

**CHALLENGES THAT TEACHERS FACE IN TEACHING  
PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED LEARNERS:  
THE ROLE OF THE CURRICULUM IN  
PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY**

by

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**MINI-DISSERTATION**

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

**MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS**



UNIVERSITY  
in  
JOHANNESBURG

**CURRICULUM STUDIES**  
in the  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG**

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December 2005

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this mini-dissertation submitted in part fulfillment of the degree  
*Magister Educationis (M Ed)*  
is original and production of my own work - acknowledgement is made for reference  
work.

.....

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October 2005

## DEDICATION

To my wonderful parents:

*Velakhe Willie Mpinga & Nontuthuzelo Violet Mpinga*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Let me take this opportunity to give my thanks and gratefulness to the Almighty who carried me through thick and thin; He gave me strength and wisdom which saw me completing this challenging project.

My deepest gratitude is expressed to my supervisor, Dr MC Van Loggerenberg, who patiently guided me during and right through this research project with professional and academic support.

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to my wife, Vuyelwa Nomfanelo B Mpinga and to my three lovely children Lindiwe, Abongile and Anesipho Velakhe Jnr, for their unconditional support, encouragement and patience during the period of my study.

A special word of thanks is also conveyed to the principals and educators of the schools in which the research was conducted and FSDOE, for their co-operation and friendliness.



I am humbled by the support of numerous people, i.e. my relatives and my brothers, Thembekile, Kholisile and Monwabusi.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND	1
1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	2
1.3.1 Introduction	2
1.3.2 What is inclusive education?	4
1.3.3 Mainstream education	4
1.3.4 Curriculum compatibility	5
1.3.5 Conclusion	5
1.4 PURPOSE OF STUDY	6
1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT	7
1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH	8
1.6.1 Aims	8
1.6.2 Objectives	8
1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	9
1.7.1 Research design	9
1.7.2 Sampling	9
1.7.3 Data collection	10
1.7.4 Data analysis	10
1.8 FURTHER CONCEPT CLARIFICATION	11
1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	11
1.10 CONCLUSION	12
CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.1 INTRODUCTION	13
2.2 LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	14
2.3 THE ROLE OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS	14

2.4	MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS AND LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	15
2.5	FORMS OF MAINSTREAMING	16
2.5.1	Physical space mainstreaming	16
2.5.2	Social interaction mainstreaming	16
2.5.3	Instructional mainstreaming	17
2.6	EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	17
2.7	CURRICULUM AND INTEGRATION OF LSEN	19
2.8	IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT	21
2.9	THE INTEGRATION PROCESS	22
2.10	ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS	24
2.11	BARRIERS TO FULL INCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT	24
2.12	PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING GUIDELINES OF ALL LEARNERS	25
2.13	INTEGRATION AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	25
2.14	INTEGRATION AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES	25
2.15	CONCLUSION	26
CHAPTER 3 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH METHOD		27
3.1	INTRODUCTION	27
3.2	RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	27
3.2.1	Research design	27
3.2.2	Sampling	28
3.2.3	Data collection	28
3.2.4	Literature review	29
3.2.5	Interviews	30
3.2.5.1	Structured interviews	30
3.2.5.2	Semi-structured interviews	31

3.2.5.3	Focused interviews	31
3.2.5.4	Group interviews	31
3.2.5.5	Conducting interviews	32
3.2.5.6	Data analysis	33
3.3	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	34
3.3.1	Validity	34
3.3.2	Reliability	34
3.4	SUMMARY	35
CHAPTER 4 – DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION		36
4.1	INTRODUCTION	36
4.2	DATA COLLECTION	36
4.3	INTERVIEW PROCEDURE	37
4.4	DATA ANALYSIS	38
4.4.1	Tesch’s approach	38
4.5	BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS	39
4.5.1	School A	39
4.5.2	School B	40
4.5.3	School C	40
4.5.4	School D	41
4.6	INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS	41
4.6.1	Introduction	41
4.6.2	The transcription of interviews	42
4.6.3	The first interview with respondent 1 (Special school)	43
4.6.3.1	Background information	43
4.6.4	The second interview with respondent 2 (Special school)	46
4.6.4.1	Background information	46
4.6.5	The third interview with respondent 3 (Special school)	54
4.6.5.1	Background information	54
4.6.6	The fourth interview with respondent 4 (Mainstream school)	61



4.6.6.1	Background information	61
4.6.7	The fifth interview with respondent 5	64
4.6.7.1	Background information	64
4.6.8	Conclusion on the Interviews	68
4.7	DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS	69
4.7.1	Introduction	69
4.7.2	Respondent no 1	69
4.7.2.1	Reading through the transcriptions	69
4.7.2.1.1	Views on learners and the challenges encountered	69
4.7.2.1.2	Views on the curriculum	70
4.7.2.1.3	Views on inclusive policy	70
4.7.2.2	Underlying meaning in the information	70
4.7.3	Respondent no 2	71
4.7.3.1	Views on learners and the challenges encountered	71
4.7.3.2	Views on the curriculum	72
4.7.3.3	Views on inclusive policy	72
4.7.3.4	Underlying meaning in the information	73
4.7.4	Respondent no 3	74
4.7.4.1	Views on learners and challenges encountered	74
4.7.4.2	Views on the curriculum	75
4.7.4.3	Views on inclusive policy	76
4.7.4.3.1	Issues that need to be addressed	76
4.7.4.4	Underlying meaning in the information	76
4.7.5	Respondent no 4	77
4.7.5.1	Views on the envisaged inclusive education policy	77
4.7.5.2	Views on the curriculum	78
4.7.5.3	Underlying meaning in the information	78
4.7.6	Respondent no 5	79
4.7.6.1	Views on the envisaged Inclusive education policy	79
4.7.6.1.1	Issues which need to be addressed	80
4.7.6.2	Views on the curriculum	80



4.7.6.3	Underlying meaning in the information	81
4.7.7	Summary of topics	82
4.7.7.1	Challenges faced by educators in special schools	82
4.7.7.2	Curriculum issues	82
4.7.7.3	Inclusive education policy	83
4.7.8	An overview of themes and categories	83
4.7.9	Summary of all the interviews	85
4.7.10	An overview of the results	87
4.8	DESCRIPTION OF THE RESULTS	88
4.8.1	Introduction	88
4.8.2	Empirical research	88
4.8.2.2	Challenges	89
4.8.2.3	Inclusive policy	89
4.8.2.4	Curriculum flexibility	90
4.8.2.5	Physical facilities	90
4.8.2.6	Learners	91
4.8.3	Literature research	91
4.8.3.1	Educator	91
4.8.3.2	Challenges	92
4.8.3.3	Inclusive education policy	93
4.8.3.4	Curriculum flexibility	94
4.8.3.5	Physical facilities	95
4.8.3.6	Learners	95
4.9	CONCLUSION	96



## CHAPTER 5 – SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 98

5.1	INTRODUCTION	98
5.2	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS	98
5.2.1	Summary of literature research	98
5.2.2	Summary of empirical research	99

5.3	CONCLUSIONS	100
5.3.1	Challenges	100
5.3.2	Educators	101
5.3.3	Inclusive policy	102
5.3.4	Curriculum	102
5.3.5	Physical facilities	103
5.3.6	Learners	103
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS	103
5.4.1	Challenges	104
5.4.2	Educators	104
5.4.3	Inclusive policy	104
5.4.4	Curriculum	105
5.4.5	Physical facilities	105
5.4.6	Learners	105
5.5	FURTHER RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES	105
5.6	STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THIS RESEARCH	106
5.6.1	Strengths	106
5.6.2	Weaknesses	106
5.7	CONCLUSION	106
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	109
	APPENDIX A	113
	APPENDIX B	115
	APPENDIX C	116
	APPENDIX D	117
	APPENDIX E	121
	APPENDIX F	122



## **CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this research the focus will be on inquiring into the challenges that teachers face in teaching physically challenged learners and whether the curriculum assists these teachers in promoting inclusivity.

### **1.2 ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND**

Prior to 1994 education in South Africa was the responsibility of a complex and uncoordinated arrangement of seventeen different education departments based on ethnic separation and discrimination. This led to severe discrepancies in the quality and quantity of provision (Engelbrecht, Kriegler, Booysen & Du Toit, 1996: 9). Services for learners with special educational needs have not only been marginalised and under-developed, but have been seen as peripheral to the concerns of the mainstream of education with little assistance given to teachers working in these schools.

Teachers, however, need to be retrained now and be prepared in a specialised way, in order for them to be able to accept learners with physical disabilities and deal with the challenges prevailing in their classes as a result of physical handicaps. Just knowing about learning barriers is not enough.

The curriculum as a vehicle used to achieve the educational aims, should be adaptable to the environment serving physically challenged learners and promote inclusivity. The White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001:172) provides very clear direction regarding the importance of curriculum flexibility in meeting the full range of learning needs. According to the policy the focal point in the accommodation of diversity in our schools is a flexible curriculum and assessment policy that is accessible to all learners, irrespective of their learning needs.

## 1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 1.3.1 Introduction

Many recent studies have focused on the research on inclusive education with the main focus being on learners with disabilities, with little attention on curriculum openness to accommodate these learners and the challenges facing teachers in their daily work.

Many research practitioners and parents are engaged in discussion around the question of inclusion. The latest research and evaluation data on inclusion show a strong trend toward improved students' results. However, these positive outcomes should be attributed to the teachers within the context of teacher preparation and administrative support for inclusion; otherwise, very little is known about teacher behaviour and practice in the class.

According to Bulgren and Carta (as cited in Wallace & Hupp, 2002: 353) teachers have fewer inter-actions with students with disabilities on academic matters and more frequent and longer interactions focusing on non-academic.

One of the issues that need to be addressed with the teaching of learners with disabilities is that more than one adult is involved in teaching (Wallace, Anderson, Tom, & Susan, 2002: 353). This is not an easy task, because as noted earlier, many classrooms in this study had more than one adult, and each of the four schools, supports team teaching. Now this type of an arrangement/situation poses a challenge and has implications for teacher preparation programs. Teachers should know different instructional strategies to address the different learning needs of the students at the same time they must know how to work with each other to effectively implement the strategies. This knowledge of differentiated roles, collaboration, and coordination must be taught

and strategies identified, for new teachers to be prepared for today's classrooms (Wallace, et al, 2002:357).

According to the research done by Opdal and Wormnaes (The Teacher, 2001: 143), on teachers' opinions about inclusion and curriculum, opinion-related factors were identified. The focus was capacity building on knowledge and skills that could empower them as teachers, and not on knowledge about learning barriers. The teachers' attitudes are influenced by the nature and the severity of the disabilities of the learners. Staff development is necessary to prepare teachers to be in a position to face the challenges and demands of teaching learners with disabilities.

Schroth, Moorman, and Fullmoon (as cited in Opdal, 2001: 145) suggest that teachers should be capacitated to lead change in their lessons and teaching designs and opportunities should be created for them to visit institutions where inclusive education is practiced so that they could gain some information.

When teachers were requested to forward their inputs with regard to needs to be done in order for them to meet the needs of learners with special needs, better qualifications was cited as an area which needed consideration (Opdal, 2001:159). Teachers also suggested topics such as parent-teacher cooperation, curriculum adaptations and individual educational plans to be given high priorities.

The White Paper calls for an evaluation of the resources already in place within the system and how these resources and capacities can be developed so that they are usable in the prevailing context of inclusive system. Qualitative improvement is brought up as a means to improve or a review of curricula to ensure that all schools apply the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS). Curriculum adaptation does not imply a different curriculum for learners with disabilities.

### 1.3.2 What is inclusive education?

Inclusive education is a new approach, which implies that some learners have needs which are different to those of the majority, or different to those, which the school has traditionally catered for in the past. These needs may pertain to biological needs such as being hard of hearing, or needing a wheelchair, or they may pertain to social needs arising out of poverty, such as lack of nutrition or warm clothing (DOE, 2001:14). In all instances, the policy requires that the school should

- recognise and respect the differences among all learners and build on similarities;
- support all learners and cater for a full range of learning needs;
- overcome barriers that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning; and
- increase the capacity of educators to cope with all forms of learning needs.

According to the documents received from a workshop inclusive education is the system of education that allow all learners to attend school in their neighbourhood, and all learners with differences of culture, religion, behaviour, physical and emotional to learn in the one environment (FS DoE). Inclusive education encourages the learners to change their attitude to accept other learners with barriers to learning and difference as learners. Inclusive education implies that learners must attend schools where their separate budget should be done away.

### 1.3.3 Mainstream education

Mainstream education is an education that caters for all those learners who are referred to as free from any form of disability.

### 1.3.4 Curriculum compatibility

Curriculum means a programme that consists of all those activities designed or encouraged within its organisational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, social and physical development of its pupils. This includes both formal programme which is also known as extra-curricular activities as well as those features which produce the school's ethos, such as the quality of relationships, the concern for equality of opportunity, the values exemplified in the way that the school sets about its task and the way in which it is organised and managed. Compatibility refers to the fact that the curriculum should be stimulating and meaningful to all irrespective of disabilities of the learners. The teaching methods and pace curriculum accusations (assessing) should be adapted to accommodate learners with learning differences (Guildford & Upton, 1992:14).



### 1.3.5 Conclusion

This research will be informed by an interpretivist paradigm accentuating the experiences and interpretation. This theory is basically concerned with meaning, and wants to find out more about societal definitions and understanding of situations.

The theory links well with the purpose of the research as it seeks to understand the situation of teachers in special schools with regard to the challenges they are facing in their daily working environment. As the research will be located within the interpretative theory, it will explore

- the role played by educators in the education of the learners with disabilities;
- the challenges facing these teachers;
- the compatibility of the curriculum with regard to these learners;

- the assistance provided, if any, by the curriculum in enhancing the idea of inclusive education.

All the above mentioned points will centre on the fundamental assumptions of the interpretative way of thinking which states that the world is made up of multi-faceted realities that are best studied as a whole, recognising the significance of the context in which the experience occurs.

#### **1.4 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

Educators who are employed in special schools are always thrown in on the deep end as they are not prepared psychologically, emotionally or mentally on the environment they are to work in. In most cases the educators who report at work for the first time in special schools, return home being affected by the physical disabilities they have seen. A lack of patience and experience prompt them to neglect these learners.

Recently there has been a growing interest in the draft policy of the Department of Education, which states that the special schools should be integrated with ordinary schools (DoE, 2001). This is even going to cause more problems if these learners are integrated in the main stream schools, as teachers there are also not trained to work with physically challenged learners. The observation I have made is that the present curriculum does not cater for a mixed class of the physically challenged and the “able” learners with reference to activities and learning programmes.

Educators need to be re-trained and be prepared so that they could be in a position to accept these learners, as knowing about the learning barriers is not enough for teachers to cope successfully in these classes. A research on these challenges and the role of the curriculum in assisting teachers to cope with these



challenges will promote and create conducive educational environment for both teachers and learners.

## **1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Our education system is still recovering from the consequences of decades of segregation and systematic under-resourcing, which is visible in the fact that the imbalances between special schools, which caters exclusively for white disabled learners and those that cater exclusively for black disabled learners, is still prevalent.

The policy of inclusive education is new, and educators seemingly are not conversant with it. Educators have not been specifically trained, and they lack support from those who are knowledgeable on this policy. The curriculum also has not yet been designed to promote inclusivity.

The parents, as important stakeholders, are also in limbo when coming to inclusive education. According to Hegarty (1993: 164) many parents of learners with special educational needs, want special schooling and consciously choose it for their children because they believe that their children are more valued and secure at these schools. But now, according to the South African Schools Act (1996), it is stated that where reasonably practicable, education for learners with special educational needs must be provided at ordinary public schools. The principles and values contained in the new constitution of SASA (1996) and the White Paper on Education and Training, acknowledge that education should be accessible and responsive to all learners. Education is considered to be a right and learners are to be given the opportunity to participate in a common education curriculum (DoE, 2000).

It is generally accepted that change is challenging and may be perceived as either a threat or an opportunity. The parents of learners with special educational

needs are thus expected to make major changes in the way they perceive inclusive education (Engelbrecht, Green & Naicker, 1999: 71). However, there is still a large majority of parents who have never heard the term “inclusive education” and/or have very little or no idea of what it entails (Engelbrecht et al., 1999: 173). These parents can be regarded as ‘not ready’; they certainly need guidance to understand and accept inclusive education. Thus, the problem this research will therefore, focus on are the challenges that educators face when teaching physically challenged learners and whether the curriculum assists these educators in promoting the policy of inclusivity.

## **1.6 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH**

### **1.6.1 Aims**

The aim of this study is to investigate into the challenges educators in special schools face when teaching the disabled learners and the challenges that will be brought to the fore by inclusive education in mainstream schools. This investigation will include furthermore, and enquire about the adaptability of the curriculum in the whole system of inclusiveness.

### **1.6.2 Objectives**

In realising the above stated aims the following objectives will be undertaken:

- To conduct a literature study in order to gain perspectives on
  - (a) inclusive education and
  - (b) challenges facing educators in special schools
  
- To conduct research by means of a qualitative strategy through interviews on
  - (a) the challenges facing educators in special schools and
  - (b) their perspectives on inclusive education in South Africa.

- Analyse the data found in the literature overview and from the qualitative research, to list and categorise and then describe the challenges, and to come to certain conclusions in order to hopefully recommend some guidelines as possible solution to the problem as stated in paragraph 1.5.
- Make recommendations or present guidelines for hopefully the proper preparation of educators to deal with the challenges of physically challenged learners in the mainstream schools for the new inclusive system of education.

## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### 1.7.1 Research design

The research will focus on a qualitative research design because data will be collected through interviews which will be conducted amongst three educators from two special schools in the Bloemfontein area. The research will assist in understanding the actions, feelings and emotions of participants challenged by teaching physically challenged learners and will also lead to a deeper understanding of the experience and viewpoints of the participants with regard to curriculum assistance and inclusion policy.

The research will also allow the researcher to interact with the participants and the factors under research that deal with the internal state of being as well as emotional issues which cannot easily be qualified by means of statistical instruments. These issues are context-bound and need the researcher to actually be 'soaked in' so as to understand the opinions of the participants (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:25-30).

### 1.7.2 Sampling

The sampling strategy that will be used for the purpose of this study is known as purposeful sampling. The aim here is to select information-rich participants who are well informed about the topic of interest (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:56), such as a minimum of three educators from two special schools in the Bloemfontein area, because they deal with the physically challenged learners. I will also include another two educators from two mainstream schools which are also in the Bloemfontein area, to find their feelings about the envisaged inclusive education policy. This means that in total there are going to be five participants from different institutions of learning.

### 1.7.3 Data collection

Literature study and interviews will be used to collect data, which is considered to be relevant to the topic of research. The tools mentioned that is, interviews, I believe will give me an opportunity to capture the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the participants. I believe that the literature study will enable me to be “perspectival”, because of interacting with the work of different authors with different views on the topic. Hopefully, the interviews will give me what the educators know, and do and feel about the situation they find themselves in.

### 1.7.4 Data analysis

The constant comparative method will be used for the analysis of the qualitative data because this method is a non-mathematical procedure that is designed to identify themes and patterns in qualitative data. The collected data will be systematically sorted through according to the correct procedures, and the researcher will develop a set of categories that will provide a reasonable reconstruction of the data collected (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:126-148).

## **1.8 FURTHER CONCEPT CLARIFICATION**

- “Children with special needs” means learners who require specialised teaching and support as a result of the nature and extent of their disabilities or because they are in trouble with the law and have been remanded into the care of a particular institution (DoE, 1997: vii).
- “Curriculum” means a programme which consists of all those activities designed or encouraged within its organisational framework to promote the intellectual, personal, social and physical development of its pupils. This includes both formal programme of lessons and the informal programme which is also known as extra-curricular activities as well as those features which produce the school’s ethos, such as the quality of relationships, the concern for equality of opportunity, the values exemplified in the way that the school sets about its task and the way in which it is organised and managed (Guildford & Upton, 1992:14).
- “Mainstream education schools” are institutions which cater for those learners who are referred to as free from any form of “disability”.
- “Special schools” are institutions that cater for disabilities whereby all forms of assistance is rendered to learners who require additional assistance.
- “Inclusive Education” refers to the teaching of all students in the same classroom; normally achieving students side by side with those with special needs (Wong, 1996).
- “SASA” is the abbreviation for the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996).
- “RNCS” is the abbreviation for Revised National Curriculum Statement.
- “DoE” is an abbreviation for the Department of Education.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In preparation for the research permission and assistance will be requested from the Free State Department of Education, the District Manager, the principals of

the participating schools and the educators of those schools; the protection of the participants needs to be guaranteed. In order to comply with the ethical considerations of the University of Johannesburg

- Anonymity of respondents will be guaranteed;
- Confidentiality will be protected.

## **1.10 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the background and orientation of the study was done. The problem was identified and stated and the aims with the research were spelled out. Some indications of the planned research design were put forward, and the ethical precautions were mentioned. The significance of the research lies in the fact that it will try to shed more light with regard to challenges faced by those educators in special schools and the attempts of the curriculum in alleviating the problem.

The findings of the research may encourage and intrigue more debate and further research on challenges facing teachers as a result of inclusive education. In the next chapter I will conduct an in-depth study of the topic by interrogating various sources around integrated teaching and learning and the position of the curriculum in this regard.

## CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Curriculum planning is an ever-changing process and this chapter attempts to examine the way in which the new development in education relate to the integration process and the teaching of learners with disabilities and the implementation thereof. It will also try to examine the extent to which the framework of the National Curriculum policy is adapted to ways that make it relevant for learners with a range of learning difficulties across the learning spectrum or irrespective of learning areas.

The breadth of the educational aims in the educational policy states that the integration of learners with special needs should promote the spiritual, moral and cultural development of learners as well as preparing them for competitive adult life. All learners in maintained schools are encompassed by these educational aims of which it should also be the case with the learners with disabilities (Ashdown, Carpenter & Bovair, 1991: 232).

According to the UN General Assembly Resolution (as cited in Ashdown et al, 1991, "Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons") states that disabled persons have the inherent right to respect for human dignity, whatever their origin, the nature or the seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities, have the same fundamental rights as their fellow citizens of the same age, which implies, first and foremost the right to enjoy a decent life as normal and full as possible. Mainstreaming basically means giving handicapped individuals the opportunity to participate in every activity that is available to everyone else (Allen, 1980: 40). Children with disabilities should be integrated into all social, recreational and educational activities, irrespective of their conceptual development but which should be accommodated by the curriculum.

There are various forms of disabilities, which are categorised as 'mild, moderate and severe' (Wood, 2002:90). Obviously not all handicapped learners are candidates for mainstreaming programs, since some learners have disabilities so severe that they would receive only minimal benefit from exposure to the standard curriculum (Blankenship & Lilly, 1981:6). Therefore, this research will focus only on those learners who are referred to as physically disabled but still educable.

## **2.2 LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Ashdown and Carpenter (1991: 232) state that the Piagetian approach on sub-stages of conceptual development can be utilised to assist in the development of a cognitive curriculum. This cognitive development is divided into sub-stages, each stage being linked to the development of a normal child and to its age (Ashdown, Carpenter & Bovair, 1991: 232). This brings to mind the question of which approach is applicable to those learners with disabilities.

## **2.3 THE ROLE OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS**

One may want to know what role the former special schools will play in this new dispensation. The aim with the introduction of inclusive education is to change the face of the public school system as the integration of special needs learners is about to be introduced. Teaching a class where children with capabilities are combined with children with disabilities such as mental retardation, behavioural disorders, visual impairments, hearing impairments etc, is not easy. Each child should be taught in the most appropriate way every day. The former special schools will then mostly be used as resource centres as they still have an important role to play within the education system.



Many special school teachers have received no specialist training in special needs, so there is a growing need of in-service training which will enhance professional development for educators in ordinary schools.

## **2.4 MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS AND LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

In his introductory message, Bengu, a former Minister of Education stated the necessity to build a system of education and training with which all South African people can identify because it serves their needs and interests. Such a system must be funded on equity and non-discrimination, it must respect diversity, it must honour learning and strive for excellence, it must be owned and agreed for by the communities and stakeholders it serves, and it must use all the resources available to it on the most effective manner possible (Engelbrecht, Kriegler & Booysen, 1996:14).

In ordinary schools learners with special educational needs can have access to a wider range of educational opportunities than their special school peers, but there is little evidence to suggest that the curriculum has often been designed with their needs in mind.

Beveridge states that a National Curriculum 'Task Group' on special education needs has provided advice for schools on wider aspects of implementation of National Curriculum. In one of the circulars it is indicated that schools themselves have a role to play in the difficulties experienced by their learners, and asserts that those which successfully meet the demands of a diverse range of individual needs through agreed policies on teaching and learning approaches are invariably effective in meeting special educational needs (Beveridge, 1995: 29). Beveridge further indicates that there are still some concerns both about the degree of flexibility with which the National Curriculum can be implemented, and also that the principle of entitlement should not become the site basis upon which decisions about appropriate curricular activities are made.

Learners with special needs in an ordinary school do not always have access to the full mainstream curriculum and sometimes, indeed are more restricted in their curricular experience than they would be in a special school. As a result there are for instance relatively few science or music specialists in these schools.

Hegarty (1993) also point to the fact that a sheer complexity of the timetable in a large school imposes certain limitations. It can be difficult to accommodate groups or individuals whose programmes of work differ significantly from the norm. This brings to the fore the question, whether the learners in the so called 'able' sector are being prepared to be able to embrace 'the would-be school mates' from special schools, because this integration seems to be one-sided and focusing only on those learners with special needs.

The following section looks at the different forms of mainstreaming.

## **2.5 FORMS OF MAINSTREAMING**

### **2.5.1 Physical space mainstreaming**

This means that exceptional children are physically and visibly present in the same school facilities as other children, and uses most of the facilities as other children. Severely handicapped learners may be segregated for instruction in special rooms, and that time is not counted as physical space mainstreaming, but there is at least some interaction in the building as a whole (Maynard, Reynolds, Jack & Birch, 1988: 15).

### **2.5.2 Social interaction mainstreaming**

It is a step beyond simply being together in the same facilities. It calls for social interaction both incidental and deliberately arranged by staff. This means that

teachers, principals and parents plan and monitor the mingling of exceptional and other children in that they encourage mutual understanding, support and learning. The learners get to know one another as persons and engage in personality-building social relationships (Maynard et al, 1988).

### 2.5.3 Instructional mainstreaming

This is the most complex form of mainstreaming. It builds on physical mainstreaming and is enhanced by social mainstreaming. Physically challenged learners and 'able' learners receive instruction in the subject, even though they will not be taught the same things in the same way. Mainstreaming in its fullest sense is achieved when all three aspects of mainstreaming are at their maximum. This depends heavily on teachers skilled in adaptive instruction (Maynard et al, 1988).

## 2.6 EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

According to Beveridge, children with learning and emotional or behavioural difficulties pose a challenge to teachers, but the extent of their needs will be relative to the quality of the educational experiences with which they are provided (Beveridge, 1995: 12-13).

Inclusive education means that it is essential first that the full range of individual needs should be taken into account in drawing up the curriculum; plans should be sufficiently flexible to allow maximum participation by all pupils.

Even though the implementation of the National Curriculum gave a legal entitlement to all children to share in a set of common curricular experiences, this also requires educators who are committed to the provision of a curriculum that is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated and will meet the full range of learner's needs (Beveridge, 1995: 56).

The school delivers the curriculum, and any curriculum reform has major implications for staffing. It goes without saying that an effective school will have an adequate number of staff with appropriate expertise and that the staff will be deployed in a planned but flexible way geared to the actual needs of learners on the roll. The placement of learners with special needs in the mainstream lessons will bring new teaching demands on the educators in the ordinary schools (Hegarty, 1993: 80).

The educators must select a series of appropriate learning experiences to help the learner meet each goal irrespective of the learner's disability. Experiences are most effective when activities are dynamic; the learner is the active participant.

The strength of special educators has been their ability to respond to the needs of the individual, which is lacking from most of educators in ordinary schools. With the stress in the National Curriculum on a differentiated curriculum all educators need to be aware of the individual learning needs of the individuals in their classes. For all too long they have looked for the source of learning difficulties within the learners. Now through the National Curriculum, they have to reappraise the whole curriculum and examine their teaching styles.

A major concern of educators has been that the National Curriculum will become a curriculum straitjacket. The reality of this concern has caused a biased focus on only the core and foundation subjects which in turn has given rise to 'mad academic deceases'. The antidote is the whole Curriculum, a curriculum diet that feeds and sustains the whole learner rather than causing global malnourishment through experiences, which fail to give sustenance (Ashdown et al., 1991).

In addition to the above many psychological theories (DoE 2000: 17) underpins much of the understanding around learning; breakdown shapes the belief that

problems are located within learners. For example very little is said about system deficiencies. The manner in which learners are socialised, exposure to intellectual work, poverty and its concomitant social problems have not been taken seriously in understanding why there is a breakdown in learning.

It remains to be seen whether the quality improvement, which also includes the reviewing of the curriculum and the introduction and application of the new curriculum policy will fully accommodate diversity, which will make integration successful (DoE 2000: 19), with untrained school-based facilitators. Even those educators who had special education qualifications were unprepared for the 'special care' class, and there was no fund of experience relating to the teaching of these learners for educators to draw upon.

According to Ashdown et al., (1991) a major concern for educators is to retain the good practice while participating to the fullest possible in the National Curriculum. The assertion, which is frequently repeated that the National Curriculum is a necessary, but not sufficient, part of the whole curriculum, is reassuring. If National Curriculum can allow educators to re-examine their priorities, methodology and extend their thinking about the curriculum on offer this can be of benefit to both educators and learners this indicates that re-training of educators is essential.

## **2.7 CURRICULUM AND INTEGRATION OF LSEN**

One of the most serious barriers to learning and development can be found within the curriculum itself and relates primarily to the inflexible nature of the curriculum, which prevents it from meeting diverse needs among learners with special educational needs. When learners are unable to access the curriculum, learning breakdown occurs (DoE 2002: 137).

The curriculum requires learners to reflect on their own and each other's progress. A good learner's book will include structured opportunities for learners and how to record their assessment. Curriculum 2005 and the Revised National Curriculum Statement require learners to demonstrate skills, knowledge and values (The Teacher, 2004). The implementation of the National Curriculum should have a similarly positive contribution too on the breadth of curriculum opportunities that are made available to all learners irrespective of their abilities (Beveridge, 1995:70).

Accordingly, the National Curriculum Council has stressed the importance of balance between individual and co-operative group learning, and the quality of teacher-learner and learner-to-learner relationships, in meeting special educational needs. Curricular issues are central in special education for when the curriculum is not planned in such a way as to be responsive to individual variation, and then learning difficulties will almost inevitably result (Beveridge, 1995: 70-72).

Hegarty states that there are five desirable characteristics of a comprehensive curriculum, which he outlines as breadth, balance, relevance, differentiation and progression and continuity. The curriculum should be broad in the sense of bringing all learners into contact with an agreed range of areas of learning and experience. It should be balanced in that it allows the adequate development of each area without undue specialisation or the neglect of any area.

The curriculum should be wide-ranging in particular, it should not be confined to academic learning, teaching arrangements should be flexible to allow for slow progress as well as accelerated learning and above all every learner should regularly experience success in learning and take from school a sense of personal worth. Two aspects of the curriculum are frequently picked out as relevant to the integration debate, breadth, of content and teaching expertise (Hegarty, 1993: 59).

## **2.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT**

Engelbrecht et al, (1996) states that there are two clear implications for the infusion of specialised education into the general curriculum which are the estimation that the need for special educational support in one form or another will be extensive, current estimates put this at up to forty percent of the school age population. It is obvious that needs of this extent cannot be met through a 'separate' system of specialised education or one which is not thoroughly interrogated and part of the general curriculum.

As stated in the following paragraph that the major need for support in this context is not premised on intrinsic disability although this certainly exists. Rather it is premised on a need that has been structurally and systemically created and is therefore extrinsically generated.

There are learners who are being considered for one reason or another, not having acquired adequate basic skills, related most essentially to literacy and numeracy at a time in their development when this should normally have occurred. It is the fundamental relationship of these skills to all other dimensions of the curriculum and the inability of these learners to progress, or to be motivated to progress, without these skills that creates the need for special educational support to be provided within the normal mainstream classroom. What is not possible, however, is for these learners who are mostly considerably older than the average first time school entrant to acquire these skills at a late stage of development in the same way as younger children might (Donald 1993:145).

Emphasis in mainstream education should be on making the mainstream curriculum more accessible to learners with learning difficulties through

differentiated learning tasks and an increasing awareness of the cross-curricular nature (Bell, Stakes, & Taylor 1994: 35). In a way of accommodating learners with special needs the curriculum could be approached with fun but also must be seen to be purposeful.

This emphasises the fact made earlier that the curriculum itself including its aims, the structuring of its contents and the process of teaching and learning will have to be flexible enough to accommodate differences of pace, learning materials desired outcome and teaching methodology. The training and support of teachers in its execution is vital. Failure to adapt the curriculum will disadvantage those learners with special needs and their needs are unlikely to be met and they will undoubtedly continue to drop out or be marginalised.

## **2.9 THE INTEGRATION PROCESS**

In order to shift thinking towards an inclusive education discourse, a re-thinking is required of one's consciousness around disability (DoE 2000: 17). However, it is widely accepted that learners who experience learning difficulties will need more time than their peers if they are to achieve success in some areas of their learning, and this has implications for the priority that is allocated to these areas within the curriculum (Beveridge, 1995: 65).

Despite the lack of specific attention to their needs, in some ways the National Curriculum can be regarded as an important step forward for those with learning difficulties, because their entitlement to a common curriculum with their peers should serve to emphasise the continuum between 'special' and ordinary educational provision. However, while some guidance has been provided on ways in which access to the National Curriculum can be facilitated for learners with special needs, it is clear that the responsibility for ensuring that this is to their benefit rest with individual schools and their educators (Beveridge, 1995: 70).



When Hegarty reports on the response and behaviour of some schools with regard to the 'less able'-learners in ordinary schools, she states that some schools wish they did not have them and seek to dispatch them to special schools, some accept them happily enough but do not take them seriously for teaching purposes, some do try to teach them but are hampered by inadequate resources and unsuitable curriculum. This realisation has brought to the fore the issue of integration. This focus on integration has arisen out of the special school context, certain learners are educated away from their peers in segregated special schools hence the transformation of education to an inclusive education meaning that returning them to ordinary schools (Hegarty, 1993 :09).

This approach which emphasises the context for learning and the basic skills which form the foundation for learning is essential in implementing integration schemes within the school where the time and opportunity for one to one teaching is more limited than in special class which may be organised for this way of working and it will also be valuable in the implementation of the curriculum and in ensuring that the curriculum on offer is both broad and balanced as required by educational law.

