Establishing a framework for an integrated, holistic, community based educational support structure

by

Glynis Pieterse

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree Doctor Educationis in the Faculty of Education:
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Date submitted: January 2010

Promotor: Professor J. L. Geldenhuys
Co-promotor: Doctor C. F. Pienaar

Place: Port Elizabeth, South Africa
DECLARATION

I, Glynis Pieterse, sincerely and solemnly declare that this thesis entitled, *Establishing a framework for an integrated, holistic, community based educational support structure*, is my original and independent work, that all the sources utilised or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a list of references, and that this thesis have never been submitted to any other university or faculty for degree purposes.

Signed ..................................    Date .................................
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, my gratitude and thanks to God Almighty for blessing me with the necessary intellectual ability and perseverance to undertake this long, lonely and exhausting academic journey.

To my family, especially to:

• My mother, Iris Ackeer, who taught me through example the pleasure and reward of reading from a very young age.
• My late father, Samuel Ackeer, for his unconditional love.
• My husband, Angelo, for unconditional support and encouragement.
• My children, Ayrton and Aaron, for the fact that they learnt to take responsibility for themselves, when needed.
• My promoter, Prof. Johanna Geldenhuys and co-promoter, Dr. Christo Pienaar, who spent many hours reading and correcting my work and who continually pushed me to do my best. My gratitude towards them knows no limits.
• Mr. Anton Adams from NAPTOSA.
• Mr. Vernon Goliath from Education Support Programmes.
• Ms. Marthie Nel, for her highly professional reading and editing, as well as advice offered.
• My friend and colleague, Anne Snyman, for the design of the graphics.
• Ms. Omaya Allie, and the rest of the library staff of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Missionvale Campus) for their outstanding support and encouragement.
• All my other friends and colleagues for your support and motivation on this long journey.
ABSTRACT

The restructuring of South African education, after the country’s first non-racial democratic elections in 1994, coincided, with the development of inclusive education in international education. The implementation of inclusive education, internationally, was guided by the Salamanca Statement of 1994 and the international “Education for All” movement. Education White Paper 6 (2001), serves as the blueprint for implementing inclusive education in South Africa.

This investigation argues that the successful implementation of the inclusive education system is dependent on the development of an effective, quality education support structure. Such an educational support structure is one that should reflect a holistic, integrated and community based approach to support.

Based on this presupposition, the primary research aim of this investigation was the establishment of a framework for a holistic, integrated, community based education support structure to do justice to learners with mainly external barriers to learning (LSEN) and educators finding themselves in an inclusive classroom in Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas.

In order to understand how such a framework can be established, the following guiding secondary research questions were posed:

- What was the international perspective on the implementation of inclusive education?
- What was the nature of educational provisioning for learners with barriers to learning (LSEN) before 1994, and the implementation of inclusive education policies thereafter?
- What were the practical implications of implementing Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) for the support roles of education support providers in South African schools?
- What is the support challenges facing learners and educators within inclusive classrooms in Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas?
- What support structures are currently available at the different levels of the education system?

This investigation was completed from a phenomenological perspective. A constructivist approach to data collection and data analysis was followed, as the investigator did not attempt to prove or disprove theory, but rather to understand the phenomena under investigation from the viewpoint of participants.
The sample, selected by means of non-probability purposive and theoretical sampling techniques, included 120 educators from 85 different schools in Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas. In addition, 4 education officials, 4 members of community organisations and 2 teacher union representatives were selected to the sample.

Through the process of data analysis, accomplished through the principles inherent to grounded theory, two themes and sub-themes were identified. The investigator presented a discussion on the two themes and sub-themes. This discussion was followed by a proposal for the establishment of a framework for a holistic, integrated, community based educational support structure. The investigation was completed by recommendations related to the primary and secondary research questions.

The investigation concluded that the implementation of inclusive education is severely hampered by strong exclusionary factors that are principally related to socio-economic backlogs that have not been successfully addressed by the current government.
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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABET</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACVV</td>
<td>Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>CASS</td>
<td>Continuous assessment system</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLT</td>
<td>Culture of Learning Teaching, and Service</td>
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<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECED</td>
<td>Eastern Cape Education Department</td>
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<td>ERS</td>
<td>Education Renewal Strategy</td>
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<td>ESS</td>
<td>Education Support Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSRC</td>
<td>Human Sciences Research Council</td>
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<td>GMSA</td>
<td>General Motors South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEP/ISP</td>
<td>Individualised Education Program/ Individualised Support Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILSTs</td>
<td>Institutional- level Support Teams</td>
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<td>LEAs</td>
<td>Local Education Authorities</td>
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<td>LSEN</td>
<td>Learner with Special Educational Needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>MLA</td>
<td>Modern Language Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAPTOSA</td>
<td>National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa</td>
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<td>NCESS</td>
<td>National Commission on Education and Support Services</td>
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<td>NCSNET</td>
<td>National Commission on Special Educational Needs in Education and Training.</td>
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<td>NECC</td>
<td>National Education Co-ordinating Committee</td>
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<td>NEPI</td>
<td>National Education Policy Investigation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICRO</td>
<td>National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NMMU</td>
<td>Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University</td>
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<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>NZEI</td>
<td>New Zealand Educational Institute</td>
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<td>OBE</td>
<td>Outcomes-based Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCRD</td>
<td>Project for Conflict Resolution and Development</td>
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<td>RNCS</td>
<td>Revised National Curriculum Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parents Teachers Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>REC-H</td>
<td>Research Ethics Committee (Human)</td>
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<td>SAHRC</td>
<td>South African Human Rights Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIAS</td>
<td>Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGB</td>
<td>School Governing Body</td>
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<td>SMT</td>
<td>School Management Team</td>
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<td>SNA</td>
<td>School Needs Assessment</td>
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<td>SNP</td>
<td>School Nutrition Programme</td>
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<td>SNAP</td>
<td>School Needs Assessment Profile</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
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LIST OF KEY WORDS

Barriers to learning and development
Community based support
Education challenges
Education support services
Grounded theory
Inclusive education
Institutional level support teams
Learners with special educational needs
Socio-economic barriers
Qualitative research
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CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW OF STUDY

1.1 ORIENTATION TO RESEARCH
Over the past fifteen years, following the country’s first democratic and non-racial elections in 1994, the South African government has set out to transform the once fragmented education system into a unity. Unfortunately, urgent challenges remain. One of the greatest challenges currently facing the South African government is the successful implementation of an inclusive education system, as outlined in the White Paper on Special Needs in Education (Department of Education, 2001).

This policy document, which was the culmination of a critical process of education policy investigation, which started as early as 1990, was lauded as a “… post apartheid landmark that cuts ties with the past…” In the White Paper, the government made its commitment to an inclusive education policy clear and simultaneously acknowledged the critical role of strengthened education support services (ESS) in the development of an inclusive education and training system (Department of Education, 2001).

Between 1990 and 1992, a groundbreaking investigation by the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC), was launched focusing on the status of ESS in South Africa. This resulted in the publication of the National Educational Policy Investigation Report, which in turn became the blueprint for investigations such as the National Commission on Education Support Services (NCESS) and the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET).

The National Education Policy Investigation Report (Department of Education, 1992) highlighted the ineffectiveness of ESS in South Africa, focusing on the following shortcomings and deficiencies:

- Gross inequalities and inconsistencies between the different racially segregated departments, as well as between urban and rural contexts.
- A lack of administrative and professional integration between the different components of ESS.
- A lack of national clarity on the nature, goals, and orientation of these services.
- Decision-making with regard to special needs was deemed to be undemocratic and non-participatory, and ineffective for the majority of needs.
• Services had not been related to the general curriculum and were thus viewed as separated from the developmental needs of all learners.

The National Education Policy Investigation Report (Department of Education, 1992) recommended a framework for the provision of support services that was holistic and integrated and required interdisciplinary and inter-sectorial collaboration between different sectors. The Report suggested a framework built on the following:
• Protection of human rights, values and social justices
• Non-discrimination
• Democracy
• Redress of educational equalities
• Cost effectiveness

Effective support structures occupy a central role in the successful implementation of an inclusive education system. In South Africa, education support services have been very limited, which can largely be ascribed to the vulnerable status of education support personnel such as school counselors. Adelman and Howard (1996:2) suggest that due to the devalued status of education support services in the education hierarchy, these services are easily dispensed with when budgets are tightened. This restricts the capability of schools to effectively address barriers to learning and to promote healthy, viable schools.

In addition, effective education support has potentially been hampered by the limited understanding of what special educational needs entail. It is imperative that any effort at restructuring ESS evaluates the terminology used within education support services, as this is ultimately a determining factor in who will be receiving and who will be involved in providing the necessary educational support. The nature, extent and range of ESS provided, are also closely linked to the terminology used in the definition of barriers to learning and development.

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (1997:68) state that in developed countries, the term exceptional is used in reference to those learners who are deemed to have special educational needs. This seems to imply that special education is the exception to ordinary education. The term is consequently mainly used in relation to learners who, due to intrinsic deficits, such as physical, sensory or intellectual limitations may require some form of special educational
intervention. In developed countries, these learners make up only a small minority (10%) of the overall learner population.

The situation in South Africa and other developing countries needs be approached differently. According to the findings of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Report on Education for Black Disabled (1987) the greater part of the learner population in South Africa is currently in need of additional educational support. During the apartheid era, the majority of the black population in South Africa was exposed to environmental disadvantages like poverty, lack of awareness of and access to medical and health facilities, political violence and lack of opportunity for learning. This has left a bitter legacy that has not been overcome in fifteen years of democratic education. Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:306) estimate that between 40% and 50% of black learners experience barriers to learning and development as compared to the 20% of learners in developed countries.

The National Education Policy Investigation Report (Department of Education, 1992:79), Donald, et al. (1997:69) as well as Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) concede the reality that the need for educational intervention is often created by internal factors, but propose that within the South African context where harsh social and educational disadvantages still apply, barriers to learning and development are often also caused by internal, external factors or by the interaction between internal and external factors. The National Education Policy Investigation Report (Department of Education, 1992:79) in turn highlighted the extent of the problem of estimating special educational needs for South African learners. The link between poverty and the development of special educational needs among learners in South Africa is non-debatable. The Report confirmed that in South Africa, the need for educational support among learners is sizeable.

The NCESS/NCSNET Report, strongly influenced by the debate and controversy surrounding the term special educational needs on the international educational front, recommended that the term learner with special educational needs be replaced by the term barriers to learning and development (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:16). The latter definition, which is the term of choice in Education White Paper 6, suggests a greater degree of flexibility and fluidity in defining special educational needs. Most importantly, the definition acknowledges that not only some learners, but all learners may from time to time have special educational needs that may require additional education support.
This new conceptualisation of special needs has extended the focus from a small group of learners who are at risk to exclusion from education to all learners who may be exposed to exclusionary pressures within the school or community (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:315).

The key barriers to learning and teaching identified by the NCSNET/NCESS Report and further adopted by White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001:7) include:

- Socio-economic barriers
- Negative and discriminatory attitudes
- An inflexible curriculum
- Language and communication blockages
- Inaccessible and unsafe built environments
- Inadequate and inappropriate provision of ESS
- Lack of parental recognition and involvement in the support for educational provisioning for learners
- Lack of human resources development, including education and training of educators
- Neurological and sensory disabilities, including physical, and, psychological impairments, as well as moderate to mild learning difficulties
- Lack of protective legislation and policy to support the development of an inclusive training system.

Support in an inclusive setting needs to be seen not as a separate function, but as an integral part of teaching and learning. It should thus be defined as all activities that increase the capacity of schools to respond to differences (Department of Education, 2005:22).

Greater clarity is also required with regard to who should be involved in providing support to learners and educators in the inclusive education class. The NSCNET/NCESS Report (Department of Education, 2001) specifies that ESS include all human and other resources providing support to individual learners and other aspects of the system. Support required by the individual learner or system could include teaching and learning support; the provision of assistive devices; general and career guidance and counseling; psychological services; therapeutic support, as provided by medical, occupational, speech and physiotherapist, nutritional programmes, social interventions, parental support, teacher training and support, and organisational and curriculum development.
In addition, ESS comprise school health services, social and psychological services, specialised education, guidance and counseling, speech and hearing therapy and occupational and physiotherapy (Donald, et al., 1997:18). Kgare (1999:7) also includes all education personnel who are involved in providing support to centres of learning through facilitating institutional and curriculum development. The support personnel may be involved in supporting educators and parents in assessment, intervention or preventative programmes.

My argument is that all the services discussed above, have a rightful and complementary place within an integrated, holistic educational support service, as they all endeavor to minimise and remove barriers to learning and development, but need to be supplemented by resources within the wider community.

According to Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005:65) and supported by the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) document (Department of Education, 2008), education support will no longer be limited to specific categories of support or to specific locations (special schools), but will be accessible through a network of support, managed by a District-based support team. This network of support will include special schools, full service schools and ordinary mainstream schools. In ordinary mainstream schools, education support will be provided by institution-level support teams (ILST), previously also referred to as school based support teams.

Furthermore, education support should be provided within the context of a health promoting school, through an integrated, community based educational support structure. The concept of health promoting schools is in harmony with a broader understanding of special needs as barriers to learning and development, which may be present at any levels of the system. It is especially consistent with one of the fundamental principles of a health promoting approach, which is collaboration between the various sectors, such as health, education, social work and community organisations in addressing problems (Department of Education, 1997).

The World Health Organisation (Department of Education, 1997:vi) defines a health promoting school as a place where all members of the learning community work together to supply learners with integrated and positive experiences and structures, which encourage and protect their well-being. This includes both the formal and informal curricula in health (including physical, social and emotional health); the creation of a safe and healthy environment; the provision of appropriate support services; and the involvement of the family and wider community in efforts to promote well-being. A health promoting centre of learning
is a centre that is constantly strengthening its own capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working. My supposition is that all these principles are mirrored in the principles of inclusive education, as advocated by Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

The health promoting aspect of schools is also in line with the approach suggested in the National Education Policy Investigation Report (Department of Education, 1992), Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000:320) and the Department of Education (2001:49) who support the broadening of educational support structures, insisting that educational support should reflect a community based, collaborative and participatory approach. These authors argue that all stakeholders such as the various organisations serving people with disabilities, non government organisations (NGOs), parents of children with disabilities, teacher organisations, universities, Department of Health and Department of Social Services, special schools, as well as representatives from the provincial and national governments, should be involved in the provision of educational support. The community based participatory approach indicates a move away from the traditional expert model to a more participatory, collaborative approach.

The World Health Organization (Department of Education, 1997:72) made the following recommendations with regard to the establishment of a health promoting environment:

- Educational opportunities for girls should be improved and expanded.
- Every school must provide a safe learning environment for learners and a safe workplace for staff.
- Every school must enable learners at all levels to learn critical health and life skills.
- Every school should serve more effectively as an entry point for health promotion and a location for health intervention.
- Policies, legislation and guidelines must be developed to ensure the mobilisation, allocation and coordination of resources at all levels to support the development of health promotion in schools. This includes fostering active collaboration between the health and education ministries; developing intersectoral committees and networks; establishing clear lines of responsibility and accountability for health promotion; and school initiatives.
- Educators and other staff must be valued and provided with the necessary support and training to enable them to develop a supportive environment for learning and development.
• Collaboration between school and community.
• Health promoting school programmes must be well designed, monitored and evaluated to ensure their successful implementation and outcomes.
• International support must be further developed, to enhance the ability of communities and schools to become health promoting.

The individualised, direct approach to learner support by a small number of specialists has clearly proven itself ineffective in providing support to a large learner population, especially considering the limited human and financial resources available within the education support structure. This contention is clearly supported by Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), which argues that a community based approach would be more appropriate, as it will draw on and maximise local resources. To be effective, education support should as a starting point acknowledge the central role of educators and parents in decisions regarding learner placement and support (Department of Education, 2001:7).

Educational support, within a systemic framework, should also extend direct support to schools and educators in the inclusive classroom. Headlines in newspapers and magazines suggest that educators are experiencing physical, emotional and psychological threats that debilitate them in their work. A key challenge is learner discipline: educators perceive that they operate in a climate that focuses exclusively on the right of the child. Educators therefore seem to perceive themselves as powerless and believe that the Education Department does not provide them with the necessary support (Mohamed & Khuthula, 2005:20-24).

This perception is supported by the report of Matomela (2008:4) which cautions that educators are leaving the teaching profession in droves, as they feel increasingly demoralised and believe that it is on the brink of collapse. This situation is ascribed to the accelerated rate of violence at schools and lack of teacher support from the Department.

The researcher is of the opinion that educators should be supported at all levels of the system. Not only should educators learn how to use assistive devices to support blind or deaf learners in inclusive classrooms, but they should also be guided to effectively manage deviant behavioral and emotional manifestations in the inclusive classroom. In addition, educators should be trained to manage their personal stress levels more effectively. A positive educator attitude is critical for the successful implementation of inclusive education at classroom level. Only when the concerns of educators are acknowledged and addressed, will they develop a more positive attitude towards inclusive education.
Hay’s (2003:135) proposal for the development of ESS is consistent with the notion of an integrated, holistic, community based educational support structure. The author emphasises that:

- ESS should not focus on special education only, but must provide a service to the total education system.
- ESS should keep and support learners within the inclusive classroom.
- ESS must not function as psychological services.
- ESS must focus on adults engaged with learners.
- Fixed diagnosis must be treated with caution.
- Support must be provided to both groups and systems.
- A truly South African education support services must actively be promoted.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A meta-approach, which resulted from merging the systems and bioecological theories, was used to conceptualise the creation of a holistic, integrated educational support system (Hay, 2003: 134). The meta-approach allows for an education support structure characterised by a shift from a deficit model to an approach that focuses on providing systemic support.

Bronfenbrenner’s theory was adopted for this investigation, as it is fully compatible with the concept of inclusion, where support is provided within the framework of an integrated, holistic educational support structure. Bronfenbrenner’s theory, which is elaborated upon in Chapter Seven, spells out the complexity of the interaction and interdependence of multiple systems that impact on learners, their development and learning (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:13).

Bronfenbrenner compares the different environments or social contexts in which children operate to a set of Russian dolls: each doll fits into the next one, and all are interrelated. These nested structures, contexts or environmental systems consist of the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem, which all interact with the chronosystem. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002:51) clarify the four systems conceptualised by Bronfenbrenner as follow:

**Microsystem:** These systems can consist of the family, school or peer groups with whom learners are interacting in face-to-face situations on a daily basis. These systems are
characterised by patterns of daily activities, roles and relationships that have a direct on learners’ development.

*Mesosystem:* The mesosystem is a set of microsystems connected with one another. It is at this level that interaction between the peer group, school and family systems take place. What happens in the one microsystem such as the home or peer group can influence how the learner will respond in the other microsystem (school) or *visa versa.*

*Exosystem:* This refers to the larger social systems in which the child is not directly involved. However, the learner may be influenced by people who have intimate (proximal) relationships with him or her in the microsystem. Examples include the parents’ place of employment and local community organisations. The child is not directly involved at this level, but he or she experiences the result of negative or positive forces involved with the interaction with his or her own subsystem.

*Macrosystem:* This level is regarded as equal to the social system as a whole. It involves all major social structures. It also contains the beliefs, values and customs that influence and are in turn influenced in a cascading manner by other levels of the system.

*Chronosystem:* The interactions between systems and the effect on the development of the learner are crossed by developmental timeframes.

In explaining the eco-systemic approach proposed by Bronfenbrenner, Swart and Pettipher (2005:10) state that in terms of this approach, systems are patterns of organisation whose identity becomes more than simply the sum of their parts. Any individual person or situation can be thought of simultaneously as both a discrete entity and part of different systems. The learner is, for example, part of a family, a school system as well as a peer system. Each of these systems operates in stable and predictable ways that contribute to its continuity, yet retains the possibility of fluidity and change. These systems operate as different, but interrelated, levels in constant dynamic interaction. Change at one level has an inevitable, although not always predictable, effect on the other levels. At any particular level there are subsystems that also interact with each other and with other levels of the system. Part of one subsystem may at times form part of other subsystems.

These systems tend to maintain themselves, but at the same time are constantly changing and reorganising themselves in an attempt to achieve a state of equilibrium. A systemic
understanding of change assumes circular rather than linear causality and the interrelatedness of all aspects of a situation. A small change at one level will potentially have an effect on the entire system. This approach acknowledges and accepts some degree of unpredictability. This model suggests that any individual is likely to experience a range of contexts shared with others, but that the interactions of the individual characteristics, time, contexts and chance will have different consequences for different learners. It implies that each individual consists of multiple systems in interaction and develops holistically.

The different levels of a system in the social context influence and are in turn influenced by one another in a continuous process of dynamic balance, tension and interplay (Donald, et al. 1997:39).

A fundamental element in Bronfenbrenner’s model is the appreciation that the environment does not merely impact on the child, but that the child is also an active partake in his own development. The child’s perception of his or her context influence the way he or she responds to the human and physical milieu (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:12).

Bronfenbrenner’s theory is, as already mentioned, evidently consistent with the establishment of a holistic, integrated educational support structure. It acknowledges the important role that parents, educators, education officials, peers, the extended family, the community and wider government structures can play in providing support, not only individual learners, but also to all other systems that may impact on the development and maintenance of barriers to learning and development. This theoretical framework accentuates the need that educational support services must deal with all barriers to learning and development in a comprehensive and integrated approach in order to ensure that quality support is provided at various levels of the system.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The successful implementation of inclusive education is, to a large degree, dependent on the development of an effective education support structure. Hay (2003:135) emphasises that inclusive education primarily depends on adequate and effective support, as inclusive education without adequate support is inclusion by default.

To achieve the aims of an inclusive education system, it becomes imperative that educators be trained and supported to meet the new challenges with confidence. According to the findings of Kgare (1999:4) providing support to educators and learners within an inclusive classroom
presupposes roles and duties for which education support personnel have so far not been trained. Bouwer and Du Toit (2000:5) support this contention, reporting that educators perceive education support as “… gravely inadequate…” intensifying their general feeling of helplessness.

In addition to educators, parents, school managers, School Governing Body (SGB) members and community organisations need to be empowered to collaboratively fulfill their support roles. Through collaboration, all role-players need to ensure that the school becomes an inviting, inclusive, health promoting arena where all learners are fully supported in order to maximise their individual potential as South African citizens.

It is against this background that the researcher undertook to establish the critical areas of support required by both learners and educators within the inclusive classroom. The researcher explored the available support structures in Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas in order to recommend effective ways in which educators, learners, education support personnel, parents and community members can collaborate, with the goal of providing effective educational support structures in schools.

1.3.1 Formulation of the research problem

A preliminary literature search (Nexus database systems) indicated that several investigations had been launched into the importance of education support services. However, the majority of these research initiatives were limited to the role of psychologists and professional support personnel, such as occupational therapists in the provisioning of educational support. The researcher wants to put up a strong argument that the provision of educational support, within an inclusive classroom, is conversely much broader and more encompassing than the support provided through the intervention of psychologists, occupation-speech-or remedial therapists. It is broader in that it entails the activation of all available sources of support, especially those available in the school and the wider community, in a holistic, integrated, community based approach to support delivery.

The research problem is therefore formulated as:

**How do we develop a framework for a holistic, integrated, community based educational support structure for Nelson Mandela Metropolitan and surrounding areas that meets the support requirements of learners and educators within an inclusive classroom?**
1.3.2 Research questions

The following primary and secondary questions were formulated:

Primary research question was: **How can a framework for the development of a holistic, integrated, community based educational support structure, serving schools within Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas, be established?**

To answer the primary question, the following secondary questions were formulated:

- What was the international perspective on the implementation of inclusive education?
- What was the nature of educational provisioning for learners with barriers to learning (LSEN) before 1994, and the implementation of inclusive education policies thereafter?
- What were the practical implications of implementing Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) for the support roles of education support providers in South African schools?
- What is the support challenges facing learners and educators within inclusive classrooms in Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas?
- What support structures are currently available at the different levels of the education system?

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.

In line with the research question, the following main aim and sub-aims were formulated:

The main aim:

*To establish a framework for the development of a holistic, integrated, community based educational support structure serving schools within Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas.*

The secondary aims were to:

- Evaluate the international perspective on the implementation of inclusive education.
- Review the nature of educational provisioning for learners who experience barriers to learning (LSEN) before inclusive education, as well the implementation of inclusive education policies thereafter.
- To assess the practical implications of implementing Education White Paper 6 (2001) for the support roles of education support providers in South African schools.
- To investigate the support challenges facing learners and educators within inclusive classrooms in Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas.
• To identify the support structures currently available at the different level of the education system.

