initiatives and the demands for rapid changes in their roles. This also had an influence on their knowledge and personal efficacy to develop appropriate curricula and to plan effectively for inclusive education (Forlin, 1999).

Teachers' perceived lack of knowledge and personal efficacy are linked to their training (Forlin, 1999) and experience in inclusive education practices. Those who perceive themselves as competent enough to educate learners with specific educational needs appear to maintain positive attitudes towards inclusion (Avramidis and Norwitch, 2002).

A further aspect that appears to influence teachers' attitudes involves their concerns about the effect of inclusive education on both the learner with specific educational needs and the regular learner in the classroom (Forlin, 1999).

2.16.2.3   Variables related to the education environment

It is already clear that developing any inclusive system places a heavy burden on teachers' shoulders, particularly during the initial stages. This is a result of the fundamental restructuring of the education system and environment. Aspects that are inherent to the education system and that show up clearly in the literature as determining factors in the attitudes of teachers towards inclusion include

appropriate support, classroom layout, class size and curricula, as well as funding and time (Ralph and Palmer, 2002).

2.16.2.4   Age and teaching experience

Teaching experience is another teacher-related variable cited by several studies as having an influence on teachers' attitudes. Younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience have been found to be more supportive of integration (Berryman, 1988). Forlin's study (1999) showed that acceptance of a child with a physical disability was highest among educators with less than six years' teaching experience and declined in the case of those with six to ten years' teaching experience. The most experienced educators with more than 11 years of teaching experience were the least accepting of these children.

(Leyser, Kapperman, and Keller, 1994) in their theory also found that teachers with 14 years or less of teaching experience had a significantly higher positive score in their attitude to integration compared with those with more than 14 years' teaching experience.

As far as age and teaching experience are concerned, it is discovered that in the practical situation, there are teachers who have a negative attitude towards learners with cognitive learning disabilities (Leyser, Kapperman, and Keller, 1994). Teachers who have 20 to 35 years of teaching experience are still used to label their learners according to their disabilities. Harvey (1985) indicated that there was a marked reluctance on the part of more experienced primary school teachers in comparison with teacher trainees to accept and integrate such children into the normal classroom. In this respect, it would not be unreasonable to assume that in general, newly qualified teachers hold a more positive attitude towards inclusive when entering the professional arena.

2.16.2.5   Experience of conduct

Experience of conduct with children and persons with special educational needs has been mentioned by several studies as an important variable in shaping teacher attitudes towards inclusion. Janney, Snell, Beers and Raynes, (1995) found that experience with (low ability) learning disabilities children was an important contributing factor to their eventual acceptance by teachers.

Already wary of reforms and overloaded with work, general education teachers' initial balancing of the anticipated high cost of inclusion against its uncertain benefits created hesitation about or resistance to the concept. Following their implementation experiences, teachers re-evaluated the balance between the cost of teachers' time and energy as compared to the benefit for the learners, and judged the inclusion effort successful (Janney, Snell, Beers and Raynes, 1995)

It is therefore clear that overall teachers with much experience with disabled persons had significantly more favourable attitudes towards inclusion education compared with those with little or no experience.

2.17   TEACHER PREPAREDNESS TO ACCEPT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

What is meant by teacher preparedness? According to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995), "prepare" means "to make or get (someone or something) ready for something that will happen in the future." Within the context of this study, it implies a period of readiness the teachers for change, for proceeding to inclusive education. According to Hay, Smith and Paulsen, (2001) the concept "preparedness" differs from "prepare", since it

indicates how well someone, in education for instance, has already been prepared for something that is imminent. It may be translated as the state of readiness of an educator for inclusive education. It is therefore questioned whether educators have been prepared with regard to skills, as well as cognitive and emotional abilities to implement inclusive education.

Too often change in education has failed because insufficient attention has been paid to the current practices and needs of those who are expected to put it into effect, i.e. the educators, it appears that the empowerment of educators has once again been neglected in the South African policy documentation on inclusive education. If the implementation of changed policies fail in a so-called developed country such as Britain, where the educators are generally adequately trained (Wearmouth, and Soler, 2001), this could also be true of South Africa, where a large number of educators are insufficiently trained. The implication is that current practices and needs of inadequate training of educators deserve serious consideration when implementing new policy (Hay, Smith and Paulsen, (2001).

2.18 FACTORS THAT DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The positive response to and acceptance by school personnel of the needs of exceptional children are important. It is furthermore stressed that teachers' acceptance of and attitude towards individuals with any form of disability are perhaps the most important variables in determining success. Another critical factor is the learning environment, which should contain inclusive resources to accommodate the needs of such learners.

To add to the statement made above, Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana (1997) emphasize that teaching and learning in an inclusive classroom depend on both the teachers' and the learners' abilities to participate fully, to be active members

in the teaching and learning situation. The learner himself/herself creates new understanding, by experimenting and asking questions. The learners must also learn to reflect upon and talk about activities (2.3), and accept one another and have access to various teaching and learning materials. To be able to respond effectively to the diverse needs of learners, teachers need to have positive attitudes to learning and change.

Fullan (1993) argues that teachers are the key forces in determining the quality of inclusive education. They can play a crucial role in transforming schools or bringing about changes. Fullan (1993) refer to numerous studies indicating the importance of teachers' attitudes for successful inclusion. They maintain that a school's philosophy and the attitude of the staff are crucial. Thus, understanding of their attitudes towards implementation of inclusive education and the changes it requires is essential to the management and accomplishment of meaningful transformation in South Africa education.

As mainstreaming and integration, and more recently inclusive education, have become a universal agenda for school reforms, most of the research on teachers' attitudes reflects international tendencies. In general, mainstream teachers are of the opinion that they do not possess adequate training, skills, time or the support network to ensure quality education for all. Recent research in South Africa indicated that primary school educators are in general not positive towards the implementation of inclusive education (Bothma, 1997).

2.19   CONCLUSION

The success of our country in any sphere-sports, culture, science or technology is harnessing of all available resources and their maximum exploitation for people benefit both physical and human resources. Education plays an enabling or catalystic role that endeavour.

Penny Heyns and Sekreman are a good example to that effect. The purpose of chapter two was tridentated how self defeating it would be for us to ignore learners with disabilities since some of them can grow into very prominent entrepreneurs, scientists and sports people to benefit the whole country. Educators form part of the critical arsenal in fighting this battle. Hence it is even more compelling for the department of education to do everything in its power to establish commonsense among the educators to welcome and support inclusive education as part of the struggle towards emancipation from all social ills, South Africa is facing. Educators therefore need to be empowered to do so.