The integration of learners with special needs into the mainstream sector would likely become much more difficult due to the fact that 'both sets' of learners have not been prepared. Learners with disabilities might themselves be even more separate as their peer groups in 'regular' classes because they might be a relatively small group which would inevitably magnify any group exemption resulting in segregation and increased isolation 'outside' the law. Educators must be committed to ensure and assist all these learners to adapt to this new dispensation, it should be born in their mind that participation and implementation of integration policy is demanded despite any adaptations necessary to ensure that it is appropriate and valid.

According to Ashdown et al (1991) there has been considerable debate about the pros and cons of educational integration in Britain for over a decade claiming that we still know little about the precise nature of interaction between 'normal' learners and classmates with special needs. It is important that we know about the nature of this interaction if we are to claim that in integration is consistent with the aims of the policy.

## **2.10 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

The assessment need to be adapted to bring everybody in line taking into consideration the small steps which leads to the attainment of the outcomes. Recording responses and progress of learners with special needs is notoriously difficult because of learners' variability of response from one day to the next, and because of the subtler of changes in expression or the minimum movements which require a high degree of observational skill, knowledge of the individual learner and intuitive interpretation based on experience. It is difficult to do justice on paper to the abilities and personalities of learners with extremely complex disabilities. A variation of records will be likely to be used, recording grids with a simple code, observation sheets, checklists and graphs and periodic reports to summarise, such as those sent to parents per term or yearly reports or prior to the annual reviews. However, this type of assessment and recording will still bring the element of segregation, which submerges in the new term 'diversity'.

## **2.11 BARRIERS TO FULL INCLUSION AND ASSESSMENT**

Ballard, Gethric, McIntire, McLaughlin, Ortiz and Thurlow (as cited in Spinelli, 2002), state that there are major barriers that are preventing full inclusion of learners with disabilities. They cite the following reasons:

- Teachers and parents generally want to protect students with disabilities from stressful testing experiences. This effort has resulted in a tendency to avoid including these learners in standardised testing.
- Schools often feel pressured to eliminate learners who might perform poorly.
- Monitoring systems to ensure accurate and regularly compliance accountability with local levels have not yet been made to ensure that these learners achieve the standards (Ashdown et al, 139).

## **2.12 PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING GUIDELINES OF ALL LEARNERS**

- Decision makers start from the premise that all learners are to participate in the accountability system.
- Decisions are made by people who know the learners' strengths and weaknesses, such as parents, educators and educational authorities.
- Decision makers take into account student's instructional goals, current levels of functioning and learning characteristics.

## **2.13 INTEGRATION AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Learners with special educational needs need parents as well as teachers, if a particular parent is making a major input to the classroom and taking steps to carry on the work of the school at home, there is a danger that schooling will loom too large in the child's experience (Hegarty, 1993: 159-160).

## **2.14 INTEGRATION AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

Educational resources are limited in supply and those required for learners with special needs can be quite scarce. Special schooling entails a concentration of

that under integrated arrangement are necessarily dispersed (Hegarty, 1993:171).

## **2.15 CONCLUSION**

The above discussion shows clearly that more groundwork needs to be done so as to adapt the curriculum to be more suitable in accommodating learners with special educational needs.

Hegarty (1993:62) claims that there is no clear balance of advantage for or against integration. Whether we look at academic attainment, social development or curricular range, the available evidence does not establish conclusively that learners with special needs are better off in either special schools or ordinary schools.

This movement towards integration cooperation has both advocates and critics. Both are needed if the change is to accomplish in the best interest of children now and in the future. There needs to be a concerted effort by curriculum developers to come with a curriculum which is all inclusive in accommodating even learners with disabilities, which will also take into consideration other contextual factors which might hinder the effective integration of all learners. The curriculum should balance the needs of the individual learners with those of his or her peers within the community and the special educational circles.

## **CHAPTER 3 –THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RESEARCH METHOD**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the theoretical framework for the research methodology will be discussed as a foundation for the rest of the study to be built on. As was stated in Chapter 1 (see paragraph 1.5.4,) it is the aim of the study to conduct research by means of a qualitative strategy through interviews on the challenges facing educators in special schools and their perspectives on inclusive education in South Africa. In order to be able to make meaning of the data that will be collected, the data found in the literature overview and from the qualitative research must be analysed, listed and categorised, and then described to come to certain conclusions in order to hopefully recommend some guidelines as possible solution to the problem as stated in paragraph 1.5. In the next chapter (Chapter 5) recommendations will be made or guidelines presented for the proper preparation of educators to deal with the challenges of physically challenged learners in the mainstream schools for the new inclusive system of education.



But first, the theory behind the method needs to be addressed.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.2.1 Research design**

I, as the researcher opted for a qualitative research design for this study as it will enable me to come into contact with the educators who deal directly with learners with special educational needs in these five different schools. It is important for the researcher to understand the feelings and emotions of the participants, this will be made possible for me through using this design and I will look through people's words, actions and records to understand their situation and the world under

investigation. Words are the way that most people understand their situation (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:18).

### 3.2.2 Sampling

After the receipt of the request to conduct a research is granted by Free State Education Department of which a copy will be attached, the research will be done in all the schools as mentioned in paragraph 3.1. The sampling technique that I have chosen is a purposeful or purposive sampling. According to (Fraenkel & Walken, 1993: 88) in this kind of sampling the research conductor is at liberty to identify a group of participants whom he believes, based on prior information will assist with the necessary data. The total number of educators in the special schools mentioned in paragraph 1.7.2 is  $\pm 60$  but only ten educators will be selected and the other five will be selected from two mainstream schools, whereas the last five schools will be from a pilot programme. The participants will be selected from a heterogeneous group in terms of age, race, gender and working experience.

I hope that the participants will be willing to cooperate because they will be assured of the confidentiality of their responses. The selected group will be information rich one, dealing with learners with special educational needs and they will participate on a voluntary basis and participate in the interviews, which will be recorded, and there after, it will be transcribed.

### 3.2.3 Data collection

Interviews and literature study will be used to collect data, which is considered to be the topic of research. The mentioned tools, literature study and interviews, I believe would give me an opportunity to capture the feelings, language and the behaviour of the participants. Whereas the literature study will enable me to be 'perspectival', because of interacting with the work of different authors with different views on the topic.

Data collection in qualitative methods consist of three kinds of data which are in-depth, open ended in interviews, direct observation and written documents including such services as open ended written items on questionnaires, personal diaries and program records (Patton, 1987: 7). This research will use the recorded information, which will later be transcribed, and it is hoped that it will provide the following:

- Analysis of how the program or system of inclusion is understood by educators.
- Analysis of how the program is going to affect the participants.
- Participants' analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of the envisaged inclusive education policy.
- Participants' level of training in inclusive education.
- The participants' evaluation of the curriculum.

The interview is a very useful tool in data collection process because it will give me an opportunity to understand the opinions of the participants with regard to the inclusion and the curriculum.

The first section of the interview will require the participants to provide their personal details like, teaching experience in their present school, qualifications and the level of training. The second section will be for the curriculum knowledge and development. The third and the final section, they will be requested to come up with comments on any aspects relating to inclusive education.

#### 3.2.4 Literature review

Many recent studies on the issue were consulted to investigate the openness of the curriculum in accommodating learners with special educational needs and the attempt to address the challenges facing educators in their daily work.

### 3.2.5 Interviews

Interview is the method of entering and maintaining conversations with people and the practical interpretations which researchers make (May, 1993: 91). It is an encounter between a researcher and a respondent in which the latter is asked a series of questions relevant to the topic of the research. The respondent's answers constitute the raw data analysed at a later point in time by the researcher.

According to (May, 1993:91) there are four types of interviews of which at times a researcher may use a mixture of two or more types. These types are: the structured interview, the semi-structured interviews, the group interviews and the unstructured interviews. For the purpose of this research I will briefly discuss each of the above stated types of interviews.

#### 3.2.5.1 Structured interviews

This type of interviews is mostly associated with survey research, and it is believed that, it is the technique which most people are familiar with. The theory behind this method is that each participant is asked questions in the same way so that any differences between answers are then assumed to be real ones and not the result of the interview situation itself (May, 1993:92). This method permits comparability between responses. It relies upon a uniform structure, while a calculated number of people are interviewed so that they are representative of the population for the purposes of generalisation.

Its success is dependent upon good pilot work and the training of interviewers in order that the range of possible responses are covered by the interview schedule and the replies result from questions which are asked in a uniform and non-directive manner.



### 3.2.5.2 Semi- structured interviews

This type of interviews combines techniques from structured and focused type of interview. It is a type of interview in which questions are normally specified, but the interviewer is freer to probe beyond the answers in a manner, which would often seem prejudicial to the aims of standardization and comparability. Information about age, sex, occupation and so on can be asked. The interviewer who can seek both clarification and elaboration on the answers given can then record qualitative information about the topic. This enables the interviewer to have more latitude to probe beyond the answers (May, 1993:93).

### 3.2.5.3 Focused interview

The main distinguishing character of interviewer when compared to the two aforementioned types of interviews is that it has an open ended character. This is said to provide it with an ability to challenge the preconceptions of the researcher. Some might regard this as a licence for the interviewee to simply talk about an issue in any way they feel like. According to Bryman as cited in (May, 1993: 93) this apparent disadvantage is turned into an advantage, a phenomenon like rambling can be viewed as providing information because it reveals something about the interviewee's concerns. Unstructured interviewing in qualitative research, then, departs from survey interviewing only in terms of format, but also in terms of its concern for the perspective of those being interviewed.

### 3.2.5.4 Group interview

This type of interviews constitutes a valuable tool of investigation, allowing the researcher to focus upon group norms and dynamics around issues that they wish to investigate. The extent of the group discussion will determine the nature of the data produced by this method. Stewart and Shamdasani as cited in (May, 1993:94) the contemporary focus group interview generally involves eight to twelve individuals

who discuss a particular topic under the direction of a moderator who promotes interaction and assures that discussion remains on the topic of interest, a typical group session will last one and half to two and a half hours. A balance must therefore be struck between the groups being too small for interactive study or too large thus preventing all group members from participating in the discussion (May, 1993:94).

Now for the purpose of this study I will use the unstructured interview method in order to be in a position to gather more information. The interviewee will be given a letter of assurance that will state that their responses will only be used for the purpose of the study and their identity will not be revealed, anonymity is guaranteed.

#### 3.2.5.5 Conducting interviews

The above discussion has covered four methods of interviews, which have different ideas, and methods underlying their practice. The next discussion will briefly look at the type of interview, which will be suitable for this research, and how will it be conducted.

In order to get the views of the educators in the existing special schools an interview will be conducted with ten educators in five different special schools. There will also be another interview with five educators in the mainstream schools so as to get their views on the envisaged policy of inclusion system. There is a pilot school where this inclusive education programme is conducted, five educators in that school will also be interviewed.

According to the First Education Specialist in the Motheo District, there are five special schools in the Bloemfontein and Mangaung area which service the physically disabled learners and these schools have been identified for the research purpose, it is where the interviews will be conducted.

In order to establish a close and harmonious relationship in which there is a common understanding between the interviewer and the interviewee, both parties must begin to talk to each other, which will be assisted by the use of descriptive type of questions. These may include for instance the amount of time that a person takes to perform a task in which the interviewer is interested. These could take the form of 'grand tour' questions such as asking someone to give an account of his 'average day' at work. This could be reduced to 'mini tour' questions by asking someone what she/he does in a particular role, for example, what tasks actually involve in the performance of a given role (May, 1993:99).

In essence, interviews are communicative events aimed at finding what participants think, know and feel (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:99). During the interview process the researcher will use a tape recorder and notes. According to (May, 1993: 104) recording have advantages and disadvantages, which are classified under the following headings: interaction, transcription and interpretation. At an interactional level, some people may find the tape recorder inhibiting and not wish their conversations to be recorded. Transcription itself is also a long process a one hour tape can take eight or nine hours to transcribe fully depending upon one's typing ability. However tape recording can assist interpretation and record the non-verbal gesture of the interviewee during the interview. The interview will be transcribed the researcher and an independent transcriber who will be the researcher' supervisor. The supervisor will also assist with coding.

The last step in this interview process will be to construct themes from the data.

### 3.2.6 Data analysis

The gathered data through the interview will be analysed to ascertain the feelings of the educators and their scope of understanding this inclusive education. The comments of the participants will be put in clusters, sorted according to their levels of understanding and acceptance of the new inclusive education policy. This data

will be considered in regard of the literature study so as to make informed judgement about the efficiency and effectiveness of the policy.

### **3.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

#### **3.3.1 Validity**

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:391) state that the validity of the test results means the degree to which they accomplish what they are supposed to reflect. This implies that the test results must fulfil their purpose of validity. To ensure validity of the results it is essential that the contents of the test instrument must be representative of the body of knowledge of the scientific field that it covers.

#### **3.3.2 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency of the measurement that is the extent to which the results are similar over different forms of the same instrument or occasions of data collection. Making the results more reliable is important to ensure greater representativity of opinions and increase the generalisability of the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:244).

The objective and standard conditions of data collection in this research will enhance reliability, which will be evident from the number of interviews conducted. The findings from different special schools will show a measure of consistency with regard to the problems educators are facing and the extent to which the curriculum is adaptive to inclusive education and in addressing the problems encountered by educators. The findings will be used to ascertain whether the results achieved will yield the similar results if the process is conducted once again to the participants. The interview will consist of open-ended questions to aid reliability of the study.

To ensure the principle of reliability and validity the researcher will identify people who are directly involved in the education of learners with special educational needs. According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:70) the researcher plans to “travel or wander with” the respondent who has agreed to respond.

### **3.4 SUMMARY**

This chapter dealt with a description of the theory of the research method that will be implemented to investigate the theme that was announced in Chapter 1, i.e. the challenges that educators face when teaching physically challenged learners and whether the curriculum assists these educators in promoting the policy of inclusivity. In the next chapter the gathered data will be analysed, discussed and interpreted in order to round off the research report in Chapter 5 with some conclusions and recommendations.



## **CHAPTER 4 - DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the gathered data through the interviews will be analysed. The comments of the respondents will be put together into clusters, sorting them according to categories and themes of understanding and acceptance of the new inclusive education policy and the challenges educators face in teaching the physically disabled learners. This data will be considered in regard of the efficiency and effectiveness of the curriculum and the policy.

### **4.2 DATA COLLECTION**

Qualitative data is collected mainly in the form of words or pictures and seldom involve numbers (Fraenkel & Walken, 1993:427). Interviews were thus used in this investigation to gather information from the participants. An interview guide was used in order to collect data (see Appendix E). McMillan and Schumacher (1993:426) state that with the interview guide approach, topics are selected in advance but the researcher decides the order and the form of questions prior and during the interview. The interview guide-approach is conversational and situational. Fraenkel and Walken (1993:385) explain interviews as an important instrument for a research to check the accuracy of, to verify, or to refute the impressions he or she has gained through observation.

The researcher recorded the respondents' answers exactly, including a verbatim record of open-ended answers (Weisberg, Krosnick & Bowen, 1989:88). The respondent was given a guide as to how long the interview was going to take. The primary purpose of an interview is to measure the respondent's attitudes. This implies that the researcher should simply ask the questions and should not express his/her own opinion to the respondent. The interviews sometimes

conclude with an informal conversation, during which the interviewer express some of his/her own attitudes.

The questions, which were prepared for the interviews were open-ended questions, seeking to collect information from the following participants in different institutions, educators from special schools and from mainstream schools. Each group was prepared its questions as indicated in (see Appendix E). The understanding of the participants was integrated on the following issues:

- The teaching experience of the educator
- Challenges encountered by educators in teaching the physically challenged learners
- Participants' knowledge of the new National Policy on inclusive education
- Participants' opinion on this policy
- The flexibility/compatibility of the curriculum

It was very helpful for me to have used interviews as a tool, because not only did it enable me to capture the opinions of the participants from what they said, but it also offered an opportunity to get face to face with them giving a lot of meaning through the body language and the tone of their voices.

### **4.3 INTERVIEW PROCEDURE**

The researcher applied to the Head of Education in the Free State Province for the registration of the research project and the permission to conduct the research in schools by interviewing the relevant respondents (see Appendix A). When the FS DoE granted permission (see Appendix B), another request was made to the Principals of schools seeking their permission to interview some members of their staff (see Appendix C). According to Fraenkel and Walken (1993:88) the research conductor is at liberty to identify a group of participants whom he believes, based on prior information, will assist with the necessary

data. The selected group is an information rich one, dealing with learners with special educational needs, and they participated on a voluntary basis by signing a letter of consent (see Appendix D).

The researcher made an appointment with the respondents whereby a suitable venue and time was set. A tape recorder was used to collect data through the interviews. All the participants were required to respond to the same kind of questions (see Appendix E) and their answers were recorded. The researcher spent 20 minutes with each respondent. McCracken (1988:34) states that before the interviews can start, the questions must be formalised. The first questions should be a set of biographical questions with which to open the interview and these will lead to core questions.

#### **4.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis in qualitative research is central to the analytic process, because it depends on the choice of particular words to summarise and reflect the complexity and enormity of data (De Vos, 1998:343). The researcher is engaging in the interpretive act, lending shape and meaning to voluminous amounts of raw data.

##### **4.4.1 Tesch's approach**

Tesch, as cited in De Vos (1998:343) proposes eight steps which a researcher should consider in data analysis, which are the following:

- The researcher ought to get a sense of the whole by reading through the transcriptions carefully; he can then jot down some ideas as they come to mind.
- The researcher chose one interview and goes through it asking what it is about and thinking about the underlying meaning in the information.



