

**THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

by

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ABSTRACT

South African education is transforming in line with the Constitution and the mandates contained in the South African Schools Act of 1996. One of the mandates that education has got to carry out is providing equal quality education for all learners of school-going age, including learners with barriers to learning and development. The high percentage of learners with barriers to learning and development who are in centres of learning and are not receiving the appropriate support pose a challenge to the Education Support Services to adopt measures that will ensure access for all learners to support services. Education Support Services personnel in some districts have embarked on a process of implementing the policy of inclusive education as a way of enabling access to centres of learners for learners with barriers to learning and development.

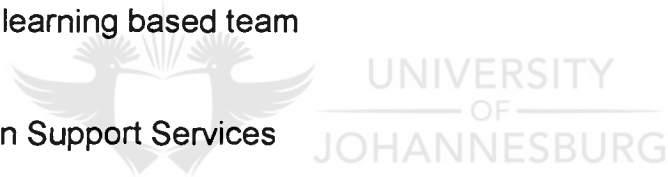
This inquiry focused on the role of the Education Support Service professionals in the implementation of inclusive education. The research question addresses a sample of Education Support Service professionals' personal views of their role. After a comprehensive literature review, a field study was launched making use of qualitative research methods. The data was collated and interpreted per data category.

The themes that emerged from the study suggest that the participants were at the early stages of implementation. The approach adopted was that of facilitating admission of learners with barriers to learning and development to centres of learning and providing professional support to educators to enable them to cope with the additional professional demands made on them by these admissions. Education Support Services personnel gave reports of providing direct intervention to learners with barriers to learning and development where educators could not provide the support. Training educators and parents on inclusive education and how to identify learners with barriers to learning and development and attempting to forge interdepartmental collaborations in order to address barriers to learning and development at the centres of learning were some of the activities of the sample group. As the implementation of inclusive education is still at its initial stages, the study attempted to determine the views of these participants on the roles they were undertaking as well as the roles that they envisage.

The study suggests that all stakeholders at the district need to be involved in devising a district strategy for implementing inclusive education that goes beyond catering only for learners with disabilities.

ABBREVIATIONS

NCSNET	National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training
NCESS	National Committee on Education Support Services
NECC	National Education Co-ordinating Committee
NEPI	National Education Policy Investigation
NDoE	National Department of Education
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
CLBT	Centre of learning based team
ESS	Education Support Services



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to present the orientation of the study and an elaboration of the rationale for undertaking it. The contextual background will be provided together with the aims and objectives of the proposed study. This will be followed by the formulation of the research question, the clarification of central concepts, a brief exposition of the research design and research methods to be used and a discussion of the layout and sequence of the study. In conclusion, the researcher's presuppositions and assumptions will be outlined.

1.2 THE CONTEXT AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The adoption by the democratically elected government of the Constitution of the New South Africa which embodies the Bill of Human Rights provided a framework for legislation that formed a basis for transformation. Within education, legislation that emanated from the new government articulates values of human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, including the right of everyone to basic education. Clauses in the Constitution that have important implications for education and for the concept of inclusion embraced in this study, are the clauses that contain principles of basic rights, equality and non-discrimination (National Department of Education hereafter referred to as NDoE, 1997 : 41-42).

These clauses are embodied in the South African Schools Act of 1996 under the compulsory attendance as well as the admission to schools clauses (Government Gazette Vol. 377 No. 17579 : 6). According to the third clause "every parent must cause every learner for whom he or she is responsible to attend a school from the first school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade whichever occurs first". The fifth clause that refers to admission to public schools states that "A public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating in any way."

This has implications for the education of all learners including the learners with special educational needs (who, in accordance with evolving terminology, will be referred to as learners with barriers to learning and development). Archer, Green and Pooler (1992: 7) assert therefore

that South Africa as a democratic country must "recognise the inalienable right of each and every person including children with learning handicaps to an appropriate education." The significance of these statements becomes pronounced if they are considered against a background of the legacy of South African education and when they are placed within the context of international trends.

Education in South Africa, prior to 1994, was organised according to apartheid policies that promoted segregation, and also led to fragmented and unequal education (Christie, 1986 : 54). According to the final report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (hereafter referred to as the NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (hereafter referred to as the NCESS) (NDoE, 1997 : 21) legislation of the time entrenched inequalities by institutionalising racial segregation, labelling learners with barriers to learning and development and separating them from their peers (Behr, 1988 : 126). The different education departments, constituted along racial lines, each had its own legislation (Behr, 1988 : 61). Inequalities in the resources allocation as well as in the service distribution to the various departments is also well-documented (Christie, 1986 : 98; NDoE, 1997 : 22). A fragmentation worth noting particularly for this study is that of specialised services for learners who experienced barriers to learning and development. Reports of the marginalization of special services that cater for these learners as well as segregation of the learners from general education, which was a general pattern of practice internationally, are well documented (National Education Co-ordination Committee hereafter referred to as the NECC, 1992:5; NDoE, 1997 : 25).

The direct consequence of this arrangement was a situation where specialised services became located outside mainstream education and assumed a highly specialised individually-focussed service status (NDoE, 1997 : 23). According to Lazarus and Donald (1994 : 8) Education Support Services (hereafter referred to as ESS) where they have been prevalent have been characterised by a tendency to ignore systemic factors and focus on the individual identified as having a barrier to learning and development.

Further evidence of segregation within the support services themselves is reflected in the National Education Policy Investigation report (hereafter referred to as the NEPI report) (NECC, 1992 : 13). Some services were located within Auxiliary Services or Psychological Services, School Health fell under the Department of Health and School Social Work came under the control of either the Department of Education or the Department of Welfare and Social Sciences. The NCSNET and NCESS Report describes the state of provision for learners with barriers to learning and development as characterised by "lack of co-ordination and fragmentation, lack of national focus and clarity on the nature of the service, centralised and non-participatory decision making and a marginalisation of the services which resulted in a lack

of status and resource allocation" (NDoE, 1997: 32). A description of inequalities in resource allocation within South African education resulted in some sectors being deprived of ESS that cater for learners with barriers to learning and development (NDoE, 1997: 41). Mention is also made of other exacerbating contextual factors like poverty, diseases and violence that place learners at risk and increase the incidence of barriers to learning and development. These are the realities that characterise the South African situation with regard to barriers to learning and development and ESS.

As a possible way forward, Archer, Green and Pooler (1992 : 7) propose that in the new democratic South Africa specialised education should be an integral part of the reconstructed general education system for all South African learners, including learners with barriers to learning and development. This suggestion is made more pertinent if it is considered within the context of remarks made by Burden (1995 : 23) where she cites discrimination according to race, gender and other kinds of discrimination as factors that prevent people from experiencing life to its full extent. The Constitutional provision embracing the right to equal education for all learners whatever their needs and differences are, is mentioned in the NCSNET and NCESS Report (NDoE, 1997 : 41). One of the main features of the changes in the education system of South Africa is the adoption of a philosophy of one education system directed towards achieving equity, access and redress by providing quality education for all (Gauteng Department of Education hereafter referred to as GDE, 1996 : 2).

The changes that are taking place within South Africa are occurring against a background of similar international developments. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994: viii-ix) that emanated from the international conference held in Spain in June 1994 provided the relevant international setting for South Africa to adopt the principle of inclusion in education. Burden (1995 : 22) states that this movement developed in reaction to approaches that discriminated against people who were classified as "not normal" because of disability or disadvantage. The proclamation enunciates the fundamental rights of every learner to education, the recognition of the unique characteristics of every learner and therefore accommodation of diversity within education systems and programmes and the accommodation of learners with barriers to learning and development within a learner-centred pedagogy that meets their needs. The proclamation also advocates centres of learning with an inclusive orientation as a means of combating discriminatory attitudes and building inclusive societies as well as achieving education for all. A framework for action that was adopted at the conference provided guidelines for implementation.

Inclusion in education is underlined by a specific attitude towards norms or criteria society uses when evaluating the worth of a human being (Burden, 1995 : 22). This is radically different from

the clinical approach described by Burden (1995 : 24) according to which people with disabilities were regarded as helpless and in need of assistance. The focus of this approach was on the deficits in the learner. Strategies and programmes to meet their needs focussed on the individual learner whereas, within inclusive education, the focus is on the system as a whole that must address and meet the diverse needs of learners (NDoE, 1997 : 41). In South Africa what inclusion has to offer must be viewed in relation to the special circumstances of the majority of learners whose barriers to learning are attributable to ecological factors caused by apartheid policies (Archer, Green & Pooler, 1992 : 8 ; NDoE, 1997: 21). By implication a distribution or redistribution of resources is necessary so as to eradicate previous injustices (GDE, 1996: 3). This requires an initiative that looks beyond individual learner problems and seeks to address contextual issues through its systemic approach. This has major implications for the role of ESS in South Africa.

In order for inclusive education to succeed, ESS have to play a crucial role of training, co-ordinating and managing the services (Hopwood, 1996 : 410). This encompasses external support services and support by resource personnel to ordinary centres of learning (UNESCO, 1994 : 31). According to the NEPI Report (NECC,1992 : 14) ESS personnel at district level traditionally include psychologists, social workers, remedial or learning support educators, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, nurses and doctors. Effective support requires more than that. Support that is appropriate for the inclusion of all learners or for the system includes "teaching and learning support ... the provision of assistive devices, general and career guidance and counselling, various forms of therapeutic support, nutritional programmes, social interventions, parental support, teacher training and support, organisation development and curriculum development" (NDoE, 1997 : 2). District support that is envisaged for inclusion is one where specialist and other support services would be based at the district support centre with the function of training educators to enable them to support all learners (NDoE,1997 : 67).

This presents a paradigm shift regarding service delivery to learners. The type of service that ESS personnel are called upon to render differs from the type of service they have been trained to give. Hanco (1995 : 146), for example, cites in-service training of educators and support to schools in implementing whole school policies as the task of Educational Psychologists who are part of ESS. This changes the focus from the individual learner to that of building capacity on all levels of the system. Therefore, with a probable moratorium on the building of specialised centres of learning (NdoE, 1997: 57) and a call to act preventatively by infusing educational support within the mainstream, the ESS in the districts are beginning to implement inclusion through facilitating admission of learners with barriers to learning and development to the centres

of learning. Examining the roles that these service providers assume in the process of implementing inclusion may provide important information for policy-makers as well as inform further practice.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The ideas of this study came about as a result of informal discussions with some colleagues in the ESS on the transformation of the service. Differing views emerged including doubts about the efficiency of the service within inclusion. Taking into account the fact that ESS providers have a crucial role to play in the implementation of inclusive education, it seemed pertinent to determine the functions of these service providers in the implementation of inclusive education.

The study chosen will be a qualitative study since it pertains to experiences and perceptions of people. The problem to be researched is formulated as follows:

What is the role of the Education Support Services in the implementation of inclusive education?

1.4 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The broad aim of this study is to investigate and describe the functions of ESS personnel in the implementation of inclusive education within an urban context. This context includes centres of learning that were previously disadvantaged and had limited or no support at all, as well as those that were previously advantaged and had the services of the ESS personnel. It is the purpose of this study to understand how the services are rendered accessible to all the sectors according to prescribed policy. Particular attention will be paid to the role of Educational Psychologists.

1.4.1 Theoretical Aims

The theoretical investigation that will be carried out in this study will provide knowledge pertaining to the roles and functions of ESS personnel within an inclusive framework. The theoretical framework will provide a body of knowledge on inclusion and ESS that will form a basis for the interpretation of data collected during the field investigation of the study.

1.4.2 The Aim of Data Collection, Analysis and Interpretation

Miles and Huberman (1994 : 9) suggest that qualitative data pertain to essences of people, objects and situations. This study aims to derive information as well as arrive at a deeper understanding of the part that individual participants play as ESS professionals within a particular context in the implementation of inclusive education at the centres of learning. Mason (1996 : 109) refers to the process of generating data as opposed to collecting data. In this study, the interpretative and reflective procedures will be applied to data gathered through focus group interviews, in-depth interviews and questionnaires in order to arrive at a conclusion.

1.5 DEFINITION OF CENTRAL CONCEPTS

The central concepts contained in the problem statement will be clarified. Other concepts that will be used will be explained in the subsequent chapters.

1.5.1 Role

A role is a part played by an individual in a given set of social circumstances (The Cambridge Encyclopaedia: 1990). Miles and Huberman (1994: 122) describe a role as "a complex of expectations and behaviours that make up what you do and should do as a certain type of actor in a setting." The role of the ESS is the focus of this study.

1.5.2 Implementation

Hopkins (1991: 7) views implementation as a phase of attempting to use an innovation. It is perceived as a process and entails coming to terms and working with a new idea over a period of time. This study looks at this process in the case of inclusive education.

1.5.3 Inclusive Education

Donald and Lazarus (1994: 20) define inclusive education as a philosophical position that relates to the educational rights of all learners. It is committed to creating access to and providing a process of education, which is appropriate to the needs of all learners including learners with barriers to learning and development. Inclusive education is also described as education that promotes the full personal, academic and professional development of all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture, sexual preference, learning style and language

(NDoE, 1997: vi). Inclusive education in these terms therefore implies a system of education that is equal and accessible to all learners.

According to Naicker (1997: 120) inclusive education is operationalised differently depending on human and fiscal resources. It is responsive to the diverse needs of all learners, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning.

1.5.4 Education Support Service Personnel

For the purpose of this study and in order to be in line with inclusive practice, the term ESS personnel is used to refer to service providers who support all centres of learning through facilitating institutional and curricular development, supporting educators and parents in the assessment and development of appropriate interventions, preventative and promotive programmes, and addressing barriers to learning and development through appropriate interventions where the centre of learning-based teams (henceforth referred to as CLBTs) have not been able to provide assistance (NDoE, 1997 : 97).

1.5.5 Centre of Learning

The term centre of learning will be used in this study in the place of school because of its inclusiveness and its link with life-long learning (except in cases where the use of the term may distort meaning). This term is also currently used in the NCSNET/NCESS Report (NDoE, 1997: v). A centre of learning is any formal or non-formal environment or place where learning takes place. This concept has a wider connotation than the concept of a school and includes, for example, adult education centres, early childhood development centres, universities and other centres of learning (NDoE, 1997: v).

1.5.6 Centre of Learning-Based Teams

These are site support teams that support educators and learners as well as the centre of learning as a whole. They comprise educators, learners, parents, community resources and support service personnel. Their function is to ensure that the needs of all learners and of the system are met (NDoE, 1997: v).

1.5.7 Barriers to Learning and Development

Arguments in favour of the use of this terminology cite the suitability of the term for use within the concept of inclusion because of its focus on the process of learning and not the individual's

problem. Barriers to learning and development are described as those factors, which lead to a learning breakdown or which, prevent learners from benefiting from educational provision. These factors may be in the centre of learning, the broader community, within the learner or within the education system (NDoE, 1997: v).

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

1.6.1 The Research Design

As the study is about people and their perceptions and is intended to arrive at a deeper understanding of these perceptions, the appropriate research design that has been selected is the qualitative research design. The target group will be the ESS professionals at an ESS centre in a Northern District in the Gauteng province.

1.6.2 Data Collection

The method of generating data will include focus group interviews followed by in-depth interviews. These will be recorded on audio-tapes and transcribed verbatim. A semi-structured questionnaire will also be completed by participants. Any other relevant artefacts or documents that might be found at the site will also be included as background or supportive data.