The following chapter, chapter three deals with how part section of the study where all theory from Chapter one to chapter two is put into practice. This is achieved by dividing the discussions into sub headings, research design, research method and interview technique.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION AND PROCEDURE

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three, the methodology used by the researcher is explained. The researcher's focus is mainly on the Free Attitude Interview (FAI.) as technique. Therefore, the theoretical origin of FAI., as well as its nature, purpose and usefulness, are discussed. Furthermore, consideration is given to the relevance of the technique to the topic of the dissertation, paying special attention to its scientific nature, i.e. referring to the attitudes of educators towards inclusive education based on the information provided by the respondents. The information provided by the respondents and external data, are also analyzed and eventually, a conclusion in this regard is reached.

3.2   THEORETICAL ORIGIN

The Free Attitude Interview was developed during industrial psychological research conducted in the United States in 1929. The technique derives its name from a translation of the term "*vrolik*" (Djkema and Timmerman, 1980). The methodology was used by researchers who granted their respondents the freedom to speak their minds openly and without any external influence. Carl Rogers also mentioned this method in his book of 1941. He emphasized the importance of this interview technique as a means of reflecting the respondents' feelings in a therapeutic context (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997).

3.2.1   Nature and purpose of FAI.

The FAI technique is a non-directive, controlled, in-depth interview that can be used as a qualitative research technique. The term "qualitative research" derives its meaning mostly from the quantitative-qualitative research dichotomy (the difference between opposite ideas) in research discourse. It can be complicated to define qualitative research, as the term is often used to refer to techniques, methods, methodologies and paradigms in research. One could say that in a qualitative research approach, the researcher tries to relate directly to phenomena as they appear in real life. One of its main characteristics is that it is oriented towards an insider's perspective, and the contextualization of the process of knowledge construction is emphasized

The aim of qualitative research is to understand and interpret the meaning and intentions that underlie everyday human actions, beliefs, thoughts, as well as people's understanding of their environment and their attitudes (Mouton, 2001). Constructivism, just as "interpretivism", relates to the theory of meaning (hermeneutics). However, constructivism breaks away from the assumption that reality can be understood by interpreting the meaning that people in a specific situation attached to it (De Vos, 1998).

3.2.2   Usefulness

As mentioned earlier, the FAI. can be used as a qualitative research interview. It means that one would be able to influence the respondents to reflect, as well as to reciprocate, and so be able to provide the researcher with respondents views on a specific topic. In accordance with Fay's conclusions (1996), it is argued that the goal of social/political research is to encourage self-reflection and deeper understanding on the part of the person being researched, at least as much as it

is necessary to generate knowledge from experience. He furthermore states that in order to do this, the researcher's design must have more than minimal advantages, "these are:"

- Sequential interviews of both individuals and small groups in order to facilitate collaboration, and a deeper probing of research issues.
- Negotiations of meaning, which entails descriptions and conclusions provided by the respondents.

The advantage of using the FAI. as an objective in qualitative methodology is, for instance, that reality can be constructed as derived from the views of the respondents. It enables an interviewer/researcher to obtain an inside view of the prevalent social phenomena, as well as to be able to explore other avenues of research emerging from the interview situation (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997).

3.2.3   Scientific inclination

The interview is a verbal technique that has been researched and used by other researchers in order to obtain certain information. The FAI. is non-directive in nature and provides space for the respondents to intervene and for the researcher to respond flexibly and sensitively. It can also be characterized as a person-to-person method used to obtain information. It helps researchers to understand the closed world of individuals and communities. The purpose is to understand the respondents' life experiences or situation as expressed in their own words. The researcher must have specific qualities to be able to conduct an FAI successfully, namely a feeling of respect for the respondent and the necessary interest to listen to other people's opinions (Meulenberg-Buskens, 1997).

3.2.4   The relevance of the FAI. to the topic of research

As mentioned by Meulenberg-Buskens (1997a), the respondents' attitudes must be determined. In this study, the respondents' feelings, beliefs and thoughts (logical and rational) are determined by the researcher, who shows the necessary interest in their opinions and thereby gains their co-operation. Meulenberg-Buskens (ibid), however, maintains that the researcher should bear certain points in mind.

- The researcher should treat his/her respondents with respect and courtesy, maintaining the inherent dignity of the respondents. The researcher should remember that every person has the need to be respected by other people.

- Respondents should be satisfied that their identity and any information provided will at all costs be treated as confidential. The principle of confidentiality implies that the dignity of respondents will be respected.

- The principle of individualization, which is based on acceptance and recognition of the uniqueness of every respondent with regard to nationality, religion, race, culture, personality, and background, must be applied. This principle implies meeting respondents at their own level and accepting them and their life world at face value.

The researcher's attitude towards her respondents should be one that allows them to be as free as possible, creating a warm and attractive atmosphere and showing her trustworthiness, because the research topic is a sensitive issue. The respondents could fear to air their views on inclusive education, as it is a new

concept to all educators and a policy that is already in practice. Many educators are therefore fearful to implement it. The researcher must give them the opportunity and freedom to talk, irrespective of whether they express themselves positively or negatively about the topic.

3.3   METHOD

RESPONDENTS: The respondents of this study were elementary educators from four primary schools in the Mangaung Township area, in the Motheo district. The schools where the educators were employed, were primarily located in informal settlements of very low socio-economic status communities, where the children come from poverty-stricken families. The spoken language of the learners and their families was mainly Sesotho, Tswana or Xhosa. Although these learners spoke different languages, the medium of instruction at school was English, particularly in the intermediate phase.

3.4   INSTRUMENT OF RESEARCH

The researcher used the FAI as a technique to collect data. In-depth interview with open-ended questions was developed to obtain the necessary information on inclusive education from the respondents. By means of these open-ended questions, the attitudes of educators towards inclusive education were determined. In a similar way as above, the attitudes of the respondents towards the "implementation" of inclusive education in their schools were determined. Bogdan, and Bilken, (1992) argue that interviews are particularly important when one is interested in gaining respondents' perspectives, by means of the language used by the individual and the meanings implied in it.

(a)   Ms. A (referred to as respondent A) replied as follows during her interview: "I am a female, born-and-bred in Bloemfontein. I'm a Post Level One (PL1) teacher. After I completed my primary education, I studied at Strydom Teachers' college where I obtained my primary teacher's certificate. I later registered for a Secondary Education Certificate, and eventually obtained a Secondary Education Diploma at Vista University. In 1995, I registered for a B.A. degree at the same University. After completing my B.A. degree, I registered for studies towards attaining a B.Ed. (Honours) degree, specializing in Special Needs Education at the above-mentioned University. Subsequently, I also registered for studies towards attaining an M.Ed. Degree, again specializing in Special Needs Education. I received the latter degree in 2005.

"I taught at a primary school in a Mangaung Township and was later redeployed in 1999 at another primary school in an informal settlement in the Mangaung Township area. I taught learners in grade two and three, in previous schools. Thereafter I taught grade three learners from 1999 to 2002. From 2003, I volunteered to do remedial teaching as I discovered that most learners are experiencing learning difficulties. Until date I am still continuing with remedial classes. I am married and blessed with three boys who are still at school."

