THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE OF INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION

by

DEIDRE GEDULD

Supervisor: Professor J.L. Geldenhuys

January 2009
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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters in Education
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Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

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January 2009
DECLARATION

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In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MAINTENANCE OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

SIGNATURE: ________________________________

DATE: ________________________________
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for enabling me to complete this journey. I have learned to stop expecting the worst, to stop trying to live up to the expectations of others and to know that I am okay just the way I am.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declaration</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Abbreviations</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Rationale for the study</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Research question</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Research objectives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Research design</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Research methodology</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.1</td>
<td>Purposeful sampling</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.2</td>
<td>Data collection techniques</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.3</td>
<td>Participatory action research</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.4</td>
<td>Narratives</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.5</td>
<td>In-depth individual interviews</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8.6</td>
<td>Focus group discussions</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>Validity and trustworthiness of the study</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>Ethical considerations</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Time frame</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>Outline of research plan</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction
2.2 Background
2.3 Elucidation of concepts
2.3.1 Integration
2.3.2 Inclusive education
2.3.3 Learners with special educational needs
2.4 Challenges of implementing an inclusive curriculum
2.4.1 Teacher capacity building
2.4.2 Role player capacity development for collaboration
2.4.3 Teacher training and support
2.4.4 Teacher morale and attitudes
2.5 Developing inclusive schools internationally
2.5.1 United Kingdom
2.5.2 Scotland
2.6 School management teams
2.6.1 SMTs in different countries
2.6.1.1 SMTs in South Africa
2.6.1.2 SMTs in the United Kingdom
2.6.1.3 School management in the United States of America
2.6.2 Shared decision-making
2.7 Life perspectives on educational management
2.7.1 Hinduism: The Vedanta perspective
2.7.2 Chinese perspective on leadership and humanity
2.7.3 The Christian perspective of educational management
2.8 Needs-based versus asset-based approach
2.9 School culture
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction 54
3.2 Research paradigm 55
3.2.1 Post-modern and social constructivist discourse 56
3.2.2 The influence of feminist thought and practice 58
3.3 Research design 60
3.3.1 Qualitative research approach 66
3.3.2 Characteristics of qualitative research 66
3.4 Sampling 71
3.5 Research methodology 72
3.5.1 Procedure 73
3.5.1.1 Participatory action research 73
3.5.1.2 Concept identification (Step 1 of participatory action research cycle) 76
3.5.2 Outsider witness 77
3.6 Data collection methods 78
3.6.1 Narratives 79
3.6.2 In-depth individual interviews 84
3.6.3 Focus group interview 86
3.6.4 Field notes 88
3.7 The researcher 89
3.8 Data analysis 92
3.8.1 Narratives 93
3.8.2 Interviews 94
3.8.3 Focus group 95
3.9 Ethical considerations 96
3.10 Trustworthiness of the study 98
3.10.1 Credibility 99
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction 102
4.2 Step 1: Presentation and discussion of findings 105
4.3 Sub-theme 1: Many educators near retirement age 107
4.4 Sub-theme 2: Challenges faced by educators in implementing an inclusive curriculum 109
4.4.1 Category 1: Educators’ lack of coping skills 109
4.4.2 Category 2: Educators’ work overload 111
4.4.3 Category 3: Isolation in the workplace 112
4.4.4 Category 4: Educators’ self-esteem 114
4.5 Sub-theme 3: Effects on learners 116
4.5.1 Category 1: Behavioural and disciplinary problems 116
4.5.2 Category 2: Learners’ lack of motivation to achieve learning outcomes 119
4.6 Sub-theme 4: Management system 121
4.7 Step 2: Action process 123
4.7.1 The use of metaphors 124
4.7.2 Area for development 126
4.7.2.1 A vision for inclusion 126
4.7.2.2 Skills needed to succeed 127
4.7.2.3 Incentives of inclusive education 129
4.7.2.4 Resources 130
4.7.2.5 Action plan 131
4.8 Conclusion 133
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction 134
5.2 Step one 135
5.2.1 Educators near retirement 135
5.2.2 Educator coping skills 136
5.2.3 Work-overload 138
5.2.4 Isolation in the workplace 139
5.2.5 Educator self-esteem 140
5.3 Recommendations 142
5.3.1 Recommendations for educator development 142
5.3.2 Recommendation with regard to teaching 143
5.3.3 Recommendations for the DoE 143
5.3.4 Recommendation for future research 144
5.4 Step two 144
5.5 Limitations 145
5.6 Suggestions for future research 145
5.7 Summary 146
5.8 Conclusion 148

References 149

Appendix A: Letters to conduct permission for research 179
Appendix B: Informed Consent Form 181
Appendix C: Transcribed interview, focus group discussion and metaphors conducted with individuals 184
Appendix D: Oral information given to participants 198
## LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Effective implementation strategies for teachers</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>Stage 1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.3</td>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.4</td>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.5</td>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.6</td>
<td>Cyclic presentations of data collection methods</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Demographics of participants</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Identified main theme, sub-themes and categories</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DBST : District Based Support Team

DoE : Department of Education

IQMS : Integrated Quality Management Systems

LSEN : Learner/s with special educational needs

NDE : National Department of Education

NEPI : National Education Policy Investigation

RSA : Republic of South Africa

SAFCD : South African Federal Council on Disability

SASA : South African Schools Act

SEED : Scottish Executive Education Department

SENCP : Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

SENDA : Special Educational Needs and Disability Act

SMT/s : School Management Team/s

UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
SUMMARY

Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.

Chinese Proverb

Inclusion is about the organizational change within schools to improve the educational system for all learners. It means changes in the curriculum, changes in how teachers teach and how learners learn, as well as changes in how learners with and without special needs interact with and relate to one another. The quality of leadership makes a significant difference to educator participation in accommodating all learners. However, for this we as educators must ensure that we are fully capable of delivering this service irrespective how old we are or what our qualification levels are.

It is my objective to understand the role the school management team plays in facilitating the process of changes, as change cannot be forced and the fear of change must be acknowledged and faced.

The qualitative research paradigm and more specifically the participatory action research approach, which is, applied research that treats knowledge as a form of power and designates with the line between research and social action particularly assisted me in answering my research question.

The research was conducted in two steps. Step 1 of the participatory action research cycle introduced the idea of problem identification in order to be acquainted with the educators’ perceptions of learners in mainstream classes. Step 1 was presented via the presentation and discussion of results. Educators at a particular school wrote narratives, they were interviewed and had discussions and the data was analyzed with the aim of identifying themes and sub-themes, from which a focus concept was extracted for the implementation of an action plan for the school management team. Step 2 was the action plan of my research study on which the school management team members decided collective as a method to restructure their thinking towards an implementation programme for inclusive education for their school. Metaphors were
used to describe school management team members’ understanding and experiences pertaining to inclusive education and why they are procrastinating.

After data analysis of the first step was concluded, the research established that the participant educators were not in favour of inclusive education and for that reason perceived it negatively. Educators are not enthusiastic about inclusivity.

Step 2 was the action plan of my research study on which the school management team members decided collective as a method to restructure their thinking towards an implementation programme for inclusive education for their school. The researcher also reflected on the limitations inherent to this study and presented guidelines and recommendations for implementing and maintaining inclusive education.

**Key words**
Action research, educator development, implementation, inclusive education, management, metaphors, narratives, Port Elizabeth, school management team.
CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND, RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Do not believe what you have heard.
Do not believe in tradition because it has been handed down many generations.
Do not believe in anything that has been spoken of many times.
Do not believe because the written statements come from some old sage.
Do not believe in conjecture.
Do not believe in authority or teachers or elders.
But after careful observation and analysis, when it agrees with reason and it will benefit one and all,
then accept it and live by it.

(BUDDHA)

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter of this study, attention is paid to the background and rationale of the study.
Furthermore, the problem statement, research questions, research objectives and an overview of
the research design and research methodology elucidates the contextualization of the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Leadership is the development by which a person influences others to achieve an objective.
Leaders have vision which they share with others. It is the leaders who unite the organization
with beliefs, values and knowledge. Leadership is perpetually linked to school improvement
(Bush, 2008:6). Harris (2004:11) reinforces this view by emphasizing that effective leaders
exercise an indirect but powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school and on the
achievement of learners. With the passing of the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996
(Republic of South Africa (RSA), 1996b) which advocates democratic school governance, school
management teams (SMTs) gained substantial decision-making powers and was given the
authority to replace centralized decision-making authorities in a variety of spheres. In order for
management teams to be able to adapt to change, they have to go through a process that takes
patience, perseverance and intentionality. Learning is contextual and it happens when the learner is taking action. In order for leaders to transform they need to be creative, they need to expand on what they already know and they need to be receptive towards change.

Leaders need to grow by investing in themselves however, when one reaches a particular position or number of years in a profession, there is an enticement to slack down. Learning is an ongoing process and leaders cannot stop to learn. Leadership at schools needs to create a growth environment in which all role-players can grow and improve and lead to the transformation of the organization.

Transformation involves every aspect of South African life and education is no exception. Far reaching organizational and structural changes are required to address the severe imbalances in provision and strong bureaucratic controls over the system at all levels (National Department of Education (NDE), 1998:11). Transformational leadership presuppose that the fundamental focus of leadership have to be the commitment and capacities of organizational members (Bush, 2008:13). Leithwood and Levin (2004) conceptualize transformational leadership in conjunction with eight dimensions:

- Building school vision;
- Establishing school goals;
- Providing intellectual stimulation;
- Offering individualized support;
- Modeling best practices and important organizational values;
- Demonstrating high performance expectations;
- Creating a productive school culture;
- Developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

At no time in the existence of the Republic of South Africa, is change more imminent and the future more challenging than in our schools. There is an increasing awareness of the relationship between the quality of education available to all learners and the quality of life in an ever changing society.
In a post apartheid South Africa, a democratically elected government embraced the principles of inclusive education, human rights, healthy environment and social justice to help bring about transformation in an apartheid education system. According to Nicholls (1996:44), education has an important role to play in the transformation, reconstruction and development of the South African society. This required major changes to the curriculum and a redistribution of especially human resources on a more equitable basis. Educators will need to rethink their roles and responsibilities, improve their practice and understandings, construct relevant knowledge and learn new skills.

The road to inclusive education in South Africa can be seen as part of a broader, global movement which was established in the latter half of the twentieth century. Most capitalist countries developed separate education systems, one system was elitist and superior which catered for mainstream learners and another for learners with disabilities were afforded a separate education excluding them from holistic development.

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) (1992) paved the way for an education system that specifically focused on learners with special educational needs (LSEN). A call for the development of a single inclusive education system for South Africa was addressed by the South African Federal Council on Disability (SAFCD) in October 1995: “LSEN have a right to equal access to education …” (SAFCD, 1995:1). The White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education (DoE), 1995) verified the position as correct that LSEN refers to learners whose educational needs are based on intrinsic as well as extrinsic factors. According to the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996:16): “Every person shall have the right to basic education and to equal access to education institutions”. The policy White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education was launched in July 2001 (DoE, 2001a), in which one of the six strategies for establishing an inclusive education and training system is:

- The implementation of a national advocacy and information programme in support of the inclusion model (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001:55).
Curriculum 2005 was introduced to replace a racist, pedagogically flawed, authoritarian, teacher-centered curriculum which encouraged and supported white superiority. Outcomes based education principles encourages learner-centeredness, collaborative learning, adaptability and flexibility. The new curricula were designed to meet the needs of all learners, a democratic society and a labour market. In January 2005, the Revised National Curriculum Statement replaced Curriculum 2005.

Most of the educators in South Africa have been trained in an apartheid segregatist environment; therefore their beliefs are echoed by those traditions. Change is very difficult and the adjustments to new paradigms even more complicated. Educators’ basic method of teaching and learning remain the same as the paradigm in which they have been taught. The drive for inclusion still takes place in a system that is otherwise unchanged (Nind, Rix, Sheehy & Simmons, 2003:5).

Inclusive education poses many challenges to our education system; it requires a closer look at how educators perceive inclusivity, how schools are organized to accommodate it, the roles played by educators and their participation in education reform (Engelbrecht, 1999:41).

Managing inclusivity is not about making differences go away; it is about using them and building on them to create a rich and exciting experience of life. As educators, we need to appreciate diversity in our learners instead of being afraid of addressing it.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

As a Head of Department at a primary school in the Northern suburbs of Port Elizabeth, it is my understanding that educators must promote a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the whole school community. It is simply not enough to accept LSEN into your classroom. You must understand what it means to believe in the educability of all, to ensure that each child has an equal opportunity to access the same critical knowledge and skills, and to be accountable for every child. This made me question how educators at my school perceive LSEN. Van der Linde
(2002:1) agrees that the idea of developing schools as learning organizations is an answer to address the current problems in South African schools.

Many a time the spotlight of the development of schools is on the proviso of knowledge at the expense of an emphasis on the attainment of skills and the establishment of a climate that augments the opportunity to learn. This implies an environment that allows for implementation. The understanding of the need for transformation of an institution is influenced by its attitudes and commitment to the process. However, an academic understanding of the subject does not constitute a bona fide commitment to the process of transformation. A change in perception and attitudes is important for significant transformation. This change is encouraged when we create platforms where all role players can express their fears, experiences, aspirations, opinions and knowledge. The best laid teaching plans may go askew if the overall milieu of the school is not supportive, encouraging and stimulating to the staff (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002: vii).

I would like to reiterate that the significance of this study lies in its attempt to explore the perceptions and experiences of a group of SMT members and how they can implement and maintain inclusive education. Educators at the sample school as well as their learners who experience barriers to learning will ultimately benefit from this process. Educators need to be developed into a competent, confident, critical and well-informed corps. Whether they are highly qualified to deal with inclusive education or not, they should be supported by government structures and if that fails, they ought to know that they are fully capable of succeeding on their own.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

As an educator in a previously disadvantaged school, it is my perception that the vision and guiding principles of inclusive education, while impressive on paper, is not always experienced as meaningful within the everyday classroom situation. Successful implementation and maintenance of inclusivity by educators are influenced by their perceptions, attitudes and commitment to educational transformation.
Within our education systems we need to create forums where educators can participate. Hargreaves (1999:122) states that “… it is plain that if teachers do not acquire and display the capacity to redefine their skills for the task of teaching, and if they do not model in their own conduct the very qualities – flexibility, networking, creativity – that are now key outcomes for learners, then the challenge of schooling in the next millennium will not be met”. Hargreaves’ research further suggests that resistance takes two forms: systematic and behavioural. Systematic resistance comes about because of the lack of relevant information, managerial ability, knowledge and skills. Behavioural resistance characterizes resistance which results from reactions, perceptions and assumptions of both individuals and group within the organization. Therefore it is essential that teachers acquire the necessary skills to be able to deal with LSEN on a sustainable way in their classroom and that the SMT plays a constructive and supportive role in their skills development.

Against this background the following research question was formulated:

**How does the SMT ensure that it embraces the interdependence and interrelatedness of each element (for example, school culture) of the school and focuses on the professional development of all educators and the school as an organization?**

Three questions guide this study:

- How does the SMT perceive inclusive education?
- How does the SMT describe the implementation of inclusive education in their school?
- How does the SMT plan to maintain inclusive education effectively?

### 1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This project aims to:

- Understand the role the SMT plays in facilitating the process of changes, as change cannot be forced and the fear of change must be acknowledged and faced.
• Offer some practical suggestions to SMTs of schools in implementing and maintaining inclusive education.
• Use its findings as the basis for the development of a teacher support team at the researcher’s school.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of a literature review is to demonstrate to my reader, that I have read and understood what has already been published on inclusive education and identify gaps in the literature. In illustrating my familiarity with the literature, I was able to relate my own research to it, and to place it in broader context. Reviewing the literature allows one to verify the results obtained from the data and to compare the results of this research study with the results of other research studies previously undertaken, in order to identify differences, similarities, gaps and unique contributions (Poggenpoel, 1998:338-344).

The ultimate goal or purpose of building an inclusive school is to establish a shared vision of chosen conditions for the future, the goal of a whole-school development approach is to create inclusive cultures and practices whilst support and collaboration are the cornerstones of successful inclusive education (Landsberg, 2005:19). Leadership in schools must communicate the vision of inclusion to all role-players in such a way that the role-players adopt the vision as their own. Leaders must not just see the vision themselves; they must have the ability to get others to see it also.

According to Swart (in Engelbrecht & Green, 2001), inclusion has its ancestry and is firmly grounded in the principles of equity, equality and access allowing all learners the right to education and equal opportunity to develop to their full potential. The SMT is in a key position to promote these values and encourage other stakeholders to see themselves as part of a rich tapestry, where the different threads add to the beauty and value of the whole, by understanding and appreciating each child’s individuality and uniqueness (DoE, 2000).
Engelbrecht and Green (2007:149) identify collaboration as a precondition for establishing and maintaining an inclusive community. The milieu within which educators have been trained does not prepare them for collaborative leadership roles. Educators have been trained with a separate, isolated curriculum or education system; collaboration is thus a totally new and alien experience. Frost and Durrant (2003) emphasize shared leadership, participative decision-making and shared responsibility for change and development. Management should provide leadership in building an inclusive school and if competencies are absent, attempts should be made to develop them. Harris and Muijs (2005) highlight that teacher leadership can lead to improved confidence, new knowledge and skills in teaching and learning, decreased isolation and stronger commitment.

The attitudes of senior staff (e.g. head teachers, deputy principals, etc.) are critical to the success of attempts to develop policies and practices (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2004:69). SMTs need to show by their word and deed that they are committed to the process of inclusion. They should indicate that they are fully prepared to take decisions in the interest of inclusion and that it is an area of school priority. According to Landsberg (2005:20), the attitudes of everybody in the school are important and need to be explored, shared, challenged, restructured and rethought when working in inclusive settings.

Schools will need to embark upon an ongoing process of self-analysis. The ideal objective would be a situation wherein educators value their personal and collaborative skills so highly that they are eager to share their knowledge and commitment with the whole school. Collaborative support and management create opportunities for educators to conduct the business of education as members of a team. Stainback and Stainback (1996:7) state that many teachers feel alienated in schools because the ethic of teaching by one’s self provides few or no chances for supportive peer interaction. For educators to continue to work in isolation would be to undermine the notion that schools, families and communities share goals related to education and the socialization of the young (Adelman & Taylor, 2003:1). Collaboration allows teachers to consult with each other and to provide psychological support. Implementing inclusion can be chaotic. To succeed, educators need to have an atmosphere where it is okay to fail. Within this environment, educators are afforded the opportunity to learn so much from their mistakes. Friend and Cook (2000:6) point out that collaboration goes beyond obtaining information from experts or just
working with someone, it involves the manner in which people work as a team to accomplish shared and clear goals.

Leadership roles need to include the following conditions and organizational arrangement (Millward & Skidmore, 1998):

- Effective leadership;
- Staff involvement and commitment;
- Effective coordination strategies;
- Attention to the benefits of enquiry and reflection;
- A policy for staff development;
- Support for teachers in acquiring new skills;
- Research on effective ways of meeting all learners’ needs;
- Development of consistent school discipline;
- Transformation of the school to a supportive community.

Leadership functions should be divided among the group and the importance of the effect of leadership conducted on group effectiveness must be considered. Leadership should rather arise from knowledge and experience than authority (Millward & Skidmore, 1998).

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

My study was grounded within a post-modern and social construction research paradigm, where research is conducted to critique and transform social relations. A postmodernist researcher seeks alternative methods for evaluating their work, including emotionality, personal responsibility and dialogue with subjects (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003:31). For these reasons, I used qualitative research methods. I believe that we are shaped by a large extent by our experiences and social realities, thus there is no single reality (Merriam, in Babbie & Mouton, 2001:72). Our interpretations of the world construct our reality and are shaped by events, encounters and our experiences therein. Educators each have a different role to play within their worlds, they share values and perspectives with others and this adds up to their realities.
Within a postmodern and social construction paradigm the researcher is encouraged to take an explicitly critical and political stance in relation to the discourses that are portrayed as ultimate truths and which serve to maintain oppressive power relations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003:20). A constructivist inquiry was used to understand the role the SMT plays in facilitating the process of change. My intention was not only to understand the role of the SMT in implementing inclusive education, but also to assist in the empowerment of the members to better understand their limitations and to bring about change to handle inclusive classrooms more successfully.

Qualitative research methods, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:78), are most appropriate to the study of social processes over periods of time. These processes will guide the successful implementation of inclusive education within schools in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. The complexity of these processes is suggested by the failure of past interventions and cannot be explained in terms of simple cause-effect sequences.

According to Mouton (2003:150), qualitative methods are highly recommended to gain understanding and insight into the life world of research participants. Educators operate in an individualistic environment where very little opportunities are created to express the challenges and uncertainties they face in mainstream education. By utilizing a qualitative approach, an attempt will be made to appreciate participant’s perception on inclusive education, because the complexities, opulence and diversity of their lives can only be captured by describing what really goes on in their everyday lives, incorporating the milieu in which they operate, as well as their frame of reference.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach was used to provide a detailed description of this study. This study can be described as an exploratory and descriptive journey concerned mainly with the collection of rich textual data. According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:44), researchers are interested in investigating and responding to exploratory and descriptive questions for example in this study: “What is the SMT’s perception of inclusive education?” and “How does the SMT implement and maintain inclusive education?” Maykut and Morehouse state that the outcome of qualitative
studies is not the generalization of results, but a deeper understanding of experience from the perspective of the participants selected for the study. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002:426) state that the qualitative research process is holistic, while Yin (1994:43) concurs that it looks at the larger picture, and starts with a search for understanding of the whole.

1.8.1 Purposeful sampling

According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994:45), purposeful sampling is a strategy to choose small groups or individuals likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon of interest. The population for this study consisted of all educators involved in the implementation of inclusive education in the Eastern Cape. However, my sample was selected from one school in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth and the participants consisted of the following people: the principal, deputy principal, 2 head of departments, 1 educator and myself. These participants had to be on the SMT of the school. The researcher was also part of the participants of this study. Purposeful sampling was used in order to obtain information-rich participants. All these participants are involved with the implementation of inclusive education at their school.

1.8.2 Data collection techniques

An in-depth and extensive review of the literature was conducted to address my research question that states: “How does the SMT perceive inclusive education?” Sources used for this study were books, journals, government documents, reports and dissertations to ensure that the researcher does not duplicate previous studies. It is not possible to address this research question by surveying only the literature review and its full impact will only be understood after the fieldwork has been completed.

1.8.3 Participatory action research

According to Brown and Tandon (cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2001), participatory action research can be seen as an integrated activity that combines social investigation, educational work and actions. The goal of action research is to work with stakeholders to generate knowledge in order
to initiate change (O’Leary, 2004:98). The researcher and the participants are equally involved in the process and each takes responsibility for the outcome of the reality that they are seeking to understand. Finch (2001:2) views participatory action research as the collective production, transformation and control of knowledge that leads to planning, development and achievement of jointly set objectives. Educators in mainstream education need to know how they can control the successful implementation of inclusive education within their classrooms.

The participatory action research method focuses on the creation of conditions for devalued knowledge and skills to be identified rendered more visible and honoured. A platform was created for the educators to experience the power of being heard and voicing their concerns; they become leaders and architects of their own development as educators. The main researcher becomes a facilitator of a team that will develop the methodological protocols necessary for the action research process. According to O’Leary (2004:98), this is a highly participative and collaborative type of research. Action research seeks to understand the behaviour of teachers from their own points of view, and uses naturalistic, uncontrolled observation to do this. Action research is subjective, discovery-oriented, process-oriented, and ungeneralizable. Rather than disregarding subjective factors, action research examines them, with a view to describing the learning environment as the participants see it. This real and information rich approach recognizes that the perceptions of the teachers represent “truth” for them, and that these factors ultimately determine what happens inside and outside of the classroom. For example, if educators show evidence of unrealistic expectations, or if the perceptions of the teacher and the learners are significantly different, then subsequent learning will be negatively affected, whether or not these perceptions have any objective basis. Action research therefore investigates and describes such factors, so that they can be acknowledged and modified.

1.8.4 Narratives

Stories are intrinsic to narrative practice — stories of people's lives and their experiences and according to McLaren (in Walker, 2003:2), “we both speak our narratives and are spoken to through narratives as we shape our identities as social actors and both respond to and constrain the identities of others”. Written narrative accounts have the ability to elucidate the often
complex and deeply challenging nature of people’s lived experiences. These narratives or stories we hear about ourselves and the stories we tell about ourselves, help us to make meaning of our lived experiences. Narratives provide a means for participants to reflect on and describe their experiences and to refine or crystallize salient features that may form the basis for ongoing interpretive action (Stringer, 2004:130).

White (2001:2) contends that communities have a cache of wisdom about life and skills of living which are relevant to the various situations they currently have to compete with. He suggest that this wisdom includes maps that guide people’s journey through life and which support in making transitions and helps to resolve difficult situations along the route. However, the relevance of this knowledge and skills in the current situation may become obscured or masked or devalued. Walker (2003) concurs with this view and expresses the opinion that more often than not SMT members’ voices are marginalized and not heard. Using narratives in inquiry can then allow research practices that acknowledge, celebrate and recognize the experiences of the participants. Narratives are the most successful way to access teachers’ thinking about their practice for teachers are best positioned to know their practice.

1.8.5 In-depth individual interviews

The individual interview, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:112), is one of the most commonly used data collection methods in qualitative research. This method in essence creates a platform for interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee that allows the interviewer access to the interviewees’ world.

Qualitative interviews are also called in-depth interviews because they can be used to obtain in-depth information about a participant’s thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations and feelings about a topic.
1.8.6 Focus group discussions

A focus group is defined as an in-depth, open-ended group interview in which two or three umbrella questions linked to the research topic inform the group discussion. A major advantage of this approach lies in the ability of the focus group interviews to volunteer express suggestion of the similarity and deviation in the educators’ views and experiences (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2006:122). The researcher will be able to get a much deeper understanding of the problem after careful recording of the discussion between participants. Bogdan and Biklen (2003:101) suggest that a focus group can be used so that participants can articulate their views on a topic or even to realize what their views are.

Krueger and Casey (2000:25) suggest that focus groups should be used when:

- You are looking for a range of ideas or feelings that people have about something.
- Your purpose is to uncover factors that influence opinions, behaviour or motivation.
- You want ideas to emerge from the group.

Focus groups provide qualitative information from well-defined target audiences. They offer the opportunity to hear voices behind numbers; they answer to the questions “How” and “Why” by revealing not only how people think but also why they think the way they do (Bless et al., 2006:122). Thus, they help understanding the criteria needed for successful laws and policies and they reveal the range of people’s opinions across several groups by comparing data collected. They also provide unique opportunities for politicians, governments’ officials and public figures to develop visions and policies that meet people’s expectations. Focus groups sessions are conducted in a comfortable non-judgmental environment, and are relatively homogeneous in terms of age, gender, educational level, and other social and demographic traits.
1.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis will be conducted in two steps:

- **Step 1 of the research**

Step 1 (concept identification) of the participatory action research cycle introduced the idea of problem identification in order to be acquainted with the educators’ perceptions of learners in mainstream classes. Educators at a particular school wrote narratives, they were interviewed and had discussions and the data was analyzed with the aim of identifying themes and sub-themes, from which a focus concept was extracted for the implementation of an action plan for the SMT.

The process and methods of data collection in qualitative research elicit a wealth of rich, narrative, descriptive data (Mouton, 1996). Once the interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed; the analysis of the data began (Strauss & Huberman in Merriam, 1998). During the data collection phase, I had already become aware of broad themes and categories that could emerge during final analysis. From the narratives collected, I instinctively became conscious that the journey the SMT undertook was not a straightforward process neither was it element by element. This whole process was an interweaving, spiral motion of movement and rest of forward and backward movement.

In my interaction with the raw data, I was guided by Terre Blanche and Kelly’s (1999:139) suggested phases of analysis and interpretation. The first step of my process will be an in-depth study of the transcripts. The second step simultaneously involved the identification of themes and the coding of material. Emerging themes and categories were identified and codes allocated. Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999:157) are of the opinion that a “code is used to indicate a segment of words that occur most regularly in data; in order to cluster segments that relate to particular themes”. These clusters were then used in the analysis and interpretation of the data and form the basis for the unfolding story told by the researcher.
• **Step 2 of the research**

Step 2 was the action plan of my research study on which the SMT members decided collectively as a method to re-structure their thinking towards an implementation programme for inclusive education for their school. This section of this research was The Learning from Experience phase. We used metaphors to assist us in reaching our goal. The team used metaphors for reflection and dialogue as a tool for their own learning.

### 1.10 Validity and Trustworthiness of the Study

Validation is imperative and multifaceted and a concern that every researcher has to answer. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) describe the validation process as being made up of the following rudiments:

- **Descriptive validity:** I presented a description of the study I engaged in. This description forms a validation in itself in that it is open to elucidation by those that reads it.
- **Explanatory validity:** In explaining why certain things occurred gives explanatory validity. Explanation coupled with the description of the study allows the reader to decide whether his/her interpretation correspond with mine. My explanation is open to being challenged and checked as I retained all my data in my research chronicles.
- **Instrument/technique validity:** My choice and assortment of data collection techniques, in my view, apposite the issue under study as I consider them to be fit for the rationale of this study.
- **Criterion validity:** In my research through the literature dealing with the role of the SMT in implementing and maintaining inclusive education I did not come across any study that dealt with this issue. I engaged in the exploration of SMT members’ perception on inclusivity at school through the introduction of changes in the area of inclusive education in mainstream classes.
- **Validity checks:** Triangulation and respondent validation were incorporated through:
  - The range of data collection matters; and
- The use of in-depth interviews with all SMT members.