The research project may be used by schools within Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas to compile guidelines for the establishment of a holistic, integrated, community based educational support framework that school managers can use to access the available resources for specific areas of need.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The next section comprises a clarification of concepts used in this report:

• **Education Support Services:** Lazarus (in Mashau, 2000:2) states that this term refers to “... all human and other resources that provide support to individual learners and all aspects of the education system”. This definition was examined earlier on (cf. 1.1)

• **Framework:** Within the context of this research the term refers to an outline, a basic plan or system (adapted from the *South African Oxford School Dictionary, Hawkins, 2003*).

• **Holistic:** This constitutes a broad, inclusive view of support and means that support needs to be a joint effort by all role-players (Donald, *et al.* 1997:26).

• **Integrated:** Within the context of this research, the term means the incorporation or inclusion of all possible educational support at all levels of the education system.

• **Special education:** Within the context of this research, this term refers to the education and support provided to those learners who experience barriers to learning within the context of a special school.

• **Learners with special educational needs:** This term refers to all learners who are experiencing barriers to learning and development, as defined in White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

• **Barriers to learning and development:** This term was suggested in White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) as the preferred term when referring to learners experiencing special educational needs.

For the purpose of this investigation, the last two terms will be used interchangeably.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the researcher’s plan of how the research will be executed. According to Mouton (2001:55), it constitutes a blueprint of how an investigation will be conducted.
Delport and Fouché (2005:261) argue that quantitative researchers and qualitative researchers hold opposing views with regard to the nature of research designs. Whereas the qualitative researcher selects one specific design from a list of possible designs, qualitative researchers have to develop their own design as they go along. Usually, qualitative researchers use one or more of the available strategies or tools as an aid or guideline.

The research design selected for this investigation was qualitative and interpretative in nature. This choice was motivated by the contention that the interpretive researcher, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:22), starts with individuals and endeavor to appreciate their interpretations of the world around them. The qualitative researcher then starts to generate their theory, based on the experiences and understandings of these individuals.

This investigation was completed from a phenomenological perspective. A phenomenological perspective, according to Fouché (2005:271), describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon, topic or concept for various individuals.

The views, values, beliefs, feelings and assumptions that the participants had with regard to the support needs of both educators and learners within an inclusive classroom was the focal point of this investigation. Furthermore, the views, beliefs and assumptions of the participants as to how educators, learners, parents, school management and education support services can collaborate within the newly introduced district support teams, as well as community organisations, with the goal of providing education support within an integrated, holistic community based framework, were explored.

As suggested by Fouché (2005:271), the investigator reduced the experiences of participants to a central meaning, or the essence of the experience, so that the product of the investigation is a description of the essence of the experiences or phenomena studied.

In addition, a constructivist approach to grounded theory was deemed the most appropriate research paradigm for this study. Grounded theory is not a specific method or technique, but rather a style of doing analysis that is characterised by a number of distinct features (Strauss, 1987:5). It is a pragmatic approach that does not rely on a set of methodological rules, but offers guidelines and rules of thumb (Denscombe, 1998:214).

Cohen, et al. (2007:22) add that within a grounded theory approach, theory is evolving and arises from particular situations, it should be ‘grounded’ in the data generated by the research
act. Opting to use this specific approach was additionally informed by the argument of Creswell (2002: 446) that in terms of a constructivist approach to grounded theory the focus is on the subjective meanings of situations or events, as ascribed by participants.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
1.7.1 Population and sampling

The target population identified for this investigation included educators in mainstream primary and secondary schools, educators in special schools, community organisations, teacher union representatives, as well as education support personnel working within the greater Nelson Mandela Metropole.

There are many types of sampling, but all sampling methodologies are either classified under one of two broad categories, namely probability sampling or non-probability sampling (May, 1997:85). For this investigation, the researcher employed non-probability purposive and theoretical sampling techniques. As this qualitative investigation focused primarily on the depth or richness of the data collected, selected samples were chosen purposely. The appropriateness of this decision is supported by Babbie and Mouton (2001:166), who indicate that it is preferable selecting a sample based on prior knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of the research aims.

I handpicked the sample to be included, based on my judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristic being sought (Cohen, et al. 2007:114). Careful consideration was also paid to the warning of De Vos (2002:334) that in using purposive sampling, the researcher should first think critically about the parameters of the population and then choose the sample case accordingly.

The sample constituted of those participants from the various population groups who declared themselves willing to take part in this investigation. The purpose of selecting this specific sample was that I believed that they would collectively be able to provide the necessary information and insights.

This investigation was furthermore based on the presupposition that the majority of participants in the sample were already supporting learners and educators within the inclusive education model. Bouwer and Du Toit (2000:1), Naicker (1999:13) and Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:315) support this conjecture, stating that the majority of historically underresourced schools are already inclusive by default. These schools are at present dealing
with large numbers of learners who have to contend with barriers to learning in diverse forms. The authors point to the absence of or limitations of education support services in these schools, where they are most needed.

In addition, theoretical sampling was employed in this study. Using theoretical sampling (inherent to a grounded theory approach), meant that sampling was intentional and focused on the generation of a specific theory (Creswell, 2002:449). A theory-based sample was utilised, because it represented important theoretical constructs. These constructs related to the concepts of inclusive education and the related support needs and structures necessary for educators and learners to function optimally in the inclusive classroom.

Theoretical sampling assists in defining categories and in identifying the contexts in which they are relevant, specifying the conditions under which they come up or are attained, and discovering their consequences (De Vos, 2002:334).

Consistent with the principles of grounded theory, an emerging design was used, in term of which data was collected and immediately analysed in order to determine what data to collect next (Creswell, 2002:450). This meant that as the researcher progressed in refining the various categories emerging from the data collected, she returned to the original sample and situations to collect more precise information.

1.7.2 Data collection
Lankshear and Knobel (2004) caution that the process of data collection should not be approached without due consideration. It needs to be designed, planned and implemented carefully and thoughtfully. The two key issues that the researcher had to resolve in the process of collecting data were access and ethical issues. These issues were an ongoing concern throughout the data collection process as well as afterwards (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 1996:142).

- Procedures to gain access to participants
To complete the research project, the researcher needed to gain and maintain ongoing access to schools, education support personnel, teacher union representatives and members of community organisations. The researcher adopted a reasoned, planned and modest strategy to improve her chances of gaining access to the participants. As Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996:143) emphasise, the fashion in which you envisage your research process and the
researcher’s ability to collect data are critically dependent on the ongoing cooperation of the participants.

Because of time and logistical limitations, I used educators who were completing their postgraduate studies at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), educators residing in Nelson Mandela Metropole, as well as a few educators who lived outside the immediate boundaries of Nelson Mandela Metropole, but who could be accessed with the assistance of the National Professional Teachers’ Organisation of South Africa (NAPTOSA) during their representative training sessions.

Permission to gain access to schools and education support personnel was requested separately from district managers and from the principals and school governing bodies of the schools selected for the research. A detailed discussion in this regard will be provided in Chapter Five.

- Ethical considerations during data collection

Prior to the commencement of this investigation, the researcher applied and was granted ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (Human) (REC-H) of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The REC-H consists of a group of independent experts that have the responsibility to ensure that the rights and welfare of participants in research are protected and that studies are conducted in an ethical manner. The relevant REC-H number is HO8-EDU-ASE-018.

Ethical considerations within the scope of research have to do with what is appropriate and what is inappropriate in the conduct of research (Mouton, 2001). The author argues that certain kinds of behaviour are morally acceptable, while other types of behaviour are frowned upon. He is of the opinion that what is deemed appropriate or inappropriate is subjective. He advises that the right to search for the truth must be balanced against the rights of other individuals in society.

Lankshear and Knobel (2004:101) add that ethical considerations relate to the extent to which peoples’ (or organisations’) interests can be harmed. Harm can range from affronts to people’s dignity and being hurt by the conclusions drawn about them, to having their reputations and credibility publicly undermined. The harm caused can be either direct or indirect.
With regard to the participants involved in this research, careful consideration was given to the following:

**Voluntary participation:** The researcher is aware that the type of person who volunteers, usually tends to be better educated, of a higher social class, more intelligent, more social but less conforming, and may possess a higher need for approval than non-volunteers. During the execution of this investigation, extra caution was taken against any coercion, especially in respect of participants who were educators completing post-graduate courses at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University’s Education Faculty. All participants were informed of the fact that participation was voluntarily.

**Respect for privacy:** The researcher demonstrated respect for participants at all times. Cohen, *et al.* (2007:321) insist that researchers should treat the information provided as well as how the manner in which the information is disseminated, with sensitivity.

There was no probing into the personal life of any of the participants, and the questions asked, were related to the research question only. Extreme care was taken in reporting on research findings so that it would not be in any way intrusive or embarrassing to the participants. Participants were as far as possible given the opportunity to read the transcriptions of interviews afterwards, to ensure that the meanings assigned to their views were correct.

**Confidentiality:** Participants were assured in writing that all information would be used for the purpose of the research only. Lankshear and Knobel’s (2004:110) have cautioned, that researchers tend to minimise the negative repercussions for participants, if confidentiality is breached, the persons potentially may be identified, informed consent must be obtained prior to participation.

For the purpose of this research schools, confidentiality was increased in that education support personnel, members of community organisations and teacher union representatives, after completion of questionnaires or interviews were assigned a number, for when the researcher needed to contact them for clarification of any data provided.

**Informed consent** was obtained from educators, education support personnel, teacher union representatives, members of community organisations members and principals who declared themselves willing participants. For consent to be informed, the researcher developed two types of statements for consent. The one was a form, to be signed by the participants and the
other an information letter, which explained the objectives and procedures involved in the research (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:104).

During each data collection opportunity, participants were provided with an information letter explaining the nature and aims of the research. The letter also included an invitation to ask questions that may be of concern to the participant. Only when the participants indicated that they were satisfied with the terms, were they asked to sign an agreement, deemed binding on the researcher. Materials from interviews were kept anonymous to ensure confidentiality. A more complete exposition on the ethical considerations followed during this investigation will be provided in Chapter Five.

1.7.3 Strategies for data collection

Strauss and Corbin (1994:273) explain that data collection and analysis are intricately linked, a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in systematically gathered and analysed data. Theory is ultimately developed through a process referred to as the constant comparative approach. Babbie and Mouton (2001:498) emphasise that data collection, data analysis and theory development stand in a reciprocal relationship with each other.

Multiple methods of data collection were used in the execution of this investigation. Data collection tools included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and document analysis (a thorough discussion of these tools will be included in Chapter Five). This multiple method approach was considered practical seeing that I focused on diverse groups living within the boundaries of Nelson Mandela Metropole such as educators, members of community organisations, teacher union representatives and various education support officials. A more extensive discussion will be provided in Chapter Five.

The choice of multiple methods of data collection was furthermore supported by Creswell’s (2002:197) statement that qualitative researchers rely on multiple sources of information and often add new forms of data collection to best understand the phenomenon being explored.

The research was conducted in three phases:
The advantage of this phased investigation is that it increased the trustworthiness of the investigation, based on the prolonged engagement of the researcher with participants.

The execution of the data collection process will now be briefly described, with a more extensive explanation provided in Chapter Five.
First phase of the investigation: In this stage, the researcher assessed the support needs of both learners and educators by means of a questionnaire. Questions that focused on educators’ knowledge of the available support structures at the different levels of the system were posed. Participants were also asked to indicate the role they wished parents and the wider community would play in the provision of support to themselves as well as the learners with special educational needs (LSEN) in their care. Information provided by means of the questionnaire, was where necessary, followed up with semi-structured interviews in order to clarify some of the responses.

Questionnaires were distributed to participants with the help of NAPTOSA during its school representatives training workshops. Additional questionnaires were distributed to educators currently (2009) furthering their studies at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Summerstrand South Campus). This strategy allowed the researcher to include a maximum number of schools in the investigation within an economic period of time.

Both open and closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaire. Closed-ended questions were asked to gather biographical data, while open-ended questions were asked with the intention of exploring the support requirements of educators and learners in an inclusive classroom. Additional questions to ascertain educators’ knowledge of the support structures available were also included.

The advantage of using open-ended questions is that it presented participants with the opportunity to answer as comprehensively as they wanted in their own words. This strategy was deemed as the most effective in research addressing complex research issues. Cohen, et al. (2007:321) concur, mentioning that open-ended questions permit participants to write an open version of their feelings and perceptions in their own terms, to elucidate and qualify these responses, and to avoid the restrictions of preset categories.

The second phase: In an attempt to gain further insight into the educational support provided by existing education support personnel as well as community organisations, the questionnaire was supplemented with semi-structured interviews. Due to the diverse nature of the sample, the type of interviews used was either one-on-one interviews or telephone interviews.

Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to use both open-ended and close-ended questions (Creswell, 2002:205). The collection of biographical data gathered by means of
closed-ended questions provided a more precise understanding of the characteristics inherent to the sample.

During the semi-structured interviews, predetermined questions were put to participants in a systematic and consistent manner, but at the same time participants were given the opportunity to address additional issues through the inclusion of open-ended questions.

A tape recorder to record all the interviews, which were subsequently transcribed verbatim, was used as far as possible. Consent to use the tape recorder as well as the information gathered through the use of the tape recorder was requested from all the participants.

The data collection strategies used in stages one and two of the investigation, were supplemented by a document analysis. With regard to the use of documents, Blaxter, et al. (1996:150) note that all research projects employ, to a lesser or greater extent, a document analysis, either utilised on its own or in combination with other research methods.

Documents have proved themselves good sources for qualitative studies as they are normally in the words and language of the participant. They are also ready for analysis, without the need to be transcribed (Creswell, 2002:209). As the issue under investigation is part of the ongoing process of educational transformation, the researcher gathered the latest information from documents produced by the National and/or Provincial Departments of Education, as well as newspapers, magazines and the internet, subsequently integrated with the information obtained during interviews. The information provided through the analysis of national and/or provincial educational documents, as included in the literature research in Chapters Two, Three and Four comprised the backbone of this investigation, as it was used to contextualise the research question as well as the accompanying objectives.

The researcher approached all documents with the necessary watchfulness, as Blaxter, et al. (1996:187) counsel that documents need to be dealt with in the cultural context in which they were written. Careful note was taken of the contention that some articles might even be an attempt at persuading the reader to adopt a specific point of view. Consideration was also given to the statement of De Vos (2002:324) to the effect that the reliability and validity of documents need to be evaluated. The author adds that if creators of documents focus on factual data, the mass media could be viewed as excellent sources of information. Caution was taken to include a balanced selection of documents (Bell, 1993:70).
The third phase involved the putting together of all the information collected by means of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and documents analysis in order to bring to a close the data collection process.

1.7.4 Literature review

The literature review within the grounded theory study is normally done once data collection has been completed. In the words of Marshall and Rossman (1989:40), “In grounded theory development, the literature review provides theoretical constructs, categories and their properties that are used to organise the data and discover new connections between theory and real-life phenomena”.

Delport and Fouchè (2005:261) nevertheless explain that the literature research may be included directly after a discussion of the research question.

I wish to clarify that the literature review conducted as covered in Chapters One, Two, Three and Four, never intended to provide key concepts or to suggest a hypothesis. It had the explicit objective of contextualising the actual research objectives and data collection process to be completed in Chapter Five. The information included in the literature review served as a stimulus for my own thinking and was not simply used as a way of summarising previous research (Burns, 2000:390). It furthermore provided me with an opportunity to gather information relevant to the research problem.

Delport and Fouchè (2005:123) support this strategy by stating that a literature review is aimed at achieving a clearer understanding of the nature and meaning of the research problem identified. Wiersma (2000:52) confirms that a literature review would enable researchers to establish what has been learnt from similar studies previously undertaken.

A literature review for the purpose of control will be included in Chapter Six, dealing with the presentation and discussion of the data collected. Wiersma (2000:52) lists the following reasons why a literature review is a significant component of an investigation:

- It specifically limits and identifies the research problem.
- It enlightens the researcher as to the research that has already been conducted in the field.
- It presents possible research design and methodological procedures that may be used in the current investigation.
- It provides suggestions for possible modifications in the research, to avoid unanticipated difficulties.
• It identifies possible gaps in the research.
• It provides a backdrop for interpreting the results of the research study.

All the data collected during this investigation as far as possible meet the stringent requirements set for establishing trustworthiness. The following section deals with the measures employed in establishing the trustworthiness of this investigation.

1.7.5 Trustworthiness
Throughout this investigation every effort was made to maximise trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is an approach used to clarify the notion of objectivity as manifested in quantitative research. The basic concern in this regard is the degree to which researchers can persuade their audience that the findings of their investigations are worth paying attention to or worth taking account of (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:276).

The criteria of credibility, transferability dependability and conformability were used as canons against which the trustworthiness of this investigation was evaluated (De Vos, 2005:345). Here follows a brief discussion on the measures employed to reach the aim of maximum trustworthiness (a more detailed practical exposition will follow in Chapter Five):

Credibility: For a study to have credibility, researchers have to demonstrate that investigations were conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the participants were accurately identified and described. The credibility of this study was enhanced by what Cohen, et al. (2007:136) refer to as member checking. The rationale behind member checking is that it allows the researcher to go back to participants in order to assess intentionality, correct factual errors, offer respondents the opportunity to add further information or put information on record, provide summaries and to check the accuracy of the analysis.

Transferability: This concept is according to De Vos (2005:346) an alternative to external validity or generalisability. It denotes the degree to which the findings of this research can be compared or generalised to other contexts or settings.

Cohen, et al. (2007:137) reason that with qualitative research, the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of findings to another context rests more with the investigator who makes the transfer than with the original investigator. To maximise transferability (generalisability), the reader is provided with sufficient rich data to determine the level of
transferability of the investigation. In this study, this was attained by the inclusion of multiple cases, multiple informants and multiple data collection strategies (De Vos, 2005:346).

**Dependability**, according to De Vos (2005:346), is the alternative of reliability in quantitative research. Within qualitative research, this concept relates to the degree to which another investigator will be able to replicate the same research and obtain very similar results. De Vos (2005:346) indicates that the concept of dependability is problematic, as it is in direct contrast to the qualitative/interpretative assumption that the social world is constantly being constructed.

**Conformability** refers to the neutrality or objectivity of the researcher. At issue is therefore the degree to which an investigator’s own biases or prejudices may impact on the findings of an investigation. Cohen, *et al.* (2007:134) caution that with qualitative research, the researcher is a part of the world he or she is researching, which makes complete objectivity a challenge. To enhance conformability, biases and prejudices need to be declared at the beginning of the research. Denscombe (1998:208), reiterates that a researcher’s identity, values and beliefs play a role in the construction and analysis of qualitative data. He nevertheless cautions researchers to distance themselves from their normal everyday beliefs and suspend judgment on social issues while executing their research.

**Researcher bias or effect**

At this point, I wish to clarify my possible involvement and biases in order to reduce the possible infringement of my personal opinions on the outcome of the investigation.

This investigation was the indirect result of the personal frustrations I experienced as an educator at a historically disadvantaged school. While the enthusiasm to educate was always there, the necessary support from parents, community structures and education support services to increase educational and academic success was lacking.

At the commencement of this research, I had served the Eastern Cape Education Department in the capacity as school counselor for twenty years. My primary role as school guidance counselor is to support the learners’ education by dealing with the personal, familial, social, academic and career challenges that threaten the process of learning and development.

I observed that those learners who struggled due to extrinsic and intrinsic barriers to learning and development continuously failed to meet the requirements for promotion in a specific
grade. Those learners are merely passed from one grade to the next, without ever having the benefit of intervention by professionals like remedial, speech, occupational or psychological therapists. This lack of proper early intervention or adequate educational support has seen large numbers of learners reaching the end of the General Education and Training band functionally illiterate; they generally drop out from school, joining the ranks of the unemployable or under employable masses.

After completing an Honours Degree in Psychology, I completed a Master’s Degree in Education (Special Educational Needs: Inclusive Education). An important requirement for the completion of this qualification was an investigation into the functioning of ESS in the Port Elizabeth area. This was coupled with a compulsory forty hours’ practical work as part of a multi-disciplinary education support team operating at a special school in the area.

My thesis at Master’s level dealt with the preparedness of Senior Phase educators in Nelson Mandela Metropole for the implementation of inclusive education. My investigation concluded that educators lacked the critical knowledge and skills required to include LSEN in mainstream classrooms. The majority of participating educators interviewed, expressed a negative attitude at attempts to included learners with severe disabilities in their classrooms.

After the completion of my M. Ed. Degree, I took up a position as school counselor at a school for specialised education. I was shocked by the lack of educational support from parents, education support personnel and the community for LSEN at this level of the education system. I also had to deal daily with the frustrations of parents whose children had specific support needs, coupled with the complete inability expressed by the parents or the educators involved to provide the required support to these learners.

My experiences gave me insight into the support needs of educators and learners on the one hand, as well as the amazing possibilities, but also limitations, within the Educational Support Services. A central question that I wanted to address is how educators can identify the support needs of their learners in the early stages, in order to access available education support, to the maximum benefit of themselves and their learners. I believe that instead of increasing bias to the data gathered, my experiences potentially enriched the quality of the study.

As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (cited by De Vos, 2005:347), the investigator attempted to answer the following questions, which serve as criteria against which a grounded theory should be tested:
• Were concepts generated?
• Were concepts systematically related?
• Were there many conceptual linkages and are the categories well developed? Do they have conceptual density?
• Was much variation built into the theory?
• Were the broader conditions that affect the phenomenon being studied built into its explanations?
• Was the process taken into account?
• Did the theoretical findings seem significant, and to what extent?

1.7.6 Pilot study
A pilot study was undertaken, as it forms an integral part of any research process. The pilot study entailed the carrying out of a feasibility test, as well as the pretesting of the measuring instrument on three possible participants with the same characteristics as the sample group (Strydom, 2005:205).

The pilot study was small, as the intention was to establish whether the relevant data could be obtained from the participants identified. It allowed me to focus on the feasibility of the investigation and provided the opportunity to identify specific sections in the data gathering instruments that needed to be adapted or clarified.

In completing the pilot study, I acted in response to Strydom and Delport (2005:327) who point to the numerous advantages of a pilot study such as the establishment of relationships with respondents; obtaining permission for the investigation; creating opportunity for establishing effective communication patterns; calculation of time and cost involved in the specific research; and the preempting of problems that may arise during the actual data collection process.

1.7.7 Data analysis
Data analysis in qualitative research is a challenging and highly creative process, which starts with data collection. De Vos (2005:333) explains that through the process of data analysis, the investigator brings order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data.

According to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (1996:184) data analysis comprises the search for explanation and understanding, in the course of which concepts and theories are likely to be advanced, considered and developed. It involves breaking the information gathered down into
manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. The aim of analysis is to understand the data through an inspection of the relationships between concepts, constructs and variables and to see whether any patterns or trends can be identified or isolated or to establish themes in the data (Mouton, 2001:108).

In this investigation, the researcher performed data analysis based on the philosophy inherent to grounded theory. Straus and Corbin (cited by De Vos, 2002:273) explain that grounded theory is discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection. These authors suggest that researchers do not start off with a theory and then conduct research to prove or disprove it, but instead embark on a specific area of research, and then steadily allow what is significant to that area to emerge.

Analysis in grounded theory takes place through open, axial and selective coding in order to deliver a theory or a theoretical model as the product of the research. The lines between the various types of coding are artificial and do not necessarily follow an exact sequence. While performing open and axial coding, I, quickly and without hesitation, moved between one form of coding and another (De Vos, 2005:341).

During coding, data is broken down, conceptualised and put back together in new ways. Codes are labels that assign units of meaning to the information obtained (Struwig & Stead, 2001:169; Wiersma, 2000:203). Coding, which helps with the reduction of a large volume of data gathered during qualitative research into more manageable portions, is the fundamental procedure in which theories are built from the data.

Open coding consists of naming and categorising data through a close examination of the information gathered. During this process, the data is broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena, as reflected in the data collected. Two analytical processes, namely those of (1) asking of questions; and (2) making of comparisons are central to open coding. De Vos (2005:341) explain that grounded theory is for this reason also known as the “…the constant comparative method of analysis”.