1.6.3 Data Analysis

Data will be analysed following an inductive method described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 135). This will be used in conjunction with methods described by Miles and Huberman (1994: 58). The process includes generating categories of meaning, refining the categories, exploring the relationships and patterns as well as integration of the data. Contextualising strategies described by Maxwell (1996: 79) will also be used.

1.7 THE STRUCTURE AND SEQUENCE OF THE STUDY

A brief outline of the course of the study as set out in the research document follows.

Chapter One, as an introduction to the focus and context of the study, gives a detailed background as well as the researcher's perspective and presuppositions. The chapter will also

cover the research question, aims and objectives of the study, including an explanation of the research methodology.

Chapter Two comprises a theoretical framework where the background and developments in inclusive education will be discussed. An in-depth discussion of ESS within the inclusive framework will also be examined.

In **Chapter Three**, a detailed discussion of the research design and methods of data analysis will be presented. Issues of validity and reliability will also be addressed.

Chapter Four will contain a data display, including both raw and processed data. A detailed analysis of the data will be provided.

In **Chapter Five**, an account or a report based on the processed data and findings will be given and recommendations made.

1.8 PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

Qualitative research is a form of interpretative research with the researcher as the sole instrument of the research (Marshall & Rossman, 1995: 59). Creswell (1994: 147) suggests that the researcher needs to state his/her biases, values and judgements. The researcher can then, according to Maxwell (1996: 91), understand how his/her personal perspectives and experience may influence the findings.

The researcher, from her experience as a teacher and as a prospective Educational Psychologist, is acutely aware of the importance of ESS in mediating learning for those learners who require such support. The researcher also acknowledges that all learners can benefit from intervention strategies used by ESS professionals because of their focus on individual capabilities or strengths and on personal development. The researcher believes that all learners can learn and succeed in their own way, and that all learners have a right to quality education.

A large number of learners that the researcher came into contact with in the previously disadvantaged schools manifested a diversity of barriers to learning and development but had no educational support accessible to them. This was due to the absence of support services at the centres of learning. Some of the learners had been assessed and found to require substantial intervention that special education facilities can provide. Such facilities were at times non-

existent in their communities or the language of instruction presented a barrier to their admission to appropriate centres in other communities.

The researcher's training also focussed on preventative strategies over and above conventional psychological interventions. Therefore, strategies that take into account the context of issues and an ecological approach to intervention are regarded as important and relevant.

As an aspiring Educational Psychologist the researcher is aware of the important role that people with this orientation can play in the implementation of inclusion. The researcher is therefore interested in investigating the role of ESS, particularly the role of Educational Psychologists as agents of change. The complexities of change are acknowledged and the trepidation that practising Educational Psychologists may feel are noted and understood. These are the preconceptions that the researcher harbours and that she brings to the study.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the context as well as the rationale for the study of the roles of the ESS personnel in the implementation of inclusion in some centres of learning. The research problem and the aims of the study were outlined. A definition of central concepts was presented, followed by an exposition of the research design as well as the research methods selected. Finally, the researcher's presuppositions and perspectives were declared.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to put this study in context, related literature will be examined. The review will include an exploration of the concept of inclusion, with special focus on the international and national perspectives, together with an examination of the foundation and theoretical bases of current inclusive practices proclaimed as the best. The second part will comprise a discussion of ESS, covering their historic role, frameworks of the provision and an elaboration on ESS for inclusive schools. A special focus will be placed on the roles of ESS personnel. A more detailed description of the specific roles of the Educational Psychologists will be given.

2.2. A DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

To provide a context within which ESS personnel function within the framework of inclusion, the concept of inclusion will be explored.

2.2.1 International Developments

Inclusion is the focus of worldwide educational reform, though Burden (1995 : 22) indicates that not all countries have adopted its principles and not all of those who have adopted it are practising it. Concepts that are closely related to inclusion and are widely used, often interchangeably (though there is a difference between them), are mainstreaming and integration. Mainstreaming and integration are concepts that evolved in developed countries where learners with disabilities had been segregated from their peers in the mainstream (Idol, 1997 : 384; Soder, 1997 : 27). The emphasis in these approaches is on accommodating learners with disabilities in the existing system of general education (Burden, 1995 : 24; Sebba & Ainscow, 1996 : 9).

Mainstreaming implies placement of a learner in the existing system of education without making appropriate changes within the system in accordance with the specific needs of the learner. Integration on the other hand promotes placement of a learner in general education and makes accommodation for particular needs of the learner: for example, instituting pull-out programmes and providing special or remedial facilities. Inclusion within the international context developed as a result of an effort to overcome the shortcomings of accommodating and supporting learners with disabilities within mainstream education that characterized integration. Inclusion therefore meant creating schools that are inherently capable of educating all learners (Dyson & Forlin, 1999 : 25). Some sources regard inclusion as a

continuous process that is developing and not as a state (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996 : 7). They describe inclusive education as a process of operating a school as a supportive community for all learners.

This is different from the notion of inclusion which makes provision for the creation of separate special classes within centres of learning (Kauffman, Lloyd, Baker & Riedel, 1995 : 545; Idol, 1997 : 386) (that is integration). A description of options within the practice of inclusion is given, with mention of full inclusion (Van Dyke, Stallings & Colley, 1995 : 476; Roberts & Mather, 1995 : 46 ; Zigmond & Baker, 1997 : 101). Some sources use the term total inclusion (GDE, 1996 : 8). Full inclusion is a practice whereby all learners, including learners with barriers to learning and development, are educated together with sufficient support, in age-appropriate, ordinary education programmes with differentiated curricular goals and needs for learners with barriers to learning and development (GDE, 1996 : 8). Dyson and Millward (1997 : 58) describe inclusion as a practice where centres of learning respond to learner needs from their own resources within the context of their normal teaching activities and within the common curriculum through the application of appropriate and enhanced teaching strategies and the provision of a flexible system of support.

Literature attributes the development of the notion of integrated education and the emergence of inclusive schooling to research in the social sciences. This research highlighted the damaging effects of categorisation, labelling and segregation (Fish, 1985 : 2; Alper, Schloss, Etscheidt & Macfarlane, 1995 : 4; Herr, 1993 : 38 ; Burden, 1995 : 23). Burden (1995 : 23) further reports that inclusion has a specific historical background characterised by a realisation of injustices towards people with disabilities. According to Gulliford (1989 : 19) the historical developments were influenced by the conceptual framework of professionals that were involved with individuals with disabilities. He cites the profound influence of medical specialists in identifying mental defects and labelling them in medical terms. Another influence that followed was that of psychology with its emphasis on intelligence testing, which replaced the medical approach (Gulliford, 1989 : 20). Later work by psychologists focussed on learners' learning and adjustment difficulties. The professional role of Educational Psychologists emerged later (Gulliford, 1989 : 21).

These international developments are closely linked to legislation, resolutions and advocacy by some interest groups. Important international legislation that had far-reaching implications for special educational reform includes:

- * The Warnock Report and the Education Act of 1981 in England and Wales that heralded new ways of assessing and meeting learner needs, encouraged parent involvement and laid the basis for educating learners with barriers to learning and development within ordinary learning sites as far as possible.
- * The Education Reform Act of 1988 which led to the establishment of a National Curriculum that

applied to all learners between the ages of 5 and 16, with the exceptions where modifications or exclusion from the provisions of the National Curriculum would have been in the interests of the learner according to regulations set out by the Secretary of State (O'Hanlon, 1993 : 143).

- * The Public Law 94 : 142 (in the United States of America) mandated the establishment of a continuum of special education programmes and services. The enactment of this law in 1978 emphasised placement of learners with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (Villa & Thousand, 1995 : 20).
- * A Resolution passed by the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps in 1979 that called for the inclusion of learners with severe and profound disabilities in mainstream education. In 1988, this demand was extended to include the integration of special and general education (Villa & Thousand, 1995 : 21).

In addition Herr (1993 : 38) identified the United Nations declarations that were precursors to the advocacy and adoption of inclusive education. His list includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Disability Rights encompassed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Disabled of 1975, the Children's Rights as set forth in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1990.

Evidence of national practices in special education is discussed by Kisanji (1996 : 67). He provides an overview of the state of affairs in the area of addressing barriers to learning and development in various countries and identifies categories into which countries can be divided. Kisanji distinguishes countries with two parallel provisions for barriers to learning and development (namely, special and mainstream education). Included in this group are Germany, Hungary and The Netherlands. He also identifies countries that have a segregated special education system, for example, Japan, Taiwan, Russia, Czechoslovakia and Hong Kong. Some countries are said to have definite links between special and mainstream schools with a mixture of integrated and special programmes supported by legislation. Countries that Kisanji includes in this category are Denmark, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom. He further refers to countries that show a mixture of integrated and special programmes supported by legislation, for example the United States of America. Countries with either limited special education (South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Senegal and Palestine) or emerging special education (Nigeria, Iran, Brazil, Indonesia, Egypt, Pakistan, India, China and Uruguay) are also identified.

It is against this background that advocacy for a worldwide reform of education to improve its quality and relevance, and to promote higher levels of learning achievement, including change in addressing barriers to learning and development, was articulated in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994 : 21). This document endorsed a Framework for Action on Special Needs education (UNESCO 1994 : ix), which called on all governments to:

- * take all the necessary steps to include all learners in their education systems
- * adopt the principle of inclusion as a matter of policy
- * develop pilot projects and share experiences with other countries
- * establish a broad participatory planning, monitoring, and evaluating educational provision to address barriers to learning and development
- * facilitate participation of parents, communities and organisations of people with disabilities in the planning and decision-making processes
- * incorporate in their strategies early identification, intervention as well as the vocational aspect of inclusive education strategies, and
- * ensure provision of teacher education programmes designed to cater for barriers to learning and development in inclusive schools

This proclamation that was binding to member states, provides a universal strategy to achieve education for all and to make centres of learning educationally more effective.

2.2.2 National Developments

Events in the development of special education in South Africa show a similar pattern to the one outlined in international developments. The early facilities for people with disabilities were set up by church organisations (NDoE, 1997 : 22). The first state involvement in special education was in the 1900s with subsequent legislation that resulted in the setting up of separate special provision for the white learners while provision for other racial groups was either limited or non-existent (NECC, 1992 : 13). A general description of specialised services that were fragmented (divided according to different education departments) and segmented (as a result of lack of integration of the services) is given in some sources (Archer, Viljoen, Hanekom & Engelbrecht, 1994 : 53; NDoE, 1997 : 23; NECC, 1992 : 13). According to Burden (1995 : 22) the notion of inclusion developed in reaction to the discriminatory approaches towards people who had disabilities or who were disadvantaged as a result of criteria applied by society in evaluating the worth of a human being. For inclusion to be fully implemented as adopted practice requires that it be entrenched through legislation. The South African legislation that provides the framework for the adoption of the principles guiding the process of inclusion includes:

The South African Constitution of 1996 which embodies the Bill of Rights that recognises the basic human rights of all citizens. The principles embraced in this document permeate all legislation and policy (NDoE, 1998 : 41).

The White Paper on Education and Training of 1995. This document stipulates the areas that needed to be transformed and calls for the establishment of a National Commission to investigate and make recommendations on education that is more responsive to diverse needs of all learners (NDoE, 1998 :

43).

The South African Schools Act of 1996. This Act endorses access to basic quality education for all learners without discrimination, pronounces the right of all learners to support services, asserts the rights of parents in the education of their children and recognises Sign language as an official language (Government Gazette No 17579 : 1996). This legal framework, established after 1994 against the background of international proclamations on special needs, provides a suitable setting for inclusion in education.

What is envisaged for South Africa, as stipulated in the **NCSNET and NCESS Report** (NDoE, 1997 : 20), is a system of education that addresses the diverse needs of learners in a holistic way through progressive provision of varying learning contexts and programmes within a single integrated education system. Reference is also made to the provision of a flexible curriculum that is accessible to all learners. The focus in this respect is on enabling the learning context to accommodate diversity and provide quality education for all learners, including the learners that the system excluded previously, by redressing past inequalities and providing equal opportunities for all (NDoE, 1997 : 41). The education system that is proposed is one that is inclusive and thereby commits itself to the process of education that is appropriate to the needs of all learners, irrespective of their background and circumstances (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1997 : 20). The NCSNET and NCESS Report (NDoE, 1997: 11) reiterates that such an education system recognises the diversity of needs that must be met among the learner populations to promote effective learning and also focusses on those factors that are barriers to learning and development thereby causing learning breakdown.

2.3 BARRIERS TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Barriers to learning and development were defined in 1.5.7 as factors that lead to a learning breakdown. According to Lazarus and Donald (1994 : 6) barriers to learning and development include physical, academic, social and psychological problems. Learners who have mental and sensorial disabilities are included in this group as well (Hegarty, 1989 : 89). Wedell (1993 : 226), however, warns against inferring barriers to learning and development from a learner's disability as barriers to learning and development are the outcome of the interaction between the disability itself and the extent to which it is compensated by the environment. Davis (1995 : 8) states that the main cause of learning problems in South Africa are extrinsic factors, with the greatest impact arising from ecological factors as a result of past apartheid policies (Archer, Green & Pooler, 1992 : 7). An increase in the incidence of barriers to learning and development is attributed to contextual factors such as poverty, a prevailing culture of violence and the absence of the culture of learning (NECC, 1992 : 30).

2.4 DEFINITION OF INCLUSION

A number of sources discuss inclusion and express, as its essence, admission of learners with barriers to learning and development to general education with appropriate support where necessary (Van Dyke, Stallings & Colley, 1995 : 475; Pijl, Meijer & Hegarty, 1997 : 1 ; Willard, 1995 : 6 ; Idol, 1997 : 384). In defining inclusion, Donald et al. (1997 : 20) emphasise the importance of the system's ability to meet the needs of the learner as normally as possible.

A broader definition is given in Ferguson (1995 : 286) who describes inclusion as "a process of meshing general and special education reform initiatives and strategies in order to achieve a unified system of public education that incorporates all children and youths as active, fully participating members of the school community; that views diversity as the norm; and that ensures a high quality education for each student by providing meaningful curriculum, effective teaching and necessary support for each student." By implication, this definition alludes to the restructuring of centres of learning by increasing their capacity to respond positively to all learners as individuals (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996 : 9; Dyson & Millward, 1995 : 52). Ferguson (1995 : 287) further cites structuring of centres of learning around learner diversity, change in the teaching approaches and focus on the supportive role as changes that accrue to centres of learning as a consequence of inclusion.

The measures mentioned above can be interpreted as applying through restructuring as well as access to education. Donald et al. (1997 : 17) on the other hand cite change in the process of education as the central aim. They suggest that change of values, understanding and actions of people should be the focus of such change. According to Naicker (1997 : 122) the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa might differ from province to province as a result of contextual factors, thereby leading to differences in the way the process unfolds. Dyson and Forlin (1999 : 31) view inclusion as a means of extending the opportunity for education to marginalised groups who may have had no access to education and involves transforming the system to accommodate diversity (NDoE, 1997: 54). According to Dyson and Forlin (1999: 33), inclusion in the South African context goes beyond providing for learners with disabilities to include "all learners irrespective of race, class, gender, disability, religion, culture and sexual preference". It is expected therefore that the implementation of inclusion in the South African context should embrace these issues.