Merriam (2002) stresses the importance of providing knowledge which is valid and reliable and that this information is presented in an ethical and objective manner. One of the ways in which she suggests you do this is by leaving an audit trail. This view is supported by Lincoln and Guba (cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:393) who suggest that an audit trail include all recorded material (video and audiotapes). I kept the verbatim transcripts of my participants interviews, copies of the narratives participants wrote, a copy of the interview schedule and examples of data analysis practices. They also suggest the use of peer debriefing, which is a process in which the researcher shares their ideas with a colleague or supervisor outside the context of the research process. I made every effort to have planning and debriefing sessions with my study supervisor and a trusted colleague. In this process I attempted to strengthen validity of the data that was collected as well as the reliability of the study.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics refers to a system of morals or rules of behaviour (Struwig & Stead, 2001:66). These provide researchers with a code of moral guidelines on how to conduct research in a morally acceptable way. Strict ethical measures have to be adhered to throughout the planning and execution of qualitative research (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh & Sorensen, 2006:584). Ethical considerations that will be addressed in the research are:

- The principle of autonomy, confidentiality and privacy;
- The principle of non-inclusion;
- The third principle states the importance of there being some benefits to participating in the study.

Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the process at any time. All aspects of the process were conducted with due respect for the rights and dignity of the participants. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their
participation through their anonymity and to this end all names and identifying characteristics were masked in the final report.

1.12 TIME FRAME

It is impossible to anticipate all challenges and possible stumbling blocks that might arise when doing a qualitative research study. Time thus has to be allocated to the unexpected that can intervene with the study, like access to educators’ classrooms need to be planned well in advance but on a very short notice can be cancelled which constitutes the setting within which research takes place and/or personal circumstances of educators like absenteeism may also intervene.

Presentation in terms of time allocation to different stages in this research process is fairly broad:

- Literature study (August – September 2007, 1 month)
- Describe research methodology (October – November 2007, 1 month)
- Data collection instruments and procedures (December 2007 – January 2008, 1 month)
- Observation (February 2008, 1 month)
- Interviews, including transcription and preliminary analysis (March – April 2002, 2 months)
- Final analysis and interpretation (May - June 2008, 1 month)
- Integrating results and writing the report (July 2008, 1 month)
- Complete draft of dissertation (September 200
1.13 OUTLINE OF RESEARCH PLAN

The research will be presented as follows:

Chapter One: Background, rationale and objective of the study
Chapter Two: Review of the literature
Chapter Three: Research design and methodology
Chapter Four: Discussion of research findings
Chapter Five: Findings and recommendations

OVERVIEW OF MY STUDY

BACKGROUND

RESEARCH QUESTION

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

DATA COLLECTION

DATA ANALYSIS

FINDINGS
1.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the background to the research, as well as the research question and objective of the study. The research design was introduced and the philosophical foundation, the research approach, methodology, measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations briefly outlined.

The following chapter will present a theoretical perspective on SMTs and inclusive education, supported by relevant literature.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Some sailors tried to jump ship...
Paul saw through their guise and told the
Centurion and his soldiers, “If these sailors
don’t stay with the ship, we’re all going down”.

(Acts 27:30-31)

In this chapter, I will provide the theoretical framework for the study, as shaped by the literature that I reviewed. I start off by sketching a background within which inclusive education is taking place and the role of the SMT in the implementation and maintenance of inclusive education. The chapter will consider literature related to the theoretical underpinnings that guide my thinking and methodology and will also consider the factors which emerged from the literature as playing a key role in the implementation and maintenance of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

2.2 BACKGROUND

One of the greatest gifts individuals have power over is an immense capacity for learning. A prerequisite for successful living is exploring how we learn and finding new ways to enhance that ability and constantly kindle it in young and old, regardless of capability, it is a sacred and ceaseless undertaking. How can we ensure that the SMT commit them to be part of an inclusive programme? How does the SMT plan to maintain inclusive education effectively?

Within our schools, we need leadership where one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality pertaining to inclusive education. Leaders need to articulate and develop a vision for inclusive education that is appealing and inspiring to its followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation
challenge their followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task of implementing and maintaining inclusive education. The important factor is that the leadership must buy into it, completely. Followers need to have a strong sense of purpose if they are to be motivated to act. Purpose and meaning are the energy that drives a group forward. It is also important that this visionary aspect of leadership provide assistance by communication skills that allow the leadership to articulate his or her vision with precision and power in a compelling and persuasive way.

Addressing past imbalances of South Africa’s education system will entail transformation. Any type of transformation involves tremors. The status quo always shakes when a shift is afoot. That’s what change is about. Things typically have to reach a state of extreme distress before they are able to transform completely. Transformation is a form of premeditated alteration to bring about significant organisational change both in ethos and practice (Norris, Mason & Lefrere 2003:52). Gourley and Kirsten (in Fourie, 1999:277) state it conveys a “sense of radical change, of a metamorphosis which needs to take place; and implies much more than cosmetic changes, window dressing or strategic moves. The SMT as the top structure in the organization, others look to you for direction, not only in terms of educational needs, but also related to behaviour, ethics, and standards. If you want others in your organization to change, the SMT must set an example for them to follow.

Transformational leadership is needed to change the perceptions of educators. Transformational leadership is a moral imperative deeply footed and driven by the will-to-truth and cognitive transcendence. In other words, transformational leadership is the ability to get people to want to change, to improve, and to be led. It involves assessing associates' motives, satisfying their needs, and valuing them (Northouse, 2001:54).

Transformation in the South African education system takes place against the milieu of the ongoing broader political and socio-economic movement aimed at redressing social, economic and legislative imbalances inherited from the apartheid era. Engelbrecht and Green (2007:5) state that any education system that claims to respect human rights must inevitably be inclusive. Education is and has always been sensitive and a highly contested terrain rife with tension that is
a throw back to apartheid. Following 1994, the government proposed for the transformation of education in schools in that it “is to reflect the changes that are taking place in our society and to strengthen the values and practices of our new democracy …” and, that “… this is not negotiable” (Bengu, 1997:2). Transformation as a result of democracy is therefore considered to be a process in which institutions develop and maintain an environment in which all the role players are afforded an equal opportunity to develop to their full potential and make a meaningful contribution to the institution and its objectives. The purpose of transformation of mainstream education should then not only be about inclusive action but should also focus on the diversification of the school, its structures and practices and the development and recognition of new and common values. Some academic theorists are of the opinion that this move is only possible if all stakeholders and role-players undergo a change in mindset. This shift would entail the sensitization or reorientation of these stakeholders and role-players to the need for change, the process of this change and how these changes will impact on the people, process and practices of the institution (Fourie, 1999:56; Norris et al., 2003:102; Daniels, 2001:45).

I am of the opinion that fourteen years into our democracy, many institutions continue to face the challenge of bridging the gap between the democratic ideals of policy and the practical implementation of policy. The greatest challenge of all has proven to be bridging the gap between the idealism expressed in policy documents and the realities of education systems that influence the responsiveness of schools and communities to inclusive education (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:82). Attempts to bridge this gap are branded by transformational agendas that essentially focus on changes in institutional governance, restructuring curricula and a change in the focus of research. A solution to the problem of bridging theory into practice is to develop a transformative approach to inclusion – which involves asking how can we actually transform the system – such that it is more capable to reach out to all learners in a way which suggest it is an ongoing process that never ends in that sense (Barton, 1998:41). Any transformation or change process is multidimensional, involves changes in conceptions, skills, practices and theory (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:67). Every system of the school is affected which adds to its complexity. Educational change in South Africa is a necessity because the attitudes and values of many adult South Africans were formed in an apartheid oppressive regime. A multi-cultured, multi-religious
and diverse South African society puts pressure on the school to conform to change. Societal expectations enhance the turbulence experience in schools.

It is not enough for the SMT to know where they going, because they might find themselves wandering without direction. Knowing why they want to make the journey will help drive them to that destination and keep them focused on the main road. Personal values, which determine how individuals perceive, interpret and evaluate experience (Butroyd, 1997:3; Manstead, 1997:245), have a radical impact on the behaviour of individuals and groups (Zuber-Skerritt, 2001:8). Teachers’ daily choices from the types of teaching strategy available to them may therefore also be directed by deep-seated personal values. It appears, for example, that many educators continue to prefer, in the first instance, to use individualism, competition and a winner takes-all attitude when it attempt to limit ideals of an inclusive society where everyone can be stakeholders (Swart & Pettipher, 2001:8), in spite of the proven ineffectiveness of this choice.

2.3 ELUCIDATION OF CONCEPTS

Over the past decades, major changes emerged regarding approaches towards LSEN, particularly in South Africa. This section briefly engages with the concepts of integration, inclusive education and categorization of LSEN.

2.3.1 Integration

Within the broad context of transformation, the NDE had to commit itself to move away from the separate systems of education, which existed (special and ordinary), to one system which has the ability to recognize and respond to the diverse needs of its learner population. Integration is viewed as a mechanism in which individual learners are expected to adapt to conditions and practices in ordinary schools (Armstrong, Belmont & Verillon, 2000:56). Adjustments are made to the individual learner and the child’s presence in school is dependent on his/her ability to assimilate with the status quo.
The DoE (1997:55) states that learners should have the ability to move from one learning context to another e.g. from pre-primary to general education and training, from a specialized centre of learning to an ordinary centre of learning, or from a formal to a non-formal programme. The Department emphasizes the fact that opportunities to successfully integrate and include all learners in life should be provided irrespective of the learning context.

The children continuously are placed into existing systems and the emphasis is on where pupils are educated and not on how they are educated. It was important for the SMT to answer the question amongst themselves: Are we prepared as a school to reach out to our learner population especially LSEN and not marginalize them from education? Booth (cited in Thomas & Vaughan, 2004:58) defines integration as a process of social adaptation, socialization and inter-acceptance of an individual with disabilities into society.

2.3.2 Inclusive education

How does one define inclusion in education when there is still significant perplexity about what it essentially means? The meaning given to inclusion in both government documents and school curricula differs from country to country as well as in within different elements of the same education systems as highlighted by Swart and Pettipher (2005:3) and adds to the mystification of inclusion even further.

Green (2001:4) states that inclusive education is the term used to describe educational policies and practices that uphold the right of learners with disabilities to belong and learn in mainstream education. The Inclusive Education Policy (DoE, 2002:22) does not refer to categories of disability but rather to levels of support needed by the learners. The definition refers specifically to the teaching of the disabled child suggesting a perception founded on the principle of a medical deficit. The disability perspective has been criticized as being too narrow in its understanding of inclusion because it tends to focus only on one form of exclusion (York-Barr, Sommerness, Duke & Ghere, 2005:201). Various writers reiterate that learners need to know that their membership to the class, school and society is a human right and not a corollary reliant on academic and physical disability (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001:5).
Additionally, a definition that focuses on the inclusion of all pupils in a school, regardless of their weaknesses in any area, once again refers to individuals who is seen “not to be able” because of a disability (Hodkinson, 2005:18). Inclusion means we all belong, it means not having to fight for a chance to be part of a classroom or a school community; it means that all children are accepted (Sapon-Shevin, 1999:4). According to Hodkinson (2005:78), these definitions refer only to children whom society and institutions believe to have “special needs”. Children branded as having special educational needs were labeled and placed in settings. This resulted in excluding them from both mainstream classes and society as a whole. Du Toit (cited in Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:3) states that it was genuinely believed to be in the learner’s best interest.

On the other hand, you find definitions that focused on the diversity or social change perspectives: “Inclusion is not simply about reconstructing provision for learners with disability; it is a means of extending educational opportunities to a wide range of groups who may historically have had little or no access to schooling” (Dyson & Forlin, 1999:32). It is comprehensible that inclusion in education is a multifarious and complex concept. Inclusion is seen as much more than a simple issue of placement; it is more likely to be understood as being about the quality of learning and participation (Rouse & Florian, 1997; Mittler, 2000). Inclusion provides people with disabilities the opportunity to function in society on active levels and to enjoy equality, respect and the right to be different.

I find for the purpose of this study the following definitions of inclusive education most appropriate: Inclusion is a process. Inclusive education is not merely about providing access into mainstream schools for pupils who previously has been excluded. It is not about closing down on unacceptable systems of segregated provision and dumping those pupils in an unchanged mainstream system (Barton, 1998:85). Inclusive education is concerned with the participation of all individuals and the removal of all forms of disqualifying practice in existing school systems (Evans, 2007:6). According to the Department of Education and Skills (2004), inclusion is about the significance of children’s experiences; how they are facilitated to learn, achieve and participate copiously in the life of the school. Adopting inclusive education is a process of educators enquiring into their own context to see how it might be developed and knowing it is a progression of personal, social and professional growth. The United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2005:15) defines inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners and reducing exclusion, within and from education in order to provide all their basic human rights to education and the right to social membership. It is about making sense of life’s experiences in a professional sense and very much valuing the role of other human beings in that process.

Benjamin (2002:50) asserts that inclusion in school is about brazen out and changing segregated attitudes, practices, structures and policies through participation of all the members of the particular community. According to the author, inclusion should be understood in relation to exclusion. Making inclusive education a reality within South African schools will be determined by the long-term professional development of educators (Swart, Pettipher, Engelbrecht & Eloff, 2002:175). Research holds the answer for many challenges that educators face. Educators will be able to answer for themselves how to teach and what to teach because they will play a more dominant role in the analysis and discussions in their schools.

Booth (2000:64) states that some continue to want to make inclusion primarily about special needs education; he concludes that holding that position seems absurd. If inclusion is about the development of comprehensive community education and about prioritizing community over individualism beyond education, then the history of inclusion is the history of these struggles for an education system which serve the interest of communities and which does not exclude anyone within those communities. One can comfortably assume that inclusion is about education for all members of a school community thus enabling educators to become reflective practitioners. Inclusion is unending resulting in the school continuing to develop to even greater inclusion for all participants of the school community. Inclusion recognizes the need for schools and communities to build reciprocal supportive associations in the interest of both. Booth, Nes and Stromstad (2003:2) reiterate that all role-players need to see education as broader than schooling and inclusive schools need to support education within the community instead of being the only source of education.
2.3.3 Learners with special educational needs

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them which is additional to, or otherwise different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in school (1996 Education Act, Section 312 as cited in Farrell, 2004:13). This traditional definition only caters for a small minority of LSEN who require support or specialized programmes in order to engage in some form of learning process.

Skrtic (1991:67) suggest that LSEN are “artifacts of the traditional curriculum”. Schools thus need to be reformed and pedagogy should be improved to respond positively to learner diversity to create opportunities for learning enrichment. Special educational needs “are a barrier” in the education of learners especially if a school adopts and supports the philosophy of “education for all” and it makes no productive contribution to the inclusive education agenda.

Special education extends beyond what the traditional classroom practice offers by using specialized instruction and teaching facilities to cater for learners with sensory impairments, those with learning difficulties, the gifted and talented (Swartland, 1996:72) and others with different developmental disorders (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006:98). Many contextualized definitions of special education exist. However, central to most definitions are the concepts of assessment, diagnosis, placement, intervention and evaluation. In the South African context, special needs education is described as focusing on medical treatments or interventions guided by “labels of difficulty and disability applied through a process of assessment and diagnosis” (Bunch, 2005).

Children identified as having special educational needs were labeled and placed in special settings that excluded them from mainstream of education and of society, frequently, if not always, in the genuine belief that this was in their best interest (Du Toit, 1996:55). Government as a way of accepting responsibility for the education of learners with disabilities took the form of special education. The special education experts assessed and classified children with disabilities and created categories that determine the special educational opportunities available
to them. Engelbrecht and Forlin (1997:4) argue that learners in South Africa under the apartheid system were not only separated and discriminated against in conformity with the ethnic divisions of the apartheid education system, but also on “the basis of disability, race and colour”.

The UNESCO (1994) document maintains that learners with disabilities should be educated with their peers, thus schools have to change many of their practices and have to adapt a different mindset with children perceived to be different (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:3). One can thus conclude that special educational needs is an umbrella, an all encompassing term, which describes a wide array of difficulties which may impair children’s aptitude to achieve whilst at school.

Special education needs teaching is “instruction focused on individual need. It is carefully planned, intensive, urgent, relentless, and goal directed. It is an empirically supported practice, drawn from research” (Zigmond, 1997:385). Heward (2003) furthers this definition stating that special education “… is focused, intense, urgent, precise, structured and continually monitored for procedural fidelity and effects”. Special education practices are not lost, but are central to the success of education programs across all settings. The skills and knowledge of the special educator are imperative to successful outcomes for learners across all settings.

2.4 CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING AN INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

In spite of the belief that education benefits most people, the South African education system faces many challenges that secure the successful implementation of inclusive education. Some of these challenges might hinder the implementation process if teachers cannot overcome them. However, for the purpose of this study, a few of these challenges have been randomly selected to show the position of teachers as they strive to implement inclusive education.

2.4.1 Teacher capacity building

Educators in South Africa are learning mediators, leaders, administrators, scholars and researchers who have to be positive to cope in every situation of a child’s life in supporting and
developing his wholeness (DoE, 2003:58). They are the primary resource for achieving the goal of an inclusive education and training system (DoE, 2001a:18). Teachers were hardly ever trained for these roles nor do they have the ability to address the diverse needs of all their learners. According to Swart, Pettipher, Engelbrecht, Eloff, Oswald, Ackerman and Prozesky, (2000:20), research has revealed that mainstream educators are of the opinion that they do not possess the adequate training, skills, time and support to ensure quality education. Kriegler (1996:41) support the idea that educators should be empowered to work within a collaborative problem-solving culture, forming dyads, groups and networks.

Teachers should be equipped with lifeskills and their confidence in themselves ought to be strengthened as lifelong learners within their vocation (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:58). Ebersöhn and Eloff (2003:48) point out that it is only after the successful establishment of an identity that one can guide people not to stereotype others, but rather to act as leaders and participants in groups, achieve some insight into group dynamics and be able to handle conflict effectively.

The reason that many policies do not work at grassroots level is laid at the door of teachers. A number of writers agree that teachers are chief agents for implementing any educational policy (Cohen, 1988:159; Lipsky, 1980:98). Teachers need to be the driving force that must ensure that policy work. However, Cohen (1990:333) pointed out that the state’s new policy also stated that teachers are the problem because their knowledge and skills are the lacking. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that teachers be involved in all aspects of policymaking.

It is worthwhile pointing out that teacher’s actions in return depend upon their training, experiences, beliefs and attitudes as well as other internal factors such as the organization and planning of the class work and other factors external to the centre, such as education policy, funding and available resources. However, teachers are responsible for the implementation of inclusion on a daily basis. An important challenge confronting educators worldwide relates to effectively managing and supporting learner inclusivity.
In South Africa, factors such as overcrowded classrooms (Eloff, Engelbrecht & Swart, 2000:5), lack of appropriate training for teachers (Forlin & Engelbrecht, 1998:216), and an increasing number of LSEN in the mainstream (DoE, 2001a), contribute to a situation where some teachers find it difficult to perform their duty of teaching.

2.4.2 Role player capacity development for collaboration

During the Curriculum 2005 teacher training sessions, very little emphasis was placed on collaborative and consultative skills development, whilst literature suggests that the development of teachers is a prerequisite for inclusive systems (Engelbrecht, 1999:127). Competencies in collaboration are essential if educators are to succeed in meeting the needs of LSEN in the inclusive classroom. Lerner (1997:164) states that effective collaboration and consultation are dependent on competence in the area of personal characteristics, setting common goals, collaborative problem solving, etc.

The need for the organization of a school-based support team is in keeping with the idea that the capability of the school community needs to be developed in order to meet the needs of all its learners. Educational change within a school-context is not a trouble-free process because it is hampered by peoples’ beliefs, attitudes, actions and behavior. They need to access support from district and their community in the form of experts such as educational psychologist and therapist. The aim would be to pool limited available resources in order to make optimum use of them (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001:49). Johnson and Green (cited in Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:161) postulate the responsibility of education support services during the implementation of inclusive education in order to be successful. Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001a:3) states that a clear responsibility of the district support teams will be to provide curriculum, assessment and instructional support. Consultation with persons in their fields of expertise, and collaboration to pool the ideas and resources of all, will be the key to human survival (Dettmar, Dyck & Thurston, 1996:342). It is becoming more and more necessary for individuals to work in teams to handle the influx of information technology and the mushrooming of knowledge in order to become effective decision makers.
The main purpose of collaboration in the scholastic context is to solve the problems that affect the ways in which schools work. Educators know more about their practice than what they use to. According to Ainscow (2002:18), teacher development has to make better use of teacher creativity and expertise. Educators are challenged to take bigger risk thus becoming learners themselves. Personal and professional factors that facilitate collaboration between teachers involve personal motivation, receptivity or openness toward divergent opinions, organizational competence, flexibility, relationships between team members, sense of responsibility, reflexive capacity, competence to innovate, sense of humility, and volunteering. Communication is fundamental to the achievement of good professional relationships (Dettmar, Dyck & Thurston, 1999:99). Collaboration must be based on a commitment that requires participants to be inclined to listen and to explain both own and other peoples’ ideas – a commitment that acts as a precautionary strategy in the face of factors that slow down interaction (Hanko, 1999:53).

The social nature of collaboration entails enthusiasm to volunteer and a personal commitment on the part of those who are going to participate in the work of the team. Some authors are of the belief that collaboration should fundamentally be based on a voluntary regime and that it must not be imposed (Friend & Cook, 2000; Pugach & Johnson, 1995). Creating a co-operative culture involves building up working relationships that should be spontaneous and must not be the result of administrative constraints or coercive means that force teachers to participate in co-operative experiences (Hargreaves, 1999).

If schools are to be successful, a professional community of support among teachers is necessary. Typically, teaching is an isolated and isolating profession. This is particularly problematic when teachers are dealing with children with many life challenges. If teachers do not have support in the class, forums for dialogue, communication, sharing, and problem solving, it is all too easy for frustrations to develop and learners with high needs to become targets.

2.4.3 Teacher training and support

Bothma, Gravett and Swart (2000:202) argue that South African teachers do not have a clear understanding of the demanding nature of the changes that they have to put into practice. Fiske
and Ladd (2004:194) claim that little was done to build “the deep knowledge structures and professional ethos required for the long-term qualitative improvement of teaching and learning”.

Regardless of momentous progress in upgrading the skills of unqualified teachers as of 2001, a significant number of teachers did not meet the most minimum requirements level of matriculation and three years of training, even teachers with the requisite qualifications required ongoing professional support (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:195). The DoE has made many rigorous efforts to build the capacity of educators through training in the new Curriculum 2005. Naicker (cited in Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:60) argues that the one-week training session did not offer a theoretical framework. It also failed to emphasize the epistemological difference between the old (where teachers dominated in the classrooms) and the new (of participatory approaches) curricula. Educators are not in a position to implement either outcomes-based education or inclusive education as advocated by the state (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:60). The Education Department did not introduce minor changes to the education system but they were dealing with the transformation of the entire system.

Naicker (1999:87) regards outcomes-based education and inclusive education as a paradigm shift, and educators should understand it as such. The implementation of outcomes-based education was not without its share of obstacles as well as negativity on the part of educators. Many workshops, seminars and other forums on outcomes-based education assumed that shifting paradigms was a simple issue disregarding the fact that teachers in South Africa have been trained in the traditional approach, which was content-bound and focused on the transmission of knowledge. This means that the gross inequalities of the past in term of educational attainment will need to be atoned. The new curriculum destabilizes teachers’ beliefs regarding teaching and learning. Roux (1998:84) agrees that the paradigm within which one functions hinders one from effectively predicting the future by arguing that there is no obligation to change. He further conceded that looking to the future from one’s old paradigm will not help form the future but oppose it and hence creative thinking may not take place.

It has been repeatedly found in the international world that in-service training does not, in the end, make much difference to teachers’ behaviour in the classroom (Witt, Van der Heyden &
In addition, the National Teacher Education Audit (DoE, 1997:18) reports that the majority of opportunities for in-service training in South Africa consist of workshops or short courses with limited opportunities for continual support.

### 2.4.4 Teacher morale and attitudes

Morale is generally considered to be a feeling, a state of mind, a mental attitude and an emotional attitude. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:16) define morale as an educator’s perception of his task, based on the perception the educator has of himself in the school, and the extent to which the educator’s own expectations are met. One can thus confidently say that morale is the professional interest and enthusiasm that people demonstrate towards the attainment of the individual and the group aspires in a specific situation. The attitude of educators is one of the most significant elements for successful inclusion in the education and training system (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2000:27). The Education Labour Relations Council Integrated Report (2005) shows that the morale of teachers within South African schools is generally very low. The Danida Project Report (DoE, 2002a) emphasizes the fact that all the educational restructuring besieges teachers since our new democracy. However, this resulted in feelings of disempowerment, low self-esteem and an inability to describe them.

Teaching is a stressful and challenging occupation. Many teachers are de-motivated and feel hopeless. The curriculum is demanding and overloaded with administrative duties. These factors, combined with some very unhelpful learners, are driving teachers out of the profession. According to the DoE (2005:60), educators’ workload is not only a highly contentious issue worldwide, but is also connected to educator stress and burnout. Greater demands made on educators and changing roles in educational restructuring are factors linked to educator stress (DoE, 2005:60).

Teachers need to look after themselves and strengthen themselves for the job ahead. Teachers need to be vigorous, self-aware and have their self-esteem intact. Teachers must assert themselves and boost their self-esteem so that when confronted with challenges of inclusivity they can respond respectfully without prejudice or collapse.
Mercer and Evans (1991:297) recognize that, although there are limits to what may be achieved, institutional leaders and managers do have scope to redress the negative effects upon teachers’ attitudes to their work of government-imposed policy and rhetoric. Professional myopia is a term they use in reference to school managers’ failure to address issue of job satisfaction among staff. Stephens (1998:33) states that many teachers face poor prospects, low morale and even lower pay levels, but treat them right and they will move mountains for you. According to Gatewood, Taylor and Ferrell (1995:460), respect, appreciation, adequate compensation, involvement, promotion opportunities, a pleasant work environment and a positive organizational culture are all potential morale boosters that can influence motivation.

2.5 DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS INTERNATIONALLY

If we consider those elements that most clearly lead to the development of inclusive education according to the report on Primary Education from the European Agency for the Development of Special Education (2003), I want to draw attention to the following objective so that before the SMT assumes their position, they should have in mind what leadership is all about.

- Pedagogic leadership: The motivation of the management team in dealing with diversity improves other staff’s involvement. The head must show strong leadership. Inclusion should be an issue discussed and shared by all the teachers, thereby generating internal motivation that would improve the attention to diversity among the education professionals involved.

2.5.1 United Kingdom

In October 1997, the English Labour government very sturdily came out in support of building an inclusive system as defined by the Salamanca World Statement on Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994). Dysan and Millward (2000:5) are of the opinion that this move did not bring about significant change because it was merely the expansion of existing provision to admit LSEN who had more severe difficulties.
The Green Paper Excellence For All Children published in October 1998 (Department for Education and Employment, 1997), and its successive Programme of Action – Meeting Special Educational Needs (DFEE, 1998), forcefully support the principle that all children with special educational needs should be educated in mainstream schools. Guidelines were issued to United Kingdom schools and local education authorities featuring ways of removing barriers to learning and learner participation that encumber or exclude LSEN. In the United Kingdom, it is unlawful to discriminate against pupils on the basis of their disability; this law is stated in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (SENCP, 2001) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA, 2001). Education for all children in the United Kingdom is a right that they must enjoy in the mainstream education.

However, the development of an inclusive policy in the United Kingdom is not without challenges. Schools are expected, due to the demands of an ever-changing marketplace philosophy, to sustain the principles of academic excellence, choice and competition, which is incongruence with a policy of educational and social inclusion. The teachers’ resistance voiced in the study of Croll and Moses (2000) could be credited to the respondents’ lack of confidence both in their own instructional skills and in the quality of support available to them. Undeniably, another repeatedly quoted barrier in the inclusion literature is the inadequate preparedness of teachers to meet the needs of a wide range of pupils with special educational needs. Research in the United Kingdom indicates that many newly qualified teachers entering the professional arena perceive themselves as ill equipped to teach these pupils (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000a). To a certain extent, this is due to the increased school-based element in original training, which does not normally allow sufficient consideration of approaches to the teaching and learning of learners with diverse educational needs. Skilled teachers have also been reported in the literature as having deficient knowledge and teaching skills to sustain the inclusion of pupils with multifarious needs while working effectively to enhance their performance standards (Avramidis, et al., 2000b; Rose, 2001). Further, the limited opportunities for professional development have resulted in the continuation of negative attitudes towards pupils with special educational needs and disbelief towards the feasibility of a fully inclusive education system.
Writing on inclusion shows there is a strong demand on the part of teachers for more training with a narrower focus on specific or individual groups of learners. This was reflected in a recent literature review conducted by Lewis and Norwich (Norwich & Lewis, 2001; Lewis & Norwich, 2005) examined whether differences between learners can be identified and systematically linked with learners’ needs for differential teaching. In challenging the claim that distinctive teaching strategies are needed for children with special needs, the authors concluded that the notion of “continua of teaching approaches” is useful as it captures the suitability of more concentrated and unambiguous teaching for pupils with different degrees of learning difficulties. This perception also makes it possible for teachers to distinguish between the “normal” adaptations in class teaching for most pupils and the greater degree of adaptations required for those with more severe difficulties in learning, those designated as having special educational needs. These are adaptations to common teaching approaches and have been called specialized adaptations, or “high density” teaching. Undoubtedly, there is a great need for educator retraining on the principles and teaching methodology of inclusive education.

2.5.2 Scotland

In 2004, the Education Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act (Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED), 2004) came into being, offering the probability to endow with new opportunities to address problems that have concerned inclusive education in Scotland. The duty of education authorities was to establish procedures for identifying and meeting the additional support needs of every child for whose education they are responsible. The major challenge was how Scottish education might best promote better life chances for all of Scotland’s children and how legislation can support this aspiration.

On 1st November 2004, Scottish Ministers published a set of four documents which was essential to the development of Scottish school education over the next few years. It stressed the magnitude of formative assessment and the need to shun extreme summative assessment.

In November 2003, the Curriculum Review Group (Scottish Executive Education Department, 2003) discussed at length the values on which the curriculum should be based. They agreed that
these should be wisdom, justice and compassion. The Curriculum Review Group concluded that “in essence [the curriculum] must be inclusive, be a stimulus for personal achievement and, through the broadening of pupil’s experience of the world, be an encouragement towards informed and responsible citizenship”. School pupils are in the process of becoming rounded individuals engaged in social and community life to comfortably, fit in with the demands of society. This belief is further highlighted in the Ambitious, Excellent Schools (SEED, 2004) who goes on to articulate that pupils ought to be allowed to become successful learners and provided with the necessary support. The Scottish inclusive curriculum what they value as a nation and what they seek for their young children. It is designed to convey knowledge which is considered to be important and to promote the development of values, understanding and capabilities. It is concerned with both what is to be learned and how it is taught.