The following steps which according to De Vos (2005:341), comprise this comparative method of analysis were followed in this study:

- Phenomena were labeled by taking apart a sentence or paragraph, giving each incident, idea or event a name, something that stands for or represents a phenomenon. This was
done by comparing responses provided by participants as I went along so that similar phenomena could be given the same name.

- Categories pertaining to the same phenomena were discovered by grouping similar concepts together. The phenomena represented by these categories were given conceptual names which were more abstract than those given to the concepts grouped under them.
- Categories were named, based on the phrases, names or ideas offered by the participants. These categories were to a large degree logically related to the data collected and graphical enough to remind the researcher instantly of their referents.
- Categories were developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. Where these properties had subproperties, they were further dimensionalised, depending on the data.
- Open coding was completed by analysing the questionnaires and interviews one by one. This involved a close examination, phrase by phrase, or word by word and sentence by sentence, in order to establish specific categories. Categories were identified as early as possible, as they were to form the basis for theoretical sampling.

**Axial coding** is defined by De Vos (2005:343) as a set of procedures through which data is put back together in new ways after open coding has been completed. The intent is to generate new connections between a category and its subcategories. In this study, this was done by using code paradigms involving conditions contexts actions/interactional strategies and consequences.

**Selective coding**

Through selective coding, the researcher selects the core category, and then systematically relates it to other categories, validating those relationships and substantiating those categories that may need further refinement and development.

In this study the following steps, suggested by De Vos (2005:344), were involved in selective coding:

- The storyline was explicated by writing down the essence of the story.
- Subsidiary categories were related around the core category by means of the paradigm.
- Categories were further related at the dimensional level.
- Relationships between categories were validated against the data.
- Categories that needed further refinement and/or development were further substantiated.
1.8 PROGRAMME OF STUDY
The investigation will be delineated as set out below:

- *Chapter One:* The introductory chapter deals with the background and rationale of this study. It outlines the problem statement, the theoretical framework, and the purpose and aims of the study.

- *Chapter Two:* In this chapter, the researcher attempts to define inclusive education. In addition, it attempts to provide an international perspective on the implementation of inclusive education.

- *Chapter Three:* traces the historical development of educational provisioning for learners experiencing barriers to learning (LSEN) before 1994, and identify the process of policy development and the implementation of inclusive education thereafter.

- *Chapter Four:* This chapter analyses the practical implications of the implementation of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) on the support roles of education support providers in South African schools.

- *Chapter Five:* This chapter deals with the execution of the investigation. Within this chapter, a more detailed theoretical exposition of the research design and methodology introduced in Chapter One is offered. It includes a description of the research design and methodology used to complete the investigation.

- *Chapter Six:* This chapter constitutes a discussion of the findings of the investigation. The themes and sub-themes emerging from an analysis of the data collected during the investigation are presented and discussed.

- *Chapter Seven:* In this chapter the main aim of the investigation, which is the proposal of a framework for the establishment of a holistic, integrated, community based educational support structure for Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas, is presented. The proposal for a holistic, integrated and community based educational support structure is framed within the perspective of the bioecological model presented by Bronfenbrenner.
• *Chapter Eight:* This chapter presents a summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the investigation. It concludes with pointing out the limitations of this study and area for possible future research.

1.9 **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the rationale for this investigation was outlined, the research problem was formulated and put into perspective and the research design and methodologies were discussed and clarified. This was followed by a clarification of the major concepts of the investigation. Finally, an overview of the chapters of this thesis was provided. The scope of the investigation was furthermore demarcated and the value of the study elucidated.

The next chapter, Chapter Two, will present an overview of educational support provision for LSEN within an international perspective.
CHAPTER TWO
EDUCATION PROVISIONING AND SUPPORT FOR LSEN: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 INTRODUCTION
Inclusive education and education support services are comparable to Siamese twins, who share vital organs. Separating these conjoined twins is normally a difficult and often fatal process. Likewise, separating inclusion from education support services would have a disastrous effect. For this reason, I consider any analysis of education support services as incomplete without an in-depth examination of inclusive education.

In this chapter, I will position the current educational developments and practices in South Africa within the wider educational context in order to establish the extent to which South African policies and practices are influenced by international trends.

This chapter will argue that developments with regard to inclusive education and education support services in South Africa have not taken place in a vacuum, but have been strongly influenced by international educational policies and practices (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:15).

The literature review shows that, internationally, inclusion (inclusive education) is a very complex concept that means different things to different people. It is made up of many strong currents of beliefs, many dissimilar political struggles and a multitude of practices (Clough & Corbett, 2000:6). In order to provide a full appreciation of the complexity of inclusive education, I will explore the various definitions of inclusive education and focus on the underlying theoretical and philosophical framework, as well as examine the historical, social and political forces that influenced its development internationally (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:3).

I will also trace the origins, trends and issues relating to the ongoing debate around education support provisioning for LSEN in both developed and developing countries. It is important to realise from the outset that educational provisioning for LSEN is a very recent occurrence, both locally and internationally, with the earliest years in both developed and developing countries characterised by exclusion and segregation (Karagiannis, Stainback & Stainback, 2000:9).
2.2 EXPLORING THE FUNDAMENTAL NATURE AND MEANING OF THE CONCEPT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

There is currently (2009) a lively debate within the international education arena as to what the term inclusive education entails. This debate is further complicated by the multiple definitions and interpretations offered by various authors in international literature.

Dyson and Millward (2000:2) comment that the meaning of inclusion seems reasonably straightforward, but Booth (cited in Dyson & Millward, 2000:3) contends that this deceptively simple concept is actually both extremely slippery and highly context-specific. Lindsay (2004:11) reiterates that any research into inclusion/inclusive education could be problematic, as it is not necessarily a simple or unambiguous concept.

The concept is made even more confusing by the variety of definitions that exists within different international contexts. The meaning given to inclusion in both government documents and school curricula differs from country to country as well as within different elements of the same education system (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:3; Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009:76).

Research into inclusive practices internationally is further complicated by the interchangeable use of the terms mainstreaming, integration and inclusive education in literature. Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:306) advise that although the terms mainstreaming, integration and inclusion are often used as synonyms, there are real differences in values and practices between these terms. The different terms are discussed below.

2.2.1 Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming, as explained by Swart and Pettipher (2001:1), is the educational equivalent of the normalisation principle, as implemented in countries such as the United States of America (USA). It is based on the premise that LSEN have the right to the same life experiences as their peers.

Mainstreaming is nevertheless reflective of a reliance on the medical model, where the only barriers assumed are those within the child and no attention is given to how the school environment may be contributing to disabling him or her. With mainstreaming, it is generally understood that LSEN would partly receive their education in mainstream, but have to prove their fitness to fit into mainstream schools, as the classroom and rest of the school have
remained more or less unchanged. This process, which constitutes inclusion at its worst, is referred to as mainstream dumping or mainstreaming by default.

2.2.2 Integration
Meijer, Pijl and Hegarty (1994:4) reason that in literature, integration is used as a collective noun for all attempts to avoid the segregation or exclusion of LSEN. Farrell (2005:90) notes that the terms inclusion and integration seem similar, as both entail provision for learners in mainstream schools. The difference in these terms can nevertheless be deduced from the writing of Nes and Stromstad (2003:116), as they inform us that integration is narrowly concerned only with the placement of LSEN and must be viewed as merely the forerunner of inclusion.

Integration relies heavily on a social and political discourse (Swart & Pettipher, 2001:1). The term is used to refer to a limited attempt at including LSEN in mainstream schools without any substantial changes to the schools themselves. Both Kisanji (1999:3) and Farrell (2005:91) incline towards the idea that integration simply means that mainstream schools make additional arrangements, such as the withdrawal of LSEN from the classroom to receive additional support, such as remedial education.

Daniels and Gartner (1999:1); Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:306); Engelbrecht (1999:8); Zelaieta (2004:37) and Kisanji (1999:3) all agree that integration implies that the individual concerned still has to make an effort to fit into existing systems in order to avoid exclusion or marginalisation.

2.2.3 Inclusion
Inclusion differs from mainstreaming and integration, as it extends beyond just the physical placement of LSEN (Clough, 1998:5). Inclusion is regarded as a moral issue of human rights and values, as publicized in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), in terms of which inclusion is acknowledged as a vital component in the establishment of an inclusive society. The inclusive education approach to education needs to be understood as a move away from a deficit model of adjustment towards systemic change (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:307).

Booth, Nes and Stromstad (2003:1) offer a transformative view of inclusion by maintaining that inclusion is a process of consciously putting into practice values based on equity, entitlement, community, participation and respect for diversity. It is a process linked to the
Inclusive education does not focus only on the small minority of learners categorised as LSEN, but protects all learners against any form of discrimination stemming from their race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and family background. It therefore not only addresses the barriers experienced by learners, but promotes the development of cultures, policies and practices in schools to allow it to become more responsive to diversity and to value all learners equally (Booth, et al., 2003:1).

Booth and Ainscow (1998:2) prefer a definition that showcases the notion of inclusion concurrent with the practices of exclusion. They argue that inclusion involves reducing the pressures that lead to the exclusion of certain groups of learners from mainstream curricula, cultures and communities and therefore does not primarily involve the physical placement of learners.

Ballard’s (cited by Dyson and Millward, 2000:3) explanation emulates that of the authors above in that he considers inclusive education as an education free from discrimination based on disability, culture, gender or any other aspect that is assigned significance by society. He further contends that all learners should have the right to access the culturally valued curriculum as full-time valued members of age-appropriate mainstream classrooms in their community, irrespective of their intellectual, physical, sensory or other differences.

Booth, et al. (2003:2) suggest that because of the multitude of exclusionary practices present in society, we need to understand inclusion not only as a goal, but also as a process towards an unattainable goal. An inclusive school is therefore an institution that is on the move, rather than a destination. When a school embraces the ideal of inclusion, it has a clear view of the goals for which it is aiming.

According to Dyson and Forlin (1999:32); and Engelbrecht and Green (2001:5) inclusive education in schools should be understood as an integral part of the requirements of any democratic society. According to these authors, inclusive education is regarded as the one strategy most likely to achieve a social and democratic society. Consequently, inclusive schooling does not simply entail an adaptation of special education, but rather a reconstruction of the public education system to meet the needs of a changing society in order for it to provide effective quality education to all its learners. The fundamental principle underpinning
Inclusive education is the appreciation of diversity within society. Each learner needs to comprehend that his or her own membership in the class and society is a human right and not a consequence of his or her academic and physical ability.

Moreover, inclusion is about recognising the need for schools and communities to establish and maintain mutually supportive relationships. All role-players need to see education as broader than schooling and inclusive schools need to support and promote education within the community, instead of being the only source of education (Booth, et al., 2003:2).

Dyson (1999:39-49) has attempted an explanation as to why various scholars offer diverse notions and descriptions of inclusion or inclusive education. He states that as inclusion is not a monolithic concept, there is a need to refer to inclusion in the plural. He maintains that the complexity and diverse nature of the term inclusion is the result of the various discourses that exist within the inclusion debate. He points to the following discourses, which each gives prominence to specific questions with regard to inclusion:

- the rationale for inclusion: the rights and ethics discourse;
- the rationale for inclusion: the efficacy discourse;
- the realisation of inclusion: the political discourse; and
- the realisation of inclusion: the pragmatic discourse.

The rights and ethics discourse, as represented in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), focuses on inclusion as a human right and an issue of social justice. This view is also reflected in the argument of Karagiannis, et al. (2000:3) that exclusion in schools breeds social discontent and discrimination. Within this discourse, it is argued that disability is socially constructed through the barriers society imposes on certain groups of people (Kisanji, 1999:4). Education is considered a human right that can be achieved if schools and not learners make the necessary adjustments to cater for diversity in the learner population.

Supporters of the efficacy discourse see inclusion as a far more effective arrangement for educating all children. This viewpoint, reflected in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), favours inclusive education, as it brings greater social benefits and is more effectively educationally and more cost-efficient than segregated schooling. Within this discourse, it is argued that special schools do not provide anything distinctive to LSEN. Special education is seen as a costly business where wide-ranging resources are concentrated on a few children, while there is simultaneously a need to maintain a separate infrastructure of schools, educators and administrators (Dyson, 1999:42).
Within the political discourse, the struggle for inclusion is against those seen to have a vested interest in the continuation of segregated education. Dyson (1999:42) argues that this struggle is “… essentially a “manichaean” one between the forces of exclusion and the forces of inclusion”.

Within the pragmatic discourse, the focus is on what inclusion should look like in practice and the ways in which the ideal of inclusion may be fully realised by focusing on the development of inclusive schools as organisations. There is a presumption that educators, practitioners, managers and policy-makers simply have to take a specific series of practical steps to realise inclusion.

Dyson (1999:42) argues strongly against choosing one discourse above another, instead recommending that these different discourses be critically interrogated in order for them to constructively inform and enhance the development of inclusive education.

Zelaieta (2004:39) reiterates the sentiment stated above by maintaining that “… one interpretation of inclusion is as good as the other” and that difference in interpretation is at this point a manifestation of the complexity and contextual variability of principles relating to rights and values. The different interpretations of inclusion/inclusive education are consequently merely seen as a reflection of the different perspectives and priorities of each organisation or community and how these are interpreted in terms of a “vision of inclusion”.

Swart and Pettipher (2005:4) and Engelbrecht and Green (2001:4) are of the opinion that although inclusion suggests different things to different people in different contexts, it is based on several common principles. These incorporate:

- An allegiance to the construction of a more democratic society.
- The creation of a quality and equitable education system.
- The conviction that education systems need to accommodate the diverse learning needs of all learners.
- The building of a value system that encourages and celebrates diversity arising from language, gender, race, socio-economic status, disability or intellectual attainment.

2.3 COMPARISON BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION IN DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

This section will showcase the differences in the implementation of the principles of inclusive education between developed and developing countries. It supports the contention of Dyson
and Forlin (1999:32) who maintain that the ideal of inclusive education needs to be understood differently in developed and developing countries.

This section will investigate the contention that special education is more easily integrated into inclusive education developed countries, where inclusion has its roots, than in developing countries (Clough & Corbett, 2000:5).

The difference between the development and implementation of inclusive education in developing and developed countries can be mainly ascribed to the fact that at the emergence of the inclusive movement, the relatively rich developed countries already possessed both extensive and sophisticated regular and special educational systems that provided adequately for the majority of learners.

As will be indicated in the next section the implementation of inclusive education in countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, Norway and Italy was to a large degree limited to the expansion and development of the existing provisioning made for LSEN. These countries virtually only had to consider ways of relocating learners, resources and expertise in their already comprehensive and sophisticated regular education systems (Dyson and Forlin, 1999:26).

The differences in the development and implementation of inclusive education in developing and developed countries is further highlighted by Dyson and Millward (2000:3) who direct attention to the significance of the fact that many of the 92 participating governments who committed themselves to the principles outlined in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) were from poor countries, which were first and foremost concerned with providing basic education for a wide range of marginalised groups, which included street children, working children, children from ethnic minorities, and children who lived in remote areas.

This is further supported by Dyson and Forlin (1999:24-26) and Ainscow (2003:15), who note that in developing countries, LSEN may be among the many illiterate learners, but do not necessarily represent the largest group of learners. It is thus clear that in developing countries the realisation of inclusive education essentially entails the extension and development of education in an attempt to include many more learners in the already limited educational provision.
McCormick and Hickson (1996:66) note that as education is often not compulsory in developing countries, providing basic education for all learners remains a massive challenge. Providing for LSEN in special schools or classes within this context would clearly place an enormous burden on governments already struggling to provide just the most basic of resources. It is nevertheless argued that the implementation of inclusive education in developing countries will increase the number of LSEN receiving some form of education.

It is worth mentioning that in most African countries in which educational provisioning for LSEN exists, it is, as in the rest of the world, an initiative started by missionaries. Examples of disability specific special schools include Chivi Mission Schools for visually impaired pupils in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda and Tanzania. In the majority of these African countries, government commitment to educational provision for LSEN in Africa started only after the 1970s (Grol, 2000:2).

Kalabula (2000:1) explains that while most African countries currently demonstrated at least a theoretical commitment to providing equal education opportunities for LSEN by formulating policies like mainstreaming and family, community or social rehabilitation, the reality remains one of exclusion.

It may therefore be suggested that while many developing countries do not have the necessary funds available to create an extended infrastructure of special schools or special programmes, the implementation of inclusive education is considered a cost efficient and cost effective way to extend education to all excluded learners.

The following section outlines developments with regard to inclusive education in both developed and developing countries.

2.3.1 Historical perspective on the development of education and support to LSEN in developed countries

Policies and legislative developments for improving educational provisioning for LSEN in the USA and United Kingdom played a major role in setting the stage for the unfolding of inclusive education internationally. The passing of The Act, PL42-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act in the USA and the Warnock Report, followed by the 1981 Education Act in the United Kingdom, to be discussed below, formed the basis for international action, which subsequently found expression in the important Salamanca Statement (Kisanji, 1999:7).
2.3.1.1 United States of America

The earliest history of educational provision for LSEN in the United States was characterised by the total exclusion of LSEN from the education system. According to Karagiannis, *et al.* (2000:18), most students who were poor, were from minority groups or had disabilities; the first hurdle was receiving any education at all.

Karagiannis, *et al.* (2000:19) have traced the educational provision for LSEN in the USA back to the 1700s, when Benjamin Rush, a physician, introduced the concept of education for people with disabilities. In 1917, Thomas Gallaudet established the first special programme of education for deaf and blind LSEN. Many other programmes soon followed, and the number of institutions providing for learners with specific disabilities continued to grow well into the 1950s.

During this time, separate educational provisioning existed for Native Americans, African Americans, and other students with visible or considerable disabilities, in that they were excluded from mainstream education.

Those children who were wheelchair bound, not toilet-trained or considered uneducable, were excluded, because of the challenges involved in their education. The Eugenics Movement, which arose at the turn of the 20th century, further entrenched the ‘dehumanisation’ of persons with disabilities. There was a widespread perception among the general public that people with disabilities had criminal tendencies and generally posed a threat to society, due to their genetic predisposition. This led to an increase in the segregation of LSEN as well as the intensification in practices like forced sterilisation (Karagiannis, *et al.*, 2000:19).

Kisanji (1999:4) confirms the widespread violation of human rights of persons deemed not to be normal; people with disabilities were considered to pose a threat to society. The disabled were believed to contaminate an otherwise pure human species. Moreover, society had to be protected from the disabled and the disabled in turn needed to be protected from society. This attitude led to what is commonly referred to as the period of institutionalisation.

The root of the idea of inclusion in the United States of America can be traced back to the transformation of the notion of individual rights, which occurred in the 1930’s as part of Roosevelt’s “New Deal” policies, in terms of which reformers insisted that people of colour, the disabled and the poor were not adequately protected under the earlier *laissez faire* conception of individual rights. This led to the issuing of a second Bill of Rights, which gave
rise to a major shift in interpretation. Public education in the USA was one of the sectors most powerfully impacted by this shift in interpretation (McLaughlin, Fuchs & Hardman, 1999:24).

Ware (1998:12) argues that inclusion as a mode of educational provisioning for LSEN in the USA needs to be understood as a social movement associated with social policy reform that started in the mid-1950s. This movement is understood as directly related to the 1954 Supreme Court decision on racial desegregation in education.

Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin and Williams (2000:12) confirm that the verdict in the Brown vs. Board of Education case was a watershed in the placement of LSEN. The ruling stated that that black learners not only had a right to education, but that they had the right to the same education as white learners. The court declared that separate education did not constitute equal education for African Americans. In addition, the ruling suggested that the placement of learners within separate settings could foster feelings of inferiority that might affect learners’ sense of belonging in their community and might have a negative impact on their motivation to learn. This thinking set the direction for inclusive education internationally.

Karagiannis, et al. (2000:20) agree, stating that the Brown vs. Board of Education verdict did not only challenge segregated educational provision for African Americans, but also led to the scrutiny of the segregated education provided to LSEN. Public opinion with regard to LSEN began to undergo a metamorphosis, with intensified efforts from advocacy groups like the National Association for Retarded Children to have LSEN included in more normalised school environments with their peers. Advocacy groups started to use the Brown vs. Board of Education verdict as a platform to challenge the restrictions imposed on LSEN by their segregation into special schools, institutions and special classes.

Anderson, Martinez and Rich (1980:9) report that on November 29, 1975, the then President of the United States of America (Gerald F. Ford) signed into law Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), which constituted a landmark for educational provisioning for LSEN. This law was the culmination of several court battles and intense advocacy on behalf of handicapped children.

Ainscow (2003:15) comments that Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), was the most influential piece of legislation yet with regard to the
education of LSEN in the United States of America. This Act and other reforms envisaged the complete overhaul of the American education system.

Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:12), Karagiannis, et al. (2000:21) and Ainscow (2003:15) observe that a legislative landmark was reached when the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) was later re-authorised as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA). The American Congress founded the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 on the following fundamental principles:

- A commitment to the principle of zero rejects, which meant that no learner could be refused admission to public schools because of the severity of his or her disability.
- Following due process in order to guarantee learners’ rights at every stage in the identification, eligibility, programme development and placement processes.
- Parents’ involvement and participation at all stages.
- Fair and unbiased assessment to protect learners against unfair penalties due to differences in language, culture and race.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997), which served as inspiration for similar developments in other countries, such as the 1981 Education Act in the United Kingdom, in theory extended the right to free public education to all learners, regardless of their disability, in the ‘least restrictive environment’.

As a result, by 1976 all states in the United States of America had passed laws subsidising public school programmes for LSEN. Several national associations passed resolutions in favour of mainstreaming/integration. At the same time, many states encouraged their educators to take preparatory coursework.

Notwithstanding these positive developments around the inclusion of LSEN, evidence suggests that in the 1970’s and throughout the 1980’s many LSEN in American schools were still not mainstreamed. Karagiannis, et al. (2000:21) concur that it was only during the 1980’s that the current dual system of general and special education was challenged.

In the 1980’s, the mainstreaming of LSEN was replaced by a move towards inclusive education. In the United States of America, inclusive schooling meant that LSEN should
attend the neighbourhood schools, which they would have attended if they did not have special educational needs (Ware, 1998:21). This new drive saw the integration of many more LSEN into mainstream classes on at least a part-time basis (Karagiannis, et al. 2000:21).

In 1986, the USA Department of Education (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services) issued the Regular Education Initiative, with the purpose of developing ways in which to serve LSEN in mainstream classes by encouraging partnerships between special education programmes and general education (Karagiannis, et al. 2000:22).

Kerzner and Gartner (2004:51) insist that, notwithstanding various inclusive policies and initiatives, inclusive education is still not a common practice in the United States of America, as most LSEN continue to be educated in separate settings. Ware (1998:22) confirms that regardless of social policy reforms, inclusion remains uneven in schools and communities across America. This view is mirrored by Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:13), who suggest that despite optimism that IDEA would lead to a reduction in separate LSEN provisioning, a massive parallel system has developed. In the process, millions of dollars were invested in establishing and maintaining separate learning environments, such as resource rooms, self-contained classes and special schools for LSEN (Walther-Thomas, et al., 2000:13; Anderson, et al., 1980:9).

Although the inclusive movement in the United States of America has gained unparalleled support during the 1990s, it should be noted that in that country, as in other countries, support for inclusion is still not universal, as some parents and organisations remain committed to separate educational provision. Begeny and Martens (2007:80) and Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:14) list the reasons why some parents are against inclusive schooling:

- Fear that the special needs of certain LSEN, like blind and deaf learners, will not be met in an inclusive setting.

- Suspicion that inclusive education is just an easy option for a government that is tired of committing resources to social programmes and wants to save money.

- The belief that the general education system is not fully prepared for inclusion, and that full inclusion cannot be accomplished due to its complex nature.

- Some LSEN, like the deaf and blind, need more intensive interventions than what can be provided in general classrooms.

- Empirical studies have not yet validated the effectiveness of inclusive education.
• The belief that educators first need to be retrained and that issues like attitude, adaptations and accommodation must to be addressed and fully supported by all sectors of schools before inclusion should be attempted.

Developments during the 1950’s onwards are seen as pivotal in the establishment of inclusive education as main provisioning method for LSEN internationally. It is noteworthy that in the United States of America there is currently (2009) no official definition differentiating between inclusive education, integration or mainstreaming. None of these terms are included in key federal education legislation, such as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), the Individuals with Disability Education Act (1997), or in any other state statute (Lipsky & Gartner, 1999:12).