2.4.1 Inclusion as a Reform of Mainstream Schools

It is suggested that provision for barriers to learning and development within inclusive education should be embedded within normal processes of teaching if it is not to assume a form of internal segregation (Dyson & Millward, 1995 : 57; Lazarus & Donald, 1994 : 10; NDoE, 1997 : 58). The implications are that classroom educators have to develop the appropriate attitude and necessary skills to enable them to respond to diversity (Burden, 1995 : 25; NDoE, 1997 : 63). It is therefore further suggested that the focus

should be on enhancing mainstream strategies to accommodate learners with barriers to learning and development within the common but flexible curriculum while development is aimed at enhancing the quality of provision for all, as inclusion is associated with overall school effectiveness (Sebba & Ainscow, 1996 : 11; Villa & Thousand, 1995 : 23). According to Balshaw (1991 : 24), for the kind of change described above to happen effectively, people who bring about the change must understand the implications of and the need for change, and how it should happen. Included in this group are ESS professionals.

2.4.2 Issues in the Implementation of Inclusion

Some sources discuss characteristics or processes that are common to the implementation of inclusion. These characteristics are derived from studies of successful practices of inclusion. Mention is made of visionary leadership and shared vision of the process among educators; a paradigm shift by policymakers and educators; comprehensive planning for educational change by educators that includes initiation, implementation and incorporation or local transformatory initiatives, high quality staff development initiatives and new strategies for support for learning within centres of learning (King-Sears, 1997 : 3; Dyson & Millward, 1995 : 67; Porter, 1997 : 69 - 70).

These are some of the activities, role functions or precursors to successful implementation of inclusion that can be considered and incorporated.

2.5 CLASSROOM PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

As a way of acknowledging and accommodating diversity, inclusive schools need to respond to learner characteristics. In implementing inclusive education Dyson and Millward (1995 : 57) warn against replicating special education within the mainstream. They suggest that strategies and systems that are embedded within the normal process of teaching must be developed.

Educational practice that emulates the principles of inclusive education and that has the potential to create a unified philosophy and revolutionary standards of educational practice are discussed by Udvari-Solner and Thousand (1995: 88, 105). These initiatives are learner-centred as they make allowances for diversity in learning styles and rates of learning. They also acknowledge the existence of different types of knowledge and pay attention to the context of learning. Practices mentioned that encompass the above characteristics are constructivist learning, outcomes-based education, practices that incorporate multiple intelligences, authentic assessment of learner performance, interdisciplinary curricula, multicultural education, community-referenced instruction, multi-age grouping, peer-mediated instruction, use of technology, teaching responsibility, peacemaking, and collaborative teaming. The curricular initiative in the South African education that places the learners at the centre of the activity making them responsible for their own learning and progress is Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes-Based Education. Initiatives that

will support inclusion within the South African situation will, according to the NCSNET/ NCESS Report (NDoE, 1997 : 19):

- * make accommodation for learners previously excluded from the system
- * incorporate practices for recognising and accommodating diversity
- * engage in activities that advocate against discrimination
- * adopt processes that involve parents, learners, educators and the community in governance within centres of learning
- * provide programmes which equip educators to deal with diversity
- * develop teaching and learning environments, and
- * provide legislation and policy that support economic and political transformation.

This implies that ecological factors will have to be addressed as well, thereby making inclusion much more than integrating learners with disabilities into mainstream. As this is a process of change, these activities require agents of change to initiate as well as support the process.

Literature identifies the ESS as appropriate for such a role in their capacity as policy implementors (Lacey & Lomas, 1993 : 31; NDoE, 1997 : 97; Hanko, 1995 : 146). The following section will therefore focus on the role of ESS personnel in implementing inclusion. Special attention will be paid to their role in facilitating the changes that should occur in line with inclusion.

2.6 EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

The term support services in inclusive education refers to various groups of professionals offering advice and skills to aid the inclusion and general education of learners with barriers to learning and development (Lacey & Lomas, 1993 : 11; Bowers, 1989 : 33). Included in this group are advisory educators, learning support educators, Educational Psychologists and Speech and Occupational Therapists (UNESCO, 1994 : 31; NDoE, 1997 : 32).

Provision of appropriate, high quality education for all learners in mainstream centres of learning means that any special services necessary for successful learning for all learners should be provided within mainstream education (Meijer, Pijl & Hegarty, 1997 : 151). Roach (1995 : 296) acknowledges this fact, though she remarks that some learners may need to be removed from an inclusive classroom for separate instruction (Roach, 1995 : 299).

For the successful implementation of inclusive education, Donald et al. (1997 : 25) envisage a broader role for the ESS that entails a shift from focussing on the problem in the individual and adopting curative measures typical of the former system to a "systems change approach". The recommended practice would include attending to social problems affecting learners as well as coordinating the process of health

promotion and prevention. Considering Balshaw's view of inclusion (Balshaw, 1991 : 24), support services will therefore facilitate change at all centres of learning and within the community.

The ESS differ according to their function, development and personnel. Lacey and Lomas (1993 : 11) identify support that is in-school support, support where teachers support learners, support between teachers and support to teachers and learners from an outside source. While the description may reflect prevalent practices, the emphasis within inclusion is on the integration and the infusion of ESS (Lazarus & Donald, 1994 : 10).

To understand current operations within the ESS a brief historical background will be given. A review of the development of ESS reveals their segregation from general education activities. Access to these services has only been through a referral system by different agencies (Drew, 1990 : 13). This is called the traditional model of support based on the child deficit model. Alper et al. (1995 : 19), in an explanation of a multidisciplinary approach, illustrate the parallel functioning of these services. This accounts for the marginalisation and fragmentation of the services (NECC, 1992 : 5; Lazarus & Donald, 1994 : 7). Porter (1995 : 302) mentions assessment of learners by specialists, diagnosis and prescribing remediation and placement in an appropriate programme as forming part of traditional practice. This reflects the typical curative approach that has prevailed for many years.

Newton (in Booth, Swann, Masterton & Potts, 1992 : 395) states that inclusion requires that centres of learning should be helped with change of attitude and approach to service delivery to be able to accommodate a diverse group of learners.

According to Watts (1990 : 12) the focus of the ESS in addressing barriers to learning and development should shift from focussing on the individual learner's basic skills and behavioural problems to supporting their educators and the centre of learning. Watts (op cit) highlights the implications of the new service on the type of skills that support services require for efficient delivery of a service that caters for the needs of the centre of learning, educators and learners. An example of the ESS activities cited by Newton (1992 : 397) is the provision of educator development to raise awareness about barriers to learning and development and assisting centres of learning in recording learners' strengths and achievements systematically in order to determine progress. This is done within the framework of establishing a centre of learning-based support (Lazarus et al, 1999 : 54).

It is also, according to Newton, incumbent upon the ESS team to promote the involvement of parents in the education of their children. This includes assisting in the implementation of the whole school approach and working alongside subject educators helping to develop appropriate curriculum materials and deliver lessons. Further activities concern working in collaboration in the classroom with individuals or groups, assisting educators and parents in presenting materials which are accessible to all learners. Wedell (1993 : 235) particularly mentions as functions of the ESS consultation with managers at the

centres of learning regarding the centres' responsiveness to learner needs and consultation with educators who have the direct responsibility for learners with barriers to learning and development as well as direct work with learners. Support for learners with barriers to learning and development may, according to Lacey and Lomas (1993: 25), be direct, indirect or a combination of the two. According to Watts (1990 : 7), ESS within the new framework focus on what the learner's educational needs are and how these can be met.

A framework within which ESS should function is suggested by Hart (1992 : 112). Hart supports a whole curriculum approach and states that it opens up possibilities for the process of addressing barriers to learning and development to become an integral part of the process of developing comprehensive education as a whole. This is different from the traditional child-deficit model that Harland (1992 : 115) alludes to. The holistic approaches commit themselves to preventive methods of meeting learners' needs. Solity and Bickler (1994 : 23) explain that prevention has become an important aspect of support services which is directed at individuals, centres of learning and communities.

Charema (1996 : 77), on the other hand, presents another view of the objectives of ESS within the inclusive education framework. He includes provision of appropriate quality specialist support to learners in the mainstream and equipping the learners with the necessary skills for independent and interdependent learning. In describing support to parents and educators, Charema lists preparing, supporting and equipping parents and mainstream educators as to how best they can help learners with barriers to learning and development as well as facilitating continuous educator development.

Donald et al. (1997 : 26) propose that in South Africa, the restructured ESS should focus on a comprehensive health promotive, developmental and preventive service directed at individuals, centres of learning and communities. This requires major changes to the perception of tasks that the ESS perform and implies a broadening of the functions of ESS as well as the extension of support beyond the centres of learning.

2.7 CHANGING ROLES OF EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES PERSONNEL

The changing roles of ESS providers include the assumption of new advisory roles, collaborative consultative roles and transdisciplinary co-operation, as well as working as interactive teams (Watts, 1990 : 9; Lacey & Lomas, 1993 : 23; Idol, 1997 : 393; Alper, Schloss & Macfarlane, 1995 : 20 ; Willard, 1995 : 12; Coben, Thomas, Sattler & Morsink, 1997 : 430).

A description of how ESS can operate is cited by Watts (1990 : 10). This covers direct work with learners, educator development work and organising the curriculum to meet learner needs as well as giving advice to administrators on policy, practice and provision based on project work, research, marketing and evaluation. This description covers the different functions from the centre of learning level to the provincial

level. This would involve ESS personnel at centres of learning, districts and provincial offices. Watts (1990 : 9) further stresses the importance of a holistic approach to support that addresses the needs of the learner and the family, other learners in class, the needs of the educator and those of the centre of learning. Concerning the range of services that are offered by ESS personnel, Donald et al. (1997 : 26) suggest that these services should be integrated through the establishment of intersectorial collaboration. That means that medical, social services and education personnel should work together for the good of the learners. Co-ordination between the services can assume different forms and the various ways in which they can work together is described in different sources. These associations will be elaborated upon briefly.

Hanko (1995 : 98) cites consultation as a process that can take place when in-class support is provided to address barriers to learning and development. The expectations are that the personnel that are experienced in the field of barriers to learning and development share with their colleagues the expertise and depth of understanding to equip them with the skills required to meet the need. This is the assistance that ESS specialists give when they advise educators on how to support learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and development. This involves sharing of expertise between professionals that includes support and collaboration.

Coben et al. (1997 : 428) suggest collaboration as a way in which services could function together. They suggest that unlike consultation, collaboration implies different but equal status between professionals. Ballesteros (1994 : 26) draws attention to the processes that occur in collaboration, which include networking, openness to ideas, a vision of how the quality of life can enhance a sense of community support from stakeholders and time. Collaboration within the framework of inclusion is also discussed by Snell and Raynes (1995 : 108) and Alper et al. (1995 : 18). According to Alper et al. collaborating teams may consist of parents and learners, administrators of centres of learning, educators, learning support personnel, consultants, paraprofessionals, and specialists' services. Processes that may occur as cited by Alper et al. (1995 : 21) include role transition, role extension, role enrichment, role expansion, role exchange, role release and role support. This responsibility is characterised by interdependence among professionals, less isolated specialisation and more collaborative interactions and shared ownership of learners with barriers to learning and development. Alper et al. (1995 : 18) see collaboration as a transdisciplinary model characterised by role change among all the team members. The participants in collaborative teams vary in status and the level of knowledge they possess. Lacey and Lomas (1993 : 23) point out that the collaborative approach encourages contribution by all members.

Coben et al. (1997 : 429) also refer to collaborative consultation and define it as an interactive process that enables people to generate creative solutions to mutually defined problems. File and Kontos (1993 : 117) state that collaborative consultation is characterised by mutual respect, with all members of the team learning from each other and sharing authority. Reference is made to an interactive teaming model that incorporates consultation and collaboration and builds upon a transdisciplinary approach. According to

Coben et al. (1997 : 430) this model has the potential to create effective, comprehensive and cohesive services because all the people involved work together instead of functioning as separate individuals or disciplines. The emphasis is on providing the best possible programme for the learner (King-Sears, 1997 : 14).

Villa, Thousand and Chapple (1996 : 43), on the other hand, remark on the discrepancy between the pre-service training that support personnel receive and their expected role in inclusion. They suggest the incorporation of the theory, practice and experience of collaborative planning and problem-solving processes into professional programmes. Villa et al. (1996 : 48) propose that centres of learning, higher education, state departments and education professionals work together in all aspects of systems change and identify the most appropriate training content, decide on demonstration sites, provide continuous development and conduct research in order to come up with appropriate information to guide practice.

2.8 RESTRUCTURING OF EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

While suggestion on the nature of support that is appropriate for inclusion have been mentioned, Adelman (1996: 432) examines some of the factors that contribute to the maintenance of a narrowly focussed, fragmented and problem-oriented ESS. He mentions limited time for on-the-job professional education and little or no cross-disciplinary training and inter-professional education. Therefore he suggests that ESS should be restructured in such a way that they become comprehensive and cohesive and are seen as primary and essential. Similarly Thomas, English and Bickel (1994 : 10) propose a linking of community services to schools and developing an integrated learner-centred service, a proposal that seems appropriate to the whole school development advocated by Adelman (1996: 433). He acknowledges the value of the centre of learning and community collaborations in enhancing access and availability of services, but cautions against such models because of their disregard of the resources already available in the centres of learning and their downplaying of programmes and services owned by these centres, whilst the scope of the problems of co-ordinating resources is overlooked.

The centres of learning and community programmes must complement and enhance each other in a way that generates a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing barriers and enhancing healthy development (Adelman, 1996 : 434). Adelman describes a comprehensive model that accommodates an extensive continuum of community and centre of learning interventions that approach problems developmentally and focus both on individuals and on environmental systems. This model has been chosen in this study because of its correspondence to recommendations articulated in the evolving policy for addressing barriers to learning and development. It will therefore be discussed at length.

According to Adelman (1996 : 434) the continuum of interventions in this model include pre-school and early school adjustment programmes, programmes to promote and maintain safety at home, physical and mental health promotive programmes, on-going social and academic support, early intervention

programmes and intensive treatment and intervention. The comprehensive, co-ordinated and increasingly integrated set of interventions to enable learning for learners and their families is perceived by Adelman as the enabling component. He maintains that school restructuring should not be confined to instructional and management functions, but needs to incorporate the third component involved in enabling teaching and learning.