There are risks and no guarantees that policy alone, will lead to more inclusive practices, without positive intervention as stated in Hayward, MacBride, Smith and Spencer (2005). Therefore, schools need to build up a wide repertoire of approaches and resources to meet the diversity of needs.

2.6 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS

This section will focus on the role of the SMT in curriculum change management. School managers are expected to assume greater responsibility for the management of all those who work in the school. Under difficult circumstances therefore it is imperative that managers sensitize themselves with the necessary knowledge on SMTs in other countries and the role they play in effective school management.

2.6.1 SMTs in different countries

In order to contribute meaningfully to the transformation of education in South Africa it is no longer good enough for a principal to be a good overseer. He or she must also be a practical leader and proactive manager. Principals should not carry the burden of running the school alone but should form a SMT who would be responsible for implementing school policies. Nothing is
permanent in this world except change. The most important function of the SMT is to manage change effectively therefore it is undoubtedly imperative to look at how SMTs in South Africa and other countries implement and manage inclusive education. There is a growing expectation that leaders and managers in education will reflect an international perspective in their practice, reflecting on their roles, responsibilities and tasks in the context of increasing globalization.

2.6.1.1 SMTs in South Africa

The concept of teamwork exemplifies the principles of working together in an environment of sharing and has a common purpose. The report of the Task Team on Educational Management Development (Lumby, Middlewood & Kaabwe, 2003:171) makes no specific reference to teams within schools, but its language is concerned with a world of partnerships which is supportive rather than directive, and whereby management is agreement with values and principles.

Operating as a team is not a magic potion for all the problems experienced at school. The perception of teamwork with its emphasis on openness and sharing may be an alien experience to educators as O’Neil (1997:4-8) is amongst those who have highlighted that teaching within classrooms is essentially private, autonomous and individualistic. However, effectively managed teams provide a powerful tool to meet the challenges and difficulties faced by educators in South African schools. The primary responsibility of the teams is to develop a plan that will guide the school’s implementation of its whole school reform model (DoE, 2000:7).

The core of the team’s joint endeavour is in connecting the processes of making, implementing and evaluating policies (Wallace & Hall, 1994:57). This entails making a stream of decisions relating to change in the best interest of the whole school community. Against the backdrop of post-apartheid South Africa, it is important for the SMT to recognize and celebrate diversity in their school. Most importantly the SMT must ensure that the school environment and the school partnerships support the school by recognizing the strengths that all parties bring to effective management. Decision-making policies must also reflect the learner diversity and reflect how the school will accommodate it (DoE, 2000:8). Diversity is about people, actions and understanding behaviour of both educators and learners. In order for the SMT to manage learner diversity
effectively, it needs school leadership to be able to distinguish between what is important and what is not.

According to the DoE (2000:111), teams form part of an essentially normative framework for school management and leadership with several overlapping assumptions:

- Leadership should be transformational so that staff and the wider school community can be inspired to share and to implement the vision of the school.
- Professional staff is encouraged to participate in teams, ostensibly on an equal basis, despite the hierarchical structures within which they all work.
- Teamwork is likely to lead to better and more widely accepted decisions.

Children with learning barriers are present in almost every classroom, in every school in the country. The law places the SMT in a strategic role regarding special educational needs for example Rossow and Warner (2000:139) claim a role for the SMT that requires knowledge, skills and commitment to the education of children with learning disabilities.

According to Johns (1996:56), management is the art of getting things accomplished in an organization. It is about moving the process in an organization along the path towards the identified vision. It involves putting plans, structures and procedures in place and then enacting them through the participants within the organization to achieve improvement.

The task of the SMT is to assist the principal with his/her management task and to share the management responsibilities more widely in the school. This is of cardinal importance if the school is to become more democratic, inclusive and participatory (DoE, 2007:B35). The SMT is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and for the implementation of school policies.

The Manual for School Management (DoE, 2007:N24) states that SMTs should, in order to effectively manage the curriculum, be aware of insufficient attention to learners with barriers to learning by suggesting a solution described within the framework of planning, implementing and
monitoring. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996:22) claims that the heavy burden of responsibility for change ultimately rest on the shoulders of teachers.

The SASA (DoE, 1996:84) emphasizes collaborative and collective decision-making between school stakeholders. The Act promotes the concept of staff working together and continuously reflects on what they are doing. It is crucial that staff function as teams – classroom teams, SMTs, etc. Teamwork is the “thread” through all systems in an effective school. Thus, teachers not only need sound speaking and listening skills, but also well-developed skills in counseling, negotiations, democratic decision-making, conflict management and group work. The quality most needed amongst teammates amidst the pressure of a difficult challenge is collaboration. Becoming a collaborative team player necessitates a change in the teacher’s perception, attitude, focus and aims for attaining required results.

Leadership and management in establishing an effective learning environment for all learners should according to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997:92):

- Be sensitive to internal and external forces creating barriers to learning and development and facilitate appropriate decision-making amongst all the learning centre members;
- Develop personal and interpersonal skills to deal with the barriers to learning development;
- Be able to balance the need to be task-orientated with the need to maintain good relationships and care for all the members of the centre of learning; and
- Use appropriate styles of leadership and management when dealing with the barriers to learning and development.

The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Draft National Strategy Manual (DoE, 2006) aims to assist with the implementation of Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education, Building an Inclusive Education and Training System in South Africa. The aim of the manual is to assist the various role-players who are participants in the emerging Inclusive Education System in South Africa especially the SMT whose responsibility is to:
• Investigate how the school can make resources available to support the inclusion of the learners.
• Submit documentation to the District Based Support Team (DBST) and follow up on their response to ensure swift action.
• Implement all interventions recommended by the DBST and communicate these to the parents.
• Take measures to ensure the smooth admission of the learner in Grade 1.

2.6.1.2 SMTs in the United Kingdom

The formulation of SMTs in the United Kingdom have never been a focal government policy, the identification thereof emerged during the early 1970’s as new management structures surfaced as pointed out in Wallace and Hall (1994:10). In 1977, the Department of Education and Science judged by Her Majesty’s inspectors as cited in Wallace and Hall (1994:10) proofed that the effectiveness of SMTs rest on consultation, teamwork and participation, but the most important single factor is the quality of leadership of the head teacher. The term SMTs became widespread by the mid 1980’s.

In Britain, the staff’s contribution and attitude toward management depended on the degree to which principals use their power to empower their organization. The basic aim of the management team is to maximize the potential of the learners and educators. You need a team to do this because no one person would have the time and skill to do everything (Wallace & Hall, 1994:57). The school’s growth depends on the aptitude of colleagues to increase their confidence and competence, and the staff to increase their capacity to work together as a team. Educational change involves much compromise, mediation and coalition building. Booth, Nes and Stromstad (2003:31) state it is about changing attitudes and actions, beliefs and behaviour. Johns (1996:566) defines change as an implementation of a programme or plan to move an organization and/or its members to a more satisfactory state.

Research of Booth, et al. (2003:29) has shown that schools that move successfully towards more inclusive ways of working disclose a shift in thinking about management. This disclosure
involves an emphasis on what has been called “transformational” approaches, which are intended to distribute and empower, rather than “transactional” approaches, which uphold long-established concepts of chain of command and control. This concept encourages management to foster a realization and recognition that individuality amongst educators and learners need to be respected and celebrated.

2.6.1.3 School management in the United States of America

According to the constitution of the United States, each state is responsible for his own public education. Each of the 50 states has its own department of education, which entrust the operation of schools from kindergarten to Grade 12 to a number of local public school districts.

Shuttleworth (2003:15) pointed out that states and school districts are exploring ways to give schools more autonomy. School-based management promotes improvement by decentralizing control from central district officers to individual school sites through the control of four resources in the organization:

- Power to make decisions that influence school practices, policies and directions;
- Knowledge that enables staff to understand and contribute to school performance, including technical knowledge to provide the service, interpersonal skills and managerial knowledge and expertise;
- Information about the school’s performance including student achievement, progress towards meeting its goals and how parents and other citizens perceive its services;
- Rewards that are based on school performance and the contributions of individuals.

Research done by Shuttleworth (2003:17) supports the fact that school-based management “can help foster an improved school culture and higher quality decisions”. This bottom-up approach is a potentially important tool for attracting more talent and interest among stakeholders than the traditional governance system of top-down management.
Leithwood (1996:21) cautions that relatively little is known about the process through which teams actually learn to accomplish their task. The assumption cannot be made that teams will necessarily best manage new situations. Teams need to move away from prescriptive education, for conformity leads to mediocrity. They must be allowed to tell their own stories in the teams within which they operate as a collective.

2.6.2 Shared decision-making

Traditionally principals were responsible for the management of their schools. However, a new and popular movement in the United States and United Kingdom is shared decision-making. Teachers are increasingly involved in the decision-making process at their schools. Shuttleworth (2003:71) states that this approach creates a different and new role for teachers, often referred to as “empowerment”. Supporters of this approach believe that shared decision-making due to the participation of educators will in due course lead to improved learner performances. Teachers who opt for the obliging path must be ready to share the responsibilities for the decisions that need to be taken and the objectives that need to be reach. Sharing responsibilities means that all the members of a team actively take part in meetings, contribute information and opinions and take responsibility for decisions (Rainforth & England, 1997:99). Likewise, they must be aware of the need to share resources, materials, time and especially the skills and ideas of the teachers involved (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995:86).

Empowerment might be defined as “a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems”, as avowed in Shuttleworth (2003:71). Empowerment all over the world seems to be continuously necessary. Arguably, this might be amongst the most important aspects to ensure that teachers overcome many of their fears pertaining to inclusive education. There are assortments of reasons why educators need to be empowered. Steyn (1999:207) identified six aims of professional development (which is one form of educator empowerment) that can meet some of the problems experienced by mainstream educators within the South African context:
• Identify staff needs and improve staff’s performance in their present positions. Changes to teaching methods, especially with regard to inclusive education, impose an identification of staff’s needs in their positions.

• To create opportunities for personal fulfillment and institutional effectiveness in order to enhance creativity and facilitate changes to the system.

• To serve primary aims of the education system through the promotion and attainment of quality teaching and learning.

• To enable staff members to co-operate in order to achieve their personal aims and those of the system.

• To development the skills of important selected staff members so that anticipated vacancies can be filled.

• To promote meaningful programmes in which the strengths and talents of each individual in the system can be utilized.

Job satisfaction is a direct result of educator empowerment because educators feel less lonely and more motivated, their actions become more consistent with their beliefs and values, they experience a sense of renewal as educators and they will constantly learn about themselves as researchers (Blasé & Blasé, 1999:231).

2.7 LIFE PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

In this section, I will examine some general perspectives on the school as organization, briefly explaining two Eastern perspectives namely the Vedanta perspective (Hinduism) and the Chinese perspective, as well as focusing on the Christian-based view of educational management. Leaders face many problems daily as they seek to improve their schools making use of different theories and practices to support in solving these problems. I belief we live by the interpretations we make, becoming better or worse through the meanings we accredit to proceedings and organizations. Different life perspectives may not be able to move mountains, but it can get teachers to think differently and to make good decisions in the best interest of all children.
2.7.1 Hinduism: The Vedanta perspective

Sapre (1993:3) states that Vedanta refers to a “body of knowledge about the individual self, the external world in relation to oneself and about God, whose manifestation is found in the creation itself”. The Vedanta is précis in a historical Indian document and the focus in modern management is on the managing of the “other”. The Vedanta emphasizes the fact that a person should first know and understand himself relatively well before he attempt to lead and manage others effectively.

A responsible, effective educational manager can differentiate between action and reaction. Each action performed by the management has certain effects as stated by Van der Westhuizen (2002:59). Any person has control over his actions but not over the effects of his actions. Management can entertain possible effects but reality with all its uncertainties does not always satisfy these expectations (Sapre, 1996:5), not even in an effectively controlled school environment. When stakeholders have an improved understanding about themselves, they will undeniably deliver more effort to satisfy the needs of the school. The benefits of following and/or adopting the Vedanta approach are that it not only enhances the intellectual ability of its followers, but the emotional intelligence of them as well. Self-consciousness, impulse control, empathy, integrity and self-motivation are all improvements of this approach as mentioned by Van der Westhuizen (2002:59). Education is a process of exercising influence (positive or negative) over others as teachers, we must steer towards the empowerment of the self in achieving the goals of the organization and education for all involved as effective participants. The enhancement of a good quality of working life is within the people themselves stretching from the person in charge to the “lowest” achieving learner. The answer is readily available in their level of meaning, personal satisfaction and peace of mind. Teachers need to be able to live according to their capabilities and to reach beyond those capabilities.

2.7.2 Chinese perspective on leadership and humanity

A good leader by Western culture is someone who can manage with confidence and authenticate their actions with rationale and reasonable arguments. The emphasis is placed on managerial
actions and the effectiveness with which it is implemented as pointed out by Kam Cheung (1996:6). This statement brings me back to my research question: Is the SMT successful in their actions and implementation of an inclusive policy for the whole school?

From a traditional Chinese perspective, the morality of the management is placed in absolute high esteem. Kam Cheung (1996:2) speaks of a humanistic approach. Chinese culture demands that knowledge and skills acquired during studying should be applied to the service of the greater community. Inclusive education, is it not fundamentally related to the development of sustainable ways of life in sustainable communities and environments as highlighted in Booth et al. (2003:2)? The answer thus lies in transferring all that management knows to its own community based on their moral convictions.

The best interest of the group is placed above that of individuals and their needs. Fung (1990:5) points out that Chinese philosophical thought is based on the constant unity of all things, the necessity for a valued-based ontology and the subordination of the individual in the interest of the group. I am of the opinion that when we can let go of the ego myth idea of what management is we can manage and join with people, serving, following and leading all at the same time. When we can be humble enough and powerful enough to let others take credit, yet still know the contribution we have made, we are truly influential. We become almost imperceptible leaders when people are aware of their efforts not ours. This is not a form of manipulation but mastery of human resources. We are recourses for our people, not visa versa. We can accept a management role without the renown if we can trust people, get them the resources they need and be a resource ourselves.

2.7.3 The Christian perspective of educational management

According to Barker (2002:13-20), a Christian leader is a servant of society, architect of organizational structures, social architect and moral architect. Michalko (2001:3) emphasizes that a manager guides his subordinates to creative thinking about the quality of knowledge they use daily. The greatest art of management and especially self-management is discovering what we are naturally motivated by, what we have energy and skills for, and then figuring out how to
adapt our work and sometimes the organization to take advantage of these natural, creative resources. Barker (2002:27-30) compiled the following guidelines for successful managers:

- Develop a relevant, challenging school vision.
- Provide sufficient resources to support the vision.
- Develop a communications network to encourage good human relations in the school context.
- Provide the necessary information to teachers to advance effective decision-making.
- Provide in-service training to develop teachers professionally.

A person characterized as just, daring, munificent, magnanimous and willing to accommodate the needs of the other people. Christianity can be perceived as a cohesive theory, professing the principle of equal opportunities for all based on the conscious knowledge of a scenario. The educational manager will be equipped to handle changing and challenging circumstances effectively.

Van der Westhuizen (2002:61) cited Thom, who stated that a manager armed with this perspective would restrict possible problems and uncertainties that might result from changing circumstances. It is my view that part of being personally influential is to know what we know. Too often, we fail to be acquainted with what we know, or tend to dismiss our own knowledge and experiences. To share our knowledge and skills we do not automatically have to be the best, but we must be able to know what it has been like not to know, and to have a passion and skill for sharing our knowledge. We also need to know how to extend our skills so that we can be teachers of men.

2.8 NEEDS-BASED VERSUS ASSET-BASED APPROACH

How can we as a management team, a professional body, best support the children we are trying to help? Mokwena (1997:66) states that a professional’s role should not be one of supplying “ready made solutions” to problems, but one of providing leadership and guidance in supporting the process.
Ebersöhn and Eloff (2003:5) state that the needs-based approach has a strong focus on problems, deficiencies and needs. It is conceptualized in a diversity of terms: deficit-based model, needs-based approach, medical model thinking, the pathology model or the paradigm of scarcity. Ammerman and Parks (1998:34) is of the opinion that it is “an endless revolving door of collecting the same morbidity and mortality and socio-economic data, writing a report designed to highlight all that is wrong with the community and moving on without providing further assistance to address identified problems”. This approach however also creates devise strategies to address these needs and problems and create the perception that only experts will be able to solve these problems consequently establishing a cycle of dependency and disempowerment (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:5).

The needs-based approach is focused on extending the status quo and is very seldom related to development and change, which is one of our main aims as an SMT.

The alternative is claimed to start off by focusing on what the school community has, rather than what it do not have. The SMT has individuals with their own unique abilities and capabilities. By definition, the asset-based approach is relationship driven (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993:9). The relationships while adopting this approach should be based on the strengths of the individuals and not on their weaknesses and problems. The approach can also be described as a “bottom-up approach” that shifts the emphasis from a service perspective to an empowering perspective (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2006:462). The benefits of adopting this approach are shared responsibilities, immediacy, relevance and practicality of solutions, flexibility, mutual support and a caring environment, as well as individual capacity building (Ebersöhn & Mbetse, 2003).

The individuals and the school through this approach are guided to become liberated and to take control of their lives. Within our education system there will always be the challenge of limited resources that hampers the effective implementation of inclusive education (Schoeman, 2000:2), thus we as a SMT should learn to work with what we have.

According to Ebersöhn and Eloff (2003:19), the asset-based approach focuses upon the following principles:
• Whoever is present is the right person.
• Everybody has assets.
• Be prepared to be surprised.
• Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened.
• So what will we do now?

In terms of individual assets, I will focus on the “snowball effect” allusion in some therapeutic writings (Metcalf, 2001:651). This creates the possibility that one change in the individual can lead to many changes in the entire system because of the interactive rapport between different systems. Assets in leadership and management could include the development of leadership capacity in the SMT for effective implementation and maintenance of inclusive education within the school as a whole.

The rationale for adopting this approach as a SMT is not to implement special needs programmes, but to afford members the opportunity to see the world in a particular way. It is a choice they have to make in their attitude to what they already do in their daily life, believing that people are resources and not problems to be fixed or recipients of services (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:31). Inclusive education can be perceived without the necessary human resources to violate the rights of teachers’ manageable professional role (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:87).

*Why have I as a member of the SMT considered this approach for my school?*

To achieve self-knowledge, which will include an understanding of self-confidence and growth, to develop suitable values and attitudes, this places an emphasis on independence and on internal locus of control, to establish the necessary skills for effective functioning (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:66).

Teachers often allude to a lack of resources as a barrier to inclusion without any lucidity about exactly what resources is needed and why. When a school clinches the ideal of inclusion they have a clear view of which goals they are aiming for (Booth *et al.*, 2003:2). A school’s greatest asset is its human resource, especially the teachers. They need support and care as they support
and care for their learners. The role of the teacher has transformed in the last decade from a transmitter of knowledge to a facilitator of learning. In order for learning to take place, the teacher has to be creative, inventive and powerful. Teachers need to be aware of developments in education, to be perceptive to change, and to be able to partake in shaping daily school life (Stainbach & Stainbach, 2002:7).

2.9 SCHOOL CULTURE

Schools are simply more than just a place where knowledge and skills are transferred. Learning happens best in an environment that is advantageous to it and that is what culture is about. In an effective school everything works together to assist the learners and educators who teach, learn and work there.

School cultures can be defined as “moving mosaics of beliefs, values, understandings, attitudes, norms, symbols, rituals and ceremonies, preferred behaviors, styles and stances and power structures” (Day, Harris, Hadfield, Tolley & Beresford, 2000:20). Scheim (1985:24) suggests that it is about the deeper levels of assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, which unknowingly define their institution’s view of itself and its environment. Whilst defining our school culture as a team we came to realize that it is not for the faint-hearted. It takes a lot of courage to look at oneself analytically. For the purpose of this study, culture will refer to the underground flow of feelings and folkways wending its way within schools in the form of vision and values, beliefs and assumptions, rituals and ceremonies, history and stories, and physical symbols (Jerald, 2007:23).

Swart and Pettipher (as cited in Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:107) highlight the fact that in order to become an inclusive, caring community that celebrates and accommodate diversity, an all-embracing school culture that communicates and lives a philosophy based on the principles and values of equity, social justice, respect, acceptance, belonging and dignity is required. Educators should have the capacity to respond to challenges in supporting their learner population by being spontaneous and flexible. The educator should have the courage to take risks, move beyond the
traditional roles dumped on them by the teaching profession and assume a problem-solving approach (Schaufer & Buswell, 1996:59).

Culture is related to the Latin word “colo” which means to build and to develop. It includes everything people do and create as participants of an identified society. Culture arises from the individual’s ability to create (Van der Westhuizen, 2002:120). This emphasize the move from centralization teachers’ responsibilities, identification of incompetence, bureaucracy, applying pressure and surrendering responsibility to an emphasis on decentralization, teachers’ rights, developing competence, learner centeredness, applying resources and participation.

The cardinal role of values in education is furthermore underlined by the publication of the “Manifesto on values, education and democracy” that was initiated by a former South African Minister of Education, Kader Asmal (DoE, 2001b). What is important is that teachers’ values and convictions determine how they perceive, interpret and evaluate experiences (Butroyd, 1997:3; Manstead, 1997:245). Undeniably, Zuber-Skerritt (2001:8) believes that all people develop a personal theoretical framework, or lens, through which they view the world, and which guides their behaviour. It is not only the individuals’ values which play a role however, researchers describe the way in which a deep-seated value system or culture may influence the thinking and decision-making in a total system such as a school. Problems occur when individual teachers’ values come into conflict with the culture of the school; it is challenging to implement a programme whose inherent values are not supported by the culture of the school (Abbate-Vaughn, 2004:229).

The principles of inclusive education are supported by values such as human dignity and respect (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:3). The implementation of these principles may require a paradigm shift – a shift away from intimidation to a more pro-active and positive approach in the establishment of an inclusive community. This paradigm shift led to a greater undertaking towards social justice for all learners. This new focus is placed on the development of autonomy rather than the protection thereof (Dyson & Forlin, 1999:28-30).
2.10 CONCLUSION

The collection of the literature and interacting with my team afforded me the opportunity to look at my own assumptions, beliefs and values regarding inclusive education and my school as a whole. I was challenged to look at different perspectives on management, sift through my own and then decide whether to change, alter or reject the new information known to me.

It also provided us as a team with a clear focal point and framework from which to investigate an array of issues surrounding ways in which barriers to inclusion can be abridged. Teacher as researcher allowed me insight into my inner world, creating a lot of instabilities and insecurities in my thinking patterns about my practice and the school as a community. This research has been an uncharted journey of discovery for us as a team. We have learned a great deal about ourselves as the greatest obstacle in the implementation of inclusion at school. I realized that in order to give birth to anything, you must die to other things. In addition, everyone goes through a kind of mental blockage when shedding his or her own skin and becoming something else, you need someone to be there to help you through the process.

Armstrong and Moore (2004:134) emphasize that collaboration, along with participation, practicality, empowerment, politics, reflection and social processes make inclusion less scientific or clinical but centered in humanism. Through this process of self- or organizational-development the school is afforded the opportunity to plan, to act, to reflect, to further plan, and so on, in cycles of self-reflection. Only when educators are presented with the opportunity to investigate, in a reflective mode, their individual and shared value systems and the possible effect on the choices that they make and embark upon inclusive actions, will a new paradigm of positive inclusivity function effectively in schools.

In this chapter, a theoretical perspective on SMTs and inclusive education were provided. Concepts relating to SMTs and inclusive education, as examined in important documents that influence the management of schools and inclusive education, were discussed. The requirements for the successful implementation of inclusive education were also reviewed. In Chapter Three, the chosen research design and method of investigation will be examined.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

A leader is best
When people barely know he exist,
Not so good when they obey him and acclaim him,
Worst when they despise him.
But of a good leader who talks little,
When his work is done, his aimed fulfilled,
They will all say, “We did this ourselves”.

(Lao Tse)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

I my capacity as Head of Department, I am drained by responses of educators when I moderate their assessment files and evaluate their teacher portfolios. Equally irritating was their response when dealing with learners in their classrooms who have special educational needs. “They just sit here and I do not know what to do with them”. I reflected on my own experiences and stories of being challenged with this educational reality and need of educators to give voice to their challenges reverberated with me.

The research question that focused my research was: How does the SMT perceive inclusive education? I chose to explore this topic through the narratives and stories of members of the SMT at a primary school in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth. I particularly listened to the challenges they encountered and how they dealt with these. The narratives, or interview guide, covered personal background, academic background, teacher training and other experiences what helped or hindered their teaching experiences of LSEN.

As a qualitative researcher who is interested in the perceptions of SMT members on inclusive education in mainstream classes, I wanted to create a space for voices of members to be heard and honoured. I explored various research paradigms and while reflecting on which research
paradigm would be best suited for the study I intended, I realized that the most important aspect of the study for me was to present the stories of this group in a respectful and accountable way. The qualitative research paradigm and more specifically the participatory action research approach which is applied research that treats knowledge as a form of power and designates with the line between research and social action (Neuman, 2000:25), particularly assisted me in answering my research question. Its focus is on immediate application and not on the development of theory or the generalization of application (Best & Kahn, 2003:20). I believe that the participant’s actions are sturdily predisposed by the setting in which it occurred and can only be generalized to analogous settings.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Babbie and Mouton (2001:42) affirm that a paradigm is the fundamental model or frame of reference we utilize to organize our observations and analysis. According to Creswell (1998:74), all qualitative researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or worldview, a set of assumptions that directs their inquiry. Creswell continue to state that these assumptions narrate to:

- The nature of reality;
- The relationship of the researcher to that being researched;
- The role of value in a study;
- The process of research (the methodological issue).

The miscellany of a strategy is normally influenced by the nature of the research and it provides a perspective on the decisions with regards to the methodology and through which the findings can be observed (Morse & Field, 1996:223). It is a strategy to reveal and capture the “lived experiences” of a small number of people (Creswell, 2005:51).

A study, which is about giving voice to inconsequential groups, should engage a research methodology and practices that create a space in which these voices can be magnified. To this end, this study is essentially guided by the critical, post-modern paradigm and social construction
discourses. Feminist approach to research is about a way of being and doing and the need to place the diverse experiences of women at the centre rather than the margins of social research (Burton, 2000:35). I used this research attitude as a dual perspective because I looked at both male and female opinions in order to study the imbalances in mainstream classes. My goal was to shun away from objectivity and to conduct research that was transformative and the feminist approach afforded me the space to do so.

3.2.1 Post-modern and social constructivist discourse

In research conducted in the post-modern and social construction paradigm, the researcher is encouraged to take an explicitly critical and political stance in relation to discourses that are portrayed as ultimate truths and which serve to maintain oppressive power relations (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003:20).

Bogdan and Biklen (2003:31) summarize the four core beliefs of post-modern philosophy as follows: reality is socially constructed; realities are constituted through language; realities are organized and maintained through narratives and there are no essential truths.

As Brueggmenann (cited in Viljoen, 2001:9) says, “A perspective has the power to make sense out of the rawness of experienced life, even though it cannot be ‘proven’ or absolutely established”. In this school of thought, there is no ultimate truth; post-modernism embraces a more interpretive approach to knowledge. In this approach, there is no right or wrong but an acceptance that there are multiple representations of truth. This then leaves space for questioning and personal preference to surface. In this process a space is thus created in which all stories are valid and there is a shift in focus from asking, “What is truth?” to asking “Whose truth?” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003:31). Any study then that hopes to create a platform for participants’ voices and experiences to be honoured, needs to “respect the ways in which participants construct their knowledge of the world they live in, the way in which they see ‘truth’ and how their social processes of language sustain these knowledge’s” (Viljoen, 2001:10).
Postmodernist researchers seek alternative methods for evaluating their work, including emotionality, personal responsibility, an ethic of caring, political praxis, multivoiced text, and dialogue with subjects (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003:31). Researchers’ own theoretical and ideological views are powerful; however their perspectives are also shaped by what they learn from interacting with their informers. Bless et al. (2006:12) state that theory needs to be advanced so that deeper understanding of social phenomena can be achieved and to ensure that knowledge not become stagnant. The researchers’ perceptions will thus continuously undergo change generating new ideas about how things can be done and why (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006:1).

A second discourse that guided this study is that of social construction. Social construction theory suggests that our understanding “verstehen” the world in which we live is constructed through interaction with others and the world. Social construction theory is interested in the effects of assumptions on people’s lives and experiences (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:46). Individuals in this worldview build up subjective meanings of their experiences. The main principle of social construction discourse can thus be viewed as the way social realities are constructed by members of a culture as they interact with each other from generation to generation and in their daily interactions. That is, societies construct the lenses through which their members interpret the world. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:396) emphasize that people’s perceptions are what they consider ‘real’ to them and what directs their actions, thoughts and feelings, implying that we do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices and languages.

Potter (in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:197) argues that the world is constituted in one way or another as people talk it, write it and argue it. One has to understand social practices and analyze the theatrical strategies in play in particular kinds of discourse. This can be achieved by gathering more facts and information from the participants who enables existing theories to be challenged and new ones to be developed. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:395) emphasize this and state that individuals assign meanings to particular entities such as events, persons or objects. This allows individuals to make sense of these entities and organize or reorganize these constructions as viewpoints, perceptions, and belief systems. The data in the form of narratives that the SMT
members wrote were their constructions that they offered to the research investigation. Data analysis and the cycles of participatory action research lead us to a reconstruction of already formed constructions (Lincoln & Cuba in McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:396).

A constructivist inquiry was used to understand the role the SMT plays in facilitating the process of changes, with special reference to the implementation and maintenance of an inclusive system. My intention was not only to understand the role of the SMT in implementing inclusive education, but also to assist in the empowerment of the members to better understand their limitations and to bring about change to handle inclusive classrooms more successfully.