2.3.1.2 United Kingdom
Though the development of educational provisioning for LSEN in the United States of America and the United Kingdom shows certain similarities, any comparison between provisioning for LSEN in the USA and the UK is complicated by the differences in the proportion of students identified as LSEN, differences in the formal assessment procedures used to identify these learners, the grade system, the regular education testing and assessment systems, as well as the relationship between the individual school and the local, state and federal education department.

I nonetheless argue that the term inclusion, as used in the UK, had its origin in the USA, where the concept inclusion was strongly advocated by the Civil Rights Movement the struggle for equality by Black Americans. Dyson and Millward (2000:4) note that the British education system itself was hardly ever affected by these problems.

Dyson and Millward (2000:6) affirm that the history of special education in the UK has always been driven by relatively liberal principles. These liberal principles, informed by the idea of equity, the value of the individual and the right of all individuals to take part in shared communities, curricula and learning, have served as counterbalance to any exclusionary pressures present in the system.

In the UK, as in many other countries, provisioning for LSEN started out as an individual and charitable enterprise, with the government becoming involved only much later. The first special provisioning for children with physical disabilities was made in 1851, with the
establishment of schools for blind and deaf LSEN. At the same time, children considered to be mentally defective were put into workhouses and infirmaries (Ainscow, 2003:13).

The tendency to provide special separate provisioning for LSEN before the twentieth century is confirmed by Glough (1998:35), who indicates that in 1891 the London School Board opened three experiential mental schools for practical instruction and that by 1896 a total of 900 children were attending 24 special schools (in Bradford, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bristol, Brighton and London).

The Wood Commission (1928) estimated that about 3 000 000 mentally defective persons in England were not receiving adequate education. In an attempt to extend educational provisioning to many more learners, the Wood Commission argued for the abolishment of certification (identification and labeling of learners) and a move towards educating all LSEN in one comprehensive education system (Clough, 1998:34).

The contradiction and tensions between educational goals and the use of special educational provision as a tool for social control and exclusion in the British education system culminated in the 1944 Education Act, which established a system of separate schooling for children with different aptitudes and abilities (Clough, 1998:36). This in practice meant a segregated special education system, with different types of schools for the children in each of the eleven established categories of ‘handicap’. The 1944 Education Act placed the duty on Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to ascertain the needs of LSEN. These learners were to be given support within mainstream schools. Placement in special schools was seen as a last resort only (Dyson & Millward, 2000:4).

Clough (1998:39) explains that the principle of “tripartitism” in the 1944 Education Act was ultimately responsible for increasing discrimination and privilege. It was initially intended to promote citizenship, but led to the further expansion of separate education. Dyson and Millward (2000:4) argue that although the 1944 Act seemed inconsistent with the goals of inclusion, it at least initiated a trend for mainstream schools to explore ways to make provision for special needs. It also led to the establishment of guidance and legislation to support provision for LSEN.

The Plowden Report (1967) had a major impact on the development of educational provisioning for LSEN in the UK, as it highlighted the impact that environmental factors
might have on educational achievement. It rejected the contention that educational difficulties were the result of individual deficit (Clough, 1998:39).

The first significant development with regard to the transformation of the British education system was the Warnock Report of 1978. The Warnock Report was written following growing discontent with the 1944 framework (Clough, 1998:39). The Warnock Report, through the Education Act (1981), gave Britain a more liberal education system, which made it possible for additional resources and specialists services to be provided for meeting the needs of LSEN within the ordinary classroom. The Warnock Report, followed by the 1981 Education Act, fundamentally changed the conceptualisation of special needs, in that it put emphasis on learners’ educational needs and not their individual learning disability or impairment (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009:4).

The 1981 Education Act (Clough, 1998:3) was an attempt to encourage a pluralistic society that valued differences in its citizens. The Act endeavored to maximise opportunities for LSEN by minimising the effect of being different. These differences included factors such as social class, gender, sexual orientation, and marital and domestic status. In practice, the Education Act (1981) determined that all LSEN should receive their education in the “least restricted environment”, which was first and foremost the normal mainstream classroom attended by all other learners. It is an indication that the government recognised the effect of the following factors with regard to educational provisioning:

- The marked inequalities in society and thus also in the education system.
- The specific type of educational provisioning provided to learners may possibly be a determining factor with regard to learners’ ability to take their place in society.
- The stigmatising effect of school failure on learners’ self-esteem and dignity as well as their ability to access the job market.

In October 1997, the British Labour Government for the first time came out strongly in favour of the creation of an inclusive education system, as defined by the 1994 Salamanca World Statement on Special Needs Education. The move towards inclusive education was not a major shock to the education system in the UK, as it did not constitute any drastic reforms, but merely the expansion of existing provisioning to admit LSEN who had more severe difficulties (Dyson & Millward, 2000:5).

Booth (2003:33-36) paints a different picture, explaining that since 1997, several policies on inclusion and exclusion have been introduced, which on the surface created the impression
that the government supported inclusion. At the same time, general education policies that promoted competition between schools and selection by schools negated the effect of these inclusive education policies. These education policies expected of schools to compete with one another, with the more popular schools being able to select the most desirable learners, providing an advantage to wealthy middle class families.

The diversity in provisioning is ascribed to the fact that although the 1981 Education Act was “liberal and egalitarian” in nature, it was an enabling and not prescriptive piece of legislation. The fact that the responsibility to interpret and implement this legislation has been left to LEAs, means that there are currently wide geographical variation. Where a learner lives, is the determining factor in whether he will be receiving his education in an inclusive classroom or special school (Clough, 1998:2-4).

2.3.1.3 Australia

The educational system in Australia is the responsibility of the individual states and territories. Each jurisdiction has its own educational acts and establishes its own educational agenda when it comes to provisioning for LSEN. The contents of the educational acts may show similarities to a certain degree, but options in providing education for LSEN vary considerably, due to the autonomy of decision-making within each authority (Forlin, 2006:255).

Although the school systems in Australia between 1940 and 1970 established a large number of segregated special schools catering specifically for LSEN, scores of learners with profound needs were excluded even from those special schools (Forlin, 2006:266). Fortunately, the process of normalisation that swept the world during the 1970’s also affected the educational provisioning for LSEN in Australia. In the early 1970’s, the Karmel Report was published recommending that government support the integration of LSEN into mainstream schools.

It was nevertheless only in 1981, following the declaration of the International Year of Disabled Persons, that the first major attempt to introduce the integration and acceptance of persons with disabilities occurred on an extensive scale in Australia. By the end of 1981, every jurisdiction area in Australia had a policy that saw integration slowly becoming a reality. This shift to integration was followed by a mainstreaming era, which culminated in support for inclusive education, as defined by the Salamanca Statement of 1994 (Forlin, 2006:267).
The right of all learners to receive their education in mainstream school was protected by the passing of the Disability Discrimination Act of 1992. This Act determines that the exclusion of learners can be justified in exceptional circumstances only. Schools now have to use the legal provision of “unjustifiable hardship” to deny any learner access to that specific institution. Unjustifiable hardships are those barriers schools have to deal with in making provision to accommodate a learner (Forlin, 2006:267).

The commitment to inclusive education implies that the Australian government is committed to the education of all children, notwithstanding their cultural, racial, ethnic or disability levels in mainstream schools. The Australian government simultaneously made available a range of service options for learners with “disabilities and other needs” (Forlin, 2006:267).

The current debate with regard to inclusive education between professionals is whether the Australian education system should opt for one single education system that provides a continuum of services, or for one single system in which all learners are provided for, with no alternative withdrawal option. As other developed countries, Australia still has to find remedies for the disparate ratio of learners from indigenous groups that drop out of school prematurely (Forlin, 2006:267).

In 2004, the Australian government proclaimed its intention to proceed with the introduction of the Disability Standards of Education under the Discrimination of Disability Act. These Standards will establish a more defined framework, which will clarify to all schools their legal obligations in relation to the enrollment, participation, curriculum development and delivery, learner support services and the elimination of the harassment and victimisation of LSEN (Forlin, 2006:268). Lingard (2000:98) is of the opinion that in the Australian context, inclusion is merely a reference to the mainstreaming of learners into ordinary schools.

2.3.1.4 New Zealand
In New Zealand, learners with disabilities and impairments were excluded at the inception of State education in 1877. The responsibility for the education of LSEN during this time was carried largely by the church or voluntary organisations (Davies, 2000:2).

During the first half of the twentieth century, there was an increasing recognition of the right of some LSEN to an education financed by the state. This led to the establishment of schools and classes in hospitals, health camps special classes and correspondence schools to provide education for LSEN. Since 1950, many parents and disability groups have advocated for
inclusive education. However, it was only with the Education Act in 1989 that such learners were given the right to be included in mainstream education. This Act, according to (Davies, 2000:2), provides all LSEN with the legal right to attend age-appropriate mainstream classes in regular schools.

As was the case in the USA and the UK, the official guidelines were later changed to the concept of the least restricted environment, which led to the exclusion of large numbers of LSEN from mainstream education, because it allowed the reintroduction of segregated classrooms and schools. Many schools openly ignored the provisions of the 1989 Act and excluded or placed restrictions on LSEN whose parents wanted them to enter mainstream education (Davies, 2000:2).

Some disability groups supported the new laws, which allowed for the continuance of a dual system of education, with the choice of placement of LSEN resting with the parents. Under the new law, the Minister of Education retained the right to decide whether specific learners needed to be educated in specialised settings. Parents were nonetheless given the right to lodge an appeal against any such decision.

The New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI), a professional educator association representing primary school educators, convened an advisory group that also came out in favour of segregated provisioning through the maintenance of a full range of educational provisioning. It was prepared to support the concept of the inclusion of LSEN in mainstream classrooms, on condition that appropriate resources were made available. The NZEI stated clearly that it would actively oppose the inclusion of LSEN in situations where appropriate resources were not available at any given institution.

The full inclusion of LSEN was achieved only by January 1990 (Davies, 2000:2). In 1995, the Ministry of Education introduced Special Education Guidelines, which legislated against any discrimination on the basis of disability. This Act reinforced the notion that LSEN had exactly the same right to access age-appropriate education settings as other learners. The fact that all schools in New Zealand are self-managing entities has made it difficult for parents to have this right to inclusion enforced. Parents are forced to argue the case for the inclusion of their child with each school principal and the school’s Board of Trustees.

Davies (2000:6) explains that the New Zealand government launched a programme called Special Education 2000, which was basically a policy guideline to develop a new resource
framework for LSEN. This policy programme, which targets about 3% of the school population, envisages the provisioning of “individually targeted” resources to learners with high or very high special educational needs. The programme also provides a variety of resourcing mechanisms for learners with moderate to specific education needs, such as learning and behaviour difficulties.

Ballard and MacDonald (1998:68) report that New Zealand currently has a dual education system, comprising mainstream provisioning and a segregated special education system serving LSEN.

2.3.1.5 Norway
Compulsory education in Norway can be traced back to 1739. The Education of Abnormal Children’s Act passed in 1881, created a segregated special education system, which ran parallel to mainstream education.

Engen (2003:78) writes that from the beginning of the nineteenth century, Norway had a dual school system, with the “governing class and the city bourgeois” attending the “learned school” and the poorer classes attending the ordinary state school. The school system strengthened class differences and made upward social mobility by means of education impossible. This was abolished in 1889, when an Education Act was passed that made it possible for all learners, irrespective of their economic or social status, to receive education in the “learned school”. Equal rights and equal opportunities were still limited, as learners had to have sufficient intellectual ability to reach a minimum academic standard that corresponded to the entry requirements of the “learned school”. It was not until 1975 that the laws on special and mainstream schools were integrated to make provision for a single education system.

2.3.1.6 Italy
In countries like the USA, the success of inclusion in Italy is seen as revolutionary and as proof that it is achievable in the long term (Begeny & Martens, 2007:81).

Begeny and Martens (2007:81) state that Italy’s government in as early as 1971 mandated that all LSEN had the right to receive their education in mainstream schools. Initial resistance by parents was overcome, and currently (2009) the majority of educators and parents are supportive of inclusion. The following conditions were attached to the inclusion of LSEN:

- No more than two LSEN could be placed in one classroom;
- No more than 20 learners were allowed in any integrated classroom;
• Extramural activities had to include all learners;
• Support teachers who had received special training were to be paired with general education educators in an integrated classroom in which both educators had to interact with all learners.

The education of LSEN is provided in conjunction with the regional and local units of the National Health Agency, which provides diagnostic and therapeutic services. Classroom support follows a team approach, in terms of which support is provided by a range of support personnel, which include physicians, psychologists, social workers and nurses and speech, occupational and physical therapists (Smith, 2007:12).

These initiatives led to a dramatic reduction in the number of segregated schools for LSEN. Meijer et al. (1994:113) confirm that almost 100% of Italian LSEN are included in mainstream schools, while only a small number of separate schools exist for learners with mental or sensory handicaps. However, the authors explain that although LSEN in Italy are placed in ordinary schools, with the support of society at large, this does not suggest that they are all integrated in the curriculum. Some educators, for example, do not regard it as their duty to educate LSEN.

Ainscow (2003:17) endorses this perspective, pointing out that although separate schools were abolished in 1977, most LSEN are integrated outside of mainstream classrooms. This can be attributed to the fact that regular educators still do not regard the education of LSEN as their responsibility.

2.3.2 Development of inclusive education in developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia

The following section encompasses a broad-spectrum investigation into the development and implementation of inclusive education policies in developing countries. It must be noted that only limited literature is available on the development of inclusive education in developing countries, especially countries in Africa. Where literature exists, it presents a very gloomy picture indeed, with regard to the provision of education in general and the provision for LSEN. Stubbs (1994:2) agrees that the international literature on educational provision presents Africa as a continent associated with sickness, disease, poverty and lack of services

The negative view of the provision of education for LSEN is reiterated by Kalabula (2000:1), who writes that the planning, organisation and orientation of special education in Africa has
always been characterised by poor funding, lack of information, negative attitudes, selfish interests among experts, cultural factors and a general lack of commitment by those in charge of education systems.

Any investigation into the development of educational provision for LSEN in developing countries needs to be placed within the proper historical context. It is common knowledge that many countries currently referred to as developing countries still have to recover from the scars of colonisation. Many of these “developing” countries were under the political control of European countries for more than 100 years. The impetus for decolonisation came with the end of the Second World War, with emancipation for most of the colonised countries arriving only in the 1960’s.

Colonisation had far-reaching political, economic and social consequences for the original inhabitants of the colonised countries. The effective provision of education was one of the social services that suffered most. Abosi (2000:281) writes, “… the educational system inherited from the colonial masters (e.g., the British) was undeveloped, with unequal opportunities and sparse human resource development. Governments had to focus more on human resource development and less on equity. This reduced emphasis on equity has had serious consequences for the education of children with special needs.”

If literature on developments in Africa is accurate, the future prospects for the successful implementation of inclusive education are very bleak. Eleweke and Rodda (2000:2) indicate that 80% of the world’s populations with disabilities live in developing areas like Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. The total number of children with disabilities is about 150 million, with only 2% receiving any form of special needs services. McCormick and Hickson (1996:66) elaborate: “The majority of these learners are confronted by factors which put them at risk for future disabilities, such as malnutrition, infection from communicable diseases, poor housing, and lack of pure drinking-water, poor sanitation, inadequate health care and a paucity of social services in rural areas. Social problems such as crime, trauma and injuries from armed conflict in areas of political upheavals, drug abuse and alcoholism have rendered almost two children out of every ten disabled”.

Grol (2000:8) adds that any debate on the education of LSEN within the African context has to take cognisance of the following factors:

- There is no reliable information about the types and incidence of LSEN in Africa. In the absence of reliable diagnostic instruments for developing countries, the World Health
Organisation (WHO) roughly estimates that 40% of the African population has a
disability, of whom about 10% constitutes children of school-going age.

- Africa is a continent with a low population density and long distances, and these factors
  have a negative influence on learners’ ability to access basic education.

- Communication between and the availability of specialists is problematic, due to poor
  infrastructure in at times perilous territories. Telecommunication is also very limited and
  often unreliable. These factors make it very difficult to bring together specialists and
  LSEN to provide adequate support. This challenge plays a major role when stakeholders
  have to decide between mainstreaming and inclusion within their specific context.

- African projects are very seldom documented or appraised. African literature on the
  education of LSEN is non-existent. Stakeholders are therefore forced to rely on
  information from overseas.

- The detrimental impact of HIV/AIDS on the educational prospects of the citizens of
  various African countries.

Furthermore, Eleweke and Rodda (2000:4) and Grol (2000:4) draw attention to the following
problems that hinder the implementation of inclusive education in developing countries,
especially in Africa:

- Absence of support services.
- Limited availability of relevant materials.
- Inadequate personnel training programmes.
- Lack of appropriate funding strategies.
- Absence of enabling legislation.

Grol (2000:4) identified the following additional problems:

- Traditional negative and superstitious attitudes towards people with disabilities.
- Over-reliance on the services and expertise provided by expatriates, which leads to a
  collapse of services when these expatriates decide to leave the country.

The following section will focus specifically on the development of educational provisioning
for LSEN in developing countries like Botswana, Lesotho, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Zambia,
Zimbabwe, India and Pakistan.
2.3.2.1 Botswana

On gaining independence from Great Britain in 1966, Botswana was one of the poorest and least developed countries in the Africa. The education system consisted of only a handful of primary schools run by religious organisations (Abosi, 2000:282). Following independence, Botswana has shown impressive growth in its economy, which has had a positive effect on the provision of education in general. Dart (2007:10) elaborates by writing, “… Botswana has seen some of the highest economic growths in the continent over the last thirty years. This has been combined with economic and political stability, guided by a government concerned with building an infrastructure to enable the population as a whole to participate in the benefits of growth”.

One of the government’s main priorities after gaining independence was to provide access to education for the entire population. Botswana currently (2009) prides itself on a highly subsidised ten-year education plan for all learners. Dart (2007:11) describes the achievements and challenges of the government as follow:

- Achievements include an increased number of learners enrolled in school (although approximately 10 percent of learners are still not able to access education).
- Those learners, who do enroll, are also much older than the recommended age of six years.
- Challenges include a significant drop-out rate from primary education, a shortage of classrooms at both primary and secondary levels, low achievement levels in both numeracy and literacy, the fact that urban learners outperform rural learners, and high repetition rates in standards 1 and 4.

Abosi (2000:281) acknowledges that educational provision for LSEN in Botswana has made very little progress. The government, which at independence depended on foreign aid, has been unable to provide essential services for LSEN. In the initial stages of independence, the government has struggled with the development of human resources, paying scant attention to the welfare of people with disabilities.

Although the first education policy was introduced in 1977, it was only with the introduction of the second policy on education, the Revised National Policy on Education (1994), that the need for special education provision was finally acknowledged. The fact that the Botswana government had signed a number of international declarations encouraging the development of inclusive education, most notably the Jomtien Declaration (1990), the Dakar Framework for Action (2000), and the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), was the impetus for a change in the approach to providing education for LSEN.
The commitment to an inclusive education policy can be construed from a complete change in the language used when referring to learners struggling due to barriers to learning and development. It is also reflected in the goals set by the 1994 Revised National Curriculum Policy on Education. The goals according to Dart (2007:13) include the following:

- Ensuring that all LSEN have equal access to educational opportunities.
- Preparing LSEN for social inclusion by integrating them as far as possible in ordinary schools.
- Ensuring a comprehensive assessment based on the learners’ learning needs. This must be followed by individualised instruction and support strategies.
- Promoting early identification and intervention to ensure the maximum success of the rehabilitation processes.
- Enabling all LSEN to become productive members of society by equipping them with the relevant life skills and pre-vocational skills in order to enhance their employment opportunities and to promote self-reliance.
- Ensuring the support and active participation of the parents of LSEN and the community through education and information programmes.

The policy also recommended that educators, associated staff and classroom assistants receive broadly focused in-service and pre-service preparation to enable them to deal effectively with the LSEN in their classrooms (Abosi, 2000:286).

2.3.2.2 Lesotho

Johnstone (2007:26) maps out the history of education in Lesotho back to the reign of King Moshoeshoe in the 1800’s. King Moshoeshoe, a skilled warrior, formed alliances with France and Britain in order to protect his country from the relentless onslaught of the Dutch settlers who made their way from the Cape Province into Lesotho. In terms of these alliances, missionaries set up formal European-style schools, which laid the foundation for modern schooling throughout Lesotho.

Lesotho remained a Protectorate of Britain until its independence in 1966. The aim of education under the British was to develop elite literate and numerate civil servants who had to help with the administration of British policies. An arrangement, in terms of which missionaries were allowed to set up schools and collect school fees in order to maintain
buildings, provide materials to support educational endeavors, was introduced in the 1800’s and remained in place until 1966 (Johnstone, 2007:26). After independence, the Lesotho government attempted to detangle the state-supported but church-managed education services. This was met with vehement opposition from the church-run education system.

The current government is facing serious challenges in the education system. The drop-out rate is unacceptably high: only about 10 percent of learners finish secondary education. The government is trying to extend access to education for all learners by eliminating school fees in primary schools. The educational challenges are further complicated by social issues, such as epidemic HIV/AIDS infection rates and rising unemployment, due to workers being laid off at South African mines (Johnstone, 2007:26).

Johnstone (2007:31) suggests that the government of Lesotho initiated inclusive education policies despite a shortage of resources, because it believed it to be in the best interests of the country. The government of Lesotho clearly had to deal with seemingly insurmountable challenges, which include a lack of adequate teaching resources such as books, science equipment and maps.

Lesotho, like other African countries, has no legislation in place to enforce the implementation of inclusive education at national level. The Lesotho Education Department has also no system of monitoring and evaluation in place to ensure that all educators are implementing inclusive education in their classrooms. Johnstone (2007:30) furthermore suggests that advocates for inclusive education in Lesotho are in a very weak position, due to the absence of anti-discriminatory laws, laws guaranteeing the education of LSEN and laws requiring effective inclusive education and support services at school level. Inclusion in Lesotho is therefore generally left to the good intentions and abilities of educators who already face major challenges in their professional lives.

2.3.2.3 Senegal, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zambia

According, to Aslett-Ryberg (2003:2-5), Senegal in 1991 adopted a law requiring the integration of special education into the country’s education system. All LSEN, then estimated at 800 000, had to be given the opportunity to gain access to mainstream education. To enhance the implementation process, the Senegalese government started retraining educators in conjunction with UNESCO and introduced 15 pilot schools practising inclusive education, run with the assistance of donors and NGOs.
According to Kisanji (1999:7) Kenya in the 1990’s started to extend educational provisioning to LSEN through the development of iterant services. This is based on the acknowledgment that existing schools could not absorb all LSEN, while special schools are too expensive to run.

Muchiri and Robertson (2000:1) report that in Kenya, barriers to the implementation of inclusive education include:

- A school system that is very examination orientated, with the necessity for education for those who cannot pass examinations being questioned.
- Very large class sizes, which make it very difficult for educators to differentiate work.
- Poor accessibility to schools, which make it impossible for those LSEN with physical disabilities to attend school.
- Educators generally do not feel confident about their ability to work effectively with LSEN.

Cotay (2000:1) expresses the opinion that education in Sierra Leone tends to be exclusive rather than inclusive. Most educational services are made obtainable only through organisations acting exclusively for the disabled. The available services are characterised by the scarcity of specialised staff, inadequate or obsolete equipment, and insufficient funds that do not cover even the minimum of requirements. Projects aimed at promoting inclusion are also hindered by overcrowded classes. Accessibility to and within schools is poor, due to the fact that assistive devices such as wheelchairs, crutches and calipers are not available at ordinary schools.

On a policy level, the Zambian government supports the inclusive education policies set out by the United Nations. The guiding principle in Zambia is that all learners should be integrated into programmes offered in mainstream education. Notwithstanding a commitment to the ideals espoused by the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), inclusive education in Zambia remains a myth. The reality is that there are still major imbalances in educational provisioning, especially with regard to LSEN (Kalabula, 2000:4).