- When the researcher has completed this task for all the respondents, a summary is made of all the topics. Similar topics are clustered together and put into themes and categories.
- The researcher conducts preliminary organising scheme to see whether new categories and codes emerge.
- The researcher formulates wording for the topics which are turned into categories, he always tries to reduce the total list of categories by grouping together topics that relate to each other.
- The researcher makes a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and alphabetises the codes.
- The data material belonging to each category is assembled in one place and a preliminary analysis performed.
- The researcher recodes existing data if necessary.

#### **4.5 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS**

For the researcher to understand the views of the respondents, which are likely to be influenced by the environment in which they work, it is important that it should also be examined to have a clear understanding of the background they are from.

##### **4.5.1 School A**

School A is situated in a white suburb and was established in May 1978 - that is 27 years ago. During that era it catered for white Afrikaans speaking learners only until 1994 when it opened its doors to all racial groups from all over South Africa and beyond the borders.

The school registers learners from Grade R (Reception class) up to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Its school roll is currently at 380 learners. The school use a parallel medium of instruction being Afrikaans and English.

The staff establishment of the school consists of a school management team of ten, comprising of a Principal, two Deputies and seven Heads of Department. The school is staffed with about 66 educators and supportive staff, including Psychologists and Physiotherapists.

#### 4.5.2 School B

School B is situated in the township just near the informal settlement. The school services the black community being learners from Mangaung and the surrounding areas. It was established in May 1983 and it has a total of 22 staff members with school management team of five (SMT), consisting of one Principal, one Deputy Principal and three Heads of Department. The school is highly affected by the socio-economic factors as the majority of learners are from poor family backgrounds, which also affect their physical and mental well-being. In most cases educators have to deal with learners who are neglected by their families. As a result of this educators have a mammoth task of looking after the social needs of their learners to an extent that intervention is done up to the learners' homes.

#### 4.5.3 School C

The school was established in 1970 with the aim of servicing the Southern Sotho speaking learners. It was established in terms of the then apartheid policies of segregating schools according to racial and ethnic groups. It is a primary school catering for learners who are referred to as 'normal' from Grade R to Grade seven.

There are 17 educators at this school and four of them are in the school management team, consisting of one Principal, and three Heads of Departments. School C has been built in an environment where most of the parents are

unemployed, and come from the informal settlement. It is also highly affected by socio-economic conditions that have a negative impact on the children displaying special needs or could be classified as needy children.

#### 4.5.4 School D

School D is one of the oldest schools in the Mangaung area and is the first Xhosa school. The school was established in 1965 through the contributions of the Xhosa speaking households. I was informed that each house had to pay a sum of ten rand every month. This was done of the concern that the Xhosa speaking learners did not have their schools and they were forced to attend Sotho schools. This was due to the previous government policies of segregation and ethnic groups. The parents organised themselves and decided that they will build their own school, and the school still stands even today. This school initially started catering for the lower primary learners from Sub-standard A (Grade 1) to Standard 2 (Grade 4) and its main clients were Xhosa speaking learners. In 1992 the school was upgraded to a higher primary school catering for learners from Grade R to Grade 9.

School D has a staff of 26 educators with the majority being female educators, the reason being that the school started as a lower primary school. Amongst the 26 educators there is a management team of five members, consisting of one principal, one Deputy Principal and three Heads of Department. The school is situated in one of the old locations which is also affected by socio-economic problems and being a target area for burglary.

## 4.6 INTERVIEWS WITH EDUCATORS

### 4.6.1 Introduction

As the interviews were to begin the researcher explained all the conditions and the ethical issues under which the research is conducted:

- Explain the purpose of the research
- Educators participate voluntarily in the project
- The names of all schools, and educators involved remain confidential
- All participants sign a letter of consent (see Appendix D)
- The interviews are to be conducted outside normal tuition time
- The letter of permission from FS DoE is shown to all participating persons.

#### 4.6.2 The transcription of interviews

The first three interviews are the conversations between the interviewer and the participants from the special schools. This will be followed by the conversation between the researcher and the educators from the mainstream schools. The following key is used to clarify the different roles; the terms/words participants and respondents will be used interchangeably referring to those who were interviewed.



*The following key is used to identify the interviewer and the participants (Respondents)*

KEY:

Interviewer/Researcher= Res

Respondent from special school= SP R3

Respondent from mainstream school= MS R4-5

Research questions:

(a) Talk to me about the challenges you have encountered in your work as an educator, teaching learners with physical disabilities

(b) Talk to me about the new National Policy on inclusive education

- What is it?
- What is your opinion on this policy?

(c) Talk to me about the flexibility/compatibility of the curriculum

#### 4.6.3 The first interview (respondent 1 (special school))

##### 4.6.3.1 Background information

Respondent number one is a middle age educator who is in her late thirties. She is married with three lovely children; two of them are attending in one the former model C schools. Respondent number one has been teaching in this school for the past five years. She trained as an educator at a college and she has never received any formal training on teaching learners with disabilities as part of her teacher's course. She attended a number of short courses organised by both education department and non-government organisations, but she believes that the courses were not intensive enough to empower her with skills needed to cope or to deal with challenges in special schools. Throughout our discussion she made it clear that she is not at ease with the envisaged integration of learners with disabilities. She raised a number of points as indicated in the following interview. Respondent number one is bit sceptical about the success inclusive education.

*Res: You have been an educator for five years, talk to me about the challenges you have encountered in your work as an educator, teaching learners with physical disabilities.*

SP R1: Thank you Sir, there are a number of challenges which I have come across in this career teaching these learners, as an educator I need to simplify their work a lot because my learners are very slow.

*Res: Hm...*

SP R1: I am always required to go back to the basics, because learners always need you to concretise the learning matter and not use the abstract form only, the other thing is that more individual attention is needed even if the learner is at a higher grade he always needs your assistance as an educator in terms of correct positioning of the book, handling of the pen and so forth.

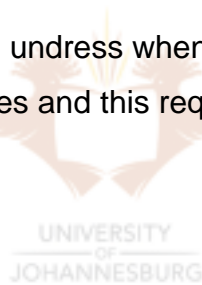
Res: *Hm (nodding with the head).*

SP R1: *I also need to take care of their seating arrangement which they always mess up.*

Res: *Hm.*

SP R1: I also help the learners to undress when is time to relief themselves like untying or unbuttoning their clothes and this requires building a sound relationship and trust.

Res: *Hm.*



SP R1: The other challenge is that one needs to adjust to their needs because at times they loose track of time in the sense that they do not wait for interval they just eat during the lessons and if you stop them they develop trump tines and so I just let them eat or even sometimes sleep during the lesson.

Res: *I heard you saying that you sometimes need to go back to the basics, what do you mean?*

SP R1: What I mean is that one can not just make or teach in abstract form only your teaching should be concrete as much as possible even maths should not end up with numbers only but should be converted to something touchable, I need to make it practical as much as possible.

Res: *Ok, let's move to the next question, talk to me about the new national policy, what is it, what is your opinion on it?*

SP R1: As far as I understand it, is that they want to accommodate these learners (LSEN) in the mainstream.

Res: *Hm.*

SP R1: I don't know but I think there are number of implications involved here apart from the obvious factors such as buildings (structures), firstly in this class I make use of an assistant educator who helps me to take care of the physical needs of the learners now, I try to imagine a situation when these learners are placed in different classes where they are mixed with other 'normal' learners that means each class will need an assistant, will they have that kind of money, I doubt.

Res: *Hm.*

SP R1: Secondly this is going to mean that the educator is going to have a lot of work to do because of the preparation, preparing for the so called disabled learners who will be slow due to their handicap and also make another preparation for the so called 'able' learners, that means a lot of work for us, thirdly most of the classes in the mainstream schools are too small as you can see here that I have a lot of space because other learners are on wheelchairs that means a lot of space is needed.

Res: *Hm.*

SP R1: Fourthly I always take too much time writing for these learners because they struggle when coming to doing for themselves even during summative

assessment learners have to speak out their answers and the educator will write the learner s' answer, lastly to save time we make use of external intervention a lot here for these learners so this means more people will be needed to assist.

*Res: Ehe. I just want us to look at the compatibility of the curriculum, the flexibility of the curriculum.*

SP R1: Hm, I would say the curriculum is not flexible, as much as it allows every learner to progress on his/ her pace but some areas of the learning content where movements are required does not cater for our learners.

*Res: Hm.*

SP R1: We always need to adapt the assessment standards by ourselves to suit our learners, when coming to extra-mural activities it will be impossible for them to compete due to lack of resources and in special schools they compete against each other and they are able to get rewards but competing against others 'normal' that will affect their confidence.

#### 4.6.4 The second interview (respondent 2 (special school))

##### 4.6.4.1 Background information

Respondent number two is a white lady who is in her late sixties with a vast teaching experience of forty years. Respondent number has also been teaching at school A for the past twenty years. She has for the past years upgrading her qualifications and she has obtained a diploma in remedial teaching. The school allocation has put her in a special remedial teaching and she describes herself as a special educator in a special school which basically means that she is responsible for remedial work in the foundation and intermediate phase. Respondent number two has negative perceptions about the integration of



learners with physical disabilities in the mainstream schools; this is evident in her discussion with the researcher as reported in the following paragraph:

*Res: You have been an educator for forty years, talk to me about the challenges you have encountered in your work as an educator teaching learners with physical disabilities.*

SP R2: Teaching these learners with physical disabilities is very hard you can not teach them like the children in the mainstream because of their disabilities, you need to have the courage, power and love for them, they need a lot of support and assistance from educators.

Res: *Hm.*

SP R2: I have started my teaching career with children who are referred to as 'able' learners in the mainstream school many years ago, after that I moved to teach learners with physical disabilities, children whom you have to pick them up, take them to the toilet some of them are on nappies; some can not eat by themselves. You have to feed them and you have to see to it that they are clean everyday and you have to bath them as well. It takes a lot of our time to do these things because of their disabilities. When going back to the classroom you have to support each one of them in what ever they are doing, these learners need one hundred percent attention from you the whole day until they go back home, you cannot leave them alone. There are challenges that you face, unlike when teaching in the mainstream school it is very easy, children can write, listen to you and they can do tasks on their own but with these children with physical disabilities you need to write down everything, just imagine writing for 20 children in one class, is a very difficult task for the teacher you need to have patience and love as I said before, because you are asking them every question in all the learning areas and you have to write down for them, so that is a challenge.

Res: *Hm*

SP R2: I have an extra chair in each table, I go there and sit and do the writing for them there is also an assistant in the class who also help to write for them and she is of great help, I wish I could have four or five of assistants, now if we can put these children back in the mainstream they will take much time of the teacher to teach them and at the same time taking the time of their classmates who are not disabled.

Res: *Hm*

SP R2: There are learning areas which are demanding such as NS, LMMMS to name but a few, now to try to minimize this problem, what I am doing, am taking the same work scheduled for learners in the mainstream I select, cut and paste the things which I think they can do because some of them are with a very low I.Q's who could be classified as mentally handicapped, some cannot even write or talk by themselves and this is a very, very difficult task, but I want them to see that they are also doing subjects and work which is done by their brothers and sisters who attend in mainstream schools but this happens at a very lower level.

Res: *How do you manage being in a special school as an educator who started in the mainstream school, what strategies have you used?*

SP R2: I am a special teacher in the special class of a special school, with a special class in this school some teachers have got these children who cannot do their work then, they are sent to me from all those classes, all the grades they come to me and then they are with me. I have got some grade four till seven in my class. I have got Afrikaans speaking pupils and English speaking pupils, so my preparation takes a lot of my time every night and every day of my life I have to prepare, I am trying to do grade 4 and 5 at the same level and try to do 6 and 7 at the same level, if there are some of these pupils whom I see that they can do

more, then I put more work for them. This is not the case with the mainstream; they do all the subjects in one day. I cannot do that because they will get confused I only do maths in the morning till break then I take only one subject per day till about 11h45 after that then we have second break and the afterwards we do hand work because they cannot focus after 12h00 they are tired, some of them are taking pills because they are hyperactive so we have to control them as well but it helps me a lot to take only one subject a day because of the confusion these children experience they are not able to go from one subject to another in half an hour they really get confused after 12h00 we are doing hand work, technology and they love that.

Res: *Hm*

SP R2: These children have physical disabilities and as well as learning problems so we put them in a "C" level where they can do ordinary work but in a very low level and then teaching them, say skills, physical growth, how to bake cakes, what do we when we go the shops, how do we shop, things like that for these children till they are 15 years old when they are to leave school or when they are to go to another centre, if there are centres like that in teaching. This is my personal opinion of these children they cannot cope in inclusive education they will sit in the class and the teachers who have 40 to 45 children in the class will not be able to pay attention to these children who have the right to do something as well.

Res: *Ok, having talked about the subjects I assume you refer to learning areas as they are called in the new curriculum.*

SP R2: Yes

Res: *I just want us to look at the compatibility of the curriculum, the flexibility of the curriculum.*

SP R2: Thanks to my experience, I am using the same kind of books as the mainstream. I am just taking parts in those books, sections which I think learners will be able to do, say if we do the map of Africa I do only S.A. and they will do one or two provinces, it depends where they come from, some of them come from De Aar, Christiana or in P.E. where there is a sea then I will do that province as well, as I do exactly the same subjects as the other classes among these 40. I do what I think they will be able to understand in deed and do the task as well. I ask those who can write to fill it in while I am busy with the others filling it for them.

*Res: Now if I understand you well, you suggest that the curriculum, the present curriculum does not fit; it is for the educator to change it to suit the needs of the learner.*

SP R2: Yes, very much, the teacher without the experience will struggle because I do not think a teacher coming from the University or College can teach these children but the teacher with experience will know, now look, I am taking this and that from the curriculum for these children because they cannot do everything because it is too much for them really too much they cannot handle it.

*Res: So meaning that with regard to this present curriculum you feel that there is a need to have a specialized curriculum for these children, that is learners with physical disabilities, is that not going to bring back the issue of discrimination, which the government and the Department are trying to do away with, as they are trying to give the same curriculum to all the learners of the province.*

SP R2: As I said they can use the same curriculum but just on a lower level just pick out from the curriculum and say listen this child is 16 years old is functioning on level 12 so is two years below his level then we can pick out from the curriculum and say this child can do this and is what we can teach them on the

second level you just continue on that same level but just putting something more, that is what I suggest.

*Res: Now the next question, talk to me about the new national policy on inclusive education. What is it?*

SP R2: Inclusive means that you have all these children with physically and learning disabilities in one class inclusive then the teacher will have to adapt with these children in the class so she is got 3 to 4 inclusive children in her class each one on a different level of functioning she has to work out different tasks for these children. This is going to take a lot of educators' time and as of my opinion with my experience and I do not think it will work because educators are going to put these children in the corners and not pay attention to them unless if they have got a special class, a support class for these children, which will be 100% committed to them, but inclusive education for physical disabilities will not work in my opinion it is a difficult task.

*Res: Now the RNCS (Revised national curriculum statements) is it not trying to address the issue of leaving behind these learners who cannot cope and these learners whom we refer to as slow learner and those with physical disabilities?*

SP R2: No because as I've said that there may be a stigma for these children sitting in the special class already and they (Government) are trying to say that they want to take that away from the children so they can be on the same level. Yes it will work, but at the end of the day who is going to be at the short end? The child, he won't be able to cope with all this work in the class. Instead he is going to be phobic and he is going to stay and they will laugh, whereas within the support class of the special class they will be on the same level.

*Res: Hm.*

SP R2: Nobody is laughing and saying he is dull or he cannot do the work, you see, that is my experience you rather put them in one class, support class, from the support class you can send them, say if they are good in maths, because they are either good in maths or languages, you send them to that teacher for maths with these children who are not so severely physically disabled or mildly disabled you can also take them in lane B and make them ready for the vocational skill class in the school. We have got lane A and B, they go to grade 10 and be taken to that class.

*Res: Now the answer you have just given to me, suggests that you agree that these learners can also be taken in the mainstream schools whereby they will only be given an opportunity to attend these specific subjects or L.A's is that so?*

SP R2: They can if the need is there, say for instance they use wheelchair they have got rails for them in the classroom with all these tables and chairs, who is going to help them when they go to the toilet? Those are some of the difficulties with these children in wheelchairs that we find in classrooms as I said some of them cannot write, talk, cannot eat by themselves, but as I say, in my opinion, put them in a support class and from the support class send them back to their original classes.

*Res: Now let us come to the learners. How are they coping, are they not sometimes thinking that they are put aside because of their disabilities? Do they understand why they are supposed to be in special schools and not attend schools where other learners whom we refer to as able learners are attending and do they share their frustrations with you and if they do so how do you assist them to overcome whatever concerns they have?*

SP R2: What I do personally, I talk to them about love, where they come from, their parents, that they were the fastest swimmers, when they were in the tummies of their mummies, that is what I tell them, they were the first to get into

the womb of their mummy that is why they are special but something went wrong with them that is why they are like that. Jesus loves them like that, they are still special and then we talk about that openly. Then I say you are not the same like learner X or learner Y, you are different but remember you swim the fastest and the furthest to be the first in mummy's womb that's why God made you special. Then they understand it because they are not the only ones alone in the school who are like that, but I think if they go into the mainstream school, they will not feel good to be in these classes, they will laugh at them and say, you cannot walk, you cannot write properly. That is my opinion, they would rather be in a special school for special school with disabilities but my experience as an experienced teacher is what I tell out of Christian way and they accept that.