Whilst engaging in constructive design, I will be the designer of a course of action which Guba and Lincoln (1989:186-187) depict as the “flow” of the constructivist design. The objective of this research is to offer practical suggestions to SMTs of schools on implementing and maintaining inclusive education. Knowledgeable choices, which can lead to effective change, can take place (Rodwell, 1998:7). The aim of this study is based on the principle of constructivism, namely to develop guidelines for suggestions to better equip teachers to work in an inclusive milieu. Constructivists give emphasis to the consequential construction of an internal presentation of knowledge through understanding and the vision thereof is the notion of being active, by making sense of things (Duff & Jonassen, 1992:21).

Constructionists cleave to the idea that human-life is fundamentally constituted in language and that language itself should be the object of study (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:149). I used the narratives (see example used in Chapter Three) and the metaphors (see Appendix C) the SMT members wrote to trace their perceptions on inclusive education. My greatest challenge in using this approach was in suspending all judgements I had of how teachers in inclusive classrooms were supposed to interact with their learners.

3.2.2 The influence of feminist thought and practice

An important discourse that helped frame this study is that of feminism. This study aimed to provide insight into the lived realities of SMT members at a primary school. Transformation at
this institution is aimed at creating an environment that is reflective of the country’s emerging democracy. According to Maguire (2000:33), feminist and action research share a declared purpose to work for democratization and social justice. The aim is thus to develop inclusional methodologies that nurture respectful relationships (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006:25). This view is supported by Fiornza (in Viljoen, 2001:17) who is of the opinion that for research conducted within the South African context, feminist ideologies which tend to be inclusive of the oppressed and the marginalized provide a “theoretical framework and intellectual space for transforming kyriarchal knowledges and deeply inculcated values of oppression”. Feminist inspired participatory research aims to create a platform through which the marginalized groups are able to articulate their points of view and to pierce the culture of silence among marginalized groups and in so doing to challenge the status quo (De Vos, 2002:465).

This paradigm sees injustice as being entrenched in the political-economic structure of society, which results in economic marginalization and exploitation, and denial of access and equity (Patton, 2002:129). The policy on inclusive education has done very little for LSEN because the culture of schooling is unchanged so as to ensure that learner diversity is recognized and valued. Educational and curriculum implementations have remained unchanged with respect to accommodate a wide range of needs that do exits within schools. Schools are still based on the postulation of homogeneity and uniformity.

In feminist inspired participatory action research, the emphasis is on research aspiring leaders. According to Patton (2002:129), this entails using research to help all those taking part in the study to gain a better understanding of their situation and to move to do something to change their situation. Research is then a process which allows people to get together around shared current concerns, problems and issues in a way that will allow them to achieve accord about how to deal with or address these challenges. This view is supported by Reinharz (1992:177), who is of the opinion that engaging in this type of research process enables the researcher to “learn from people and not just about them”. Maguire (2000:35) aligns herself with this view and stresses the importance of feminist inspired research creating a platform for the voices of educators to be heard and to celebrate the diverse positions, strengths and experiences of educators that operate in an intricate web of historical and cultural settings.
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer research questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:165). Research design designates how the research is set up: what happens to the participants and what methods of data collection are used? As previously stated the primary aim of this study was to explore the perceptions of SMT members on inclusive education and their role in implementing and maintaining it.

This research design comprise of four steps as illustrated in Figures 3.1 to 3.6, based on the work of Cowne (2003:26), with the intention of producing effective implementation strategies for teachers in mainstream classes of inclusive education. This research was embarked on to acquire an educational psychological perspective on the topic, studying learning and teaching styles of the SMT and the reasons why they have employed educational practices (Woolfolk, 2007: 9). According to Slavin (2003:3), educational psychology is the accrued knowledge, wisdom and theory that every teacher should acquire to intelligently unravel the daily nuisances of teaching.

Figure 3.1: Effective implementation strategies for teachers

Stage 1
Problem Identification
(Role-play under the co-facilitation of the outsider witness and action reaction)

Stage 2
Concept definition and classification (Narrative writing)

Stage 3
Self-Talk/ Conversations (Interviews)

Stage 4
Review and decide on action (Literature review on in service training)
Development is recognized as a major challenge, if not the major challenge, facing us all as we move towards the 21st century. This study is an exercise assisting educators at a particular school to buy into a new way of doing. Knowles (1980:398) defines Andragogy as the art and science of helping adults learn. Andragogy is based on the following understanding of adult development:

- Their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality towards one of being a self-directed human being.
- They articulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
- Their readiness to learn becomes increasingly oriented towards the development task of their social roles.
- Their perception of time changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly their orientation towards learning shifts from one of subject-centredness to one of problem-centredness.

**Stage 1: Problem identification (Role-play under the co-facilitation of the outsider witness)**

This exercise guided the participants to become aware of their perceptions of learners in mainstream classes (see Figure 3.2: Stage 1). Sigmund Freud (1963) once said mortals can keep no secret. Their lips are silent, they gossip with their fingertips; betrayal forces its way through every pore. The team was able to witness during the observation the signs that are present, irrespective of the words that are said. They could observe their resistance to change by reflecting on their own development over time; they stagnated and was shaken up due to the implementation of inclusive education. Their dependency on the status quo allowed them to be co-opted into the preservation of an unmerited relaxation of the rules.

**Figure 3.2: Stage 1**
Stage 2: Concept definition (Self-concept)
Self-concept is dynamic in nature and can be regarded as a set of situation-related attitudes and beliefs you hold of yourself, people evaluate themselves in accordance with their perceived assets in any particular environment (happy or not, confident or not, etc.) (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:52). Observation is a powerful tool for assessing and monitoring a teacher’s progress (Bubb, 2005:45). It helped them see how they were functioning, and to see this as objectively possible. They could draw out the contradictions in their behaviour. They could look at the implications of their actions and the real consequences of their decisions (see Figure 3.3: Stage 2). The writing of narratives permitted the team to express the kind of daily demands they face and identify their coping strategies.

Figure 3.3: Stage 2

Stage 3: Self-Talk
The aim of the interviews was to challenge the team to become proactive. Proactivity reflects asset-based enablement, as well as responsibility and ownership (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:61). Proactivity accentuates our autonomy to decide. The team was asked to identify a metaphor that best describe them and to explain to the group why. Suzanne Bailey (in Easton, 2008:xliii) explains that metaphors unite both the right and left brain to reveal meaning. Easton explains the two ways of using a metaphor is:

- The first step in using a metaphor is choosing the appropriate metaphor;
- The second step involves pushing the meaning of the metaphor as deeply as possible, until the beliefs surface (Easton, 2008:xliii).
The team had to discover their relative truth for themselves (see Figure 3.4: Stage 3). For so long, they believed that something was true for them because it worked for them at a particular time. However now they have new information drawn from their own fount of experience to be able to change their opinion. Mohandas Gandhi (1927) once said: “As long as I have not realized the absolute truth, so long must I hold the relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must meanwhile be my beacon, my shield and buckler. Though this path is straight and narrow, and sharp as a razor’s edge, for me, it has been the quickest and easiest”. The team came to the consciousness that they are not getting the results they want. Thus, they had to discard of it and keep looking until they found something that works for them respectively. The benefits of being a proactive person is: You can regulate your state of mind, you are able to motivate yourself, heighten your powers of perseverance, and behave optimally – whatever the demands that life makes on you. The continuous implementation of this exercise as a life-skill can lead you to a state of being comfortable, healthy and happy.

Figure 3.4: Stage 3

Stage 4: Review and decide on action
The objection of the focus group discussion during this stage is to draw the participants to a place of consciousness where they can objectively choose the right path for themselves at this particular time in their lives. From here they must build ways of maintaining consciousness so that they need not slumber into a particular mindset of doing things. The challenge for management as a leadership would be to be able to confront, to challenge, to discipline those whom one is responsible to lead. This is not a competitive approach to learning, but rather a form of pacing. Fasokun, Katahoire and Oduaran (2005:43) state that pacing take individual
similarity into account. John Dewey (1929) came up with the idea that anything that can be categorized as genuine or authentic education happens through experience, even though not all experiences are educating. Constructivism involves the deep reflection of educators on things or events that are happening around them. Taylor, Marienau and Fiddler (2000:20) summarize one of the main facts in the theory of constructivism as:

- Knowledge should be seen as a creative construction in which the individual learner is an actor or active participant or subject rather than a passive object.

The SMT must draw up an action plan, one that is specific, measureable, achievable, and relevant to the implementation of inclusive education (see Figure 3.5: Stage 4).

**Figure 3.5: Stage 4**
Figure 3.6: Cyclic presentations of data collection methods

(Adapted from Cowne, 2003:24)
3.3.1 Qualitative research approach

The qualitative approach to research has been decided on as the realm in which to conduct the study, as I wish to acquire insight into a phenomenon through ascertaining the meaning affixed to it (Neuman, 2003:16). A qualitative research approach attempts to make sense of or interpret peoples’ experiences in terms of the meanings they attach to it (Gay & Airasian, 2000:16). Qualitative research is a broad approach to the study of social phenomena (Marshall & Rossman, 2006:6).

I decided upon a qualitative research design, in view of the fact that it would effectively echo the researcher’s vision with regard to inclusive education. I would also be able to attain an in-depth description of the participants’ reality, because the perceptions, needs, limitations and fears of the participants will be articulated. It is an approach which also acknowledges the interplay between the researcher, the focus of the study and the limitations that impact on the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:3).

3.3.2 Characteristics of qualitative research

Qualitative research is characterized by three assurances; first, it seeks to comprehend the world through interacting with, identifying and interpreting the actions and perceptions of its actors. Secondly, it has a propensity to collect data in natural settings, rather than artificial and constructed contexts. Thirdly, it is predisposed to generate theory rather than test it (Scheyvens & Storey, 2003:57). Qualitative research methods have a reputation for being anecdotal, or associated with ideas that cannot be described with hard, secure facts. Scheyvens and Storey (2003:59) diverge and emphasize the fact that qualitative research methods can provide powerful insights into the world.

Creswell (2007:37) defines qualitative research as starting with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the denotation individuals or groups assign to a social or human problem. For this reason, I have selected
qualitative research as my domain in which to conduct my study, as I wish to gain insight into a phenomenon through ascertaining the meaning attached to it (Neuman, 2003:16).

The following characteristics of qualitative research are important to consider as suggested by Marshall and Rossman (2006:2):

- **Qualitative research is exploratory in nature**

This method of inquiry is one which explores the meaning making process of participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:395). The relationship between experiences and meaning making is central to this study; I am interested in people and their lived reality. In order to honour and give voice to that reality, I could not engage in a process that would entail unearthing an objective reality or ultimate truth. The most appropriate vehicle for this inquiry would, according to Best and Kahn (2003:240), be a qualitative study because one of the elemental aims of qualitative research is not the search for the truth but rather an acceptance of the existence of many different constructions of events. Cultural and historical perspectives influence our understanding of the world and our experiences in it. This view was of particular interest to me as this study has as one of its aims the exploration of the impact of transformation on a minority group of educators at a historically disadvantage school. This study is an attempt to help endow the SMT with insight into what is happening in their classrooms and school. It also help educators to realize that their voice is important and through building a body of research we can strengthen our own developing theories of inclusive education and the role the SMT plays in implementing and maintaining it. According to Holliday (2002:6), we will be enriched by new insights and a better understanding of the phenomenon.

In this study, I was enthusiastic to ascertain and explore new paths and did not allow any preconceived notions or hypotheses to influence me. Denzin and Lincoln (2005:1) sadly state that qualitative research serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth. I was open to embrace the complexity of social life, investigate new strategies, all prejudgements was set aside (bracketing), and I relied on insight to gain a picture of experiences (Yates, 2004:135).
• **Qualitative research has a descriptive focus**

My readings and experience as an educator has helped me to realize that there is no one truth or reality. Qualitative research, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:112), is based on the assumption that there are multiple realities, that the world is not an objective interpretation, but a function of personal interaction and perception. Knowledge is therefore inherently contextual, local and pluralistic. This method of research could then be viewed as an approach, which is inductive and which emphasizes process rather than product. The key area of interest is how people make sense of their lives and how they structure their social worlds. The focus is on understanding the full multi-dimensional, dynamic picture of the subject of study. In a study such as this, it is therefore vital to respect the ways in which participants construct their knowledge of the world they live in and the way in which they see ‘truth’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2002; Viljoen, 2001).

In this study, the aim was to obtain an inclusive and precise depiction of the perceptions of SMT members with regard to inclusive education, the implementation and the management thereof (Hakim, 2000:69). Thomas and Smith (2003:5) declare that data collected from participants in their natural authentic form cannot be mathematically manipulated or presented in a table, but they can be useful in passing on knowledge. To elicit these perceptions, narrative writing and focus group interviews were used as the main data collection strategy.

• **Qualitative research follows an inductive approach**

Qualitative research contributes to policy formulation, implementation, and modification (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:400). Qualitative research has the ability to analyze people’s perceptions of an issue, the attitude of policymakers and the views of those who implement policy. Engelbrecht and Green (2007:63) highlight the fact that inclusive education is the most appropriate strategy for addressing the diverse needs of all learners in South Africa. This method of research adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry. Quantitative research reduces data to numbers which is then presented as the results of statistical test, whilst
qualitative research constructs interpretive narratives that capture the phenomenon under study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001:102). Qualitative research because of its flexible methods of investigation looks at the dynamics of how things operate (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:29).

Qualitative research can be portrayed as inductive, initiating as an open-ended question, rather than using a theoretically plagiaristic hypothesis (a deductive approach) (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:43). Qualitative researchers construct their patterns, categories, and themes from the bottom-up by organizing the data into progressively more abstract units of information (Creswell, 2007:38). Challenges to identify relationships or patterns can take place only once the data have been analyzed and interpreted. The consequences of which are active participation between researcher and participants in mutually shaping the themes and abstracts that surface from the process.

- **Qualitative research is emergent and flexible**

Qualitative research is more holistic and emergent with a specific focus, design, interview instruments, and interpretations developing and changing along the way (Gay & Airasian, 2000:204). Qualitative research is amenable to the changing conditions of the study as it evolves (Merriam, 1998:8). The qualitative researcher trails the curvatures of the investigation as they emerge (Holliday, 2002:33). Denzin and Lincoln (2005:5) use the metaphor of the qualitative researcher as a jazz improviser suggesting that many different things are happening at the same time, different voices, different perspectives, points of views, angles of vision.

According to Creswell (2007:39), an initial plan for research cannot be prescribed, and that the initial stages of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data. It necessitates that the next in the process follows from the previous one (Silverman, 2002:2). The key idea of this research is to be enriched by teacher perceptions of their own teaching and learning in order to address the research question with the information obtained from the participants.
• **Qualitative research is a holistic perspective**

The whole phenomenon under study is understood as a complex system that is more than the sum of its parts (Gay & Airasian, 2000:205). I was not only interested in the process alone but also in its outcome so as to build on that which we know. Charmaz (2006:3) claims that in qualitative research we add new pieces to the research puzzle or conjure whole new puzzles while we gather data. The whole of the research gives meaning to each part, and each part without the whole has little meaning (Neuman, 2003:147). In qualitative research, immense emphasis is placed on description, describing what is taking place in a situation, instead of comparing the elements of a meticulous section of a situation. The narratives used in this study were guided by a theoretical lens used by Rosenholtz (as cited in Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:142): “How long does it take to learn to teach?” To advocate teachers, education is a lifelong process. Researchers are bound by identifying the complex interactions of factors in any situation instead of cause-and-effect relationships among factors (Creswell, 2007:39).

• **Qualitative research is contextual**

The proposed study took place in a specific area. Each participant in this study had to be a teacher at a specific primary school and a member of the SMT. De Vos (2002:301) highlights the fact that people’s behaviour becomes momentous and explicable when placed in the context of their lives and the lives of those around them. She goes further to suggest that without context there is little possibility of exploring the meaning of an experience.

The energy of interest that came from the researcher was infectious and very useful to this specific setting. The aim is to provide an extensive and dense description of the phenomenon as it occurs in its natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:27). This approach was contextual, as I had to meet each participant in a specific setting to record his or her needs and perceptions. Qualitative researchers enter the setting/context of the participants with open minds (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:95), prepared to immerse themselves in the complexity of the situation.
In a narrative study, one needs to find individuals to study which are accessible and willing to provide information that can shed light on the phenomenon being investigated. These individuals are called your sample because they comprise of a small group. They are a portion of the school population. A sample can be seen as a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which we are interested (De Vos, 2002:199)

In qualitative research, the sample size is kept small because the purpose of the study is not generalization of the findings but rather to provide a rich description of the SMT’s perceptions on inclusive education. Merriam (1998:61-62) suggests the use of purposive sampling, a technique she says that will provide an “information rich sample”.

The purposive sampling technique is a non-probability sampling technique that involves a non-random sampling of subjects. This is aimed at achieving a broad variation in participations, it is important to be specific about the inclusion criteria. This view is supported by De Vos (2002:200) who suggests that one of the primary inclusion criteria should be participants who would enrich the study. Participants in the study should add to the study by being able to provide rich descriptions of what is being studied, should be able to articulate their experiences and be willing to give rich and sensitive accounts of these (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003:65). It is believed that the participants in a qualitative study are able to give access to the specific perspective, experience or condition that one wishes to understand (Struwig & Stead, 2001:121).

The inclusion criteria for this study regarding participants were as follows:

- Participants had to be educators at a primary school in Nelson Mandela Bay and involve in inclusive education.
- Participants had to be members of the SMT.

This method of sampling is cost effective and less time consuming.
The five SMT members including myself met in my office at school in which I explained or informed the participants as to the purpose of the study, the course of the research process and what would be expected of them. At this time we also discussed issues of confidentiality and consent which was discussed in more detail in Section 3.9 (Ethical considerations). During this session I also created an opportunity for participants to ask any questions (which were discussed in more detail in Appendix D) or express any concerns that they had. The session ended with us scheduling a time for the individual interview (see Section 3.7.2) as well as looking at tentative dates for the focus group (see Section 3.7.3) session. The individual sessions took place over three weeks and sessions lasted for about 1 hour. There was a two-month interval period between the individual interviews and the focus group session. An informal gathering a month later followed the focus group session.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of this section was to present a description of the execution and discussion of participatory action research and the first step of concept identification. I looked at the following main features of participatory action research as summarized by Ary et al. (2006:538):

- The research is situated in a local context and focused on a local issue.
- The research is conducted by and for the practitioners.
- The research resulted in a change implemented by the practitioner in the context.

Action research can also be called practitioner research, teacher inquiry, or teacher research. A good component of action research is reflection and accentuates a methodical research approach that is cyclic in nature, alternating between action and reflection, continuously refining methods and interpretations based on understandings developed in earlier cycles. Action research offers a practical tool for the SMT and the staff as a whole to take action so as to solve their problem and consequently to improve their practice.
3.5.1 Procedure

The purpose of this study for me was to investigate the actions of members of the management team towards LSEN, what they think, what they feel and what kind of language they use to respond towards LSEN. Thus I went out to collect information and to gain understanding about this experience. Creswell (2007:40) is of the opinion that we study a phenomenon to understand the context or setting in which participants in a study address a problem or an issue. I was afforded the opportunity to work with the information in different ways and to use a variety of ways to analyze it. Primarily data is the material with which researchers work, however this data must be valid. The items in my data collection toolbox included narrative writing, interviews, focus group discussions and my field notes. Each participant had written a very detailed metaphor on how they experience education within their classrooms.

We used metaphors to assist us in reaching our goal. Our aim was to change the educators’ culture of working with inclusivity. This step is an action research process designed by the participants to assist them in changing the perceptions they hold on inclusive education and to develop themselves more.

3.5.1.1 Participatory action research

For this study, a participatory action research design was proposed. Participatory action research methodology adopts an explicitly political stance that has as a primary focus the empowerment of disenfranchised and marginalized groups. The purpose would be to encourage the participants to take action to transform their lives. Transformation or action is thought to be encouraged by engaging in a process of self-reflection of their social reality and a critical awareness of their ability to transform it by their conscious action (Cornwell & Jewkes; Rothman both cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2001:123). This view is supported by De Vos (2002:112) who describes participatory action research as a process in which critical intelligence is used to inform action and that this allows social action to become praxis, or critically informed committed action. Participatory action research thus attempts to create a platform for people to reflect on and share their stories and experiences within the context of their personal and social history. De Vos
(2002:112) describes this as the commitment of participatory action research to social action through a critical engagement that has at its core trying to critically appreciate and advance the way things are in relation to how they could be better. The insight gained in the process serves to empower. Obtaining the data or the process of knowledge creation is not considered to be an end in itself, but should rather be viewed as a means to empowerment. Participatory action research has emerged as a significant methodology for intervention, and change within groups and communities. It is a recognized form of experimental research and focuses on the researchers’ direct involvement within a particular community with the goal of improving the performance quality of the area of concern (Dick, 2000; McNiff & Whitehead, 2006).

The process of data collection therefore has as its focus information collection and the conscientization of participants through collective enquiry and reflection (De Vos, 2002:419). Such a process will allow participants in the study to become proactive in the progression of their communities and in defence of their own class and group interests. The criticism of participatory action research is that it lack scientific rigor, confusing social activism and community development with research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:568). The process of research is then aimed at helping to build communities of people who are committed to informing themselves about the “relationship between circumstance, action and consequence” and in the process free themselves from personal and institutional constraints that inhibit their power to live by their “legitimate and freely chosen social values” (McTaggart, 1997:1). Participatory action research creates knowledge, but not for the sake of knowledge alone. It tries to bring together knowing and doing. Participatory action research researchers, no matter what method they use, affirm that peoples’ own knowledge is valuable and regards people as agents rather than objects, incapable of analyzing their own solutions.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:56) uphold that what differentiates the participatory action research model is the rapport between the people involved in the research process and the use of research as a instrument for action and for increased person knowledge, enabling teachers to become agents of change (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:142), as systems do not change by themselves (Fullan, 1993:17). Teachers need to become concerned about change proposals so that schools can develop into inclusive communities. Teachers need to be empowered so as to
gain better understandings of teaching and learning, as well as new skills that will be needed to ensure that they are equipped to implement the required change (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:142).

Moving to new and improved action involves a creative moment of transformation. This supports Wadsworth’s (1998:78) view that all research involves some form of resultant action that invariably leads somewhere even if it isn’t far from where it started or only a small number of people are consciously aware of it. The process of research involves decision-making, and participatory action researchers engage in a process of conscious decision-making that are inevitably value driven and that will impact the inquiry and its findings. Some of the areas of decision-making that impact on the study include which questions will be asked, who will form part of the population, which phenomena will be observed and action will or will not be taken (Wadsworth, 1998:83). The decision-making remains an ongoing aspect of participatory action research and involves a continuous spiral of planning, observing, reflecting and then revising plans. This spiral, known as the Lewinian action/reflection spiral, creates a space in which issues and understandings on the one hand and the practices on the other will develop and evolve (McTaggart, 1997; Zuber-Skerritt, 1996). This spiral highlights the fact that research inevitably results in action, even the decision not to change are seen as action (Ary et al., 2006:543).

Each member of the SMT took individual responsibility for their own practice, but collectively we had a reciprocal influence on each other. I am in accordance with Dean (cited in McNiff & Whitehead, 2006:34) that states, “Action research should lead to teachers asking questions about how to improve the quality of our teaching”. Conventional research often sees itself as proceeding from point A to point B along a straight line. Starting with a hypothesis and proceeding to a conclusion which may then be written up. Participatory action research considers it imperative to the success of the study that the hypothesis is relevant and useful. Thus asking:

- Where did the hypothesis come from?
- Have they been carefully constructed and well grounded over time?
- Are they plausible, are they relevant?
Instead of a linear model, participatory research proceeds through cycles, starting with reflection on action, and proceeding round to new action which is then further researched (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006:30).

The SMT members identify areas of concern, by looking at their emotional literacy. According to Bubb (2005:29), emotional literacy is the practice of recognizing, understanding, appropriately expressing and managing emotions in oneself and other people. Whilst reading through my text, I was reminded of how we conducted this process – with the participation of the participants we designed new interventions on a regular basis, research these interventions as they unfurl and then confer on their utility and social value – with the knowledge that a new cycle will commence until hopefully, the participants can sustain the development due to their increase competence and understanding of inclusive education. This was a very time consuming process, with very little resources available to us and challenged by peoples’ reluctance to participate. In the end, however, we agreed that this process aided us to inform our practice and brought us to new insights (Ary, et al., 2006:561).

3.5.1.2 Concept identification (Step 1 of participatory action research cycle)

The first step in theory generation was the identification of concepts. Theories are statements concerning how things are related. Henning et al. (2004:14) states that theories are human constructions: they are copied from information that people collect from seeing, hearing, touching, sensing, smelling and feeling. In this study, concepts were generated through an investigation of teachers’ perceptions regarding inclusive education, as well as relationships flanked by the findings and the literature. The strength of the theory will depend on the supremacy of the data, the clarity of both gathering and analysis procedures, and the ability of the researcher to conceptualize tangible features (Henning et al., 2004:117).

Tierney (cited in Clough & Nutbrown, 2002:83) postulates that in order to seek new epistemological and methodological avenues demands that we map new parts rather than constantly return to well worn roads and point out that they will not take us where we want to go.
I decided on narrativization as my primary research method because I am not only interested in the participants past actions, but also how they understand those actions.

### 3.5.2 Outsider witness

The outsider witness is part of a reflection process associated with a definitional ceremony in narrative therapy. According to Myerhof (in Carey & Russell, 2003:2), “definitional ceremonies provide opportunities for being seen and in one’s own terms garnering witnesses to one’s worth, validity and being”. They continue that when the person acting as the outsider witness acknowledges how they have been moved by what they have witnessed, when they explain why this is so, and when they explain how their lives will be different as a consequence, this is often powerfully therapeutic. White (in Carey & Russell, 2003:4) states that this allows participants an opportunity to experience that their “story is valuable to others or I’d never thought that others might benefit from the telling of my story”. Fox and Tench (2003:2) outline the guidelines that can be drawn on to facilitate this process as:

- acknowledging the experience of the persons;
- acknowledging their preferred ways of being, their values, commitments, hopes and dreams;
- acknowledging our own responses to what we had heard and the aspects of our own experience which gave rise to those responses (resonance);
- acknowledging how our lives had been affected by what we had heard (transport).

The outsider witness acts as an observer and sat outside of the role-play session and used the above guide for specific listening, in which she made deliberate links with the participants around shared values and commitments. The SMT members were asked to describe what was happening in the context of their play. The members identified that some learners were isolated (representing the LSEN group), the educator made very little contact with them and these learners were very disruptive. During this role-play session, the educator had her hands in her hair and was unable to manage this group effectively. Fox and Tench (2003) and Carey and Russell (2003), stress that even though the researcher and participants share a co-relational relationship,
both parties remain conscious of the fact that the researcher remains the channel through which the liberating knowledge will be shared with others.

As the outsider witness I made use of a professional educational psychologist to assist in channelling us on this path of self-discovery. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:232) perceive this as a facilitating method for fostering holistic involvement in processes of enquiry into educators’ own conditions and developmental needs. Via co-facilitated reflection the outsider witness brought into the session an opportunity for the individual acknowledgement of the participants by recognizing their personage preferred ways of being, their values, commitments, hopes and dreams (Sax, 2000; Fox & Tench, 2003). The SMT was asked to model a scene so as to form a still-life representation of their classrooms (see Figure 3.2 Stage 1). This representation was used to draw out discussions relating to the subject being researched. Fox and Tench (2003:101) are of the opinion that this process also creates an opportunity for participants and the outsider witness to share their responses to what they have heard and the aspects of their own experiences with which this resonated. The process allows participants to share their reflections on their own and others experience and in the process find common ground upon which to build their shared discoveries (Sax, 2000).

3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In the course of our methods, we primarily aspire to perceive this world as our research participants do – from the inside. While qualitative research does not advance in preset steps, it is indispensable to establish strictures for data collection, by defining the setting or field site (a socially defined territory with shifting boundaries); the members (the participants who will be form part of the research); the events (what the participants will be interviewed about); and the case for study (the evolving nature of events undertaken by the members within the setting or field site) (Neuman, 2003:366-379). The data collection steps engross:

- Setting the periphery for the study;
- Gaining information through focus group interviews, narrative writing and individual interviews; and
At the outset, I requested permission to embark on research at a school in Nelson Mandela Bay from the Director of Education and the school principal (see Appendix A for proof of permission received). After I was granted permission, I met with the principal and SMT members of a particular school to conduct research there. According to Holliday (2002:8), qualitative research locates the study within a particular setting that provides opportunities for exploring all possible variables of the phenomenon. In this study, the setting was a particular school in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth.

I explained the aim and research procedure. Initially, I wanted participants to first write narratives for me, but realized that I needed an expert to assist me in guiding the process. An educational psychologist availed herself as an outsider witness. Participants were given a consent document to sign which orally explained the purpose of the research and the ethical information (see Section 3.8). During this session, permission was obtained from the participants to participate in the study and to record the sessions.

Before the actual data collection process began, the participants forming the sample of this research were invited to individual briefing sessions in which information about the aims of the study and the process of data collection were explained and they were also informed of the data capturing process. Because the study and data collection process were stretch over several months, participants were informed of the time lapse and together we reached agreement on date, time and venue of the interviews. The individual interviews were conducted at school. The focus group session took place at an alternative venue in which participants were relaxed to communicate without being disturbed.

3.6.1 Narratives

Narrative writing was decided upon as a data collection method for the reason that it enables the researcher to build trust relationships with the participants and thereby to make sure that authentic data be obtained.
Pinnegar and Daynes (2006) advocate that narratives can be both a method and the phenomenon of a study. As a method, it commences with the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of individuals (Creswell, 2007). Czarniawska (2004:17) defines narrative as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions which are chronologically connected.

People live out the stories of their lives and according to McLaren (in Walker, 2003:2), “we both speak our narratives and are spoken to through narratives as we shape our identities as social actors and both respond to and constrain the identities of others”. Written narrative accounts have the ability to expound the often complex and deeply challenging nature of people’s lived experiences. These narratives or stories we hear about ourselves and the stories we tell about ourselves, help us to make meaning of our lived experiences.