(b)   Mr. M (referred to as respondent B) replied as follows:

"I am a teacher at a primary school in the Mangaung Township area. I was born in Brandfort and completed my primary education there. I then continued with my secondary education in Bloemfontein, where I lived with my aunt. My parents were very poor, so I had to leave school and look for a job in order to earn money. The money I wanted to use to continue with my studies. In 1985 I attended school at Kagisanong. I passed standard 6 (grade 8). I was employed at a farm school for a period of three years. In

1985 I attended classes at the Kagisanong College of Education and obtained my Primary Teachers' Diploma. I started teaching at one of the primary school in Mangaung in 1989. The population group in my school are predominantly Tswana speaking learners, although the medium of instruction is English.

"I taught Afrikaans and Economics, as well as Management Science, to learners in grades four and six from 1989 to 2003. From 2004 until date I have been teaching Afrikaans, Human and Social Sciences, as well as Economics and Management Science, to learners in grades six and seven.

"In 1992 I registered at the Vista University in order to further my studies. I completed my B.A. degree in 1997. Unfortunately, for a period of two years afterwards I did not study as I was keen to learn about remedial courses, which were not offered at the Vista University. At a later stage, Special Needs Education was introduced and therefore I registered for a B.Ed. (Honours) degree in 2002.

"I am a very active educator and participate in some committees. I am the chairperson of the school's HIV and AIDS Committee, which is committed to helping learners to overcome barriers to learning after school hours and to meet with their parents to discuss the problems experienced. I do this of my own volition. I also acted as a factotum at a certain stage and was co-opted to become a member of the School Based Support Team (SBST) Committee.

"I am married and my wife is unemployed. We are blessed with five (5) children, two boys and three girls, who are all still of school-going age."

(c)   Ms T (referred to as respondent C) explained herself as follows: "I am a female educator, born in the rural town of Wepener. I am the third child of my parents and the only educated one. I started school at Wepener, and later proceeded to Bloemfontein for secondary education. I commenced my studies for the Primary Teachers' Diploma at the Bonamelo College of Education in QwaQwa. I subsequently taught learners in grade 4 in my hometown, Wepener. Years later I resigned, and went to Bloemfontein and started teaching at a school, which has now been selected by the Department of Education and Culture, Motheo District, as a 'pilot' school.

"I am a member of the School Based Support Team SBTC committee and am also involved in the testing of learners in order to refer them to guidance clinics. I also participate in some sports activities. I am married and blessed with three children."

(d)   Mr P referred to as Respondent D replied as follows: "I am an educator at a primary school in the Mangaung Township area. I was born in the Gauteng province and attended my primary and secondary education in 'Phefeni' in Orlando West. I thereafter commenced with my studies at the Mphohadi College of Education where I obtained a Primary Teachers' Certificate. I taught at primary schools offering English, Life Orientation, and Art and Culture to learners in grades five and six. In 2003 I moved to the Free State and was appointed as PLI teacher, teaching English, Life-Orientation and Human and Social Sciences to learners in grades four to six. I like extra-mural activities. Therefore I am a school choir conductor and participate in many music competitions.

"I am married, and my wife is also a teacher. We are blessed with two children, a boy and a girl."

3.5   DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher paid a visit to the respondents at their homes to request them to participate in the interviews to be conducted. The FAI was used as an instrument. The interview was well structured. The reason for selecting the FAI as instrument was to make the respondents feel at home and able to talk as freely as possible.

The gender balance was considered; therefore, four respondents (two females and two males) were selected. The interviews were conducted at the respondents' respective homes during weekends, preferably on Sunday afternoons. The researcher recorded the important facts as the respondents explained views on the topic.

The interviews were conducted mainly in English. However, Sotho and Xhosa were sometimes also used. Each interview took approximately an hour to complete.

3.6   DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected by means of interviews were transcribed from the tape recorder and then analyzed as text in order to extract the meaning constructed by the respondents. The data were furthermore analyzed by means of textually oriented discourses. The words of the respondents were questioned in order to disclose the influence of the ideology carried by the respondents. This helped the

researcher to reflect on the respondents' beliefs, as these were relevant to the topic under investigation

3.7   CONCLUSION

Chapter Three discussed the respondents' profile as explained by themselves, as well as the methodology and instrument used, the data collected by means of a specific data collection procedure and lastly the data analysis. Chapter Four discusses the responses elicited from the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, AND THE PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATORS' ATTITUDES

4.   INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three discussed the strategies used to collect data from the respondents. In Chapter Four, the data thus collected are interpreted and analyzed. The information collected in Chapter Two is also used to investigate the views held by the respondents and their discursive practices in relation to the framework, as a basis for supporting contemporary social practices of the inclusive education concept as a principle of democracy.

The analysis of data collected in this regard is done by looking at themes that surfaced during the data collection process, namely the FAIs conducted with some primary school educators.

The transcripts were scrutinized carefully by the researcher in order to select common views among the respondents. In most instances, it was noted that the interviews seemed to have a lot of information in common. Chapter Four therefore focuses mainly on the knowledge and meaning construction revealed by the teachers regarding their attitudes with regard to the implementation of inclusive education.

The problem statement, labelling of respondents and respondents' responses are also discussed and lastly a conclusion is presented.

4.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem statement in this study is the attitudes of some primary schools educators in the Mangaung Township area towards the implementation of inclusive education.

4.3   LABELLING

The respondents were linked to the interviews by means of labels such as RA, RB, RC, and RD.

4.4   SOCIAL PRACTICES

Just as with Education for All, inclusive education is about ensuring the right to education for all learners, regardless of their individual characteristics or difficulties, in order to build a more just society. In contrast, however, inclusive education initiatives often have a particular focus on those groups who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities.

In South Africa, the transitional process has been based on clear principles that have been built into legislation and other government documentation. The notion of equality of rights is built into the Constitution. It also contains a constitutional commitment to education for all. In White Paper No. 6 2001 on Education and Training, this commitment is translated into terms that are more specific. There is an obligation on the State to protect the right of all children to education and

training, irrespective of differences such as race, class and gender. There is also an obligation on public schools to provide quality education for everyone.

Based on the above-mentioned theory, it is mentioned in Chapter Two that the concept of inclusive education is a lifelong process, and is never a static outcome. It is an objective that is constantly being worked towards.

The respondents used in the study had various opinions on the concept of inclusive education. Their responses to one of the questions were as follows:

R: Respondent (Question): What is your opinion on the concept of inclusive education?

RA: To me the concept of inclusive education is not a new word. I know and understand the concept, but in my point of view, I think there are many things that need to be done in order to put this system into practice.

RB: I know and understand the concept of inclusive education, and according to the theorists, inclusive education is a non-discriminative concept. All children, irrespective of their disabilities, race, age and gender, have the right to learning and to being included in mainstream education. Learners, who are physically very severely handicapped, and those with behavioural problems, are entitled to be included in mainstream schools, and the inclusion of all learners in inclusive education, poses a critical challenge to all educators.

