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**A critical investigation into the managerial implications
of inclusive education**

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ABSTRACT

Special needs education has always provided special challenges to school administrators, policy makers and teachers. The world-wide move towards inclusive education as an alternative to exclusive education or casual mainstreaming has resulted in significant developments in Namibia in the past decade. Global educational reforms have focused on education for all as well as inclusive education and Namibia is signatory to several conventions and declarations in this regard.

Research in this field has largely focused on the role of the inclusive teacher, and of course the special needs of the learners. Little or no attention has been paid to possible managerial and organisational challenges which accompany the move to inclusive education.

This thesis seeks to critically investigate the managerial implications of inclusive education. The focal point of this research is to gain a clear understanding of the managerial implications in an inclusive school for learners with visual impairment, chiefly through an exploration of the experiences of management members of the inclusive process.

The research is located within a qualitative research paradigm, which is subsumed by a phenomenological model. The data gathered through in-depth interviews include many anecdotal accounts that provide insight into the ways respondents reacted to experiences at the inclusive school. The main findings of the research are highlighted and discussed. Recommendations arising from a critical analysis of these main findings are presented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The role of educational administrators or management, according to Sander (1989), is one of coordinating the actions and interaction of persons and groups who participate directly or indirectly in the educational process of the community. The educational process discussed in this thesis will concentrate primarily on inclusive schooling.

For decades special classes and special teachers have been the crux of educating students with special needs (Meijer & Hegarty as cited in Johnson 1999). Students with special needs include those with sensory disabilities such as visual and hearing impairment. My focus will be on visual impairment. Before I elaborate on my reasons for conducting this specific research, I would like to provide a brief explanation of the education of learners with visual impairment.

Public schools began to make provision for children with visual impairment only from the 1900s (Lowenfeld 1982). The alternative to special or exclusive education is *inclusive education* (Choate 1997: 36) and it is defined as "the provision of appropriate instruction for pupils with special needs in regular classrooms" (Giangreco, Baumgart & Doyle as cited in Johnson 1999). "Inclusive education has been premised on the understanding that all learners should be taken into account, embraced and considered as viable members of educational communities" (Zimba 1999: 38).

In the Namibian education system, special education has a history of no provision, denial of access, segregated provision, casual mainstreaming, and full integration to inclusive education (Zimba 1999 & Haihambo-Muetudhana 2000). The past ten years have been characterized by major international and national inclusive education policy developments. Global educational reforms have focused on education for all as well as

inclusive education and Namibia is signatory to several conventions and declarations in this regard. The goals of equal access, equal opportunities and equity are advocated in the Jomtien Framework for Action (1990), Education for All (1993) and the National Policy on Disability (1997). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) provides clear guidelines on how inclusion should be approached and maintained.

The Gabriel Taapopi Senior Secondary School (SSS), where I conducted my research, is situated in the Ondangwa West Education Region. It became the first school in recent years to integrate learners with visual impairment into its curriculum. In my role as Regional School Counsellor, responsible for the special schools and programmes division, I detected that there is a need to develop a clear understanding of how the school is managed to facilitate this integration. I realised this during previous visits to the school and through in-depth discussions with staff members. My responsibility, among others, includes the needs assessment and training of teachers to deal with special needs in the classroom, equipping them with basic skills to teach all children in the ordinary classroom. This includes learners with disabilities or learning difficulties.

Experience has revealed that the attitude of teachers towards the integration of children with disabilities is an important variable (Thomas as cited in Bayliss 2001: 7). Australian research suggests that integration is dependent upon teacher attitudes, which are in turn dependent upon teacher characteristics and the ethos and support offered for integration. Research by Ward & Centre (as cited in Bayliss 2001: 7) indicates a lack of confidence among ordinary teachers in their instructional skills and the quality of support personnel available. There was a tendency to favour integrating only those children whose disabilities were not likely to require extra instructional and management skills. Bridge & Moss (as cited in UNESCO 1999: 7) however, argue that in welcoming schools, "teachers share their values, beliefs and understanding about diversity and negotiate open and clear statements about schools for all." Vaÿrynen (as cited in Kokkala 1997: 175) similarly believes that integration tends mainly to be "dependent on the attitudes of the headmaster and the general climate of the school…" When interpreting the above statements, it is quite clear that I am moving towards the phenomenon of the "culture" of a school. Bush (1995: 135) asserts that the culture of a school may be expressed through

its "goals." He further argues that the statement of purposes and their espousal in action, serve to reinforce the values and beliefs of the organization.

Schein (1992: 12) defines the culture of a group, as:

> A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.

It is safe to argue in relation to the above sentiment that culture is a learned phenomenon, and that positive attitudes towards difference as well as collaboration are very important in accommodating diversity, whether in a school as a whole or in a classroom situation. Diversity is a key phrase in inclusive education.

Implications for inclusive schooling are wide, while management is a complex and crucial aspect in any school. I am interested in finding out what the practical implications of integration are for the management of the school. In an attempt to shed light on what management is, I will keep to a simple but clear definition of management. The Task Team on Education Management Development in South Africa (1996: 27) states:

Management is about doing things and working with people to make things happen. It is the process to which all contribute and in which everyone in an organization ought to be involved.

A more formal definition regarding the task of management is that it entails "ultimately the creation and support of conditions under which teachers and their students are able to achieve learning" (*ibid.: 8*). The mere fact that the management of Gabriel Taapopi SSS accepted the challenge to include learners with visual impairment into the mainstream classrooms, presents the school with the opportunity to respond to the educational needs of all learners. This would suggest that the school system would most probably require systematic change.

How can the management of Gabriel Taapopi SSS develop the capacity to attain this goal of achieving effective learning conditions for both learners with visual impairment and sighted learners? What are the roles of the management of Gabriel Taapopi SSS regarding the process of inclusion? How are crucial issues such as allocation of resources, funding, staff training, decision-making processes, classroom management, goal setting, and support systems experienced and addressed by the management of the school? These are the major questions, which need to be addressed through this research.

The Task Team on Education Management Development in South Africa (1996: 30) in its report proposes an education management approach, which is both an integrative and collaborative one. It is collaborative in that it involves all staff and stakeholders, and integrative in so far as it informs all management processes and outcomes in an organizational setting. This approach, according to the Task Team (1996: 30), links goal setting, policymaking, planning, budgeting and evaluation at all levels of the school. It furthermore argues that management development combines education, training and support in the context of organizational development, staff development and curriculum development with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning. This approach is significant to me because it implies that in order for management to implement these crucial educational aspects, systematic change will be required. From a professional point of view, I strongly believe that this relatively new phenomenon of inclusion requires commitment and dedication on the part of education officers and teaching staff. Another crucial aspect one needs to consider is effective observation and research to answer the many questions in this field. This study aims to provide information that may be valuable, in theory and practice, to all other schools which may wish to accept the challenge of inclusion, as well as potentially helpful information for policy formulation in the field of inclusive education.

In realising the importance of integration, I am aware that principals and teachers may require much more training and sensitisation to inclusive education. An increasing number of educational institutions are being faced with challenges of integrating learners with visual and hearing impairment and the question of how to accommodate them in a

meaningful way. In exploring the concepts of inclusion and integration in teaching and research I aim to contribute fruitfully to this national process. Since inclusive education is a relatively new concept, I have discovered through needs assessments and in-service training workshops that teachers generally lack a clear understanding of inclusive education. Large classes and inadequate facilities, including physical environment, are seen as major barriers to attempts at inclusive schooling. In addition, I have found that financial constraints as well as a lack of support systems for inclusion in our Educational Regions also add to the inability or unwillingness of school principals to successfully integrate learners with special needs into the mainstream classes.

This research does not aim at providing quick and definitive answers to the immediate problems and challenges facing so many of our schools and the expectations of parents, politicians and other stakeholders. It is an attempt to understand the situation and managerial implications that prevail in the inclusive education provided by Gabriel Taapopi SSS. This may in turn provide or develop a knowledge base that may assist in starting the practice at other schools. It is my sincere hope that this research will offer information about the implications of inclusive schooling for consideration by management of schools which may wish to embark on inclusion, even if only on a small scale, starting with a few learners. Although there is a great deal of information available on the Namibian education system (Snyder 1999), very little research has been conducted on inclusion and its implications. I hope that my research will contribute to building a useful base for decision-makers for drafting inclusive policies and programmes. I further trust that my research would interest school managers and teachers to search for a deeper understanding and critical appraisal of inclusive education.

Lastly, considering the personal growth I have experienced while conducting my research, I cannot agree more with Engelhart (as cited in Möwes 2001: 17-18) when he says:

> …what the thesis research does for the student is equally important. If the thesis serves to enhance the student's understanding of his professional field,

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guides him in abiding interest in his problem and as a stimulus to further research in the area and results in knowledge and appreciation of scientific methods and attitudes, his degree is deserved.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

I have sought to critically investigate the managerial implications of inclusive education. Although much research has been done in the field of inclusive education over the last decade, the focus has rarely been on the management of the development or implementation of inclusive education. One of the focal points of this research is to gain a clear understanding of the managerial implications in an inclusive school for learners with visual impairment. Another research goal is to explore the experiences of the management members regarding the inclusive process.

I was guided by the following questions in my research to investigate the managerial implications of inclusive schooling as well as the experiences of management members at this inclusive school.

Did management members have any previous experience of inclusive education?

What would management members describe as the most significant challenges they had to face?

How do management members experience the management of this inclusive school?

What are the management experiences with issues such as:

Teacher in-service training

Allocation of resources, funding

Curriculum adjustment /development

Goal setting and support systems?

How do management members experience or perceive the atmosphere of the school in relation to inclusive schooling?

Are the management members of this inclusive school facing any special challenges?

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The research is located within a qualitative research framework. The qualitative paradigm is subsumed by a phenomenological model, in terms of which individuals are conceptualized as active agents in constructing and making sense of the realities they encounter. Phenomenology is a framework within which subjects can respond in a way that accurately presents their points of view about that part of their world being investigated (Ferreira 1983: 2). Giorgi (as cited in Kruger 1988) agrees that the operative word in phenomenological research is "describe." The researcher should describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon as it appears, rather than indulging in attempts to explain it within a given framework (Kruger 1988: 143). In chapter 3 I provide a detailed justification for using phenomenology as my choice of research method.

I found interviews to be an appropriate data-gathering tool. The strategy of in-depth interviewing allowed me to obtain first hand knowledge of the implications faced by the management staff. I interviewed the previous principal of the school and the current principal, the resource teacher and a head of department.

The in-depth interviews were conducted with the aforementioned participants. I used open-ended questions which enabled me to explore issues flexibly. I made use of a tape recorder in order to obviate the necessity of writing during interviews. The transcribed interviews constituted the essential raw material of my research. In taking a phenomenological stance, it was expected of me to "bracket personal preconditions and judgements and remain faithful to the data," as Stones suggests (cited in Kruger 1998: 153). Thus I allowed important dimensions to emerge from the analysis of my study without pre-supposing what these may be. As the inquiry revealed patterns of major dimensions of interest or importance or what Stones (1998) calls "spontaneous emergence of natural meaning units (NMUs)," I began to focus on their verification and explication.

1.4. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS.

My definition of the concepts and terminology used in this study are provided below. I need to emphasize, however, that the choice of definitions often presents problems across national or international levels. Nevertheless, as a researcher, I prefer to adhere to the more widely accepted terminology and meanings of concepts. The concepts and terminology used in my research are those which I regarded as most suitable in illustrating meaning to me. Nearly all of the information has been drawn from the *African Journal of Special Needs Education 1999*, unless otherwise stated.

Special needs education (SNE):

The term "Special needs education" gained prominence during the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain, in June 1994

According to the editorial committee of the *African Journal of Special Needs Education* 1999***, the rationale for the term is that "special education" suggests a "special" segregated approach to education, which is being challenged by the new approach of inclusive education.

The changing social environment of children with special educational needs has spawned a new and different vocabulary. Three educational terms commonly used today (mostly interchangeably) and also present in this study are *mainstreaming, integration* and *inclusion.*

Mainstreaming:

This term is widely employed as an alternative to segregated school provision for learners with special needs. Mainstreaming, according to Aefsky (1995) provides learners with special educational needs, the opportunity to be placed in a regular class based on the learner's ability to keep up with the work assigned. It is accepted that the learner will adapt to the demands of the class (Engelbrecht 1999).

Integration:

This approach involves the provision of educational services to learners with special needs in a special class, in a typical regular school. Special education services were usually provided in special education classes (Aefsky 1995).

Inclusion:

The Salamanca Statement (1994: 6) is eloquent in its call for inclusive education to address the issue of exclusion of children with special needs. The Statement (1994: 6) describes the principle of inclusion, as that of "schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other needs" [emphasis in the original]. This sentiment is shared by Giangreco, Baumgart & Doyle (cited in Johnson 1999: 72) who define inclusion as "the provision of appropriate instruction for pupils with special needs in regular classrooms."

This implies that instead of requiring the special needs learner to adapt to the classroom, as was the goal in mainstreaming, the classroom is re-organized to fit the learning needs of all learners (Du Toit 1996: 7). It is clear that inclusive education not only includes a large diversity of learners, it also differentiates education for this diversity. Lastly, it should be emphasised that the understanding of inclusion is an international phenomenon that challenges exclusionary policies and practices (Keith 1996) and it is only since the late 1980's that inclusion has come to supersede integration (Thomas, Walker & Weldo 1998: 10).

Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN):

Learners with special educational needs include children with disabilities, gifted children, street children, working children, children from remote or nomadic

populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities (Salamanca Statement 1994: 6), learners affected by HIV/AIDS, girls who are pregnant, etc. (Booth 2000).

My research interest is solely on the inclusion of children with disabilities (CWD), with special emphasis on learners with visual impairments (LVI). In the following paragraphs I will shed more light on these terms and their meanings.

Current practices in special education emphasize that children with disabilities are children first and foremost. This emphasis goes beyond the recommended terminology: *children with special needs* rather than *special needs children* (Wolery & Wilbers 1994). This sentiment is underscored by the editorial committee of the *African Journal of Special Needs Education* (1999: 72), which emphasizes that persons with disabilities should never be described solely in terms of the disability, e.g. "person with visual impairment" not "visually impaired person" or "the visually impaired."

Visual impairment:

Visual impairment is the umbrella concept encompassing all degrees of visual loss.

Visual impairment, according to Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasiow (1997: 413) is increasingly defined in educational terms. Educational classifications are *moderate*, *severe* and *profound,* and are based on the special educational adaptations that are necessary to help these children learn.

A moderate visual disability can be almost entirely corrected with the help of visual aids, either in the regular classroom or in a resource room. A severe visual disability is helped only somewhat with visual aids; while the child can still use vision as a channel for learning. This classification is equivalent to the definition of a child with partial sight. A child with profound visual disability cannot use vision as an educational tool. For this child, touch and hearing are the predominant learning channels (*ibid.: 413*).

Resource Teacher:

Whenever a learner with visual impairment is accommodated into a regular classroom, the classroom teacher or the teacher with special skills in instructing learners with visual impairment offer some sort of tutorial support. The names assigned to such a teacher differ across nations and across time. This teacher could take the role of a "case manager" or "service co-coordinator" (Kirk *et al*.1997: 434), a "learning support teacher" (Dyson, Bailly, O'Brien, Rice & Zigmond 1997: 21-22) or, in the case of Gabriel Taapopi (G.T.) SSS a "resource teacher." It is this teacher's role which is likely to effectively endorse, and ensure the success of inclusion of the learners with disabilities in a regular classroom. For example, a mainstream teacher prepares her/his lessons in advance, before the resource teacher transcribes the texts and tasks into Braille. The learners usually work in their writing frames for Braille after which the resource teacher transcribes the learners' work for the mainstream teacher at the end of a lesson (Vaÿrynen as cited in Kokkala 1997).

1.5 OUTLINE OF THESIS

In chapter 1, I have focused on the background information to the study as well as the problem statement. In addition, I have given a brief outline of the methodology as well as a clarification of terms used in the study.

Chapter 2 presents an overview of literature that I have found relevant to my research topic. This chapter also offers coverage of the international and national as well as historic trends regarding inclusive education. A brief summary of the education for learners with visual impairment and the critique on inclusion is also included in the chapter. Consideration is also given to the management of the inclusive process and the significance of the culture of a school, while international studies related to management and inclusion are covered in depth.