Narratives provide a means for participants to reflect on and describe their experiences and to refine or crystallize salient features that may form the basis for ongoing interpretive action (Stringer, 2004:130). By means of narrative research as a methodological tool, the researcher gained rights of entry into several nodes of experiences. The six SMT members had to: Write a reflective story on their current teaching practices and the teaching and learning practices in their classroom. The following is an example of such a narrative and was written by Toni one of the participants.

**Example of a narrative: Toni**

I am an experienced Junior Primary teacher / educator and over the past 32 years I have been able to move and shift through major changes in the profession. With the help of departmental officials or inspectors who was involved in seeing the move from one era to another, we as Junior Primary teachers went through the intensive changes in methodology with flying colours. INSET was hands on resources available and learner teacher ratio a dream. We had inclusivity and groupwork and learners with special needs well accommodated in special classes where they flourished with their peers. And at the end of their primary education they became positive learners ready to take on high school with eagerness and proudness. They were successful and
some of them even passed matric and became independent human beings responsible for their personal growth.

At the moment I feel I cannot say that “I know my job or I love my job!” I am in a situation where things seem normal but I know that it is not true. I know that the demands and requirements expected from me is making me wonder how successful I am. Since I am not allowed to reason, as I would like to, I accepted making an oversight bias situation which causes me to believe “we can do it, we are successful in this approach of inclusive education”.

Are we really? Because on paper it works, but being alone in class its your conscious and fear that you are messing up another life, that you are not taking the learner to the required level as you should. This frustrating educator and learner. Expectations that will never be met due to over-crowding and lack of resources. Fear of failure, handling of disappointment. Lack of training how to accommodate the variety of barriers of learning in a normal 40-60 learner ratio. Who and how to assess the learner makes you as educator doubt your teaching abilities. How honest is your assessment? Does it meet the outcomes and on which level?

Inclusivity printed on white paper is much more than just interacting and associating, it is more than learning from each other. It is getting the best education for the learner even if it is only the needed basic level whereupon they can improve their knowledge to gain equal opportunities to become a respectful positive human being. It is their human right to experience education for their needs. An educator with the correct training to rectify the problem therefore is of utmost importance.

The third value of our Constitution table is equality. All children must receive equal education with respect to resources and personal opportunities.

Value and respect. Education must focus on strengthening the development of the child’s respect and furthermore education must address respect for human rights.
Am I addressing these human rights correctly, or am I only keeping my 6 ELSEN learners busy? How deep or how wide must I go to rectify the problem before being accused that I am infringing parents’ personal lives? I don’t have the knowledge how to test and what to expect. I therefore ask again are we ready to reason or debate that inclusivity is successful in an abnormal classroom situation?

Today 6 August 2007 at the Conference for African Union for Educators they admitted that they have not reached their objectives they planned for in 2003.

White (2001:45) contends that communities have a cache of wisdom about life and skills of living which are relevant to the various situations they currently have to compete with. He suggest that this wisdom includes maps that guide people’s journey through life and which support in making transitions and helps to resolve difficulty situations along the route. This research will subscribe to the notion of the “snowball effect” alluded to in some therapeutic writings (Metcalf, 2001:651). The proposal is that small movements in any individual in a system create movement in others in the system (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:20). Therefore if any individual formulates even the smallest amount of adjustment in behaviour or mobilizes the slightest positive feature within himself, it could mobilize assets in others.

Teachers are empowered to examine the ambiguity, contradictions and competing imperatives characteristic of many everyday teaching situations; and to renegotiate relationships between self and context. However, the relevance of this knowledge and skills in the current situation may become obscured or masked or devalued. Walker (2003:67) concurs with this view and express the opinion that more often than not SMT member’s voices are marginalized and not heard. Using narratives in inquiry can then allow research practices that acknowledge, celebrate and recognize the experiences of the participants. Narratives are the most successful way to access teacher’s thinking about their practice (Atweh, Kemmis & Weeks, 1998:152) for teachers are best positioned to know their practice.

The narrative texts that are generated in the process can serve to transform “silence into dialogue, open out the ambiguities of the everyday, tease out the seamless labelling of the oppressed and
capture the unruliness of human action” (Walker, 2003:3). White (2001:98) supports this view and stresses the importance of creating spaces in which these often devalued knowledge’s and skills can be identified, made more visible, in a process that richly describes and honours their experience. Narratives may reveal hidden positive dimensions of experiences and enable participants to see their world in a more positive light or become more aware of new potential. The writing and discussion of experiences enabled teachers to articulate meanings and unexamined tensions around their identity and teaching work. The educators examined connections between their feelings, aspirations, past experiences, relationships and events and consider how these had shaped and were shaping their identities.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:747) argue that by listening to people we are empowering them. The stories of women in managerial positions at schools have often been marginalized and Merkel (2001:17) stresses the importance of “women’s need to reclaim the right to tell their stories” because it is important to listen to people about what is important to them (Josselson in Smythe & Murray, 2000:88). Narrative work can allow us to uncover often obscured ways in which dominant discourses influence and mould us. Researchers using narratives should aspire to being maximally inclusive in their work in order to guard against the possible systemic bias which disadvantages unpopular voices. The narrative researcher should endeavour to present studies that are personal and social; capture past, present and future; combined with the notion of place and situations (are contextual). Denzin and Lincoln (2000:746) state that personal narratives matter to accent that we live within the tensions represented by our memories of the past and the expectancy of the future.

The study would be one which asks questions, collects field notes, derives interpretations and writes a research text that addresses both personal and social issues. Studies in this field should also ensure that these issues are addressed not only by looking at an event, but also by considering its past and its future. Walker (2003:4) is of the opinion that inquiry, using narratives, supports a view of educational knowledge being a dynamic process that encourages the critic of the stories we hear and tell. This process, she continues, does not make our knowledge less trustworthy, but rather by welcoming continued review and revisiting as new perspectives emerge, the research attempts to remain true to the process of research.
Webster and Mertova (2007:114) highlights a number of ensnares or limitations that can be associated with the use of stories in research. Extensive amounts of data can be collected in the data collection process. Traditional methodology tools tend to encourage a narrowing view of the data collected, however the critical event narrative method is capable of avoiding this trap as stated in Webster and Mertova (2007:115) by eliciting and focusing on the critical events in narratives of experience.

### 3.6.2 In-depth individual interviews

An interview is a personal contact between an interviewer and a respondent (Miller & Salkind, 2002:309). The individual interview, according De Vos (2002:292), is the principal form of data or information collection in qualitative research. This method in essence creates a platform for interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee that allows the interviewer access to the interviewees’ world. Kvale (in Sewell, 2001:1) defines qualitative research as attempts to understand the world from the participant’s point of view. The interviewer allows the interviewee to speak from their own experiences while using a flexible topic guide to ensure that information shared during the interview remains focused on issues, which are considered relevant to the study.

The setting in which the interviews took place allowed the participants to be very relaxed and co-operative because the school is a familiar environment for them. Two researchers partook in the research: one was the outsider witness who facilitated, and the other the observed. I concur with Fontana and Frey (2000:645) that interviewing allows us entrée to the internal world of our fellow human beings, particularly the nature of their social lives, their perceptions, how these perceptions are interpreted and how these experiences affect their thoughts and feelings about their experiences and themselves. The following open-ended question was put to the five participants including myself:

“What is your greatest fear or challenge about inclusive education”? 
And since this study is essentially about a group of members’ experience of inclusion at an institution, I felt that this method of data collection provided me the ideal tool to access the lived experiences of the participants. Henning et al. (2004:51) emphasizes the fact that the power of interviews is situated in the mind of persons on the street and we relate our own experiences by comparing it to the interviewed person’s. This is the most important aim of the interview to bring to our attention what individuals think, feel and what they have to say.

Since the interview is a social encounter, it is incumbent upon the interviewer to create an atmosphere in which participants feel that their experiences are valued and honoured. This process will add to the validity of my research study by showing the complexity of variables and the interactions that are surrounded in the data obtained from this situation (De Vos, 2002:351). One of the major challenges I experienced was maintaining the balance between allowing the sharing of respondent’s experiences and perceptions while ensuring that their comments related back to the study.

Collecting and recording of data from an interview can be documented in several ways. The audiotape recorder was used with permission to capture the interviews, which was then transcribed verbatim into written text (see Appendix C) (Terre Blanche & Durrheim 1999:132). This allows the data to be presented in their most authentic form. Tape recorders allow a much fuller account of participants’ opinions, to make sure that full understanding has been achieved. The transcribed texts were taken back to the interviewees to establish whether the transcriptions were true reflections of the interviews in terms of the respondents’ perceptions; in other words, whether the content of the transcriptions were valid.

Research conversations in this study focused on broad themes that were introduced as natural flows in the research conversation. This appeared to put participants at ease and as the interviews progressed, an initial reticence seemed to relax into more natural and spontaneous responses and rich descriptions of participants lived worlds and how they react to it (Kvale in Sewell, 2001:4). An exploration of the qualitative approach emphasize the importance of sensitivity and communication skills in the interviewing process and to this end, I relied heavily on the basic
therapeutic principles of creating an environment in which respondents experienced unconditional positive regard, and attentive and empathetic listening.

Marshall and Rossman (cited in De Vos, 2002:343) advocate that the process of preserving the data and meaning on tape and the transcription and preliminary analysis significantly augment the efficiency of the data analysis.

### 3.6.3 Focus group interview

Feminist based philosophy emphasizes the importance of creating supportive and challenging relationships in order to facilitate silence breaking (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:641). The focus group session was the platform for this space in which the gap between the researcher and researched was reduced. The unstructured nature of the focus group conversations also reduces the researcher’s control over the interview process.

Using a focus group session as part of my data gathering process appeals to me because it creates an opportunity for people to get together and create meaning amongst themselves instead of on their own. A major advantage of this approach lies in the ability of the focus group interviews to volunteer express suggestion of the similarity and deviation in the educators’ views and experiences (Bless et al., 2006:122). The researcher was able to get a much deeper understanding of the problem after careful recording of the discussion between participants. Bogdan and Biklen (2003:101) suggest that a focus group can be used so that participants can articulate their views on a topic or even to realize what their views are.

A focus group is defined as an in-depth, open-ended group interview in which two or three umbrella questions linked to the research topic inform the group discussion. During the course of the interview participants were asked to reflect on these questions and to hear other participant’s responses to these questions. Throughout the session participants were encouraged to talk to one another, ask questions, share stories and comment on others experiences and views. As group interaction is a fundamental part of this method, the researcher remained conscious of the influence of group dynamics. I watched out for the expert, the dominant talker, the shy
participant, the rambler and made sure that all participants were afforded an opportunity to contribute to the research conversation not allowing the dominant more confident participants to manipulate the discussions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003:101).

Krueger and Casey (2000:25) suggest that focus groups should be used when:

- You are looking for a range of ideas or feelings that people have about something.
- Your purpose is to uncover factors that influence opinions, behaviour or motivation.
- You want ideas to emerge from the group.

This is one of the most suitable data collection methods for my study because the SMT has been selected as a collective based on their common characteristics pertaining to the implementation of inclusive education.

In this study, it necessitated managing the more confident and articulate members of the group while ensuring that the quieter participants partook fully (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003:103). The participants in this study easily established an atmosphere that valued and honoured the experiences and reflections of all the participants. As the researcher I comfortably adopted the role of structured eavesdropper. De Vos (2002:293) considers this to be a role in which the interviewer takes ‘a backseat’ while dexterously directing and encouraging the flow of discussion over important areas related to the research because the participant must do 90% of the talking.

Interviews were recorded on tape and video; it is unethical to record interviews without their knowledge (Best & Kahn, 2003:324). Tape recordings are opportune and inexpensive and preclude the requisite of writing during interviews which may be distracting to both interviewer and subject (Best & Kahn, 2003:324). The tapes were later transcribed for close, objective analysis because tape recordings afford the opportunity to be replayed as often as necessary. I hoped by recording our discussions and passing the tapes back to the members of the SMT I would be able to contribute something back to them in return for their help by allowing me to access their perceptions. This happened to be a very enriching experience for participants; they
could objectively look at their responses and be empowered by it. They were also provide with special opportunities to learn more about their developmental process and self-awareness.

The focus group sessions took place at an agreed upon venue and lasted for close to two hours. Before the focus session commenced the participants reflected on their experiences informally. I felt that it was important to set the scene for creating an atmosphere in which participants could feel safe to share their feelings and experiences. The participants knew that they were not implementing inclusive education and did not fully accommodate LSEN in their classroom. During the focus group discussion we identified all the possible causes of this problem and developed a more inclusive vision for the school.

This investigation was guided by a clear code of ethics which afforded the participants the advantages of confidentiality, voluntary participation, anonymity as well as professional conduct by the researcher. The outsider witness also formed part of this group only as an observer. The following question was put to participants:

“How do you experience change in the school environment within inclusive education?”

The researcher relentlessly listened for commonalities and differences of opinions, and got the group to reflect on the degree to which their understandings or experiences are homogenous or diverse. The researcher momentarily abridged the main factors, required verification and expressed her gratitude to the participants for participating (De Vos, 2002:317).

A debriefing session between the researcher and the outsider witness was arranged to discuss themes, as well as whether the group provided what was expected.

3.6.4 Field notes

In this study field notes were taken from the time data collection began. Silverman (2000:140) proposed two practical rules for taking field notes, namely record what we see as well as what we hear, and expand field notes beyond immediate interview. Field notes provided an enhancement to the recorded interview; it gave a description of the setting, the impression formed by the
interviewer, and the type of non-verbal communication expressed by the participants (De Vos, 2002:286). Huberman and Miles (2002:15) state that field notes are an ongoing stream-of-consciousness commenting on what is happening in the research.

These notes supplemented my narratives, interviews and focus group discussions. These notes can also serve as a back up against mechanical problems that might set in. Field notes have two components (Ary et al., 2006:477):

- The descriptive part, this includes complete description of the setting, the people and their reactions and interpersonal relationships, and accounts of events.
- The reflective part, this included the researcher’s personal feelings or impressions about the events, comments on the research method, decisions I made and or any problems I encountered.

Field notes can be documented in various formats that include jotted notes, observation notes, theoretical notes, analytical notes, methodological notes and personal notes (Neuman, 2003:304).

The date, time, place and list of the people present was a necessity I couldn’t omit whilst recording my observations.

3.7 THE RESEARCHER

In qualitative research, the researcher is directly involved in the setting, interacts with the people, and is the “instrument” (De Vos, 2002:359). For this reason, no qualitative report can leave out the researcher’s own perspective and consideration ought to be given to how that might have shaped events and interpretations.

The researcher in qualitative research is the key instrument in the accumulation of data through the observation of behaviour, interviews with participants and narrative writing (Creswell, 2007:38). The researcher also takes on various roles such as explorer, advocate, friend and
reformer, however Henning et al. (2004:79) accentuates that the researcher’s role is threefold: she is researcher, technician and listener.

The researcher refined her social skills to build rapport with the participants because an interview is a social situation and inherently involves a relationship between the researcher and the participant (Huberman & Miles, 2002:54). People’s idea of reality is not accessible to outsiders, as a result, methods are necessary to unravel and capture participants’ viewpoints as accurately as possible (DeVos, 2002:279). The focus is on the everyday and natural experiences of the respondents. The researcher should attempt at all times to gain information, feelings and impressions and experiencing the circumstances of the real world of participants by living alongside them. Bryman (2000:96) emphasizes that it is only by getting close to their subjects and becoming an insider that they can view the world as a participant in that setting.

I suspended all my personal beliefs pertaining to the implementation of inclusive education. According to Creswell (2007:59), bracketing is when the researcher sets aside his own experiences, as much as possible, and takes a renewed perspective towards the phenomenon under study, in order to not affect the data that was collected. While being present without judgment is theoretically central to being a researcher, each researcher can be captured by their own biases and preconceptions.

Burns and Grove (1999:15) postulate that intuiting is the acquisition of insight into a phenomenon that cannot be logically given account of. Teachers, with many years of experience is suppose to be able to teach any type of learner, yet why is it that within mainstream education teachers have a problem with LSEN? I paid special attention to what the participants thought, felt and did and what they said about it giving me their one-sided reality in an arranged discussion.

The researcher uses questions to clarify a response or ones that pushes the interview a little further into a topic (Ary et al., 2006:412). De Vos (2002:295) reiterates that probing deepens the response to a question, it increases the richness of the data being obtained and it gives indications to the participant about the intensity of response that is desired. This process assisted the
researcher to get more information on the phenomenon under study. When I experienced that the participants were evasive, deviating from the topic or making irrelevant talk in their eagerness to contribute I used fixed probes such as “Explain yourself a little further” or “Please tell me more about that”. This exercise forced me to sharpen my listening skills more.

In order to keep participants focused on the topic of discussion I rephrased questions to ensure they understood what I was saying, without changing the meaning or the content of the information.

The researcher and the participants are both free to ask for an explanation of a word or a concept this created a possibility for me to yield meaningful data. Clarification limits vagueness, ambiguity or confusion.

This communicative technique allows the researcher to structure and stimulate the participants to give more information (De Vos, 2002:295). This afforded me the opportunity to clarify the ideas and opinions of the participants and to ensure that it is consistent with that of the participants and that I understood that which they were saying.

The pause involves learning to be silent (Ary et al., 2006:481). It allows the participant to reflect on the subject matter. I gave the participants the opportunity to think of what they wanted to add and did not rush them along to get to my next question.

Towards the end of the interview I asked the participants if there was anything they still wanted to add. I kept the tape recorder of the individual and group discussion running because I have learned that somehow participants mention the most interesting understandings at the end of the interview. Tape recordings can be heard repeatedly to analyze the messages, or validate what has been said during our discussions.
3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Creswell (2007:148) defines data analysis as a process whereby the researcher prepares and organises the data for analysis than reduces the data into themes through a method of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion.

Ary et al. (2006:490) suggest that qualitative data analysis involves attempts to comprehend the phenomenon under study, synthesis information and explain relationships, theorise about how and why the relationship appeared as it did, reconnect the new knowledge with what is already known. In qualitative research, ideas and evidence are mutually interdependent (Neuman, 2003:441). Since the aim of data analysis is to transform the information received into an answer to my original research question.

The process and methods of data collection in qualitative research elicit a wealth of rich descriptive data which begins almost immediately (Leedy & Ormrod, 2002:154). Cournoyer and Klein (2002:209) put forward that data analysis is a way to convert data into “mind-friendly forms, while preserving the connection with the observations”. However, I'll remain mindful of the caution by Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999:152) that “the social constructionist is opposed to imposing preconceived categories and measuring instruments on the research”, and concentrate on how talk is used to manufacture experiences, feelings, meanings and other social facts. No data is more authentic than others, thus I attached a narrative (see example attached in section 3.6.1) in its original form.

For the purpose of this study, I made use of Creswell’s (2007:150) data analysis spiral. The researcher engaged in a process of moving in analytical circles rather than making use of a preset linear approach. The first step in the spiral is the management of the data; the first step of my process became an in-depth study of the transcripts of my narratives, individual and group discussions. This entailed repeated readings and making diagrams and brainstorming which assisted in increased familiarity with the content of the transcripts. The researcher organizes the data into file folders. I then converted the files to appropriate text units thereby getting a sense
of the whole database. I wrote memos in the margins of my field notes. This helped with the exploration of the data. My next spiral was the description, classification interpretation loop; the data would be supported by the raw material (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). The second and third steps occurred simultaneously and involved the identification of themes and the coding of material. The nucleus of qualitative research now started (Ary et al., 2006:492): the identification of themes and categories and their refinement. The codes were assigned according to one theme and four related sub-themes with different categories. In detail I described what I saw within the context of my research setting. In the final phase of the spiral, I presented the combined data of my narratives, individual and group discussions. The development of one theory in the form of a verbal statement led me to the explanation of the foremost phenomenon in question. The theory depicted the evolving nature of the phenomenon and described how certain conditions led to meticulous actions or interactions. No matter what form the theory took, it is based entirely on the data collected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:140).

3.8.1 Narratives

In my interaction with the raw data gathered from the narratives participants wrote, I was guided by Webster and Mertova (2007:104) suggesting two factors that both govern and justify narrative inquiry: The themes of human centredness and the complexity of human experiences. The first step of my process was an in-depth study of the transcripts. This entails repeated readings and making diagrams and brainstorming which assist in increased familiarity with the content of the transcripts. This enabled me to get to know the material well enough to know what kind of theme emerged and how my interpretation of the data was supported by the raw material (Kerlinger in De Vos, 2005:223). Storytelling is a natural and common form of human communication according to Webster and Mertova (2007:103) and narratives are used to communicate those elements of experience that have had a profound impact on an individual. They thus suggest a critical event approach to assist the researcher in finding ways to revealing these concerns that traditional methodologies are improbable to uncover.

The second and third steps occurred simultaneously and involved the identification of themes and the coding of material. Emerging themes and categories were identified and codes were allocated.
Wiersma (2000:203) is of the opinion that a “code is a process of organizing data and obtaining data reduction; in order to cluster segments that relate to particular themes”. These clusters were then used in the analysis and interpretation of the data and formed the basis for the unfolding story that was told by the researcher. The codes were assigned according to category, themes and related sub-themes. The transcripts were reread a number of times and one theme were decoded using the code key (Ary et al., 2006:492). These were recorded in tables according to the assigned category. Where a subject did not fit into a theme or category a new one was created. The next stage involved the careful and detailed examination of themes in order to establish similarities and differences. This process was repeated until no new findings emerged. The last step involved writing up my version of the interpretations and in this process I remained conscious of the importance of staying with the participants’ stories, to be respectful and understood their storied experience whilst analyzing their very personal stories. Interpretive analysis is to stay as close to the raw data as possible and to interpret from a position of empathic understanding (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999:139).

3.8.2 Interviews

The researcher made use of an audio-tape to record the interviews and capture the data. The researcher made field notes throughout the interviews to reflect on what activities occurred. In coding, we break down a body of data into labelled, meaningful pieces, bearing in mind that we later want to cluster the fragments of coded material together under the code heading and further analysing them both as a cluster and in relation to other clusters (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999:143). Wiersma (2000:203) proposes that coding is analogues to getting ready for a rummage sale. Bogdan and Biklen’s (1998) categories for coding were used namely:

- Setting/context. This category contains general information. A study of the school situated in the Northern areas of Port Elizabeth.
- Definition of the situation. Data on how teachers view their work within mainstream education.
- Perspectives held by the participants. Contains more specific ways of thinking. Particular phrases that subjects use often reflect their perspectives.
Subjects’ ways of thinking about people and objects. Members may have labels they apply to learners such as “underachieves”, “stupid”, etc.

Process. Categorizing sequences of events. Teachers’ description of the stages in their careers was placed in this category.

Strategy. Refers to the methods, techniques and other ways that participants accomplish what they want and avoid what they do not want. Strategies in teaching LSEN.

Once all data were sorted into major and minor categories I looked at some of the range of categories and determined whether some fitted together into themes.

3.8.3 Focus group

Data analysis involves reviewing the data as it was collected and attempting to synthesis and to make sense out of what was observed. According to Ary et al. (2006:553), data analysis has been described as a search for patterns or trends in the data to answer two questions:

- What is the story told by the data?
- What might explain this story or what factors influenced the story?

Babbie and Mouton (2001:475) postulates that through debriefing, problems generated by the research experience can be corrected. According to Salkind (2000:38), the easiest way to debrief participants is immediately after the session. The outsider witness was very instrumental in this process. By acknowledging the experiences of the participants, acknowledging their preferred way of being and acknowledging their resonance towards inclusive education. This created an opportunity for participants to address their developmental needs. The researcher wrote up my version of the interpretations and again in this process I remained conscious of the importance of staying with the participants’ stories. Selective coding was used whereby I examined each member’s response individually and found only one theme that reflected their individual perspectives.
Ethics refers to a system of morals or rules of behaviour (Struwig & Stead, 2001:66). These provide researchers with a code of moral guidelines on how to conduct research in a morally acceptable way. Strict ethical measures have to be adhered to throughout the planning and execution of qualitative research (Ary et al., 2006:584). These guidelines help the researcher from engaging in scientific misconduct such as plagiarising other’s work, falsely reporting results and or failing to uphold the confidentiality and privacy of research participants. De Vos (2002:63) accentuates that ethical principles should be internalized in the personality of the researcher as to make sure that ethnically conducted judgment becomes part of his *modus operandi*.

The researcher’s application for ethics approval was granted by the Ethics Research Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University under the ethics clearance reference number HO8-EDU-ASE-008 (attached as Appendix B). I received written consent to do the research from both the DoE as well as the principal of the school (both copies of letters are attached as Appendix A). Researchers have obligations both to their subjects by protecting their rights, needs and values and to their profession by publishing information that is not misleading (Ary et al., 2006:584).

Informed consent is a necessary condition rather than luxury or a hindrance (Hakim cited in De Vos, 2002:65). Participation in the study was voluntary and participants were orally assured of their right to withdraw from the process at any time (see Appendix D). I felt that it was essential to establish a relationship of mutual respect, trust and collaboration between the participants and the researcher. According to Wiersma (2000:418), ethical considerations are central to ensuring the protection of the rights and welfare of participants.

For the purpose of this study, I adhered to the following ethical measures:

The principle of autonomy, confidentiality and privacy: Participation in the study was voluntary and all participants gave their informed consent. The confidentiality aspect of the research was explained to the participants (Ary et al., 2006:585). Participants were informed that they had the
right to withdraw from the study at any time and that they had a right to anonymity. During the course of my intake interview, I informed participants of the above and assured participants that all direct identification information would be removed from the audio-tapes and transcripts and that pseudonyms would be used instead of their real names. I assured them that the visual data would be used for the purposes of the dissertation only and that it would not be accessible to anyone outside of the study.

Non-inclusion, the second principle, is a process in which the researcher needs to consider possible discomforts to the participant because of their participation (Wiersma, 2000:418). For some of the participants in the study communicating openly about their attitude towards inclusive education and their non-accommodation of LSEN was an issue because of the sensitive nature of the information they felt they would be sharing and the fact that the findings of this study would be published as part of a dissertation. I counteracted these fears by emphasizing my commitment to anonymity and confidentiality. Open dialogue and negotiations usually promote fairness to the persons and the research inquiry (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:422).

The third principle states the importance and advantages of participating in the study (Wiersma, 2000:419). By participating in the study, the participants were afforded the opportunity to have their experiences heard and validated. This creates the potential for shared experience, an opportunity to learn and share from each other and the potential for mobilization into action. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421) state that when participants adjust their priorities and routines to help a researcher, they are giving of themselves.

Trust and confidentiality are key elements of my research. Participants were assured of access to all transcripts and audio and visual recordings in which they will participate. We had a feedback meeting whereby participants could check intervening results and conclusions before submitting my study. This exercise also helped participants to assert ownership of the research project. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:413) stress the ethical responsibility of the researcher providing the reader with a clear statement about where they position themselves in the study. McTaggert (in Morkel, 2002:99) concurs that this practice fits with the feminist research practice
of ‘positioning’. I was clear about my interest in the field of research as well as placing myself within the socio-political context of my study.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407) emphasize the importance of providing knowledge which is valid and reliable and that this information is presented in an ethical and objective manner. One of the ways in which they suggest you do this is by leaving an audit trail. This view is supported by Guba and Lincoln (cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000:393), who suggest that an audit trail include all recorded material (audiotapes). I kept verbatim transcripts of my participants interviews, the narratives participants wrote, a copy of the interview schedule and examples of data analysis practises. They also suggest the use of peer debriefing, which is a process in which the researcher shares their ideas with a colleague or supervisor outside the context of the research process. In this process I attempted to strengthen validity of the data that was collected as well as the reliability of the study.

Guba’s model (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290-327) certifies that trustworthiness can be applied in qualitative research with positive results. It consists of four criteria that should be embraced if a researcher wishes to ensure trustworthiness. These criteria are:

- Credibility (checking the true value of the findings).
- Transferability (the strategy employed to attain applicability).
- Dependability (refers to the consistency if the findings).
- Confirmability (using the criterion of neutrality ensures freedom of bias) (Krefting, 1991:217).

These are discussed below.
3.10.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research concerns the truthfulness of the inquiry’s findings and the term is analogous to internal validity in quantitative research (Ary et al., 2006:504). According to Krefting (1991:215), credibility is obtained from the findings of the research as authentic experiences, as lived and perceived by participants. Credibility in this study was established through triangulation.

Triangulation is an accepted method of securing credibility in qualitative research and is described by De Vos (2002:341) as follows:

- Applying multiple theoretical perspectives early in the planning stages of research or when interpreting the data (post modernism, social constructivism and feminist).
- Using more than one analyst, coder and outsider witness (investigator triangulation).
- Administering two or more instruments of data gathering (methodological triangulation: narratives, interviews, focus groups, field notes and the researcher).

Triangulation of data collection and data control was executed. Krefting (1991:219) states that the aim of triangulation is based on the idea of the amalgamation of multiple perspectives for mutual confirmation of data, to ensure that true phenomenological research was performed.

This study employed investigative triangulation as the researcher was part of the research and could not be separated from it. An outsider witness was present during the focus group discussions where she listed non-verbal interaction and recorded impressions of the process thus decreasing the researcher bias and enhancing trustworthiness. In order to provide the participants with evidence of the findings, audiotapes and interview notes were readily available.

3.10.2 Applicability

Applicability refers to whether the findings can be applied or generalized to similar findings or groups (Ary et al., 2006:507). Generalization is often not probable because every research
situation represents an environment with a meticulous interaction with particular persons (Ely, Fiedman, Garner & Steinmetz; 1997:12). Therefore, in order to address weaknesses to applicability, the researcher needs to present sufficient data to permit comparison (cited by Lincoln & Guba in Krefting, 1991:216).

Applicability was reached in this study by providing a rich description of findings and research methods, thus allowing other researchers the opportunity to determine if data can be transferred. Research methodology was elucidated in detail and very correctly and substantiated with the following sampling criteria:

- Participants had to be educators at a school in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan involved in the implementation of inclusive education in the Eastern Cape.
- Participants had to be members of the SMT.