*Res: Will that not heal with time if they are put in the mainstream school, when all the learners will get used to them and they also get used to be in that situation with other learners.*

SP R2: I do not know in my experience, we once had a learner here who had high ability (intellectually) he was best in all his classes, he could not walk that was his disability, we asked him, 'learner X do you want to go to another school because you are so clever, you are so clever than all these children', he was really clever then he said to us 'no I don not want to go there they will laugh at me' and he stayed here, so that is my opinion of these kind of people but I do not know if in future they will accept these children especially if they also have got learning disability as well they will seat in the class they can't go they have to hurry and they cannot do that they've got no time to do that I do not think so, we have a problem with that is why I say this school is a special school for these children they feel secured, safe and accepted in the school.

*Res: Mam do you have any concerns that may not have been covered by these questions which you would like to bring to my attention.*

SP R2: Sir as said to you before, I would like this school to continue, it is a very important school for these children and some of the parents came to me over these four years after they went out of the school and she said thank you mam for what you did, I did not realize at the time but now I see what you meant when you said to me listen, let us think about this child's future in five years, not now, what are you going to do with this child in five years time, is he going to cope outside in the world? What are you going to do with them? Are you going to keep them here and teach them more qualities in his life? What are you going to do with them? So the parents, some of them, do not understand the disabilities of these children, they do not want to hear that they are disabled; they still think that my child can still be cured, I am going to pray. It is difficult for us to tell the parent that listen your child has got a problem, once he has accepted then we can go on to teach this child. My personal opinion is that schools like these must stay for these children, you cannot send them to mainstream schools, and they will feel out. Some of the schools do not have lifts only stairs, what are they going to do with them? I support these schools with my whole heart. I have a problem with the inclusion policy of these children with physical disabilities.



#### 4.6.5 The third interview (respondent 3)

##### 4.6.5.1 Background information

The third respondent is a male educator who has been teaching at school B for the seven years. This gentleman is a family man with one baby daughter. He is responsible for the intermediate and senior phase. Respondent number three trained for his teaching qualifications in one of the local University where he completed his B Ed. After completing his degree he enrolled for further training where he did his diploma in remedial teaching. He feels that this course helped him to cope with the challenges put forth by his daily work. At the same time he feels that the Department of education needs to come with more workshops that will capacitate all those who are going to be involved in inclusive education.



There is also a need for more social workers to be employed so as to look at the social problems of the learners.

*Res: You have been teaching for seven years, talk to me about the challenges you have encountered in your work as an educator teaching learners with physical disabilities?*

SP R3: Thank you, first of all one needs to understand the different disabilities and how these disabilities are affecting the way these learners process information, because sometimes it is difficult as a teacher, you are fresh from school, you have to teach a learner with “cp” it means the child is paraplegic and it serves as a problem on how they process information.

*Res: Hm*

SP R3: The other point is about the knowledge of different disabilities and how the teacher could understand them and how they affect the learning and training of those learners. It goes about tackling the task that they have been given, they take time to finish their work and sometimes you have a deadline (due date) to finish as a teacher and that gives you a problem also.

*Res: Hm.*

SP R3: The other thing is, as a teacher many learners are hospitalised for operations or for research purposes and they become absent from school, time and again, maybe some learners need to go and dress (wound dressing) themselves or change or they need to go and clean themselves every two to three periods so you find that as a teacher you do not cope with such problems. Some of the learners need to take some medication every three hours, because of epilepsy, more especially in summer they have epileptic attacks quite often but

at least in winter it is better and during these period one is expected to teach and it is often frustrating for most of the educators teaching at the special school.

Res: *Hm*

SP R3: The other thing that frustrates us as teachers of special schools is the issue of we get too attached to the child disability of a learner to a point that you feel pity for them and that creates a problem for us and being so attached and forgetting that the child must perform to the best of his or her abilities and these are some of the problems we are facing these are in short the simple problems which we are facing but there are so many problems which frustrate us as teachers.

Res: *Then you spoke about those learners who are time and again being hospitalised, others need to go and take their medication how do you help them to catch up?*

SP R3: You try as much as possible that when they come back from those lapses you get them back again you go and re-introduce the topic again and check whether they are on par with other learners, but still it is a problem because sometimes because of deadlines (due date) it is not always possible to go back and re-address what they have lost during the time they were in hospital or when they were in operations. We always try to come back and most of them catch up easily but not all of them. It is my task to go back again and teach them what I taught them before so that they can be part of their classmates.

Res: *Ok, then the other thing that you talked about is the issue of being sympathetic to these learners, is there any assistance that you get, maybe to try to sooth your emotions, your feelings when you feel pity for them when you feel sorry for them, is there any assistance you get?*

SP R3: Normally if the child is in your class as a class teacher you become everything to the child, even to the point of physically going to the home of the child to check the condition back home, to apply a grant for the child so that he can have some money, if there is a medical condition you go to a nursing sister and tell the sister if there is something she needs to attend to medically and also involve all the stakeholders in order to help the child by looking after the social aspect of the child. You try all the means to assist even organising for them some clothes from your relatives.

Res: *Hm.*

Res: *Let us come back to the learners, how are these learners coping with their disabilities? Are they not sometimes thinking that they are put aside because of their disabilities? Do they understand why they are supposed to be in a special school and not attend the school (mainstream) where other learners whom we refer to as "able" learners are attending and do they share their frustration with you and if they do so, how do you then assist them to overcome whatever concerns they have?*

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SP R3: Firstly is the issue of making them aware that they are part of the broader society, not to feel as if they are the outcast of the society because after all they live with the normal people in the whole community because sometimes their self esteem is too low and they do not see themselves as having potential, so they think that they are not part of the whole picture. So as a teacher you always motivate them. If the child achieves something, even if it is a small something, you say well done, keep it up. By saying so you motivate, so motivation plays a role in their lives and then the way people look at them, the way people tease them, they will tell you and say just because I am disabled they think I am stupid, they think I am a curse to the society.

Res: *Hm.*

SP R3: Then you need to sit down with the child and counsel the child and make them accept themselves first and tell them that people do not think alike, some will think that you are not a person, women will think that this person is not worthy of been a human being but in all aspects you must motivate the child everyday because they get negative comments about their disabilities and it hurts them a lot that I can tell you because they confess to us even their siblings do not see them as their equals so as a teacher you need to motivate them a lot.

*Res: Sir could you talk to me about the new National Policy on inclusive education:*

- *What is it?*
- *What is your opinion on this policy?*

SP R3: Firstly, personally this inclusive education is about addressing the imbalances but mostly is about giving support to learners who have learning barriers in other words the policy seeks to address the issue of discrimination, the issue of labelling, the issue of diagnostic but now it focuses on the issue of the level of support for the learners from severe to moderate and low intervention of the because every learner has different disabilities.

*Res: Hm.*

SP R3: Now to address those disabilities, is to look at how best you can address those barriers. That is why we talk about three levels which are the high level of intervention administered in the resource centres and there is also learners who need a moderate level of intervention administered in the full service schools and those who do not need that kind of intervention are at the mainstream ordinary schools so the level of support is important in inclusive, to include everyone in the education system.

Res: *Hm.*

SP R3: Now my opinion about it is that this policy will work but it will take close to 20-30 years to realise it. One will never reach a full inclusive because the very same word inclusive is very broad because if you include everyone it means you include all kinds of barriers to learning and training, so the policy is a good idea, I am for it but it will take time to realise it even myself I will not be there to get the fruits of inclusion if you check the reality on the ground.

Res: *Now if you were to be given an opportunity to advise the authorities about the implementation of this policy, what issues would you bring to their attention that needs to be addressed?*

SP R3: First of all is the issue of the training of educators with regard to that, because the educators who have not been trained to handle these learners will not cope. Secondly is to sell the idea to the parents what the Department/Government intended to do. Thirdly, it is about the issue about making the disabled community aware of the intentions of the Department to introduce this type of education, because the issue of diagnosing and labelling will hamper the purpose of the policy, so the training of all stakeholders is important.

Res: *Talk to me about the flexibility/compatibility of the curriculum, how flexible is it in the present situation in accommodating your learners (LSEN).*

SP R3: What we have learnt at our school is that you do not adapt the curriculum but you adapt the assessment standards to assess the outcomes in an activity, but there's this thinking that the curriculum should fit the learners but not visa versa. In other words when you draw up the curriculum you draw it with the understanding that the learners would understand it, it would fit to the needs and the potential of the community, so first of all you look at the assessment

outcomes, whether the learner can be able to achieve the very same objectives without using the traditional way of assessing the children.

Res: *Hm.*

SP R3: The child can reach the very same outcome with the different approach towards the activities and that for me is what is working in our school, you focus on the tools of assessing the child and in that way the child will attain the very same outcomes but differently, at different levels and in different times because you allocate time according to the learner's abilities to finish the task that is given to him / her, so I think the curriculum for us is flexible, because if the child cannot talk you give him another activity which is suitable towards the very same outcome he will reach it differently than other traditional way of assessing like writing tests, class – works, exams and other oral assessment, so the curriculum can be flexible but only in terms of how do you assess the outcomes, this is how we include the learner in the ordinary curriculum.

Res: *Now what about the content in the curriculum because assessment is based on the content/knowledge/values and attitudes how relevant is it to the disabled learners?*

SP R3: The curriculum should not be far from what the learner can do, for example in our school we always say we are in the Free State the content of the curriculum should include things that the learner can live daily with them, you cannot talk about the sea or there is no ocean in BFN because there's no ocean for them but you look at the content look at the learner what the learner can live within the environment then you extract the curriculum from the environment of the child. Therefore of the curriculum should be about learner's experience for instance in the Free State the content should be around farming/mining because these are one of the natural resources of our Province.

*Res: Now at the present moment is it what is in the curriculum as you say that the curriculum should focus on the learner's environment, is it the case with this curriculum taking into consideration the learner's disabilities?*

SP R3: Up to so far no, I think the issue of curriculum development/studies is a new term, but the new inputs and new debates I think is trying to address the content visa-versa the learner's environment but for now it is not that good because most of the curriculum does not cover what the learner can be able to do because of the disabilities is abstract for learner, they do because they do see it on daily living.

SP R3: General comments:

- Firstly I would like to say it will be very wise for the policy markers to visit special schools so that they can have first hand experience and information on the situation on the how do they teach, and the type of learner in these schools.
- They should also involve the NGOs who are working directly with people with disabilities so that they can make informed decisions.

#### 4.6.6 The fourth interview (respondent 4 - from the mainstream school)

##### 4.6.6.1 Background information

Respondent number four is a female educator who has been teaching at school C for the past ten years. She holds a three-year teacher's diploma and she is busy upgrading her qualifications through one of the local University where she has registered for a degree in special educational needs and inclusive education. Respondent four has an eleven years teaching experience, teaching in mainstream school. She is a friendly person but firm, who really cares about her learners and also a very approachable kind of a person. She has been teaching

in the Foundation Phase for the better part of her teaching experience. With regard to this research, she has an open view with some reservations, as it will be indicated in our conversation.

*Res: You have been teaching for 11 years, what is your take on the envisaged National Policy on inclusive education?*

MS R4: I think the National policy on inclusive education will have some difficulties it will not be a smooth sailing for everyone the reason being that most of the educators know nothing about inclusive education especially educators in the mainstream school in particular educators in the township schools they have no idea about the inclusive education policy. This means the Government must do a lot before this policy is implemented. My opinion is that this might be a success if and only if most educators are given ample opportunities of having first hand experience by visiting special schools and having first hand experience on how those educators deal with those learners.

*Res: Now if you were to be given an opportunities to advice the authorities what would be the first thing that you would advice them about?*

MS R4: My first advice would be not to bombard educators with information educator are bombard with a lot of information and educators are not even consulted when changes are being made like the OBE most educator are not even now clear about OBE, and all of a sudden there's this inclusive education they are bombarded with information and they are not given enough training and most people who conduct workshops they know nothing about what they are doing, they do not have knowledge of the classroom so if they can include educator in making decision may be it would be better.



*Res: My topic is around the physical disabled learners who are going to be integrated into the mainstream schools. Do you think this will take place in a way that it would not have any hassles?*

MS R4: I would not say there wouldn't be any hassles there are going to be some hassles because the so called normal children are not used to handicapped children. At first they have to get used to them and on the other hand the so-called physically disabled children will also have to get used to the so-called normal children.

Hm... In the long run there are going to be clicks between these two types of learners and also amongst the educators themselves. Most of us know nothing about how to handle learners with physical disabilities so we will have some negative attitudes towards them. The negative attitude of the teacher can also affect the learners themselves, and other learners will also be influenced by the attitude of the teachers so it will affect the so-called physically disabled learners.

*Res: I believe the other issue that may be brought forward around the issue of integration of the disabled learners is the issue of the resources but I would not like us to talk about that. I want us to look at the curriculum what about the curriculum does it accommodate the physically disabled learners?*

MS R4: Not all in all some of the contents of the curriculum only suits the so-called normal learners so it will have to be revised in some way or the other?

*Res: But as I am talking to you right now there is a talk and training on RNCS is it what you are talking about?*

MS R4: It is not fully implemented. I am not clear about it so some of the things are not suitable for learners with disabilities, if maybe I had full knowledge of RCNS I would be in a position to come out clear on that.

Res: *Now when you say some of the things are not suitable for LWD can you given me an example?*

MS R4: Like in the foundation phase there are some movements that we need to do in a class practice or formulate their own movements so learners with disabilities would not be able to do that so they will be excluded and not be part of that lesson.

Res: Now what is the other thing, which is not covered in these questions, which you would like to bring to my attention?

MS R4: My concern is about learners who seem to be neglected because I think they should also be prepared to accept each other in the same learning environment, because they live together in their communities, this will also break the stigma attached to disabilities.

Res: *Hm.*

MS R4: I strongly believe that the department has not done anything to prepare other stakeholders like parents and children themselves about this new policy.

#### 4.6.7 The fifth interview (respondent 5)

##### 4.6.7.1 Background information

Respondent number five has been teaching at school D for the past twenty years. She has a vast teaching experience of thirty seven years, teaching in the mainstream schools. She is a very humble person and always willing to assist.

This respondent qualified as an educator three decades ago where she obtained her primary teacher's certificate and she went on to further her studies and obtained a B.A degree and Honours degree at the local university. Respondent number five has an appetite for education as she has just completed her Masters' degree in special educational needs. She is the one of the interviewees who has a positive attitude with regard to the inclusion policy, as it will be evident in our discussion.

*Res: You have been teaching for thirty-seven years, what is your take on the envisaged National Policy on inclusive education?*

MS R5: Well the way I perceive this question is as follows firstly, let me describe what inclusive education is. Inclusivity, according to my understanding, means the participation of people with disability in all daily activities at school, at work, at home and in our community. In education this means the promotion of the equal participation of and non-discrimination against all learners in the learning process, irrespective of their disabilities within a single seamless system and a continuum of learning contexts and resources according to need.

*Res: Hmm...*

MS R5: Furthermore inclusive education is important because of the following points:

Point one: Let us remember that learners with disabilities have the same rights and capabilities of non-disabled learners to pursue their learning note to the fullest, most often being disabled means being excluded from educational opportunities. In the majority of cases, learners with disability are willing and are able and can participate effectively in learning with little need for special equipment or technology.

*Res: Hmm.*

MS R5: Point two: Inclusive education takes the view that children with disability should be educated with their non-disabled peers in an environment that is as unrestrictive as possible and facilitates mutual acceptance and respect.

Res: *Hmm....*

MS R5: Point three: Inclusive education is the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving true education for all. According to the white paper it has been stated that inclusive education is about acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.

Res: *Hm.*

MS R5: Inclusive education is about accepting the fact and respecting that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience. It is also about enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.

Res: *Hm.*

MS R5: Last but not least, it is about empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participating critically in the process of learning.

Res: *Hm.*

MS R5: My opinion on this policy is as follows, as inclusive education continues to be a hotly debated issue it is critical that the voices of learners to be heard.

One way of ensuring that learners have a voice is to provide them with opportunities to meet together to form friendships among us, generate allies across groups and learn to take charge of the education in their lives. Inclusive education seems to have a positive effect on almost everybody; however, there is still a good deal of work that has to be done to get everybody and all stakeholders on track.

Res: *Hm.*

MS R5: The school must become a place of welcome for parents as well as the learners assisting the learners with special needs in strengthening their abilities to dream, to work for inclusive despite many barriers and to contribute to the making of an inclusive ethos in mainstream schools. This will be easy if of course the curriculum is structured in a way to meet all the learners. With the implementation of Curriculum 2005, this will lessen or alleviate problems which exist, because this approach allows learners to make progress through learning programs at their own pace and style.



Res: *Hm*

MS R5: The Curriculum 2005 credits learner's achievements at every level irrespective of the pathway they follow and the rate at which they may acquire the necessary competence.

Res: *Hm.*

MS R5: Allows a learner to demonstrate their competence in a manner that is most appropriate to their abilities. It measures progress against previous achievements and not against those of other learners and places emphasis on learner's progression and experiencing success.

Res: *Hm.*

MS R5: To conclude, I must say, we as educators, if we can have a positive attitude towards the notion of inclusive schooling, a willingness to accept the challenge of adapting classroom practices and reviewing school structures is essential. All educators and supportive staff should be involved in developing the policy, which includes the set of beliefs that guide the schools inclusive practices together with a commitment to implement such practices.

Res: *How should the educators be prepared in order for them to have a positive attitude that you talked about towards this inclusive policy?*

MS R5: I think there should be more training, workshops should be conducted so as to change their mind sets, because educators have negative attitude, and they still regard these children the so called LWD (Learners With Disabilities) and labelling them, they will feel inferior and other children “normal” will copy that and also reject them so educators need training to change from negative to positive attitude so as to cascade this to the learners, but is going to take a long time and if we are really prepared there’s nothing that is going to beat us.