RC: I am familiar with the concept of inclusive education, which is according to the new educational policy in South Africa. It means that all learners have the right to be accommodated in the mainstream education system.

RD: I understand the concept inclusion education although I did not study about it in my studies. I see this new system as a good idea.

Conclusion:

R: According to the respondents' opinion, some know and understand, and others have some idea of inclusive education. Therefore, it is of great importance that they should know what the inclusive education philosophy entails. There are a number of issues that are supposed to be clearly known and understood, and these are set out below.

4.4.1   Issues of inclusive education

Inclusive education emanates from the belief that the right to education is a basic human right and foundation for a more just society.the education-for-all movement has endeavoured to make a quality basic education available to everyone.

- It takes the education-for-all agenda forward by finding ways of enabling schools to serve all children in their communities as part of the system.

- It is concerned with all learners, with a focus on those who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities, such as learners with special needs and disabilities (UNESCO, 2001).

4.4.2   Progress towards inclusive education

The agenda of inclusive education presents a considerable challenge to South Africa. However, it has been shown in Chapter Two that it is a challenge which other countries have been able to meet. UNESCO (2001) states clearly that from the 1960s onwards, some countries – the Nordic nations in particular – had begun to develop education systems in which a wide range of children, including those with disabilities, were educated together. Many other countries followed their example in a more cautious manner and began to extend the range of children educated in ordinary schools. The Salamanca Statement and Framework undoubtedly gave a boost to this process. According to this Statement, inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their learners.

Accommodating different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate teaching, strategies, organizational arrangement, and the use of partnerships with their communities, are also important principles (UNESCO, 2001).

4.5   ATTITUDES OF EDUCATORS

Attitudes towards differences in our society remain a critical barrier to learning and development. As was mentioned in Chapter Two (2.11.1), attitude is a key concept in social psychology. In academic psychology parlance, attitudes can be described as a positive or negative view of attitude objects: a person, behaviour or event.

The following are the respondents' responses with regard to their attitudes to inclusive education:

R (Question): What is your attitude towards inclusive education?

RA: I have a positive attitude towards inclusive education; acceptance in this instance will help people change their negative attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools. Fullan (1993) is an educationist who has contributed much to our understanding of the process of educational change.

R: can you quote that abstract from Fullan's book? I am interested in it.

RA quote that the crux of change involves the development of meaning in relation to new ideas, programmes, reforms or sets of activities, but it is individuals who have to develop new meaning and those individuals are insignificant parts of a gigantic, loosely organized, complex, mass social system that contains myriad different worlds (Fullan, 1993).

In response to the question on his attitude towards inclusive education, RB explained:

I am positive, and I understand that this is a new system that will challenge educators to learn and use modern strategies in order to meet the demands of all learners. I furthermore support my statement by saying that learners with special educational needs will feel very happy to be accommodated in the mainstream schools and be part of the community and advantage of inclusive education is that special needs learners will get a chance to interact with other children in one education environment and this will ensure that inclusive education is supported.

RC: Mokgotsi ha ke batle inclusive education (My friend I don't like inclusive education). To tell the truth, I have a negative attitude towards the system or practice.

R: Why do you have a negative attitude, can you elaborate on that?

RC: This approach to me is time-consuming. In a classroom situation all learners need to be helped by the teacher, even though the child is brilliant, but now most of the time I have to attend to this learner with special needs. Therefore, I really do not understand whether inclusive education will be a success.

R: Previously you mentioned that your school is a "pilot school", a Full-service school?

RC: Yes, I did mention that, but as I have said earlier, I don't like inclusive education, it is time-consuming. For your interest sake, I can tell you again that, although I have a negative attitude, I am one of the committee members who work with the problems of the learners after they have been identified by the class teacher. We meet as a committee and discuss the problem of how they can be helped or rather to refer him/her to the district support service.

R: That is amazing! Even though you are taking part in this good work, you still insist that your attitude is negative.

RC: Yes.

RD: I have a positive attitude towards inclusive education. It is a good idea that was taken in South Africa by the Minister and Department of Education to appoint NCSNET on all aspects of special needs in education and training. In my point of view or understanding, inclusive education will build up self-confidence amongst educators and also amongst learners with special needs to be included in the mainstream, because these learners will learn to accept, love, respect and feel with one another, not forgetting that some of these disabled learners are their families.

R: You have mentioned the point of building up self-confidence; will you please explain in which manner?

RD: By self-confidence, I mean that every child and every educator (but more especially the learners) will feel secure, accepted, able to communicate with other learners, being an active part of the society and able to collaborate in a stimulating situation, in which everyone is valued and welcome as a member of the society.

I can mention again that inclusive education is a good idea and it holds the following advantages:

1)   It may lead to improvement of existing facilities and mainstream schools.

2)   Special needs learners may develop more self-confidence and not experience themselves as different.

3)   The special needs learners will feel they are being accommodated by the community, and they will perform well.

4)   Mainstream learners will also learn from special needs learners, and that will improve acceptance and love.

5)   Special needs learners will no more be discriminated against.

In the above statements, it is mentioned that some educators are positive and others are negative. For the most part, negative attitudes towards different learners manifest themselves in the labelling of learners. As a result, it is considered that educators refuse to accept their responsibility. It is expected that teachers should change and meet the requirements of democratic education. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, (1997) have specific views on the multidimensional role of the teacher, discussed in the following sections.

4.5.1   The teacher as a mediator of learning

This is the primary role. Teachers are responsible for mediating the most effective learning possible for all learners.

R (Question): According to your understanding, are you ready for mediating effectively with your learners?

RD: Yes, I am ready.

RC: I can, but if only these learners with special needs are not in my class.

R: From your words, it seems as if you are not prepared to be a democratic teacher.

RC: I have said before that I have a negative attitude towards inclusive education.

4.5.2   Teacher as scholar, researcher, and lifelong learner

Being a scholar and lifelong learner is an essential part of the teacher's professional role. Without this, the teacher cannot fulfill any of the other roles adequately and continuously throughout his/her teaching life. "Doing research" is often thought of as something with which teachers need to be concerned. And this is wrong. Research is basic to all teaching and learning activities (Donald, *et al.*, 1997).

R (Question): What do you think about being a scholar, researcher and a learner?

RA: Grateful, as a teacher one should be in line with changes, i.e. shifts. A teacher should always learn, and search for new ideas.

RB: To be a scholar and a learner means that I will be carrying relevant information at all times. I will be able to help learners with different problems. And by being a researcher, it means that I will be able to meet the requirements of effective teaching in an inclusive education classroom.

RD: In reply to the question, I will be able to help learners/learners to learn how to question and to think in a way that should be basic to the teaching process at any level.