Stubbs (1994:2) and Kalabula (2000:2) emphasise that social and economic conditions play a major role in the development of policies and practices in developing countries. Commenting on the effect of poverty on educational provision in Africa, Kalabula (2000:2) states that the economic decline in Zambia over the past twenty years has made it very difficult for the government to meet its social and economic obligations. As the number of people living under
deteriorating social conditions in Zambia increased, the ability of the poor and indigent to access available education commensurately decreased.

Kalabula (2000:4) further notes that extreme poverty is normally accompanied by extensive malnutrition, tuberculosis and diseases associated with poor sanitation and lack of access to clean drinking water, and a wide range of vitamin deficiencies.

Many of the poor cannot even afford the already low cost of participation in education. In addition, many impoverished parents opt to use their children in domestic economies or to help with accessing the resources the family may need for their survival. Cultural practices, especially those relating to girls, continue to result in early withdrawal from the education system. Access to education is also hampered by the extremely long distances that many rural and urban learners must walk every day to get to school (Kalabula, 2000:4).

Kalabula (2000:8) elucidates the following constraints to the provisioning of education to LSEN within an inclusive education context in Zambia:

- The lack of specific legislation to enforce inclusive education in all schools.
- A lack of political will, which has given supporting donor partners the opening to enforce the working programmes used in their countries of origin, without first adapting these to the circumstances in Zambia.
- Self-interest among local experts and supporting donor personalities who have used the divide-and-rule method in order to spread their own opinions.
- Inadequate special needs education resource facilities.
- Centrally drawn examination-orientated curricula that do not meet the needs of LSEN.
- A major rift between national level inspectors and classroom educators who are close to the problem and work with the learners.
- Lack of communication between parents and other persons who play a significant role in the lives of learners.
- Lack of understanding of the specific individual needs of LSEN by administrators at different levels of the support system.
- The negative attitudes of ordinary educators, regular learners and other school staff towards LSEN.
- Lack of advocacy and funding.

2.3.2.4 Zimbabwe
Zimbabwe is a landlocked Southern African state, which borders on South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. This country, colonised in 1890, only gained independence from Britain in 1980 following a fifteen year liberation struggle against the white minority regime of Ian Smith (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998:75).

Educational provision and education is a relatively recent development in Zimbabwe (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998:80). Prior to 1980, the Zimbabwean colonial government exerted extreme limitations on the education of black learners. The absence of formal education policies for black LSEN confirms that the colonial government was reluctant to provide education for LSEN. Services were developed for white and coloured LSEN only. The minuscule number of black learners, who had access to education, did so mainly thanks to the initiatives of their own families and the support of missionary philanthropic programmes (Mpofu, Kasayira, Mhaka, Chiresh & Maundanidze, 2007:66).

Peresuh and Barcham (1998:75) claim that in Zimbabwe, education for LSEN was provided as a religious duty rather than a human right. The aims of charitable organisations and churches were based on religious and humanitarian considerations, with the result that education focused on religious education and training in practical skills such as basketry, woodwork, leather work, sewing and cookery.

On independence, Zimbabwe had only twenty so-called special schools catering for learners according to their specified disabilities. Peresuh and Barcham (1998:75) state that the first schools established for LSEN were for learners with visual and hearing impairments, followed by those for learners with mental and physical handicaps.

On the surface, it seems as if the current Zimbabwean government supports the development of an inclusive education system. According to Mpofu, et al. (2007:66), this is evident from the fact that the Zimbabwean government is a signatory to several inclusive education-related international charters and cooperative agreements, including the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the World Declaration on Education for All (1990); the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1993); the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Education (UNESCO, 1994); and the Millennium Development Goals, which focus on reducing poverty and promoting development.
Like most African nations, Zimbabwe nonetheless lacks specific legislation to support inclusive education. It has several pieces of legislation that are supportive of the ideals of an inclusive education system, such as the Zimbabwe Education Act (1987), which abolished all forms of discrimination as practiced prior to 1980 and the Zimbabwean Disabled Person’s Act (1992), that addresses aspects of citizenship for the disabled, which specifically recognises the right to equal opportunities in education and employment (Mpofu, et al., 2007:66).

Mpofu, et al. (2007:76) state that due to the lack of legislation specifically supporting inclusive education, it is difficult for schools to implement the structures, procedures and resources necessary for successful inclusion. The initiatives to develop inclusive education are not matched by “…. appropriate quality instruction features, such as availability of teacher and student support, accessibility classrooms and/or the curriculum for students with disabilities in general education programmes”.

A major step towards inclusive education was the introduction of Circular (3/89) of 1989, which aimed to ensure that all learners, including LSEN, had access to the same curriculum. The curriculum had to be broad enough to meet the special learning needs of all LSEN. With the introduction of this general curriculum, it became possible for all LSEN to move more easily within the education system and to improve their chances of success in the public examinations. The positive effect of the above circular has unfortunately been negated by the recommendation that LSEN receive their education in special classes, resource rooms or special schools. The placement of LSEN is the responsibility of a School’s Psychological Services, based on learners’ level of disability and their home circumstances (Peresuh & Barcham, 1998:76).

The development of inclusive education has also been hampered by the generally negative attitudes of the community as well as professionals. In this regard, Peresuh and Barcham (1998:77) have commented as follow: “In Zimbabwe disability is seen as a curse and is associated with a punishment for one’s evil deeds or as the result of witchcraft”. Mpofu, et al. (2007:76) elaborate, “…students with disabilities are second-class citizens in the school and community, since their needs are ignored without accountability by both the government and the local education authorities”.

Peresuh and Barcham (1998:77) offer the following feasible reasons why special schools will continue in Zimbabwe:
• Most parents prefer their disabled children to reside in a boarding school, as this relieves them of the major responsibilities and care connected with looking after them.

• Special schools are better equipped than integrated classes to meet the needs of LSEN.

• Special schools employ specialist educators, who usually provide each other with support, which encourages the type of professional development that is often missing in integrated settings.

• Most special schools are run by NGOs, with the financial support of donor agencies. The government is unable to match this extra funding in its resource units and special classes.

2.3.2.5 India and Pakistan

Although separate education is still the norm for LSEN, the Pakistan and Indian governments show commitment to improve provision for LSEN. Both countries have endorsed the Framework for Action (1990), as well as the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994), and have taken steps to implement the recommendations contained therein.

India houses 16 percent of the world’s population, making it the world’s biggest democracy. India has the second largest school-going population (after China), namely 108 million children between the ages six and ten years. These learners are from diverse language, cultural and social-and economic backgrounds. The Indian Constitution guarantees free education for all children. However, surveys conducted in 2000 revealed alarming results; *inter alia* that approximately 27 million Indian children (more or less 40 percent) were not attending school (Singal, 2006:351). The task of responding to the needs of LSEN has been further obscured by the fact that no consistent term is used when referencing to LSEN. LSEN are generally used interchangeably with the term “learners with disabilities” (Singal, 2006: 356).

There are various difficulties in evaluating the progress of educational provisioning for LSEN in India, as reliable statistics with regard to the number of LSEN in the schooling system do not exist. This is ascribed to the lack of well-trained investigators, as well as the unwillingness of poor families to disclose information about their family members with disabilities, due to the social stigma attached to disability. Various reports estimate that there are between 10.39 million and 12.59 million LSEN in India suffering from one or other form of disability (Singal, 2006:356).

Singal (2006:357) indicates that between 1944 and 1986, the Indian government followed a dual approach to educational provisioning for LSEN. Both the Sargent Report (1944) and the
Kothari Commission (1966) acknowledged that the educational needs of LSEN were being neglected and recommended that the Indian government follow a dual approach to educational provisioning for LSEN. The report suggested the integration of LSEN, where possible, but warned against the blanket integration of all LSEN into mainstream classrooms. It recommended the expansion of both special and integrated facilities. The dual approach was reaffirmed in the National Policy on Education, as well as the Persons with Disability Act of 1995.

While the government of India supports the founding of special schools, it is not actively involved in establishing or running them. Special schools, which have shown an enormous increase, are normally private institutions. The government assists by providing grants-in-aid to some of the non-governmental organisations that run them. Such NGOs are able to establish and expand special schools, thanks to international funding by organisations such as the Canadian International Development Agency (Singal, 2006:358). Singal (2006:365) argues that the increase in the number of special schools is indicative of a complete lack of perception of the inequalities that special education systems produce.

The inclusive movement in India seems to fall short of the definition of inclusion, as understood internationally. The focus is limited to the inclusion of learners with disabilities who are able to meet specific set requirements to fit into the mainstream education. These requirements seem to include learners’ academic, emotional, and physical readiness and communication skills.

Eleweke and Rodda (2002:116) present a negative picture of inclusive education in India, mentioning it has had an extremely limited success rate. The authors’ research has revealed that although a national-wide inclusion scheme called Integrated Education for Disabled Children was launched in 1974, the programme recorded very limited achievements. Up towards the time of the research, only about 60,000 of the estimated 30 million LSEN had enrolled for this programme in India. Moreover, many LSEN had been forced to drop out of the programme due to lack of relevant support services and resources.

Singal (2006:361) contends that the way in which inclusion is dealt with, in India, place the poorer communities at a further disadvantage. He writes, “The identification of preconditions draws support from the argument that in India a high proportion of children with disabilities come from poor families who have little awareness of disability issues and meager resources,
and, in the absence of effective social security system, these children are ill-equipped to be included in the mainstream”.

Pakistan, whose neighbours include China, India and Afghanistan, is home to about 120 million people. In terms of the WHO estimate of a 10% disability rate among the citizens of developing countries, Pakistan has 10.24 million persons living with disabilities, of which an estimated 5.4 million are learners of school-going age. The development of educational provision in Pakistan is challenged by a struggling economy. Khan (1998:100) writes, “The lack of resources and the relative poverty of the economy are important constraints in development on all levels”.

In the 1980’s, the Pakistan government launched an initiative to establish special education services. It entailed a separate system for special schools, determined by the various categories of disabilities. Singal 2006:104 elaborates, “It envisioned that children with disabilities could be best educated in separate institutions, with special curricula, specially trained staff and special support staff”. According to an account given by Khan (1998:102), Pakistan still maintains a dual system of education. On the one side, there is “normal” education; and, on the other side, special education. Special education is, as in most developing countries, mainly a charitable concern, carried out by NGOs that are financially supported by international donors. NGOs in Pakistan are, in the words of Khan (1998:102), “… playing a significant role in mobilising financial resources and motivating parents and communities to participate in policy making and in the planning, organisation and delivery of services”. The role of the government lies in offering financial assistance and technical assistance to the NGOs.

2.4 CONCLUSION

Internationally, as indicated in this chapter, the educational arena has been characterised by a major shift in educational provision for LSEN. Almost every country, whether in the developed or the developing world, is currently rethinking educational provision and support for LSEN. Evidence provided, indicates that the majority of governments are attempting reforms at policy level to align their education systems with democratic principles such as human rights, equality and social justice. This process of reconstruction is usually accompanied by a willingness to learn from the experiences of others (Evans, 1999:229).

Eleweke and Rodda (2002:115) argue that the idea of implementing inclusive education in developing countries on the same basis as in developed countries is doomed to failure. The authors emphasise that even when educational policy in developing countries acknowledges
inclusion as an advantageous form of education for LSEN, these countries are unable to adequately implement inclusive education. In addition, the authors list numerous countries (Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, China, Chile, Ghana, Guinea, India, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Lesotho, LOA People’s Democratic Republic, Malawi, Morocco, Mongolia, Palestine, Peru, South Africa and Uganda) in which UNESCO initiated pilot programmes did not achieve very encouraging results, in that they remained pilot projects.

This investigation cautions African states, including South Africa, to take care not to implement Western educational changes in African social, political and economic conditions without the necessary alterations. It suggests that an imperative issue that needs to be addressed is whether the implementation of inclusive education, as put forth in the Warnock Report (Britain) or L42-142 (USA), is appropriate for developing countries suffering from a seriously lack of human and physical resources (Kalabula, 2000:4). This view is backed by Ainscow (2003:19) who questions the wisdom of implementing western models of special education in developing countries, such as Pakistan and India. He argues that these models are built on an understanding of children and schooling that may possibly not exist in developing countries.

Moreover, it should be recognised that the goals of and processes for the development of inclusive education in each country are different. While it is universally accepted that the ideal situation is the development of inclusive education based on respect for human rights and social justice, developing countries still need to focus on developing quality education for the masses within their specific individual economic, social and political constraints (Evans, 1999:232).

Ainscow (2003:17) and Eleweke and Rodda (2002:113) nevertheless argue that the implementation of inclusive education in developing countries, where the need is enormous, coupled with foreseeable limitations and the unavailability of resources, seems to be a logical solution to increase the number of LSEN who receive any education at all.

I believe that while we as South Africans have much to learn from the international educational landscape, we ultimately need to focus on our own context if we want to implement the policy of inclusive education meaningfully.

The next chapter provides a historical perspective pertaining to the development of educational support and provisioning for LSEN in South Africa from 1900 until 2008.
CHAPTER THREE
DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION SUPPORT AND PROVISIONING FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter, the reader is presented with an overview of the historical developments within educational support in South African schools from 1900 to 2008. I am convinced that a historical glimpse into the type of educational support available to LSEN under the previous dispensation would afford us a clearer perspective on the nature and types of educational support services currently available in South Africa (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:15). It will, in addition, help us to appreciate the challenges involved in transforming the current system of education support into one which is more in harmony with the principles of the envisaged inclusive education system.

To fully appreciate the exposition on educational support and provisioning for LSEN provided in this chapter, the development of educational support services and structures needs to be viewed within the context of the racially divided education system that prevailed prior to 1994, when vast disparities existed between educational provision for Black, Coloured, Indian and White learners. I assert that this education system (and the accompanying educational support services) was in general designed to favour the white population and to undermine the development of other population groups. Csapo (1996:35) echoes this assertion, stating that the pattern of racial inequality and deprivation present in the general education of blacks was even more severe in the area of education support services.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISIONING AND SUPPORT FOR LSEN PRIOR TO 1976
Prior to the second half of the nineteenth century, there was no state educational provisioning or support for any type of special needs among learners in South Africa. The absence of support services and structures for LSEN can largely be ascribed to society’s general intolerance to differences, especially physical disabilities. In South Africa, as in many other societies, people held negative and superstitious attitudes towards those whose physical appearance was outside the norm. It is widely reported that disabled people were often killed, chained and imprisoned as a result of the ignorance of society. The Department of Education (1997) and Du Toit (1996:8) report that this attitude did not only lead to the exclusion of
learners from any kind of provisioning, but also contributed to a welfare or charitable approach to disability.

Du Toit (1996:7) further explains that the development of provisioning for LSEN in South Africa followed international trends, in that it started off with initiatives, chiefly by religious organisations. This contention is given credence by the fact that the first incidence of provisioning for LSEN in South Africa can be traced back to 1863, with the establishment of the Grimley Institute for Deaf and Dumb Learners in Cape Town. The Institute, founded by six Dominican sisters, was funded solely by the church. Noteworthy, even at this early stage in history, special education was run along racial lines, in that the Dominican school in Cape Town catered for white LSEN only while the Dominican school for the Blind at Witteboom served non-white LSEN.

Additionally, church and private organisations were responsible for the establishment of the Athlone School for the Blind for Coloured children, a school for blind Indian children, and the Worcester School for Coloured children with epilepsy (Department of Education, 1997:22).

Behr (1988:121) adds that the Dominican Order established a school for handicapped black learners at Hammondskraal, near Pretoria. The pioneering work done by the Dominican Order led to the establishment of the Deaf and Blind Institute at Worcester (1881), the Convent School for the Deaf at King William’s Town (1886), the St. Vincent School for the Deaf in Johannesburg, and the Athlone School for the Blind at Bellville (Behr, 1988:121). According to Du Toit (1996:8) these were all private initiatives, with no funding being received from the state.

Du Toit (1996:11) further states that educational provision for non-white learners developed at an extremely slow pace. With regard to the establishment of institutions for non-white LSEN, Nkabinda (1993:3) lists the establishment of the Bartimea School for the Deaf and Mute in the Orange Free State, the Dominican School for the Deaf in the former Southern Transvaal, the Vuleka School for the Blind and Deaf in Natal, schools for children with cerebral palsy at Tlamelang in the former Western Transvaal and at Lebata in the then Northern Transvaal, and special schools in KwaZamokuhle.

Du Toit (1996:11) also mentions the existence of the Kutlwanong School for the Deaf and the Tshilidzini School for the Physically Disabled, which were established and run by
missionaries. A remarkable accomplishment was the development of Braille script for Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa LSEN.

Noteworthy, the only special education provision for Indian disabled learners was the Arthur Blaxell School for the Blind. This School was later transferred to Pietermaritzburg under the name New Horizon School for the Blind. In 1998, special classes for mentally retarded learners who were not able to follow the normal curriculum were added to many schools (Behr, 1988:126).

Du Toit (1996:7-8) and Naicker (1999:30) concur that the state steadily increased its involvement in the provisioning of education to LSEN after 1890. The state provisioning for white LSEN officially started in 1890, when the Cape Education Department recognised the existence of church-run special schools for white learners. State involvement entailed sending school inspectors to these schools, as well as paying half the salaries of the educators. In addition, the state provided finance for a few special schools, the building of hostels and the training of teachers in special education.

Howell (2000:110) reports that during this era, existing special schools were enlarged and new ones build to cater for the needs of white learners. State funding was also used for the establishment of special classes in white mainstream schools, to which learners experiencing learning difficulties in mainstream classes were then redirected.

The establishment of special schools and classes catering for LSEN gained further momentum in the 1920s, when South Africa developed its own set of intelligence tests. Intelligence tests, used to assess the intelligence of children, became the foundation for the placement of white LSEN in special schools or special classes. These tests were the precursor of categorization, labeling and the exclusive special education system (Du Toit, 1996:9).

Act 29 of 1928 (Special Education Act), arguably the first signal of the medical model as basis for dealing with special educational needs within South Africa, provided for the establishment of vocational and special schools for LSEN (Naicker, 1999:30). Moreover, the Special Schools Amendment Act passed in 1937, made schooling for white LSEN compulsory. As a result of this Act, the number of white learners in special schools increased dramatically which placed pressure on resources, provision and funding. To accommodate all the white learners boarding schools and hostels had to be build (Du Toit, 1996:9).
Despite a number of initiatives instigated by Parliament (such as the Mental Disorder Act of 1916), very little progress was made in the education of learners with mental disorders. In an attempt to provide education for LSEN with mental disorders, the government created a Sub-Directorate of Mental Hygiene, which from 1923 started to provide psychological and pedagogical assistance to schools and clinics (Behr, 1988:122).

Du Toit (1996:8) reports that the education of learners suffering from mental disorders gained momentum only in 1945, when the Report by the Interdepartmental Committee on Deviate Children was published. The brief of this Committee was to make recommendations on medical and therapeutic treatments for the social integration of learners with mental disabilities. These learners had until that stage been excluded from education provision. From this point on, medical and mental diagnosis became entrenched as part of educational provision for LSEN.

According to Naicker (1999:31), the 1948 Special Schools Act further entrenched the medical and mental diagnosis and treatment model. The medical model, which shaped the provision of special education for the next five decades, focused on individual deficits in learners, viewing them as helpless and dependent beings. The rise of the medical model was the beginning of the professionalisation and the accompanying mystification of special education.

Du Toit (1996:9) states that the National Part, with its apartheid policy, came into power in 1948. This held significant implications for the provision of special education and support services. The cornerstone of the apartheid policy was the 1950 Population Registration Act, in terms of which all South Africans were divided into four racial groups, namely Whites, Blacks, Indians and Coloureds. The end result was that during the reign of the apartheid government, education and ESS were dispensed by no less than 19 different racially and ethnically divided education departments.

Simultaneously, the promulgation of the Special Schools Act of 1948 further entrenched the division between special education and mainstream education within the Education Department, resulting in severe inequality in resource allocation to the different departments (Howell, 2000:110).

During the apartheid era, special education for white LSEN was quantitatively and qualitatively expanded (Du Toit, 1996:10). In 1950, three more special schools, fully controlled and financed by the state, were established for white learners only. These schools,
situated near Kimberley, were intended for the education and training of severely mentally handicapped, white learners. These schools had to provide scholastic programmes tailored to these learners’ specific disabilities, but which would at the same time enable them to find employment in the open job market (Behr, 1988:125).

In 1960, the state also established schools of industries and reform to accommodate children from the ages of 12 years upwards who had been identified as destitute or suffering from neglect or delinquency. These learners received instruction in the normal curriculum up to matriculation level, as well as vocational and industrial training (Behr, 1988:125).

Engelbrecht and Green (2001:19), Howell (2000:110) as well as Swart and Pettipher (2005:15) concur that under the apartheid government, a First World model of highly specialised education support services was reasonably well developed in those education departments serving white advantaged learners, while support services for learners from other population groups were either inadequate or non-existent. A small minority of mainly white learners, and, to a lesser degree, Indian and coloured learners, had access to highly specialised and costly educational support services. Behr (1988:126) asserts that special education provision for non-white learners ranged from slow to absent. Minimal special education provision for black learners by the state was introduced in 1963 only. This must be seen in the context of the fact that at that time, African learners were not entitled to free and compulsory education (Du Toit, 1996:11).

Lomofsky and Lazarus’s (2001:305) assessment of this situation was that the provision of educational support services did not apply to the majority of black learners, which represented 80% of the population, as remedial teaching was introduced in black schools only recently. Nkabinda (1993:3) observes that in the absence of any functional education support services in black schools, the majority of learners were mainstreamed by default. Black learners living in rural areas were in particular totally excluded from the education system (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:16).

According to reports of the Department of Education (1992:16) the disparities between the different racially based education departments and ESS were noticeably reflected in the appropriation of finances and teaching resources and the training of human resources. In terms of budgetary provision, a meager 3% of the overall education budget went to support services. White LSEN received 30% of this amount, with the remainder going to black education. Teaching resources, assessment tools, treatment equipment and books were scarce in non-
white education. Where they were available, their quality was questionable. Human resources training and development within support services received minimal attention in general, but was predominantly absent in the black education departments.

3.2.1 Nature of services available

The nature and extent of educational support was defined by the conjecture that there were two groupings of learners in South Africa. On the one side, were the ‘normal’ learners, who were in the majority, and, on the other side, the minority of learners, who were in need of special educational measures that would enable them to gain access to education.

Howell (2000:112) comments that ‘normal’ learners were those learners whose learning needs could be met without additional support or intervention within the mainstream schools. Learners who experienced difficulties of any kind and required special interventions relating to these difficulties were referred to as learners with special educational needs. These included learners with different disabilities as well as those who, for whatever reason, were unable to cope within mainstream education. Arguably, this term gave little insight into the specific needs of the specific learners and confirmed the international perception of the term ‘special needs’ as a catch-all phrase for all those learners who did not seem to fit into the mainstream system. This assumption not only divided the learner population, but also failed to describe the nature of the needs of learners regarded as “special”. It also provided no insight into what had caused the learning breakdown or why these learners had to be excluded from mainstream education (Department of Education, 1997:11).

Education support was provided on the basis of the medical model, with its exclusive focus on the diagnosis and treatment of LSEN. The medical model, which originated from the medical field, focused exclusively on pathology, sickness and the nature of the presenting problem (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:5).

The Department of Education (1997) implies that within the realm of the medical model, learners were constructed as disabled. Their disability was portrayed as a personal problem, and the disabled were consequently seen as tragic victims whose needs had to be met by the non-disabled. The medical model, which supported the supposition that LSEN were helpless and in need of charitable assistance, was a major factor in the negative stereotyping, marginalisation and exclusion of these learners. This approach emphasised deficits in the learners and tended to disregard their educational needs and abilities.
Naicker (1999:46) states that disability was seen as an objective attribute of the learner, not a social construct, by the community. This contributed to the exclusion of the disabled from social and economic life, because their disability was seen as a natural and irremediable characteristic of the person.

Engelbrecht (2001:17) claims that this approach led to professionals subscribing to the belief that learners were at best disadvantaged and in need of individual fixing or, at worst, deficient and therefore beyond support. The author argues that the medical deficit approach led to questionable identification criteria and direct support delivery to only a few advantaged schools and communities. The medical deficit approach did not allow for support for learners whose problems were of an environmental or socio-economic nature. It therefore overlooked systemic factors and the impact of broader socio-economic factors in the creation and perpetuation of efficient support for learners with disabilities and learning difficulties.