Res: *The other issue that I would like us to look at is the issue of the curriculum, the present curriculum, do you think is there any need for the curriculum to be changed in order to accommodate these learners?*

MS R5: I would say it is OK; the fault lies with us educators if we really practice this C 2005 and we implement it fully there will be no problems. There is nothing wrong with it, as I mentioned before it allows the child to proceed in his/her own pace and style unlike the old traditional curriculum whereby a learner was expected to finish the syllabus of which is not the case with this one.

#### 4.6.8 Conclusion on the interviews

The information gathered through the interviews shed more light on the views and understanding of the new inclusive education policy by all the respondents and the challenges they face those who teach in special schools and the perceptions of the educators in the mainstream schools.

According to Fraenkel and Walken (1993:88) the research conductor is at liberty to identify a group of participants whom he believes, based on prior information will assist with the necessary data. The group for this particular research project is a group consisting of individuals from different schools dealing with learners under investigation, so the appointment was set with the respondents in the convenient venue and time. A tape recorder was used together information from the participants. All the participants were required to respond to the same kind of questions (see Appendix E) and their answers were recorded.

The response received from the two educators in a former model C special school is in sharp contrast with the response received from one educator who is also teaching in a special school. The former strongly believe that this type of transformation is going to be a disastrous exercise for our learners with special needs, whereas an educator who is also at a special school is hopeful that this will work out but it will need time.

The respondents from the mainstream schools also have their different views, with respondent number four a bit sceptical and displaying a lack of confidence in our Department of Education. She makes reference to the outcomes-based education, which in her opinion was not fully attended with regard to the training of educators. The next respondent from the mainstream school section, as a person who was also involved in furthering her studies around this field, is bubbling with confidence that this is an excellent idea. Her only concern is the lack of commitment and unwillingness to adapt to change by fellow educators.

## 4.7 DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

### 4.7.1 Introduction

The data which was collected from all the participants/respondents was interpreted according to Tesch's approach as cited in De Vos (1998:343) and he proposed eight steps which a researcher should consider in data analysis (see paragraph 4.4.1), and the following paragraphs will give a perspective on this approach.

### 4.7.2 Respondent no 1

#### 4.7.2.1 Reading through the transcriptions

##### 4.7.2.1.1 Views on learners and the challenges encountered

Reading through the transcriptions is the first step suggested in Tesch's approach and as I read through, the following ideas were identified as the main ideas of our conversation:

- Simplifying the work
- The learners pace is too slow
- As an educator she needs to go back to the basics (Concrete & Abstract)
- Maths, try to make it practical as much as possible
- Learners need more individual attention
- Seating arrangement of the learners should be taken into consideration
- One on one is very important, different times, different lessons
- Help learners to undress if they do not feel comfortable with what they are wearing
- This needs one to build a relationship and trust
- Pay attention to each and everyone's needs



- Eat during class time and sometimes allow them to sleep

#### 4.7.2.1.2 Views on the curriculum

- Curriculum is good but it has some limitations
- Does not really assist her in terms of accommodating her learners
- Group work is not possible
- Expected to complete work/curriculum as in normal school and is impossible
- Curriculum not flexible enough
- Need a curriculum for special schools
- No guidelines on how to handle certain learning content when coming to teaching

#### 4.7.2.1.3 Views on inclusive policy

- Accommodation of learners from special schools in the mainstream
- Regarding RNC's: L.F's (learning Facilitators) cannot offer assistance they claim that they do not have experience with regard to special schools
- Educators should be allowed to use the traditional teaching styles because some learners do not have limbs to do practical work (skills) and they are not accommodated in the curriculum

#### 4.7.2.2 Underlying meaning in the information

From the above stated points in paragraphs 4.7.2.1.1 to 4.7.2.1.3, it is clear that the respondent is sceptical about the successful implementation of inclusive policy. This feeling arise from the number of challenges she faces in her daily work, interpersonal relationship seems to be the main bone of contention.


The respondent furthermore brought up the issue of the flexibility of the curriculum. She believes that the curriculum is a good one with some loopholes here and there, because it does not accommodate learners in special schools. The amount of work was too much for her learners, with some activities only relevant for learners in the mainstream schools.

Concerning inclusive policy, she was up to date or aware of the envisaged inclusive education policy. Her concern was on the level of support they would need as educators, because she indicated that the departmental officials were not in a position to assist them with regard to special schools.

#### 4.7.3 Respondent no 2

##### 4.7.3.1 Views on learners and the challenges encountered

The following points came through, as I was reading the transcript of this respondent:

- 
- Teaching learners with physical disabilities is very hard
  - You need to have courage, power and love for them
  - They need a lot of support and assistance
  - You have to pick them up, take them to the toilet and some are on nappies
  - You have to take care of their hygienic being and bath them
  - Learners need one hundred percent attention from you
  - Some of the learners cannot write, because they do not have limbs you need to write for them
  - You cannot cope alone; you need an assistant in your class
  - If these learners are in the mainstream, each class will need an assistant educator and I believe it will not be financially viable
  - A lot of time will be wasted for the 'able' classmates
  - Some learning areas are demanding

- Preparation takes a lot of time
- Some of them take pills because they are hyperactive so they need to be controlled
- Learners are going to be phobic; other learners will laugh at them

#### 4.7.3.2 Views on the curriculum

- My experience is a treasure
- I am able to choose parts of the content which are similar to those used in the mainstream
- The present curriculum not flexible enough
- A teacher without the experience will struggle
- Teachers direct from the University or college I do not think will cope in teaching these children
- Learners cannot do everything because it is too much for them they cannot handle



#### 4.7.3.3 Views on inclusive policy

- Inclusive means that you have all these children with physical and learning disabilities together with 'normal' or able children in one school, one class
- The educator will have learners who are on different levels of functioning
- This implies that the educator has to work out different tasks for these learners
- Take a lot of educator's time
- My opinion is that it will not work
- Educators are going to put these children in the corners and not pay attention to them, unless if they have a special class
- A support class for these learners is needed
- There is an existing stigma attached to children with disabilities
- Other learners will laugh at them

- But if they are in a support class of the special class they will be on the same level
- Learners use wheelchairs they will need rails in classes
- They will need suitable furniture
- Special schools must stay to cater for these learners
- I have a problem with inclusion policy the integration of these children with physical disabilities

#### 4.7.3.4 Underlying meaning in the information

The meaning derived from the above paragraphs 4.7.3.1 to 4.7.3.3 depicts a negative perception around the envisaged inclusive education. Respondent number two with her vast experience of 40 years in the teaching profession feels that the whole exercise will do an injustice to the learners with physical disabilities. The underlying feeling is that these learners will not get the attention that they deserve, because the educators in the mainstream schools are not trained to teach these learners and they will devote much of their time to the learners whom they are used to work with. The respondent also highlights the issue of socialisation amongst all learners. She strongly believes that the disabled learners will not feel comfortable amongst the able learners. She indicates that they will be subjected to ridicule because of their physical appearance and maybe even in the class because of their academic performance.

The curriculum is also a major concern for her, as she feels that it fails to accommodate the type of learners in her school. She makes reference to the learning areas such as natural sciences and mathematics which she feels that are too demanding. Some of the learner's activities in these learning areas and other learning areas do not accommodate our learners.

With regard to inclusive education, the respondent shows a clear understanding of the policy. As I indicated on the above paragraphs she is not convinced that it will work.

#### 4.7.4 Respondent no 3

##### 4.7.4.1 Views on learners and the challenges encountered

- Important for an educator to understand different disabilities
- How these disabilities affect the way learners process information
- Learners take time to finish their work
- Educators under stress if learners take time to finish because at times educators need to meet the deadlines (due dates)
- Most learners are hospitalised during the course of the year to undergo some operations
- During lessons they leave to dress their wounds
- These cause delays in progress
- Need to take their medication especially those who are epileptic
- It is some times frustrating to teach in special schools
- Educators become too attached to learners to the extent that they become empathetic
- This also affects them psychologically
- Some circumstances calls for the visitation of their (learner's) homes where you find that they are neglected and that affects them
- We assist them for their medical attention; to receive social grants this means a lot of work
- Make them aware that they are part of a broader society
- Sometimes their self-esteem is too low
- As a teacher you need to motivate them

##### 4.7.4.2 Views on the curriculum

- The school understanding is that you do not adapt the curriculum but assessment standards
- There is this thinking that the curriculum should fit the learners but not visa versa
- Draw the curriculum with the understanding that the learners would understand it
- It would fit to the needs and the potential of the community
- First look at the assessment outcomes, whether the learner can be able to achieve the very same objectives without using the traditional way of assessing the children
- The child can reach the same outcomes with the different approach towards the activities
- Focus on the tools of assessing the child and that way the child will attain the very same outcomes but differently
- Allocate time according to the learner's abilities for him/her to finish the given task
- Because of these points I think the curriculum for us is flexible
- If the child cannot talk you give him another activity which is suitable towards the very same outcomes
- Curriculum can be flexible but only in terms of how do you assess the outcomes
- This is how we involve the learner in the ordinary curriculum
- The curriculum should not be far from what the learner can do
- It should be relevant and based on their daily experiences
- I think the issue of curriculum development studies is a new field
- The new input and new debates are trying to address the content visa-versa the learner's environment
- The curriculum is not 100% addressing and dealing with what our learners are able to do

#### 4.7.4.3 Views on inclusive policy

- Inclusive education is about addressing the imbalances
- Is about giving support to learners who have learning barriers
- The policy seeks to address the issue of discrimination, the issue of labelling and the issue of diagnostic
- Is about the level of support for learners
- The policy will work but it will take close to 20-30 years to be realised
- One can never reach a full inclusive because the very same word is broad
- It means you include all kinds of barriers to learning and training
- The policy is a good idea, I fully support it

##### 4.7.4.3.1 Issues that need to be addressed

- Training of educators
- Sell the idea to the parents
- Make the disabled community aware of the intentions of the department to introduce this type of education
- The training of all stakeholders is important

##### 4.7.4.4 Underlying meaning in the information

The following paragraph gives an overview of what the researcher thinks about the ideas of respondent number three as jotted down in paragraphs 4.7.4.1 to 4.7.4.3.1. The respondent alludes to the fact that there are a number of challenges that they face as educators when teaching learners with physical disabilities. The challenges he raised range from academic challenges to social challenges which hampers effective teaching and learning in their centres.

According to respondent number three he sees the present curriculum as not too rigid in the sense that they can accommodate and adapt the assessment

standard to suit their physically disabled learners. He also hints the fact that there are areas which do not really accommodate these learners and their environment.

The respondent is in full support of the envisaged national policy on inclusive education as it seeks to address the imbalances of the past and giving support to learners who have learning barriers.

#### 4.7.5 Respondent no 4 – mainstream school

##### 4.7.5.1 Views on the envisaged inclusive education policy

- The national policy on inclusive education will have some difficulties
- It will not be smooth sailing for everyone
- The reason is that educators know nothing about it
- The government must do a lot before the policy is implemented
- My opinion is that this might be a success if and only if educators are given ample opportunity of having a first hand experience by visiting special schools
- Should find out from educators in these schools how they deal with these learners
- The so-called normal children are not used to being in one class with handicapped learners, this will be a problem
- Learners with physical disabilities also are not used to being with learners in the mainstream schools
- There's a possibility of the formation of clicks amongst the learners
- Educators may also be part of clicks, those who teach learners with disabilities on one side and others on the other side
- If educators are not trained they will develop negative attitudes towards these learners



#### 4.7.5.2 Views on the curriculum

- Present curriculum not all-inclusive
- Some part of the content in the curriculum suits only the so-called normal learners
- The curriculum will have to be revised in some way or another
- I am not clear about RNCS
- Foundation phase curriculum has areas which needs learners to do some movements for a class practise and that will be difficult for the physically disabled learners, this is one example
- The non-involvement in the whole process is a concern, they are not prepared like other stakeholder i.e. educators
- Parents also have been neglected

#### 4.7.5.3 Underlying meaning in the information

Respondent number four is a bit sceptical and she displays a lack of confidence in our department. She makes reference to the outcomes based education which she believes it was not given an enough time in terms of teacher training. This makes her to believe that inclusive education will not be an easy programme or curriculum to implement. Her fears emanates from the fact that educators were not trained on this policy and even if training will be done it will be a crash course which is not enough for one to effectively implement the policy. She also suggests that there should be interaction between educators in special schools and those in the mainstream schools.

Respondent number four is very much concerned with the fact that learners from both sections are being neglected and not being prepared for this change and this will cause some problems. The parents also are being left behind around the issue of inclusive education.

With regard to the curriculum, she believes that the present curriculum is not an all-inclusive one. There is a need to revise the curriculum so that it will be accommodative of all learners.

#### 4.7.6 Respondent no 5 – mainstream school

##### 4.7.6.1 Views on the envisaged inclusive education policy

- Inclusivity means the participation of people with disability in all daily activities at school, at work, at home and in our community
- In education it means the promotion of equal participation
- Non-discrimination against all learners in the learning process irrespective of their disabilities
- A continuum of learning contexts and resources according to need
- Learners with disabilities have the same rights and capabilities of non-disabled learners to pursue their learning note
- Most often being disabled means being excluded from educational opportunities
- In the majority of cases, learners with disability are willing and are able and can participate effectively in learning with little need for special equipment or technology
- Inclusive education is the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes creating welcoming communities
- Building an inclusive society and achieving true education for all
- Inclusive education is about acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support
- Inclusive education is about accepting the fact and respecting that all learners are different in some way
- Learners have different learning needs, which are equally valued
- Is about enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners

- Is about empowering learners by developing their individual strengths
- Enable them to participate critically in the process of learning

#### 4.7.6.1.1 Issues which need to be addressed

- Inclusive education continues to be a hotly debated issue, it is critical that the voices of learners to be heard
- Allow learners to meet together to form friendships
- Generate allies across groups and learn to take charge of the education in their lives
- There is a need to get everybody and all stakeholders on track
- Capacitate schools to become a place of welcome for parents as well as the learners assisting the learners with special needs in strengthening their abilities to dream
- Lack of commitment from educators
- Unwillingness of educators to adapt to change

#### 4.7.6.2 Views on the curriculum

- The curriculum is structured in a way to meet all the learners' needs
- With the implementation of C2005, this will lessen or alleviate problems which exist, because it allows learners to make progress through learning programs at their run pace and style
- The C2005 credits learner's achievements at every level irrespective of the pathway they follow and the rate at which they may acquire the necessary competence
- Allows learners to demonstrate their competence in a manner that is most appropriate to their abilities
- It measures progress against previous achievements and not against those of other learners
- It places emphasis on learner's progression and experiencing success

#### 4.7.6.3 Underlying meaning in the information

Respondent number five is showing confidence in the implementation of inclusive policy as is evident on the following paragraphs 4.7.6.1 to 4.7.6.2. She strongly believes that this is an attempt to uproot discrimination amongst the human race and make sure that opportunities are created for equal access to all country resources and equal participation in daily activities at school, at work, at home and in our communities. The emphasis is on the fact that all learners have the same right irrespective of their physical being. Respondent number five sees inclusive education as an attempt to acknowledge that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.

There is a need to involve all the stakeholders for the programme to be successful. Learners should be allowed to form friendships and generate allies across groups and allow them to learn to take charge of their education.

The present curriculum receives thumbs up from this respondent because she states that it is structured in a way to meet all the learner's needs. The implementation of this curriculum will lessen or alleviate problems which exist as it allows learners to make progress through learning programmes at their own pace and style. C2005 credits learner's achievements at every level irrespective of the pathway they follow and the rate at which they may acquire the necessary competence.

#### 4.7.7 Summary of categories

##### 4.7.7.1 Challenges faced by educators in special schools

Four of the participants in this research spoke at length about the challenges they encounter in their daily work. The physical being of the learners poses a

great challenge as learners cannot do most of the activities which can be done by able learners, this obstacle hampers their progress in the learning process and in turn it also affects the teaching process. A number of them are assisted by educators in performing the basic things like writing which is one of the central activities in the learning process. Some of the learners' physical disabilities also affect their mental ability because there is not good coordination with regard to the mind and the physical activities. Educators indicated that these learners are often slow and always need individual attention.

The participants also indicated the inability of the learners to help themselves when they are to visit bathrooms or are to change their clothes to participate in extra-mural activities. Learners' state of health is one of the serious challenges faced by educators; some of the learners are on medication for various illnesses. This affects their progress in class and the effective teaching; at times some are booked in for operations which mean that on their return the educator needs to see to it that they are brought up to date with their missed lessons.

#### 4.7.7.2 Curriculum issues



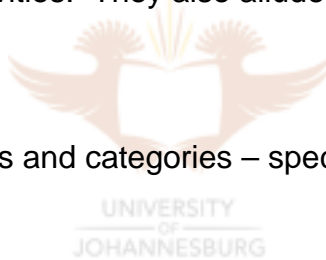
What came up here is that three out of five respondents feel that the present curriculum does not fully accommodate learners with disabilities. As one respondent said that she needs to concretise the subject matter every time and this becomes more evident when learners are busy with MLMMS. Group work is another issue which comes up; it is difficult to conduct group work in some instances, as one of the strategies for the successful implementation of the curriculum activities.

Educators who feel that this present curriculum is flexible enough to accommodate all learners, one is from a special school and the other one is from the mainstream school. They believe that this curriculum provides equal opportunities for learning and it supports the notion that all learners can learn and

progress in their own pace and time. It credits learner’s achievements at every level irrespective of the pathway they follow and the rate at which they may acquire the necessary competence.