From the preceding conversation, it became clear that the respondents are prepared to change their attitudes and act as learners, administrators and managers. Being a leader involves using professional insight and influence in giving purpose and direction to the teaching situation. Being a good leader

entails good understanding, self-discipline and knowing when to be directive, and when to negotiate or delegate learners to work on their own (Heron, 1989). There is no one correct way/method of leading. Rather, different ways are appropriate for different needs. Leadership also entails being able to balance task and maintenance needs (Donald, Lazarus, and Lolwana, 1997). In any classroom situation there is a need for a particular task to be successfully completed and, at the same time, for the social and emotional needs of the learner to be met (social maintenance).

4.6   IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In general, it seems that the majority of teachers support the idea of inclusion. It further appears that the implementation of inclusive practices often results in a positive change in teachers' attitudes. The respondents' comments seem to bear out this statement.

R (Question): What do you think of the implementation of inclusive education in your school?

RA: I have said earlier that I have a positive attitude towards inclusive education, and therefore I do not see any problem to implement the system, but I think there are many things to be done before this system of education can be implemented… hee… [hesitates]

R: You seem to hesitate...

RA: No, I would like to mention only one aspect: the most crucial aspect is that teachers need to be trained, etc.

RB: To answer the question of implementation, I think, think, think, and!! [laughs]

R: You are laughing now! What do you think about?

RB: There is no problem about implementing inclusive education, but I am worried that the parents know about the change of education.

RC: I am unable to answer your question, because as far as I am concerned, I do not have skills to implement inclusive education and also I am not trained, and the situation might be difficult and cause frustration.

From the above statements from respondents RA, RB and RD, the researcher fears that the implementation of inclusive education will not run as smoothly as the Department of Education imagines. In general, it seems that a majority of teachers support the idea of inclusion, but some foresee problems in its practical implementation. The respondents also argued that overcrowding in classrooms could impede the smooth learning and teaching process, because it could make it difficult to attend to the individual needs of learners. Therefore, the teacher-to-learner ratio should be increased.

RA: Implementation of inclusive education can be a success of parents, teachers, principals and heads of department who can understand and know the concept of inclusive education. They must, however, accept individual learners with disabilities. As far as I have noticed, the implementation of inclusive education in the classrooms, or the school as a whole, is the teachers' baby, who should see to it that it is put into practice.

RB: Gruender (1996) argues that the heart of an education philosophy of constructivism consists of nothing other than helping the learners create within themselves the necessary constructs. They must figure out how to learn and record constructs, so that they can be consulted by oneself and others without being limited by the bounds of human memory.

To support the statement above, the researcher adds the views of Dewey (1963) who staunchly advocated the use of activity methods in the classroom. He believes that traditional schooling "forces learners into the mould of passive receptacles waiting to have information instilled", instead of allowing them to move about, discuss, experiment, solve problems, work on communal projects, and pursue research outdoors and indoors.

4.6.1   Planning for implementation

It appears that the implementation of inclusive practices often resulted in positive changes in teachers' attitudes.

R (Question): What do you suggest about the planning of inclusive education implementation?

RA: The White paper no.6 2001 should start introducing more (pilot) full-service schools, to see whether this implementation of inclusive education can be a success. This will also enable them to identify the problems ordinary teachers are experiencing and perhaps find solutions to resolve them. The District Support Services should introduce more workshops, pamphlets and programmes to help teachers to be able to apply the policy of inclusive education.

It becomes clear that inclusion requires a great deal of planning and co-ordination between general and special educators. Careful measures should be taken to assure teachers are viewing the approach in a committed and positive manner. They need to realize the legal justifications for inclusion and the positive impact an inclusive programme may have on a student's academic and social development (Donald *et al.*, 1997).

4.7 THE LINK BETWEEN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION (OBE)

For the researcher, the question is how teachers with a negative attitude will teach learners according to the outcomes-based approach. Inclusion and OBE cannot be separated – they are closely interrelated. Both require that every learner undergoes the following steps in his/her learning development:

- Start the learning experience from a familiar point, i.e. prior learning must be established before the next learning step is taken.

- Being taught in a way that matches his/her learning style, abilities and special needs.

In inclusive education, the teacher is expected to do the following:

- Assist learners to reach their full potential;
- Be participatory, democratic and transparent;

- Ensure that inclusive concepts are integrated throughout the teaching and learning process; and

- Allow the expression or demonstration of knowledge in a range of ways (Dewey, 1963).

4.8   TEACHER PREPAREDNESS FOR INTEGRATED CLASSROOMS

It was indicated in Chapter Two (2.16) that the fact that teachers require some training to be prepared to handle an integrated classroom, is an acknowledgement that the implementation of inclusive education is a complex and multi-faceted issue that will have to be planned with meticulous detail.

From the response of the respondents, it emanated that, although they understood the concept of inclusion, they were still lacking the following:

- Educational and teacher support.

- Knowledge about the potential effects of inclusive education on learners with special educational needs and on learners in the mainstream.

- Adequate provision of facilities, infrastructure and assistant devices (Swart *et al.*, 2001).

The author is also of the opinion that relevant pre-service training can go a long way toward shaping positive attitudes among teachers.

4.9   CURRICULA

The respondents argued similarly that the curricula at schools, and at other levels of education, do not promote accessibility for all learners. They mentioned that the curricula for inclusive education and training systems should be responsive to the needs of all learners. They also need to be flexible and accessible. Accessibility includes providing the opportunity for all learners to gain entry to the education system and to participate fully in the learning process.

4.9.1   Principles of curricula

Curricula are a powerful tool in developing practices for inclusion with its outcome-based approach. These principles imply that:

- Learning has to be active.
- There is a focus on critical thinking, reasoning, reflection and action.
- Comments and inputs from the community are sought and encouraged

4.10   TRAINING OF EDUCATORS

The respondents were of the opinion that training of all members in the school situation was crucial. RB commented that a car or train driver could not be given a driver's license before being trained. Therefore, principals and educators must be trained to ensure that inclusive practices are successful.

As indicated in Chapter Two (2.15.1), the entire school needs to be transformed in terms of culture, policies and practices if it is to accommodate and respond to diversity. Therefore, it is essential that all staff and various stakeholders will work out a common understanding of inclusion and principles for policies (e.g. for discipline, code of conduct, etc.)

4.11   PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The respondents showed an interest in public participation. R.C said that for every activity at school requiring money, the parents would be involved. It is therefore of the utmost importance that parents and other stakeholders should also be involved in decisions about inclusive education.

4.11.1   The principle of involving parents/stakeholders

The principle of involving parents and key stakeholders in the investigation was considered important. This is in line with the democratic ethos of public policy developments that is emerging in South Africa.

In general, parents have been given little recognition in the education and training system as the primary caretakers of their children. They have been allowed little participation in decision-making regarding their children's involvement in learning programmes and regarding the governance of centres of learning. However, the critical role that parents need to play in the education and development of learners is being given official recognition in new legislation and policies (NCSNET/ NCESS, 1997).