Chapter 3 addresses the aim of the study and provides a description of the research paradigm I have worked in. The phenomenological approach is discussed, while I also

offer treatment of the research participants, data-gathering tools and data analysis. A critique of phenomenology concludes the chapter.

Chapter 4 presents the data while in chapter 5 I focus on my main findings of the research.

Chapter 6 offers a summary of the main findings of my research and focuses on the potential value of my research as well as the limitations of my study, concluding with a brief section on my personal reflections.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Academic and popular research conducted during the last decade resulted in an abundance of articles on the nature of inclusive education. Not much literature however, is available on the management of inclusive schooling, especially on the aspect of managerial implications of inclusive schooling.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to discuss the findings of some of these studies so as to provide the general background and rationale for this study. In the initial section an overview of the international and national developments as well as historical trends regarding inclusive education is provided. I shed light on the current education of learners with visual impairment in Namibia and examine some of the critiques of inclusion. In the second section the management of the inclusive process is discussed. In the third section, I examine the meaning attached to a school's culture. Finally, in section four I focus on various studies on management and inclusion as well as the conclusive remarks.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND HISTORICAL TRENDS REGARDING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Over the past thirty years, the integration and mainstreaming of learners with special needs have significantly raised public awareness. Mainstreaming, which originated in Scandinavian tradition, became a worldwide policy included in the United Nations Resolutions 94-142, which were accepted in the USA (Tuunainen as cited in Kokkala 1997).

A Norwegian scholar, Edward Befring, referred to five main phases into which the adoption of special education in Europe can be divided.

During phase 1 (1775-1875), the first special schools were founded. In phase II (1875-1940), the formed rights of children with special needs were incorporated into legislation. Phase III (1945-1970), was characterized by the rapid expansion of services which were usually offered in segregated settings. In phase IV (1970-1990), the key words were normalization, individualization and integration or mainstreaming. The development has been rapid and initiatives are frequently made in the field of special education. One of the most powerful new ideas is inclusive education, which is the latest phase; phase V (*ibid*.).

The concept of inclusion in education operates within the framework of "rights". Many of these rights are echoed in the Namibian Constitution (1990), including the right of all Namibian children to free primary education. The focus is particularly on those learners who have been excluded from regular schooling (Lazarus, Daniels and Engelbrecht 1999) and the restructuring of schools in order to respond to the needs of these learners (Tuunainen as cited in Kokkala 1997).

Developing countries in particular, including Namibia, have embraced this new idea and made it the basis of their education policies. International initiatives by United Nations organizations such as UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF jointly add up to a growing consensus that inclusion makes good educational social sense. Namibia is signatory to several international conventions and declarations which originated when frameworks were drawn up to determine the rights of a learner to education and the promotion of inclusive education.

International declarations and conventions include, among others, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959), Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons (1971), Declarations on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975). The 1990 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasizes in Article 2 that rights shall apply to all children without discrimination. The 1990 World Conference on Education for All advocates the goals of equal access, equal opportunities and equity through the Jomtien Framework for Action. In 1994, a revised version of the United Nations Standard Rules

on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities was published. The same year, UNESCO initiated the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on special needs education, which provides the clearest and most unequivocal call for inclusive education and has reinforced the ideas expressed in other international declarations and documents (Forlin & Forlin 1996, Saleh & Vayrynen 1999).

On a national level, Namibia's then Ministry of Education and Culture (now the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture) embarked on integrating all children with special needs in regular schools (MEC 1993, Article 391). In 1997 the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation published its National Policy on Disabilities, which closely follows current international trends, and in 1998 the Taskforce on Educationally Marginalized Children identified, among others, children with special needs as being educationally marginalized. On February 9, 2001 the Namibian Constitution in Braille was launched officially and presented to the Namibia Federation for the Visually Impaired. The words of the Prime Minister, Hage Geingob clearly indicate the commitment of the Namibian Government towards the integration of the visually impaired:

> We must continue to recognize the need to integrate physically challenged people into society on fair, equitable and non-exploitative terms, so that they can contribute fully to the socio-economic development of our nation (Geingob 2001: 3).

With the gradual inclusion of learners with disabilities into regular schools, there are without doubt major shifts in ways of working and new challenges brought into centre stage. Needless to say, taking into account the social, cultural and economic context of countries, development work must be particularly sensitive and informed of the historical and political dimensions of societies, which are coloured by the beliefs, values and attitudes of people (UNESCO n.d.: 7). The following paragraphs on the Namibian education, inform the reader about attempts at working towards inclusive education for learners with visual impairment.

2.2.1 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CURRENT EDUCATION FOR NAMIBIAN LEARNERS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

Regarding the education of learners with disabilities, Namibians were guided by superstitions. Each cultural group had its own superstitions or beliefs. Since my research focuses on a school situated in the north of Namibia, I will refer only to some Owambo cultures, in terms of which people believed that deformity in a newly born was the result of involvement in witchcraft. Others believed that having sexual intercourse during the day would result in the child being born blind. Looking at an adult who is naked supposedly could also cause blindness. These beliefs are passed on to children with the aim of preventing them from exploring their sexuality which, I believe, mainly serves as a preventative measure (Special Needs Resource Teachers 2001, pers. comm.).

Prior to the independence of Namibia, learners with physical disabilities were sent to special schools in South Africa, based on the learners' racial affiliation. White learners with visual impairment were sent to schools such as school for the Blind Jubileum Worcester, and Prinshof School for the Blind. "Non-Whites" were sent to the Siloe School for the Deaf and Blind "Thaba Nschu." Accommodation, transport and tuition fees were paid by the state, while parents also contributed partially to these expenses (Van Niekerk 1982).

The first special school which catered for learners with visual and hearing impairment in Namibia, opened its doors in 1973 in Ongwediva, Northern Namibia. Until today, the Eluwa Special School still caters for "non-white" deaf and blind learners. (Bruhns, Murray, Kangueehi & Nuunkuawo 1995). In addition to the specialized education provided at Eluwa Special School, vocational training is offered through Engela Training Centre for the visually impaired, also situated in the North of Namibia.

Immediately after Namibia achieved its independence in 1990, it became imperative that new policies on education had to be put in place by the new government. Article 20 of chapter 3 of the Constitution of Namibia guided the overall policy direction of education. It states, among other provisions, that all persons shall have the right to

education. Thus, clearly the Namibian Government committed itself to providing quality education for all and to ensure equitable access to this education. The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture is mandated to provide education and training to learners with special needs and abilities within the age group of 3-25 years. Learners with visual, hearing, mental, emotional or physical impairments are included in this group (MEC 1993). The National Institute for Special Education, established in 1995 and based in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, includes three additional special schools: for hearing impairment, visual impairment and physical/mental disabilities. A teacher training and assessment centre is expected to be in place soon.

In keeping with the Namibian Constitution (1990) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990), a separate department within the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, the Directorate of Special Education, was established and is responsible for the education of learners with disabilities. The motto of this division is "Education for All" and it is divided into two divisions: The Diagnostic, Advisory and Training Services (DATS) and Special Schools and Programmes (SSP). These divisions both provide assistance to disabled learners from as early a stage as possible and also assist them to become optimally integrated into society. In-service training to teachers is a crucial objective of both divisions.

Currently, blind students in northern Namibia receive their seven years of Primary and three years of Junior Secondary Education at Eluwa Special School. Upon completion of their Junior phase and after achieving a promoting grade in grade 10 (when sitting for the Junior Secondary Examination) successful candidates become eligible to enter grade 11 at Gabriel Taapopi Senior Secondary School which is the only regular school currently including visually impaired learners together with sighted learners in the same classroom. As a result of this inclusion concept, which is a rather new one in Namibia, one can argue that classroom teachers would have to become significantly more involved in the education of all learners, including those with visual impairment.

In order to effectively provide educational services to all learners, Muthukrishna (2000), has suggested four essential roles classroom teachers in an inclusive setting need to perform:

Learning mediator

Interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials.

Leader, administrator and manager;

Community, citizenship and pastoral role.

The role which will be the focus of this study, is the third one, namely the teacher as manager. Before I continue with the role of the teacher as administrator and manager, I wish to discuss various views on inclusion as expressed by the proponents and critics in the field.

2.2.2 INCLUSION AND ITS CRITICS

Endless debates between inclusion advocates and critics, according to Dyson *et al.* 1997, leave policy-makers and practitioners confused on how to proceed with the process of inclusion. Tuunainen (as quoted in Kokkala 1997: 19) argued that the international debate on inclusion is increasingly connected to the "human rights issue." This belief, in my opinion, strongly influences the current thinking around inclusion. Therefore, I have chosen to examine some of the critiques of inclusion in this light first before proceeding to other strands.

Despite the continued advocacy of inclusion as a human right within the inclusion schools literature (also refer to literature earlier in the chapter, p.14 on the Convention of the Rights of the Child 1990, The Salamanca Statement 1994, The Namibian Constitution 1990, and the Policy on "Education for All" 1993), it is strongly argued that the linkage of inclusion to such a theoretical base seems "tenuous, to say the least" (Dyson 1997). It further questions whether or not inclusion is a right - is it necessarily compatible with every other right to which children are entitled? Inclusion is

furthermore criticized for focusing narrowly on schools and by doing this, Dyson (1997) asserts that it is restricting its capacity to engage seriously with other aspects of social policy which are relevant to the experiences and lives of those who, in educational terms, have "special needs." In some cases as was found in Ethiopia, special needs specialists as well as with schools and teacher training units seem to offer the biggest resistance to inclusive education (Tuunainen as cited in Kokkala 1997). On a personal level, it is my experience in the field of special education that the maximum resistance against the simple principles of inclusion often comes from some professionals in the field, as well as principals and teachers who are unwilling to be open-minded to new ideas while in some instances some may be influenced by too many prejudices.

The philosophy of inclusion has always had a major impact on young children with visual impairment (Kirk *et al.*1997). There are serious arguments within the profession on the question of how thoroughly children with visual impairment should be integrated into normal pre-schools. Lowenfeld (1982: 69), one of the respected voices in the field, states: "I believe uncompromisingly that integration of the blind into society is on all age levels in their and society's best interest". His opinion, however, is not equally shared by Erwin (1991), who believes an important aspect of the integrative approach is partnership and teamwork between the classroom teacher and the visual consultant teacher. Erwin further emphasizes that without proper planning and support personnel, the integration of the child with visual impairment may lead to social isolation, particularly when the only focus in such setting is academic. The sentiment clearly demonstrates that the issue of an appropriate age or stage for integration or mainstreaming of learners with visual impairment has been focused on by many researchers, and was summed up by Kirk *et al.* (1997) when they note that the trend towards mainstreaming or inclusion of children with disabilities has left many youngsters with visual disabilities without the special skill training they need to live independently.

Extreme advocates for full inclusion (e.g. Lipsky & Gartner 1989; Stainbach & Stainbach 1996) are of the opinion that any form of segregation of students with special needs, is socially unjust and a denial of their rights to be exposed to the same broad

range of learning experiences enjoyed by all other students. On the other hand, critique offered by less extreme supporters of inclusion (e.g. Fuchs & Fuchs 1995 and Smelter, Rasch & Yudewitz 1994 as cited in Westwood 1997) suggest that the needs of students with significant disabilities are best served by retaining the full range of placement options, including special schools and special classes for those who need them.

This opinion indirectly raises the question of the costs involved in the provision of segregated special education. Lynch (1994) states in the World Bank Report on Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs in the Asia Region:

> If segregated special education is to be provided for all children with special educational needs, the cost will be enormous and prohibitive for all developing countries. If integrated class provision with a support teacher system is envisaged for the vast majority of children with special educational needs the additional costs can be marginal (Unesco n.d.: 7).

Despite the international debate for and against inclusion I tend to agree after a review of literature in favour of inclusion, that the idea of inclusion is now influencing the development and restructuring of schooling in many countries [*including Namibia*] regardless of the fact that the pattern for provision remains extremely varied from country to country (Unesco n.d.: 2, 5).

The mere fact that advocates and critics are debating inclusive education makes it an absolute challenge for education managers to seriously contemplate the possibility and accompanying advantages to not only the learners, but also to society and the country, of integrating learners with special needs in the regular classroom.

Such contemplation and possible debate irrespective of whether the final outcome is negative or positive can be regarded as a first major step in the direction of a new development in Namibian education which will eventually benefit thousands of Namibian children with disabilities.

Having briefly discussed some differing views on inclusion, I shall continue with the discussion of the role of the teacher as a manager as mentioned earlier on in this chapter.

2.3 MANAGING THE INCLUSIVE PROCESS.

Management is a complex phenomenon and a rich field of study. Over the years, a lot has been said about management and the meaning attached to it. A simple definition is offered by the Task Team on Education Management Development in South Africa (1996: 27) which states that:

> Management is about doings things and working with people to make things happen. It is a process to which all contribute and in which everyone in an organization ought to be involved.

Carrol Shartle (as cited in Warwick 1998) identified two major dimensions in the late 1940s, which needed to be kept in balance, and within which managers need to excel. These were: *consideration* (the ability to deal fairly and effectively with individuals or groups) and *initiating structure* (establishing and maintaining an appropriate organizational framework). Similar findings emerged from Blake and Mouton (1964) who produced a grid, plotting the extent of employee-centred and production centred leadership. The managerial grid of Blake and Mouton (1964) plots the extent of employee-centred and production-centred leadership on a scale of 1-9 and was designed to measure and assess leadership style. Van der Mescht (1996) is of the opinion that with the "concern for people" on the one hand and the "concern for production" on the other, the possibility exits to construct a graph where concern for people is the horizontal axis and concern for production the vertical. By responding to a series of questions and scoring one's answers in the prescribed area, it is possible to plot one's position on the graph. The ideal position, according to Blake and Mouton (1964) is 9.9 where concern for people and production are equally balanced. Committed, trusted and respected people that have a stake in the organization achieve this rarely obtained score. A score of 9.9 is called "Democratic Management" (Sander 1989). In 1975 Yukl added a third dimension to the duality, namely "decision centralization" which serves to indicate the degree to which a leader influences a group's decision (Warwick 1998).

In any school the levels of responsibility are to be regarded as being three fold: executive, tactical and operational (Warwick 1998) for example:

Executive decisions relate to overall aims and long-term policy.

Tactical decisions are concerned with the influence of such aims on sectional planning.

Operational decisions are vital for the translation of institutional policy into classroom practice.

The interrelationship of all three areas is an essential element in my study since I interviewed the principal who serves on the executive level, a head of department who operates on the tactical level and the resource teacher who represents the operational level.

In view of the managerial responsibilities in schools, it is proper at this stage to present a brief overview of the challenges which managers and administrators may face as they provide the impetus and support to make inclusive education a reality. Muthukrishna (2000) elaborates on this when breaking down the role of the teacher as administrator and manager into a number of compliant practical skills teachers need to possess for inclusive education to succeed:

Managing various approaches to teaching such as group work, collaborative learning, individualized learning, and peer-mediated learning in different educational contexts and with diverse groups of learners;

Working with other peers in participative decision-making and collaborative teaching with the aim of maximizing the participation of all learners;

Resolving conflicts in the classroom and school in a sensitive manner;

Supporting the involvement of parents and the community, and building structures to facilitate this;

Accessing human and material resources from the community in order to maximize the participation of all learners;

Promoting and supporting innovative practices in order to improve the schools' responses to diversity;

Planning collaboratively with peers in developing ongoing staff development programmes that are relevant and which meet local needs;

Creating an inclusive ethos in school where all learners, staff, parents and community members are valued;

Managing and facilitating institutional and organizational change.

In addition to Muthukrishna's (2000) practical skills needed by teachers, I also find the identification of the most crucial roles of managers by Alper (1995) significant to my research. He states that the role of managers and administrators should include the following:

providing a vision of how a school will look if it educates all of its learners,

administrators can facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration by removing the barriers to change (structure and organization),

staff training, continuing education and ongoing professional development will be necessary and administrators can support teachers in inclusive schools by providing in-service training,

finally, a creative distribution and pooling of resources is essential to implement and maintain cross-disciplinary collaboration.

I am of the opinion that it is not only managers or administrators who have positive roles to fulfill. It is very important that classroom teachers view and accept their roles in a positive manner in order to make schools more inclusive. According to Forlin (1997), teacher commitment is enhanced when individual beliefs and values are reflected in the school's culture.

But what exactly is understood by the concept of a "school's culture"?