#### 4.7.7.3 Inclusive education policy

All the respondents displayed a fair knowledge of this policy and each one has his/her own views about it. Again two out of five respondents (Res: SP R3 and MS R 5) are optimistic that the policy is going to work because it is a good policy which seeks to address the issues of discrimination experienced by learners with physical disabilities. The other three respondents (Res SP R1, SP R 2 and MS R 4) are pessimistic in the sense that this policy is not going to work, their argument is around the physical well being of these learners who need to be assisted in performing various daily activities. They also alluded to the fact that the physical facilities are not in place.



#### 4.7.8 An overview of themes and categories – special schools and mainstream schools

Table 4.1 - Special school educators

THEMES	CATEGORIES
1. Educators	<p>1.1 TEACHING EXPERIENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trained to teach in mainstream schools only</li> <li>- No training for special education teaching</li> <li>- Difficulties in handling learners with physical disabilities.</li> </ul>
2. Challenges	<p>1.2 LEARNERS PROBLEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work difficult for learners</li> <li>- Educator need to simplify the work</li> <li>- Restlessness</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educator write for learners</li> <li>- Ill health</li> <li>- Learners very slow</li> <li>- Assistant needed in each class</li> </ul>
<p>3. Knowledge of Inclusive Policy</p>	<p>1.3 EDUCATOR VIEWS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They have heard about it</li> <li>- Worried about learners</li> <li>- Concerned about financial implications</li> <li>- Concerned about trainers / officials</li> <li>- Not a good idea</li> <li>- Emotional distress</li> <li>- Policy makers should visit special school for first hand experience</li> </ul>
<p>4. Curriculum</p>	<p>1.4 FLEXIBILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not flexible</li> <li>- Need educators to use their experience</li> <li>- Some learning areas not easy for LWD</li> <li>- As a result failure to do the task affect confidence</li> <li>- Standard of the curriculum too high for these learners</li> </ul>

Table 4.2 - Mainstream school educators

THEMES	CATEGORIES
1. Educators	<p>1.1 TEACHING EXPERIENCE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No practical experience in teaching LWD</li> <li>- Need training</li> </ul>
2. Perceived challenges	<p>1.2 IN THE CLASS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Difficult for educators to understand LWD</li> <li>- Learners themselves should be prepared</li> <li>- Learning space is a problem</li> <li>- Educators negative attitude – if not empowered</li> </ul>
3. Knowledge of Inclusive Policy	<p>1.3 EDUCATOR VIEWS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not know much but have heard about it</li> <li>- Need training from well-informed officials.</li> </ul>
4. Curriculum	<p>1.4 FLEXIBILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not all parts of the curriculum will be suitable for LWD</li> <li>- Curriculum need to be revised</li> <li>- One believes that the present curriculum is fine</li> </ul>

#### 4.7.9 Summary of all the interviews

The researcher applied to the Head of Education in the Free State Province for the registration of the research project and the permission of conduct the research in schools by interviewing the relevant respondents (see Appendix A). When the FS DOE granted permission (see Appendix B), another request was made to the Principals of schools seeking their permission to interview some members of their staff (see Appendix C). The selected group was an information rich one, dealing with learners with special educational needs and they participated on a voluntary basis and signed a letter of consent (see Appendix D). The researcher made an appointment with the respondents whereby a suitable venue and time was set. A tape recorder was used to collect data



through the interviews. All the participants were required to respond to the same kind of questions (see Appendix E) and their answers were recorded. The researcher spent  $\pm$  20 minutes with each respondent. McCracken (1988:34) states that before the interview can start, the questions must be formalised. The first questions should be a set of biographical questions with which to open the interview and these lead to core questions.

The response received from the two educators/respondents, SP R 1 and SP R 2 in a former model C special school, is in sharp contrast with the response received from one educator (SP R 3) who is also teaching in a special school but in the formerly disadvantaged area. The former respondents strongly believe that this type of transformation is going to be a disastrous exercise for our learners with special needs because of various reasons as stipulated (see paragraph 4.7.10, Table 4.3) for the overview of the results. Respondent SP R 3 who is also an educator in special school is hopeful that this will work out but it will need time (see paragraph 4.7.4.1 - 4.7.4.3.1 for his reasons).

The respondents from the mainstream schools also have their different views, with respondent number four (MS R 4) a bit sceptical and displaying a lack of confidence in our department. She makes reference to the outcomes based education, which in her opinion was not fully attended with regard to the training of educators (refer to paragraphs 4.7.5.1 – 4.7.5.3 for an in-depth discussion and her ideas). Respondent number five (MS R 5) is from the mainstream school section and she is a person who was also involved in furthering her studies around this field. She is bubbling with confidence that this is an excellent idea; her only concern is the lack of commitment and unwillingness to adapt to change by fellow educators (see Table 4.2) for themes and categories.

4.7.10 A general overview of the results

Table 4.3 – Final results

THEMES	SP R1	SP R2	SP R3	MS R4	MS R5
1 TRAINING EDUCATOR	Needed	Needed	Needed	Needed	Needed
1.1 Educator's scope of work	Lot of work	Lot of work	Too much under pressure to meet due dates	Lot of work	Lot of work
2 CHALLENGES:					
2.1 Academic	Slow learners	Too many LA cannot	Learner takes time to finish	-	-
2.2 Physical	Cannot write	Some write	work need assistance from the educator for every act		
3 INCLUSIVE POLICY:					
3.1 Knowledge	Aware	Aware	Aware	Aware	Aware
3.2 Attitude	Negative	Negative	Undecided	Negative	Positive
4 CURRICULUM	Not flexible	Not flexible	Some areas	Not flexible	Flexible
5 PHYSICAL FACILITIES	Lacking concerned	Lacking concerned	Lacking	Upgrading	Upgrading
6 LEARNERS	Will not cope	Will not cope	Will cope if prepared	Will cope if prepared	Will cope if given a chance

## **4.8 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESULTS**

### **4.8.1 Introduction**

The following section of the research is about a brief description of the results as picked up from the themes as extracted from the interviews with the participants, reference will also be made to the literature research (see Chapter 2) under the following sub-headings:

### **4.8.2 Empirical research**

#### **4.8.2.1 Educators**

All the respondents agree unanimously that educator training is one of the critical areas which need to be looked at. They believe that educators who have not been trained will not be able to handle learners with disabilities and will not cope, and this will affect learning and teaching in a negative way. There is a concern about the training itself because the participants raised the issue of training officials who are always not well informed about the matter to be presented. The time factor or the period of training also came up; training should not be done in a short space of time with a lot of information (MS R 4).

A number of support staff will have to be employed as external intervention is the order of the day where learners with physical disabilities are present. Educators were also concerned with their workload, as there's an outcry because of the lot of paper work with the present set up. They raised the issue that if one is having in one class a set of learners with physical disabilities and the so-called "able" learners, this means more preparation is needed and there will be not enough time as at times some of the learners with disabilities can not write by themselves.

#### 4.8.2.2 Challenges

The following were the views of educators who rendered their services in special schools. They expressed the view that teaching learners with physical disabilities is not an easy task. The challenges they face in their daily work amongst others are, learners are often very slow in carrying their tasks. Some learners are not in a position to write for themselves now at times they are to assist ± 20 learners which implies that if they are in the same class as 'able' learners their time will be wasted. Some of the learners are on wheelchairs and they need people who will move them from one place to another and the educators are supposed to assist. The other issue is the emotional behaviour of the learners which educators need to deal with on a daily basis, this refers to learners who do not stick to class rules, who will just demand to eat during the lessons or go to sleep of which if this is denied they develop trump tines (SP R1). Some learners struggle to hold their books correctly due to their physical disabilities and this again is the responsibility of the educator together with the daily arrangement of their seating areas in the class which is also the responsibility of the educator.

The learners' health is one of the challenges the educators have to face. Educators always release learners during the lessons to take their medication and others are removed from the classes because they are to under go operations and this in a way delays the learners progress and educator's plans. Educators are sometimes emotionally affected by learner's state of health because of the relationship they have and there's no support from side of the employer to council and put them in the right frame of mind.

#### 4.8.2.3 Inclusive policy

All the participants are well aware of the envisaged inclusive educational policy, generally they explain it as a system which seeks to address the issues of

discrimination and give everyone including learners with disabilities equal opportunities to participate in all daily activities at school and in other areas.

As indicated in Table 4.1 there are respondents who have a negative attitude around inclusive education, believing that is not going to work. Their negative attitude is based on the points they made in paragraphs 4.7.2.1.1 to 4.7.2.1.3, and paragraphs 4.7.3.1 to 4.7.3.3, respectively. Some of the respondents are undecided about the policy whereas there is one who is in full support of the inclusive education policy.

#### 4.8.2.4 Curriculum flexibility

As indicated in Table 4.3 there are respondents who believe that the present curriculum is not flexible and it sidelines the participation or it makes it difficult for learners with physical disabilities to be part of effective teaching and learning. One of the respondents believes that certain sections of the curriculum are accommodative to learners with physical disabilities whereas other areas are not. The last respondent fully supports the present curriculum. She believes that it is a perfect curriculum to be continued in the inclusive education system. For detailed views of the respondents remarks, refer to sections 4.7.2.1 to 4.7.6.3.

#### 4.8.2.5 Physical facilities

The researcher never focused much on this issue but it repeatedly came up during the interviews as the respondents expressed their frustration and doubtfulness. They all agreed that there is a serious lack of physical resources ranging from small classrooms in the mainstream school to not so conducive surfaces outside, for those learners who use wheelchairs, there are no rails. The view here is that the existing structures should be upgraded.

#### 4.8.2.6 Learners

Through the interviews the learners were the centre of the discussions. Some of the respondents (see Table 4.3) felt that learners with physical disabilities will not cope in the mainstream. They believe that the whole process has left out important stakeholder in learners because they have not been prepared to be part of this section. The other respondents believe that learners will cope if they are prepared for this change and the whole disabled community should be consulted.

#### 4.8.3 Literature research

##### 4.8.3.1 Educator

In literature review of this research, that is chapter two, it has emerged that many special school teachers have received no specialist training in special needs, so there is a growing need of in-service training which will enhance professional development for educators in ordinary schools. This means that educators, principals and parents will be able to plan and monitor the mingling of physically disabled children and other children in that encourage mutual understanding, support and learning (Maynard et al, 1988). Even though the implementation of the National Curriculum gave a legal entitlement to all children to share in a set of common curricular experiences, this also requires educators who are committed to the provision of a curriculum that is broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated and will meet the full range of learner's needs (Beveridge, 1995:56).

The strength of special school educators has been their ability to respond to the needs of the individual, which is lacking from most of educators in ordinary schools. The educators must select a series of appropriate learning experience to help the learner meet each goal irrespective of the learner's disability.

Experiences are most effective when activities are dynamic; the learner is the active participant.

Even those educators who had special education qualifications were unprepared for the 'special care' class, and there is no fund of experience relating to the teaching of these learners for educators to draw upon, despite of all these educators must be committed to ensure and assist all these learners to adapt to this new dispensation, it should be born in their mind that participation and implementation of integration policy is demanded despite any adaptations necessary to ensure that it is appropriate and valid.

#### 4.8.3.2 Challenges

Teaching a class where children with capabilities are combined with children with disabilities such as physically challenged, behavioural disorders, visual impairments, hearing impairments etc, is not easy. Each child should be taught in the most appropriate way every day; then the former special schools will mostly be used as resource centres as they still have an important role to play within the education system.

According to Beveridge, children with special educational needs pose a challenge to teachers, but the extent of their needs will be relative to the quality of the educational experiences with which they are provided. The placement of learners with special needs in the mainstream lessons will bring new teaching demands on the educators in the ordinary schools (Hegarty, 1993:80). With the stress in the National Curriculum on a differentiated curriculum all educators need to be aware of the individual learning needs of the individuals in their classes. For all too long they have looked for the sources of learning difficulties within the learners. Now through the National Curriculum they have to reappraise the whole curriculum and examine their teaching styles.

A major concern of educators has been that the National Curriculum will become a curriculum straitjacket. The reality of this concern has caused a biased focus on only the core and foundation subjects which in turn has given rise to mad academic decesses! The antidote is the whole curriculum, a curriculum diet that feeds and sustains the whole learner rather than causing global malnourishment through experiences, which fail to give sustenance, Ashdown et al, (1991).

It remains to be seen whether the quality improvement which also includes the reviewing of the curriculum and the introduction and application of the new curriculum policy will fully accommodate diversity, which will make integration successful with untrained school based facilitators (DOE, 2000:19).

In order to shift thinking towards an inclusive education discourse, a re-thinking is required of one's consciousness around disability. However, it is widely accepted that learners who have difficulties will need more time than their peers if they are to achieve success in some areas of their learning, and this has implications for the priority that is allocated to these areas within the curriculum (Beveridge 1995:65).



#### 4.8.3.3 Inclusive educational policy

In Chapter 2 of this research it is stated that the breadth of the educational aims in the integration policy states that the integration of learners with special needs should promote the spiritual, moral and cultural development of learners as well as preparing them for competitive adult life. All learners in maintained schools are encompassed by these educational aims of which it should also be the case with the learners with disabilities (Ashdown, Carpenter & Bovair, 1991:232).

Mainstreaming basically means giving handicapped individuals the opportunity to participate in every activity that is available to everyone else (Allen, 1980:40). Furthermore one of the aims of inclusive education is to change the face of the



public schools system as the integration of special needs learners is about to be introduced. The only concern around this is that educators in special and mainstream schools have not yet received any specialist training in special needs, so there is a growing need of in-service training which will enhance profession/development for educators in the mainstream schools.

#### 4.8.3.4 Curriculum flexibility

Curriculum planning is an ever-changing process and this means that it should also try to examine the extent to which the framework of the National Curriculum policy is adapted to ways which make it relevant for learners with a range of learning difficulties across the learning spectrum or irrespective of learning areas. The literature reveals that in ordinary schools learners with special educational needs can have access to a wider range of educational opportunities than their special school peers, but there is little evidence to suggest that the curriculum has often been designed with their needs in mind.

Beveridge states that a National Curriculum 'Task Group' on special educational needs has provided advice for schools on wider aspects of implementation of National Curriculum. In one of the circulars it is indicated that schools themselves have a role to play in the difficulties experienced by their learners, and asserts that those which successfully meet the demands of a diverse range of individual needs through agreed policies on teaching and learning approaches are invariably effective in meeting special educational needs (Beveridge, 1995:29).

Beveridge indicates that there are still some concerns both about the degree of flexibility with which the National Curriculum can be implemented, and also that the principle of entitlement should not become the site basis upon which decisions about appropriate curricular activities are made.

#### 4.8.3.5 Physical facilities

Physical facilities are some of the educational resources which are limited in supply and those required for learners with special needs can be quite scarce. In Chapter 2 (see paragraph 2.5.1) of this research the researcher refers to physical space mainstreaming which means that exceptional children are physically and visibly present in the same school facilities as other children, and uses most of the facilities as other children. Severely handicapped maybe segregated for instruction in special rooms, and that time is not counted as physical space mainstreaming, but there is at least some interaction in the building as a whole (Maynard, Reynolds, Jack & Birch, 1988:15).

#### 4.8.3.6 Learners

The UN General Assembly Resolution, Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons has been quoted in Chapter 2 stating that disabled persons have the inherent right to respect for human dignity, whatever their origin, the nature or the seriousness of their handicaps and disabilities, have the same fundamental rights as their fellow citizens of the same age, which implies, first and foremost the right to enjoy a decent life as normal and full as possible. Learners with disabilities should be integrated into all social, recreational and educational activities, irrespective of their conceptual development but which should be accommodated by the curriculum.

Learners with special needs in an ordinary school do not always have access to the full mainstream curriculum and sometimes, indeed are more restricted in their curricular experience than they would be in a special school; as a result there are for instance relatively few science or music specialists in these schools.

The other issue which comes up is the question, are the learners in the so-called 'able' sector being prepared to be able to embrace 'the would be school mates'

from special schools, because this integration seems to be one sided and focusing only on those learners with special needs.

#### **4.9 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the aim was to analyse data and discuss the findings thereof. The information gathered through the interviews shed more light on the views and understanding of the new inclusive education policy by all the respondents and the challenges faced by those who teach in special schools and on the other hand the perceptions of the educators in the mainstream schools.

Analysis of this chapter revealed common topics covered both in literature and empirical research, which are educator training, challenges encountered in special schools and the perceptions around the integration of learners with physical disabilities, curriculum flexibility, physical facilities and the position of the learners.

The discussion shows clearly that more groundwork needs to be done so as to the motivation of educators and put them on an in-service training with the aim of preparing them for the envisaged inclusive education policy, the two bodies of knowledge are in agreement that educator training is critical for the policy to be implemented.

The challenges raised up centres around the physical space, learner's physical disabilities and the flexibility or lack of flexibility in the curriculum, of which educator need to adjust the assessment standards.

The physical facilities are another issue which needs attention, as the present facilities are not in an acceptable state of affair to think of integration in the near future.

The major concern from the literal and empirical research is the leaving behind of the learners from both communities that is from disabled community and 'able' community who seem to be neglected and not being prepared for the coming educational system.

The debate towards integration cooperation has both advocates and critics. Both are needed if the change is to be accomplished in the best interest of all children now and in the future. There needs to be a concerted effort by authorities to come up with a system which will be able to accommodate all learners taking into consideration all contextual factors which might hinder the effective integration of all learners.