4.12   CONCLUSION

All the data processed in this chapter point towards the existence of a negative attitude in educators on inclusive education. It is also important to note that this poses as a challenge to the department of education because the same educators are members of communities that must oversee the implementation of inclusive education at schools. It is interesting to note also that negative attitude is not without cause, which makes it easier for the department to develop a remedy and take inclusive to the level it deserves.

Coming up next on Chapter five which deals with the findings, recommendations and further research based on the analysis and interpreted data under chapter four.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Five, the final chapter of the research study, a summary of the findings, recommendations and suggestions for future research are provided. This is followed by a conclusion.

5.2   QUALITATIVE FINDINGS IN A NUTSHELL

In the focus of the research on some aspects regarding the implementation of inclusive education, for instance with reference to the policy, educational practices and culture of an inclusive educational system, various patterns could be clearly distinguished. These patterns concerned the attitudes of primary educators in the Mangaung Township area, indicating barriers educators experience with regard to their attitudes to change, the curriculum material and equipment available, the role of parents and the broader socio-economic context influencing educators' beliefs and expectations of inclusive education practices. These aspects will consequently be discussed briefly.

Finding 1: Teachers' attitudes

Since teachers are the people who make learning possible, their own attitudes, beliefs and feelings with regard to what is happening in the school and classroom

are of the utmost importance. Teachers need the time and the space to re-examine their general understanding of teaching and learning. They also need support in order to be able to focus on the positive rather than the negative elements of inclusive education.

Teachers are human beings with individual attitudes to differences. Many of them may initially resist the notion of inclusion. Teachers with little experience of learners with disabilities are likely to have negative attitudes towards these unfamiliar learners, which will manifest in the labelling of learners. In some cases, the label used will only be "learning difficulties". The negative attitudes result from fear and a lack of awareness about the particular needs of learners or potential barriers that teachers may have to face during the teaching process. For example, HIV-positive learners have been excluded from attending school with other children, because of poor knowledge of the disease and its transmission. By attending school with others, these learners are viewed as placing teachers and other learners at a risk of becoming infected.

Teachers fear the inclusion of a learner with a disability in their classrooms and respond negatively to their attendance. Negative attitudes towards disability are picked up by the other children and this further alienates the disabled learner.

Finding 2: Barriers to change

In order to adopt a new way of working, it is necessary to have a reasonable understanding of what it involves, what the purpose is and why it is done in this way. Without such an understanding, commitment is likely to be limited and attempts are going to be at best tentative and, more frequently, flawed.

Educators need opportunities to collaborate on inclusive programmes in their schools. In order for them to change, they require adequate training via pre-service and in-service programmes that will help them develop skills for effective collaboration and implementation of inclusive services.

Finding 3: Curriculum

Cognitive education is a movement based on ideas. In teaching, the focus is required to shift from a content-based curriculum emphasizing only what is learned towards viewing learning as a process in which "learning how to learn" is important. There has been a shift towards an enabling curriculum that is broad-based and that encompasses knowledge, values, attitudes and skills application. The conceptualization of the learner consequently changes from that of a passive receiver of knowledge to that of an autonomous learner, reflective thinker and problem solver who is actively involved in his or her own learning and construction of knowledge.

Sometimes educators, often because of inadequate training, use teaching strategies that may not meet the needs of some of the learners. What is taught by means of the curriculum may often be inappropriate and lead to learning breakdown. The materials used for teaching and learning will constantly reflect only one type of culture or life experiences from which some learners will feel excluded and may therefore become marginalized.

Finding 4: Materials and equipment

Materials should explore all avenues for opportunities being granted to learners to express themselves freely and to capture evidence of learner knowledge. The learning materials should therefore be evaluated and developed to make provision for the needs of all learners.

Finding 5: Parents' involvement

New policies and legislation in South Africa (DoE Education White Paper 6, 2001; support the optimal involvement of parents in the education of their children. The active involvement of parents in the teaching and learning processes is central to effective learning and development. Such involvement includes recognition of parents as the primary caretakers of their children and, as such, they are a central resource to the education system. When parents are not given this recognition, their participation in the learning process is not facilitated and therefore effective learning is threatened and hindered. Negative attitudes towards parental involvement, a lack of parent empowerment and support for parents, particularly in poorer communities, all contribute to a lack of parental involvement in teaching and learning.

Finding 6: Socio-economic barriers

The socio-economic conditions in a community have an effect on educational provision. Lack of access to basic services affects the learning process and leads to learning breakdown or exclusion (Thejane & Muthukrishana, 2001).

The relationship between education provision and the socio-economic conditions in any society must be recognized. Effective learning is fundamentally influenced by the availability of educational resources to meet the needs of any society. In our country especially, there are still inadequate numbers of centres of learning to meet the educational needs of the population. Poverty-stricken communities are also poorly resourced, frequently characterized by limited educational facilities and large classes with a high pupil/teacher ratio, which increase the

likelihood of learning breakdown and the inability of the system to sustain effective teaching and learning.

5.3   SUMMARY

The research conducted in this study focuses on the attitudes of primary educators in the Mangaung Township area towards the implementation of inclusive education. According to relevant literature studied, as reflected in Chapter Two, being prepared for the implementation of inclusive education means that educators should understand, among other things, the concept "inclusive education" and its implication in the organization of (education), as well as the vision and mission of the organization of (schools).

The researcher conducted research among four primary schools from the Mangaung Township, two of which are from the formal township area and two of which are from the informal settlement. All four are public schools, and the findings indicated that the teachers involved in the study, knew and understood the concept of "inclusive education" because of their studies, but they were not yet adequately prepared for the implementation of inclusive education in the classroom situation.

5.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are some limitations to this study. Firstly, all the data were collected from teachers teaching at mainstream schools. Their responses may not be representative of teachers from different types of schools, for instance special schools. Secondly, the data collected from the respondents from each of the schools were not classified as responses from general educators to be separated

from responses from special schools educators. If the responses had been separated, the summary of results could have been more varied.

Duncan *and Briggs,* (2005) argue that the researcher should acknowledge that it is impossible to produce interpretation other than what is presented in the study concerned, because its unit of analysis is meaning construction. Research on meaning and its construction is always about the researcher's interpretation of other people's interpretation of the world, and this is always fluid, ever changing and removed from direct experience.

5.5   RECOMMENDATIONS

Inclusive education requires a great deal of planning and co-ordination between general and special educators. Careful measures should be taken to ensure that the teachers involved are committed and positive. Teachers need to be encouraged not only to voice their concerns with inclusion, but also to be actively involved in generating their own programmes to facilitate the inclusive process in their schools.

Open communication between professionals should be occurring in the Mangaung Township area as the respondents claim that there is little collaboration between mainstream and special education educators.

The data collected from this research clearly indicate that educators need opportunities to collaborate in their schools. They also need adequate training, particularly with regard to the development of the inclusive education and training system, as various factors will affect the nature of and the extent to which such a system can be developed.