2.4 CULTURE OF A SCHOOL

I referred to the concept of inclusion earlier in this chapter, which operates within the framework of "rights." This "rights" approach emphasizes that all learners have a right to access to education and it focuses particularly on those learners who have been excluded from the regular schooling system. Lazarus *et al.* 1999 suggest that access refers to the ability of the psychosocial environment to facilitate positive learning for and development for all learners. The psychosocial environment includes the culture and ethos of the school, attitudes, human relations and the way in which the classroom is managed. Although all of these aspects are relevant and important, I am particularly interested in pursuing the aspects surrounding the school culture.

Professional literature on school culture presents a number of classifications of conceptual and analytical contributions and Hoy & Miskel (1996) suggest that instead of discussions on school culture being "empirical," they are rather "philosophical" and "rhetorical". They are further of the opinion that good contemporary research is "sparse" (p.139) but strongly believe that much of what occurs in school organizations must be interpreted in the context of the school's culture. At this point, it is appropriate to examine what meaning is attached to a school's culture.

Davidoff & Lazarus (as quoted in Lazarus *et al.*1999: 59) propose that the culture of a school

> comprises the values, norms and overall climate of the school. This is the
> central element of school life, constructing all other aspects and developed
> through the other aspects of school life.

Bush (1995) asserts that each school has its own distinctive culture, dependent on the mix of values, beliefs and norms prevalent in the organization. Each culture has its own features which differentiate one school from another and give it a unique ethos. The statement of purpose (expression of goals) and its espousal in action serve to reinforce the values and beliefs of the organization, and the leader of the organization has the main

responsibility for developing and sustaining its culture (p.136). Drawing on Greenfield's (1984: 158) analysis, Bush (1995) argues that the "organization" is made by "individual human effort, intention and will that make the entities and the social realities". In relation to this, O'Brien & O'Brien (1997) believe that for inclusion to thrive in schools, they (schools) must be conscious communities. This sentiment, in my view, could be based on the extensive writings on schools as communities by Sergiovanni (1992 and 1994) which suggest that changing the school metaphor from "organization" to "communities" actually means changing the theory (*ibid.* 1994: 1).

Sergiovanni (1994: 3) proposes that schools as communities

> … bond people together in special ways and bind them to concepts, images, and values that comprise a shared ideal structure…Communities are defined by their centers of value, sentiments, and beliefs that provide the needed conditions for creating a sense of we from a collection of I's.

I believe that because of this view, Sergiovanni (1994) moves away from Greenfield's (1984) "individual human effort" and emphasizes the bonding of teachers and learners and their being tied to shared values and ideas by community. In schools as communities (*particularly in an inclusive school)*, relationships, according to Sergiovanni (1994) are both close and informal. Individual circumstances count *(as in the case of disabled learners)*. Acceptance is unconditional *(no discrimination or exclusion of the disabled)*. Relationships are cooperative *(principals are not the only key "founders "of the schools culture, teachers, parents and learners are just as involved)*.

However, despite Sergiovanni's (1994: 41-45) argument against the "inevitable control driven leadership" in an organisation, to "self-management" and "shared values" in school communities, I am positive that views on schools as organizations still have a strong place in management theories. Greenfield (1984) understands organisations as founded in meanings, in human intentions, actions and experience; they are therefore "cultural artifacts", rather than given realities. In elaboration of this statement, Hoy & Miskel (1996) state that school cultures could be interpreted by analysing their symbols,

artifacts, rites ceremonies, icons, heroes, myths, rituals and legends. Having defined the term "school culture" and how it is used and understood in this study, the next logical question is how do other researchers analyse the culture of schools?

It has long been recognised that the behaviour and symbolic leadership of the principal establishes the cultural climate of the school (Sage 1997). Principals have their own values and beliefs arising from many years of successful professional practice (Bush 1995) and therefore Nias, Southworth & Yeomans (cited in Bush 1995) suggest that heads are "founders" of their schools' culture while they recognise the significance of the deputy heads and curriculum co-coordinators in disseminating school culture.

In support of the above, Sage & Burrello (1994: 238), after several case studies on principals, affirm: "The beliefs and attitudes of the principals towards special education are the key factors in influencing their behavior towards students with disabilities". My experience, as a Regional School Counsellor, is that the principal, as the gatekeeper of the school, is the one who undoubtedly influences the actions of staff members and the majority of learners towards learners with disabilities in the regular school.

I believe the attitudes of management members on an international level towards inclusion would be interesting and of significance to this study

2.5 INTERNATIONAL STUDIES RELATED TO MANAGEMENT AND INCLUSION

The following paragraphs will give an overview of various studies that have been conducted on the views and attitude of teachers towards inclusive education and more specifically on integrating learners with visual impairment into regular schools. There has been a number of attempts in America and Australia as well as certain African countries to research the views and attitudes of principals and teachers. These have ranged from descriptive, anecdotal records and interview data to factor analysis studies, surveys and questionnaires.

In one case study, Solomon, Schaps, Watson & Battistich (1992) identify four key roles for principals in facilitating inclusive practices:

Providing support to teachers as they learn and grow,

working to establish caring relationships with students and faculty,

developing a school wide discipline programme that reflects insight into students and their problems and,

setting a tone of support and caring in the school community while providing resources for students, staff and parents.

These key roles expected of principals, in my opinion, encompass not only the importance of facilitating inclusive practices; they should be the epitome of all schools or educational institutions. The authors further note that to carry out these responsibilities would require principals to function as primary change agents. In the next paragraph I will take a closer look at the functions of principals as change agents before proceeding with discussions on additional studies.

Sage (1997) is of the opinion that we should recognise that inclusive schooling calls for major system change. He further states that "strategies for promoting inclusive practices in schools… primarily involve the facilitation of change… and the actions in administrators must be guided by identified needs in order to change existing attitudes and practices"(*Ibid.*: 114).

It is my understanding that the principal of the school should, in most cases, spearhead these strategies. The strategies required for inclusion are, according to Sage (1997), those that promote opening oneself and others to the possibilities of change, that model the taking of risks, and that reinforce any/all attempts at creating an inclusive climate for learning by all learners. Lipp (as cited in Sage 1997: 114) emphasises the importance of principals to function as primary change agents when he states that new leadership

imperatives call for "a fundamental shift in leadership style, from gatekeeper of tradition to catalyst for change". At this stage a closer look at the functions of principals as instructional leaders and change agents, would be enlightening.

Case studies carried out by Kaskinen-Chapman *et al.* (1992), Porter & Collicot (1992), Schattman (1992), Servatius *et al.* (1992, as cited in Barnett and Monda-Amaya 1998), stress the role of the principal as the school's instructional leader. Their findings, in my view, relate closely to the ideas of Sage (1997) and Lipp (as cited in Sage 1997) who basically offer an emphasis and elaboration of the key elements. As instructional leaders and agents of change in inclusive schools, principals should possess several competencies. Kaskinen-Chapman *et al.* (as cited in Barnett & Monda-Amaya 1998) found that firstly, principals should have knowledge and skills in effective instruction, assessment and discipline to provide support and feedback to teachers. Secondly, principals should possess skills in establishing and supporting instructional teams. They structure time for teams to meet and provide support for their work. Thirdly, another competency needed by principals, is the willingness to support collaborative interactions and operate comfortably and effectively in collaborative groups. Finally, leaders in inclusive schools must establish a clear vision that results in commitment from school and community.

Applying a quantitative analysis, Barnett and Monda–Amaya (1998), examined the attitudes of principals across the state of Illinois towards inclusion. Of the 3, 879 schools, 115 were randomly selected for participation in the study. The survey instruments were mailed to all selected schools, of which 65 schools responded. The authors used descriptive statistics to analyze the survey. Regarding attitudes the respondents felt overall that their schools were somewhat inclusive and were continuing to work to become more inclusive. They felt that inclusion could work in their schools, but were not convinced that all children should be included in regular classrooms. Finally, they did not believe that teachers and school communities were adequately prepared to support the implementation of inclusive educational practices.

According to Cross & Villa (1992), Villa *et al.* (1996) Williams, Fox, Thousand & Fox (1990, as cited in Soodak & Podell 1998) several aspects of school climate have been previously shown to facilitate inclusion, but administrative support and collaboration stand out as the most frequently cited and most powerful predicators of teachers' attitude towards inclusion. The results of these studies suggest that teachers are more willing to include and accommodate students with disabilities in their classrooms when they perceive that their school administration fosters a supportive climate and when the school encourages teaming and collaboration. Principals are key figures in providing appropriate support and education to their teachers. The availability of that support directly influences the opinions and attitudes teachers hold and therefore principals must obtain the skills necessary to provide that support.

In yet another study, Soodak & Podell (1998) distributed survey packets to 530 teachers 194 of whom returned them. Of these, 188 completed all four-survey questions and these were included in the data analysis. One of the four survey questions focused on the school climate, in which participants responded to three questions about school conditions (e.g. class size) and seven statements about their perceptions of the climate of their school. Factor analysis of the semantic differential scale measuring teachers' responses to inclusion was performed. Findings indicated that the type of student disability was most strongly related to teachers' response to inclusion. Teachers are more hostile towards including students with mental retardation, learning disabilities and behaviour disorder than those with hearing and visual impairments or physical handicaps. These findings are consistent with earlier research which found that teachers hold more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of students with social and physical disabilities than academic or behaviours disorders (Wilczenski as cited in Soodak & Podell 1998).

The previous findings on the teachers' preference of learners with social or physical disabilities are further strengthened by the Seventeenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disability Education Act (1995) by the U.S. Department of Education, which indicated that the goal of moving students with visual

impairments into the regular classroom or as close as possible, is proceeding. (Kirk *et al.* 1997)

A case study by Teferi (as cited in Kokkala 1997) sheds light on the integration of blind learners in a regular classroom at Mulugetta Gedle School in Ethiopia. Despite certain conditions at the school (such as the absence of textbooks written in Braille, suitable teaching aids and no network of resource centres established, no guidance and counseling services), the people in and out of school have a positive attitude towards the integration of blind learners in the school. Both blind and sighted students follow the same curriculum, but it varies in degree and teachers use the same lesson plan to teach blind and sighted students together. Even though some teachers have involved blind students in all aspects of their lessons, there are teachers who preclude blind students from learning some contents and from participating in class work, homework and assignments.

From these research studies it is evident that most studies which have been done on inclusive education, were carried out in foreign cultural contexts. Focusing on the Namibian context, a quantitative research study is being conducted on "Views of teachers towards inclusive education in Namibia" (Möwes 2001). His thesis had not published at the time of completing this thesis. Research has indicated the need for better information on managerial implications for inclusive schooling. This need is even greater in Namibia since no study has been carried out on the managerial implications for inclusive schooling. Consequently, there was a need for research such as this to be carried out to increase our understanding and gain new perspectives on the managerial implications of inclusive schooling.

Most research studies into inclusive practices, as reviewed literature indicates, have been conducted in the United States, Australia and some African countries. In view of this it may be inappropriate for me to take these studies and apply their significance to Namibia with its diversity of different values, attitudes and cultures. The challenge of this understanding, to special needs researchers in general and myself in particular, is to be more cautious about generalising the findings of these studies into the Namibian

context and to research what is relevant and applicable to the society in which I live and work. The phenomenological approach which is followed in my study is likely to produce findings that vary significantly from those of previous studies in the field of inclusion.

In this chapter I have attempted to draw on the historical trends of inclusive education, the management of the inclusive process, the culture of a school, as well as international studies related to management and inclusion. The next chapter will give an overview of the method and procedures employed to answer my research question, which focuses on the managerial implications of inclusive schooling.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding two chapters have laid a basis for this research. In chapter one, the problem of the study has been stated along with the definitions of terms or concepts. In chapter two, I reviewed the related literature both outside and in Namibia. In this chapter, the aim of the study is briefly stated, before the main focus shifts to the research methodology, especially the research design. The research instrument is described and discussed as well.

3.2 AIM OF THE STUDY

This study sets out to gain a clear understanding and critical insight into the managerial implications of an inclusive school. Certainly this phenomenon raises several questions of interest to me as a researcher:

Firstly, what are the managerial implications of inclusive schooling?
Secondly, how do management members construct meaning of inclusion, in other words, how do they experience it?
Finally, how do individuals perceive and respond to the managerial implications?

In order to meet these objectives, I made use of a qualitative approach.

3.3 A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

As Strauss & Corbin (1990) point out, qualitative research can be best used when we want to know the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of the target population. My interest specifically focuses on the experience of the research participants. Qualitative research

allows the research participants to speak for themselves and makes it easier to access the meanings which people have constructed (Taylor & Bogdan 1984, McMillan & Schumacher 1993).

The qualitative research approach has also been used as a means of gathering information especially suitable for research in special education, since "subjects are unique, with diversity across categories of disabilities as well as within them" (Mertens & McLaughlin as cited in Mertens 1998: 46). This qualitative approach may allow me to find new perspectives on the target field of Special Education, something I am trying to achieve through this research.

The main reason why I prefer this approach is primarily because description is one of the characteristics of qualitative research. The phenomenological model is accepted to be an integral part of qualitative method characterized by the natural setting and description. These properties of qualitative methods are again embedded in the objectives of my study and are in logical agreement with my purpose. My research can be described as "an intensive study of specific instances of a phenomenon" (Gall, Borg & Gall 1996: 543). The data collected are in the form of words rather than numbers. The written result of the research contains quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation (Bogdan & Biklen 1992: 30). Likewise, description is one of the five ways of approaching attitude research in which the describers are less concerned with sophisticated qualification (Oskamp as cited in Kebede 1997). In addition to this, Merriam (1998: 11) clearly states that the aim of descriptive research is to examine events or a phenomenon in such a way that there is no manipulation or treatment of the subjects and the researcher accept matters as they are.

Moreover, qualitative research focuses on the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument. In this research, the crucial factor is not the number of respondents, but rather the potential of each person to contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam 1998: 77).

As I stated earlier, this research is located within a qualitative research framework. A phenomenological model subsumes this paradigm. In the case of my research, phenomenology is referred to as "the methodology of the study" (Marshall & Rossman 1995: 82) and I find it essential to give a brief overview of the most important aspects of phenomenology which relate to my research.

3.4 THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

Phenomenology is the study of experience and the ways in which we draw on experience to develop a worldview. It carries an assumption that there is a "structure and essence" to shared experience that can be determined (Patton 1990: 70). Phenomenology provides a context for making sense of and "understanding the subjective meanings that participants attach to events and processes" as it "manifest itself in concrete lived situations" (Valle & King as cited in Van der Mescht 1996: 40). Ferreira (1983: 2) furthermore describes it as a "framework within which subjects can respond in a way that accurately presents their point of view about that part of their world being investigated". Therefore I believe that phenomenological research serves my goal of gaining a clear understanding and critical insight of how management members experience the inclusive process at a regular school.

Giorgi (as cited in Stones 1988) agrees that the operative word in phenomenological research is "describe". Thus, the researcher should describe as accurately as possible the phenomena as it appears, rather than indulging in attempts to explain it within a pre-given framework (*ibid.:* 143). Years later, Giorgi (1992a) still strongly argues that "description is the use of language to articulate the intentional objects of intuitive or presentational evidence" (p. 122). Earlier in the chapter, I mentioned that description is one of the characteristics of qualitative research and it is evident that the phenomenological model clearly underscores this notion. As a phenomenological researcher, in order to be faithful to the phenomena as they appear, I should be restricted only to the inquiry of the experiences themselves and describe only what presents itself precisely as it presents itself (Giorgi 1992a: 121). According to Stones (1998:142)

phenomenological reduction or bracketing will help the researcher to "approach the phenomenon of investigation from a position of conceptional silence, in order to open him to perceiving more clearly its emergent dimensions".

In my study, I have to brack*et all* my beliefs concerning the reality of the subjects and any presuppositions or prejudices with which I could possibly approach the management members I interview. If I succeed in doing so, I will attempt to identify the phenomenon (management implications as experienced by management members) in "pure form, uncontaminated by extraneous intrusions" (Patton 1990: 408). I will elaborate on the aspect of bracketing and reduction in more detail later in the chapter.