Engelbrecht (2001:17) draws attention to the fact that the medical paradigm delineated the roles and actions of educators and professionals, as well as the segregated structure of the Education Department. The training offered to educators in ordinary classes serving ‘normal’ children differed from the training offered to those involved in specialised education. The perception that the educators in the special setting possessed specialised knowledge, elevated them to the level of experts. This meant those special educators and other professionals were the only ones assumed to possess adequate knowledge in assessing, identifying and treating disabilities (barriers) within learners. The role of these professionals was reasoned to be vital, based on the supposition that the identified learner could not be cured without their intervention.

The dominance of the medical model in defining the nature of ESS has led to a complete lack of focus on other factors that also impact on the development of learners. Kriegler, Möller and Schoeman (1998:6) caution that “…a medical frame of reference is no longer altogether relevant and appropriate in the face of major social, economic and political upheavals facing society as a whole…” The authors argue that a balance in the quantity and quality of life in South Africa can be attained only if the crisis in education and the associated low levels of illiteracy and high level of unemployment and poverty are addressed.

The Department of Education (1997:13) report that ESS within South Africa embraced a combined preventative/curative approach, with the curative aspect of service delivery described as “usually underdeveloped”. An individualistic, a-contextual clinical approach was
predominant in the provision of ESS. The general curriculum aspects of support services were either badly underdeveloped or non-existent. In addition, ESS were described as “….predominantly marginalised auxiliary services…”.

Mashile (2000:89) supports this, stating that ESS were operated primarily in terms of cure rather than prevention. Services focused on learners with particular academic, psychological or physical needs, while very little was done to promote the health and well-being of the general learner population. In African schools, specifically, there was an exclusive concentration on the diagnosis of the problem with minimal, if any, follow-up services to address the difficulties diagnosed.

3.2.2 Type of support services available

The support services available to learners included school health, psychological and guidance services, which incorporated school guidance and counseling and special education. The African National Congress (1995:115) argues that these services, where they existed, were characterised by marginalisation, lack of integration, inequalities and lack of clarity and focus. The limited provision of ESS was concentrated in urban areas and primary schools.

3.2.2.1 Psychological services

According to the National Education Policy Investigation report (Department of Education, 1992), psychological services were introduced in 1967 with the proclamation of the National Education Policy Act of 1967, which was to form the basis upon which educational support in South Africa was modeled.

Within the former Transvaal, an elaborate system of child guidance clinics for each of the 24 inspection circuits was established by the School Psychological and Guidance Services of the Transvaal Department of Education. Each clinic served a group of schools, which was supported by a multidisciplinary team made up of clinical psychologists, vocational guidance psychologists, orthodidacticians, speech therapists, sociopedagogic psychologists and occupational therapists. These teams performed intellectual, scholastic and emotional assessments of learners. Depending on the intelligence level of the learner, he or she was either placed in a special or adaptation class at a mainstream school, or in a special school (Department of Education, 1992).

Various therapists provided learner support in the form of psychotherapy, pedotherapy and speech therapy. Therapists were also required to identify learners with learning deficits,
cultural deprivation and behavioural problems. Other provinces offered similar services, but not on such an elaborate scale as the former Transvaal (Department of Education, 1992).

Behr (1988:51) advises that in 1982, the then Transvaal Education Department changed the name Psychological and Guidance Service to Educational Aid Services and renamed school clinics to Educational Aid Centres. At the same time, it ruled that all personnel, excluding psychologists and speech and occupational therapists, should henceforth be called subject advisers. Ortho-pedagogues were renamed advisers for educational matters; socio-pedagogues were renamed subject advisers for counseling; ortho-didactitians were renamed subject advisers for instructional matters; and vocational leaders were renamed subject advisers for career matters.

It should be noted that these services were initially available to white learners only. While the Department of Bantu Education later established its own version of psychological services, the services were limited to the assessment of learners in Form I and Form II. The purpose of these assessments was to help educators assess learning. Psychological services for Coloured learners were subsequently introduced, with each school having at least one educator responsible for the provision of Guidance. Within Indian education, the purpose of assessment was the placement of learners who needed special education. The quality of support services established for Black, Coloured and Indian learners was inferior in comparison to that of the services established for white LSEN (Naicker, 1999:33).

3.2.2.2 School guidance services
Mashile (2000:89), The Department of Education (1997) and National Education Policy Investigation (1992:19) report that it is only for the last 25 years that school guidance and counseling have been integrated into the broader South African education system. School guidance was introduced in White schools from as early as 1967; Indian and Coloured schools in 1973; with African schools following in 1983 only.

According to the National Education Policy Investigation Report (Department of Education, 1992:20), the content of guidance curricula in all education departments in South Africa reflected a dual vocational/general guidance approach. The main focus areas included:

- Vocational and career guidance.
- Educational guidance.
- Social guidance.
- Personal guidance.
Family guidance (in some instances).

The staff involved in guidance and counseling carried a wide range of titles reflecting the differences in the conceptualisation of their roles. These differences were linked to the view that while guidance was a curriculum activity, counseling was a separate service to be provided outside the curriculum. The following titles, listed by the National Education Policy Investigation (Department of Education, 1992), reflect the plethora of names under which guidance and counseling staff was known:

- teacher-psychologists
- teacher-counselors
- vocational guidance teachers
- guidance teachers
- guidance counselors
- careers counselors
- school counselors

Behr (1988:52) reports that in the Cape, Natal and Transvaal, post designated teacher-psychologists were allocated to all secondary schools with a minimum of 300 learners (Cape) or 500 learners (Natal). The minimum qualification for the position of teacher-psychologist was a degree, with Psychology as a major subject. This was in addition to a Higher Diploma in Education, and a course in guidance and counseling. It was required that these personnel spend at least three quarters of their time in providing a guidance or counseling service.

While the importance of guidance and counseling was recognised in key education policy documents, it remained a lesser service in all education departments in South Africa (Department of Education, 1992). The marginalisation increased when the country began to suffer severe economic constraints.

Behr (1988:114) observes that a career counseling survey conducted by the National Institute for Personnel Research in the Johannesburg area in 1980 revealed the following:

- Career opportunities, the work role and related personnel responsibilities of these staff members were neglected.
- The selection and training of career guidance staff in schools were often below standard.
- Too often, the roles of teacher and career counselor were combined.
- Career counseling staff was professionally isolated.
• Career counseling at schools was treated as of less importance than other activities.

3.2.2.3 School health services
School health services refer to health services provided within the formal schooling system. According to the National Education Policy Investigation (1992:16), in the previous dispensation, school health services were managed by the various racially based health departments in South Africa and the homelands. School health and welfare services were extremely disadvantaged in terms of resources, which led to minimal provision. The focus of these services included health education, the supervision of environmental health factors, immunization programmes and screening. Medical personnel paid home visits and provided a follow-up service, where appropriate.

The focal points of these services were vision, hearing and growth, which led to the total disregard of other health problems affecting particular areas and groups. The provision of health care to learners in rural areas was especially challenging, as personnel had to cover long distances with minimal resources and materials (Department of Education, 1992:16-19).

3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISION AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR LSEN AFTER 1976
The 1970s was characterised by a rising demand for a change in the educational provision for non-white learners. Protest against apartheid education was symbolised by the Soweto uprisings of 1976. By the 1980s, South Africa’s education system had been totally discredited. This era saw a race for policy development and investigations, which will be discussed in the next section.

3.3.1 De Lange Commission
In 1980, school boycotts once again broke out throughout South Africa in response to the prevailing discontent with the state of affairs within non-white education. As a response to this situation, the apartheid government appointed the De Lange Commission to conduct a thorough investigation into Black education and to make recommendations to improve the situation. The main Committee identified eighteen different independent areas of study. It pronounced the following eleven principles to serve as guidelines for the Commission:

• Equal opportunities for education, including equal standards in education for each inhabitant, irrespective of race, colour, sex or creed.
• Positive recognition for commonalities as well as diversity in the areas of religion, language and culture for all South Africans.
• Recognition of individual freedom of choice of the individual, parents and organisations in society.
• Education needs to be geared to meet the needs of individuals as well as promote the overall economic and manpower development of the country.
• Establishment of a positive relationship between formal, informal and non-formal aspects of education in school, society and the family.
• Formal education needs to be the collective responsibility of the state, parents, individuals and organised society.
• The private sector and government must share responsibility for education.
• Provision should be made for the establishment and state subsidization of private education within the education system.
• The processes of centralisation and decentralisation need to be reconciled organisationally and functionally.
• Recognition of the professional status of educators.
• Provision of education needs to be based on ongoing research.

The Main Committee appointed a sub-committee to integrate the wealth of data obtained, and in June 1981, the Main Committee published the Provision of Education in RSA Report, as well as eighteen separate work committee reports. The Commission made the following key proposals:
• A single integrated department of education must be established for the whole South Africa.
• Education of quality should be available to all South African learners.
• The schooling system had to be changed.

The Commission emphasised the importance of special education as part of the bigger educational structure. It indicated that provision for LSEN had not developed at the same extent for all population groups (Behr, 1988:37-59). The Commission pointed out the considerable backlogs that existed in educational provisioning for non-white LSEN and made the following suggestions with regard to the management of special educational needs:
• Collaboration between the different education departments must be increased and a centralised, equitable educational policy for all population groups in South Africa must be established.
• Skills development should be taught during the pre-service and in-service training of educators to empower them to identify and provide support to LSEN.
• Guidance and remedial educators must be appointed to assist educators and also collaborate with classroom educators and personnel within the ESS and School Clinics.
• A social worker who could be held responsible for parental-and-child guidance must be appointed at each school. The social worker could also assist in decisions with regard to the placement of learners in special schools or classes.
• Special schools must be extended to provide for learners with sensory, mental and neurological impairments.
• Special support must be provided for LSEN in mainstream schools as an alternative to placement in special schools (Pienaar, 2005:32).

The response of the apartheid regime to the De Lange Commission’s Report was to issue a White Paper (1983) in which the guiding principles of the Commission’s report were accepted, but the recommendation of a single non-racial education system was rejected (Behr, 1988:135). Pienaar (2005:33) declares that the De Lange Commission Report was notwithstanding groundbreaking, in that it was the first time that the concept of educational support for LSEN was addressed head-on.


During the International Year of the Disabled of 1987, an investigation was launched by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) into the state of special education for Black learners in South Africa. The HSRC Report reiterated the fact that there were harsh inequalities in the provision of special education for Black learners when compared with other population groups. It also reflected on the high incidence of disabilities among the black community. Du Toit (1996:11) indicates that this situation could be ascribed to the unfavorable factors typically present in Third World countries and normally associated with poverty, lack of access to medical and health services and ignorance and traditional birth customs. The HSRC Report emphasised the need for the development of a more just education system. Its recommendations included the following (HSRC, 1987):

• An integrated system of education with the aim of breaking the divisions based on language, culture and race must be introduced.
• Educational resources must be redistributed in order to provide qualitative improvements in the education of all population groups in South Africa.
• The multicultural composition of the South African population must be recognized in the curriculum, handbooks and mediums of instruction.
• Management and control of educational matters need to become more accessible to local communities.

3.3.3 National Education Policy Investigation (1992)
The National Education Policy Investigation (1992) was one of the most comprehensive investigations ever undertaken on the state of education in South Africa. The National Education Policy Investigation mission was to examine feasible policy options in all areas of education within a value framework derived from the Broad Democratic Movement. Within the sphere of education support, it endeavored to initiate debate on the following issues:
• How should education support services be transformed in the future education system?
• How, where and by whom should it be managed and administered?
• Which services should be provided?
• Under which conditions should these services be provided?
• What scale of resources should be allocated, and how?

Jansen (1999:3) contends that the National education Policy Investigation Report provided a broad value framework for a post-apartheid democratic education policy. This framework emphasised non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, equality and redress as the basis for education policy development after 1994.

3.3.4 National Education Renewal Strategy (1992)
The National Educational Renewal Strategy (ERS) was published in two versions, the second following public criticism of the first. The main criticism against the first version was that on the one hand it was working within the apartheid paradigm, and on the other hand not addressing fundamental problems within the education system. The ERS, which was to serve as a blueprint for education reform in later years, achieved very little. It suggested adjustments to the inequalities in funding and resource provision. At the same time, control and governance of white schools was handed over to white communities (Pandor, 2001:74).

Jansen (2001:19) states that the ERS was rejected, as it was interpreted as offering a dual-track system: a vocational training system for blacks and an academic education system for whites. This was reminiscent of the racial theme established long before the apartheid education laws of the 1950s.
The ERS, according to Atmore (1991:1), made the following policy proposals for a possible future model in education:

- Race should not be a factor in education and equal opportunity should be assured. Justice in educational opportunities must be ensured.
- National unity should be ensured, while diversity should be maintained.
- A decentralised education system, unified at national level and with accountability at both levels should be established.
- Responsibility for the new education model should be shared by all stakeholders at all levels.

3.3.5 New Curriculum Model for South Africa

Jansen (1999:5) states that in the rush to position itself within the changing political scene, the apartheid government published a document titled A New Curriculum Model for South Africa, wherein it recommended changes to the apartheid state curriculum. The proposed curriculum had at the core the rationalisation of the exceedingly large number of school syllabuses, the development of core learning areas and a stronger vocational education accent. The proposals have been mirrored in some of the curriculum reforms initiated after 1994 by the newly democratically elected government.


The ANC completed its own policy development process with the publication of its Policy Framework for Education and Training (African National Congress, 1995:i). The vision of the ANC included a commitment to the development of a holistic and integrated ESS that would promote the overall development of all learners through the provision of appropriate health, psychological, academic, and vocational and social services.

The principles expressed in this document are:

- All-inclusive lifelong learning to be treated as a right, with appropriate and equal educational provision for LSEN.
- Democratic representation of all stakeholders at all levels.
- Holistic development, which will place emphasis on the need for a broad health promotive and developmental approach. It will include programmes for preventative intervention.
- Service integration, which calls attention to the interrelatedness of health, social, psychological, academic and vocational training.
• Progressive mainstreaming of LSEN, where appropriate and possible. Where this is not possible, suitable education in special schools and classes must be pursued.

This ANC initiated document (African National Congress, 1995) made proposals with regard to provisioning, teacher/educator/trainers, the special case of disabled learners, governance and the National Commission on Special Needs. It seemed to be inclined towards the concept that provisioning must bring together curative, holistic, developmental and preventative programmes, with the focus on the early identification and prevention of barriers to learning in the individual learner as well as at systems level. It proposed that the health promotive and developmental practices of ESS be introduced in all contexts of learning as well as the general curriculum, with a special emphasis on the life skills curriculum.

The African National Congress policy framework (African National Congress, 1995) recommended a community based approach in which district and community centres served as general education and community resource centre from which high and medium-skilled ESS personnel, with their accompanying resources, could provide services.

In addition, a multi-tiered structure incorporating different levels of experience was proposed, in which the first level would be general educators who had basic skills acquired during pre-service training. This training would include recognition of special needs and how to infuse the principles of holistic developmental objects into classroom practice.

The second level included post-basic skilled educators, who would have acquired additional expertise through recognised in-serve training in one or more areas of ESS. These educators should be in a position to address primary health, welfare, academic, vocational and psychological issues.

At the third level, medium-skilled specialists and paraprofessionals would operate. These professionals would deal with vocational and general guidance and counseling, specialised education, health and social work. The teams would be based in district/community centres, in order to provide a service to educational and training institutions.

The fourth level would include high-skilled specialists, such as medical, psychological and other personnel with post-graduate training and who had the necessary accreditation and professional registration. These personnel would operate in teams and would need to:
• undertake assessments and diagnosis,
• consult, train and provide support to medium-skilled teams and their programmes,
• provide in-service training for educators who may require post-basic skills recognition,
• co-ordinate and undertake general curriculum, institution and systemic interventions.
The African National Congress policy framework emphasised a trans-disciplinary approach, which would draw on community expertise at all levels of the system.

The demise of the apartheid regime was deemed a victory for democracy and human rights, both nationally and internationally. The county’s first democratic elections in 1994 heralded the dawn of radical changes in educational provision policy for LSEN within the South African education system. The newly elected government now had the opportunity to reconstruct the fragmented, discriminatory education system. The next section of this chapter will focus on these policy changes.

3.4 DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROVISIONING AND SUPPORT SERVICES FOR LSEN POST 1994
International developments in inclusive education influenced policy development in South Africa. The following section presents the most important changes in the educational provisioning of LSEN in the international arena.

3.4.1 International developments which influenced educational policy developments in South Africa
Prior to discussing educational policy changes introduced after the 1994 election which brought into power the African National Congress-led government, an understanding of developments on the international education scene is required as these had direct repercussions for policy development in South Africa. Swart and Pettipher (2005:15) confirm that educational change in South Africa did not take place in a vacuum, but was strongly influenced by developments in the international arena.

As extensively discussed in the previous chapter, the international education arena was dominated by the global human rights movement, which propagated a paradigm shift from a dual education system to ‘Education for All’. Burden (1999:10) states that the slogan, ‘Education for All’, was derived from the growing belief, that all learners had the right to enjoy equal access to quality education, notwithstanding their supposed potential or circumstances. The slogan can be seen as a response to a system in which learners who possessed characteristics deemed ‘not normal’, were excluded from mainstream schools and had to receive their education in separate or special settings.
The concept ‘Education for All’ conveys the need to create an environment in which all learners are respected, accepted and accommodated as unique human beings with diverse qualities and not for what others or society wants them to do or achieve in order to comply with the labels of normality and excellence (Burden, 1999:15).

The international influences that were the driving force behind policy investigations and recommendations in South Africa after 1994, were all rooted in the recognition of the right of all learners to quality education in which their diverse needs would be adequately met. Relevant prominent documents will now be discussed.

In 1989, the United Nations, in an attempt to deal with equality and quality education, promulgated Article 28, which presented an important shift towards recognising the needs of the child as central to the education process. Article 28 emphasised the need to achieve the ideal of equal, quality education for all children progressively and on the basis of equal opportunities, through the following measures:

- Making primary education compulsory and free for all.
- Encouraging the development of different forms of secondary education including general and vocational education; making them available to each child; and taking measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need.
- Making higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means.
- Making educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children.
- Taking measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates (Burden, 1999:17).

3.4.1.2  Jomtien World Conference (1990)
In 1990, delegates from approximately 155 countries and representatives from 150 governmental and non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations met at the World Conference on Education in Jomtien, Thailand. The theme of this Conference was “Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs”. At this Conference an appeal was made to all countries to universalise adequate basic education. Prominence was to be given not only to the provision of basic education, but also to the improvement of the quality of education and outcomes.
Burden (1999:18) lists the following resolutions, which emphasised the concerns and objectives of the delegate countries in attendance:

- The inherent right of the child to a full cycle of primary education.
- The commitment to an education in which individual differences are accepted as a source of diversity, as a challenge and not a problem; and the improvement of the quality of primary education.
- Greater parental and community participation in education.
- The recognition of a wide diversity of needs and patterns of development among primary schoolchildren and a more flexible range of responses.
- A commitment to a developmental, inter-sectoral and holistic approach to education and the care of primary schoolchildren.


(Ainscow, 2003:25) explains that although this document was not legally binding, it provided an internationally recognised framework for the formulation of rights based legislation by government. It proposed that:

- States should have appreciation for the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational prospects for children, youth and adults with disabilities in integrated settings.
- States should guarantee the education of persons with disabilities as an integral part of the educational system.
- General educational authorities should be responsible for the education of persons with disabilities in integrated settings.
- Education for persons with disabilities should be an integral part of national educational planning, curriculum development and school organization.

3. 4.1.4 Salamanca Statement (1994)

Under the auspices of UNESCO, more than 300 delegates representing 92 governments and 25 international organisations met in Salamanca, Spain from 7 to 10 June 1994. At this gathering, the Salamanca Statement, informed by the principles of inclusive education, was adopted. Ainscow (2003:23) comments that the Salamanca Statements is the most significant document to have ever appeared in the field on special education. The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) endorsed the right to education for every individual, as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It also served as a renewal of the pledge made by the international community at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All.
While the Salamanca Statement promoted inclusive schools, it acknowledged that in certain instances, education within special schools may be the most appropriate education for some LSEN. It suggested that the case of each learner be evaluated on its own merits. The Salamanca statement (UNESCO, 1994) proclaimed the following:

- Every child had a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every child had unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- Education systems must be designed and implemented to accommodate diversity.
- LSEN must have access to regular schools, which must accommodate them within a child-centered pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.
- Schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities and building inclusive societies and are also more cost effective for the entire learner population.

The Salamanca delegates urged the international community to promote and implement an inclusive approach by means of the following measures:

- Prioritising development and financial planning in order to improve their education systems.
- Adopting as a matter of policy the inclusion of children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise.
- Encouraging the development of demonstration projects with countries that have experience of inclusive education.
- Encouraging and facilitating the participation of parents, communities and organisations for the disabled in decision-making processes around provisioning for LSEN.
- Focusing on early identification and intervention strategies, as well as the vocational aspects of inclusive education.
- Making sure that both pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes address provisioning for LSEN in inclusive schools.

The Salamanca Statement has been enormously powerful as a channel for motivating educational change in the international arena (Dyson, 1999:36). The Statement offers a vision, establishes standards and is a yardstick for determining the progress in schools (Swart & Pettipher, 2001:8).
3.4.1.5 Education World Conference: Dakar (April 2000)

At the Dakar World Education Forum, held in April 2000, the commitments made at Salamanca, Spain in 1994, were reiterated. Internationally, there was clearly a growing preference for a single inclusive education system for all, which could meet the learning needs of all children effectively (Howell, 2000:108).

The strong impetus towards the establishment of inclusive education internationally, coincided with the establishment of the new democratic government in South Africa. The democratic South African government of National Unity (1994) committed itself from the onset to the transformation of the South African educational policy in order to tackle the imbalances and neglect of the past and simultaneously align the country with international standards of recognition of human rights (Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:317).

3.4.2 National developments in education after 1994

The advent of democracy in South Africa was preceded by 342 years of colonialism and apartheid. As in other colonised countries, the education system during colonisation was characterised by exclusion, division and discrimination on the basis of race, language, gender and ability. In South Africa, discrimination became institutionalised and was further entrenched when the National Party assumed power in 1948 (Van der Merwe, 2000:2).

The African National Congress, as the country’s first democratically elected government, came to power in 1994 and immediately spearheaded the process of the political, social, economical and educational transformation of South Africa. A new emphasis was placed on values such as equity, non-discrimination, liberty, respect and social justice, as provided within the framework of the South African Constitution. One of the African National Congress’s major challenges was to unite the nineteen different educational departments, which were until then divided along racial lines, into one unitary, non-racial department under one ministry with one policy. On top of this, the new government inherited the legacy of two parallel systems of education: on the one hand was a divided and fragmented mainstream system and, on the other hand, a peripheral and racially divided system of special education (Howell, 2000:111).

According to Howell (2000:114), the African National Congress dominated government recognised that changes in the area of education must involve policies and practices that would redress past inequalities and create equal opportunities for all learners, particularly those who had experienced the most severe forms of discrimination and exclusion. The newly
elected government appreciated the fact that a redress of imbalances would necessitate structural changes to the education system and the transformation of the approach that categorised and labeled learners, as well as the transformation of the nature and organisation of teaching and learning. Donald, et al. (2002:19) emphasises the need to go beyond a narrow view of education, since the challenges in education include the full spectrum of social reform, including tackling issues of poverty, housing and health, which have significant effects on the development of children.

Howell (2000:116), Swart and Pettipher (2005:17) and Mothata (2000) identify the following key policies and legislation that have been developed after 1994. These policies all have significant implications for the manner in which education support will be rendered to all LSEN, in that they dispute the understanding of ‘special needs’ education under the Nationalist government.

- The South African Schools Act (1996)
- The National Commission on Special Educational Needs and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (1997).

3.4.2.1 White Paper on Education and Training (1995)

The White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995) was the first policy document on education and training by South Africa’s newly elected democratic government (Du Toit, 1996:14). In this White Paper, the government dedicated itself to integrating the diverse educational systems into one, providing for the needs of a developing and democratic country. The White Paper acknowledged the massive inequalities that existed in the provision of education in the past (Howell, 2000:108).