3.10.3 Dependability

De Vos (2002:352) states that dependability is the alternative to reliability, referring to whether the findings of the research would be unswerving if the study was repeated with similar participants in similar context. This criterion is concerned with the degree to which the replication of the research study in a similar context or with similar participants would deliver similar results and or the extent to which variation can be tracked or explained (Ary, et al., 2006:509). This process is also known as consistency. This study made use of triangulation of data sources to increase consistency in the research. The raw data, namely the field notes and audiotape recordings are available as an audit trail for scrutiny by interested individuals or organizations.

3.10.4 Confirmability

According to Ary et al. (2006:511), confirmability ensures that the research is free from bias in the procedures and the interpretation of results. In other words, can the findings of the research
be confirmed by participants to verify the results? Neuman (2003:376) postulates that a neutral researcher is neither influential in nor influenced by the study.

Confirmability was ensured through the application of triangulation, reflexivity through the safe keeping of field notes and the researcher kept an appropriate distance in order to not influence the research.

3.11 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher described the research design and methodology chosen for this study in some detail. The processes of data collection, data analysis, the philosophical assumptions on which the study is based, the theory generative approach, strategies to ensure trustworthiness, and ethical considerations, were also discussed.

In the next chapter, the findings will be discussed, supported by direct quotations from the interviews and a literature control.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Last night as I was sleeping
I dreamt – marvelous error –
That I had a beehive
Here inside my heart.
And the golden bees were making white combs
And sweet honey
From my old failures.

Antonio Machado

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter of this study, the research design and methodology were delineated. This chapter will cover the findings from the narratives, in-depth personal interviews and focus group discussions conducted during the data collection. Through data analysis, one theme was identified namely: Educators are not supportive of inclusive education, which impacts negatively on effective implementation. A literature control was undertaken to stimulate the identification of “evergreens” and thought leaders in the field of study which enabled me to demonstrate knowledge of the most recent and convincing theories (De Vos, 2002:128). Neuman (2000:446) stipulates that this also contribute to establish credibility. Step 1 of the participatory action research cycle introduced the idea of problem identification in order to be acquainted with the educators’ perceptions of learners in mainstream classes (adapted from Cowne, 2003:24). Step 1 will be presented via the presentation and discussion of results. Educators at a particular school wrote narratives, they were interviewed and had discussions and the data was analyzed with the aim of identifying themes and sub-themes, from which a focus concept was extracted for the implementation of an action plan for the SMT (see figure 3.6).

Step 2 was the action plan of my research study on which the SMT members decided collective as a method to re-structure their thinking towards an implementation programme for inclusive
education for their school. Teaching is an inherently an emotional profession (Holmes, 2005:108). I used the idea of Goleman (1998) on self-awareness to guide my team to work on the following very important aspects:

- Emotional awareness – recognizing their emotions and the effect it had on them not implementing inclusive education. The writing of the metaphor guided this process along.
- Accurate self-assessment – knowing one’s inner resources, your abilities and limitations including your fears and why you have made it your own.
- Self-confidence – a strong sense of one’s self worth and capabilities.

This section of this research was The Learning from Experience phase as described in Chapter 1 (section 1.9). The team realized that they are ageing; their experiences of their physical and social world are frequently new ones, only some of their previous learning has equipped them to deal with inclusive education. Educators have agreed in principle that they need action. Educators have come to the agreement that they live in a learning society and that their learning is a process of creating and transforming experiences into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, beliefs, emotions and the senses (Javis, 2001:53).

The researcher made use of participants at a particular school in the Northern areas of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan and discussed with the principal her intention to use the school as a site to embark on a research study on the policy of inclusive education and the implementation thereof at said school. Permission was granted by the principal for the research to be conducted. Meetings were held with the SMT to inform them of the aim, procedure and ethics regarding the study. The researcher requested that they avail themselves and partook in the research study.

Permission was granted by the District Manager in the DoE, for the researcher to conduct research in the metropolitan at a single school. The researcher sought and obtained agreement from the participants to play an active role in the study. The researcher reiterated the aspect of confidentiality of the shared information and informed the participants of the ethical principles to be ensued.
The sample for the study comprised of five teachers including myself who have been trained during the apartheid era for a particular schooling contexts but who then for the last 25 to 30 years plus have remained at the same school. This information serves as no reflection on the integration of the Education Department within the broader education and training sector. A question that lingered in my subconscious was: Are the conditions within the school environment conducive to create the right culture and climate for the teachers to grow and develop, so as to sustain them to perform at their best?

Data collection and fieldwork instigated in August 2007 and ended in November 2007. Participants were asked to write a narrative accounting their experiences from the time they started teaching up until now as well as challenges that beleaguered teachers at public level in the profession. This narrative exercise had a specific contextual focus, for instance how teachers in mainstream classes deal with LSEN. I placed these individual stories of the participants within their personal job experiences as well as their historical context, the time and the place in which they teach.

The participants referred to in Table 4.1 came from basically the same socio-economic and educational background. All of them were educated in the House of Representatives under the previous apartheid government. While reflecting on the demographic data related to these participants, I was struck by how similar their experiences seem by just looking at the statistics. Are they caught up in the traditional role of what an educator should be, in the teacher-orientated and content-based teaching approach of the past in which they have been groomed? Have they served their purpose in the traditional role and have they forgotten their traditional approach and accepted their role as an outcomes-based practitioner?

This study focused on these teachers’ work reality, it described their school-specific circumstances, situations and events and revealed not only the significance of these in influencing teachers’ attitudes to their work but the complexities and intricacies which arise out of the individuality and heterogeneity of teachers. For ethical reasons and to protect the identity of the participants, their post levels will not be revealed in this study.
Table 4.1: Demographics of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>LANGUAGE</th>
<th>YEAR OF STUDY</th>
<th>YEAR EXPERIENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wayne</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maya</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martha</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriah</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>MED</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As explained previously in Section 3.6.2, the individual sessions took place over three weeks and sessions lasted between one 60 and 90 minutes. A two-month period elapsed between the individual interviews and the focus group session.

The focus group sessions took place at a decided upon venue so that the participants could divorce themselves from the school environment and lasted for close on two hours. I felt that this was important, as it would set the scene for creating an atmosphere in which participants could feel safe to share their feelings and experiences.

4.2 STEP 1: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

One main theme transpired through the process of data analysis of data obtained from narratives, interviews and focus group discussions. The identified theme was discussed independently, exclusively for accounting and theoretical purposes. Under the theme, various sub-themes and categories were identified, as indicated in Table 4.2.
Table 4.2: Identified main theme, sub-themes and categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN THEME</th>
<th>SUB THEMES</th>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educators are not supportive of inclusive education which impacts negatively on effective implementation.</td>
<td>1 Many educators near retirement age</td>
<td>2.1 Educators’ lack of coping skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Challenges faced by educators in implementing an inclusive curriculum.</td>
<td>2.2 Educators’ work overload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Effects on learners</td>
<td>2.3 Isolation in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Management systems</td>
<td>2.4 Educators’ self esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>3.1 Behavioural and disciplinary problems</td>
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<td>3.2 Learners’ lack of motivation to achieve learning outcomes.</td>
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An in-depth discussion of the identified theme, its subthemes and categories and appropriate quotations from the narratives, transcribed interviews and group discussions will now be presented in order to substantiate the findings. The quotations (in italics) that were used may not be grammatically correct because the narratives and interviews were transcribed verbatim. The main theme of the findings can be formulated as follow: **Teachers are not supportive of inclusive education since it challenges them to become agents of change and therefore, they are negative towards the implementation thereof.**
The members of the SMT that participated in the study repeatedly emphasized that they were not in favour of inclusive education and support separate specialized education. This served as the basis for their negative attitude towards implementation and maintenance of inclusive education.

From this theme, 4 sub-themes emerged. The following sub-themes will now be discussed as they appear in Table 4.2:

4.3 SUB-THEME 1: MANY EDUCATORS NEAR RETIREMENT AGE

It was apparent from the statements made by the participants they are convinced that since they are close to retirement age, they have nothing more to learn; they do not want to be reflective practitioners and cannot for the life of them see how their development now might affect their learners. The participants are stressed by their work content and administrative work.

Engelbrecht and Green (2007:58) emphasize that a positive attitude towards inclusive education and dedication to education for all comprises a critical challenge in terms of inputs to inclusive education. Participants self-talk, or the words of their inner dialogue used when thinking, can increase their stress levels, limit their potential, and colour their experience with a negative pen. Schafer (cited in Olivier, 2005) explains stress as “arousal of mind and in response to demands made on them”. Educators in my study highlighted that this experience emerges specifically within the boundaries of their work environment.

*I am two years away from retirement and want to exit the profession gracefully. Inclusive education will deny me this opportunity.*

*It is too late for me now and I am too stressed to undertake major changes, my best years are something that belongs to my past. I’m thinking of vacations and peaceful days not the trauma of my insecurities.*

*Improving my practice now holds no benefits for me or my learner’s inclusive education came too late in my teaching career.*
Research findings from the United Kingdom, United States of America, Singapore, Finland and the Netherlands all point to age being a determining factor of teachers experiencing stress in the workplace (Holmes, 2005:44). Apparently, older teachers aged 45 or over, have been found to be more susceptible to negative stress and its related symptoms.

The participants expressed concern that inclusive education is an attack against their professional priorities, and the DoE does not support and protect their personal and professional interest and the erosion of their quality of life. These teachers are in agreement that their teaching is undervalued.

*Teaching has lost its joy and satisfaction for me. I wonder many a times if I am in the right place. I feel trapped and stressed out by all the information that surrounds me. I have nowhere to go but luckily for me I’m just two years away from getting there. Every night after school and over weekends I sit with my lesson plan and try and figure out what I can do to make them understand but I feel such a failure I don’t seem to achieve anything. So what the heck in even trying?*

Harris, Day, Hopkins, Hadfield, Hargreaves and Chapman (2003:34) identify this near retirement period as the *disenchantment phase* in the *developmental phases* of educators in managerial positions. Lack of confidence and fatigue were seen as characteristic features of this phase as a sense of mortality increase. The participants in my study lost motivation to try out new teaching methods and their health deteriorated as they reach retirement age. Most of the participants in this study reached a plateau in their teaching. They are stressed out by their perceived limitation in themselves and the implementation of inclusive education. Factors such as the current rapid social and political transformation in South Africa contribute to feelings of insecurities and stress in the work place. It is widely accepted that that stress has a major influence on a professional persons’ performance (Olivier, 2005).
4.4 SUB-THEME 2: CHALLENGES FACED BY EDUCATORS IN IMPLEMENTING AN INCLUSIVE CURRICULUM

Participants in this study have adopted a security of avoidance towards inclusivity and this has taken its toll on them in more than one way. It has become too difficult for them to take flight from those individual learners in their classrooms who challenge the participants daily with their diversities. Participants feel threatened and intimidated by those whom they think are not like the rest of the class, they run instead of stay and grow from this experience.

Four categories namely: educators lack of coping skills, work overload, the problem of isolation in the workplace and educator self-esteem have emerged from the data collected and will be discussed and reported on individually by the researcher.

4.4.1 Category 1: Educators’ lack of coping skills

As one of the categories under this sub-theme, it emerged that the participants need a repertoire of coping skills to implement inclusivity effectively. For the purpose of this study, coping skills would be taken to mean: “enhancing that which reduces the impact of negative stress” (Holmes, 2005:105). The challenge is to equip teachers with skills and to strengthen their belief in themselves as lifelong learners within their profession (Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:58).

Whenever I enter my classroom I continuously feel exhausted, when I look at the eyes of my learners looking back at me I experience such great anxiety and I cannot handle that and deal with it.

Am I really this incompetent to deal with my learner’s inability to understand my teaching? I am not interested in teaching these learners in my class because I do not know how to work with them. I have 48 learners in my class and cannot cope with their individual needs especially those with extreme learning problem I must work with my normal child. I can’t cope it’s just too much. Teaching is my whole life I have never seen myself being anything other than a teacher. I always thought that I am a good teacher but these learners make me realize what a failure I am. I need to be able to exercise competence whenever I am challenged with a problem in my classroom that
does not need recipe-type knowledge or a simple right or wrong judgement. I feel drained and burned out. I simply do not know how to cope.

I always understood education to be a helping profession, but no one is helping me cope with these learners in my class. My kids used to have good results and that was indicative of the success I achieved in my classroom. Now I have no guideline against which to measure my outcomes.

Poor learning habits, low achievement and reduced motivation seen fairly frequently in learners with learning difficulties can influence the attitude teachers develop towards such learners (Westwood, 2007:13). According to studies re-examined by Eggen and Kauchak (2004:244), teaching learners with learning problems can have a very negative effect on teachers’ own enthusiasm, motivation and ability to cope.

Participatory action research and narrative writing proved to be very helpful in assisting participants to express themselves freely. It allowed them to reflect on their growth and development within the teaching profession. It linked improvement and inquiry to their classroom practices. Fear of rejection by colleagues, the departmental officers, and the perceptions of participants of being less than undermines their self-esteem and inhibits them from risk-taking. Risk-taking is central to the task of learning new things. One of the participants became very emotional when she shared:

At the back of my mind, there is always the nagging fear that I have failed these kids. I have failed to make them feel secure and helping them to fit into what is termed as mainstream schooling. I don’t like the fear it creates in my inner world. Yet I know education is a mental game. I know for a fact every time something happens irrespective how trivial in a classroom situation – a new learner admitted, absenteeism, bad behaviour, and non-teaching – everything changes. But I have withheld myself from the possibility of exploring.

The passive approach participants choose kept them stuck in their circumstances and their belief of not coping kept them attached to this story which they have adopted as their own, titled: I cannot cope and it became their identity within an inclusive classroom.
4.4.2 Category 2: Educators’ work overload

In this category participants highlighted that they have no time for anything anymore since their workload is too much. The participants felt there is an intrinsic tension between their perceived proper job of educating the children in the classroom and the gigantic collection of nonessential tasks that have to be done. They are intimidated by large volumes of administration and paperwork that forms part of the accountability process.

I find myself being more involved with learners social and adaptation problem instead of doing what I’m paid to do, which is Teach. I don’t think people realize that what you have to put up with every day. The work is too much. I am more an administrative clerk than I am a teacher. Piles of paper work need to be done on each LSEN. Nobody looks at the content but they want it done. My workload is so much heavier; things were so much less complicated when we had two separate streams of learners.

There is just too much of it and just too little time in which to do it without putting at risk the quality of work that goes into the classroom. The paperwork includes detailed curriculum planning with adaptations needed to accommodate the LSEN, recording and assessment of learners’ progress, the marking of learners work, drawing up of individualized work, preparation of Independent Learning Programmes. The list just seems endless, what about fundraising efforts to pay Governing Council Educators needed in overcrowded classrooms.

These participants are of the opinion that they do not benefit from all the required duplication of documents completed per learner as required from the DoE. So much of what happens in their classrooms is decided on by non-teachers who know as much about teaching and learning as educators about performing a biopsy.

I have so much administration work, 220 learners, 8 hours per day, 5 days a week, what about extra-curricular activities? Outcomes-Based Education, Revised National Curriculum Statement and now National Curriculum Statement, all this require more paperwork and lots of finances that neither the school nor the community have.
Educators do not want to spend more teaching time on learners who progress slowly and struggle to cope with the work. They see intervention as extra work. They are impatient and not motivated enough to spend more time with the learners.

Bubb and Early (2004) agree that the demands placed on teachers are robbing them of the joy of the profession, the learners are denied the gratitude of good quality teaching and learning and the community at liberty are robbed of independent, critical thinking individuals and a high quality labour force. For this reason, some of the participants in my study became philosophical and gave up, becoming part of the problem. On average, primary school teachers spend a quarter of their time on planning, marking and report writing.

4.4.3 Category 3: Isolation in the workplace

In the workplace, participants experience feelings of isolation in what they do, too busy seeking perspective amongst the confusion of inclusivity and they are too intimidated to express their loneliness and fear on this uncharted water of all inclusive.

Social bonds and trusting relationships may be developing with children but the road that teachers follow with colleagues is very ephemeral. Fullan (1996:38) declare that the most common state for teachers is not a collegial one; it is a state of professional isolation; of working alone aside from one’s colleagues.

It’s funny though after I get into my classroom I do not know a single thing about what’s happening in my colleague’s class. I am so engrossed and caught up in my own clutter. It is organized clutter to me; it protects me against inspection and infringement.

Challenging context can create a sense of isolation in many teachers and they do not know whether their problem is common to other teachers as well as themselves. The curriculum has changed a lot and teachers are of the opinion that it forced them into deeper isolation. Teachers are too busy seeking perspective and too weary to reveal their fears.
Very little discussion is done from management to assess and intervene on teacher challenges in the classroom. I don’t know whether I am on the right track or whether my train has derailed a long time ago. Nobody supports me with these problems. I want freedom from isolation and need much more collaboration and collective decision-making.

Participants experience no sense of belonging within the inclusive curriculum. Teaching is a solitary business. There is no opportunity or urgency for collective problem solving. Teachers tend to work all by themselves and struggle all alone. From the research conversations, it would then appear that participants sometimes felt overwhelmed and withdrawn, that they did not act in accordance with what was expected of them. The development of inclusive school communities necessitates a shift from exclusion, individualism and isolation to an emphasis on belonging (Sands, in Engelbrecht & Green, 2007:178).

Participants incongruously got some sense of protection from this isolation because they could exercise their discretionary judgement in the interest of the children they know best. Some of the participants had self-controlled classrooms whereby one teacher is responsible for teaching all the learning areas and others have specialized learning areas. The teachers in the self-controlled classrooms state that departmentalization isolate learning areas, assuring less amalgamation between teachers and their areas of concern. Teachers articulated their concern that they are facing the innumerable challenges of the profession without a system of support.

Teaching was a noble profession for me and I had high hopes for both my learners and myself. Nothing compare to the feeling of achievement when I see my learners grow and develop into the persons they are destined to be. But, somehow I have lost sight of all this because my human heart does not believe anymore that I am neither a success nor an achiever. I am not making a difference to my learners already challenged life. I feel neglected by my principal, colleagues and the community at last.

Participants are faced with a moral dilemma, the very nature of the profession calls unto them to make a difference in the lives of their children, inspire, challenge, motivate and support them so that they do not sit like little frogs at the bottom of the well and think the sky is just as big as that
which you see from the foundation but to permit them to surface and have a totally new perspective of the sky through novel lenses. Parents are more informed than ever and they ask many questions about the progress of their children. Resulting in greater demanding for accountability from their children’s educators.

4.4.4 Category 4: Educators’ self-esteem

According to Mruk (2006), in psychology, self-esteem reflects a person's overall evaluation or appraisal of her or his own worth. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs for example, “I am competent or incompetent” and emotions such as, triumph, despair, pride or shame. I think self-esteem is central to everything you do. It affects your behaviour and thoughts. It changes how you feel about and value yourself. Why should self esteem matter to educators?

- Self-esteem can be the difference between success and failure.
- Esteem can affect your thinking, causing your outlook to be positive or negative.
- Esteem affects your confidence.
- If you do not value yourself how will you be able to value others?
- Self esteem enables you to have the right attitude to succeed at work.
- It affects your happiness.

I cannot recall when last I felt good about myself standing in front of my learners and do the work I so love above all else. I so perfectly fit the description of a sergeant-major; yelling on kids watching them all the time it’s just as well I have surveillance cameras on them at all times. It is not in my character to do behavioural investigations; I want to do investigative learning yes but I so miss the way things use to be.

I tried so many a times to be innovative and introduce my learners to learning content that they are familiar with for example “local is lekker” we would listen to different South African type of musical genre but out of the blue you will find a learner who is much older that the majority of the class population rapping foul language and banging on the desk the way he is enjoying his little stunt. This really frustrated me and drove me crazy. I totally lost my cool and control of the
situation. I spend so much time planning this activity I honestly wanted my learners to feel relaxed in my class irrespective of our age gap and know that music is something that does not call for age in order to understand the message that are brought across.

I look around me and I think I’m all alone in this situation it seems as if my colleagues cope and have little complaints. I was so scared to go back into my classroom; I sit in the ladies and at times have no confidence to face my class.

My fear of not succeeding with the LSEN prohibits me from taking action in the interest of my learners. My ignorance on inclusive education disempowered me more consequently breeding more fear. But I don’t do a thing about it. I see myself as a failure in my classroom whilst I should be able to teach these learners.

The participants concur that the way you feel about yourself impacts on your happiness level and it can make life more or less stressful for you. For example, if you trust your ability to handle what comes within an inclusive environment, you will be more likely to see difficult situations as a challenge instead of as a threat; on the other hand, if you don’t trust your own ability to handle things, you will be more likely to see new situations as menacing and stress-provoking.

One thing that has a major influence on a person’s self-esteem is their ‘self talk’, the way they talk to themselves, interpret things, and comment on life inside their heads. A thinking style that is consistently negative can disseminate a negative view of one’s life and self, as well as cause other problems.

When we have negative feelings about ourselves, so that we are too critical, complaining and pessimistic, others tend to take this attitude toward us as well. How we treat ourselves helps determine how others will likely treat us.

Participants’ negative self-esteem is driven by thoughts couched in “should”, “oughts”, and “musts”. These words imply that they should be something other than what they are. A more positive approach is to replace these words with “wants”. Instead of saying self-punitively, “I should be a better educator”, it may be helpful to change the thought to: “I want to be a better educator”.

115
4.5 SUB-THEME 3: EFFECTS ON LEARNERS

According to Van Wyk (2001:196), learner discipline in public schools is ranked as one of the major concerns expressed by all stakeholders in the education process in South Africa. In this third sub-theme two categories namely: behavioural and disciplinary problems and learners’ lack of motivation to achieve learning outcomes emerged relating to participants experiences of learners in an inclusive classroom.

4.5.1 Category 1: Behavioural and disciplinary problems

It is widely acknowledged that discipline is essential for creating a positive school climate conducive to good academic performance. The phenomenon of discipline refers to an appropriate behaviour and as such to advocate certain beliefs and norms of decorum. Discipline is necessary for the successful functioning of a school. Bad behaviour not only disrupts teaching and the learning process, but it poses the problem of endangering learners and educators.

I was curious as to why the participants were in agreement that learners behave badly and have disciplinary problem. From the interviews and the focus group discussions it was evident that behavioural and disciplinary problems might ascend, learners who are unable to keep up with their school work and the rest of the class as a result of intellectual limitations often develop behavioural problems as a way of drawing attention away from their school work or simply to get the educator to pay attention.

Joubert and Squelch (2005:2) state that discipline is about positive behaviour management aimed at promoting appropriate behaviour and developing self-discipline and self-control in learners. In the South African schooling context, discipline is often understood more narrowly as corrective corporal punishment.

One of the participants went on to explain:
In the past, we could not discipline the learners using various methods, corporal punishment worked for us and the Department, nor did the parents and the learners have problems with that. Today however, the writing is against the wall. The authority of the educator is replaced with human rights. These learners with learning problems are totally disruptive and perverse. Many a times I wonder who is class clown the learner who does not want to learn or I who want to force him to pay attention?

The participant cited children are either lazy or naughty meaning they are deliberately undermining the educator’s endeavours to be the good educator he never doubts himself to be. The school where he comes from taught him to be a good disciplinarian and he dictates in an autocratic fashion. This attitude leaves no room for debate or discussion or negotiation regarding his teaching methodology. Lack of success on the part of the learner can only be ascribed to laziness or lack of discipline.

Another participant comes from a similar learning environment and he was no stranger to being on the receiving end of physical violence whenever he failed to make the grade. He is not open to the possibility that his achievement in becoming an educator (only) is perhaps not the result of the particular brand of education he had but that it was despite such brand of education.

Three participants reported that they endure intense frustrations in a classroom where learners should have been separated in accordance with their abilities and or disabilities so that the participants could effectively educate the learners in their classrooms. They have no doubt that such separation is also in the interest of the learners. They argue that learners that cannot cope due to lack of intelligence or effort or lack of discipline slows down the process of education for faster learners with their disruptive behaviour which is usually interpreted as willful disregard of the educators’ wishes. In his frustration, the educator resorts to violence in the form of corporal punishment. Kubeka (2004:52) accounts that teachers argued that, without corporal punishment, discipline could not be maintained (children would neither show them respect nor develop the discipline to work hard unless they were beaten or threaten with being beaten).

The participants were of the opinion that the Education Department disempowered educators from exercising the necessary discipline in the classroom when it outlawed corporal punishment
yet kept all learners together despite the differences in their learning abilities. They even
categorized some learners as outright hooligans.

_The pupil point blank refused to give cooperation in the classroom and there was nothing I could
do about it because he was protected by the constitution of the country. He even threatened to have me locked up and I could die of frustration._
_I will never take this nonsense any longer. He does what he wants and when he wants it and now I can do nothing to him._

_Of course the DoE have many shortcomings in the manner that they administer an education system in transition. They have done nothing tangible enough in order to change the negative attitudes of the older educators to inclusive education or get them to change their strategies and tactics with learners in their classrooms towards creating an atmosphere conducive for respect and service delivery towards their subjects. The educator does not even realize how the DoE let him and his learners down in this regard. All that he knows is that the classroom has become a battlefield and that the Education Department effectively handcuffed him. No wonder he and his colleagues that think like him do very little work due to lack of motivation therefore it is not uncommon for children of twelve years of age not to be able to read when they reach Grade seven._

According to Squelch (2000:1), good discipline is one of the key characteristics of an effective school and is a necessary condition for effective teaching and learning. Bearing in mind that the typical classroom accommodate no less than 45-50 learners in South Africa, upholding order within a classroom under these conditions can take so much effort that educators have simply not enough time to teach, thus it is a common phenomenon for participants to ignore disruptive learners.
4.5.2 Category 2: Learners’ lack of motivation to achieve learning outcomes

Many learners hesitate to participate in the learning process because they lack confidence. Motivation and enthusiasm manifest as desire and interest, and as a driving force that pushes learners to take action and to pursue the attainment of academic goals. Lack of motivation and enthusiasm designate absence or deficiency in desire, interest and learners’ driving force.

Lack of motivation and lack of enthusiasm are two of the main reasons for failure and of non-participation. Learners lacking in motivation and enthusiasm are usually passive, blame everything and everyone for their circumstances, and often come up with many excuses why they should not and cannot do this or that, while a motivated learner will take initiative, try and not give up, and will not even think about such excuses.

Lack of motivation and enthusiasm can manifest everywhere, especially in schools and this often brings indifference, unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Regrettably our education system is created in such a way that it only sing praises to the learners who achieve. The children who never or very seldom reach an outcome do not have or receive any accolade or paper that recognizes their achievement. In our classrooms, we do have such learners. These are the ones who show no motivation towards their schoolwork.

_I do not know how to create an environment in my classroom to encourage these learners. Two hundred and fifty learners pass through my hands each day. I do not have the time to accommodate each one’s individual need for affirmation. I cannot artificially praise a learner and I have no results to show for it. Who am I deceiving here? My learners cannot solve problems within the classroom context critically. They lack confidence to want to achieve academic achievement holds no success in for them and they are in a state of confusion because they really want to perform well but every effort meets failure._

_So many of my LSEN do not complete tasks or exercises at all, they do not even try. If I introduced new concepts that I think would motivate them to want to listen or try out they would rather turn to distracting the others and trying to entertain them by doing funny monkey tricks._
School and the classroom environment ought to be a safe haven for learners, *a home away from home experience*, where learners receive intellectual nurturing, to facilitate their learning so as to become individuals who develop physically, emotionally and intellectually to function fully in their respective communities with their limitations.

A few of the participants made known that these learners do not open up to them. The learners do not trust them enough. One participant mentioned: “*I feel their eyes watching me as I move around the class. I don’t know if they fear me more or I them. Is this a healthy environment for the both of us?*”

Participants expressed concern about their learners’ intense fear of failing. *No one likes to make mistakes. Some children are terrified of giving the wrong answer. They don’t want to look foolish in front of their teachers and peers. These learners with a fear of failure are often observed as quiet, shy or just the opposite, one that is the “class clown” – engaging in behaviours that mask the real problem. These children rarely answer a question in a class discussion or complete their assignments.*

*Many learners with learning difficulties in my class feel incredibly stressed by the many demands of the curriculum outcomes and the challenges they face at school.*

Procrastination, laziness, lack of interest and passivity bring despondency; weakness and lack of satisfaction, but being enthusiastic, motivated and active bring a sense of joy, strength and power. By getting motivated, you act, do things, take your mind off problems and difficulties and focus on finding solutions and achieving success. The frustrations that many teachers feel in trying to motivate hard-to-reach learners come from the realities of time pressure, the large number of learners with learning and emotional needs, heavy accountability demands from administrators and parents, and other stress-producing situations that exist in many of our schools.
4.6 SUB-THEME 4: MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

According to the Collective Agreement Number 8 of 2003 (Education Labour Relation Council, 2003:4), the philosophy that underpins the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in South Africa is based upon the fundamental belief that the purposes of IQMS are fivefold:

- To determine competence;
- To assess strengths and areas for development;
- To provide support and opportunities for development to assure continued growth;
- To promote accountability; and
- To monitor an institution’s overall effectiveness.

Under this sub-theme, the perceptions and experiences of the participants pertaining to IQMS as expressed by them will be discussed and reported. Participants have not yet internalized the system and see it as a punitive measure directed against them imposed from the outside. The purpose of the appraisal system is to develop the educator however, the participants’ experiences are not in line with what is envisaged by Collective Agreement Number 8. The specific needs of participants were identified in their Personal Growth Plan however, nothing was done by the DoE to assist them to address their needs and experiences.

Several participants linked the appraisal system to the quality of teaching and learning in the school and the much dreaded inspection system of yester year.

*Classroom observation is obvious a given in appraisal, my team must be able to come into my classroom and observe my interaction with my learners and determine if it’s conducive to constructive learning. They will also become aware of my LSEN and whether I have incorporated them into my lesson plan. At the end of it all they must act in an advisory capacity. If they themselves know much less about teaching learners with learning difficulties than what I do of what help is their input?*
The visit from my team is just a window dressing exercise, I’m at my best and all my learners
behave themselves. The created atmosphere belies the reality of my classroom experience for my
learners and me. If my team sees the bigger picture within my classroom they might just not give
me the assessment mark that I think I deserve. This will be detrimental to my one percent
increase per annum

Participants expressed a need for the Department to come on board and to play a more supportive
role in appraisal. The Department must support educators in dealing with broader social
problems. The school does not exist in isolation and if the Department does not intervene, the
learners will not draw full benefit from the schooling system. This opinion will be discussed in
detail as a recommendation in Chapter Five.