In accordance with the findings of the research, certain recommendations are being made. It is highly recommended that teachers should be supported by the district-based support teams and parents, and that they be supplied with relevant materials and equipment in order to implement inclusive education effectively at school level.

5.5.1 The training of teachers

Teachers need to be trained in pre- and in-service programmes in order to be able to focus on the strengths of learners and to regard the different cultural and ethnic backgrounds of learners as having the potential to stimulate a richer learning environment. They also need to understand the diverse needs of the learners in their classroom, to identify their problems and to be able to provide support to all their learners in order for them to learn and develop successfully.

(a) Teaching and learning materials

Learning materials such as textbooks that are developed and used, should be customized to meet and reflect the diverse needs of the learner population.

(b) Curriculum change

Central to the accommodation of diversity in schools is a flexible curriculum and a policy that ensures that the school is accessible to all learners, irrespective of the nature of their learning needs. It is important, since curricula create the most significant barriers to learning. This difficulty to learning arises from within the various interlocking parts of the curricula, such as the content of learning programmes, the management and organization of classrooms, teaching styles and the pace of teaching, time frames for the completion of curricula, the

materials and equipment that are available, as well as the methodology used in the classroom.

The new curriculum, namely Curriculum 2005, is linked to inclusion by accommodating the full range of diverse learning needs.

(c)   Parents as agents of change for a paradigm shift

According to Barton (1997), an agent of change can be defined as a person who facilitates planned change and planned innovations. Other names given to this person are catalyst, solution giver, resources link and process helper.

In the Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) it is stated that parents should be included in a partnership between parents and professionals. Parents' involvement as partners in inclusive education can be efficient so that they are on board regarding various inclusive education activities with other parents.

By merely including parents in the inclusive education programmes, the negative attitude of educators may change because the burden of "shift" is not their responsibility only. In addition, they will be able to work together with the parents in a partnership to solve the problems that arise. By making their dissatisfaction known and upsetting the status quo, parents can energize the problem-solving process and get the ball rolling. Therefore, parents should use the education they get from awareness-raising campaigns about inclusive education to effect change in the education situation.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The findings of the investigation suggest that although the respondents understand what inclusive education entails, a huge effort will have to be made by policy makers and provincial education departments to effect the paradigm shift (change), toward the implementation of inclusive education. The teachers are apparently neither prepared nor ready to teach learners effectively in inclusive classrooms. However, it is commendable that the overwhelming number of educators is open to changes and willing to learn more about inclusive education.

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APPENDIX 1

11249 Kgutlo Street

Bloemanda

Rocklands

14 April 2006.

Dear …………

REQUEST TO CONDUCT INTERVIEW

I hereby ask you to share your opinions with me in my studies for which I am conducting research entitled:

"Attitudes of primary school educators towards the implementation of inclusive education".

The interview will be conducted at your place of preference.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

APPENDIX 2

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW: A

Interviewing Ms A on the 9th May 2006 at 15:00. The interview took place at her school, which is a primary school in the Mangaung Township area situated in an informal settlement area.

INTRODUCTION

- Researcher: I
- Respondent: RA

I: Good afternoon Mum, and how are you?

RA: Good afternoon, I am very well, thank you.

I: You look tired, was your day stressful?

RA: Oh; Yes! I had two learners which I had to apply certain tests to remediate them.

I: Hei! bo! Since when are you a remedial teacher?

RA: I am a volunteer, I have noticed that many learners are struggling with literacy and numeracy, particularly in the Foundation Phase, so I talked with my principal to ask her that I am willing to help these learners.

I: I can see your classroom that is a remedial class.

RA: Yes, You know that I am qualified.... I have obtained B.Ed. in Special Needs Education at Vista University.

I: Don't boast, I know very well. Now do you see any fruitful results about helping these learners with learning problems?

RA: Their performance is very slow, they even forget what we have done, I must be very patient to them, having a smile all the time.

I: Mhhhhh! Very good, show your talents.

RA: Thank you.

I: Up to so far, have you not encountered problems, from other educators in particular?

RA: Oh no, Sesi, with educators is .mothelele (smooth) but with parents, parents, man the parents, they don't respond when I need to see them Hei morena.

I: (Laughing loud) why do you clap your hands and stand up, touching your head?

RA: (Laughing) I am getting nervous when talking about the parents. The parents must be active to the education of their children, they need to be given report about the child, they also need to know the changes of education especially when the child encounters problems.

I: You know what you are doing. You really show knowledge and interest.

RA: Yes, yes, I know, I understand, and I have knowledge. Remember that I am trying to implement the knowledge. Remember that I'm trying to implement the new policy of inclusive education although I don't have relevant resources and material, but with these remedial work; I [am] focusing at inclusive education and its practices. I must put into practice what I have learnt.

I: That's very good, keep it up.

RA: Thank you, Ma'am.

APPENDIX 3

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW: B

Interviewing Mr. M on the 4th of May 2006 at 15:30 at the school. It is a primary school in the Mangaung Township in Rocklands. The school has classes from Grade 1 up to Grade 7.

- Researcher: I

- Respondent: RB

I (Knock at the door): Good afternoon, Ntate (Sir).

RB (Looking up): *Ag... Mrnarena* (mum) *lophetse jang* (how are you)?

I: I am fine but I am tired.

RB: Have a seat, and join me to have a cup of tea, please.

I: Thank you. What time are you going home, or you work until very late?

RB: Yes, I do work until late at times, and you know that in this school I am a teacher and a factotum that is why I go home at 17:00. But today I am waiting for you, for our appointment as you have asked for.

I: Thank you for waiting for me. Actually I was not sure that I will get you. I would like to ask you a few questions, concerning my topic, that is, the attitudes of primary schools educators in Mangaung Township area, towards the implementation of inclusive education. I would like you to tell me about your opinion about this inclusive education.

RB: *Haaa! Ha! Ha*! Exciting. Firstly, let me start by saying I teach Grades Five (5), Six (6), and Seven (7) and my learning areas are Tswana, Life Orientation and Natural Science. The learning area I like or prefer most, is Life Orientation, but I am not there (*ha ke moo*), I was just giving you my interest. To answer your question, I can say that I understand the concept of inclusive education that is a new policy that should be implemented in South Africa and it includes the right of all learners to education that is in short. *Errrr…………r*

I: Go on please...

RB: Yes, I like this policy of inclusive education because it gives every learner/children to attend school and it is in collaboration with OBE where learners learn at their own pace. I will make an example about myself. When I was at Grade 1 (One) and (Two), I have a learning disability and my teacher called me *ka thlokgo e tonna* (big head). She got fed-up when treating reading; I struggled until my uncle helped me. One day when I realized that I can read, I went next to her and asked "*Can I read for you*?" She responded..."*tloha*" (get away) I pleaded, she said "... *dira ka bonako*" (make quick) I read, read, she was so happy and from that day she called me "big boy".

I: And then, she changed her attitude towards you?