The schematic diagram (Figure 2.1) illustrates the enabling component or interventions to address barriers to learning and development and has been adapted from an illustration supplied by Adelman (1996: 437)

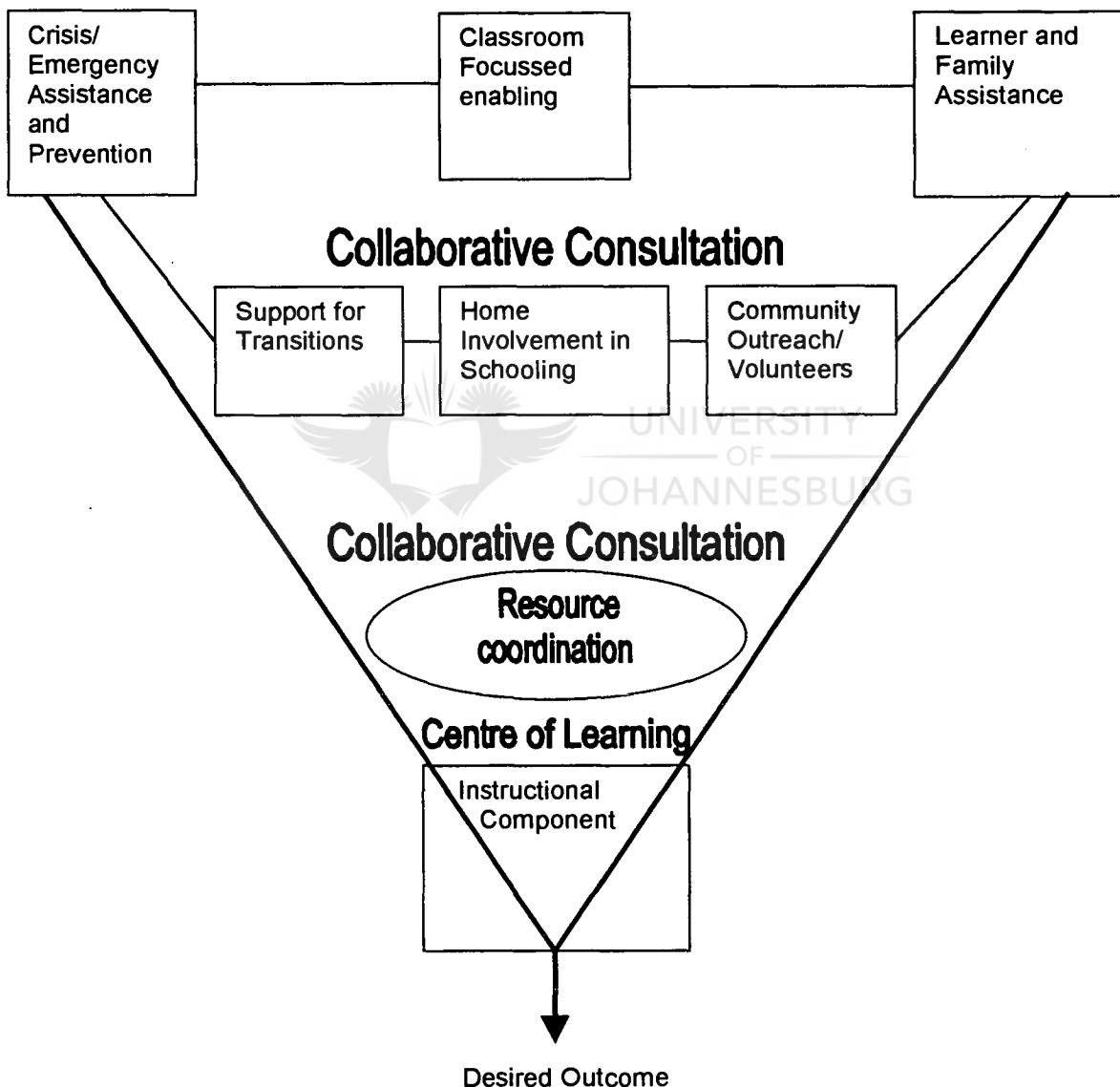


Figure 2.1. An enabling component to address barriers to learning and development and enhance healthy development (Adelman, 1996 : 436).

This model places all support services within the instructional component as enabling mechanisms and

establishes their essential role in achieving desired outcomes for all learners. Support and community services are placed on par with all other centre of learning components. Adelman further discusses the following infrastructure that could be developed at various levels for an enabling component to function:

2.8.1 School-based Programme Teams

The school-based programme teams ensure well-planned, implemented, evaluated, maintained and evolved programmes. The centre of the activity is the centre of learning where programmes for addressing barriers to learning and development involving the centre of learning and its surrounding community coalesce. According to Adelman (1996: 439), where an integrated enabling component operates, the following can be expected:

- * efforts to weave existing activities including curricular activities to foster positive social, emotional, and physical development will be undertaken
- * development of more effective programmes, and
- * expansion of the enabling component by forming collaborations with other centres of learning and community resources, and inviting more volunteers and community, and resources to work at the site.

2.8.2 Mechanisms for clusters of schools

Adelman (1996 : 441) refers to a team formed by representatives from each participating centre of learning whose function is to co-ordinate and integrate programmes serving various centres of learning, identify and meet common needs and create links and collaborations among the centres and community agencies. An added function of this mechanism as given by Adelman is its usefulness as a mechanism for leadership, communication, maintenance, quality improvement, and ongoing development of an enabling component.

2.8.3 A system-wide re-organisation

According to Adelman (1996 : 441) a system-wide re-organisation refers to the establishment of policy and leadership that entrenches the enabling component and that places it on par with the instructional and management components. System-wide re-organisation, according to Adelman (1996: 441), ensures a district (or provincial) policy commitment that places development of a comprehensive integrated approach for enabling learning on par with instruction and management, and facilitates the establishment of system-wide mechanisms for operationalising the enabling component.

This re-organisation can include the formulation of a common vision, strategic planning, the co-ordination and integration of enabling activities system-wide.

2.9 THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGISTS

In this regard, Adelman (1996 : 442) proposes a blending of specialist-oriented activities with a generalist perspective through cross-disciplinary training that according to Alper et al (1995: 21) may occur through collaborative consultation. The reconstruction described above requires that ESS professionals should help centres of learning and communities to create a comprehensive, integrated approach for addressing barriers to learning and enhance healthy development. Wilson (1991: 78) sees the Educational Psychologists' role at the centres of learning change from applying norm-referenced standardised tests, diagnosis of problems, placing learners in special classes or pull-out programmes to the design, implementation, and evaluation of intervention as well as functional measurement and collaborative work involving educators and parents to resolve problems in their natural settings.

In addition to what Education Psychologists are expected to do as mentioned above, Hanko (1995: 146) stresses the unique position of Educational Psychologists because of their inter-professional consultative skills and understanding of human behaviour to provide learning support specialists at the centres of learning with the kind of continuous support they need. The ease with which Educational Psychologists assume the role of organisational facilitators is pointed out by Adelman (1996: 440). Their role in this capacity entails creating readiness for change, helping centres of learning develop mechanisms for mapping, analysing and redeploying relevant centre resources and working with complexes of centres of learning to evolve long-lasting collaborations with community resources.

Educational Psychologists can therefore be expected, over and above their normal functions, to use their skills to facilitate and support transformation.

2.10 PROPOSED MODEL OF PRACTICE FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICES

Recommendations made in the NCSNET / NCESS Report (NDoE, 1997: 64) with regard to the envisaged ESS include the following:

- * Comprehensive support to learners
- * Incorporating community resources, and
- * The adoption of a preventive and a developmental approach to support.

Lazarus and Donald (1994 : 16) give the following illustrated tasks of the ESS personnel at district level (this is an adapted illustration).

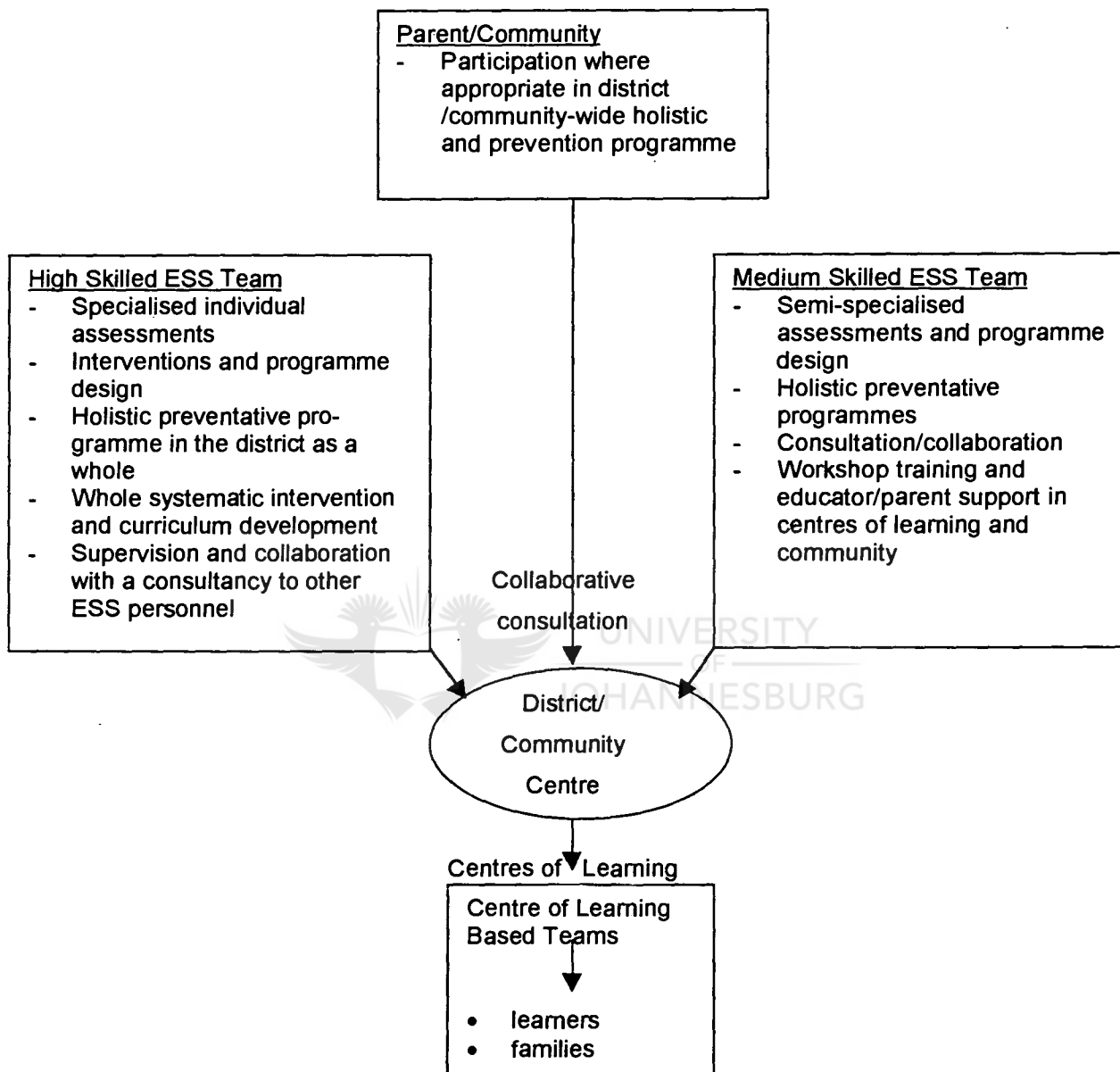


Figure 2.2 Tasks of the ESS at District Level

This account, given by Lazarus and Donald, is of an envisaged team of professionals with differing levels of skills forming ESS and offering a range of services. Suggestions are given for a model of practice in which the centre of learning is the frontline for practice of support services while the district provides a centre for specialised or more expensive resources and also serves a multi-purpose function (Lazarus & Donald, 1994: 17). The emphasis is placed on the collaboration of transdisciplinary teams. The district

centre for specialised or more expensive resources and also serves a multi-purpose function (Lazarus & Donald, 1994: 17). The emphasis is placed on the collaboration of transdisciplinary teams. The district ESS team's role consists mainly of providing support to the centre of learning and community based team, and requires skills in co-ordination, management and facilitation (NDoE, 1997 : 90).

Donald et al. (1997: 238) further suggest that implementation of inclusion should be a progressive process that involves setting structures in place with the provision of continuous development for educators as well as ESS personnel. Donald et al. (op cit.) advocate a joint ownership of the process of inclusion by parents, educators and others before adopting a model of inclusion. They see the development of an effective ESS and the development of the quality of mainstream education as another prerequisite. A suggestion to restructure specialised centres of learning to enable them to offer a supportive and consultative service is also given. They mention the development of intensive and extensive academic programmes by ESS as a way of addressing the academic disadvantages of the South African youth.

In elaborating on the strategies for implementing inclusive education the NCSNET/NCESS Report (NDoE, 1997 : 174) stresses that the process must begin with the accommodation of learners of school-going age who are presently not accommodated in the centres of learning. Pursuance of a public awareness campaign on education for all so as to facilitate a paradigm shift and understanding of the process is regarded as a priority. Mention is also made of a review of assessment procedures (NDoE, 1997: 142).

2.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the notion of inclusive education as described by various sources was discussed and reforms that need to occur in the education system for it to embrace diversity were elaborated on. The place of support services in inclusive education was defined and the envisaged roles of support service personnel were discussed. The roles for ESS derived from the literature consist largely of creating the infrastructure for support within the centres of learning and facilitating the development and broadening of these structures to involve the community. As the emphasis needs to be on expanding and infusing support services into the education system, models of incorporating support in education were outlined. An attempt was made to outline the support that is directed at supporting learners, parents and educators at centres of learning, support that is developmental and seeks to enable centres of learning to address contextual factors as well.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research design that has been selected as a means of investigating the roles of district ESS personnel in the implementation of inclusion in their district. Other aspects that form part of this chapter include the context of the research, the research design, the problem and purpose of the study, the research methods and methods of data-collection and processing. The issues of the reliability of the findings of the study as well as ethical considerations will also be included.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN

In describing the research design, Bogden and Biklen (1998 : 49) view it as a reflection of the researcher's plans of how he/she is going to proceed with the research, while Leedy (1997 : 93) defines it as "the complete strategy attack on the central research problem". This section of the study will contain an explanation of how the researcher plans to proceed with the investigation.

3.2.1 Context of the Research

Creswell (1994 : 2) states that straightforward, uncomplicated thoughts yield sound research. To provide the background as well as rationale for the choice of the research design, the context of the study will be discussed first.

The site chosen for study was a district in the Northern Region of the Gauteng Department of Education. Seven members of the ESS were able to participate in the study. They gave accounts of both their previous roles as well as their roles within the implementation of inclusion (See Annexure D). Though the district is in an urban area, 13 of its centres of learning are designated "farm schools" and about 80% are in areas of informal settlement. The participants stated that these centres of learning were characterised by a high level of illiteracy among parents which results in a lot of the learners being admitted to the centres of learning without having received any stimulation and preparation for school. Because of the low socio-economic status of the parents, health problems among learners are rife. Parents attribute these to witchcraft and refer learners to traditional healers. A significant number of the learners perform poorly at the centres of learning.

The ESS professionals revealed that at some farm schools a large number of learners were manifesting

symptoms of mild mental disability. The district has three special schools. The centres of learning in the previously advantaged areas have human resources in the form of learning support educators who support learners with barriers to learning and development. These centres are now accessible to learners from neighbouring areas, and services that these centres provide are therefore available to all the learners in those sites. Although these services are supposed to be accessible to all learners, the language of instruction presents a barrier and limits access to learners from disadvantaged areas. Centres of learning are not equipped to deal with cultural diversity. This situation is further exacerbated by the presence of learners from neighbouring countries who speak languages other than those spoken in South Africa.

3.2.2 Problem and Purpose

Because of the policies of the old dispensation, there is inequity and inequality in the provision of educational support to centres of learning. Some centres have qualified specialists providing support to learners at the site. These are centres that historically had operating support services. The majority of the centres of learning have no access to support at all.

The South African Schools Act of 1996 establishes the right of equal access to basic and quality education for all learners without discrimination (Government Gazette 15 of November 1996: 6). The right of all learners to receive support where necessary is also clearly stated in the NCSNET / NCESS Report (NDoE, 1997 : 44) that is in the process of becoming a Green Paper. ESS personnel are therefore expected to provide support to all learners who experience barriers to learning and development through the adoption of a preventative and a developmental approach to support. This is a move towards inclusive education (NDoE, 1997 : 44). The model of inclusion suggested entails building capacity within centres of learning by infusing ESS concerns within the mainstream. The problem under investigation in this study pertains to determining the role of the ESS personnel in providing support for barriers to learning and development within this new framework.