In order to use description as the "clarification of the meaning of the objects of experience precisely as experienced" (Giorgi 1992a: 122), I will have to turn towards the lived-world (or *lebenswelt*) of the individual. *Lebenswelt* is described as the interrelatedness and interdependence of people and their lived-world. Van der Mescht (1996:40) best describes this when he states that human beings are never seen as separated from the world they inhabit. My research interest is to gain critical insight and understanding of the management members, their perceptions and experiences and the way they make meaning of their world in which they live, their lived-world or *Lebenswelt.*

Lebenswelt

Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, borrowed the notion of intentionality from Franz Brentano in order to explain the intentional structure of all consciousness. By intentional he meant that all our thinking, feeling and acting are always about things in the world. According to Spinelli (as quoted in Van der Mescht 1996: 40), intentionality refers to "the fundamental action of the mind reaching out to a stimuli which make up the real world in order to translate them into its realm of meaningful experience". Thus, intentionality is a matter of seeing the way in which the subject gives meaning, that is, their intention to objects, other subjects and themselves. Husserl called intentionality the essence of consciousness. Stones (1988: 28) further suggests

that Husserl investigated "consciousness as being directed on to that which is not consciousness itself… being conscious means an intentional act through which man lets the world appear to him". Van der Mescht (1996: 41) elaborates on the abovementioned sentiment by arguing "to live is to be constantly in the world, intentionally making meaning and being endowed with meaning".

Lebenswelt and its uniqueness

Van der Mescht (1996: 41) is of the opinion that the researcher's focus would be on the meanings as constructed by individuals and not necessarily on the human world or the human subjects. A crucial aspect to emphasise here is that no two individuals will attach exactly the same meaning to something. The implications for me would be that when data are analysed, the unique experience of each management member regarding inclusive education could give a clear indication of whether it was "only partially sharable" (Spinelli as cited in Van der Mescht 1996: 42) or totally "unsharable". However, Van der Mescht (1996: 42) argues that there are areas which are shared, as well as shared experiences particularly where people have common cultural and linguistic roots. If this is the case, then the uniqueness of the individual's *Lebenswelt* needs to be ascertained to find that which is unique in each participant.

Lebenswelt: perceptions

Another significant attribute of *lebenswelt* is perception.

Van der Mescht (1996: 43) argues that any researcher's attempt to gain understanding of the individuals' *lebenswelt* requires an acknowledgement of the importance of perceptions. The *lebenswelt*, the lived-world, is the reality as perceived by the individual by means of reflective experience and these perceptions of the individual is what the researcher is concerned with. Giorgi (as cited in Van der Mescht 1996: 43) actually encourages the researcher

> … to understand the reality claims (or non-reality claims) precisely as they are made by the research participants. In other words, it is the perceived reality that phenomenologists are interested in and often 'distortions' are more vital than veridical perceptions.

This statement implies that whether or not the participants' perception of reality accurately reflects that reality is of no concern to the researcher. In compliance with this Merriam (1998: 11) states that the "researcher takes things as they are" and that the examination of a phenomenon will be done in such away that there is no "manipulation or treatment" of the participants.

An essential aspect in phenomenological study is the relationship between perceptions and reality in the sense that the perception of the participant comes to mean the reality itself and according to Van der Mescht (1996: 44) this is the only reality that we are able to subject to scrutiny.

3.5 APPROACHING THE DATA: THE CHALLENGE OF METHOD

Bracketing and reduction

In his original conception of phenomenology, Husserl outlined a "neutral" field for enquiry, which gives rise to the crucial step entitled "phenomenological reduction", which Stones (1998: 142) calls a process of suspending or bracketing personal preconceptions and presuppositions by making them explicit. Thus, the researcher is restricted in his/her inquiry to the experiences themselves, with all beliefs concerning the reality of the objects placed in abeyance. An attempt is made to use only pure description. As mentioned earlier, Stones (1998: 142) further argues that through the process of reduction, the researcher makes the attempt "to approach the phenomenon of investigation from a position of 'conceptional silence', in order to open himself to perceiving more clearly its emergent dimensions". It is this attitude of openness of the researcher to whatever emerges that leads to the adequate understanding of a phenomenon. The data therefore "as it manifests itself" (Van Kaam as cited in Stones 1998: 143 - referring to Husserl's slogan "to the things themselves") should be the

starting point for the researcher, who should not borrow anything from any other source and bracket his/her own assumptions and presuppositions.

As a Regional School Counsellor, currently responsible for Special Schools and Programmes (SSP), but also as the researcher, I find myself in a precarious position: I have my own perspectives and opinions about inclusive schooling and the possible managerial implications it might have. Thus, bracketing is particularly challenging for me. I had to make a conscious decision (as a phenomenological researcher) to cut my visits to the inclusive school and management members in order not to provoke any assumptions and expectations. Stones (1998: 142) is of the opinion that "a complete reduction is obviously impossible" while Van der Mescht (1996: 46) reasons that complete reduction is clearly idealistic although the attempt must be made if one is to be true to one's data. Three years later, Van der Mescht (as cited in Michael 2000) emphasised that surely it is a goal worth striving for as it is precisely through this rigorous examination of the researcher's presuppositions that a higher degree of objectivity is obtained. Therefore, for a researcher, this pathway of bracketing or reduction will clearly be a stepping-stone to arrive at the reality as experienced and perceived by the management members on managerial implications.

3.6 WHY PHENOMENOLOGY?
A JUSTIFICATION FOR USING THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH APPROACH

Phenomenological research emphasises the individual's subjective experience (Tesch as cited in Mertens 1998: 169). Therefore it seeks the individual's perceptions and meaning of a phenomenon or experience as I stated earlier in the chapter. A typical question asked in a phenomenological research is "what is the participant's experience like?" (Mertens 1998: 169). The core aspect of my research inquiry is the subjective experience of the management members in an inclusive school and phenomenology provides me with the platform to enter the *Lebenswelt* of these participants.

Clearly the starting point for phenomenology is the personal experience of the individual, which is an account of his/her lived experience. It seeks to focus on the active, creative individuality of the human subjects. Therefore, according to Ratner (2001: 3) phenomenologists would aim to "illuminate the intentional meaning of the subject in detailed, descriptive qualitative accounts."

In my endeavour to gain an understanding of the experiences of management members by means of in-depth interviews, one can argue that inter-subjectivity is a particularly meaningful dimension of their experiences. That is, experience becomes meaningful by being lived in a shared context. As I mentioned earlier, phenomenological approaches in special educational research studies is gaining increasing acceptance in recent years. This sentiment is underscored by Tarozzi (2001: 11) who argues that the use of … phenomenology in education and in educational research puts this approach into the interpretive turn and the paradigm shift which is touching social sciences". I find it proper to refer again to the crucial aspect of reduction or bracketing as mentioned earlier. Phenomenology provides me with the opportunity to suspend my own worldview about the phenomenon and display openness to the participants' experience of their lived-world (*Lebenswelt)*. This should lead me to a critical insight into and understanding of the managerial implications of inclusive education, thus the meaning of the world as the individual experiences it.

It is against this background that I present the following paragraphs of how research was designed and initiated.

3.7 PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION: A METHOD

Stones (1998: 150) reminds the researcher that the steps to be followed:

> … constitute specifically applicable procedures, which are congruent with the general principles of phenomenological research and hence allow the

emergence of an essentual [*sic*] description of the phenomenon without distorting the essential meaning of the original data.

Although phenomenology aims to illuminate the intentional meaning of the subject in detailed, descriptive and qualitative accounts, there is certainly no prescribed way to do it. Van der Mescht (as cited in Michael 2000) clearly underscores this sentiment when he states:

> … there is no single, generally accepted research strategy. Nor should there be, since it is the phenomenon itself, the data generated through the enquiry, and the problem to be addressed or the question to be answered that should determine the methodological procedure.

Selecting participants

The choice of participants does not depend on whether or not they form a representative sample, but on whether or not they are able to "generate a fund of possible relationships that can be used in determining the essential structure of the phenomena" (Polkinghorne as cited in Michael 2000). As stated earlier, my interest lies in how management members at Gabriel Taapopi Senior Secondary School experience the inclusive process.

The participants are:
the previous principal of the school,
the current principal,
the resource teacher for the learners with visual impairment and
one head of department recommended by the principal

These participants meet the criteria as set out by Stones (1998: 150) as they have had experiences relating to the phenomena to be researched, and are verbally fluent and able to communicate their feelings, thoughts and perceptions relating to the researched phenomenon. Although I do not speak the same home language as the participants, I do not regard this as a problem as they have a sufficient command of English to obviate the need for translation.

All participants expressed their willingness to participate and appointments were made for the interviews. In this thesis a code identifies the participants interviewed: P1 is the code for the previous principal, P2 for the current principal, the resource teacher is RT and the head of department HOD.

Interviews

In line with the qualitative approach, semi-structured in-depth interviews with open-ended questions were used to collect the data. Before discussing the in-depth and phenomenological interviewing, I wish to provide a short overview of the importance of the interview as a research instrument in my research.

Interviews, unlike questionnaires, provide a guarantee that all questions would be attempted and that the data would be available. Through the interviews an attempt was made to gain a sense of the management members' experiences and their insights. Bailey (1982) states that interviews allow for interviewees to respond in their own words and are flexible in the sense that one can probe for more specific answers and can repeat questions when the response indicates that the respondent misunderstood a question.

In-depth interviewing is a data collective method also described as "a conversation with a purpose" (Kahn & Cannell as cited in Marshall & Rossman 1995: 80). The strategy of in-depth interviewing allowed me to obtain first hand knowledge of the implications faced by the management staff and to understand the meanings these people hold for managing this process of inclusion of learners with visually impairment in the regular classrooms.

Phenomenological interviewing, according to Marshall & Rossman (1995: 82) is a specific type of in-depth interview which is grounded in the theoretical tradition of phenomenology. Pollio, Henley & Tompson (1997: 29-30) elaborate as follows:

> The goal of any phenomenological interview is to attain a first person description of some domain of experience, with the course of the dialogue

largely set by the respondent; the interview begins with few prespecified questions concerning the topic.

Formulating my original questions proved to be a difficult task. Like Van der Mescht (1996: 56), I had to obtain a balance between the "consciousness of the phenomenological attitude to the importance of the subjects' experience of the phenomenon", and the perceptions of the management members. Piloting my interviews gave me the opportunity to reflect on the kind of responses I was receiving. This made it possible for me to modify my interview schedule, which I had set up as a guideline. I came to the realisation that some of my questions had to be rephrased or replaced as shortcomings in the logical sequence were revealed. I also became quite aware that some of the wording used might be incomprehensible to respondents. These pilot interviews opened a multitude of new avenues during the actual interviews for further explanation on issues by saying "Can you tell me more about it? Can you give me an example of that?" and this allowed the "deeper attitudes and perceptions" of the respondents to emerge (Cohen & Manion as quoted in Van der Mescht 1996: 59).

A tape recorder was used during the interviews while I also took some notes in order to supplement the audio recordings. The interview questions were the same for each respondent although I had to rephrase some of them to adjust to the role and responsibilities of the different respondents. I transcribed the data gathered and then to ensure accuracy, read the transcripts while listening to the audiotapes. Silverman (1995) regards this as very important since the interviewer would be less likely to make errors in transcribing.

3.7   DATA ANALYSIS

3.7.1   NATURAL MEANING UNITS

Stones (1998: 153) encourages the phenomenological researcher to get an intuitive and holistic grasp of the data by suggesting that during the initial reading of the interview

transcripts, the researcher should bracket personal preconceptions and judgements, and so remain faithful to the data. I referred to this process of bracketing earlier in the chapter. The transcripts were then read again with a more reflective attitude. Giorgi (1975) adds that the next step is to try to determine the natural meaning units as expressed by the subject. Cloonan (as cited in Stones 1998: 153) defines a natural meaning unit as

> a statement made [by the subject], which is self-definable and self-delimiting in the expression of a single, recognisable aspect of [the subject's] experience.

These meanings are then subjected to rigorous reflection and transformation where the researcher uses her or his own words to describe the essence of the experience for the subject. What follows is the interrogation of the natural meaning unit and its accompanying theme in terms of the specific purpose of the study (Giorgi 1975: 87), in this case the managerial implications of inclusive schooling. Without losing the situatedness of the experience, the researcher now strives to synthesize and blend the transformed meaning units into a descriptive statement, giving a sense of the experience as a whole (Polkinghorne 1989: 54). Lastly, a second description is also written in which the particulars of the specific situations are left out and the focus becomes aspects of managerial implications of inclusion in general.

3.8 ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

As a School Counsellor serving on a Regional level, I am in a supervisory position to my colleagues at Gabriel Taapopi SSS. Naturally one would be concerned that unequal power relations might skew findings, but there are two reasons why I believe this did not happen in my case.

Firstly, my research interest was to gain critical insight and understanding of **their** perceptions and experiences as management members, the way **they** make meaning of the world in which they live.

Secondly, I could not agree more with Aanstoos (as cited in Giorgi, Barton & Maes 1983) when he so correctly justifies "I sought not to test hypotheses but to discern the essential meanings of the subject's descriptions". Therefore I did not look for any specific answers during the interviews. In fact, my research questions were open-ended and my agenda was open throughout the study: bracketing any pre-conceived notions I had, even if it was not the easiest thing to do! My focus was to describe the experiences of the respondents only and I tried to avoid anything that bordered on the unethical. Permission to carry out the research was afforded to me by both the Regional Director of Ondangwa West Region as well as the Principal of Gabriel Taapopi SSS.

3.9 CRITIQUE

As I have stated earlier in the chapter, the emphasis of this study is on the meaning construed by individuals and my aim is to describe and understand, as opposed to correlate and predict. In order to do this, I used non-directive, semi-structured interviews, which is certified by Bernstein (as quoted in Cohen & Manion 1994: 35) who asks:

> … and what of the insistence of the interpretive methodologies on the use of verbal accounts to get at the meanings of events, rules and intentions? Are there not changes? Subjective reports are sometimes incomplete and sometimes misleading.

Bernstein's criticism, according to Cohen & Manion (1994), is directed at the overriding concern of phenomenology with the meaning of situations and the ways in which these meanings are 'negotiated' by the actors involved.

By using these interviews, my aim was to produce a wealth of descriptive data, which I hoped would "highlight complexity and promote broad insight into situations" (Bennett, Glatter & Levačić 1994).

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I gave an in-depth coverage of the procedure of data collection and how the interviews were transcribed. What follows next is a presentation of the data as found in the four respective protocols. Quotations in the texts below (the natural meaning units) are exact and they capture the language and intent of the interviews. It should be noted that although the original protocol for each interviewee exists, they are not included in this chapter as a whole. In fact, after a lot of reading through the protocols, in order to get a sense of the whole, I divided the transcripts into natural meaning units (NMUs). I have already discussed the concept of NMUs in chapter 3 under the paragraph of data analysis. These NMUs were subjected to meticulous reflection and transformation where I re-described the essence of the experience for the subject.