RB: Yes, of course (laughing loudly) but I am not at that juncture, my point is helping learners with learning disabilities is crucial. What I am doing here at my school is helping those learners at my own time, i.e. I'm trying to practice inclusive education.

I: Do you have the ability in helping learners with learning difficulties?

RB: Of course, yes. Have you forgotten that I obtained my B.Ed. (Honours) in Special Needs Education at Vista University?

I: That I know, and please tell me how do you help them?

RB: After school hours I ask them to remain behind for just an hour so that we can do more exercises of reading, some in writing. The principal know about these extra classes. And the parents of those elected know I did pay a visit to their homes and explain to the parents my intention about having extra classes with their children. It materialized because last year I found that one learner is having a hearing impairment so his parents took him to Pelonomi Hospital to be treated. The boy is performing very well since his problem was identified and the parent, a single parent, is very happy.

I: From your point of view, how can we motivate other educators to act like you?

RB: That is the duty of the Department of Education and Training to conduct more workshops to help educators to know about inclusive education, and this workshops should take a longer time, not two or three weeks, at least a month because there is a lot to be done in inclusive education.

I: *0 ka bua bosiu basa, Ntate* – So far, thank you.

RB: *Se seo sa sekgowa ke se thata, ke ya se itumelella, go siarne Mma*, goodbye.

APPENDIX 4

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW: C

Interviewing Mr. T on the 12th May 2006. The interview took place in his classroom, at a primary school in the Mangaung Township area. The school is situated between the informal settlement and Bochabela location. The school has been selected as a full-service school in the Township.

I: Researcher

RG: Respondent

I: Dumela Mme, I am a student at Central University of Technology in Bloemfontein, fortunately you know me and we are almost neighbours. I am doing research on the attitude of primary schools educators in Mangaung Township area towards the implementation of inclusive education. I would like to find out your views concerning inclusive education and also to ask you a few questions in this regard.

RG: Oooh! *Dumela ngwaneso* (my sister). You are welcome, I will help you although inclusive education e nntena (boring). At times I become frustrated.

I and RC: *Ha, ha, ha, Mmmhhh*.

I: Please tell me what are you really doing, i.e. your role at school, since this school is a full-service school?

RC:I am teaching Grade 1, having forty learners in my class …….. too many. I am member of the SBST (School-Based Support Team) committee. I am just helping, by writing the problem of the learner who has been identified and keep the records that is the clinical cards from the psychologist.

I: Is that all the work that you do?

RC: I have said that I am teaching Grade 1 and in Grade 1 the teacher has to work hard, but I am not in class almost every day except when the chairperson attend a meeting or have an appointment with a psychologist.

I: What is your opinion about inclusive education since your school is practising it?

RC: *Mokgotsi, ha ke e battle* (my friend, I dislike these new policy). It is time consuming. It is similar to OBE that learners learn according to their own pace, and they have a negative attitude towards it. You as a teacher cannot always pay attention to learners with difficulties/problems, what about that learner who has a higher ability, he/she also need attention, especially to these young ones.

I: But you are practising the principles and objectives of inclusive education already, now do you still have a problem?

RC: Yes, I or let me say "We" are practising, but I don't understand these policy, I am not even trained – only one person who is trained i.e. the chairperson. I wish

you were here to see on your own that it's a waste of time, dealing with one learner for two to three weeks or until maybe that learner is referred to *Pholoho*.

I: What is your opinion about inclusive education and its implementation?

RC: Negative, negative, I am really negative.

I: *Mme*, you are a teacher, you should make means of understanding this new policy and be able to understand its meaning and how it functions.

RC: Yes, I am a teacher, let the Department do something, like to organize workshops so that teachers can inculcate new skills to implement inclusive education. By attending more workshops the attitude of many educators can change as you know that to change is not easy, it need time and motivation.

I: We have talked a lot, thank you, Mme.

RC: Thank you, *Mokgotsi*.

APPENDIX 5

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW: I

Interviewing Mr. P on the 19th of May 2006. The interview took place at his school in his classroom. The school is a primary school situated in Rocklands.

I: Researcher

RD: Respondent

I: Good afternoon, Ntate. How are you, I am a student at Central University of Technology in Bloemfontein. I am Dipuo, I am doing research on the attitude of primary school educators in the Mangaung Township area towards the implementation of inclusive education and also to ask you a few questions in this regard.

RD: *Dumela hle, Mme, ke ya hoopla ka kopano ena* you wrote a letter and phoned to confirm the appointment *dumela hle*, please call me Thabo.

I: *Ntate Thabo*, please tell me, you are teaching at a primary school, which learning areas are you teaching and which ones are you interested in?

RC: I am teaching Sesotho in Grade Six and Seven, Life Orientation Grade Five, Six and Seven. I feel more comfortable and relaxed when I teach Sesotho. Not because it's my language, but I feel sick when a learner is having learning problems, i.e. not able to read and express him/herself correctly in mother

tongue, the so-called first language according to the Department of Education's policy.

I: What methods are you applying in order for them to co-operate?

RD: Mme, I use different strategies to help these learners. Some of the methods that I apply, I don't even remember what experts called them, but my goal is to see an African child read with confidence and understanding. By putting more effort to my work is where I recognize that even if the educator can try his/her level best, some learners encounter problems, more especially in reading and writing i.e. in spelling.

I: You have mentioned that in the class situation there are learners with learning problems. Is it only one learner or are they many?

RD: No, it's only one or two, others they just need more time. Thereafter they perform well. To my experience, most teachers/educators neglect reading. That is why our learners perform so badly.

I: Tell me what do you with that learners having learning problems?

RC: Mme, I just go on with him/her until the end of the year whereby the learners is supposed to be in the next class.

I: Ntate, do you know anything about the concept "inclusive education".

RC: To tell the truth, I heard about the concept, but I don't have any knowledge nor understanding about. Some say "inclusive" means that we mainstream educators should take learners with walking crutches and wheelchairs in our classrooms. And there is nothing wrong with that. The learner can walk with a wheelchair only to discover that, that particular learner is brilliant.

I: *Ntate Thabo*! It seems as if you know what inclusive education is, because some of your facts include inclusion i.e. including learners with different impairments.

RID: Oooooh! If that is so, I am not aware that I am on the track, that's wonderful.

I: Now, Ntate, what, what is your opinion about the attitudes of educators as I have mentioned towards the implementation of inclusive education?

RD: To my point of view, educators who have negative attitudes are lagging behind. *Ba na le kgethollo* They must change their attitudes and beliefs, seek for new skills in order to be able to practise this inclusive education.

I: To be specific, what can you say about you?

RD: I am definitely positive it will help us improve our teaching methods and to know how to deal with different learners at different situations.

I: Thank you *Ntate Thabo* for your assistance.

RC: Thank you Mme, you have opened my eyes, I am going to read books about inclusion, it is so interesting, as far as I am concerned. Good luck in your studies.

I: Bye-bye.