The question that is therefore posed in this study is: **What is the role of the Education Support Services in the implementation of inclusive education?**

The Purpose of the Research Inquiry

Purpose refers to motives, desires and goals that one may have in doing a study, which may be personal, practical or for the sake of research (Maxwell, 1996: 14).

The purpose of this research is to elaborate on the involvement and the functions of the ESS in the initiative of implementing inclusion. It is also hoped that the study will reveal the relevant roles of the ESS in the implementation of inclusion. It is, furthermore, within the scope of the study to provide information

for future consideration during implementation of inclusion in the South African context.

3.2.3 The Research Design

Maykut and Morehouse (1994 : 64) give a description of a research design and refer to the detailed strategy the researcher adopts in the research. Mention is made of the description of who the participants are, the location of the study as well as the methods to be used. The research design that is most appropriate for this study is the qualitative research design. According to Creswell (1994 : 162), a qualitative research study is conducted by the researcher who studies specific events in their natural settings. He cites the nature of the data as comprising people's experiences and perceptions which are in the form of words, with descriptive data as the product. Creswell (1994 : 162) also states that qualitative research is process and not product oriented, with an emergent design and negotiated outcomes.

This study is aimed at understanding the participants' views and opinions regarding the role of the ESS in the implementation of inclusion at the centres of learning. Accounts will be recorded in the participants' own words. Merriam (1998 : 11) adds that qualitative research also aims at eliciting understanding and meaning. The participants' responses will be recorded for the purpose of generating meaning relating to the study.

The specific qualitative research design that was selected because of its focus on the account of activities of participants from their perspective and its effort to understand processes and perspectives is the basic or generic qualitative study described by Merriam (1998 : 11).

3.2.4 The Research Method

According to Maxwell (1996 : 65), qualitative research methods are the methods you use in conducting qualitative research. Mason (1996 : 36) is of the opinion that a research method in qualitative research implies more than data collection. It also means a data generation process which is analytical, intellectual and interpretive. Research methods are used to extract meaning from data and choice of a particular method depends on the nature of data to be amassed (Leedy, 1997:103). A definition of qualitative data suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994 : 1) identifies them as "sources of well grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable contexts." In looking at the research method used and since the researcher is the research instrument, the researcher's role will be discussed.

The Researcher's Role

The qualitative researcher is regarded as the research instrument in that data collection is dependent on his/her personal involvement (Leedy, 1997 : 107; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994 : 48). Creswell (1994 : 147, 163) refers to the interactive nature of qualitative research which makes it crucial that the researcher should be open about biases, values and judgements that may shape the interpretation of his/her report.

As regards this study, the researcher worked in the ESS in another district and was involved in the initial efforts undertaken in that district to support learners who experience barriers to learning and development in the centres of learning where such support was non-existent. The available ESS also operated on the basis of assessment, individual intervention and referrals. The researcher, in her present job, is aware of requests received from centres of learning to establish special classes in order to accommodate learners who are considered to be unable to cope with curricular demands. The shortage of properly qualified personnel who can support the learners that need assistance is also a known and documented fact (Donald et al. 1997 : 229).

The choice of the site came about after the researcher became aware of a submission from the district outlining problems in the area and plans to address them. The demographics in the district include elements that pose an organisational challenge. The researcher is of the opinion that successful implementation in the district has the potential of yielding significant data for future implementation. Gaining access to the site followed preliminary discussions with some members of staff and a formal request to management to conduct the research at the site. Permission to involve ESS personnel in the study was obtained through written requests for participation (see Appendices A and B attached).

3.2.4.1 Sampling

Sampling in qualitative research is, according to Maxwell (1996 : 69), not only confined to people, but includes settings, events, and processes. Participants that make up the sample are selected on the basis of their ability to answer the research question (Creswell, 1994 : 148), hence the name purposeful sampling or criterion-based sampling (Maxwell, 1996 : 70).

The sample in this study was selected on the basis of the following factors:

- * Participants worked in the particular district
- * Participants were ESS professionals
- * Involvement in the inclusion of learners in mainstream centres of learning

The sample consisted of seven members of the ESS who formed the team of what was previously called the Educational Aid Service Centre. The group included two Educational Psychologists, one Career Guidance specialist, a Psychological Service practitioner, two Education Specialists and an ESS Co-ordinator. Though their average years of experience was 12 years, the average involvement in the process of inclusion was approximately 18 months.

3.2.4.2 Methods of Data Collection

Maykut and Morehouse (1994 : 48) mention participant observation, in-depth interviewing, focus group

interviewing and document analysis as ways of capturing data in qualitative research. To ensure internal validity, Maxwell (1996 : 75) advocates triangulation of these methods which involves collecting information from diverse sources using a variety of methods. This study is a generic qualitative study (Merriam, 1998 : 11) in which focus group interviews, in-depth interviews as well as unstructured questionnaires were used as ways of generating data.

Focus group and in- depth interviews

An interview is defined as a conversation with a purpose (Mason,1996 : 38; Merriam, 1988 : 71; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994 : 79). As the aim was to gain an understanding of the participants' roles, semi-structured interviews were held.

Examples of the essence of the questions asked during focus group interviews are:

1. What is your role in implementing inclusion in your district?
2. What are you doing to support learners with barriers to learning and development in the district?
3. What is your understanding of inclusion?
4. How do you go about including a learner in a centre of learning?
5. What changes have occurred as a result of the implementation of inclusion?
6. How do you deal with problems that arise?
7. Do all the centres of learning receive support to the same extent?
8. What are the needs in your district?
9. How would you describe the way you work in the district?
10. How do you feel about the functions you have to perform within the new process?
11. How have you managed to deal with the changes?

The way the questions were presented depended on the responses of participants. Some of the questions were a follow-up on what participants said. The participants were allowed to talk with minimum interruption. The focus group interviews were conducted in a selected venue at the ESS centre.

The in-depth interviews focused mainly on the individual involvement of each participant, including perceptions and concerns regarding what they do. Participants were interviewed in their respective offices at pre-arranged times. These were conducted after the focus group interviews. The following line of questioning was used with most of the participants, depending on the responses the individuals gave.

1. What role do you play in the inclusion of learners in your district?
2. What were your concerns at the beginning?
3. What are your concerns now?
4. Are you experiencing any impeding factors?
5. What do you think enabled you to cope with the role you have to play?

6. What do you think should be happening at the district in order to address barriers to learning and development?

An audio-recording and verbatim transcription of two focus group interviews and individual interviews took place. Initial analysis of the transcripts took place after each transcription. Notes of non-verbal cues during interviews as well as during conversations were made.

The semi-structured questionnaire

This was the first attempt at generating personal data as well as details of individual functions. The questionnaire was issued after the first focus group interview where a lot of information on the functioning of the team had been elicited. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the individual roles and experiences. (A sample of the questionnaire is attached as Annexure C).

3.2.4.3 Methods of Data Analysis

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994 : 121 & 126), qualitative data analysis involves examining the meaning of people's words and actions. A description given in Bogden and Biklen (1998 : 57) states that data analysis is a "process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other materials to increase your own understanding of them and enable you to present what you have discovered to others." Its main characteristic is its inductive nature. The aim of data analysis in this study was what Barritt (in Leedy, 1997 : 162) describes as "to find meaningful shared themes in different people's descriptions of common experiences." Leedy (op cit) specifically states that qualitative studies describe themes and patterns. The procedure followed in this study and displayed as chain-of-evidence in Chapter Four is based on the methods suggested by Maykut and Morehouse (1994: 127-133) as well as Miles and Huberman (1994 : 55-69).

Data Reduction

Miles and Huberman (1994 : 10) suggest that data reduction encompasses selecting, focussing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming data. In this research the transcribed data were analyzed by means of the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (in Maykut & Morehouse, 1994 : 126-131). Accordingly, the transcribed data were repeatedly read. Units of meaning were identified and copied onto cards verbatim. Maykut and Morehouse (1994 : 128) discuss the process of identifying units of meaning that they call the unitizing of data. Categories of meaning were arrived at through grouping those units that had the same meaning and assigning a word or phrase that reflected the essence of the unit's meaning written beneath, while the location of the data was indicated on the margin of the transcript (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994 : 129). These labels were reviewed and more abstract categories or emerging themes arrived at through further analysis (See 4.3 and 4.4).

Maxwell (1996 : 79) refers to contextualising strategies which are focussed on identifying relationships among the elements of the text “that connect statements and events within a context into a coherent whole.” In this study connections between categories and themes were sought out and indicated.

Data Display

Miles and Huberman (1994 : 11) describe data display as an organized, compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion-drawing and action. Data display in this study entailed presenting the data derived in the form of partially ordered as well as conceptually ordered matrices (See 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5).

Conclusion-drawing and Verification

Maykut and Morehouse (1994 : 158) suggest that the derived themes or patterns must be prioritized according to their importance in contributing to the focus of inquiry and quotations that best illustrate the selected themes must be identified from the data. These guidelines were adhered to in this research. The report that emerged comprised an account of the patterns or themes that emerged together with the excerpts from the data that illustrate them.

3.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Mason (1996 : 146) describes validity as, “Judgements about whether you are 'measuring' or explaining what you claim to be measuring or explaining”. In qualitative research validity refers to the credibility of a description and interpretation (Maxwell 1996 : 87) or what Leedy (1997 : 168) calls trustworthiness.

Identifying validity threats is recommended for the purpose of ruling them out. Leedy further cites criteria that can be used to determine internal validity and includes:

- * Usefulness of the report to those who read it
- * Contextual completeness
- * Research positioning
- * Reporting style

The following measures were taken to ensure internal validity in this study:

3.3.1 Research positioning

A discussion of the researcher's role included an account of the researcher's biases thereby raising awareness of the possible influence of this factor on the results.

3.3.2 Reporting style

The analytical procedures adopted preserved the authenticity of the data gathered as the report was generated from the participants' verbatim responses from which themes were derived.

Other measures taken to ensure that the findings are valid were:

3.3.3 Triangulation

This entails collecting information from a diverse range of individuals and settings using different methods (Maxwell, 1996 : 75). Data relevant to this study was generated through focus and in-depth interviews, an unstructured questionnaire and documents that were collected from the site. Any convergence of data would lend credibility to the findings.

3.3.4 Reliability

Merriam (1988 : 172) states that in qualitative research an exposition of the assumptions and theory behind the study as well as use of triangulation support the dependability of the results. In this study the researcher's assumptions were presented and different methods were used to generate data thereby ensuring that the data derived were trustworthy.

3.4 ETHICAL ISSUES IN ANALYSIS

Ethical issues pertain to the appropriateness and inappropriateness of the actions of researchers in relation to the people whose lives are being studied, to other researchers and to those who sponsor the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994 : 288). According to Merriam (1988 : 179), ethical problems occur during data collection and the publication of findings.

In this study, prior to data collection, permission was sought from participants to involve them in the study. The purpose and the details of the study were disclosed and participants gave a written consent. The participants were further given an undertaking that their names would not be disclosed. An agreement was also reached that the outcomes of the study would be discussed with the group before publication and this agreement was adhered to.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This section of the study contained a discussion of the chosen research design. The context of the study, the researcher's worldview, the purpose and the problem being investigated was also explained. That was followed by the discussion of the research method, methods of data collection and analysis as well as an examination of issues of validity, reliability and ethical considerations. The next chapter will

encompass a presentation of the data collected, analysis of the data and a presentation of the resultant themes.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Following on the description in the previous chapter of the research design that includes methods of data collection and analysis that have been selected, this chapter focusses on a detailed account of the data analysis process. A description of data consolidation, examples of transcribed raw data from data sources, a process of analysis of data into semantic units and an illustration of the emerging categories and themes will be presented. Themes from various data sources will be displayed and compared and final themes derived. The derived themes will ultimately be reconceptualised and interpreted through the theoretical framework.

4.2 THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Given the research problem described in Chapter One the study was conducted at the ESS premises in a District in the Gauteng Department of Education. These offices were previously called the Educational Aid Service Centre. Seven participants who are part of the ESS team took part in the study. The participants included Educational Psychologists, a Career Guidance specialist, a Psychological Service practitioner, two Education Specialists whose focus is barriers to learning and development, and the Education Support Service Co-ordinator. The data recorded were derived from focus group interviews, in-depth interviews and a questionnaire that was used to get more background individual information.

The District functions by way of the teams focussing on projects as needs arise. During the period of research the whole team was involved in the organisation of a function that the members of the Sports Unit had planned. They also combined forces to assess the needs of learners in one of the special schools in order to decide on the best support provision for the learners. Additional contextual information has been provided in 3.2.1.

Though national policy on addressing barriers to learning and development has not yet been finalised, the Gauteng Department of Education adopted the practice of inclusion and issued guidelines on the course of action to be followed (GDE, 1996: 7-8). The District has been engaged in addressing various problems at the centres of learning and a programme of action to address barriers to learning and development has been developed.

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The process of data analysis involved data reduction through analyzing transcribed text for content, clustering according to emerging categories, dendrogramming and deriving subsequent themes.

4.3.1 An example of transcribed data from a focus group interview

An example of transcribed data from a focus group interview is given below.

The respondents involved are indicated by means of the following letters :

RB, FR, A and V. The letter Q has been used to indicate questions asked by the researcher.

- Q. I would like us to talk about what we do in our role as Education Support Services in the implementation of inclusion.
- FR. What we have to do is to establish structures at schools for us to work with and to bring about.... and to bring about change in attitude because like previously in the TED schools the people didn't know what to do with them. They want to pass on the children with problems. Our focus is to bring about that change, that mind-shift that they also have to work with the child. We can assist them to work with the child.
- RB. We also focus mainly on the development of our teachers at schools in that they should be an independent support team so that whenever they are faced with problems they are able to try and remediate them rather. That can be done through training.
- C. My function is to see to it that the structures are established with the support of Head Office. Structures that are supposed to be implemented on the ground and all the activities that Head Office actually likes us to implement are actually done that way, and the co-ordination and the facilitation of all these structures are carried out as they are supposed to be carried out.
- FR. I would like to add on to what C. said that we are field workers. We have to, on the ground, see to it that policies that we get are implemented.
- V. I say that firstly I think our role is to identify with the mission of GDE, which is to address barriers that are.... that are experienced by them (learners). So, it means at first we must be able to see where the loopholes were and compare the past and the present and align ourselves with the role of addressing the needs of today even if it means we have to actually abandon some of the

roles especially if we can realise that we actually address only part of, you know, and not the majority of the learners who were previously disadvantaged. That's the first thing. Although there are problems across, the past is part of us, you know, and we somehow still play part of the past role and part of the present role and we are somewhere there in the middle. I start to wonder when we look at what is happening, I start to wonder whether we are in the process of transformation. Is it okay for now to say that maybe in future we will?

RB. Maybe a point we need to raise is that through our training we have to try and see that there is a paradigm shift. It is true what V. has just said. That is what we are trying to achieve except that we recondition the mindset of our teachers at schools because we know what the past has done and the people are afraid to venture into new processes.

FR. Besides, it is important for them the schools to network, to co-operate together, to involve each other as schools, parents.

4.3.2 An example from one of the transcribed in-depth interviews

A similar procedure was followed with in-depth interviews. An extract from a transcribed in-depth interview is given below. This extract has been included as an illustration of an account of individual experience and perceptions.