4.2 NATURAL MEANING UNITS (NMUs)

The natural meaning units for the respective participants are presented below in table form in the left side, with my description of the experience in the right column. In short, the description aims to explicate the meaning which dominates the NMUs

Natural meaning units of current principal (P2)	
I will say I have no previous experience in working in inclusive education. The only experience that I have is that, that I've picked up at G.T. last year	The only experience he has regarding inclusion is linked to his appointment at the school the previous year.
It was a challenging experience and it is an experience that is actually building on my other experience, whereby (pause) I mean that it is never been easy (pause) to deal with these two type of kids, the ones	He recognizes the challenge involved in working with the sighted learners as well as the LVI at the same time

who are VI and ones that are sighted together,	
to ensure that these learners are learning at the same pace, like the other learners that are sighted.	A challenge is to ensure that VI learners learn at the same pace as sighted learners
But one thing, the materials are very, very expensive	The high cost of the materials is a concern to him
most of the time they are not available in the country, we need to get them from outside and as I've said, it takes time, before we even locate people that can actually give us a hint of where to get these materials	The accessibility of resource materials is another challenge for him
sometimes you can get some materials that can help, but that does not necessarily mean that that it meets all the requirements that our syllabi are looking for	Materials available are not always suitable in the context in which they are needed
We only have a minimum number of these learners at our school and as it is the…(pause) in life one normally put the resources where the majority of the people are.	He realises that the LVI are in the minority and resources are mostly used to meet the needs of the majority of learners
We would like to see the support coming in for these few people.	Support for the LVI is seen as crucial – support seen as "coming in" from outside
I think part of the management is made with the help of the Resource Teacher (RT) that I'm having, because she has been with the blind learners or the VIL for so long and she did get some training in handling or helping the VIL, so, that she understands their needs probably better than I do and sometimes or most of the time I rely on her opinions or her advise to get things going	He attributes his managing of the inclusive process partly to the active involvement of the RT and relies very often on her advice and opinions – he is open to a participative approach
as we would like to treat all of them with fairness, at times, the small resources that the school has, cannot really be used to their advantage as well	The current resources do not meet the needs of the LVI, despite the attempts made to treat them with fairness
most of the activities that we prepare,	LVI sometimes excluded

because of the whole nature of the school that the majority are taking place in activities that are just meant for people that can see, they sometimes are unable to participate. And that is probably challenging on my part as a manager of the school, because I would like to see them participating in all aspects	from activities – sees this as special challenge – believes in total participation
none of our teachers are trained to deal with VI people and I think this is one of the set backs that we are working with. Because teachers are really struggling…they are really doing very…best in their abilities to help these learners.	Despite teacher education being a problem, teachers still try their best.
I would say really, there is a need for these teachers to go through the in-service training.	Teachers need training
sometimes they (the learners) feel they are not understood or at times they are not getting the help they deserve to get. And, sometimes the teacher in question really feels that they are doing their best, but because they do not know exactly what it takes to work with these particular persons, they may fail	LVI feel misunderstood – teachers lack expertise
The only help that we really get, and that I would say, is quite minimal. We do get help through the Regional Office – and this is basically that on materials like papers.	Assistance from Regional Office with material only
Any other help, really, from the inspectorate of the Special Education, or anything is unknown to us. We do not get anything – from that directorate.	No other assistance received
the other learners in the school have taken cognisance of the other learners' presence, and therefore, it means they are supporting the others	He believes learners support each other – there is a culture of support and recognition
Because if these learners are getting assistance and welcoming spirit from the other learners then there will also be a spirit of learning	A "welcoming spirit" leads to a "spirit of learning"
On the teachers' side, basically they complain, as I have said, come because of the lack of training and not because the teachers feel these learners is a burden.	Lack of teacher training

one thing that I do often is encouraging the meeting between the Resource Person and then they bring me their problems. But at least, once and again I do meet with them personally.	He meets with Resource Person to discuss problems – sees himself as problem solver "they bring me their problems"
I personally as a manager, I also need to…maybe get hold of some of the people that are in the same environment as I am. That means, schools that have special people like these ones. Now, I will need to share my experiences and get ideas from other people. That, I don't get, because in this area we are the only school that is doing this and therefore it is difficult for me to get any other ideas from outside	Feels isolated – he could learn from others, but his school is "the only one"; there is a need to learn from others, a need for colleagueship
this is basically more…more serious than anything else, we would like to see materials for the blind learners coming. One: they don't even have machines to take notes with. Now we are giving them notes because they cannot take their own notes. We would like to see other materials like the teaching aids and other tools coming in and maybe having machines of our own which we can use in the school instead of going to Oniipa and wait for a week before you get… before you get the papers back and of times teachers cannot to on a pace that everybody else is going if they have to wait until their materials come and then go ahead. We really, really need some of these things to be in place, for us to be more effective.	They need materials and special equipment
… we need these people to be better motivated because we have realized that in the beginning when they come here and this probably because they know they are competing with people that can see and they have at least on edge over them. Sometimes, they have a lack of motivation	The LVI need to be "better motivated" – they perceive sighted learners as having an "edge over them"
… if those learners come here already motivated, that can save us a lot of time,	If they arrived motivated the school could start

because then we can just start with them from the word go. But… you know, the first trimester is actually to work with the person and just prepare the person mentally.	teaching them sooner. He sees motivation as happening somewhere else, before they come to his school
some people perceive the blind learners is that maybe because they cannot see and their eyes are in their heads, maybe that affect their brains, which is not true. We should actually make our community to understand that some of these kids are just more brilliant than people that can see. Their brains are just as well developed, and we just need to support them on that	There is prejudice against LVI – people think they are less intelligent. The community needs to be educated out of this attitude
Natural meaning units of HOD	
I've started at G.T. in the beginning of 1999; I've been an ordinary teacher. Then I became an assisting HOD in Maths and Physical Science, and then…until recently that I was actually appointed as HOD.	She is a newly appointed HOD
It's kind of a guidance role. Sometimes they need to make some decisions about their future, they come with their forms to be filled in, they've got research going on and they select me to be some of the people presenting these topics.	Plays a guidance role to LVI
They have to become familiar with the environment setting before they become independent and confident.	Feels that confidence and independence of LVI is linked to their mobility
It's like teaching two classes in one. Although we call it inclusive education, I think there is a lot, a lot to be desired. I think, because either the VIL are neglected or the other or the others are neglected	Sees inclusion to be challenging-especially teaching the LVI and the sighted learners in the same class. Both groups are neglected
One of the challenges is: not enough resources for them. The books, machines, and the special papers they are using	Lack of resources contributes to the challenges experienced
one of the challenges I can see is that the teachers are not trained to teach these VIL	Lack of trained teachers for the LVI
the Ministry of Education, the Regional education or the education in Namibia in general, doesn't look at the school as	MBESC not very supportive to school-mentions examples of

inclusive. They have been given the learners to be dealt with, but in the process, when they evaluate, when they put the staffing norms in use, they do not consider that the inclusive school need special attention. Specially a budget	staffing norms and special budget for school
Sometimes I feel the learners are too…(pause) dependent. They think they are special and they come to you with a lot of complaints but sometimes they don't have facts.	Feels that despite being in an inclusive setting LVI still think they are "special"
The kids themselves do support the others. They sometimes write down notes for them. Always in the afternoon you will find them, they are studying together, discussing with these LVI. Generally they are accepted here as part of us	There is a climate of support and acceptance from the side of the sighted peers/classmates
people (teachers) are just complaining, they say:" Ah! We are just forced – how could we teach the VIL in the classrooms? You have to do two lesson preparations."	Teachers find teaching of the LVI a challenge and complain about the workload
If we had special classes and special training, their attitude might, might change. Only the lack of training…If you are trained you know how to cope, you know the strategies.	Blames lack of training for not coping with LVI in the ordinary classroom
training should be there before you embark on a certain process. I mean that is logical, okay? The second thing is the Education system; the Ministry of Education has to be prepared to give assistance to the people who are involved so that they don't be discouraged.	Training is seen as crucial and so is the involvement of the MBESC
Natural meaning units of RT	
as a resource teacher…I do a big job. The VIL are experiencing many difficulties in especially in their schoolwork. Most of the teachers they don't know…I use to write summaries, examination and even prepare assignments. I transcribe when they finish writing they bring me the transcript and I rewrite them and give them back to the teachers who give them back to the learners and I have to make	Describes her job as "big" constantly mediates between the teachers and LVI

sure that the teachers explain their results and their comments on the assignments	
most of the work I'm doing now, I wasn't trained for. I've just learned from my own experience but I haven't even worked much with the special children especially the blind. I'm just straight from the College and then I went to Eluwa Special School, actually working with the VIL I just learned how to Braille, how to make teaching aids for them	She relies a lot on her own experience and what she has gained from the Special School. Did not receive any formal training in working with LVI
They don't know time or what it takes to make some of these materials. Because sometimes you might be having five (5) learners or three (3) in a class and now having those learners I have to write up a test or a summary and then this has to be sent to this rehabilitation centre in Oniipa (ELCIN) and sometimes it takes two weeks for them to finish with the copies so that the copies can be returned to the school. Now, most of the teachers they don't know, sometimes I'm telling them, but Now it seems it's a problem to them.	She finds the teachers' ignorance about time (length and effort of material production) frustrating, despite the fact that they are informed.
In the case of teaching aids, the subjects that they're taking, I think these are not good subjects for these learners because most of the teaching aids that they are suppose to get-I am unable to do the teaching aids	In certain fields of studies, material production appears to be problematic.
This Cambridge examination is also a problem. The time for these blind learners has to be doubled. Sometimes if they had to finish up at five (17h00) then the guys can even write up to eight o'clock (20h00). Most of the time, by the time the teachers have already left the school. I'm only here with the principal. If the teachers would be here, then they would be able to help and explain what that diagram means to the learner, but now since they have all left, there is nothing I can do.	Some factors about external examination are seen as problematic-time allocation for students and commitment of teachers. Sense of helplessness.
Another problem is also the sitting arrangements in the classrooms. Most of the time they are also not helping these	She feels that most classrooms are not conducive for teaching-

blind learners, and usually when they are writing, some of these blind learners are just left out and the teacher has not prepared anything for these blind learners	learning process
the subject that I'm teaching to other classes, I'll just have to leave them some notes because I don't want him to be left out like that, since he's in grade 11 and it is just his first part of grade 12.	The sighted learners in this case are neglected in order to prepare material for LVI
some of these teachers feel it is impossible for them to have these learners here and some are saying: 'what's the use of still teaching these learners if they are not even passing?" Since I've been here no learner has pass. Some of the first learners who came here, maybe because they were new or something, the teachers were really teaching them – that's why they passed.	Teachers are not very supportive to LVI and most of them fail their final exams
Sometimes the teachers has prepared a lesson whereby these blind learners have been excluded …the teachers are a little bit supportive of these learners…the teachers who are teaching them, they are able to assist and help them in some cases.	Exclusion of LVI during teaching is not uncommon, however, sometimes the subject teachers are more supportive.
There are just reference books in the library – although it's difficult for the blind learners to have access to the reference books since there are no reference books in Braille.	Resources like reference books are lacking for LVI
It seems the Ministry has all forgotten about the resource teacher and the learners with visual impairment. Because of the staffing norms, and for the school to keep me here, I was given some subjects to teach… the principal told me that next year I'm going to have 30 periods per week	Ministry does not offer the support needed and her workload increases with additional 30 periods.
this inclusive education, I don't think these learners are getting much…that what they deserve. But as I've said this inclusion is just verbally, not practically.	Is sceptical of the practicality of inclusive process
Natural meaning units of former principal (P1)	
I had no experience whatsoever on	He had no formal

inclusive education. When I arrived at G.T. the system had already started, which means it had already been implemented-so it was a new school to me, a new system. So I had literally no experience whatsoever. I really had to learn from scratch.	training on inclusive education.
the school was now experimenting with inclusive education…it was really difficult, it was a challenging situation, in the sense that basically no preparation was done, the school was not prepared, you know, the staff was not prepared both professionally and psychologically and otherwise. .). So it was a trial-and-error thing. You know, you just had to rely on yourself basically to get things going, so it was really a big challenge. Ahmm…it was tough.	He sees the inclusive process as challenging and not properly planned. He described it as a trial-and-error experimenting process.
, as a principal, you really had to do a lot of up and down because you know, on one part there is a possibility of the children, they are getting the impression that they are disregarded, they are kind of regarded as second-class learners and therefore they don't matter much to the teachers and you have to work very hard not for that kind of feelings to sneak into the children. On the other side you have staff that simply had no clue how to handle the situation and of cause you had staff who were completely negative also, you know,	He was working very hard to strike a harmonious balance between the LVI and the staff members who were not very positive about the inclusion of LVI.
you had to lay your hands on matters yourself, if things had to be done. Say for instance, when you had examinations and specially my first year in G.T. the children were forgotten in the transcribing of the question paper for grade 12 into Braille. I had no idea that they had to have Braille paper for the LVI. I packed my things nicely but on the date of the examinations that's when I learned that the question papers were supposed to be in Braille and they were not there…it was	He learned certain procedures the hard way and gave and example of examination and he described his intervention as "crisis management"

a crisis management	
One had to coach not only the children themselves but also the staff as I said, you had to make it a point that at least you communicate to the staff… the question of forgetting children in activities, especially in examinations, must stop. If somebody happened to do it, there will be a form of punishment or some form of sanction you know, to be inflicted on this person responsible	New rules were communicated to the staff which included certain consequences if not adhered to
people needed training… basic, basic training in order to be able to deal with these learners. What I did was I consulted with the Senior School Counsellor and I think through you a form of basic training was conducted at Eluwa special School… they also came out of the training with little basic skills of making little materials like diagrams with piece of beads, glue, rope, paper…all these kind of things. So the initial training served as a eye opener	He realised that basic training was a necessity for teachers and organized the first training for teachers.
These learners can only do certain subjects. You know, their choices are restricted because of that… at some point the LVI used to complain that their choices are limited and therefore also their choices after high school are limited in terms of career opportunities. But…that was the best that we could do. We tried to experiment with subjects such as economics for example and in the process we just discovered that after that they couldn't do it.	Tried to adjust the curriculum for LVI by experimenting with subjects such as economics although it was unsuccessful
Cambridge also wrote us a letter that these learners should stop writing exams for typing. We had to reply that that couldn't be done, unless we want to destroy these children completely. And that was a protracted kind of struggle and I think we (management) resorted to something like they will do typing only as a skills subject and not as an examination subject.	They (management) got involved in a "protracted struggle" with Cambridge which concerns typing as a subject for LVI

people had no idea, the R.O. had no idea, they just dumped these learners in the school and they called it a project and they were experimenting whether CWSN can be integrated in the mainstream schooling system. And therefore, it presented a lot of problems. No funding was provided, no special equipment.	He experienced that MBESC only dumped the LVI at the school with no preparation or funding to offer as assistance
we ended up asking for the appointment of a R.T. or person in this field who could liaise between the learners and the staff, someone who could assist with the transcription of the material into Braille and initially that idea was rejected by the R.O…. rejected out of hand. It was argued that what we have is a project which was experimented upon, now if we appoint somebody to deal specifically with the LVI we will be defeating the purpose of integrating these learners into the mainstream…and you know that took us aback.	Their request for the appointment of the R.T. was not taken in a very positive light and was "rejected out of hand" by Regional Office
Almost on a daily basis we had to communicate, in fact, at a time you know, it became like a burden to me. Every time, you know, you come to your office, this R.T. is hanging by the door, she'd like to see you, to the extent that you kind of really feel 'no, this person is depending too much', but you would also understand the person could not do otherwise…It was a challenging, challenging situation	He had a close relationship with the R.T. although he found that there was a strong "dependency element"
eventually the situation improved with the little training we got, although it was just one short kind of training. It made an impact and the teachers also got to accept the situation and try to do something at least and now eventually with the arrival of the R.T. also things improved quite dramatically. And these children, I think some started performing well, some of them also received academic awards, prizes like anybody else, something they couldn't do a few years back. And that's why I'm saying they've really become part of the G.T. family, they are treated to the due consideration of their special	The initial training of teachers and the role of the R.T. eventually led to the improvement of the learning environment at the school, to the extent that the learners start to perform very well and they "became part of the G.T. family

needs situation	
What I did was I relied on the support of others. I was in close contact for example with the principal of Eluwa Special School. That was our feeder school in the first place and the principal there was more knowledgeable and you know, she also knew the children. Therefore, there was this close contact between my office and hers. And now with the appointment of the R.T. that's something I personally fought for, it was like an achievement. Your office, especially with your intervention and that of Mrs Nghipondoka that's something we also build and that was strengthened and the office really beginning getting involved very actively, and you know things really changed for the better unlike the way it was before.	He builds his own support system by creating a close relationship with the principal of the special school and he strengthened his link with the department of special education. The appointment of the R.T. is seen as an achievement.

4.3 SITUATED STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTIONS

According to Giorgi (as cited in Polkinghorne 1989: 54) the aim of the situated descriptions is for the researcher to try and express in an explicit way the implicit aspects of the natural meaning unit and then write out a sentence in his or her own words that expresses this discovery. Stated in the third person, these transformations preserve the situated context in which the experience has occurred to an individual subject.

4.3.1 SITUATED STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PRINCIPAL (P2)

Recently appointed as principal of an inclusive school, P2 is new to this position. His experience of inclusive education is related to that of a learning curve, a challenging experience indeed. The challenges he is currently facing and his strong sense of equity and justice are themes which emerged in his protocol, and these will be described below.

CHALLENGES

P2 is faced with the following challenge: as a manager, of paramount importance to him, is his ideal that LVI learn simultaneously and at the same pace with the sighted learners. He overtly recognises the challenges involved for him as a manager in working with both the LVI and the sighted learners. He realizes that the very resources needed to make effective his ideal of equity and simultaneous learning for the LVI, is either scarce: "most of the time they are not available in the country" or they are very costly: "... the materials are very, very expensive". These resource materials are also not always accessible: "most of the materials we can lay our hands on, are within the Republic of South Africa". Furthermore he finds that if the materials are available, they are not necessarily appropriate or pertinent to these learners in the Namibia education system since: "… they are based on the Cape Syllabus". The problem with resource materials is indeed one challenge he is concerned about. Another challenge, which has surfaced strongly, is training.