The White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995) acknowledged the fact that educational support was virtually non-existent in Black schools. This Paper stated that it was important to increase awareness of the significance of education support in an
education and training system devoted to equal access, nondiscrimination and redress. The Ministry of Education indicated the need to explore a holistic and integrated approach to educational support. The document argued in favour of a more systematic approach, pointing out that issues of health, social, psychological, academic and vocational development and support services for LSEN in mainstream schools were inter-related.

According to Lomofsky and Lazarus (2001:308), the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) introduced the following initiatives:

- The Culture of Teaching, Learning and Service (COLTS,), which aims to restore respect for diversity and a culture of learning and teaching in schools.

- The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), is designed to give recognition to prior learning and teaching, which went together with the concept of lifelong learning. This integrated approach is an attempt to establish justice, equality and high standards within education.

- Outcomes-based Education (OBE), designed in response to the diversity in learning styles and needs amongst the South African learning population. OBE is inclusive in nature, as it places a strong emphasis on the processes needed for learners to achieve the desired outcomes. A Continuous Assessment System (CASS) forms an integral part of the OBE curriculum. OBE and the National Curriculum Statement will be discussed in paragraph 3.4.2.7.

- South Africa’s new Language Policy, which recognises all twelve official languages, including Sign Language.

3.4.2.2 South African Constitution (1996)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa was adopted on 8 May 1996. It is the supreme law of the country and is grounded in the principles of democracy, equity, nondiscrimination and a respect for the dignity of all South African citizens. The Constitution became the binding framework for all national and provincial legislation in the field of education. All other education policies and legislation had to be in line with the Constitution (Mda & Mothata, 2000:5).

The new Constitution defines education as a basic human right. Section 29(1), (2), (3), (4) and (5) of the South African Constitution stipulates that no learner within South Africa may be denied access to basic education, for whatever reason. The Constitution furthermore emphasises the fact that the inequalities of the past need to be addressed by focusing on aspects of access, equity and redress (Howell, 2000:116).
3. 4. 2. 3  South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996)
The South African Schools Act (1996) heralded a new era in the field of general education in South Africa by nullifying all previous legislation that might contradict the spirit of the new Constitution. This paved the way for a unitary system of education, as espoused in the principles of the Constitution and the White Paper on Education (Howell, 2000:117).

One of the key milestones associated with this Act was the introduction of compulsory school attendance for all children between ages six and fifteen years. The Act moreover supported the optimal involvement of parents at all levels of decision making. To guarantee parental participation and input, the South African government introduced elected and representative School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in all public schools in South Africa (Manganyi, 2001:25).

The ultimate purpose of the South African Schools Act is to provide a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools. It lays emphasis on the fact that SGBs need to strive to provide quality education for all learners at the schools.

With this Act the obligatory exclusion of LSEN from mainstream schools has been abolished. Section 5(1) of the Act stipulates that public schools must admit all learners and serve their educational needs, without unfairly discriminating in any way. The Act further stipulates that the rights and wishes of parents must take priority over the admissions policy of SGBs, which gives parents of LSEN the right to a choice in placement. In addition, LSEN must also be given representation on SGBs (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:309).

3.4.2.4  White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997)
Mothata (2000:6) refers to this document as “…a remarkable White Paper…”. The vision of this integrated Strategy is an inclusive society in which disability issues were integral in all government development strategies, planning and programmes. Mothata (2000: 6) pinpoints the intention of the Strategy as:

- The development of an integrated management system for the co-ordination of disability planning, implementation and monitoring in the various functions at all levels of government.
- The development of capacity building strategies that will increase government ability at all levels to put into practice the recommendations contained in the Strategy.
- Programmes of public education and awareness-raising, aimed at changing the fundamental prejudices in South African society.
This document noticeably supports the paradigm shift from a medical model of disability to a socio-critical model, based on the awareness that society needs to transform to accommodate the diverse needs of all people (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:1). The document expressed the need to restructure both society and the physical environment to allow everyone to participate optimally in society. The report recommended the provision of life skills training to encourage independent living as well as the provision of assistive devices and specialised equipment to facilitate access to the curriculum (Lomofsky & Lazarus, 2001:310).

3.4.2.5 National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and National Commission on Education Support Services (1997)

The NCSNET and the NCESS were appointed by the Minister of Education in 1996. Their mandate included that they investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training within South Africa. The focus of the investigation was the development of education to ensure that the system became more responsive to the diverse needs of learners.

The principles espoused within the 1996 Constitution of South Africa and the White Paper of Education and Training formed the basis of the investigation (Department of Education, 1995a, b, c & Muthukrishna & Schoeman, 2000:326). The key principles were equality of opportunity, protection from discrimination, respect for human diversity, redress of the past inequalities experienced by historically disadvantaged groups, an education system responsive to the needs of all its learners, and the right to participate fully in the community and society.

The terms of reference included an exploration of a holistic and integrated approach to ESS, in collaboration with the Departments of Education. The investigation was to be completed in collaboration with the Departments of Health, Welfare and Population Development, and Labour. Such an inclusive approach recognised the interrelatedness of issues of health and the social, psychological, academic and vocational development for LSEN in mainstream schools (Mashile, 2000:91).

According to Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000:319), the terms of reference specified the following key areas of focus for the investigation:

- An analysis of the existing situation with regard to ‘special needs’ and ‘support services’.
- The creation of a theoretical framework for educational support within the context of a holistic, integrated approach. This included the clarification of the relationship between
ESS and LSEN. The Commission also had to define the possible role of Guidance as a subject within ESS.

- The creation of a future vision, principles and strategies for education provision with respect to ‘special needs’ and support services, with a specific focus on inclusion and the strategy of mainstreaming.
- An investigation into the consequences of the above for curriculum and institutional development, the organisation of governance and funding of schooling and other levels of education, including higher and further education, and the staffing of educators and education support personnel.
- The development of a strategic implementation plan.

In an analysis of the contribution of the NCESS/NCSNET report to the challenge of the notion of ‘special education needs’, Muthukrishna and Schoeman (2000:323) direct us to the following critical issues that have to be dealt with:

- The values and assumptions that underpin the exclusionary concepts from the field of pathology and medicine. The central criticism is that standardised tests place learning and other difficulties within the individual.
- The concern that the term special needs has become a catch-all phrase for all learners who do not fit into the system.
- The need to address the question of human rights, social justice and equal opportunity and quality education for all learners.
- The notion of special needs as indicative of an individual change model focusing on the individual insufficiency within the learner, instead of on shortcomings in the system.
- The belief that certain aspects of language usage serve as a springboard for educational myths and biased practices.
- The need for language that will permit the system to implement a problem-solving, focused approach, to the benefit of all learners.
- ESS need to focus on the development of the system rather than on the needs of individual learners.
- The need to establish a community based approach to support, to signal a move away from the traditional expert model of support.

This Report made an enormous contribution to our understanding of the nature and extent of barriers to learning and development within South Africa. It has been especially lauded for addressing the need for more acceptable and respectable terminology when referring to LSEN.
A review of the concepts resulted in the realisation that a range of needs exists among learners and within the education system and other systems within the environment.

The Commission argued in favour of the term ‘barriers to learning and development’ instead of the traditional term ‘LSEN’. The Report stated that a range of needs existed among learners and within the education system which had to be met if effective education and development were to be provided and sustained. It contended that the system must be structured to function in such a way as to accommodate and be responsive to a diversity of learner and system needs. It argued that if the system failed to provide for and accommodate this diversity, learning breakdown and the exclusion of certain learners would occur (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:1).

The Commission (Department of Education, 1997) made significant recommendations for the transformation of the South African education system. It laid down the groundwork for an inclusive education system by recommending the following:

**System transformation:** The Report argued that the entire education system needed to be transformed to become responsive to the needs of individual learners. It addressed the need for enabling mechanisms to facilitate curriculum and institutional transformation to ensure responsiveness to diversity.

**An integrated system of education:** The Report argued that the separate systems of education needed to be integrated into one inclusive education system that was responsive to the diverse needs of all learners. Within this system, learners needed to be able to move freely between contexts. This system should be structured in a way that facilitated integration and inclusion in all aspects of life.

**Infusing special needs and support:** The Report advocated a move away from an individual (one-on-one) focus to a systems approach.

**The development of barrier-free access to the built environment in all centres of learning:** The Report came out in support of the recommendations contained in the Integrated National Disability Strategy on barrier free learning environments. The Report asserted that the learning environment should be able to accommodate the diverse needs of the learning population. All learners should be able to move around the environment freely and unhindered.
A holistic and integrated approach to institutional development: There should be collaboration between different government departments in order to provide comprehensive support to all learners. All relevant stakeholders need to come together for the purpose of policy planning and at local level and in practice.

Developing a flexible curriculum: The Report indicated the need for a more flexible curriculum, which would satisfy the developmental needs of all learners.

Promoting the rights and responsibilities of parents: The Report underscored the role of parents supporting their own children, where suitable and/or possible. It pointed out that parents needed to be involved at all levels, including the planning, development, implementation and monitoring of educational support. The parents of all learners need to be encouraged to play a critical role in school governance. To maximise parental involvement, parents ought to be educated as to their rights and responsibilities within the education process.

The rights and responsibilities of educators and learners must be promoted: For inclusive learning to be successful, educators and learners need to be directly involved in the development of the school. These two groups must be provided with the structures and support to develop their capacity in this regard. The educator’s role could include representation in governance, playing a central role in curriculum development, and the management of learning programmes. Learners could be maximally involved as a resource within the centre of learning through the introduction of peer education or ‘child-to-child’ approaches.

Providing effective development programmes for educators and other human resources: The Report indicated the need for effective development programmes that would equip educators and other support personnel with the necessary skills, attitudes and knowledge to address diverse barriers and learning needs.

Community based support preventative and developmental approach to support. The Report recommended the utilisation of all resources available within the community. It argued that the strengths of existing community support system in South Africa should be drawn and developed further. This was in line with the idea that support should be available as close as possible to the point of need. A centre-of-learning based support team should be the core around which education support was organised.
Funding strategies: The Report reasoned in favour of a funding strategy that guaranteed redress and sustainability and promoted access to education for all.

The NCESS/NCSNET Report (Department of Education, 1997) clearly held enormous implications for the way we viewed special needs in learners as well as the type of ESS required to meet these needs. It strongly recommended a move towards inclusive education.

3.4.2.6 School Register of Needs Survey (1997)

Pienaar (2005:45) and Townsend (2007) relate that in 1997 the Department of Education surveyed 32 000 schools to establish whether they could meet the basic requirements for the inclusion of LSEN in terms of the following:

- Physical convenience.
- Services offered to LSEN.
- Availability of equipment to cater for the needs of LSEN.
- Resources available to assist LSEN.

The survey indicated that 25% of these schools lacked basics such as running water, while 40% were in a very poor condition. In the majority of schools, learners did not have access to flush toilets, libraries and laboratories. There was also a shortage of classrooms, textbooks, desks, chairs, equipment and stationery.

The results of this survey raised serious questions as to the ability of the Education Department to provide additional educational support in schools where the most basic of resources were still lacking.

3.4.2.7 Outcomes-based Education and the National Curriculum Statement

The idea of a change in curriculum reached a turning point in 1990. Jansen (1999:4) elaborates, “Until that time, South African education was characterised by a uniform and predictable curriculum policy environment. The apartheid state managed a centralised curriculum policy system, which was variously described as racist, Eurocentred, sexist, authoritarian, prescriptive, unchanging, context blind and discriminatory”. The apartheid curriculum, based on a school subjects approach, was introduced into schools that had vastly different resource environments. This led to the production of vastly different consequences in different race-based resource environments (Jansen, 1999:4).
The National Curriculum Statement (C2005 or NCS), generally referred to as Outcomes-based education (OBE), was introduced into schools in 1998. It had been developed in the pre-1994 policy period as part of a set of policy proposals that drew on international experience in countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand (Christie, 1999a:166).

The African National Congress government viewed OBE as the perfect vehicle to transform the face of South African education from a fragmented, dual system of education to an inclusive education system (Naicker, 2000:2-3). Soudien (2007:121) claims that OBE was considered a strategic move away from a racist, apartheid, rote-learning model of learning and teaching to an education system that would liberate, promote nation-building and focus on the individual learner and that was built around specific outcomes.

The NCS, developed on the principles of social justice, a healthy environment, human rights and inclusivity, was an extension of the vision and the values embedded in the Constitution (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003:H-46). It was an important step away from the content-laden, ideologically distorted, examination-orientated apartheid curricula. It placed the emphasis on what the learner could do and on the development of problem-solving skills (Christie, 1999a:166). The engagement of learners to enthusiastically and actively take part in the process of learning constituted a break from more traditional teaching methods based on drill and memorisation. The new concept of knowledge was to be one of constructivism, integration and the elimination of inflexible disciplinary boundaries in favour of thematic continuity and the parallel integration of daily knowledge and school knowledge (Green, 2001:5).

Christie (1999a:166) indicates that the implementation of C2005/NCS has proved to be challenging. Its successful implementation has been hampered by poor preparation, short notice, lack of competency and funds at provincial level, and limited teacher-training. A major failing of C2005 is that it failed to acknowledge the diverse milieus in which it was implemented. It is not suitable for conditions in the majority of South African schools. A further failing is that little attempt was made to address issues such as racism, sexism and Africanisation. It was clearly best suited to well-resourced schools with well-qualified teachers and better-prepared learners (Jansen, as cited by Christie, 1999b:284).

Christie (1999b:283) contends that the new Curriculum was rightly accused as being “… jargon ridden and inaccessible in its discourse”. The procedures for designing learning programmes were experienced as complex, sophisticated and sometimes even difficult to
understand. In response to criticism, the National Curriculum Statement was streamlined and strengthened. It was later reissued in the form of the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RCNS) (Soudien, 2007:130).

Naicker (1999:13) points out that the introduction of OBE was the key factor that caused educational change in South Africa, in that it required rethinking about assumptions about learners, learning and everyday educational practices. OBE is acknowledged as inclusive in nature, as it is based on the following important assumptions:

- All learners can succeed, but not necessarily at the same pace.
- Successful learning serves as a foundation for more learning success.
- Successful schools should create the space and opportunities for success.
- All educators have high expectations of all learners.

The idea that all learners can succeed, but not at the same pace, means that no learner can fail. Time within OBE is flexible and not dictated by the clock or calendar. Learners who struggle to achieve the necessary outcomes need no longer be branded as failures or be taken out of the mainstream classroom and put into a special class. Instead, LSEN are, with the necessary support from parents, educators and professional support personnel, given extended opportunities to progress to another grade. Learners are preferably not kept back, but are allowed to progress with their age cohort. Where a learner needs to be kept back in a grade, it will only take place after consultation with parents, educators and educational support professionals (Naicker, 2000:4).

An important feature of OBE is that it is based on criterion-referenced assessment, which is distinct from the traditional norm-referenced assessment used in the past. With norm-referenced assessment, comparisons were made between the performances of different learners to decide whether the individual learner had progressed satisfactorily (Kraak, 1999:40).

In terms of the OBE approach, an individual learner’s performance is measured against a specific set of predetermined criteria. Kraak (1999:40) explains, “The topic to be assessed must be clearly defined, and the nature of specific performance must be specified in advance. The object of training is to allow each individual to become competent in the mastery of certain prescribed performance objectives”.
Naicker (2000:4) reasons that the success of an inclusive OBE is dependent on educators making the important paradigm shift from special education, which was exclusive in nature, to inclusive education. Difficulties with the implementation of C2005 can be ascribed to the fact that epistemological issues were totally ignored in the week-long training of educators. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that the majority of educators have received their professional training within a tradition of fundamental pedagogy that served apartheid interests. A large number of educators were trained under a paradigm concerned with prediction and control. This paradigm reflected general faith in the soundness of a non-democratic system (Naicker, 2000:7).

3.4.2.8 Education White Paper 6: Building an Inclusive Education and Training system (2001)

The Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) built on national and international documents and legislation and placed the inclusion of LSEN at the core of education transformation (Engelbrecht, 2004:22). Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001:6) characterised an inclusive education system as follows:

- It acknowledges that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.
- It accepts and respects that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs that are equally valued and an ordinary part of human experience.
- It enables education structures, systems and learning methods to meet the needs of all learners.
- It acknowledges and respects differences in learners, whether due to age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status.
- It changes attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.
- It maximises the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovers and minimises barriers to learning and development.

The guiding principles for achieving an inclusive education and training system are spelled out as follow:

- Acceptance of the principles and values contained in the Constitution and White Paper on Education and Training.
- Human rights and social justice for all learners.
- Participation and social integration.
• Access to a single inclusive education system.
• Access to the curriculum.
• Equity and redress.
• Community responsiveness.
• Cost effectiveness.

The key strategies and levers for the establishment of an inclusive education system are:
• The qualitative improvement of special schools and their conversion to resource centres to support mainstream schools.
• An overhaul of the process of identifying, assessing and enrolling learners.
• Expansion of access and provision. This would involve the mobilisation of out-of-school youth, disabled children and youth of school going age.
• The establishment of full-service schools (at least one primary school in thirty districts is to be designated as a full service school).
• The provision of support for curriculum development, assessment and institutional development.
• The strengthening of ESS.
• The establishment of District Support Services to provide coordinated support to all the schools.
• National advocacy and information programmes to support inclusive educational policies.

Timeframes for implementation
The goals and vision of the White Paper reflect a twenty-year developmental perspective. The implementation plan is divided into the following short-, medium- and long-term phases:

**Short-term steps (2001-2003) and long-term steps**
• Implementing a national education programme on inclusive education.
• Planning and implementing a target outreach programme.
• Completing an audit of special schools and implementing a programme to improve efficiency and quality.
• Designing, planning and implementing the conversion of thirty special schools into resource centres/special schools in thirty designated school districts.
• Designing, planning and implementing the conversion of thirty primary schools into full-service schools.
• Implementing district support teams in the thirty districts.
• Orientating and introducing management, governing bodies and professional staff to the inclusionary model.
• Establishing systems and procedures for early identification and addressing of barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase (Grades R - 3).

Medium-term steps (2004 - 2008)
• Transforming further education and training and higher institutions to accommodate the diversity in the learner population.
• Mobilising disabled out-of-school children and youth, in line with available resources.
• Expanding the number of special schools, full-service schools and district support teams.

Long-term steps (2009 - 2021)
• Expanding provision in order to reach the target of 380 resource centres/special schools.
• Establishing 500 full-service schools and colleges and district support teams for the 280 000 out-of-school children and youth.

The following section deals with the development of policy guidelines by the Department of Education in an attempt to implement inclusive education in all schools.

Three booklets emerged from Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), which set out operational guidelines for establishing district support teams, transformation of special schools into resource centres and the development of full service schools. These booklet, are an indication that the South African government is steadily moving beyond mere words, towards the actual implementation of inclusive education.

In the booklet, Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education: District-Based Support Teams (Department of Education, 2005d), the Department of Education (2005d:14) acknowledges that a strengthened education support structure is the key to reducing barriers to learning and development. The envisaged educational support service will have at its centre district-based support teams comprising staff from provincial and regional offices and head office, as well as staff from special schools. The primary function of the district-based support team will be the evaluation of programmes, monitoring the effectiveness of these programmes and, if necessary, suggesting modifications (Department of Education, 2005d:14).
Within the envisaged educational support structure, emphasis will be placed on the establishment of a framework of collaboration or teamwork between various support providers within or outside the school and its community, in order to address challenges in a comprehensive manner (Department of Education, 2005d: 10).

The core functions of district-based support teams are envisaged as follows (Department of Education, 2005d: 21):

- The development and support of institutional-level support teams (ILSTs) in schools. ILSTs need to be trained to empower them to build capacity at their institution, identify and prioritise learning needs and barriers within the local context, and identify the support needed to address these barriers by pursuing these within a strategic and management framework.
- The creation of links between institutions and formal and informal support systems in the surrounding community.
- The provision of indirect support to learners (through support educators) and school management (through curriculum and institutional development) to ensure that their institutions become responsive to the diverse learning needs of all their learners. Direct support to learners will be provided where institutional-level support is unable to respond to particular learning needs.

To fulfill the above functions, the following personnel within the district-based support teams will require competencies in the following areas (Department of Education, 2005d:22):

- Assessors of needs and barriers that may present themselves at all levels of the system.
- Researchers/Evaluaters, to identify resources inside/outside of the school. These researchers/evaluaters should also be able to monitor and evaluate programmes inside/outside the institutions.
- General learning support facilitators, to identify specific learning barriers and to develop responsive learning programmes.
- Specialist learning support facilitators, to provide expertise on programmes such as Braille and Sign Language support to address specific barriers to learning.
- Material developers, to develop specific materials that are responsive to specific learning needs.
- Health and welfare workers engaged in addressing specific psychological, social and physical health problems.
- Counselors.
• Trainers to develop the capacity of educators and parents to improve their ability to support learners.
• Team effectiveness and conflict management trainers and facilitators.
• Curriculum specialists and developers with general and specific curriculum competencies. These personnel should be able to develop adaptations of learning programmes to meet specific learning needs.
• Organisation development experts, to help schools develop supportive and effective teaching and learning environments.
• Leadership, management and governance expert, to support school governing bodies, management teams and individuals to play an effective role in schools.
• Financial management expert, to improve the capacity of schools to take responsibility for their own finances.

District-based support teams are expected to fulfill their mandate by drawing on the expertise of educators and personnel from special schools/resource centres, full service/inclusive schools, higher education and other education institutions, which are to be identified through a process of “…community resource-profiling or asset-auditing” (Department of Education, 2005d:18).

District-based support teams may also have specific support needs within the various contexts in which they have to function. It is envisioned that appropriate support to the personnel within district-based support teams will be provided where identified. The teams will specifically be trained in the following areas (Department of Education, 2005d:33):
• Understanding and working with the process of change.
• Understanding the challenges of providing support.
• Knowing what support is available within the education and other government departments and within the local community.
• Understanding the concept of inclusive education, including the need to change attitudes with regard to inclusion.
• Understanding what the barriers to learning and development are, within a systemic understanding of problems and solutions.
• Developing knowledge and skills to address barriers to learning and development at all levels of the system.
• Adult education skills to pursue various training roles required at this level.
• Networking skills and learning to work collaboratively through team effectiveness training and ongoing support.

• Basic management and leadership development, including project management skills.

**Strengthening of special schools:** In terms of the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), existing special schools will have to undergo radical changes in their orientation and role to align them with the vision of an integrated an inclusive education system (Department of Education, 2001:24.) The continued existence of special schools is viewed by many as a major barrier to inclusive education. Notwithstanding this flawed perception, special schools can potentially to be utilised in the promotion of inclusion in schools. Special schools ought to be seen as valuable sources of intellectual capital which, through sharing experience in adapting curricula, organisations and attitudes, could help mainstream educators develop the confidence necessary to deal with the diverse needs and demands within an inclusive classroom (Armstrong & Moore, 2004:39).

The Department of Education (2001) and Department of Education (2005b) underline the important role of special schools within a continuum of support services. They confirm that existing special schools will not be abolished, but rather strengthened. These schools will be required to make drastic changes to their orientation and roles in order to align themselves with the vision of an integrated and inclusive education system. It is intended that only learners who require high intensity support will be enrolled at special schools. Special schools will furthermore have to become part of the district-based support teams. Special schools must therefore be pro-active and align themselves in such as manner that they become resource centres, with the capacity to provide service and expertise to neighboring schools and the wider community.

In order to further extend the provisioning to all learners within an inclusive education system, the National Department of Education has decided to establish full-service schools (Department of Education, 2005(b)). Full-service schools is a new concept introduced into the South African education system which are to a large degree mainstream schools that will be equipped and supported in order to provide for the diverse needs of the learner community. It is foreseen that full-service schools will aim to achieve access, equity, quality and social justice in education by embracing the vision of an inclusive society as put forward in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. They are envisioned as institutions that celebrate diversity by recognising potential, increasing participation, overcoming and reducing barriers and removing stigmatisation and labeling (Department of Education, 2005(b):8-9).
It is anticipated that full-service schools will be able to offer the following (Department of Education, 2005b:7):

- A sense of belonging so that all learners, staff and families can experience a sense of worth in the learning community.
- The capacity to respond to diversity by providing appropriate education for the particular needs of each learner, irrespective of disability or differences in learning style or pace, or social differences experienced.
- The establishment of methods to assist curriculum and institutional transformation to ensure both an awareness of diversity and the availability of additional support to those learners who need it.