Q. I would like to hear from you what your concerns were at the beginning of the process of inclusion.

RB. Most of the problems that we encountered were related to understaffing at schools. If you have got to act.... apply the weighting system there would be a problem of teachers not being available, and most of the teachers were not empowered enough to deal with such children in a normal classroom situation. And furthermore, I think people tended to need more.... expected more support, you know, from the staff in general because the tendency was, you find that a person has got an included learner and in the long run she or he takes the sole responsibility for that child. So, there is not enough support from the colleagues or the other staff members in the institution. And, also resources mainly are the problem like we've got children who like ... move with wheelchairs. You feel like this child is getting tired. The other kid was a CP so we thought if we could get a wheelchair...It was a bit difficult to liaise with Welfare to try to arrange for it.

I also think that it's also difficult to liaise with other departments – Health and Welfare, the role they play in inclusion, because they need to be part of this thing, like when children need wheelchairs, grants or whatever. We need to go back to them. So, sometimes that presented

problems for us, whereby we ended up saying okay. We are not going to include this learner anymore because of such problems.

Q. You talked about support that you give to teachers. Can you tell me more about that? What kind of support?

RB. In this instance we were looking at the age of this particular learner because this learner was 12 years of age, so we were looking at the programme to try and accelerate the progress at the school because the learner was performing very well and we felt we should not delay because already he has been delayed in starting school. So if we are going to look at accelerating him, this might benefit this learner in the long run. So, acceleration would work well for this particular learner. We also gave guidelines on how to prepare activities centred around catering for the needs of this particular learner in an ordinary classroom situation, how the teacher can deal with this learner as a specific individual to try and avoid separating him from other learners - what activities can the person or teacher structure which will ensure that this learner does not feel that "I've actually been separated from the others, I'm not the same as them". Ja.

Q. What could you say were things that made it easier or difficult for you, whichever was your experience in the process?

RB. I feel the main problem was the fear of the unknown, you know. If you haven't dealt with a problem before or a case before or a thing before, you tend to wonder what the outcome would be. So, most of the teachers tend to fear "Am I going to be able to deal with this situation? Am I going to be able to deliver what I'm supposed to deliver to this particular learner? Will I take this learner to the route that I'm intending to, through the particular route?" Other problems, like I've indicated, are lack of resources in schools, both human and material resources and lack of determination on the part of other educators because to include successfully really needs a lot of planning. So, if teachers are not really determined to help, we tend to have a problem.

I think another problem is if you find a learner in.... we have an instance of a learner who was mentally retarded in one of the schools. Learners took a long time to accept this particular learner within their midst. He ended up developing social problems and sometimes crying at school. They had to call us to come and intervene, but ultimately it went out well because we ended up using other learners to try and make the rest to accept him within their midst. I believe also the large numbers are a main concern, large numbers in classes because sometimes you need to go around you know.

4.3.3 Data obtained from questionnaires

Raw data obtained from the questionnaires were transcribed verbatim and then organised in the form of a display that is attached as Appendix D.

4.3.4 Raw data obtained from in-depth interviews

Transcribed data that were derived from in-depth interviews were also compiled in a form of a matrix labelled Appendix E.

The transcribed raw data from the three sources were analyzed for meaning resulting in a list of semantic units. By constantly comparing the semantic units (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994: 134) clusters of semantic units were derived and categories established.

4.3.5 Categories of meaning from the focus group interview

Below is an example of semantic units from the focus group interview and categories derived therefrom.

Table 4.1 Categories of meaning derived focus group interviews

SEMANTIC UNITS	CATEGORIES
To empower teachers at schools through support systems.	Capacity building.
Ensure that we have got a well-developed support system.	Support.
Engage parents in helping them to understand the new policy on education.	Attitude change.
We are also trying to involve other stakeholders.	Collaboration.
Some learners still need individual attention.	Support.
We try and design some programmes.	Programme development.

4.3.6 Categories derived from in-depth interviews

An example of semantic units and categories derived from one of the in-depth interviews will also be illustrated.

Table 4.2 Categories of meaning derived from in-depth interviews

SEMANTIC UNITS	CATEGORIES
We placed him in a mainstream school.	Placement.
... we assessed them informally and then placed them out to mainstream schools.	Placement.
We have to give guidelines to the teachers initially what to do with learners in class.	Capacity building.
I do individual but in severe cases.	Direct intervention.

4.3.7 Data analysis from questionnaires

An example of data analysis from the questionnaires is shown below.

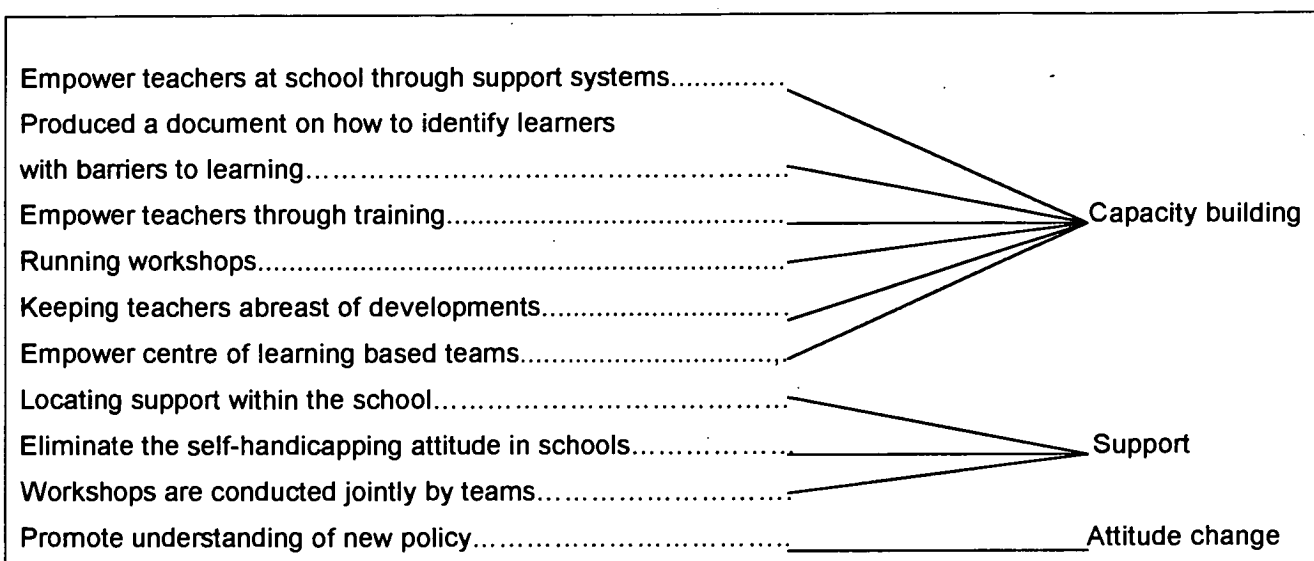
Table 4.3 Categories of meaning derived from the questionnaires

SEMANTIC UNITS	CATEGORIES
Support to schools.	Support.
Advocacy on inclusion.	Attitude change.
Motivating teachers about the process of inclusion.	Attitude change.
Inclusion of all learners with special needs into mainstream.	Placement.
Provide educators with skills and knowledge of providing support.	Capacity building.

4.4 DATA REDUCTION TO DERIVE THE MAIN THEMES

The next step that was followed in the process of data analysis was the clustering of the categories in order to arrive at the final themes. The process used for this purpose is called the dendrogram method (Miles & Huberman, 1994 : 251).

Below is an example of a section of the dendrogram drawn from clustering categories from the focus group interview.



The same procedure was followed with all data sources.

4.5 MAIN THEMES THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA SOURCES

The following table illustrates the main themes which emerged from each data source and the final themes that emerged.

Table 4.4 Main themes and sub-themes from data sources

THEMES/CATEGORIES	SUB-THEMES/ SUB-CATEGORIES	FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS	QUESTION- NAIRE	IN-DEPTH INTER- VIEWS
Educational Support	Individual intervention	X	X	X
	Support	X	X	X
	Inclusion	X	X	-
	Assessment	-	X	-
Capacity Building	Programme development	X	X	X
	Workshops	X	X	X
	Attitude change	X	X	X
	Advocacy	-	X	-
Co-ordinating Function	Collaboration function	X	X	X
	Consultation	X	-	-
	Site improvement	X	-	X
Policy Implementation	Management	X	-	-

The display above shows themes that were common to all data sources, that are reflected as the final themes. A brief discussion of these themes with their ensuing sub-themes or sub-categories follows. A detailed discussion will be given in Chapter Five.

4.5.1 Educational Support

The participants viewed their role as giving support to “the whole education system”. Details given include the following forms of support reflected as sub-themes. The sub-categories of support within the school system are the following:

Individual intervention

Individual intervention refers to instances where support is given to a learner by a specialist which, in this study, refers to direct intervention to assist a learner where the centre of learning support system is unable to assist or in severe cases.

Support

ESS personnel relate support that they give to educators, parents and learners and to support teams within centres of learning where learners with barriers to learning and development have been included. This support entails advising educators, parents or support teams on how to address barriers to learning and development. Although this was done in response to perceived needs and appeals for assistance, the strategy adopted empowers educators and parents.

Inclusion

This pertains to intervention by ESS personnel to enable a learner with barriers to learning and development to be admitted to a centre of learning. This was described as involving preparing educators and empowering them on how to work with a learner with barriers to learning and development.

Assessment

The process of assessment refers to determining through the use of informal tests the best programme or facility for the learner. Learners were assessed to determine whether they “were candidates for inclusion”.

Site improvement

This refers to the programme of action to eliminate problems within centres of learning and enable learning to take place.

4.5.2 Capacity Building

Participants reported on activities that were intended to prepare and empower educators for inclusion. These were in the form of workshops. The following sub-themes were identified.

Programme development

As part of this theme participants included developing programmes to address training needs of educators. Some of these were programmes of identifying learners with certain barriers to learning and development, programmes of support that educators can give to learners, for instance, programmes to accelerate over-aged learners. These were developed in response to indicated needs within particular centres of learning.

Workshops

The workshops that the participants organised for the educators were aimed at imparting skills and knowledge on how to support learners with barriers to learning and development.

Attitude change

Another theme that emerged very strongly was that of changing attitudes of educators and learners towards those learners with barriers to learning and development, as well as getting the parents to accept inclusion.

Advocacy

Advocacy is a sub-theme of attitude change and refers to a conscious effort to help the educators, parents and learners to understand and accept inclusion.

4.5.3 Co-ordinating Function

This process concerned the setting up of structures in the centres of learning as well as establishing links between them to facilitate support among educators.

Collaborative function

The participants also referred to tasks that they undertake together with educators and their communication with parents as some of the measures to support learners with barriers to learning and development.

Consultation

Consultation in this case referred to communication between the participants and other sectors of the support services in order to enable the learners to access services provided by those groups. The term also applies to the assistance given to educators where educators sought assistance from ESS professionals.

Site improvement

Another aspect of site improvement concerns arrangements made to facilitate co-operation between different centres of learning regarding sharing of resources.

4.5.4 Policy Implementation

Policy implementation pertains to practical application of the adopted programme of action in addressing barriers to learning and development.

Management

Management refers to taking responsibility for the implementation of inclusion at the centres of learning. It pertains to ensuring that the process proceeds smoothly.

Besides the themes listed above, the following “outlier” was identified:

You have to try to be a teacher and a psychologist.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, data that had been collected through different methods were presented. The steps followed in data reduction were described and examples given. Finally, the process followed in deriving main themes was demonstrated and the final themes and sub-themes that were extracted were presented. In the next chapter these themes will be discussed in detail and final comments will be made.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In investigating the role of the ESS personnel in the implementation of inclusive education, accounts of activities and functions of the district ESS practitioners were recorded and the analysis of the data gathered yielded the main themes and sub-themes reported in the previous chapter. This chapter aims to focus on the themes that emerged. These themes will be discussed and related to the relevant theoretical framework presented in Chapter two, including any relevant additional theory if necessary. By way of concluding, comments on the limitations of the study, possible recommendations and suggestions for further research will be covered.

5.2 INTERPRETATION OF THE MAIN THEMES

Miles and Huberman (1994 : 261) express a conviction that researchers “ need to tie findings of our study to overarching, across-more-than-one study propositions that account for the how and the why of the phenomena under study”. Findings from this study will therefore be considered against the background of the existing findings. A discussion of the main themes and sub-themes follows. These findings were presented to the participants who concurred with some of the findings. Clarifications and further comments from the discussions with the group have been incorporated.

5.2.1 Educational Support

Accounts of the educational support that the participants gave contain descriptions of the service that they provide. Included hereunder are different levels of support. The framework within which support has to be provided was explained by one participant in the following manner, “ What we have to do is to establish structures at schools for us to work with”. Another comment implied that the educational support is directed at enabling the educators to assist learners in their charge, “ They have to work with the child. We can assist them to work with the child”. This was further emphasized by a comment from another participant , “We must actually empower educators, parents and communities”. This is an indication of the changed approach to the type of service that the ESS offer within an inclusive framework. Verification of the actual practice was not undertaken in the study due to time constraints. The efforts described are directed at enabling educators to address barriers to learning and development that individual learners may exhibit.

In describing support appropriate for inclusion in South Africa, Lazarus, Daniels and Engelbrecht (1999 :

52) cites a community-based approach to support that emphasizes natural support systems and community resources in providing support to centres of learning. Within this framework, a broader task of the district support team is described. Mention is made of the district support teams' primary task of developing capacity to understand and address diversity and barriers to learning and development within sites of learning. This appeared to be a primary objective within the District. Some of the activities that were mentioned that form part of education support are described below.

Individual Intervention

In providing details of the different forms of educational support, some participants related that they provided direct intervention to individuals learners.

This entailed support that was provided to the learners where centres of learning had not succeeded in providing assistance. One participant gave the following account as an example of a learner who was receiving individual therapy, "This one boy has very destructive behavior. He steals from teachers and I did everything at school. When I see the child it goes with parental guidance". Further examples of individual intervention were related by another participant, "We attend to remedial problems, learners with behavioural problems or when a learner is being abused". Participants who indicated that they provided individual intervention were the Educational Psychologists and personnel in the Psychological Services. Part of the support was provided within the centres of learning while a report of a learner who had to be brought to the ESS centre was given. Examples of individual intervention related were described by one participant as consisting of, "Psychological therapy, coping skills, how to cope with work".

Dearden (1994: 48) views a whole school support system as a system that allows initiatives to be pursued as well as provision of support where it is needed, including individual support. This is reiterated by Donald et al. (1997 : 26) where they discuss the possible need for learning support even when preventative approaches have been adopted. The importance of ecological factors is discussed by Solity and Bickler (1994 : 22) where they stress that the focus of intervention should not only be on the learner but should include the exploration of the interactions of the family or educators with the learner. According to the NCSNET/NCESS Report (NDoE 1997 : 88) individual intervention is considered in exceptional cases within inclusive practices. This is confirmed in Lazarus et al. (1999 : 55) who reiterate that even where there are resources within the centres of learning to address most of the barriers to learning and development sometimes specialist services that can be provided by the district ESS will be required. Accounts given reflect that the Educational Psychologists and personnel in the Psychological Services provide individual support to some learners and their families.