Because of his strong orientation toward the future of the LVI, preparation for their future in terms of acquiring skills and knowledge for himself and his teachers is another crucial aspect for him: "… there is a need for these teachers to go through in-service training". He also experiences a sense of helplessness and sees himself as an isolated subject, alienated from others in a similar situation:

> I personally as a manager, I also need to… maybe get hold of some of the people that are in the same environment as I am. That means, schools that have special people like these ones. Now, I will need to share my experiences and get ideas from other people. That, I don't get, because in this area we are the only school that is doing this and therefore it is difficult for me to get any other ideas from outside. And, it would have been good if some people outside that were dealing with LVI or inclusive education to come together at times and share our experiences and maybe see what we can do for these learners. But it is not happening, because probably we are the only people and for us to be able to talk about that, is probably myself and my teachers who are also in the same boat as far as learning is concerned.

Thus, he is aware of the non-existence of other principal in the same positions as he is. Regardless of his feelings of alienation from the "inclusive education world", he realises

that any genuine possible contributions of ideas and sharing of knowledge could assist him and contribute to his experience of inclusion. Not only does he express his hope for teachers to be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills, he also wishes to expand on a multi-professional support system.

In his recognition of the importance of a support system, he is open to a participative approach in the sense that he attributes the managing of his management of the inclusive process partly to the active involvement of the RT and consults with her on a regular basis: "… most of the time I rely on her opinions or her advise to get things going". He meets with the RT on a regular basis and sees himself as a problem solver: "… they bring me their problems". Despite his role as problem solver, the problems that he previously had all solved with LVI and his teaching staff are in fact very complicated and some problems remain unsolved because no help or support from outside is available. Support for the LVI, however, is obtainable from within the school. He finds that because the sighted learners are supportive of LVI, there is a "welcoming spirit" which leads to a "spirit of learning" and this makes an incalculable difference to the climate of learning and teaching at his school. His own contribution towards improving the quality of the teaching and learning process can be best described by his ideals or efforts to redress the imbalance that exists between the LVI and the sighted learners.

HIS SENSE OF EQUITY AND JUSTICE

For P2, a strong imperative exists to empower the LVI by means of allocating essential resources for their learning needs. He understands that the current resources do not meet the needs of the LVI, despite attempts to empower them and treat them with fairness: "… as we would like to treat all of them with fairness, at times, the small resources that the school has cannot really be used to their advantage as well". He wishes to encourage a feeling of authentic coexistence (justice) and does not want injustice to prevail. His aim as manager is to promote justice to these LVI by:

- making sure that equal facilities or resources are accessible to all learners which will at the same time improve effective teaching:

> If we have materials here, like maybe a printer that can do brailing, then that would be very good because all of our teachers can use the computers and put their examination or notes or their assessment materials on the computer and within a few minutes they will have their product. Then you can go on a pace that everybody else is going.

- ensuring that: "learners are learning at the same pace, like other learners who are sighted";

> - striving towards full participation for them in school activities despite limitations due to their lack of sight:

> … most of the activities that we prepare, because of the whole nature of the school that the majority are taking place in activities that are just meant for people that can see, they sometimes are unable to participate. And that is probably challenging on my part as a manager of the school, because I would like to see them participating in all aspects…

Despite the learners having a visual impairment, P2 is fully aware of their potential to be achievers, to be free beings: "… they are keen to learn, they are willing to learn… they are brilliant". Because of these realisations he finds it disturbing that LVI are not psychologically prepared for the inclusive process and observes that their self-image needs strengthening: "… we need these people to be better motivated… sometimes they have a lack of motivation because they feel that sighted learners have an edge over them". He is further conscious that despite LVI being "brilliant", "bright" and "their brains just as well developed", the community still reacts toward them in a prejudiced and discriminatory manner as if they are intellectually challenged. Prejudice and discrimination are still firmly rooted in the society and he feels that foundations of a more inclusive society should be laid. This can be achieved through sensitisation of the community. The very existence of inclusion presupposes that coexistence for LVI and the sighted is good, but more so, even better is authentic coexistence of all. This for him is the ultimate challenge as a manager.

4.3.2 SITUATED STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION OF FORMER PRINCIPAL (P1)

Upon his arrival as principal at Gabriel Taapopi SSS, P1 not only had to adjust to the new environment of the school, he also had to face the challenge of a recently implemented experimentation project: inclusion of LVI. As he says; "I had no experience whatsoever on the inclusive education. I really had to learn from scratch. I had to adjust. It was a challenging situation.". Having inherited a "new system" which was already introduced, P1 experienced his initial role as that of a reformer.

SCHOOL REFORM

P1 found that although the "new system" has been introduced, the situation was very much still the same because the "school was not prepared". He had to change the existing coordination of the teachers, whom he sees as the biggest assets: "the most crucial part" of his school. He faced the obstacle of his teachers not being trained on two fronts: "they were not prepared both professionally and psychologically". How did he attend to this?

TRAINING

P1 reached out and asked for help: "What I did was I consulted with the Senior School Counsellor and I think through you a form of basic training was conducted at Eluwa Special School". He described this training as an "eye opener" which allowed his teachers to "get some basic idea of what kind of people the LVI are that they are dealing with and also… they came out of the training with little basic skills of making little materials like diagrams with pieces if beads, glue, rope, paper …" According to him, despite the fact that it stopped abruptly, the training certainly made its "impact" on teachers.

P1, however, realized that the teachers need more psychological knowledge to be able to respond to the curriculum demand. The knowledge and skills required are mainly those

of good teaching, which would also include curriculum content. He was shocked to find: "that children are forgotten sometimes, you know the LVI." He gave an example of assessment when learners are writing a test:

> … a class is having a test and you find that the teacher forgets the children with special needs, who need some special kind of treatment, for instance, the test has to be in Braille form and it was just not so… they were not remembered.

He had to devise means to address this aspect of teachers. He says: "… you had to make it a point that at least you communicate to the staff… the question of forgetting children in activities, especially in examinations must stop". Furthermore, he employed certain disciplinary measures against teachers who would preclude these learners during assessment: "… there will be a form of punishment or some form of sanction… to be inflicted on this person responsible and this was mainly for the benefit of the children".

CURRICULUM RENEWAL

The content of his reform furthermore included curriculum renewal. P1 embraced a rethinking of the existing curriculum of the school in order to meet the needs of the LVI. He remembered it as a "tricky situation". His second thoughts on the curriculum content arose from the fact that he took into consideration their (LVI) opinions and feelings: " … the LVI used to complain that their choices are limited and therefore also their choices after high school are limited in terms of career opportunities". Since LVI could not do mathematics; "… there are no calculators for visually impaired people", he initiated the idea of opening a new field of subjects for LVI: "… we tried to experiment with subjects such as economics for example, and in the process we just discovered that they could not do it". He illustrated this with an example of LVI "reading" a diagram of supply and demand curve when it is combined and stated "… they could not 'see' the whole picture because they read with their fingertips and therefore they could not". P1 entered into confrontation with Cambridge Examination against their stipulation to abolish typing exams for the LVI. He called the process a "protracted kind of struggle". Typing, in his view, was crucial for the LVI because not only was it "one of the easiest subjects" LVI

had to resort to, it is also a subject 'through which they communicate". He resolved the matter by informing Cambridge that they (management): "… resorted to something like they will do typing only as a skills subject and not as an examination subject".

Cambridge was not the only opponent that he disagreed with and triumphed over. A long battle with the Ondangwa West Regional Office (R.O.) eventually was rewarded with the appointment of the resource teacher (RT)

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE RESOURCE TEACHER

Although the inclusive process was the brainchild of the Regional Office, P1 experienced that "the R.O. had no idea, they just dumped these learners in the school and they call it a project… experiencing whether children with special needs can be integrated into mainstream schools". Their request to appoint a resource teacher was "rejected by the Regional Office… rejected out of hand". P1, on the other hand, did not give up. He realised that the resource teacher could make a considerable contribution toward the learning process of LVI, someone who "could liaise between the learners and the staff, someone who could assist with the transcription of Braille…" Despite being taken "aback' by the response of a Senior Education Officer at the Regional Office, who felt that the appointment of a resource teacher will "be defeating the purpose of integrating these learners into the mainstream", he (P1) "personally fought" for the resource teacher's appointment and when it was finally approved, he saw it as "an achievement".

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS AND LVI

P1 discovered that the relationship between the LVI and teachers had to be addressed. As a manager, he had to handle the feeling of resistance, which existed among the teachers and safeguard the image of the LVI at the same time. He described his experience as follows:

> As a principal, you had to do a lot of up and down, because you know, on one part there is the possibility of the children, they are getting the impression that they are disregarded, they are kind of regarded as second-class learners, therefore they don't matter much to the teachers and you have to work hard not for that kind of feelings to sneak into the children. On the other side you have the staff that simply had no clue how to handle this situation and of cause you had staff who were completely negative also… One had to coach not only the children themselves but also the staff.

Another means P1 developed in order to enhance effectiveness in the teaching and learning process, was to set up a support system or means of networking with others.

SUPPORT SYSTEM

Realising his inexperience regarding inclusion, as well as the fact that he did not receive any training in it whatsoever, P1 decided to reach out to those who were more knowledgeable and familiar with children who have special needs: "I personally have not received training before on special education. What I did was I relied on the support of others". He cultivated "close contact" between himself and the principal of Eluwa Special School, because she knows the learners and their needs so well. Furthermore, he had a "very close" working relationship with the resource teacher. Although her presence at the school was also characterised with "an element of dependency" which became like a "burden" to him, he tried to assist and support her at all times. The association with the Senior and Regional School Counsellor at the Regional Office were also "built on" and "strengthened" and this led to the office becoming "involved very actively" in offering support to the school.

OTHER EXPERIENCES

P1 repeatedly referred to his experience as "challenging" and "quite interesting". He very wittily shared his experience through which he learned certain procedures and practices of inclusion the hard way, for instance, the time shortly after his appointment when he found himself in a predicament during final year examinations:

> I had no idea that they had to have Braille paper for LVI. I packed my things nicely but on the date of the examinations that's when I learned that the question papers were supposed to be in Braille and they were not… it was a crisis management.

In fact, his initial experience of the inclusive process in Gabriel Taapopi SSS is one of being a "trial-and-error thing". He is optimistic, however and quite modest when he reflects on the time of his arrival and departure from the school and especially the performance enhancement of both teachers and learners:

> … although I don't really brag about it, I actually can say there is much difference to the extent that some LVI started performing well and some of them also received academic awards, prizes like anybody else, something they couldn't do a few years back.

Most significantly to him was his observation that an environment was created at the school where LVI were accepted: "… they've become part of the G.T. family, they are treated with the due consideration of their special needs situation, although a lot still remains to be done". In a conversation with him, after the interview, P1 stated that the inclusive process at Gabriel Taapopi SSS is "not a desperate situation at all, there is hope".

4.3.3. SITUATED STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION OF HEAD OF DEPARTMENT (HOD)

The HOD is currently acting in a guidance and counseling role towards the LVI. In her capacity of representing her department and teachers, she experiences certain challenges as barriers to the inclusive process and she is convinced that "there is still a lot to be desired" regarding inclusive education.

BARRIERS TO THE INCLUSIVE PROCESS

Teachers' attitude

The experience she has with teachers at the school, indicates that despite LVI being considered as having good academic achievement or above average performance: "… you've got some of them who are capable… who are really brilliant", they (LVI) are still not easily integrated because teachers are dissatisfied about the additional workload and extra preparations: "…it's like teaching two classes in one". This stance leads to an overall negative feeling among certain teachers who are protesting, they say: "Ah! We are just forced… how can we teach the LVI in the classrooms? You have to do two lesson preparations". She further described the attitude of some teachers towards LVI as "somehow quite with a burden" and is adamant that only with the exposure to "special training" will these attitudes towards LVI change. It is clear to her that teachers in the regular classroom environment often fail to accommodate the educational needs of LVI.

Teacher training

A challenging factor, which was reiterated during the interview with the HOD, is the topic of teacher training. She is of the opinion that "… teachers are not trained to teach these LVI". She is further convinced that the atmosphere of the school will not change unless "… we could have training". She feels it is imperative that a greater knowledge and responsiveness with respect to special needs in the classroom be developed. The importance of training is clearly expressed in her remark: "… training should be there before you can embark on a certain process, that is logical".

Lack of resources

The resources being scarce, the HOD argues that they must get the maximum benefit from the existing resources they have: "… we usually use what we have". There is a lack of "… books, machines and the special papers they are using" and her argument is that the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) does not perceive the

school as inclusive, since the human resource aspect is not taken into account in terms of the new staffing norms arrangement. This and the lack of a special budget add to the frustration experienced. The redistribution and appropriate application of resources are crucial aspects to her.

4.3.4 SITUATED STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION OF RESOURCE TEACHER (RT)

Having received no proper formal training in inclusive education and especially relying on her own experience and knowledge, the R.T. reached a point where her feelings of helplessness are increasingly growing. Her role as resource teacher, her experience with the staff members and her deep concern for the LVI are factors further contributing to her sense of helplessness: "I don't know how long I'm going to stay here. I just don't know". This sentiment is further stimulated by her uncertainty of her own abilities and the role she is fulfilling: "… the way I'm helping the teachers, I'm not even sure whether I'm doing the right thing… everything I do is according to my knowledge… there is no job description".

Her current role as resource teacher for LVI, is something which she was not formally trained for: "… most of the work I'm doing now, I wasn't trained for. I've just learned from my own experience, but I haven't even work much with the special needs children, especially the blind". Constant mediation between the teachers and LVI are required and she described part of her role as: "I use to write summaries, examination and even prepare assignments. I transcribe…I rewrite…". Her frustration sets in because she finds the teachers' ignorance upsetting, especially regarding their perception of the effort and length it takes to produce material or teaching aids: 'They don't know time or what it takes to make some of these materials". Her inability to produce certain teaching aids is another concern to her: "… most of the teaching aids they are suppose to get, I am unable to produce them".

Despite her fulfilling a supportive role to teachers and LVI, she experiences that support from the outside, the MBESC towards the LVI and herself, as a resource teacher is not particularly forthcoming: "It seems the Ministry has all forgotten about the resource teacher and the LVI". On the contrary, she feels that her workload has been dramatically increased by the policy of new staffing norms:

> … because of the staffing norms and for the school to keep me here, I was given some subjects to teach also. Just last week the principal told me that next year I'm going to have 30 periods per week.

The internal support from the side of certain teachers' as well as the sighted peers who accept the LVI, to her compensates for the lack of support from outside. This is despite her observation that it's only a few learners: "It's only the classmates who might support them but only maybe 2 to 5 learners in a class who are willing to help the LVI". Her scepticism about inclusive education is nurtured by her overtly expressing the opinion: "… this inclusive education, I don't think these learners are getting much … that what they desired."

In summary, it is clear from the data that except for the resource teacher, who had a certain degree of exposure before, none of the other three respondents had any experience whatsoever regarding inclusive education. The inclusive process at Gabriel Taapopi SSS is perceived and experienced by all respondents as a challenging and learning experience. Limited recourse, a need for teacher training and the support aspect are themes all respondents have in common.

The next chapter is devoted to the discussion of the main findings from the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It is the aim of this chapter to concentrate on the main findings from the research, taking into account the research questions the study was attempting to answer, as well as a reference to my initial goals. In order to get a clear and holistic picture of my research I find it essential to relate once more to the initial aim of the study.

5.2 AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aim of the study is to gain a clear understanding and critical insight of the managerial implications of an inclusive school, in this case Gabriel Taapopi SSS. As I mentioned earlier in chapter two, this phenomenon certainly raises several questions to me as a researcher.

Firstly, what are the implications of inclusive schooling?

Secondly, how do management members construct meaning of inclusion, i.e. how do they experience it?

To explore the experiences of the management members regarding the inclusive process is one of my research goals, which guides me to questions such as:

How are critical issues such as curriculum adjustment, allocation of resources, funding, staff training, classroom management, and support systems addressed by management? It is my sincere wish that the discussions, which follow below, will reflect and attempt to provide answers to these questions.

5.3 MAIN FINDINGS

In response to the open-ended questions posed to them, it was clear that all four management members interviewed had their own unique experiences, which to a certain extent also correspond with the experiences of each of the others. The data presented in chapter four include many anecdotal accounts that provide insight into the ways respondents reacted to the experiences at the inclusive school. The following paragraphs aim to highlight and discuss the main findings or key issues from the raw experiences by respondents. The experiences themselves are rendered into summary statements for analysis and are compared to the literature presented in chapter two as well as new relevant literature.