## CHAPTER 5 - SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to look into the challenges facing educators in special schools, educators who teach the physically challenged learners and the compatibility of the curriculum, further more it also looked at the envisaged inclusive education, assessing the extent to which both educators in special schools and the mainstream schools know this inclusive policy and how do they feel about it.

This chapter will consist of a summary of the most important findings of the literature and the empirical research, conclusions, recommendations and some concluding remarks are to be presented.

### 5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

#### 5.2.1 Summary of literature review

Before the dawn of the year 1994 our system of education was fragmented constituting a number of educational departments based or formed on racial lines (see Chapter 1, paragraph 1.2). This resulted into complex and uncoordinated arrangement of 17 different education departments. This gave rise to severe discrepancies in the quality and quantity of provision services for learners with special educational needs have not only been marginalised and under-developed, but have been seen as peripheral to the concerns of the mainstream of education with little assistance given to educators working in these schools.

The curriculum in this case is an essential component in the system to address the imbalances of the past and ensure that the educational aims are adaptable to



the environment serving physically challenged learners and promote inclusively in all respect.

Recently there has been a growing interest in the draft policy of the Department of Education, which states that the special schools should be integrated with ordinary schools (DOE, 2001). This is even going to cause more problems if these learners are integrated in the mainstream schools, as the majority of educators there, are not trained to work with physically challenged learners.

The policy of inclusive education is new, and educators seemingly are not conversant with it. Educators have not been specifically trained, and they lack support from those who are knowledgeable on this policy. The curriculum also has not yet been designed to promote inclusivity.

Education as an instrument used to transform the society from the evils of segregation. The South African Schools Act (1996), states that where reasonably practicable, education for learners with special educational needs must be provided at ordinary schools. The principles and values contained in the new constitution of SASSA (1996) and the White Paper on Education and Training, acknowledge that education should be accessible and responsive to all learners. Education is considered to be a right and learners are to be given the opportunity to participate in a common education curriculum (DOE, 2000).

### 5.2.2 Summary of empirical research

The information collected through the empirical research reflect the essence of the views of all the participants on issues such as the integration of learners with physical disabilities to the mainstream school section, the challenges facing educators in special schools, the flexibility or non-flexibility of the curriculum and the perceptions of the educators who are in the mainstream school on inclusive education. It is clear from the discussion that all the participants understand

what inclusive education is. They believe that the problem will emanate from the fact that learners with physical disabilities need special resources and support. Any system which does not provide for these needs is doomed for failure.

The training of educational practitioners is of utmost importance to have a paradigm shift needed so as to develop a positive attitude towards the changes. The empirical research revealed that not all participants were in favour of this policy on inclusive education. Their concern around this policy is the training of educators; participants also raised the issue of training officials who are always not well informed about the content of their training. The other factor is around the question of the period for training, they believe that training should not be of a shorter period during which a lot of information is conveyed in a short space of time.

The whole system is going to need a number of human resources from the academic staff to support staff such as psychologists, physiotherapist and others.

The respondents have also voiced their concerns about their workload; there is dissatisfaction around workload because of a lot of paper work involved in the present system, now having a set of learners with physical disability and the 'able' learners in one class means a lot of preparation.

### **5.3 CONCLUSIONS**

According to the descriptions of the findings in Chapter 4, the following conclusions can be made:

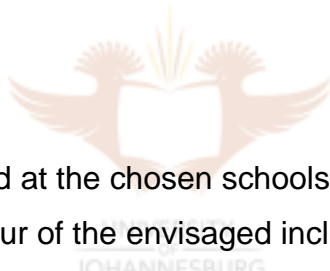
#### **5.3.1 Challenges**

Indeed learners with physical disabilities require a special attention and care during tuition and after tuition time. This is due to the difficulties they come

across in the performance of their academic activities and realisation of their physical needs. The integration of these learners in the mainstream schools poses a greater challenge if we are to consider a class teacher: learner ratio. The education authorities will have to revise the issue of statistics when coming to learners with special educational needs (LSEN) because if this is not re-considered it will leave educators with big numbers in the class, the present system let the disabled child to be counted twice.

The learners' health is also one of the challenges the educators have to face. Educators always release learners during lessons so that they can go and take their medication and some are removed from the classes because they are to undergo operations. This is one of those challenges which disturb the educator's progress.

### 5.3.2 Educators



From the research conducted at the chosen schools, it is evident that some of the educators are not in favour of the envisaged inclusive policy. In accordance with one of the aims of the research, it can be stated that educators are aware and have some knowledge about integration policy the only disturbance is the fear of the unknown and these fears could be put away by an in-service training.

All the respondents agreed that educator training is one of the critical areas which need to be seriously looked at. They believe that educators who have not been trained will not be able to handle learners with disabilities and will not cope; this will affect learning and teaching in a negative way.

There is a lack of confidence towards the educational officers who always conduct workshops. The feeling is that they are not specialists and as a result they have some limitations which affect the imparting of knowledge and also failing to address the attendants' questions and concerns.



### 5.3.3 Inclusive policy

According to an overview of the results in Chapter 4, Table 4.3 it can be pronounced that educators apparently understand what inclusive policy is all about. All the participants have a common view that is a system which seeks to address the issues of discrimination and give everyone including learners with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in all daily activities at school for all and in other areas.

As indicated in Chapter 4, Table 4.3 there is respondents who have negative attitude around inclusive education policy. The problem lies in the practicality of the policy, when it comes to implementation in the classroom, they feel that it cannot be realised in the present educational situation and conditions.



### 5.3.4 Curriculum

Curriculum as one of the corner stones of the education system should be broad in the sense of bringing all learners into contact with an agreed range of areas of learning and experience. When learners are unable to access the curriculum, learning breakdown occurs.

According to the descriptions of the findings in Chapter 4 on the issue of the curriculum the following conclusion can be made. The respondents have conflicting ideas on the flexibility or inflexible nature of the curriculum. Educators who feel that the curriculum is inflexible are those who have indicated that the whole inclusion policy is going to experience some problems, participants who are not optimistic about the whole system. The assessment here is that they expect that everything around the curriculum should be on a silver platter without making any effort to make the present curriculum work, as it allows and

accommodates all learners to work at their own pace and recognises diversity amongst all types of learners.

There are also some respondents who are prepared to be agents of change and make the best out of the present curriculum. They believe that this curriculum provides equal opportunities for learning and supports the notion that all learners can learn and progress in their own pace and time.

### 5.3.5 Physical facilities

As much as the physical facilities were not part of our research, it was clear that the respondents were concerned about the availability of physical resources because the matter came up quite often despite the attempts of the researcher to shift the focus away from the issue. They all agreed that there is a serious lack of resources ranging from the capacity of the present classroom size in the mainstream schools, to uneven grounds which may hamper and be safety risk to those learners with physical disabilities.



### 5.3.6 Learners

Through out the interviews learners were constantly mentioned, some of the respondents felt those learners with physical disabilities will not cope in the mainstream. They believe that the whole process has left out important stakeholders i.e. learners; they have not been prepared to be part of this transformation.

## 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The interaction with literature study, empirical investigation and perspectives gained, brought to the fore the following recommendations:

#### 5.4.1 Challenges

I would recommend that the Department of Education prioritise the issue of capacitating all the stakeholders, particularly the educators who need to be prepared mentally, socially, emotionally and otherwise, for them to be able to handle these challenges brought by the interaction with the physically disabled learners.

The Department of Education need to look at the issue of getting more support staff like social workers, health practitioners, psychologist and physio-therapist especially from the black community who will always be able to communicate with the learners and the members of the communities where these learners are from, in their own language. This will alleviate the problem educators are encountering of having to play different roles at the same time.



#### 5.4.2 Educators

All educators should be considered for re-training on the unique needs of learners with special needs and this need to be attended to as a matter of urgency. The authorities should also avoid short quick workshops, which always leave educators with a lot of information, but yet confused and frustrated. Utilise experts in training educators, people who will win the confidence of educators and work on their fears for change.

#### 5.4.3 Inclusive policy

The Department of Education, as the custodians of this policy, needs to make financial resources available for the training of educators. The policy should also be made to be at the top of the agenda in different public forums so that the public across the spectrum should be involved and aware of the inclusion policy.

Finances should also be made available in the form of bursaries to encourage educator to follow this field.

#### 5.4.4 Curriculum

I recommend that the Department of Education should seriously consider holding workshops on curriculum aspects for educators, changes in a short period of time like the introduction of C2005, RNCS, inclusion are frustrating for educators because while they are adjusting to certain change before settling or grasping, there's already a new one in the pipeline, therefore systematic introduction is recommended avoiding haphazard changes at all cost.

#### 5.4.5 Physical facilities

School physical facilities such as classroom size, learner's furniture, entrance (doors), rails and ramps, toilets, chalkboards in the classes should be in a position and condition that will make teaching and learning conducive for all.



#### 5.4.6 Learners

Proper training of educators as agents of a change will ensure that learners are also brought on board because they are the one's who are going to be affected mostly by this.

Representative council of learners from both sections, learners with disabilities and 'able' learners should be engaged and their socialisation be a priority.

### 5.5 FURTHER RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

A further research may be conducted around the integration of learners with physical disabilities to investigate the readiness and financial muscles of the

Department of Education to provide and upgrade the physical resources so as to realise a successful implementation of inclusive education.

## **5.6 STRENGTH AND WEAKNESSES OF THIS RESEARCH**

### **5.6.1 Strengths**

Despite the confinements of the conditions of a mini-dissertation the study managed to gather the necessary data. The nature of the research methodology gave the researcher an opportunity to interact with the respondents who are dealing directly with the subject of the investigation allowing him to get true prevailing conditions.

### **5.6.2 Weaknesses**

Due to the fact that this research is a mini-dissertation the researcher could not make an in-depth investigation on the topics covered in this research. This gives me an idea that an in-depth study is opened for further investigation through doctoral thesis.

The research was conducted during an awkward period when most of the respondents were busy with the examinations in their different institutions and the researcher had to comply with the conditions laid down by FSDoE which state that a research interview should be conducted outside tuition time, in spite of that this research was carried out.

## **5.7 FINAL CONCLUSION**

The significance of the research was based on the fact that it shared more information with regard to the challenges faced by educators in special schools and how does the curriculum assist them in dealing with those problems. It also

shed more light on the feelings on educators both in special and mainstream schools about the envisaged inclusive education policy.

This investigation based all its findings on literature and empirical research and it is evident that there is no clear balance of advantage for or against integration, whether we look at academic attainment, social development or curricular range, the available evidence does not establish conclusively that learners with special needs are better off in either special schools or ordinary schools.

The changes in our education system as a result of inclusive education will affect all stakeholders. Potentially they could generate a lot of stress, especially for educators and learners. They could affect the schools emotional climate as much as they can also affect the academic curriculum. This is a clear indication that more ground work needs to be done as to motivate educators and put them on an in-service training with the aim of preparing them for the envisaged inclusive education policy. The two bodies of knowledge, empirical and literature are in agreement that educator training is critical for the policy to be implemented.



The findings of the research may encourage and intrigue more debate and further research on challenges facing educators as a result of inclusive education.

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## APPENDIX A

PO BOX 3356  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
9300

THE HEAD: EDUCATION  
CES: IRRISS  
PRIVATE BAG 20565  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
9301

SIR/MADAM

RE: A REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOLS

I am a registered student at Rand Afrikaans University for the M Ed (Curriculum Studies).

I have already completed all my modules for the degree and I am now doing a mini dissertation on the following topic: The challenges that educators face in teaching physically challenged learners and whether the curriculum assists these educators in promoting inclusivity.

This research will be in a form of interviews with the individual teachers in special schools and the mainstream schools which fall under your jurisdiction, all interviews will be done after tuition time so as to avoid disturbing the smooth running of the schools and participation will be voluntarily.

I therefore request your permission to undertake this research.

Find with this request a confirmation letter from FS DoE.

Hoping that my request will receive your favourable consideration.

Thank you,  
Mr VS MPINGA

Contact numbers: 051-529-0728 (h)  
083 247 6510  
051-432-4410 (w)



APPENDIX B

# FREE STATE PROVINCE



Enquiries : Mr W S van Rooyen  
Reference no. : 16/47/82-2004

Tel : (051) 404 8077  
Fax : (051) 404 8074

2004-10-28

Mr V S Mpinga  
PO Box 3356  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
9600

Dear Mr V S Mpinga

## REGISTRATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT

1. This letter is in reply to your application for the registration of your research project.
2. Research topic: **The challenges that educators face in teaching physically challenged learners and whether does the curriculum assists these educators in promoting inclusively.**
3. Your research project has been registered with the Free State Education Department and you may conduct research in the Free State Department of Education under the following conditions:
  - 3.1 Educators, participate voluntarily in the project.
  - 3.2 The names of all schools, and educators involved remain confidential.
  - 3.3 The questionnaires are completed and the interviews are conducted outside normal tuition time.
  - 3.4 This letter is shown to all participating persons.
4. You are requested to donate a report on this study to the Free State Department of Education. It will be placed in the Education Library, Bloemfontein. It will be appreciated if you would also bring a summary of the report on a computer disc, so that it may be placed on the website of the Department.
5. Once your project is complete, you may be invited to present your findings to the relevant persons in the FS Department of Education. This will increase the possibility of implementing your findings wherever possible.
6. You are requested to confirm acceptance of the above conditions in writing to:

The Head: Education, for attention: CES: IRRISS  
Room 1204, Provincial Government Building  
Private Bag X20565, BLOEMFONTEIN, 9301

6. We wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

**WB van Rooyen**  
CES: IRRISS  
cc Director of District: Xhariep

Department of Education ∇ Departement van Onderwys ∇ Lefapha la Thuto

Private Bag X20555, Bloemfontein, 9300 • Republic of South Africa • Riphabolike ya Afrika Borwa

## APPENDIX C

PO BOX 3356  
BLOEM FONTEIN  
9300

THE HEAD  
FREE STATE DEPT OF EDUCATION  
PRIVATE BAG X 20565  
BLOEMFONTEIN

RE: ACCEPTANCE OF THE CONDITIONS

DEAR SIR/MADAM

I hereby wish to confirm the acceptance of the conditions set by the FSDoE with regard to the registration of my research project.

Yours truly,

Mr VS Mpinga



## APPENDIX D

914 KOTOYI STREET  
ROCKLANDS LOCATION  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
9300

### To Whom It May Concern

It is hereby confirmed that Mr Maseti .T was my employee as from the 04/04/1999 to 04/09/2004 as a driver.

He has been a loyal and dedicated driver ever since he joined me.

REASONS FOR LEAVING: He informed me that he leaves the job because he would like to attend a driving school with the aim of upgrading his driver's licence so as to pursue his other personal interest.

I wish him the best of luck in all his endeavors.

Thank you,  
Yours truly,

YEAR PROGRAMME  
DUTY CHART

TIME TABLES

CIRCULARS

SCHOOL ROLL  
NEWS FLASH

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

VISSION  
MISSION STATEMENT

BUSINESS CARDS





PO BOX 3356  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
9300

THE PRINCIPAL  
TSWELANG SPECIAL SCHOOL  
BLOEMFONTEIN

SIR/MADAM

RE: A REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a registered student at Rand Afrikaans University for the M Ed (Curriculum Studies).

I have already completed all my modules for the degree and I am now doing a mini dissertation on the following topic: The challenges that educators face in teaching physically challenged learners and whether the curriculum assists these educators in promoting inclusivity.

This research will be in a form of interviews with the individual teachers in special schools and the mainstream schools which fall under your jurisdiction, all interviews will be done after tuition time so as to avoid disturbing the smooth running of the schools and participation will be voluntarily.

I therefore request your permission to undertake this research.

Find with this request a confirmation letter from FS DoE.

Hoping that my request will receive your favourable consideration.

Thank you,  
Mr VS MPINGA

Contact numbers:           051-529-0728 (h)  
                                      083 247 6510  
                                      051-432-4410 (w)



## APPENDIX E

A copy of this form should be left with the respondent and one copy should be signed by the respondent and be kept by the interviewer

Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I am a researcher on a project entitled:

This project is being sponsored by the Department of \_\_\_\_\_ at the University of \_\_\_\_\_

I am an M.ED student and the principal researcher of this topic and I may be contacted at this phone number \_\_\_\_\_ should you have any questions.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research. Your participation is very much appreciated. Just before we start the interview, I would like to reassure you that as a participant in this research you have several definite rights.

First, your participation in this interview is entirely voluntary.

You are free to refuse to answer any question at any time.

You are free to withdraw from the interview at any time.

This interview will be kept strictly confidential; under no circumstances will your name or that of the institution be revealed.

I would be grateful if you would sign this form to show that you read its contents.

(sign)

(printed)

(dated)

## APPENDIX F

### QUESTIONS TO EDUCATORS FOR INTERVIEWS:

TOPIC: The challenges educators face in teaching the physically disabled learners and whether does the curriculum assist these educators in promoting inclusivity.

### QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS

- *You have been an educator for .....years, talk to me about the challenges you have encountered in your work as an educator, teaching learners with Physical disabilities.*
- *Talk to me about the new National Policy on Inclusive education.*
  - (a) *What is it?*
  - (b) *What is your opinion on this policy?*
- *Talk to me about the flexibility/ compatibility of the curriculum.*

### QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS IN THE MAINSTREAM SCHOOL

- *You have been teaching for ..... years, what is your take on the envisaged National Policy on inclusive education:*
  - *What is it?*
  - *What is your opinion on this policy?*
- *Talk to me about your present experiences about the curriculum, is it flexible enough to accommodate learners with physical disability.*