Support

Another level of support that pertains to assistance to educators at the centres of learning to enable them to address barriers to learning and development was also mentioned. This involved advice given to

educators regarding methods of teaching certain learners, "We first identify what kind of support they need, like some teachers will say 'we need some programmes to assist these learners to cope in the classroom'. We'll sit down, look at the kind of material they are using in the classroom, work out some programme, go back to the teacher and then see to it that the programme will suit the learner in the classroom". This illustrates consultation and collaboration between the ESS and educators, and collaboration among ESS practitioners as a team. The support is provided to educators, learners and parents. Another respondent gave the following comments, "We've got specific methods that we are training them on, like the co-operative teaching and learning method". Co-operative teaching and learning described, even involved engaging parents to give assistance to learners. In this way concerns that educators have with regard to human resource shortages were addressed.

A further account of support is described by another participant as follows, "What we are fighting to achieve is to empower teachers at schools through the support systems, to ensure that schools have got a well developed support system".

The participants also mentioned enlisting the services of other service providers, like the Department of Health and the Department of Welfare which is explained by one participant as follows, "And I also think that it is also difficult to liaise with other departments – Health and Welfare, the role they play in inclusion".

The kind of support that is recommended in the NCSNET/ NCESS Report (NDoE, 1997: 97) comprises facilitating institutional and curriculum development which is designated as institutional transformation (Lazarus et al. 1999 : 55), developing appropriate interventions as well as developing preventative and promotive programmes. The respondents are primarily involved in facilitating support for learning.

Inclusion

The data collected also contains accounts of the participants' roles in placing learners with barriers to learning and development at the centres of learning and their experience thereof.

Inclusion, in the participants' view referred to their intervention in facilitating placement of these learners, "We've got some parents who have children that are not in school because of mental handicap or physical handicap if the mother wanted the child to be included in the school we contacted the principal and if he agreed to it we took the mother and the child and discussed the matter with them and then we discussed this with the staff".

Intervention mentioned pertained to assisting educators with methods of teaching that would suit the needs of the learners. One of the learners quoted had foetal alcohol syndrome while the other had mental retardation. Difficulties in facilitating admission of physically disabled learners to centres of learning were reported in one account, "..... its all the practical things for wheelchair children". This is confirmed in

another participant's account, "The other child had cerebral palsy, so we thought we could get a wheelchair for him. It was difficult to liaise with Health and Welfare to arrange for it".

A further comment from another participant refers to the impact of the attitude of the principals, "It also depends on the enthusiasm of the principal and whether they are taking this to heart and start to re-organise their school to work with the process and include learners".

Support that seeks to develop practice that is in line with inclusion is described in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994 : 90-91) and includes effective leadership that is committed to addressing barriers to learning and development, staff that is confident of their ability to help learners and hold a conviction that all learners are capable of learning, a commitment to provide a range of curricular opportunities for all learners and a systematic procedure for monitoring and reviewing progress of learners. Making a school inclusive according to Lazarus et al. (1999 : 58) requires organisational development in order to manage change that inclusion entails. The ESS team at district could initiate and manage this process.

Therefore inclusion involves "the development of the physical, psychological, social, spiritual and environmental health or well being of the learning population" (Lazarus et al. op cit.). The Education Support Service under study appears to be engaged in the issues of access.

Assessment



Participants also referred to their role in assessing learners as part of the educational support they provide. They referred to informal assessments they conducted to determine if they could include learners, " We look at what abilities does the child have. Sometimes they are good at working with their hands and also participate in certain activities in the classroom, and we also look at particularly the interest of these children and also their communication skills if they could adjust well in their environment...". Focus is therefore on identifying strengths in learners.

Assessment within the framework of inclusion and institutional transformation is widely discussed in the literature. While problems of assessment involving the use of standardised tests are documented (Hallahan & Kauffman 1991 : 69; NDoE, 1997 : 85), early identification of the barriers to learning and development, and early intervention is also emphasized within the new framework (NDoE, 1997 : 83). The form of assessment that is recommended and is compatible with inclusive education is continuous curriculum-based assessment (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1991 : 70) .

Literature also refers to assessment that is designed to facilitate learning. Rothman and Semmel (in Gaylord-Ross, 1990 : 355) cites arguments for the use of dynamic assessment to determine a learner's receptiveness to instruction. According to them, dynamic assessment can provide educators with alternative methods for evaluating the learning status of learners, including difficult to teach learners

(Rothman & Semmel, 1990 : 379). An example of a theory that falls in this category is one developed by Feuerstein (Rothman & Semmel, 1990 : 360), which stresses the use of mediation in-learning and has put forward a model for assessing learning potential that is coupled with learning support.

Educational support that is provided in this study, therefore, varies in terms of target groups and needs that are being addressed.

5.2.2 Capacity Building

Capacity building is another theme that was identified. This was mentioned in the context of assisting educators develop skills that enable them to respond to some of the learner needs. As a prerequisite for inclusion within centres of learning, educators need to develop appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable them to accommodate diverse learner needs. Ainscow (1994 : 25) elaborates on staff development that is appropriate for learners with barriers to learning and development, and that takes context into account, encourages collaboration between colleagues, allows for certain individuals to adopt key roles of coordination and leadership and provides continued support for staff as they struggle to develop their classroom practice.

Several instances of efforts by the participants to build capacity at the centres of learning were cited, " If the child is at the school we follow up in the beginning to see if the teacher can cope with the child and maybe help with the teaching strategies and with what kind of attitude should she have". Skills development as well as attitude change is implied in this instance.

This is reiterated in another participant's remarks, that pertain to the establishment of the centre of learning based team, "We also focus mainly on the development of our teachers at the schools in that they should be an independent team so that whenever they are faced with problems they are able to remediate them rather". As some of the centres of learning lack resources, a participant's remarks indicates assistance given to the centres to enable them to access existing resources as well as to develop their own resources, "We have also trained our teachers to develop resources just like the NGO's".

According to the NCSNET/NCESS Report (NDoE, 1997 : 98), staff development programmes should prepare educators to reflect critically on their practice and roles, and effective non-discriminatory teaching and support practices should be developed. Human rights and anti-bias training are regarded as being of primary importance. Capacity building within the process of inclusion therefore extends from facilitating a paradigm shift to imparting required skills.

Programme development

Another aspect of building capacity in the centres of learning involves providing the centres with the

necessary strategies and information. Reported activities in this regard were aimed at enabling the educators to identify learners with barriers to learning and development, "We worked-out a programme on how to recognise a learner with certain problems and distributed it to primary schools". Participants provided learning support programmes, "Remediation guidelines are also given". Data collected also refer to programmes to accelerate the progress of older learners that were developed.

Hall, Campher, Smit, Oswald and Engelbrecht (1999 : 157) emphasize collaboration in order to share expertise among teachers as a way of supporting educators within a whole school approach. Lazarus, et al. (1999 : 52) refer to a systems approach in addressing barriers to learning and development and recommend the problem-solving or preventative and health promotive strategies.

Workshops

Participants also referred to the methods they used to build capacity. Accounts repeatedly refer to workshops that the participants conducted in order to impart skills and render support to centres of learning. There are accounts of workshops on inclusion, "In terms of the activities that we ran within the district in ensuring that the inclusion policy is widely spread and advocated on, we have had several workshops with the principals, with educators and with parents". Another view given pertains to workshops aimed at educator development, "We are aiming at teacher development strategy in the school where we have arranged for workshops on how to go about teaching ... co-operative teaching and learning...".

Attitude change

A further aspect of capacity building for inclusion pertains to attitude change. Implementing inclusion means that ESS personnel and educators at the centres of learning adopt new roles and functions. Fritz and Miller (1995 : 211) cite the restructuring of education that occurs in order to improve educational practice, thereby making it suitable for all learners, including learners with barriers to learning and development.

According to McLaughlin and Rouse (1991 : 2), educational change is a process in which individuals alter their ways of thinking and doing. In this study participants reported bringing about a mind-shift among educators as one of their responsibilities, "Our focus is to bring about change, that mind-shift that they also have to work with a child". Further comments from another participant were, "Throughout our training we have to try and see that there is a paradigm shift". Participants saw their role as helping educators with an attitude change. Activities that they listed include emotional preparation of educators for inclusion, encouraging acceptance of learners with barriers to learning and development by educators and other learners, promoting understanding of the new policy and clearing anxieties about inclusion. This is explained in the comment by one of the participants, "There is a great fear and anxiety among most of the teachers about the whole issue of inclusion and also how to deal with it".

Part of the attitude change discussed pertains to members of the ESS as one of the participants stated, " We somehow still play part of the past role and part of the present role when we look at what is happening you start to wonder whether we are in the process of transformation...". Mention was made of the need for ESS professionals to combine efforts and define the aims and objectives of support services. The need for all members of the Support Service to change their mindset as well as to respect other people's culture was mentioned, " If we can have respect for each other and also for other people's culture and background that will also help".

Advocacy

One participant referred to the resistance and reluctance among principals to admit learners with barriers to learning and development to centres of learning, "If you bring a child to a school and explain the kind of situation to the principal, the principal will tell you ' I don't think that will actually work' ".

To promote acceptance of the policy of inclusion particularly by the principals, workshops were conducted. The following comment from one of the participants explains their strategy, "In ensuring that the inclusion policy is widely spread and advocated on we have had several workshops with the principals, with educators and with the parents". Part of the objectives of these workshops was to sensitize principals about the learners with barriers to learning and development that were already at the centres of learning. The advocacy described was mainly directed at the management of the centre of learning.

5.2.3 The Coordinating Function

As part of implementing inclusion at the centres of learning, members of the ESS had to set up centre of learning based teams.

This is how one of the respondents described the process, "The most important structure that we are busy with is actually the support teams which consist of groups of teachers who are motivated". Coordinating the use of existing resources by the centres of learning and facilitating co-operation among educators in various centres of learning was reported as part of the activities of the team. Instances where participants play a coordinating role as described in one account include facilitating co-operation between previously advantaged and disadvantaged centres of learning already mentioned, "We are trying to bring these schools together so that sometimes we utilize the resources of previously advantaged schools".

Collaborative functioning

According to Hall, et al. (1999 : 158) activities such as the exchange and sharing of information as well as

and requires possession of group communication skills, problem solving and conflict resolution abilities (Hall et al. 1999 : 159).

Accounts of collaboration between participants, educators and parents in order to support learners were expressed by one respondent, "I feel strongly that if we can empower our centre of learning based teams, we hope that these teams will be of assistance to us as district staff, to come up with some ideas on how we can address some of the problems that we encounter".

Consultation

According to Hanco (1995 : 44) consultation is aimed at helping with immediate concerns and long-term developmental training in relation to underlying wider issues. This, in practical terms, refers to the sharing of skills and understanding pertaining to a particular case by professionals (Hanco, 1995 : 49).

An example of consultation in the study is the involvement of educators in adapting the curriculum to suit learner needs. Instances where ESS professionals engaged in consultations with the centres of learning is reflected in the following quotation from a participant's comments, "I also told the teacher rather to allow the peers to work with him, when he gives them tasks, to let them work co-operatively in a group". Another respondent made the following remark, "... the main concern from the educators was the cultural issue. They needed to know and understand the cultural background of their learners and we were able to help".

ESS professionals' role described above is more of facilitation and provision of information.

Site improvement

Part of the educational support that participants referred to pertained to ensuring the development of centres of learning as supportive centres.

A participant described the focus of the ESS in the following way, "... disadvantaged schools. Not only are we focussing on them, but we are trying to bring these schools together so that sometimes we use the resources of previously advantaged schools to help address the problems in the schools". Their main area of focus is on staff development and providing opportunities for educators to share expertise. This is one participant's remark, "I remember at one farm school we had a number of mentally retarded children and the teachers were actually saying 'you know we don't know how to deal with these children'. We arranged for an afternoon with other teachers in our White schools because they have been exposed to a lot of training on how to deal with such learners". This is an example of improving a centre of learning through encouraging co-operation and collaboration.

Improving centres of learning according to Ainscow (1994 : 23) pertains to making centres of learning

Improving centres of learning according to Ainscow (1994 : 23) pertains to making centres of learning effective in addressing barriers to learning and development. He cites as a critical factor improvement in teaching where educators are able to meet the needs of learners through the use of strategies that help all learners to experience success (Ainscow, 1994 : 24). The process of improving centres of learning within the framework of inclusion, particularly in the South African context, would be aimed at contributing "towards the development of an inclusive society where all members of society are able to fulfil their potential and participate optimally, and where respect for and valuing of diversity in the context of social integration is an active value" (Lazarus et al. 1999 : 46).

5.2.4 Policy implementation

A few accounts referred to the ESS role in carrying out directives from Head Office, "We have to on the ground see to it that the policies we get are implemented". Another participant made reference to structures that the ESS are supposed to establish, "My function is to see to it that the structures are established with the support of Head Office". Other responses related to obligations of ESS were described as follows, "We have to identify with the vision and mission of the Gauteng Department of Education to address barriers to learning and development". The participants perceived themselves as being in a favourable position to provide feedback on the feasibility and applicability of policy issues to Head Office. One respondent reported the negative impact of some directives emanating from Head Office on the district functioning, "... some of the concerns that have been raised are mainly things that need to be addressed by Head Office, like proper planning before implementing policies. You look at rightsizing, redeployment. It has got a great impact on the policy of inclusion".

Management

Some of the views expressed by the participants pertained to the conviction that ESS, by virtue of their role in the implementation of inclusion, are engaged in a particular management process, "... and the co-ordination and the facilitation of these structures are carried out as they are supposed to".

5.3 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Conclusions that can be drawn from the above study are that the participating ESS personnel are involved in the inclusion of a few learners into mainstream centres of learning. This is confirmed by the comments made by one of the participants, "I don't think we are making that much of an in-road to what is happening in the schools.... we are only touching on very, very few". The service offered comprises direct intervention by the ESS professionals, where learners either come to the ESS centre at the district or the ESS professionals see the learners and parents at the centres of learning. Advice on how learners who experience barriers to learning and development can be assisted is provided to educators and parents.

Programmes for identifying learners with barriers to learning and development, and for co-operative teaching and learning have been developed and workshops were conducted thereon. Workshops aimed at bringing about a mind-shift among principals have also been held. The participants express the intention to support centres of learning and the education system as a whole. It is evident that though the ESS at the district are beginning to engage in activities that are aimed at locating support within the centres of learning, part of the roles they fulfil involve attending to learner problems. Accounts given reflect awareness of the ecological factors and their effect on barriers to learning and development experienced by learners, "Addressing specific needs of the learners you know, would it actually address the problem because it is the symptom of the problem". Reported programmes that have been proposed for parents of learners who are at the "farm schools" are beginning to indicate engagement in long term preventative programmes. Reports from the participants themselves indicate that some of them are still grappling with the paradigm shift and they have reservations about the success of the implementation. Though the ESS operated as a team as suggested by the following comment, "Teachers out there in institutions don't see us as experts in specific disciplines because we approach them as teams", they still have individual tasks that they perform according to their job descriptions. Reports of collaboration within the ESS in conducting wider district activities were given while concern was expressed about the lack of co-operation and collaboration in the district functioning as a whole, "The Auxiliary Unit is still a unit on its own operating in schools, the Teaching and Learning Unit is still a unit on its own... we are passing different messages...".

Uncertainty about the new functions and roles that they have to assume, as well as an absence of a mechanism or a benchmark to indicate effective and efficient implementation of inclusion was also mentioned, "You work, you function but you don't know whether you are on the right track, you don't know whether you are developing. Nobody speaks to your progress ... you just think and you see these regulations and acts, you determine them as your framework ... but as to whether you are doing the right thing, you never know".