5.3.1 SUPPORT FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The MEC (1993:131) clearly states that the aim of special education is not "intended to provide favours to handicapped children…it is guided not by a sense of sympathy but by an ethos of support." Management members interviewed indicate that the situation at Gabriel Taapopi SSS require support services across a broad front if they are to make effective provision for LVI. Support services can be categorized into those which are of a specific educational nature on national level, i.e. the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture (MBESC) as well as on regional level; the inspectorate, advisory teachers and regional school counselors. These support "agents" should provide information, insight and advice so that the school can discharge its task of inclusion adequately. Support is also received from inside the school with the role of support offered by the principal, the resource teacher and class teachers.

In the case of Gabriel Taapopi SSS, it appears to be an overpowering fact, as pointed out by the data, that the inclusive process was initiated by the high-level decision makers of the MBEC, even though the initiative does not necessarily reflect or share the aspirations of the managers of the school. Thus, the data suggested that broad consultations were

absent and this led to an even greater sense of turbulence experienced. It is clear that the MBESC did not take into consideration the level of support needed or the possible implications of the newly introduced inclusive practice. One can argue that little ownership was initially taken of the inclusion process by regional officials, school management and staff members, because they were not actively participating in the process. In the words of P1:

> … it was really difficult, it was a challenging situation in the sense that basically no preparation was done, the school was not prepared… the staff was not prepared both professionally and psychologically… people had no idea, the regional office had no idea, they [MBESC] just dumped these learners in the school and they call it a project… it presented a lot of problems. No funding was provided, no special equipment.

Although support for the LVI is seen as a crucial and essential aspect, it is experienced on different levels. P2 would like to see it as "coming in" from outside. According to the HOD, the MBESC seem not to be very supportive to the school, as they do not consider that the school needs special attention, especially "… when they put the staffing norms in place". This sentiment is shared by the RT who feels that the "Ministry has forgotten all about the resource teacher and the LVI". Because of the new staffing norms policy, her workload was increased with 30 periods per week, leaving her with a feeling of helplessness on how to deal with it all.

5.3.1.1 CREATING AND CULTIVATING EXISTING SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Experience suggests that although support is seen as necessary to achieve effective management of inclusive practices, the continuing support needed from a range of quarters, e.g. MBESC and Regional officials were not forthcoming. Thus, in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning, the principals of Gabriel Taapopi SSS opted to mobilize other sources of support e.g. P1 cultivated "close contact" between himself and the principal of Eluwa Special School and he "built on" and "strengthened" his association with the Senior and Regional School Counsellor at Regional level in order to gain more knowledge and assistance from them. A "very close" working relationship with the resource teacher is experienced to be of great help to both

principals who consulted with her and often relied on her advice and opinion in managing the inclusive process.

5.3.1.2. SUPPORTIVE CLIMATE IN THE SCHOOL

The data seem to indicate a strong feeling that a culture of support and recognition for LVI is present at the school. The role of the principals in creating or offering support will be discussed later in the chapter. I wish to focus on the general support for LVI as well as the supportive role of the RT. P2 is of the opinion that the sighted learners in the school "… have taken cognizance" of the LVI's presence, and therefore "… it means that they are supporting the others". Support and assistance are rooted in the "welcoming spirit" from the sighted learners, which leads to a "spirit of learning" for the LVI. This sentiment is further underscored by the experience of the HOD who argues that the climate of support from the side of the sighted peers is clearly noticed in the sense of acceptance that exists, for example, sighted peers sometimes "… write down notes for them… they are studying together" and in general "… they are accepted here as part of us". As P1 states: "… they've really become part of the G.T. [Gabriel Taapopi] family".

In the literature review, I specifically referred to certain aspects surrounding the school culture which "comprises the values, norms and overall climate of the school" (Davidoff & Lazarus as quoted in Lazarus *et al.* 1999: 59). There was a deliberate attempt from P2, as related in his experiences, to restructure the school into a community that supports LVI. This is in line with the view held by O' Brien & O' Brien (1997) that for inclusion to thrive in schools, they must be conscious communities. Segiovanni's (1994) extensive writings express his beliefs that relationships in schools, as communities are both "close and informal". At Gabriel Taapopi, there is clearly a close working relationship between the principal and teachers as well as learners amongst each other. According to Sergiovanni (1994) "relationships are cooperative". This is indicative of the cooperation which exists between the managers and the resource teacher and certain staff members. That "acceptance is unconditional" in Gabriel Taapopi SSS is debatable. Acceptance seemed to be a gradual process and the data suggest acceptance of LVI is coming from certain sides only: from the principals and sighted learners (as experienced

by HOD and RT). Certain teachers seem to be rather negative about inclusion and therefore less acceptance towards LVI are reported in the date. In support of the foregoing finding, Center and Ward (1987) found that principals were more accepting than teachers. The attitude of teachers will be focused on in a separate sub-heading in the chapter.

5.3.1.3 THE RESOURCE TEACHER AS SUPPORT AGENT

Earlier in chapter 1 p.10 the role of the resource teacher was described as offering "some sort of tutorial support" and this person is seen as a "service coordinator" (Kirk *et al.* 1997:434) or a "learning support teacher" (Dyson *et al.* 1997: 21-22).

At Gabriel Taapopi SSS, the resource teacher provides direct support to the regular classroom teacher as well as the LVI, and indirect support to the management of the school. Direct support to classroom teachers includes consultation and a significant amount of time working with the teachers. Close cooperation between the resource teacher and regular classroom teachers include joint planning and preparation of lessons. This kind of cooperation is certainly in line with an opinion by Erwin (1991) that partnership and teamwork between classroom teachers and the resource teacher are important aspects of the integrative approach. In other instances, the resource teacher helps to develop strategies and produce materials to support the instruction of LVI. The RT says: "I used to write summaries, examinations and even prepare assignments. I transcribe… I rewrite". The production of material requires a significant amount of time and effort, which the regular class teacher is sometimes unaware of.

The resource teacher furthermore serves also as a support agent to the principal of the school. Through her partnership with him, she assists him in the transition period. Her recommendations and opinion are greatly valued and she solves problems around a variety of difficulties that may arise with teachers and LVI. Her support appears to be a significant element in making the inclusive practice more manageable in the school.

So far, I have discussed the role of the MBESC, support from within the school as well as the role of support as offered by the RT. What is the position regarding support from the side of the two principals interviewed?

In a case study done by Solomon *et al.* (1992), four key roles for principals who facilitate inclusive practices are identified. I wish to single out three key roles which correspond with the respondents' experiences. P2 provided support to the teachers in realizing that basic training in handling LVI was a necessity for them and therefore he organized the first training session for the teachers. P2 worked to "establish caring relationships with students and faculty" by listening to the LVI and "meet with them personally" to discuss their problems. Both principals tried to set a tone of support and caring in the school community. In order to do this, both P1 and P2 had to facilitate change in the existing practices at the school. Thus, they end up functioning as "primary change agents" (Solomon *et al.* 1992).

5.3.2. PRINCIPALS AS CHANGE AGENTS IN AN INCLUSIVE SETTING: "CATALYST FOR CHANGE"

Principals are key figures providing appropriate support and education to their teachers. As primary change agents, both P1 and P2 possess certain competencies as suggested by Kaskinen-Chapman *et al.* (1992). They expressed the willingness to support collaborative interactions and operate comfortably and effectively in collaborative groups. More importantly, both principals had a clear vision of how the school will look if it educates all of its learners.

5.3.2.1 A VISION OF EQUITY AND JUSTICE

In an attempt to manage and facilitate institutional and organizational change at Gabriel Taapopi SSS, P1 and P2 had to shift, in the words of Lipp (as cited in Sage 1997:114) "from gatekeeper of tradition to catalyst for change". It was a challenging experience for both principals, as they faced a double problem: they could not maintain the status quo, if they were to respond to the new challenges, while at the same time they also had to

maintain some form of continuity between their present and past practices. The vision of equity and justice for all learners served as an overarching goal to initiate transformation.

P2 had one main vision: that of seeing that LVI learn simultaneously and at the same pace with sighted learners. His ideals and efforts to redress the imbalance that existed between LVI and sighted learners would certainly contribute to the improvement of the quality of the teaching and learning process. His vision of equity and justice is in line with the goal of the MBESC not to tolerate "inequities" (p.67) in the education system but to provide "equal access" as the first step toward achieving equity. "Equity has to do with fairness (MEC 1993: 36). His vision is put into action, when he (P2) as a manager promotes justice to the LVI by ensuring that equal facilities or resources are accessible to all learners and also that these learners "are learning at the same pace, like other learners that are sighted". Furthermore, he strives towards full participation for them in school activities despite their limitations due to their lack of sight. This finding is consistent with an opinion by Lazarus *et al.* (1999) that access refers to the ability of the psychosocial environment to facilitate positive learning and development for all learners. His other vision is that foundations of a more inclusive society should be laid by suggesting general awareness raising in a community where prejudice and discrimination against blind people are still firmly rooted.

The content of reform mainly introduced by P1 include administrative reform, curriculum renewal, new approaches to examinations and professional development opportunities for his staff members. These reforms are discussed below.

5.3.2.2 ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

Realising that he had inherited a "new inclusive system" and having no experienced whatsoever, P1 had to open himself to change as well as facilitate collaboration to prevent barriers to change. This is what Sage (1997) calls prompting to opening oneself and others to the possibilities of change.

In an attempt to change the status quo at the school, P1 encountered certain forms of turbulence resulting from the dissonance that occurred as his teachers struggled to make sense of this new idea of inclusion. Both P1 & P2 worked very hard to strike a harmonious balance between the LVI and teachers and gradually shifted from a "trial-and-error" management style and "crisis management" to a more caring and successful change and commitment to collaborative planning with Regional Office officials and the principal from the Eluwa Special School.

Administrative efforts contributed to the overall improvement of the school climate as LVI were gradually seen in a more positive light, which resulted in their academic performance enhancement. The appointment of the resource teacher also contributed to an atmosphere of close collaboration with teachers and LVI. Both principals interviewed showed progressive and open attitudes towards their work as managers. By promoting and supporting innovative practices both respondents improved the school's responses to inclusion of diversity. Administrative support and collaboration are the most frequently cited aspects to facilitate inclusion (Cross & Villa 1992; Villa *et al* 1992; Williams, Fox, Thousand & Fox 1990 as cited in Soodak & Podell 1998).

5.3.2.3 CURRICULUM RENEWAL

In order to meet the needs of the LVI, P1 embraced a rethinking of the existing curriculum at the school. He recalls it as a "tricky situation". To get better insights as to how the existing curriculum could be improved, he included the LVI in the decision making process, by taking into account their opinions and feelings. Bush (1995: 56) refers to this as "participative modes of management". He is further of the opinion that participants have "equal rights to determine policy and influence decisions". According to Bush (1995:63) decisions are reached by "consensus or compromise rather than acquiescence to the views of the… principals". This "democratic management style" (Sander 1989), clearly indicates that P1's "concern for people and production are equally balanced" (Blake & Mouton 1964). The decision by management and staff members concerning Typing as an examination subject (see next sub-heading) also emphasises the aspect of "decision decentralization" (Yukl in Warwick 1998), which serves to indicate

the degree to which the leader (principal) influences a group's (management and staff) decision. Both principals articulated the expectations for the LVI's performance in general education activities and in addition also encouraged active participation of learners to achieve the same results as sighted learners. Therefore, their actions definitely reflect "participative decision-making with the aim of maximizing the participation of all learners" (Muthukrishna 2000).

Based on what was discussed in the previous paragraph, it would be reasonable to conclude that the management of Gabriel Taapopi SSS certainly engaged in a management process in which "all contribute and in which everyone are involved" (The Task Team on Education Management Development in South Africa 1996: 27).

5.3.2.4 NEW EXAMINATION APPROACH

Cambridge Examinations stipulated the abolishment of typing for the LVI. Responding positively to the learner diversity in the school, P1 took up what he calls a "protracted kind of struggle" with the examinations authority. He considered typing not only as a crucial subject because it is easier for LVI, but also as a critical means for LVI "through which they communicate". The management of the school triumphed in the solution that LVI "will do typing only as a skills subject and not as an examination subject", making it still possible for LVI to benefit from the subject.

It is, however, interesting to note that the battle on the aspect of time allocation for LVI during examinations is not entirely resolved, as the resource teacher still sees the current examination procedure as a problem.

From the discussions, I can safely conclude that in line with the literature reviewed, these principals without a doubt, through their efforts and course of action, opened themselves and others to the process of change. Furthermore, they both entered a climate of risk-taking and tried their level best in attempting to create an inclusive climate for learning by all learners in the school. Therefore, they can certainly be described as

"catalysts for change" (see Lipp as cited in Sage 1997:114) functioning as change agents at Gabriel Taapopi SSS.

5.3.3 THE LINK BETWEEN TEACHER TRAINING AND TEACHER ATTITUDE

This is a fascinating theme for me as a researcher because I have experienced the reality of it in my field of work. The literature reviewed mainly concentrated on the attitude and knowledge of principals and thus fails to provide a discussion of teacher attitude towards inclusive education. This shortcoming calls for new literature to be introduced, as this seems to be a consistent theme that emerged from the data of all four interviewees.

With the introduction of the inclusive process at Gabriel Taapopi SSS, no groundwork was done for management and teachers. They were not prepared for this new phenomenon in any professional or psychological way. The key issue which all four respondents referred to was the link between teacher training and teacher attitude. International literature consulted on the topic suggest that teachers with little experiences of people with disabilities are likely to have negative attitudes to inclusion as they feel they are not equipped to deal with these learners (Coates 1989, Hoover 1994 and Mittler 1995). This sentiment is in line with the experiences of the respondents. There is strong evidence from this research confirming the abovementioned findings as respondents were forthright about these aspects of professional development and attitude changes of teachers: "If we had… special training, their attitude might… change. If you are trained, you know how to cope, you know the strategies" (HOD). The opinion of the HOD is further endorsed by research done by Stephens & Braun (1980) and Trent (1989) who argues that teachers will be more willing to accept learners with special needs education if they receive training in special education.

The RT describes the attitude of teachers as: "Some of these teachers feel it is impossible for them to have these learners here". P2 makes reference to this topic when he states: "On the teachers' side, basically they complain because of the lack of training and not because the teachers feel these learners is a burden". This lack of expertise could be a

concern to teachers themselves, as they do not have the ability to cope with the inclusive process because of a lack of confidence in their own knowledge and skills. P1 elaborates on this when he says: "you have staff that simply had no clue how to handle this situation and of course you have staff who were completely negative also".

It is interesting to note that teacher training; whether it is in-service training, seems to be a critical element. All four respondents expressed their opinion that teachers are not adequately prepared to support the implementation of inclusive educational practices. This view is in line with research conducted by Barnett & Monda-Amaya (1998).

Only one of the four respondents recognized or remembered the 5 day training which was offered to the staff members of Gabriel Taapopi SSS from 1-5 March1999. The training was conducted in collaboration with Eluwa Special School and included topics like psychology of the blind, mobility training and material production as well as the basics of Braille. The resource teacher and 13 staff members attended the training. I have to agree with Mushaandja (2000) who argues that the problem we face in education in Namibia is that of "negative attitude". He draws on evidence that the majority of the teachers we are having in secondary schools are relatively well qualified both academically and professionally (MEC, EMIS 1998). Zimba (1999) however, is of the opinion that in many Namibian schools a large number of teachers either have inappropriate, insufficient or no training to administer inclusive education classrooms. This, he argues, is the case "notwithstanding vigorous efforts that have been taken by the Ministries of Education to enhance teacher competencies through pre-service and in-service programmes" (Zimba 1999: 44). Despite the lack of training, the problem currently experienced begs the questions whether it is because of lack of interest, laziness or just a plain negative attitude towards these learners? Says the HOD: "people are just complaining, they say 'we are just forced, how can we teach the LVI in the classrooms?' You have to do two lesson preparations".

Could this above statement by the HOD imply that teachers already find their managing of the classes with sighted learners a priority and also a demanding exercise, leaving

them with little time or willingness to experiment with new teaching approaches? This could be the reason why the RT expresses another concern when she states:

Sometimes the teacher has prepared a lesson whereby these blind learners have been excluded…usually when they [sighted learners] are writing, these blind learners are just left out and the teacher has not prepared anything for them.