The standards of education are not the same in all school, not all schools have the same teaching
aids to assist in the effective delivery of services within schools. We have to copy our own
textbooks, when we do receive from the Department it is not enough for all our learners and we
struggle to collect school fees so as to purchase our own books. The building structure is not
capable to meet all the learners’ needs. The desks are grouped together with not enough seating
for everyone. You are left with the question do I give textbooks to those who can read and ignore
the ones struggling, do I allow those who pay school fees to sit at a desk? Does IQMS force me
to practice separate education to my learners?

It is evident that participants are not supported by the DoE when they are in need of advice
pertaining to inclusive education or LSEN in their classrooms. Resources are not available for
LSEN such as magnifying glasses for those who are visually impaired and continuously the DoE
(2001a:33) maintains that material and equipment in particular devices will be made
progressively accessible and available to those learners who cannot gain access to learning
because the school lack the resources.

Participants feel IQMS leave loopholes in the system that can be by-passed resulting in
participants not giving themselves honest scores. However, it does not protect the learner who
does not achieve from exclusion. So, why not continue with something that works for you now;
less stress and less disruption to your life because the DoE did not assist them in unpacking each performance standard and each school’s identity differs from the other thus there cannot be uniformity.

Educators fear that if they assess each other or themselves it is not value-free or context-free and within the context of inclusive education, this is based on human judgement. Educators are of the opinion that the system was not designed by them, but by persons who have no idea what the realities and challenges look like that they are confronted with daily.

What really puts me off is when my Development Support Group enters my classroom and is on the lookout for the personality characteristics of my learners, my teaching behaviour, my classroom management technique and how I utilize the time between presentation of work and the completion of task. These aspects will determine my learners’ academic performance, whilst we all know the inability of my learners to reach the learning outcomes of my work schedule.

The purpose of IQMS is to assure that there is ongoing support and improvement however, participants highlighted their concern that the DoE absolve themselves as the custodian of quality education in South Africa by conveniently remaining absent from educator development.

Participants agreed that they cannot sit around and wait on their employer until he/she eventually arrives to join their party for accountability. They themselves will work on a plan of action to promote individual professional growth and ongoing support for educators at their school and their community at large.

4.7 STEP 2: ACTION PROCESS

This step is an action process designed by the participants to assist them in changing the perceptions they hold on inclusive education and to develop themselves more.
4.7.1 The use of metaphors

We used metaphors to assist us in reaching our goal. Metaphors were used to describe SMT members’ understanding and experiences pertaining to inclusive education and why they are procrastinating. Metaphors by definition are a very active process because it is at the heart of understanding oneself, the others around you and the world at large.

Metaphors originated from the Greek word “metaphora” meaning “transference”, a metaphor has generally been understood as a figurative expression which interprets a thing or action through an implied comparison with something else. Aristotle, who is usually considered the originator of “comparison” theories of metaphor, described metaphors in the Rhetoric as elliptical similes - comparisons of “things that are related but not obviously so” without using “like” or “as”. According to Aristotle, the best or “most well liked” type of metaphor transfers its meaning from one subject or “register” to another through the principle of analogy. As Aristotle observes in the Poetics, these metaphors often depend on logical relationships between multiple terms (Hartmann, 2003).

According to Armstrong (2000), iso means the same and morphic means to structure. An isomorphic metaphor is a story with a similar structure to some other event, perhaps as a way to offer solutions for educators’ problems. We explored the creation and use of isomorphic metaphors in our personal development.

Isomorphic metaphors can be used to coach educators to access their unconscious resources, to help educators find important goals, to find blocks and solutions and to identify potential consequences. Isomorphic metaphors also help educators identify and voice their objections and resistances.

At my core I knew teachers learned best when they learn from each other, how to translate their experiences to their colleagues and very important when to find resources within themselves or from their community.
The use of metaphors was a very powerful and emotional revelation for me. The team used metaphors for reflection and dialogue as a tool for their own learning. Easton (2008:xliii) states metaphors assist people in identifying their beliefs. The challenge for us as a group was to look intensely at our beliefs and find commonalities amongst them that served as motivation for us as a group to adopt and to build onto. Doing this exercise at my school required enormous energy, concerning the teaching culture at my school. However, doing this project has contributed to my effectiveness as a teacher. Using metaphors created the structure I needed to examine what I considered to be the most important factors in facilitating the effective implementation of inclusivity.

The outsider witness and I decided on the following strategy employed by Bailey and Lewicki (2007:33) as the vehicle to achieve our envisaged outcome of personal development for our group:

- Shift between and align general ideas with specific detail.
- Shift amongst multiple points of view.
- Shift the scope of work from large to small, as well as to reframe thinking.
- Shift perceptions in time – past, present and future.
- Shift the media of communication to include words, numbers, pictures, and movement.

The participants were asked to write and explain how they perceive inclusive education by using a suitable metaphor. They also had to make a drawing to support the metaphor they decided on. Whilst participants were drawing and writing one could witness the extensity of the exercise on their faces. You could almost feel their inner experiences. What fascinated me most was the interest they showed in this activity and their willingness to want to improve on what they are presently doing within their classrooms and at school. This exercise was a construction of an outer situation to explore peoples’ inner experiences. Not their teaching crises, challenges and problems prohibited them from participating, yet each participant entered this arena with their own vulnerabilities and strengths.

125
Each participant had written a very detailed metaphor on how they experience education within their classrooms. Our aim was to change the educators’ culture of working with inclusivity.

For the purpose of the study, I will name my participants Wayne, Paulo, John, Iyanla and Maya.

The team was of the opinion that they are not able to implement inclusive education effectively as stated in the sub-themes in Step 1 of the research. These sub-themes gave a full account of their respective perceptions on inclusivity and their lack of motivation to participate in the implementation thereof. This constituted me to find a way of getting the participants to re-evaluate their position about inclusivity and their ability to learn, in order to be able to benefit from what is offered.

All the metaphors of the participants were discussed in detail on completion and were submitted as Appendix C. On personal consultation with Professor John Creswell he recommended that the drawings of the participants be included in the study to further illustrate their metaphors and were also submitted as Appendix C as additional sources to enhance the validity of my research.

4.7.2 Area for development

The content of the metaphors was not analyzed individually by the researcher but was the strategy used for educator development. From the focus group discussion, the participants identified the following as areas for development: A vision for inclusion, skills needed for success, the incentives of inclusivity, resources and an action plan for implementation.

These development areas will now be discussed.

4.7.2.1 A vision for inclusion

The question “Why formulate a vision for the group”? can be asked. The group’s need for a vision for inclusion identified the need to move forward and to rediscover their passion for education. They needed fuel to keep themselves going. They expressed the opinion that a
printed version of a vision for inclusivity fully visible in their classroom will enhance an environment of productivity and success for themselves and their learners. This will ensure that the need of the school will at all times be put first, so as to put the school’s needs first, keep the vision visible before role-players, both the educators and the learner, and to allow the educators to understand and value their role in implementing inclusive education.

The following vision for inclusion was formulated:

**Vision for inclusion**

*By 2013 the above-mentioned school will be a recognized leader and advocate for inclusivity. The school will be known for successfully educating a diverse array of public school learners within its community in all aspects of the development of the learner.*

*Our learners must be educated holistically resulting in socially committed and morally responsible individuals of their respective communities.*

*It is our goal to deliver academic excellence, encourage positive self-esteem and leadership discipline amongst all our learners.*

The central point of education suggests that school leadership should look ahead, think strategically, and recognize the critical contributions that educators will make in the workplace of the future. Such leaders realize that the world is rapidly changing and that they must act today to assure that their people will be fit to contribute tomorrow.

4.7.2.2 **Skills needed to succeed**

Teachers’ professional skills should equip them to know how to prepare intervention programmes, how to determine the intensity of support, how to make adaptations, accommodations and
modifications to the curriculum and what resource provision is needed (use what is available). According to the asset-based approach the individual will be enriched because of the contribution that individual is making towards a support programme. Inclusion practitioners are educators who do more than teach children with learning difficulties – they advocate for change in schools and communities, sparking a passion for inclusion in teachers, administrators, and families and giving them the practical guidance they need to make it work. This is how the participants in this study envisage their role equipped with the following skills:

• Self-acceptance allows one to solve as many of your problems as you possibly can. The team need to make the most of who they are by overcoming or fixing those things that are within their power to change for example maybe within your classroom set up you have difficulties setting boundaries or take responsibility for the learning of all the learners. This problem can be addressed by building good teams that are supportive in implementing creative alternative to discipline management. All of us have hurdles that can be overcome, if we so wish to change.

• To believe in your own value. Each one of us is the greatest asset we will ever possess. We must not sell ourselves short and we must blow our own trumpets.

• Trust is a vehicle for building inclusivity. A strong relationship amongst all role-players in the school community is needed, so that members of this organization can show compassion, understanding and empathy for the people in it.

• Innovation. In order to stand in front of an inclusive classroom one needs innovation. Educators must work smarter in their classes and not harder. Educators need creativity to accommodate all learners effectively.

• Persistence. Inclusivity is not a very easy component of the school curriculum to implement when one is faced with the reality of overcrowded classrooms, hungry learners and ill-prepared educators. Educators must be able to manage their performances effectively. It is about planning to perform, develop yourself so that you can perform, you must be able to manage you performance and importantly growth in performance need to be recognized and rewarded.

• Enhance listening skills. Educators must be able to listen to both their learners and the parents and at times put themselves in these role-players shoes. These people sit
with an array of information that can really lighten your task as an educator. Value their role in effective education.

- Leadership. Good leaders always make a difference. Knowing what people need and want is a very important means in understanding them. If a leader can understand the people he works with, you can influence them and impact their lives in a constructive way.

4.7.2.3 Incentives of inclusive education

Failures in education are so often laid at the door of educators and my participants so often had to face discouragement in their classrooms. Even after achieving some level of success with their learners, many have not received any form of validation for work done in their classroom. So often we can see so much potential in others, yet find it difficult to unlock our hidden treasures and recognize it. Therefore, it is essential to the developmental process that there be some degree of nurturing the intrinsic resources and talents that people possess.

Educators need to take ownership of the successes of implementing inclusive education. It emphasizes collaboration, dynamic partnerships and participation. It makes allocation for the identification of problems and creates and rebuilds relationships between the individual, the institution and the community. Role-players are more aware of each other and become bigger risk takers in learning. It is a platform for sharing experiences. Role-players become less concerned with making mistakes and express their opinions and views more freely. Through discussions with peers, educators can become more relaxed, at ease, comfortable and accepting of their own classroom situation.

Commitment to development creates greater awareness of each other and our role in our work environment. It increases awareness of one’s own teaching, own feelings about our teaching, our attitudes and our knowledge. This process of participation will allow the participants the opportunity to become the person they were meant to be. Participants expressed negativity towards inclusivity, which leads to them becoming unproductive in the sphere of inclusivity.
According to Lawley and Tompkins (2000), one of the most effective ways to use the process of metaphors is to help individuals heal negative patterns of behaviour. In this way, the individual becomes more harmonious and better able to take action towards the challenges they are faced with. Hord’s (1997) research on professional learning found the following incentives for teachers:

- Reduced isolation
- Increased commitment to the mission and goal of the school and increased vigour in working to strengthen the mission.
- Shared responsibility for the total development of learners and collective responsibility for learner success.
- Increased meaning and understanding of the content that teachers teach and the roles they play in helping all learners achieve expectations.
- Higher possibility that teachers will be well informed professionally renewed and inspired to inspire their learners.

4.7.2.4 Resources

The team agreed that they have a huge array of assets that they can tap, for example, learning how to learn, work methods, being able to think critically, the management of changes, self-understanding, etc. assist in their development in evolving to become advocates of inclusivity. Every human being is born as an unique tabula rasa (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:39). We found that all of the participants in this study were involved in activities in their church organizations, local community, sports and recreation, community outreach programmes and care givers. People can be guided throughout their lives to use their experiences and specific opportunities for skills acquisition to cope more adroitly with the increasing demands of life (Ebersöhn & Eloff, 2003:41). We used the capacity inventory as proposed by Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) which implies that every individual has needs and every individual boast a unique combination of assets and capacities, and see how each individual can assist in implementing the inclusive vision formulated by the group. In our midst, we identified:

- who will be responsible for chairing our weekly meetings;
• who will organize our weekly workshops for skills development on the identification of learning problems;
• who will contact specialists in our local community that can assist us in remedial education programmes;
• and collectively drawing up individual educational programmes for all our learners in need of one.

According to Easton (2008:51), powerful professional learning establishes a culture of quality where educators are continuously asked to apply their skills and professionalism to improve the learning of learners.

Intention was the buzzword adopted by the group. We each wrote out personal growth plan, for example:

• My knowledge of the curriculum for inclusivity will allow me to skilfully use learner centred approach to engage learners meaningfully. I will avail myself to collect as much information on inclusivity and what the curriculum requires from me and my learners.
• I will become actively involved in the organization of workshops and seminars for colleagues, consulting with various experts in the field of inclusivity.
• I will engage in collaborative activities with ease and enjoy excellent relations with my colleagues.
• I want to adopt a multi-dimensional approach to problem solving in my classroom and school.

4.7.2.5 Action plan

An action plan was agreed on to navigate our way forward. In order for us to become good leaders in the field of inclusivity, we must become good learners. Hallinger and Bridges (2007:7) state that education in the professions should emphasize the application of knowledge and add that professional development should aim at preparing managers for action. Smith (2001:35)
declares that action learning embodies an approach based on comrades in adversity learning from each other through discriminating questioning, fresh experience and reflective insight. Bush and Glover (2005:232) note that this approach is highly effective because the action learning is exigent: you have to elucidate your problems to others, they listen and discuss and finally feedback suggestions to assuage your area of difficulty.

We have decided that we are going to become people who succeed by developing an attitude of refusing to quit and not allow failure to defeat nor define us. We are opening up our doors so that all in the organization will learn. We will adopt a spirit of inquiry so as to ensure an array of choices to choose from. Our roles will be that of data collectors and analyzers as well as reporters and mentors to our colleagues. Easton (2008:52) adds that those who are going to implement change must also be involved in the design of the change they wish to see. As a team, we realized that in order for us to implement these changes the pace of schooling will consequently be slowed down, allowing us time for inquiry and reflecting that will promote our learning and the application thereof.

As mentioned earlier, we started off by assembling the collective skills of the team in formulating solutions to individual problems in the short term and to assist in reaching our long-term goal of professional educator development. We started by grouping two educators; they had collective work on a jointly defined problem. This project included working together with learners in a classroom. The benefits of this are that educators can simultaneously buttress discipline and influence, the administration work can be spread as well as the teaching load lessen. However, this is not a permanent measure; the objective thereof was to get a collaborative process going to implement shortcomings identified. The goal of this partnership was to take one classroom, get the most suitable partnership with all the skills needed and work collaboratively on a solution. The first classroom we focused on was grade one. The educator highlighted her problem with identification of learning problems. The educators were placed in the same class for three weeks. In that time, collectively they observed the identified learners, the work the learners handed in and the learners’ behaviour in class. The partner was not in the class the whole day. The partners brought their notes and views to the team’s discussion table. Collective solutions will be circulated and advice will be offered to take this process further.
In my research, I have found that participants started to communicate more freely about their classroom experiences and were more open to critics and recommendation.

4.8 CONCLUSION

Chapter Four presented an analysis and discussion of the research findings by means of identified themes, apposite verbatim quotations, and comparisons with relevant literature. An action plan for implementation of inclusive education was formulated. The team initiated this important collaborative programme to involve participants working as one to solve difficulties that arise in the inclusive classrooms.

Chapter Five will present the conclusions and make recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

So I prayed to the God of heaven.
And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king,
and if your servant has found favour in your sight,
I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs,
that I may rebuild the wall.

(Nehemiah 2:4-5)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, I explored the experiences of a group of SMT members at a particular school in the Northern areas of the Nelson Mandela Metropole with whom I reached the objective of my study which was to understand the role the SMT plays in facilitating the process of change and offer some practical suggestions to the SMT in implementing and maintaining inclusive education. In the course of the study I hoped to create a space in which these members could voice their inimitable lived reality individually and as a group. In the process I hoped to find out how these members’ experiences hold opposing views or were analogous, which personal and institutional variables impacted on their experiences and what enabled or restricted their functioning within the context of inclusive education.

The data collection process created an implausible opportunity to engage SMT around their experiences as leadership of a particular school in the Nelson Mandela Metropole. The themes served as topics to be pondered on and the group session for validation of feelings, perceptions and experiences. This became a space for the SMT to share the lessons that they had learned and the ideas about how to deal with the diverse challenges stumbled upon. Such critical thinking is underpinned by the heart and head in influencing beliefs and practices. The process validated the view that when dealing with any group of people it would be extremely disrespectful and naïve to assume homogeneity. Each person’s experience and personal make up ensures their desire to succeed and to make a positive impact on their learners, their school and most importantly
themselves. Understanding their point of departure certainly impacted on their ability to communicate their needs better. Though there are commonalities in what they experienced as learners, these experiences should always be seen in context. As the instrument of this research and a member of the SMT, I had to confront my own preconceived ideas about the key challenges my colleagues were confronted with. Some of the findings confirmed my understanding of how they think, what they feel, what inspires them, how they are likely to act and react in a given situation. I understood that relationships were the adhesive that would hold my team together resulting in raised awareness and it opened my eyes to new issues.

For the purposes of this discussion the conclusions were bandied together under the headings educators near retirement, educator coping skills, work-overload, isolation in the workplace and educator self-esteem which will be discussed fully.

5.2 STEP ONE

Step one of the participatory action research cycle introduced the idea of problem identification in order to be acquainted with the educators’ perceptions of learners in mainstream classes. Educator participants at a particular school each wrote a narrative, they were interviewed and had group discussions and the data was analyzed. These methods of data collection assisted in achieving the objective of this study. The following can be deduced from the data analysis:

5.2.1 Educators near retirement

Educators in this age group who participated in this study had their own havens of security, familiarity and comfort. This was a place they wanted to be in and wanted to stay in and not be bothered with new policies that rattled their way of being. Because they were comfortable there, their activities within their class environment and their behaviour took on familiar patterns. Their patterns became habits, their habits routines and before long their routines became a comfortable rut.
Has teaching become a young person’s game? The group felt that they are still the same person of ten years ago, but as they have aged other people tend to treat them differently. They felt that they are being treated as older people unable to adjust to the rapidly changing world. However, in a less changing environment, people are confronted with fewer opportunities to grow and their personal development is reticent in their final years. As the body ages they do not always wish to discover new philosophies and new ideas. The educators lost their youthful daring and drew back from experiential learning. The benefits of developing in old age is that one loses the ambition for applause, recognition, popularity, the fear of an endangered career which bring about a refreshing freedom.

5.2.2 Educator coping skills

The participants expressed their view that so very often they think about the great crises in life and wonder how they would face them. So often we come to those bleak periods when everything we feel goes stale and flat, when our energy wanes and our enthusiasm dies. I found it interesting to note that educators found it very difficult to perform in a way that is inconsistent with how they see themselves and adapt to the increasing rate of change. These educators offered evidence of feeling intense uncertain and insecure which had to do with their professional role in an inclusive classroom.

I encountered two popular problem areas identified by the participants in the classroom of today. On the one hand they say that classrooms in disadvantaged areas are much too over-crowded and on the other, that some learners have an inability to respond positively to their particular teaching methods.

Having analyzed what the requirements are for good health of the teaching environment for learners wherein the educator has to play the role of the most important and able heart of such a system, I believe that one is now able to analyze the criticism of these educators and express a valued judgement thereon.
During the cause of my investigations I found participants being extremely well informed on the DoE’s prescription about what constitutes ideal educator-learner ratios for a suitable learning environment. It is a fact that most schools in the disadvantaged areas of society are grossly over-crowded in terms of the Departments’ teacher-learner ratios. Even though one cannot regard as irrelevant the negative impact that an over-crowded classroom can have in a learning environment, one must take issue with the lack of effort that is clearly evident from the SMT the reason for this is as follows:

- When I prepare myself as an educator (whether for twenty learners or forty learners) my preparation remains essentially the same.
- When I present my lesson to the learners, I present it to the entire class and the number in the class is irrelevant.

The only difficulties that one expects can be in the form of the number of learners that may not have drawn sufficient benefit from the presentation of my lesson when it was presented. If my class consist of twenty learners, it is likely that I will have less remedial candidates than can be expected from a class of forty. In both case scenarios, I am expected to give appropriate interventions to those learners in need of such interventions. Therefore I (as the heart of the inclusive education system) need to be appropriately qualified not only to teach learners without educational challenges, but also to teach those learners with challenges. If I cannot do this then I fail the learners and the education system.

My biggest concern is that, knowing that educator-learner ratios in disadvantaged areas are less than ideal; educators have seized this opportunity to use this as the perfect scape-goating opportunity. Educators are not enthusiastic about inclusivity. They only see problems and no opportunities. What they do is to reflect attention for bad outcomes in education for our learners to the conditions of over-crowdedness on the one hand, and on the other they blame their failure as educators in inclusive education on the learner.

It is true that the DoE can improve the learning conditions for both the educator and the learner. However, until that happens, educators have to take full responsibility to become well-equipped
(as the heart of education they are supposed to represent) as fully trained educators for an inclusive educational environment.

There was consensus amongst the members that the primary way to learn to handle themselves well under pressure is by observing life and adjusting to its rhythms. One sure method is to study those who have already mastered this art. Therefore, to ensure that we learned only from the best, we have invited the experts into our classrooms to guide and to assist us.

5.2.3 Work-overload

All of the participants spoke of a “disregard for the paperwork” that is a prerequisite for each LSEN, a detailed curriculum planning per annum, detailed assessment of each learner in the class and daily preparation. They are in agreement that there is just not enough time in a day. According to Holmes (2005:47), anecdotal evidence has suggested that this situation has worsened in recent years between the proper job of educating children and the vast array of peripheral tasks that have to be done and, while countries such as the United Kingdom who seeks to take steps to reduce the administrative burden of teaching, there is still much progress that needs to be made. Participants stated that one of the greatest challenges is that special needs children are more likely to be overwhelmed by crowded classes and loud noises. To address these issues, the DoE should decrease the class size and ensure that the class routine is well ordered and structured.

The educators want to be accountable for learning, but they want the actions they take for accountability to be useful and helpful to them, to the learners they teach and the parents who entrusted them with their children.

These are the often insensitive messages that reinforce the perception of teachers not doing what they are paid to do which is teaching. Participants feel overwhelmed, stressed out, overworked, and have become nothing more than “glorified social workers”. The participants are not saying the learners are not worth it — what they are saying is that it is impossible to meet the demands of our educational system, the parents of their learners, our government and our society.
According to participants many tests appear to be more about responding to public pressure than about providing timely, relevant and meaningful information. In order for educators to effectively implement inclusive education they need:

- Less administrative work that put more pressure on them whilst they are in a process of empowering themselves on multi-disciplinary approaches to inclusive education.
- The need support from the DoE through various support structures within the Department.
- Participants expressed the need for assistants who can see to the administrative side of education whilst they focus on doing the job which is to teach.

5.2.4 Isolation in the workplace

“Loneliness is the worst pain in this world. It constantly eats away the person's heart, and can cause the person to hate, to feel enraged - the same rage and hate that can cause one person to kill another. It is like a wound of the heart; the type of wounds that cannot go away with a kiss or a hug. The only thing that can make this great pain go away is love and compassion, another human heart to pull them out of this hell” (Princess Diana).

One of the most common feelings participants have is loneliness and a sense of being on their own. Often the sense of isolation is made worse if you find it difficult to talk about how you feel and what you are going through. It can be hard to talk to friends and family about how you really feel; you tell them that you’re fine, when you feel very different inside. You may find yourself giving people other reasons for not being yourself, such as “just feeling tired”.

The result of this isolation is that most teachers have the idea that other teachers are doing a much better job than we are: ours are the only learners who will not be quiet. Ours are the only learners who are not learning the material. Consequently, we do not want anyone to come in and see that we have no idea what we are doing. However, when I acknowledge that loneliness is a feeling by saying, “I FEEL lonely”, I open the door of my prison cell because feelings can and do change. Of course, as long as I continue to say, “I feel lonely. I feel lonely. I feel lonely”, nothing will
change. For although I opened the door, I have chosen to remain in the cell. To completely set myself free I have to take that extra step by saying, “I feel lonely, SO I'M GOING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT”. This process was helped along with the writing and illustration of the metaphors.

If you can find the courage to talk to just one person about how you feel, it can be the first step towards helping you to feel better within an inclusive classroom. Primarily this was the decision the participants agreed upon: We are going to talk our way through all the difficulties we experienced and collectively come to an agreement on what practices would be implemented. By reaching out and not remaining stuck in that state of being we became someone’s ear, someone’s assistant, someone’s observer and someone’s help. By availing ourselves we have gained so much in return: support, understanding and a helping hand.

The participants expressed their need for channels of communication to remain open and to be stimulated from the exchange of ideas, and being able to question their actions and attitudes openly. This will result in understanding children in your classroom better and feeling less alone.

5.2.5 Educator self-esteem

Attitudes are the perspectives people bring to any situation or experience, which can colour points of view. While attitudes are shaped by life experiences, genetics, and education, they are, ultimately, under conscious control. In other words, if people are aware of their attitudes, they can choose to change them.

One method of shifting emotion is called the BARES model (Scheinfeld, 1998:55):

*Be aware of all your emotions*

*Accept them all without judgment*

*Recognize that you control your attitudes and behaviours*

*Express true emotions*

*Shift negative emotions consciously*
Participants highlighted the following questions to help them assess their awareness of their attitudes towards inclusive education that enhanced their low self-esteem:

- Are you aware of attitudes and beliefs that are limiting in your inclusive classroom?
- Can you identify choices you are making in your expression of emotions and your behaviours?
- Are these choices optimal for you?
- Are they leading to your own health and happiness?
- Do the people in your life promote positive thoughts or do they reinforce your negative limiting beliefs about inclusivity?
- Do you believe in yourself in a supportive way?

Participants started recently to think about their self-esteem and the confidence that comes with it as their own renewable resource and, it’s up to them and only them to sustain it. The energy can only come from within. They know that when they tried something new, it was very intimidating but it was also thrilling and no matter what, they learned something and learning always boosts how they felt about themselves. Thus, their self-esteem engine was re-energized and ready for the next challenge.

It seems that just the act of trying triggers a positive reaction in brains of the participants because no matter the outcome, they are *taking action* and not simply *thinking* about it. They expressed the opinion that if they think too much there are too many reasons to stay standing still. Standing still is not a sustainable option for the long term. Self-esteem can erode and wash away under these conditions. They needed to stick with their metaphors for just a while longer; participants were of the view that their inner resources needed care and consideration.

Participants iterated that actions of collaboration and action learning renewed them – not because they work from the outside in, but because they have given themselves the time for contributing and successfully managing their schedule and their focus so that they can enjoy the moment and reap the rewards. Of course life gets in the way of these things; some risks don’t quite pay off.
The rewards of supposed failures are there and they would still fall prey to a busy schedule and
the demands of the DoE, and work overload, etc. But then they act.

And this is the one thing they really do wish they knew a few years ago, that they are the person
in charge of their own resources, they must feed and nurture and challenge themselves, they must
build their reserves for the really big threats, and they must keep themselves beating, growing,
authentic, creative and alive.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made with unambiguous reference to educator
empowerment and development.

5.3.1 Recommendations for educator development

• External support must be made available to educators from the Education Support
  Services especially with the introduction to new policies inclusive education so as to
  ensure a smooth prologue.

• Action research within educator classrooms is a continuous process and it assist with
  the drawing up of a personal growth plan for educators. The value of action research
  to any educator cannot be ignored and aging do not hamper effective participation
  from educators.

• Action learning, coaching and mentoring should be made available to educators.
  Practical approaches are needed to assist educators in their experiential learning
  cycle. This will also allow educators the opportunity to learn from the experts.

• Peers need to network to discuss challenges and successes that educators encounter.
  A very effective leadership development approach to implementing a new concept of
  implementing inclusive education in classrooms which are workable.

• Clustering between neighbouring schools to augment collaboration, development and
  the sharing of skills, knowledge and expertise. Educators need to build relationships
with their colleagues for when the road seems long and weary you can count on the support of a willing colleague.

- Educators need to participate in processes of personal reflection and a platform need to be created.

5.3.2 Recommendation with regard to teaching

- In overcrowded classrooms, especially at the beginning of the year when educators are struggling to organize the classrooms, an educator assistant must be made available to assist in the identification and remediating of learners with learning problems to get this process of implementing inclusive education started.
- A training programme can be introduced at schools to assist educators in developing their competence to deal with learners with learning problems.
- School-based Support Teams at schools should become fully functional and not exist in name only. Educator leadership skills in inclusive education need to be sharpened and developed. The team is instrumental in the realization of the vision for inclusivity.
- The SMT should be readily available as a consultative body or to model the process to other schools in assisting in the implementation of inclusive education.

5.3.3 Recommendations for the DoE

- Educators need time to experiment with new developments in the field of education therefore; **TIME** must be made available to them to interact in humanistic, positive and collaborative ways.
- Educators should receive recognition and incentives for committing themselves to be agents of change in their schools to enhance and to motivate future educator development.
- The DoE should make more remedial education posts available so that these educators can work on a rotational basis to assist neighbouring schools. Many problems educators experience can be removed if identified early.
• Reduction in the paper required on each learner with learning difficulties.

5.3.4 Recommendation for future research

• This study delimited itself to the experiences of one SMT; further research is needed to determine whether other SMTs have similar or differing experiences at their school.

• An action research can be taken to trace each educator who formed part of this qualitative study’s experiences.

• This process can be researched with the whole school and the collective journey of the participants documented.

5.4 STEP TWO

Step two was the action plan of my research study on which the SMT members decided collectively as a method to restructure their thinking towards an implementation programme for inclusive education for their school. It is an indicative method that illustrates that the objective of the study was achieved through the active participation of the SMT in creating a vision for inclusive education.