This is indicative of the area of need as identified by the professionals. It is essential that support for transformation for the ESS personnel must focus on enabling them to develop necessary skills, for example, skills in collaboration and facilitation as well as assisting them with professional development programmes. Evaluation and monitoring mechanisms also need to form part of developments.

Though reference was made to barriers to learning and development that emanate from apartheid policies as well as socio-economic disadvantage, focus of the implementation within the district is on barriers to learning and development resulting from disability. Concerns were also expressed about the process of devolving policy from Head Office without creating the necessary enabling conditions at the district. Carrying out the process of implementing inclusion amidst all other functions they have to perform as district personnel was reported as a cause of problems. Reports of problems resulting from conflicting policies that are implemented concurrently were described as having a negative effect on the relations between district and centres of learning.

Despite concerns and obstacles to the smooth execution of some of the tasks reports of feelings of optimism about the implementation and the inclusion process were expressed in the questionnaire responses.

Pertaining to what the participants thought should happen in the district the responses highlighted further attitude change among educators, continued advocacy for inclusion, development of common district policy, focus on narrowing the gaps between centres of learning, team functioning, prioritising areas of focus so as not to overload educators and centres of learning and the provision of complete support by senior management.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Though this study pertained to determining the particular roles and experiences of the group, there are certain lessons that can be learned from the process. These will be described in this section as recommendations.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Practice

Over and above suggestions on what ESS have to do in the implementation of inclusion, it is important to ascertain their level of readiness to carry out the tasks expected of them. As change agents, ESS practitioners themselves must be supported and assisted to deal with the change, thereby enabling them to take the process forward with confidence and conviction.

While training courses for such personnel must take cognisance of and include skills that the new roles require, policy makers must also engage in thorough preparation of personnel, especially if they are expected to drive policy initiatives.

Furthermore, deliberate efforts to promote acceptance of the policy of inclusion should not only be directed at educators, parents and learners. All levels of management have to be in full support of the process. As continuous monitoring and evaluation of the process can yield vital information that can inform evolving practice, it is recommended that implementation of inclusion should incorporate these activities.

It is also important to bear in mind that thorough planning on a short-term, medium-term and long-term basis should be undertaken before implementation. Clear goals and objectives should be articulated at every phase of the implementation.

These plans should be district plans so that ownership of decisions taken can be assured.

Implementation should be closely monitored and evaluated to facilitate adaptation of actions in terms of ecosystemic factors. The process needs to be related to other parallel complementary processes. There is also a need to view inclusion in its correct perspective within the South African context as a human rights issue and as a context for addressing all forms of discrimination relating to social class, race, gender, disability and any other form of discrimination (Lazarus et al. 1999 : 48). Focus should be on how districts can begin to work towards this transformation without seriously disrupting learning. It is also pertinent that suggestions articulated in the NCSNET/NCESS Report be born in mind. The report suggests that priority be given to ensuring that all learners of school-going age gain access to education (NDoE 1997 : 142). This is also an imperative contained in the South African Schools Act of 1996.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Further Research

A deduction derived from the remarks that respondents made imply that there is a need to investigate the processes involved in the devolution of policy imperatives to districts. What would be pertinent in this case would be the frameworks and infrastructure that policy makers put in place to facilitate and to support implementation.

In the case of implementing inclusion, there is a need to assess ownership of the process by the ESS themselves as well as to determine what programmes are in place to promote ownership of policy initiatives by districts.

A study that would provide valuable information for the implementation of inclusion in the South African context would be a study of the role of parents in inclusive schools. This is of importance taking into account the South African parent population, the majority of whom are semi-illiterate or illiterate with socio-economic limitations. A study that looks at their involvement is important.

The information that came out of this study identified the crucial role of principals and centre of learning management teams in successful implementation of policy. A study of the impact of management on the success or failure of the process is also recommended.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Measures to ensure validity and reliability of the study discussed in Chapter three were taken. Limitations that may raise questions regarding the credibility of the study will be discussed briefly.

The choice of the sample was based on the definition of events as provided by the participants. The sample was not selected on the basis of an evaluated programme. This may pose a problem in the generalizability of the findings. This study could have generated more data had there been time to conduct extended observations of the activities discussed.

Secondly, the research was conducted by a novice researcher with no previous experience in research. Therefore, unintentional errors might have been made. Reflections on these and their correction enriched both the study and the researcher.

Lastly data collection also became limited by the constraints of time and money.

5.6 FINAL COMMENTS

This chapter comprised a discussion of the findings in relation to the existing theoretical framework on inclusion and the role of ESS professionals at the selected district. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations for practice and further research were made. Limitations of the study were also discussed.

The roles of the ESS personnel in implementing inclusive education mentioned were to support educators, parents and learners, programme development, capacity building within centres of learning, collaborating with other sectors of the support service and parents, as well as to bring about attitude change amongst educators, parents and learners. These facts were presented in the form of themes or categories and sub-themes or sub-categories that were related to existing theoretical framework.

The importance of the study is seen in terms of presenting issues that demonstrate processes that are taking place in the implementation of inclusive education, including issues that the Education Support Services are faced with, that impact on the process of implementation.

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ANNEXURE A

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A GROUP INTERVIEW

I am presently engaged in a study of the role of Education Support Service in the implementation of inclusive education as part of fulfilling requirements for my studies.

I request you to allow me to involve the Education Support Service personnel in your district in group interviews of approximately one hour duration. Contents of the interview will remain confidential and individual participants will not be identified by name.

Should you have any further questions or desire for further information, you can contact me at P.O. Box 100223, MORELETA PARK, 0044 or phone (012) 997 1706. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr R E Swart at Rand Afrikaans University, telephone number (011) 489 2273.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and support.



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DATE

ANNEXURE B

THE INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

In a bid to study the role of Education Support Services in the implementation of inclusive education, ideas, perceptions and reports have to be amassed from Education Support Service personnel. Your district has been identified as one of the districts that can provide valuable information.

An invitation is therefore extended to you to participate in group interviews of approximately an hour's duration. The decision to participate is completely voluntary. All contents of the interview will be held in strict confidence. Though permission to record the interview on tape will be sought, individuals will not be identified by name. All raw data will be held by the interviewer and will not be distributed to any other unauthorised individual.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and support.



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.....
Interviewer's Signature

.....
Participant's Signature

.....
Date

.....
Date

ANNEXURE C

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of the study you have been asked to participate in. Please spare a few minutes of your time in order to complete it. Completed questionnaires can be put in an envelope that will be in Office All questionnaires will be collected on the 23rd October 1998 at 14:00.

Background information

Gender:

Job description/Professional Qualifications:

Years of experience:

1. Describe the type of work you do to support schools and learners with barriers to learning and development.
2. How long have you been involved in the implementation of inclusive schooling in the district?
3. What service do you offer within this process?

ANNEXURE D SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER	WORK EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	PERIOD OF INVOLVEMENT IN INCLUSION	CURRENT FUNCTIONS	ACTIVITIES RELATED TO INCLUSION	EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING BLD	FEELINGS ABOUT THE PROCESS OF INCLUSION	SUGGESTIONS OF WHAT CAN BE DONE
*F	12 years	+ 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual intervention in severe cases Guidelines to teachers and parents Worked out a programme, on how to recognize a learner with certain problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of learners with special needs, into mainstream Assisting parents and teachers involved with the learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People are busy with change of attitudes towards inclusion and are becoming more positive 	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers with a negative attitude must acquire a mind shift and try to be positive. Smaller classes in black schools would be wonderful
*F	12 years	12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide educators with skills and knowledge of providing support to learners Provide counselling to learners Talk to parents about the learner's problems Refer learner and parents to support services provided by other structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivate educators about the concept of Inclusion, its aspects and provision The effort is made to clear educator anxieties about inclusion Inform educators that inclusion does not imply that a child will be admitted in a school without consideration of the required facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some teachers feel inadequate in addressing various problems In some schools/teachers, the time is not available to provide for every learner's needs and still cover the syllabus Concern over shortage of teachers Some teachers are not prepared to an extra mile Strained relationships between schools and districts personnel Schools often feel that rules are imposed on them without consideration of their circumstances i.e. periods overload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the realities on the ground, inclusion also has its flaws Inclusive school is meant to enable access to the resources and make them available to all learners. The fact that learning institutions in terms of facilities, structures and ideologies are static hampers dynamics of policy implementation As a process inclusive education in this District has taken off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous interaction, dialogue about issues and recognition of acceptance of diversity of communities serviced by district is vital We have the most poverty stricken community of learners in the farms and townships and we have the most elite community of learners in the suburbs. The district should dwell on discovering ways of bridging the gap The district could, led by national policy develop a policy together with schools that emphasize accessibility of resources

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER	WORK EXPERIENCE IN YEARS	PERIOD OF INVOLVEMENT IN INCLUSION	CURRENT FUNCTIONS	ACTIVITIES RELATED TO INCLUSION	EFFECTIVENESS OF STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING BLD	FEELINGS ABOUT THE PROCESS OF INCLUSION	SUGGESTIONS OF WHAT CAN BE DONE
F	12 years	15 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish CLBTs Organizes and facilitates capacity building workshops to empower educators to support LBLD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to schools, educators, learners and parents Advocacy for inclusion 	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is definitely challenging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to schools i.e. educators, learners and parents Advocacy on inclusion policy
F	15	1 year 4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career guidance specialist Advising learners who are over-aged to apply at technical colleges Advise learners on their subject choices at Grade 8 and 9 Assist matric learners with choice of grades Refer and apply for learners with learning difficulties to technical colleges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address problems of over-aged learners, slow learners advising them about the technical colleges and what is being offered there 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing barriers to learning as a district has reduced to a certain extent frustrations learners and educators are faced with Teachers are able to handle some of the problems with skills from workshops 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everybody is aware about the process of inclusive schooling If we give it time we will be able to measure its progress and impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approach this in a team spirit Support and keep informing learners and parents about the importance of inclusion policy Making schools share whatever information and resources they have Focus on aspects that district feels are important and stop overloading teachers and learners with a lot of changes
M	8	± 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate the work of staff who work with learners at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing the implementation of the inclusion process at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Learners are included although on a very small scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers need to be empowered as this is a new process that will need their full attention and conviction People are busy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District director and the senior management staff need to support the process fully
F	12	About 2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of learners with special needs Assisting teachers and parents involved with learner 				

ANNEXURE E

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

PARTICIPANT	ROLE	CURRENT SUPPORTING ROLE	PROMOTING FACTORS	PERSONAL FEELINGS AND PERCEPTIONS	IMPEDING FACTORS	CONCERNS RELATING TO INCLUSION
1. CK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placed one learner with fetal alcohol syndrome in a mainstream school. Assessed learners informally and placed them in mainstream schools. Have to give guidelines to the teachers on what to do with learners in class. Attend to learners that schools cannot handle. Attend to severe cases on a one-to-one basis if parents bring the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to teachers and parents. Give guidelines and workshops to teachers. Liaise and support school support systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A supportive group. Open view towards people and to differences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel sorry for the lost generation for whom nothing can be done. We have work through children (to get to them- lost generation) to reach adults. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Blacks, Coloureds and Indians wasn't scary for me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern is with wheel chairs, there are children with no facilities. Large classes make it difficult to differentiate. Sympathy with teachers.
2. S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that those learners are candidates for inclusion through assessment. Interacted with learners, parents and educators. Determining strengths and ability of learners to adjust to the environment. Give teachers necessary support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the kind of support that educators need. Draft programmes (in consultation with teachers) that suit learners. Work out programmes and ensure that they suit the learner in the classroom. Effect changes together with educators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being prepared to learn. Being patient. Committed to the whole process. Teachers were willing and were positive in accepting these learners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeling less confident if one does not know what one is expected to do. I believe teachers are willing to do it as long as they've got all the necessary support. Teachers are concerned about serious cases. Schools are not involving communities effectively. Teachers need more workshops to bring them on board. We need to assist them through the process. If we try to educate our communities it would help. Parents can help with basic things. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitude of teachers whether teachers accepted this new concept.

PARTICIPANT	ROLE	CURRENT SUPPORTING ROLE	PROMOTING FACTORS	PERSONAL FEELINGS AND PERCEPTIONS	IMPEDING FACTORS	CONCERNS RELATING TO INCLUSION
3. RB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing programmes to accelerate older learners. • Engages in activities to promote acceptance of included learners. • Advising teachers on promoting peer interaction. • Facilitate networking among teachers. • Give guidelines on how to deal with included learners. • Trying to involve the Department of Health and Welfare, liaising with them as much as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated colleagues who generate a spirit of positive competition and co-operation. • Sense of belonging to a team who depends on you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion is acceptable to most people. • Pain over the disabled, children who are not receiving education. • We must give other people a chance. • The whole process must be approached positively. • It really needs a lot of planning for one to be able to include. • Change is something that one needs to accept if you are to develop. • If we give people enough time and space and allow them to air their views, allow them to criticize, they interact with it more in a profitable manner. • Some people want to change and others want to hold on to old principles and policies. • Inclusion is acceptable to most people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of the unknown among teachers. • Lack of resources at schools. • Lack of determination among educators. • Lack of acceptance by other learners. • Large numbers in classes. • Problems of the paradigm shift. • We are faced with the problem of over-aged learners disadvantaged by the system. • People don't want to use the opportunities they have been exposed to. • Fear of lack of expertise. • Poor or lack of involvement of the community due to lack of exposure to policy and knowledge of their rights. • Negative perceptions of disability. • Difficulties in liaising with Welfare and Health. • Anxiety of having to deal with the unknown. • Parents are not informed about what to do. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understaffing. • Teachers are not empowered to deal with such children. • Lack of support from colleagues to the teacher of included learner. • Lack of resources. • Problems of interdepartments liaison procedures. 	



PARTICIPANT	ROLE	CURRENT SUPPORTING ROLE	PROMOTING FACTORS	PERSONAL FEELINGS AND PERCEPTIONS	IMPEDING FACTORS	CONCERNS RELATING TO INCLUSION
4. T.	Advised over-aged learners to enroll at technical colleges.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There should be some criteria that should be used to know which learners are to be included in the mainstream and which can be left in the special school. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitude and fears that educators display. Inclusion of some learners who present a problem in class.
5. FR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss issue of inclusion with principal and staff. Help teachers with teaching strategies and attitude change. Follow up to see if the teacher can cope with the child. Focus on teacher support and involve the parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give guidelines to teachers. Very little individual therapy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeing the merit of this (inclusion) to the child. Believing that it (inclusion) is aimed to build a more just society. Support from fellow colleagues. Positive principals and educators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion is a very big, task that is beginning. There is growth in some schools although they are few. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal is the driving force and can make the whole thing stop if they are negative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitude of teachers and other learners who may not be ready for inclusion.
6. V.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I am often not directly involved in inclusion. Attend to remedial problems, behavioral problems and learners who are abused. Counseling Run preventative programmes. Run workshop on parental involvement. Individual intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counseling some learners on an individual basis. 	<p style="text-align: center;">UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have to look at programmes that would address the way of working. Develop parents, educators and the level of learners. Need to address problems from a community point of view. Need to address problem areas in the farming community. Need to motivate everyone to be actively involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educators who still are dragging the whole process. Learners who are not motivated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farm schools and schools in townships. Addressing problems from a community point of view. Lack of active involvement. Educators who are not prepared to do more than they have to.