Sad as this may be, this is a phenomenon not only confined to Gabriel Taapopi SSS. A case study research by Teferi (as cited in Kokkala 1997) indicated that in Ethiopia even though some teachers have involved blind students in all aspects of their lessons, there are teachers who preclude blind students from learning some contents and from participating in class work, homework and assignments. Literature reviewed reflect that any form of segregation of students with special needs, is socially unjust and a denial of their rights to be exposed to the same broad range of learning experiences enjoyed by all other sighted learners (Lipsky & Gartner 1989; Stainback & Stainback 1996).

It is noteworthy though, that not the entire teaching staff of Gabriel Taapopi SSS are found to be negative, as the RT states: "…the teachers are a bit supportive of these learners, especially the teachers who are teaching them, they are able to assist and help them in some cases". According to the previous principal, P1, the possible change in attitude could be related to the initial training the teachers received: "… the little training we got… it made an impact and the teachers also got to accept the situation". As if to underscore this sentiment P2 notes "although teachers see themselves as struggling, they are really doing [their] very best in their abilities to help these learners".

In my view, teachers at Gabriel Taapopi SSS would certainly need to receive more training in teacher strategies and competencies; however, just like other community members as well as sighted learners, they also need to develop a critical understanding of the prejudices and discrimination against LVI and reflect on their level of commitment to these learners.

5.3.4 RESOURCES

Reviewed literature indicates that not only should the role of managers include administrators to support teachers in inclusive schools by providing in-service training (as initiated by P1), but managers should also creatively distribute and pool resources which are essential to implement and maintain cross-disciplinary collaboration (Alper 1995). Resources for an inclusive setting are undoubtedly important and according to respondents, resources had often been diverted from the general school funds, until the regional office started to offer their assistance and support in this regard. The provision of learning materials to support the change process is vital, but often neglected or inadequate as is the case to a certain extent at Gabriel Taapopi SSS. For P2 to ensure that his vision and sense of justice is accomplished, that of LVI learning simultaneously and at the same pace with the sighted learners, resources are required. Resource materials at the school are scarce, expensive, not accessible or simply not appropriate to the needs of LVI. Since resources are scarce, the HOD argues that management and staff get the maximum benefit from the existing resources they have. Sometimes, learning materials are simply not easy to produce without the necessary technical support and skills as the RT states: "most of the teaching aids they are supposed to get, I am unable to produce them".

All respondents see the redistribution and appropriate application of resources as critical. Earlier in the chapter, I discussed the vision and a sense of justice as experienced by P2. We need to return to that idea briefly. P2 made a very honest statement when he revealed a glimpse of the reality of resource distribution at the school: "We only have a minimum number of these learners in our school and…in life one normally puts the resources where the majority of the people are". He further elaborates: "… as we would like to treat all of them with fairness, at times the small resources that the school has cannot really be used to their advantage as well". This is the reality.

One thing is clear: the unequal distribution of resources, the growing gaps between what they have, and do not have – these injustices wipe out the sense of meaning and continuously fail to fully integrate the needs and interest of the LVI in the school. In

chapter two p.13 I referred to the concept of inclusion that operates within a framework of "rights", which connects it to the "human rights issue" (p.17). Well, we will have to revisit that issue again. The equal distribution of resources comes down ultimately to a question of rights and justice, which officially has to acknowledge the rights of all learners. Prioritising to provide learning materials and other resources for LVI is ultimately a question of rights enshrined in the Namibian Constitution (1990) and our Education policy (MEC 1993), but it is also about fairness, a vision towards which the current principal is striving. He is certainly committed to greater justice for LVI as well as equity in resource allocation. This would certainly imply that the existing inequalities should be denunciated, which would closely link to his vision of redressing such imbalances and resolving to fairness.

In conclusion, it is sensible to note that from the discussion on resources, it is clear that considerable resources are required for LVI. One can also argues that it is essential to have a developed strategy that guides the allocation of resources, of course, within a coherent framework and which will also help to maximise their beneficial effect.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding five chapters have laid a foundation for this chapter. In chapter one the problem of the study has been stated along with the definition of terms. In chapter two, the review of relevant literature in and outside Namibia was focused on. Chapter three provided a brief overview of the aim of the study and the research methodology employed to conduct the research. In chapter four I presented the data received from the respondents by offering situated structural descriptions for each respondent. Chapter five concentrated on the discussion of the main findings from the research. In this chapter, I summarise my main findings discussed in chapter five. The potential value of my research and the limitations of my study are discussed. I conclude with a brief section on my personal reflections based on my research.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The results of this study raised several key issues that were examined more closely in chapter five. In the next paragraphs only the key findings are summarised.

With regard to support for inclusive education, the data indicate that the decision-makers of the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (MBESC) initiated the inclusion process, even though this initiative does not necessarily reflect or share the aspirations of the managers of the school. Broad consultations were lacking and therefore the management members experienced an even greater sense of turbulence. Clearly the MBESC did not take into account the level of support needed from their side or the possible implications of the newly introduced inclusive practice.

The implication here is that if the MBESC is committed to the practice of integrating learners with special needs, in this case LVI, then it should also be prepared to offer

support in various ways to the management of Gabriel Taapopi SSS. This lack of support from the Ministry resulted in the former principal (P1) creating his own and cultivating existing support systems.

Another finding is that management members believe there is a culture of support and recognition for LVI present at the school. Support and assistance for LVI are rooted in the element of acceptance, i.e. the "welcoming spirit" from the sighted learners that leads to a "spirit of learning" for LVI. The resource teacher furthermore serves as a support agent to the principal. Through her partnership with him, she assists him in the transition period. There is also evidence that close cooperation exists between the resource teacher and the classroom teachers since they jointly plan and prepare lessons for LVI.

Managing a new inclusive process was a challenging experience for the principals interviewed. Change was inevitable. Another main finding is that the previous and current principals (P1 & P2) both serve as change agents in the inclusive setting. This finding is consistent with research by Kaskinen-Chapman *et al.* (1992).

In an attempt to manage and facilitate institutional and organisational change at Gabriel Taapopi SSS, P1 and P2 had to shift, in the words of Lipp (as cited in Sage 1997: 114) "from gatekeeper of tradition to catalyst for change." It was a challenging and a learning experience for both principals. Reform was crucial. The findings indicate that the main vision of P2, that of seeing LVI learn simultaneously and at the same pace with sighted learners, served as an overarching goal to initiate reform. The content of transformation include administrative reform, curriculum renewal and new approaches to examinations.

With regard to administrative reform, findings illustrate that in an attempt to change the status quo at the school, P1 encountered certain forms of turbulence resulting from the dissonance that occurred as his teachers struggled to make sense of this new idea of inclusion. Both P1 & P2 worked very hard to strike a harmonious balance between the LVI and teachers. These two principals gradually shifted from a "trial-and-error" management style and "crisis management" to a more caring and successful change and

commitment to collaborative planning with Regional Office officials and the principal from the Eluwa Special School.

Administrative efforts contributed to the overall improvement of the school climate as LVI were gradually seen in a more positive light, which resulted in the enhancement of their academic performance. The appointment of the resource teacher also contributed to an atmosphere of closer collaboration between teachers and LVI. Both principals interviewed showed progressive and open attitudes towards their work as managers. By promoting and supporting innovative practices, both respondents improved the school community's reaction to inclusion of diversity.

With regard to the question of curriculum adjustment, one main finding is vital to the management process. In an effort to meet the needs of LVI, the previous principal (P1) engaged in a participative decision-making process, by taking into accounts the opinions and feelings of the LVI as well as his management members and other teaching staff. This is consistent with what Bush (1995: 56) calls "participative modes of management". This democratic management style, visibly indicates that a concern for LVI and their academic performance are equally balanced and a vital aspect for both principals. Another critical element that emphasise the point of "decision centralization" (Yukl as cited in Warwick 1998) was the triumph over "a protracted kind of struggle" (as quoted by P1) with the Cambridge Examinations. Cambridge Examinations stipulated the abolishment of typing for LVI, while the principal and management considered Typing as a crucial means of communication. A mutual decision by the principal and management enabled LVI to benefit from typing as a skills subject and not as an examination subject. This decision-making process serves to indicate the degree to which the leader (the principal) influence a group's (the management) decision.

Still related to the findings, an important question emerged from this research: could there be a link between teacher training and teacher attitude? This seems to be a consistent theme that emerged from the data of all four interviewees. Firstly, respondents were forthright about the aspect of professional development and attitude changes of teachers: "… if we had special training, their attitude might… change. If you

are trained, you know how to cope, you know the strategies". All four respondents expressed their opinion that teachers are not adequately prepared to support the implementation of inclusive education. This finding is consistent with research done by Barnett & Monda-Amaya (1998). The lack of expertise is a concern to teachers themselves, as they feel they do not have the ability to cope with the inclusive process because of a lack of confidence in their own knowledge and skills. As a result, certain teachers become negative and view LVI as a burden. One implication of this finding is the need for teachers at Gabriel Taapopi SSS to receive more training in teacher strategies and competencies. Another implication is that teachers need to develop a critical understanding of the prejudices and discrimination against LVI and for them (the teachers) to reflect on their level of commitment to these learners.

With the regard to resources for LVI, the following was evident: resource materials at the school are scarce, expensive and inaccessible or simply not appropriate to the needs of LVI. Data indicate that resources for LVI had often been diverted from the general school funds until the regional office started to offer its support and assistance in this regard. The provision of learning materials is vital to support the change process, but often neglected or inadequate as is the case to a certain extent at Gabriel Taapopi SSS. Considerable resources are required for LVI if the vision is to be accomplished and a sense of justice is to prevail.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHANGE

The varied experiences of the four management members interviewed indicate the impact of change. The most crucial factor that impacts successful change seems to be the principal's willingness to embark upon new challenges with an open mind. The level of cooperation between classroom teachers and the resource teacher is also critical. Facing change can be overwhelming. However, both principals embraced the process of transition and so became change agents in the school.

Some respondents stated that they had no input into the decision to implement inclusion at the school. Teachers were also not psychologically and professionally prepared to

work with LVI and could therefore not reasonably be expected to do so. Some teachers tried their level best to accommodate these learners. Although participants had no experience whatsoever about inclusion, they are optimistic that "although a lot still remains to be done … it is not a desperate situation at all, there is hope" (P1).

6.4 THE POTENTIAL VALUE OF MY RESEARCH

Having discussed the main findings of my study, I am well aware that educators may require time to digest these findings and work through their implications. The aim of this research is to support management of all potential inclusive schools, rather than to dictate or unduly influence them. I hope that this research will contribute to building a useful base for decision-makers for drafting inclusive policies and programmes. I further trust that my research will interest education officers, school managers and teachers to search for a deeper understanding and to make a critical appraisal of inclusive education. Having focused on experiences of management members, I am sure that this study provides relevant information that may be valuable, in theory and in practice, to all other schools which may contemplate accepting the challenge of inclusion.

The recommendations which follow resulted from the research findings and the interpretations thereof.

6.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The aspect of training is critical. Training is recommended for management members and teachers as well as for LVI.

It is recommended that Regional School Counselors, in collaboration with Eluwa Special School and Teacher Education institutions, offer school management workshops aimed at providing management members with leadership skills to manage inclusive school, as well as to mobilize and coordinate human and material resources in aid of LVI. Support from the MBESC is this regard is definitely recommended.

In order to expose teachers to the issues of inclusive education such as teaching approaches and strategies, the use of teaching materials, the utilisation of available support services and the presentation of in-service training programmes are recommended. These could include workshops and seminars.

It is recommended that the feeder school, Eluwa Special School also serves as a resource school to Gabriel Taapopi SSS and as a basis of providing guidance and counseling awareness services for teachers working with LVI.

There is an overwhelming need for LVI to be prepared psychologically in order for them to be motivated and to adjust to an inclusive setting. It is recommended that the grade 10 teachers of the feeder school, Eluwa Special School, take up this responsibility.

6.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I do believe that my research has opened the way to future research opportunities in the field of inclusive education. My research questions focused only on the experiences of management members since my research was conducted in the field of educational leadership and management. It would be most interesting and valuable if future research could be extended to the experiences and perceptions of LVI. This kind of research could indeed offer formative recommendations for the MBESC and management's consideration when integrating LVI.

Future research is also recommended to investigate or analyse the possible link between teacher training and teacher attitude towards inclusive education in Namibia. This type of research could certainly contribute fruitfully to a better baseline for future inclusive practices and practitioners.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Three limitations of this study should be noted.

A major limitation of this study pertains to the small sample of respondents required for the research. The sample was restricted to four management members of an inclusive school in the Ondangwa West Education Region. This may be a limiting factor in the generalization of the findings. This limitation, however, may be insignificant, considering that the respondents were drawn from all levels of management. Therefore, I hope that the sample can still be regarded as sufficiently representative. Having said that, I cannot help but wonder whether perhaps teacher themselves would not have more direct knowledge of what actually transpires in their classrooms. I have to keep in mind though, that my research was aimed at the experiences of management members only.

Another limitation was the limited time allocated to conduct the research. This study had to be completed within a certain time frame and this curtailed the extent to which it could otherwise have been expanded.

6.6 PERSONAL REFLECTION

As a researcher, conducting this research has indeed been one of the richest learning experiences I have ever had.

Having interviewed the participants and while transcribing the data, I was overwhelmed by the realisation of how little I actually knew about the practical reality of implementing an inclusive process. A new world created primarily by the experiences and perceptions of management members was opened to me.

As a Regional School Counsellor, I further realised the importance of follow-up training for teachers and management members. After the initial training session of Gabriel Taapopi SSS staff members, I took it for granted that since they were based in an urban area, these teachers would continue on their own to improve their newly acquired skills to deal with LVI. I was wrong.

Having focused only on the training of special needs teachers in rural schools, I had disregarded the needs of the teachers at Gabriel Taapopi SSS. This research served as an

eye-opener to me. It also presents a needs assessment for further training of the teachers at the school.

I can safely conclude that I have achieved my research goal: conducting this research has enhanced my understanding and has allowed me to provide a critical appraisal of the managerial implications of inclusive schooling.

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APPENDIX

Research Instruments.

Interview schedules for respective participants.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CURRENT PRINCIPAL
GABRIEL TAAPOPI SSS.

1. Please tell me, do you have any experience of inclusive education? (If **yes,** please tell me about it).

2. What would you describe as the most significant challenges that you face as principal of an inclusive school?

3. How do you experience the management of the school?

4. How do you experience issues such as:

   - Teacher in-service training.
   - Allocation of resources, funding.
   - Curriculum adjustment.
   - Support systems?

5. Do you think the atmosphere of the school is conducive for inclusive schooling? What role do you play in creating a conducive atmosphere?

6. Do you think managing this inclusive school poses specific challenges? If so, how do you deal with these challenges?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FORMER PRINCIPAL
GABRIEL TAAPOPPI SSS

1. When you became the principal of Gabriel Taapopi SSS, did you have any experience of inclusive education?

2. What would you describe as the most significant challenges you had to face as a principal of an inclusive school?

3. How did you experience the management of this inclusive school?

4. What was your experience regarding issues such as:
   - Teacher in-service training.
   - Allocation of resources, funding.
   - Curriculum adjustment.
   - Support systems?

5. During your time as principal, do you think the atmosphere of the school was conducive for inclusive schooling? What role do you think have you played in creating a conducive atmosphere? What mechanisms did you have in place?

6. Do you think that the management of this specific school posed any challenges? If so, how did you deal with these challenges?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR RESOURCE TEACHER
GABRIEL TAAPOPI SSS.

1. Could you please tell me how long have you been appointed as resource teacher?

2. How do you see your role as a resource teacher in an inclusive school?

3. Who or what have been important influences on your decision to be a resource teacher for learners with visual impairment?

4. What are the most important challenges or new tasks that you are facing as a resource teacher?

5. What problems do you experience in facilitating the inclusive process?

6. Do you experience the atmosphere of the school a supportive to inclusive education? (Tell me about it, what do you mean?)

7. How do you experience classroom management, in-service training and support systems?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
GABRIEL TAAPOPI SSS

1. Could you please tell me how long have you been appointed as head of department?

2. What role do you play in this inclusive process?

3. What are the most significant challenges or new tasks that you are facing as head of department?

4. What problems do you experience in relation to inclusive schooling?

    How do you experience the management of regular classrooms that include learners with visual impairment?

5. Do you experience the atmosphere of the school as supportive to inclusive education? (Tell me about it, what do you mean?)