Any educational organization that acknowledges to be transforming in line with the democratic philosophy of South Africa has to construct an environment that welcomes and celebrates the diverse realities of this country. This would suggest efforts that are mindful to increase sensitivity about how traditional practices evocative of a past that may be associated with oppression and may send messages that are counterproductive to the message of transformation. This process should include tangible and structuralized diversity and sensitivity training programmes that afford people at all levels of the institution an opportunity to express their fears, concerns and experiences of inclusivity. This is a very personal process that compels people to assess long held beliefs, and it is expected that it could be met with resistance.
Challenges cannot be wished away or attempt improvised to move through the process of change with blinkers on, research has proven that people’s attitudes play a key role in enabling organizational modification.

5.5 LIMITATIONS

A concentrated and passionate attempt was made to present a well planned and methodical investigated research dissertation, however the researcher can identify the following as limitations of the study:

- The research took place at only one school in the Northern areas of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Area. More relevant, important and richly descriptive information could probably have been acquired had the research population been bigger.
- The research was very time consuming and it placed a very big demand on the participants to commit themselves to this process.
- For the participants, this process was a very emotional journey as well and as a researcher, I was always mindful of Bird's (2001:10) analysis that we can expose resilience when we can research the endeavour of the silence, the difficulty, the sense of being overwhelmed and challenging the panic that comes with prospects and the critical ideas that act us to silence. This challenged me to not get too involved in being a comforter.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Developing a model that assist foundation phase educators to implement inclusive education successfully.
- Negotiating pathways in inclusive education for children with learning difficulties.
- Developing an education model that creates opportunities for impoverish communities.
5.7 SUMMARY

One of the greatest gifts individuals have power over is an immense capacity for learning. A prerequisite for successful living is exploring how we learn and finding new ways to enhance that ability and constantly kindle it in young and old, regardless of capability, it is a sacred and ceaseless undertaking.

Inclusion is about the organizational change within schools to improve the educational system for all learners. It means changes in the curriculum, changes in how teachers teach and how learners learn, as well as changes in how learners with and without special needs interact with and relate to one another. The quality of leadership makes a significant difference to educator participation in accommodating all learners. However, for this we as educators must ensure that we are fully capable of delivering this service irrespective how old we are or what our qualification levels are. As a Head of Department at a primary school in the Northern suburbs of Port Elizabeth, it is my understanding that educators must promote a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the whole school community. It is simply not enough to accept learners with special educational needs into your classroom. You must understand what it means to believe in the educability of all, to ensure that each child has an equal opportunity to access the same critical knowledge and skills, and to be accountable for every child. This made me question how educators at my school perceive learners with special educational needs.

It is my perception that the vision and guiding principles of inclusive education, while impressive on paper, is not always experienced as meaningful within the everyday classroom situation. Successful implementation and maintenance of inclusivity by educators are influenced by their perceptions, attitudes and commitment to educational transformation. I believe that schools which can nurture, develop and use the skills, talents and strengths of all its members will enlarge its collective resources and ultimately is likely to be more at ease with itself.

It is my objective to understand the role the school management team plays in facilitating the process of changes, as change cannot be forced and the fear of change must be acknowledged and faced, and to offer some practical suggestions to SMTs of schools in implementing and
maintaining inclusive education. Its findings will form the basis for the development of a teacher support team at the researcher’s school.

The qualitative research paradigm and more specifically the participatory action research approach which is applied research that treats knowledge as a form of power and designates with the line between research and social action particularly assisted me in answering my research question. The qualitative approach was selected, as it is exploratory and descriptive in nature and I wished to acquire insight into a phenomenon through ascertaining the meaning affixed to it.

The research was conducted in two steps. Step 1 of the participatory action research cycle introduced the idea of problem identification in order to be acquainted with the educators’ perceptions of learners in mainstream classes. Step 1 was presented via the presentation and discussion of results. Educators at a particular school wrote narrative, they were interviewed and had discussions and the data was analyzed with the aim of identifying themes and sub-themes, from which a focus concept was extracted for the implementation of an action plan for the school management team. Step 2 was the action plan of my research study on which the school management team members decided collective as a method to restructure their thinking towards an implementation programme for inclusive education for their school. Metaphors were used to describe SMTs’ understanding and experiences pertaining to inclusive education and why they are procrastinating. Metaphors by definition are a very active process because it is at the heart of understanding oneself, the others around you and the world at large.

After data analysis of the first step was concluded, the research established that the participant educators were not in favour of inclusive education and for that reason perceived it negatively. Educators are not enthusiastic about inclusivity. They only see problems and no opportunities. All of the participants spoke of a disregard for the paperwork that is a prerequisite for each learner with special educational needs. One of the most common feelings participants have is loneliness and a sense of being on their own. I found it interesting to note that educators found it very difficult to perform in a way that is inconsistent with how they see themselves and adapt to the increasing rate of change.
Step 2 was the action plan of my research study on which the SMT members decided collective as a method to restructure their thinking towards an implementation programme for inclusive education for their school. The researcher also reflected on the limitations inherent to this study and presented guidelines and recommendations for implementing and maintaining inclusive education.

Educators must never stop to ask the question, Where am I? In this way, they will not merely react; they will act.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The aim of this research study was to understand why educators in mainstream classrooms do not implement inclusive education. To achieve the aim of this study, a qualitative narrative writing was employed in order to expand on understanding the perceptions of educators with regard to the implementation of inclusive education. One theme emerged in step one of the data analysis with overlapping sub-themes and categories. Step two was the implementation of the action research for inclusive education.

The recommendations were made for teaching, practice, research and educational development. The limitations of the research were accentuated.

This research study highlighted the need for educators to be developed and educated on inclusive education and ways need to be discussed so that educators can become advocates of inclusive education.
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APPENDIX A
LETTERS TO CONDUCT PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

The main objective of this study will be to investigate the role played by the SMT at a specific school in addressing the implementation and maintenance of inclusive education.

In order to understand educator perceptions on inclusive education in mainstream schools, a qualitative research approach will best suit this investigation in an attempt to make sense of or interpret people’s experiences in terms of the meaning they attach to them.

The population of the study will consist of a specific school in the Northern areas of the Port Elizabeth Metropole which seems to have a problem implementing the policy of inclusive education.

Letters for permission to grant investigation have been given to the principal and the District Director of Education and read as follows:

LETTER TO SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

11 March 2008

THE PRINCIPAL
C.J. Swem
Sanctor Primary School
Coleus Crescent
Sanctor
PORT ELIZABETH
6059

Dear Sir / Madam

I am presently an educator at Sanctor Primary School, as well as a part-time second year M.ED student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), doing full research under the supervision of Professor J.L. Geldenhuys.

My research study centers on the role of the School Management Teams (SMTs) in the implementation and maintenance of inclusive education in schools.

The investigation will include narrative writing, focus group interviews and individual interviews with members of the SMT. The aims of the study are to solicit ideas that might enhance the effective implementation and maintenance of inclusive education and suggestions on the development of a teacher support team.

I hereby seek permission from you and your SMT to engage the SMT members of your school as participants in my study. The investigation will be guided by a strict code of ethics as presented by the Ethics Committee of the NMMU. All data collected during the investigation will be
treated in a strictly confidential manner. Your participation in my study will be invaluable and highly appreciated.

I declare myself available to answer any queries you or the SMT members might have regarding the nature of the investigation.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. D.C. Geduld (Persal Number: 501678519)

LETTER TO DISTRICT DIRECTOR

12 March 2008

THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR
Department of Education
PORT ELIZABETH

Dear Sir / Madam

I am presently an educator at Sanctor Primary School, as well as a part-time second year M.ED student at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), doing full research under the supervision of Professor J.L. Geldenhuys.

My study centers on the role of the School Management Teams (SMTs) in the implementation and maintenance of inclusive education in schools.

I hereby seek permission from the Department of Education to conduct my investigation at Sanctor Primary School.

The investigation will include interviews with individual members of the SMT, focus group interviews and narrative writing.

The aim of the study is to solicit ideas for the enhancement of effective implementation and maintenance of inclusive education and suggestions on the development of a teacher support team.

Please feel free to contact my supervisor, Professor J.L. Geldenhuys at 0415041188.

I trust that my request will meet with your favourable consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. D.C. Geduld (Persal Number: 501678519)
### Title of the research project
The role of school management teams in the implementation and maintenance of inclusive education

### Reference number (for official use)

### Principal investigator
Mrs Deidre C. Geduld

### Address
36 Amandla Street
Cleary Estate
PORT ELIZABETH
6059

### Contact telephone number
072 135 5897

### A. DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF PARTICIPANT

#### Person legally competent to give consent on behalf of the participant

<table>
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<th>Initial</th>
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I, the participant and the undersigned I.D. number

OR

I, in my capacity as of the participant I.D. number

Address (of participant)

---

#### A.1 I HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

1. I, the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project that is being undertaken by Mrs Deidre C. Geduld of the Department of Advanced Studies in Education in the Faculty of Education of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

2. The following aspects have been explained to me, the participant:

   2.1 **Aim:** This research study centers on the role of the school management teams in the implementation and maintenance of inclusive education in schools. The investigation will include narrative writing, focus group interviews and individual interviews with members of the school management team. The aim of this study is to solicit ideas that might enhance the effective implementation and maintenance of inclusive education and suggestions on the
development of a teacher support team.

**2.2 Procedures:** Data will be collected using interviews. All participants will be given as much time as they feel necessary to respond to questions. With the expressed permission of each participant, the interviews will be tape-recorded. No participant’s name will be used, but each interview will be coded with a number in order to define categories. In no way will the identification be used to determine participant identity.

**2.3 Risks:**

Not Applicable

**2.4 Possible benefits:** As a result of my participation in this study might be able to enhance the effective implementation and maintenance of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

**2.5 Confidentiality:** My identity will not be revealed in any discussion, description or scientific publications by the investigators.

**2.6 Voluntary participation/refusal/discontinuation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My participation is voluntary</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My decision whether or not to participate will in no way affect my present or future care/employment/lifestyle</td>
<td>TRUE</td>
<td>FALSE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The information above was explained to me/the participant by

(name of relevant person) Mrs Deidre C. Geduld

in [ ] English [X] and I am in command of this language

I was given the opportunity to ask questions and all these questions were answered [ ] satisfactorily

4. No pressure was exerted on me to consent to participation and I understand that I may withdraw at any stage without penalisation.

5. Participation in this study will not result in any additional cost to myself.

**A.2 I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signed/confirmed at</th>
<th>on</th>
<th>20</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Signature of witness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ] Signature or right thumb print of participant</td>
<td>[ ] Full name of witness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. STATEMENT BY OR ON BEHALF OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

I, Mrs Deidre C. Geduld, declare that -
- (name of participant)

I have explained the information given in this document to

and/or his/her representative

(name of representative)

- he/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions;
- this conversation was conducted in
  and no translator was used
- I have detached Section D and handed it to the participant

Signed/confirmed at ____________________ on this ______ day of ______________________ 2008.

Signature of interviewer : __________________________

Signature of witness : __________________________

Full name of witness : __________________________

C. IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO PARTICIPANT

Dear participant

Thank you for your/the participant’s participation in this study. Should, at any time during the study:
- an emergency arise as a result of the research, or
- you require any further information with regard to the study, or
- the following occur

(indicate any circumstances which should be reported to the investigator)

Kindly contact

Mrs Deidre C. Geduld – Researcher – 0721355897
Professor J.L. Geldenhuys – Supervisor – 0415041188

(it must be a number where help will be available on a 24 hour basis, if the research project warrants it)

STATEMENT BY INVESTIGATOR:

I, _________________________ (name of researcher) declare that I have explained the information given in this document to _________________________ (name of participant). He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions regarding my study. This meeting was conducted in English and no translator was used.

Signed at ____________________ on this ______ day of ______________________ 2008.

Signature of investigator : __________________________

Signature of witness : __________________________

Full name of witness : __________________________
APPENDIX C
TRANScribed INTERVIEW, FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION AND
METAPHORS CONDUCTED WITH INDIVIDUALS
METHAPHOR: WAYNE

My prentjie beeld die natuur uit. Ek is baie lief vir die buitelig, en hou van toer. Wanneer alles my begin vasdruk, soek ek toevlug in die natuur, veral die see. Die rustigheid wat dit uitstraal, het ‘n kalmerende effek op my. Dan noem ons nog nie pragtige uitsig van verskillende kleure nie Dit is in alle vlakke van die natuur sigbaar, die veld, see, hemelruim, ens.

As ons dink aan die veld waar verskillende plantes, insektes, voëls en diere in ‘n rustige harmonie saamleef, kan ons net die skepping van God waardeer en prys. Daar is soveel diversiteit, maar tog vind die natuur ‘n manier om alles te deel en in harmonie saam ‘n bestaan te voer. Alles het ‘n unieke doel en sekere behoeftes, maar hul floreer in hul verskeie habitats met andere soos ‘n hegte gesin. Hulle kan niks doen aan hul omstandighede nie, maar tog vind hul maniere om voort te bestaan.

Jy kan net introspeksie doen en die voorbeeld van die natuur in jou lewe toepas. Ons is ook ‘n skepping van God met sekere talente wat ons kan gebruik om daardie kalmte te skep, ten spyte van ons verskille, omstandighede en die warboel waarin ons moet bestaan.

Dieselfde kan in ons klasse toegepas word. In ons klaskamer aanskou en ervaar ons dieselfde differensiasie, met een verskil, die mens het gevoelens en dit beïnvloed hul optredes en reaksies. Alle leerders is nie op dieselfde vlak nie en besit ook nie dieselfde vaardighede nie. Net soos verskillende plantes, insektes, ens. saamleef, moet ons maniere ontwikkel en probeer om die
verskillende leerders in ons klas met al hul leemtes te akkommodeer. Ons moet dus self verskillende leertegnieke en –metods aanleer, leerders se sterk- en swakpunte raaksien en dit gebruik om leer vir ons leerders maklier te maak bv. Verskillende tipe vrae in ‘n vraestel. Sommige leerders is akademies en ander meer prakties aangelê. Leerders wat akademies meer bevoeg is, sal dit maklier vind om sinne te skryf en vrae te beantwoord, maar mag miskien sukkel om praktiese werk te doen soos sketse teken, dinge ontwerp en bou en tekeninge te interpreteer. Vraestelle wat differensiasie uitbeeld, sal sekerlik vir almal in the klas ‘n gelyke kans gee om beter te vaar. Dit is nie altyd moontlik nie en die “resources” is nie daar nie, maar ons moet probeer.

Sommige leerders sukkel met lees en vind dit moeilik om dinge op skrif te stel, maar ek weet hul hou van teken en kan maklik ‘n skets interpreteer. In die Wiskunde vraestel sluit ek vrae in wat hul sterkpunte ook akkommodeer. Een leerder in Graad 7 het weer goeie sakrekenaar vaardighede, so ek skenk haar die geleentheid in die vraestel om haar vaardighede toe te pas. Ander vaar weer goed op sportgebied; dus is dit belangrik dat skole verskillende sportkodes beoefen.

Verder moet ons die konsep van die natuurtoneel by die leerders tuisbring. Respek en selfvertroue is hier baie belangrik. Die leerders moet deel voel van die hele klas, maar hulle moet ook hul verantwoordelikhede ken en aanvaar en doen wat van hul verlang word, ten spyte van hul verskillende agtergronde, vaardighede, kennis en gesindhede. Daar moet een gemeenskaplike doel wees en almal moet daarna strewe.

Die leerkrags moet probeer om daardie gees van samehorigheid, gelykheid en aktiewe leerling deelname by die leerders tuis te bring of te bevorder. Ouers kan dit vergemaklik as hul deel uitmaak van die proses deur net hul klein deel tuis te doen. Dit sal ook baie help as leerkrags hul leerders se vermoë ken, asook die nodige opleiding (LSEN) ontvang sodat ons hul leemtes kan akkommodeer en mettertyd kan remedieer. Die moontlikhede is daar, dit hang net van ons af.
I am a passionate educator. My passion is derived amongst other from my compassion with disadvantaged learners. I was once a disadvantaged learner in the times when corporal punishment was the norm.

We used to believe (and I am still of the view) that corporal punishment was never bad. Look at me for example. We took our punishment well. We never ran to our parents. If I dared, my parents would have finished the job on me, as they also believed that the educator could never be wrong.

I once got the fright of my life several years ago when I suffered cardiac failure. I never thought that I would be a candidate for death at such an early stage in my life. I suffered a huge blow to my self-esteem.

With much introspection, I eventually analyzed my life correctly as being in need of bodily maintenance (especially my heart). I started educating myself about the needs of my body and my heart in particular.

From this exercise, I set about embarking on a changed lifestyle, which was consistent with fostering good bodily health and my heart in particular. Over and above regular exercise (that I
am now extremely passionate about), I also laid huge emphasis on good nutrition. I learned the bodily needs, that which is conducive for maintaining a good healthy body. Therefore, I do not necessarily eat what my body craves for (as was previously the case), but I give the body what it needs for good health. I needed to understand what a good healthy body requires in terms of need.

As I changed bad habits (eating and exercising particularly not limited thereto) for good habits, I started getting positive spin offs from my changed lifestyle. This was enough pay offs for me to keep up the momentum. Today I am enslaved to this positive lifestyle change I made several years ago. I am in good health (body and soul). I am so invigorated and addicted to life that I just want to offload some of the joys to my learners. This is in a nutshell why I am so passionate about educating young learners.

Due to my life altering experience, the heart has become the strongest symbol for me. You may ask why. My answer in brief is:

1. It is so centrally situated in my body and it is so critically important for my life and good health;
2. I learned that if I want to have a good life, I have to have a good healthy body which presupposed good healthy body parts or organs such as lungs, legs, arms, kidneys, etc. (all of which constitute my entire physical body);
3. For these body parts to be in a good healthy condition so that it can fulfill its specialist functions in order to give me the best possible quality of life, they have to consume good clean oxygen, good nutrition, clean water and all the other chemicals in varying quantities and sizes needed by a healthy body. With aging, we lose much of these things and they have to be replaced in terms of a healthy body’s needs once they become depleted;
4. Nutrition, water, oxygen and these chemicals are conveyed to where they are needed in the body as food by a very complex transportation system known as the heart, arteries and blood circulatory system.

I see the heart as the most important organ of them all as, once it stop pumping blood, then the transportation system cannot function and death will occur of all organs and consequently the body.

Consequently a good lifestyle has inherent in it good maintenance of the entire body and its organs.

I must admit that the body of our educational environment is so infested with disease what one has to urgently do a reality check in order to see what the cause for the poor state of health of education in our schools can be ascribed to. I am certain though that just as I analyzed the root causes of my poor health and restored my body with lifestyle changes to good health, so one can clean up the education environment at our schools in order to create a more positive education environment for the learners.

I believe that I, as the educator, am the heart of the system of education. I have to play a healthy and positive role in the system of education and if the present outcomes of education (measured
by the products we release from our school for secondary education) are anything to go by, then chances are that I as the heart of the system of education am not functioning at optimum levels. If this is so, then adjustments should be made after proper evaluations regarding:

(a) My technical readiness to do my work well and efficiently. Hopefully the disease I represent for the system of education can be ascribed to lack of maintenance or care. If it is indeed so then the education system will surely come to a halt shortly (its only a question of time). I have to be capable of delivering the goods in educating others, otherwise I, as the heart of education should be replaced for not being able to do my work. If I cannot do my work as the heart, the body of education will die.

(b) Fortunately if the body of education only has a diseased heart, then I can safely say that such diseased heart is the result of a diseased lifestyle. Such lifestyle should be adjusted so that one starts undoing those things that enhances good education. That means that I have to equip myself to understand the science behind how to become a successful teacher/educator just as I had to learn and understand the objective and uncontested needs of the heart in terms of nutrition, exercise, etc.

(c) Consequently, one further expects a good positive learning environment to be pivotal for the attaining of good outcomes in education. Such an environment should be founded on utmost respect between my learners and I. There should be relative peace and absence of fear as fearful people cannot concentrate well enough. People function at their best when they feel secure. They should not experience pain or discomfort. Hunger is a huge obstacle to creating an environment conducive for learning. Therefore, before one can think about educating a child, I must rule out any likelihood that a learner finds him/herself in any kind of distress.

(d) Just as hunger, or bad eyesight or other physical impediments to learning are obstacles that should be addressed before effective and efficient learning can take place, so is an educator who threatens learners with violence. He harms the positive relationship that should exist with negative behaviour.

(e) Such educators are to be exposed to the uncontradicted reality that children that suffered abuse become abusers themselves. On the other hand, children that learn through positive reinforcement methods are more loving and calm individuals.

(f) Because a good system of education can afford to give an educator a choice between making use of positive reinforcement (which had been proven to be much superior to the dictatorial approach linked to corporal punishment) such system has to retrain all its teachers to understand fully such methodology (especially those that frown upon it as unworkable). If teachers do not implement such teaching methods based on positive reinforcement or they show any resistance to implementing such methodology, their services should be terminated in the interest of restoring good health to the profession and the system of education. Such diseased organs will indeed be cancerous for the body that they will knock out the body’s natural resistance to the illness so that the body even risk having its immune system collapsed under the onslaught of a proliferation of cancer cells unless the cancer is timeously detected, isolated and removed from the body.

(g) On the contrary, as I as the heart of the education am restored to health and I experience the positive spin offs of the new evolving system of education (the body), I will become extremely invigorated by my experience as part of the dynamic renewed and rejuvenated body:
• Relationships between educators and learners will become excellent and can only flourish in future;
• Educators will become approachable and humble instead of thickheaded, wise, all powerful and nasty;
• Educators will find continuous growth in their own lives because they open themselves up to lifelong learning;
• Learners find it easy to concentrate and give their best in all their future endeavours;
• Learners will feel free to participate in all activities;
• Learners will share easily and look forward to their school day;
• Educators will give maximum (even after hours) due to the fact that part of their salary they will derive from job satisfaction.

Every year, since the body of education started to move away from authoritarian education to a system based upon positive reinforcement, one expects the system to run more slick in its operation. Educators will gain more and more experience and results of learners will improve in quality. The system of education will not compare learners by their results, but individual learners’ results will be compared to the expected outcomes for the individual given his personal makeup and potential.

As I discover my true potential as an educator, so am I contributing as best I can to serve my educational body to serve the South African public. Instead of stress we all will experience joy. Blood will be flowing smoothly in the veins of our educational body. There can be no cholesterol problems in this body and our arteries and veins will allow unobstructed flow of oxygen rich blood through the body which will be served well by a heart that is free of disease and furthermore is fit and capable of doing its work well.

My influence will of necessity be pumped to all the areas of our educational body.
METAPHOR: MAYA

The vase represents me as educator. The flowers of different colours and length represent the learners in my class and in my care.

The different colours represent the different needs and abilities of the learners. They come to school from different backgrounds with different experiences of good and bad. Because of this baggage, they cannot always perform to their full potential.

The flower stems are all in different lengths – the longer stems are the learners who are confident – in the way they converse and do their tasks. The limp and shorter stem symbolizes the learners with learning challenges. They are the ones that need intervention like remedial or extra lessons.

It can be very challenging if the vase is overflowing – with the big numbers of learners in your class. The lack of support systems and few resources can add to the problem. As educator you are expected to help your learners with learning challenges. In your big class it is not always possible because they need a lot of individual attention.
The simplicity of my bouquet of flowers floods me with a feeling of peace and tranquility. My flowers used to represent all that was good about life. I picked doctors, educators, preachers, good parents, community leaders and non-achievers from their midst of which I was so proud off.

My vase of flowers kept me challenged and creative. In the way I went about rearranging it to get the most rewarding effect. However over the years more and more unwanted weed landed up amongst the beauty of my flowers. The stress and strains of just being labeled an educator, new assessment standards, work overload, introduction of new policies and IQMS.

My vase has lost its beauty for me. I look at it and the joy it used to bring me are no longer there. My mother loved flowers and each week she would fill our home with vases picked from her own garden. When I was 12, she died of breast cancer. And the vase I took with me in my heart as a remembrance of her short-lived life. The vase is a symbol of how I remember and why I remember from the most personal map of my individuality. It is an episodic way of how my life evolved from my childhood, adolescence, my college years, my marriage, my motherhood and most of these phases I experienced at my school. At my school I had both laughter and tears. And if I should lift each layer of deposited sediments (the memories I had at school) it will reveal glimmers of my true selves.

I feared digging into my authentic self. I knew it would bring back painful memories of my limitations, of my inabilities, of my lack of interest and most importantly, my insecurities and low self-esteem. However, it also allowed me room to explore, to remember and to celebrate. Most importantly, I excavated the real me.
METAPHOR: MARTHA

- Fear
- Despair
- Challenges
- Responsibility
- Transitions

- Innovative
- Passionate
- Positive Self-image
- Tolerant
- Co-operative

My red postbox represents my life as educator and the mail inside, my learners with their different needs. My postbox is a receiver of good, bad, letters or even junk mail. Each letter has its own demands and deadlines and compares clearly with each learner who needs the different strategy in methods. Each letter is also accepted as the learner’s inner thoughts of fear, disappointments, secrets of despair of abuse, poverty and oppression; And I as educator needs the knowledge, skills and experience to help and intervene.

The lack of support systems makes daily challenges we face unattainable. Personal situations that are marked as a red alert takes years to be solved and the learner has to wait until their problem will be attended to by … officials. I should challenge myself differently with each letter and had learned that not everything should be accepted as *fait acompli*.

I should be able to find solutions on my own for every other letter and with support from my manager and colleagues. Hoping that our solution will work and influence my learners positive to find ways to their problems till placement or funds become available for their problem.

Teaching is not for the fainthearted. Year ago it was a passionate and respectful career, but we find that with all the modern problem, drugs, abuse, HIV/AIDS, poverty, educators must be able to be more than the educator; doctor, nurse, social worker, caregiver, etc. with the absence of the needed resources and dedicated educators teaching norms and values and motivating despair and failure.

My passion and love for teaching force me to understand the other letters – “accounts”. I must be innovative to promote the best in my learners and support them to build and attain a vision and find heroes and role models that will help them to build a better life. Make them aware there is a better life waiting with education.
Lastly my junk mail represents some of the complaints and excuses I hear form parents who refuse to get involved in their learners’ education. A lot must still be done to get some parents involved; to them their child is the school’s responsibility to feed, clothe, educate and “maak groot”, them making everybody unhappy with their attitude.
I am a very creative person and enjoy doing silk ribbon embroidery. It affords me the opportunity to bring my cloth to life and to play around with colour.

Our education I would like to depict as the frame around my mosaic. A mosaic is a picture or a decorative pattern formed by inlaying thousands of little pieces which can be multi-coloured to create a larger representation.

Teaching brought me moments of happiness and contentment in my profession. I made my own imprint on my teaching because I knew exactly how to express my own inimitable style. My classroom at the beginning of the year, was a completely empty file. On registration I would receive 35 learners remembering that my file is empty and that I needed to organize or rearrange my pieces because my objective was my mosaic picture. My pieces are bare but yet it has so much potential waiting to be unleashed. I looked at all this small detail and a world would unfold for me. Each day I created myself anew through the choices I made in my classroom.

However, I do not know where I am in education anymore. I have only one conscious priority to make it through the day. The 96 eyes that stare at me, each morning pulls at my soul in a thousand different ways. For the last 14 years, I feel like I have procrastinated in my classroom. I cannot identify what is most important in my class anymore. My classroom is tearing me apart.

Over the years, I have forgotten the value of unearthing a mosaic. It is one of the most exciting discoveries for an archaeologist because a mosaic tells its own stories. It tells of people’s experiences, of how they lived and of what was important to them. Modern man could learn from the discovery of ancient mosaics and add value to their own lives by appreciating the sacredness of these people’s reality.

A mosaic is my symbol of glory when the crush of my daily classroom events clamors for my attention. Each mosaic piece alone was light and caused no great harm. But piece after piece got placed in my classroom that I felt I couldn’t use to complete my whole. The load eventually of totally unmatched pieces got too heavy. A lot of neglect on the part of the Department of Education and myself inevitably lead to lives of striking disrepair. Education is complex, I know,
and most of the time you are in uncharted territory. There is no established map to follow and that means making decisions and choices continually. The choices I made impacted not only on me, but on my learners, their families and the community at large, therefore my choices cannot simply be yes or no. For this reason, I have always strived to do better and consequently kept on improving on my technique of assembling my mosaic. Most importantly, it didn’t matter if anybody else knew it, I did. My decision to strive for excellence in my picture wasn’t hard for me because of the training I received.

Now, I am stuck in inclusive education and I cannot create my work of a masterpiece.
APPENDIX D
ORAL INFORMATION GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participants

You are being asked to participate in a research study. I will provide you with the necessary information to assist you to understand the study and explain what would be expected of you (participant). Please feel free to ask the researcher to clarify anything that is not clear to you.

To participate, it will be required of you to provide a written consent that will include your signature, date and initials to verify that you understand and agree to the conditions.

You have the right to query concerns regarding the study at any time. Immediately report any new problems during the study, to the researcher. Telephone numbers of the researcher are provided. Please feel free to call these numbers.

Furthermore, it is important that you are aware of the fact that the study has to be approved by the Research Ethics Committee (Human) of the university. The REC-H consists of a group of independent experts that has the responsibility to ensure that the rights and welfare of participants, in research are protected and that studies are conducted in an ethical manner. Studies cannot be conducted without REC-H’s approval. Queries with regard to your rights as a research subject can be directed to the Research Ethics Committee (Human) you can call the Director: Research Management at (041) 504-4536.

If no one could assist you, you may write to: The Chairperson of the Research, Technology and Innovation Committee, PO Box 77000, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, 6031.

Participation in research is completely voluntary. If you do not partake, you have the right to withdraw at any given time.

If you do partake, you have the right to withdraw at any given time.

If you fail to follow instructions, or if your medical condition changes in such a way that the researcher believes that it is not in your best interest to continue in this study, or for administrative reasons, your participation maybe discontinued. The study may be terminated at any time by the researcher, or the Research Ethics Committee (Human) that initially approved the study.

Although your identity will at all times remain confidential the results of the research study may be presented at scientific conferences or in specialist publications.