Full-service schools should cultivate a philosophy that is based on certain suppositions that support inclusion, such as:

- Everyone at the site of learning is responsible for the education of each learner, irrespective of his or her learning needs.
- Everyone at the site of learning is focused on meeting the needs of all learners in a unified system of education.
- All educators have skills and knowledge that can and need to be used to support the efforts of their colleagues to ensure the success of all learners.
- All learners benefit from participation in mainstream institutions and should be shown respect for their unique, personal forms of growth and contribution (Department of Education, 2005b:9).

Support to learners within the full-service schools will be given by school-based support teams that could be formed by School Management Teams (SMTs), principals and educators. It is expected that full-service schools will develop resource centres, for the use of educators and learners. All services available at the school and within the community will be drawn on, to the maximum advantage of all role-players (Department of Education, 2005b:10).

These schools are envisaged as beacons of the transformation process. To be effectual, schools will be required to acquire cultures, policies and practices that celebrate and respect diversity, and cherish innovation and problem solving. They will have to create a safe and supportive milieu in which educators are motivated and supported in their work and learners feel a sense of belonging and are able to freely engage in the learning process. It is expected that full-service schools will have empowered, representative SGBs that are able to facilitate the
establishment of a culture of learning, teaching and service (Department of Education, 2005b:11)

Full-service schools will be expected to provide services through a process of collaboration with other schools in the neighborhood. They will make available their facilities for training educators from neighboring schools and admit learners for short periods in order to teach them in specialised areas, such as Braille, mobility and Sign Language.

The following support services could be made available through full-service schools:

- Sharing and exchanging resources such as facilities, information, skills and technology.
- Provision of advisory assistance to educators (for example in preparing materials, training and capacity building).
- Sharing examples of good practices.
- Promoting sustainability and development (Department of Education, 2005b:12).

3.4.2.10 National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (2008)

The National Strategy on Screening, Assessment and Support (SIAS) (Department of Education, 2008) to be discussed in this section, is possibly the most critical policy document in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa.

The core purpose of the document is to review the process of identification, assessing and providing support for those learners who may require additional support in order to enhance their inclusion and participation (Department of Education, 2008). The SIAS process provides clear guidelines on the development and implementation of support plans to address any additional needs a learner may experience within the school system.

The Strategy maintains that the screening process is not designed to isolate, label or exclude learners from the normal curriculum, but rather serves as a tool to determine the level and type of additional support LSEN may require within the classroom or in their families or communities to enable them to maximally access the curriculum.

Additional support, according to the SIAS (Department of Education, 2008) document, refers to the specialised personnel, physical and material resources and training that must be provided in addition to standard educational provisioning in order to maximise learners’ participation in the learning process.
Five specific support provision areas are identified in the Strategy:

1. Personnel
2. Assistive technology/Specialised learning and teaching support materials
3. Curriculum differentiation
4. Training/Human resources development
5. Increase in environmental access

The SIAS process has at its core a paradigm shift from the placement model of special education to the support model of inclusive education. The placement model inherent to the old placement system is diagrammatically explained in Figure 3.1.

Within the thinking of SIAS, this model will be replaced with that focuses on addressing the additional learning needs learners may encounter and that need to be supported holistically. This new model is presented in Figure 3.2.

The SIAS process, which starts upon the entry of all learners into the schooling system, is divided into four different stages namely screening, identification, assessment and support provisioning and monitoring.

Central to the SIAS process is a Support Needs Assessment (SNA) form which is divided into four different sections as discussed (Department of Education, 2008:10).

Stage 1: Learner profile
Section 1 is completed for all learners, including those deemed vulnerable, on their entry into school. The completion of this stage is the responsibility of all educators, in consultation with the ILST and parents, district-based support teams and health professionals. As part of the process, educators gain background information on each individual learner in an attempt to understand his or her basic needs, talents and aspirations. During this stage, a Diagnostic Profile is completed by a health professional, only in respect of those learners believed to be at risk.

The Department of Education (2008:13,27) has emphasised that the Diagnostic Profile serves to indicate the severity of the disability as well as the functional limitations of the learner. It provides only one part of understanding regarding the level and nature of educational support learners may require and therefore no official decision with regard to placement should be made solely on the basis of the Diagnostic Profile.
Stage 2: Identification of personal and contextual barriers to learning and development

This stage encompasses the identification of personal and contextual barriers to learning and development through a process which culminates in the completion of SNA Sections 2(a) and 2(b). These two sections constitute the learner’s Individual Support Plan (ISP), which needs to be completed only if he or she requires additional support.

This initial identification of the learner’s needs must be based on accumulated evidence from the curriculum assessment process gained through observation, documentation from the learner’s portfolio, workbooks and consolidated verbal and written information from other educators and the parent of the learner (Department of Education, 2008:13).

FIGURE 3.1: Placement model to educational support
This process is the responsibility of the ILST, in conjunction with the learner’s parents. The process includes the following:

- Reflection of the educator.
- Consultation and involvement of parents.
- Identification of the learner’s support needs.
- Identification of contextual barriers.
- Review of teaching and classroom practices and arrangements.
- Review of the whole school changes and support strategies.
- Identification of community resources.
• Tracking of support provided.

Stage 3: Assessment of support requirements - determining nature and level of support needed by learner.

Sections 3(a) and 3(b) of the SNA form, which entail a request for additional support, are again requested and completed only in respect of those learners needing additional support. These sections are the responsibility of the district-based support team, in consultation with the institution-level support team and the parents of the learner.

The goal in stage 3 is to develop a more complete understanding of the nature of support needed by the learner as well as the level of intensity of the support that must be provided. The following factors are taken into consideration:

• The impact on the work of the educator and the school functioning.
• An analysis of the school’s capacity with existing resources to meet needs and achieve school improvement.
• The identification of community resources.
• In-depth assessment of learner support needs in order to determine a support package.
• Application of additional resources.
• The learner’s eligibility to access to alternative specialised programmes.
• Inputs to devise an action plan.

Stage 4: Action planning, provisioning and monitoring of additional support

This section constitutes the development of an action plan regarding the provisioning and monitoring of additional support for schools, educators and those learners requiring high levels of support. This part of the SNA must be completed by the district-based support teams, in consultation with the school. It constitutes the following:

• A review and analysis of the motivation for additional support from ILST.
• A verification of the ILST assessment and proposals for support.
• The provision of additional support to the school and learner, taking into account the resources already available at the school.
• Resource allocation, where necessary.
• Training, counseling and mentoring of school, educators and parents.
• Monitoring support provision.
• A decision by the district-based support team (DBST) with regard to placement is taken after all options have been exhausted.
While the action plan is used to determine where a learner can be placed to access maximum support, it is understood that all decisions regarding placement, will be temporary and reviewable (Department of Education, 2008:30).

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter demonstrates that the South African education system underwent radical restructuring following the demise of the Nationalist government in 1994. It demonstrated how the newly elected South African government grasped the opportunity to restructure not only the country’s general education system, but also the provisioning of education to LSEN. The educational provisioning and support of LSEN and the development of education support services had since moved from the periphery of educational provision to centre stage, at least at the level of policy development.

The major challenge remains the successful implementation of the various education policies that are currently in the pilot phase. These policies must now be translated from mere words into successful classroom practice. It is my conviction that the successful implementation of education policies that promote inclusion is reliant on effective educational support structure. Effective educational support takes place within a framework that is holistic, integrated and community based.

The next chapter provides an insight into the practical implications of implementing Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) on education support structures in South African schools.
CHAPTER FOUR
PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF IMPLEMENTING EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 6 ON EDUCATION SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

4.1 INTRODUCTION
According to Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), the process of developing an inclusive education system, which started in 2001, should be completed over a twenty-year period. As indicated in Chapter Three, the Department of Education is currently piloting various programmes and putting in place various structures to make sure that South Africa moves closer to the reality of an inclusive education system, as envisaged in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).

In this chapter, the focus will be on the main principles guiding the envisaged support within an inclusive education system as well as how this will impact on the traditional roles played by educators, school management, parents, education support professionals and the community.

4.2 MAIN PRINCIPLES GUIDING ENVISAGED INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM
The inclusive education system envisaged by the National Education Department is conceptualised around a redefinition of support, the development of a district education support programme and teams, as well as a delinking of support from one specific site (Department of Education, 2005c:22-23).

A redefinition of support has become necessary following the radical overhaul of the definition of special educational needs. As indicated in Chapter Three, prior to 1994, special educational needs were conceptualised as only present in children with intrinsic deficits or disabilities. This conceptualisation ignored systemic and broader socio-economic factors in the generation and maintenance of special educational needs (Donald, 1996:73). The new definition formalised by Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) moved away from this narrow and limited focus to a broader focus on what constitute barriers to learning and development. Evidently, it has become vital for educational support services to go further and redefine what constitute effective support within the framework of an inclusive education system.
In addition, the new definition of support indicates a move from the traditional model of special education, which was built on the foundation of the medical model. Within the medical model, education support entailed the provision of individual support to individual learners who failed to make satisfactory academic progress within the mainstream classroom, due to what was assumed to be inherent deficits. These learners were assessed according to specific norms, after which it was decided what specialist interventions would be appropriate to ‘fix’ their problems. These interventions normally took the form of speech therapy, occupational therapy, psychotherapy or interventions by a medical specialist (Johnson & Green, 2007:159) and (Department of Education, 2005c:22).

These interventions were based on the assumption that whatever was wrong with the learner, could be fixed only by the intervention of professionals; after being fixed, the learner would be able to return to the mainstream class. This direct, one-on-one intervention, focusing on only a limited number of learners, was ineffective in providing support to those who really needed it (Johnson & Green, 2007:160). The contentious nature of this provision of specialised education support service to a limited number of learners only is expanded on by Engelbrecht (2004:17), who calls attention to the fact that within South Africa, the medical model has led to doubtful identification criteria and direct support to only a few advantaged learners. This acontextual and individualistic approach overlooked the effect of social-economic factors in the origination and continuation of barriers to learning and support.

The new definition broadens our understanding of educational support provisioning to include socio-economic and health factors that may present themselves as barriers to learning and development (Johnson & Green, 2007:160). With the redefinition of support, it is suggested that all learners, not only those learners with intrinsic disabilities, may from time to time require support to minimise the effect of barriers to their learning and development. This widened perspective will obviously have serious implications in terms of the numbers of learners that may have to be provided with and could benefit from support.

Moreover, appropriate and effective educational support services will demand a move away from a positivistic, linear approach to an eco-systemic, recursive one. Engelbrecht (2004:21) and Sibaya (1996:88) argue that the development of a culture of thinking that emphasises systemic and inclusive values within a holistic approach to support will be fundamental to the successful implementation of inclusive education.
The Department of Education (2001) seems to concur, as it proposes a systemic approach that is more efficient in supporting the assessment of individuals as well as the promotion of preventative and intervention programmes. The importance of an ecosystemic approach to service provision to LSEN is also confirmed by Johnson and Green (2007:160), who state that different aspects of a child’s development are interrelated and cannot be examined in isolation. Bronfenbrenner’s ecosystemic approach, discussed in detail in Chapter One, acknowledges that the individual learner is part of a complex network of intersecting contexts. All of these contexts or interactions have the potential to impact on the learner’s ability to progress academically (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:16).

This understanding of an individual learner within his/her context implies that any intervention to remove or minimise barriers to learning and development should not focus exclusively on the individual, but take into account all the systems of which he/she is a part. Within the scope of an ecosystemic approach, education support will encompass all activities, which may increase the capacity of a school to respond to the diverse needs within its learner population. An ecosystemic approach to education support will have a beneficial effect on all learners, as the provision of any additional support to a specific learner will enhance the learning process of all the other learners in the class. The main focus of individual support will be to increase the inclusiveness of the curriculum for all learners (Department of Education, 2001:22).

Clearly, within the inclusive education approach, educational support is not something that can happen apart from the general classroom, but is an integral part of teaching and learning. Areas of intervention may include the differentiation of the curriculum, modifications to the timetable, the introduction of a school feeding scheme, the development of a positive self-concept or specific learning skills, and much more (Johnson & Green, 2007:160).

* A move away from the category of disability to the level of intensity of support needed, means that support based on a specific category of disability (e.g. visually impaired, hearing impaired, intellectually impaired) will be replaced with support based on the level of intensity of support needed. Support is divided into four different levels of need, with Level 1 and 2 constituting low levels of support. At this level, support is linked to day-to-day teaching strategies, which may be changed in the classroom to enhance the inclusion of LSEN. It includes all changes at school level that can assist in developing more inclusive cultures and policies and practices. Level 3 entails a moderate level of support, while Levels 4 and 5 constitute high levels of support (Department of Education, 2008:19-21).
The objective is that no learner will in future be assessed, categorised and placed simply on the basis of his or her category of disability. When providing support within an inclusive education system, support providers should take cognisance of the fact that the range of support needed by an individual learner fluctuates drastically in relation to his/her specific intrinsic needs as well as his/her context. Contextual barriers such as poverty and socio-economic home conditions will also determine the level of support that the system needs to provide. In order to achieve this, the Department of Education has already reconsidered the processes involved in the screening, identification and assessment of all learners (Department of Education, 2008:23).

*There will be a delinking of support from any one specific site.* In the past, educational support was to a large degree concentrated on specific sites of learning, either special schools or special classes in mainstream schools. In the envisaged inclusive education system, support services will be provided at the site of learning, which in future will be any school of the parent’s choice, as the first option or goal. This support is envisaged as more of an organisational and funding measure.

The type of interactive education support envisaged in South Africa is captured in Figure 4.1 (Department of Education, 2005b: 21).

**FIGURE 4.1: Interactive Education Support**

![Interactive Education Support Diagram](image-url)

**KEY**
- COM - Community
- DST - District-based support team
- FSS - Full-service schools
- PA - Parents
- RS – Resource centre
- SH - Schools

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The delinking of support from any specific site implies that for schools to be successful in supporting learners academically and socially, they will have to look beyond the boundaries of their own expertise and experience. Schools will need to develop an eagerness to work with others who have the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. Schools need to become part of a wider, dynamic and flexible resource base, which may include all stakeholders in the education process (Attfield, Blamires, Gray & Moore, 2004:1).

To make this intention a reality, educators will need to undergo a critical shift in terms of their assumptions as to how learners who need different levels of support, can be supported in new ways, especially with the help of a strengthened district based support team. In order to achieve this goal, the Department of Education has introduced short-term steps to control the admission of learners to special/resource schools to ensure that only those learners who present high intensity support needs are enrolled at these institutions (Department of Education, 2008).

The three principles (discussed above) upon which the envisaged inclusive education system is to be built, will have repercussions for special schools (Department of Education, 2008:24).

Special schools and mainstream schools have historically been placed at either end of a continuum. On the one end of the continuum were highly trained experts, possessing special knowledge and expertise in dealing with LSEN and, on the other hand, the majority of educators, with little training in specialised educational support. In terms of Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), existing special schools will have to undergo radical changes in their orientation and role to align themselves with the vision of an integrated and inclusive education system (Department of Education, 2008:24).

The continued existence of special schools in South Africa is viewed as a major barrier to inclusive education. Notwithstanding this (in my opinion) flawed assertion, special schools can potentially be utilised to promote inclusivity in schools. Armstrong and Moore (2004:39) express the notion that special schools ought to be seen as valuable sources of intellectual capital.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the Department of Education (2001 and 2005a, b) supports the potential value of special schools within a continuum of support services. It affirms that existing special schools will not be abolished, but rather be required to drastically change their orientation and roles to align themselves with the vision of an integrated and inclusive
education system. It is foreseen that only learners who require high intensity support will be enrolled at special schools, which would become part of the district support services. Special schools must therefore become pro-active and align themselves in such as manner that they become resource centres with the capacity to provide service and expertise to neighboring schools and the wider community (Department of Education, 2001).

This is substantiated by the views expressed by Muthukrishna (2001:46) who advocates that special schools be incorporated and utilised as resource centres, as this will allow for the effective provision of support in the curriculum and assessment at schools in the same area. Additional roles could include the preparation of learners for inclusion into mainstream schools, the early identification of and intervention for LSEN, and the provision of home-based support and assistive devices, such as Braille facilities, Sign Language interpreters and specialised support. In addition, outreach programmes that target disability awareness and advocacy must be introduced.

Muthukrishna (2001:45-47) argues in favour of a move towards community based support structures, which may include educators, principals, school management staff, special education educators, parents and parent organisations, community members, psychologists, school counselors, health and social workers, available therapists and community organisations, such as disabled people’s organisations.

4.3 CHANGING SUPPORT ROLES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN EDUCATION SYSTEM

Inclusive education will without a doubt bring about significant changes in the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all stakeholders in the education process. Naicker (1999:14) confirms that successful inclusion in South Africa will require a systemic change in thinking and behavior at schools as well as the roles and responsibilities assumed by various stakeholders.

Below is an examination of the implications of the envisaged inclusive education system for the roles and responsibilities of school management, educators, parents, SGBs, educational support professionals and the community.

4.3.1 School management

Swart and Pettipher (2005:19) and Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:33) concur that the first step towards the establishment of an inclusive school is a collective vision of favored conditions for the future. They remind us that principals need to play a key role in constructing this
collective vision. Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:30) indicate that effective leadership, shared by all role-players, is vital for everyone involved with learners and their families. Critical elements of leadership are the ability to establish direction, align key participants, motivate and inspire others, and produce useful changes in the school as an organisation.

The Department of Education (2005b:17) states that principals have to set the tone for the transformation process, ensure that decisions are made, challenges met and processes supported in line with the philosophy of inclusion. This view, mirrored by Swart and Pettipher (2005:19), identifies the principal as the person who should take the responsibility for setting the tone of the school and helping the school as a whole to maintain a supportive, caring community.

As leaders driving the implementation of inclusive education in their schools, principals have to concentrate on keeping up the motivation of their educators, assist them in finding creative solutions, meet the challenges they may encounter and stimulate critical reflection, which is crucial for any development to take place (Department of Education, 2005b:17).

In addition, principals must create the conditions for success in their schools. Ainscow (cited by Kriegler & Farman, 1996:47) identifies the following common characteristics of an inclusive school:

- Effective leadership from a head teacher who is committed to meeting the needs of all learners.
- Confidence among staff members that they can deal with learners’ individual needs.
- A sense of optimism that all learners can succeed.
- Arrangements for supporting individual members of staff.
- A commitment to providing a broad and balanced range of curriculum experiences for all learners.
- Systemic procedures for assessing learner progress.

### 4.3.2 Classroom-based educators

The new democratic dispensation in South Africa heralded major changes and practices, which most educators could not possibly have foreseen. Before 1994, most educators accepted separate education provision for LSEN as the most appropriate and successful approach. They generally believed that LSEN would not be able to cope with the demands posed by mainstream education. This notion was reinforced by the fact that mainstream educator
preparation programmes did not provide mainstream educators with the necessary skills and dispositions for dealing effectively with LSEN within an inclusive set-up (Engelbrecht et al., 2000:3).

Clearly, the current role of educators will have to be overhauled dramatically to meet support challenges within an inclusive classroom, as educators will stand central in providing educational support. The Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) states that classroom educators will have to take responsibility for the LSEN in their charge. The Department of Education (2005b:30) strongly suggests that referring LSEN for support outside of the classroom is unacceptable and avoidable, as all educators have the ability to teach all learners. It contends that though some learners may be in need of additional support, no special pedagogy is required to educate LSEN.

This view is supported by Hay (2003:16), who confirms that within the scope of an inclusive education system, learners should not be removed from the classroom to receive interventions elsewhere. All interventions and support will have to be provided in the mainstream classroom, with educators playing a critical role in providing this support, as they are in direct contact with learners on a daily basis (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:40). Hay (2003:137) explains that inclusive education will in practice necessitate a transition from a direct method of service delivery to a more indirect form of providing interventions and services to learners through educators.

Undoubtedly, policy changes with regard to educational support provisioning can only be successfully implemented if educator training reflects the current policy reforms. Educators, according to the Department of Education (2008), have to develop a conceptual understanding of inclusion and the diverse needs of learners. Warnock (1989:105) cautions that without proper educator preparation and training, in line with specific educational reforms, even the best-made policies will not endure. This is reiterated by Walter-Thomas, et al. (2000:3), who identify poor educator preparation as one of the reasons for the failure of inclusive education programmes in general. Consequently, opportunities for professional development must be provided where educators do not possess the necessary skills and knowledge to implement or initiate changes in their classrooms (Walther-Thomas, et al., 2000:56).

With regard to the training of educators, the Department of Education (2005b:30) concedes that educators may require new skills in curriculum differentiation, curriculum assessment of potential, collaborative teaching and learning, collaborative planning and sharing reflection on
practices and co-operation. Communication and collaborative skills are singled out as the most essentials skills for effective teaching within an inclusive school environment.

Swart and Pettipher (2005:18) emphasise the importance of further educator training “…educators will have to refine their knowledge and skills and where necessary develop new ones”. They, too, call attention to the fact that educators will need support in the form of staff development, in-service education and training, and the opportunity to collaborate with staff from special schools, full-service schools and personnel from education support services. Townsend (2007) advocates the necessity for every educator within an inclusive classroom to acquire a remedial education qualification. This is supported by Naicker (1999:25), who states that to achieve the goals of inclusive education, each educator will have to become a special educator through in-service training.

Van der Merwe (2000:5) supports the training of educators to empower them to confidently and successfully play their part in the realisation of inclusive education. It is furthermore suggested that feelings of efficacy will enable educators to deal effectively with the diverse challenges in their classrooms. The authors suggest that when educators are not confident in their ability to cope with diverse needs within their classrooms, they may become despondent and tend to ascribe the learners’ failure to factors intrinsic to them.

Nel (2007:3) warns that educators are currently not equipped to take on inclusive education and will therefore be unable to respond to the diverse needs within their classrooms. She suggests that educators acquire knowledge and skills with regard to the following aspects:

- The various forms of extrinsic and intrinsic barriers.
- Identifying and assessing learners who experience barriers to learning and development.
- Compiling assessment profiles of learners who experience barriers to learning.
- Collaborating with relevant role-players; and interviewing parents.
- Implementing intervention strategies.
- Keeping record of progress.
- Development of reflection skills.
- Mobilisation and utilisation of resources available at school.
- Preventing and addressing barriers to learning from a variety of aspects.

A further challenge to the successful implementation of inclusive practices in schools will be the attitudes of educators to LSEN. This is especially significant if we consider that the
Educators’ attitudes, beliefs and assumptions are directly translated into actions and teaching practice, and inform decision-making. Educators’ attitude towards diversity can as a consequence either be an obstacle or a positive force in the implementation of inclusive education. It is therefore of critical importance that the attitudes and assumptions of all role-players in the education system and community are explored, shared, challenged and, where necessary, restructured in order to accommodate diversity in our schools (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:20).

Stofile and Green (2007:58) and Prinsloo (2001:345) agree that the attitudes and morale of educators constitute a critical challenge in terms of their inputs to inclusive education. Prinsloo is particularly persuasive that the need to train educators to think and work in a new frame of reference constitutes the single greatest challenge facing the new education dispensation. She indicates that a disturbing number of educators are confused and insecure due to the series of radical educational changes which has transformed their working environment.

Swart and Pettipher (2005:40) also paint a rather gloomy picture of educators’ morale and attitude, stating that educators are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated and helpless because of the numerous changes imposed on them without them being consulted. It is argued that educators tend to see inclusive education as being foisted on them, despite the many concerns raised by them about the practicality of inclusive policies. Stress factors identified, include the lack of understanding parents of LSEN have of their long-term capabilities and prognosis, inadequate in-service training to prepare them for the demands of including LSEN, as well as discontent about the idea of having to be accountable and responsible for learners’ welfare as well as academic outcomes (Engelbrecht et al., 2000:2).

This negative outlook is further explored by Stofile and Green (2007:59), who state that educators are overwhelmed and demoralised by all the reforms that they have had to deal with in such a short space of time. The authors remind us that educators are experiencing increased levels of stress due to the implementation and administration of OBE, curricula, pass-rate requirements and reporting and having to perform tasks not included in their job description. At the same time, educators’ ability to deliver effective education is hampered by unmanageable class sizes, workloads, physical layout of the class, lack of equipment and numerous administrative duties.

Lomofsky, Roberts and Mvambi (1999:71) observe that in order for educators to be positive agents of change in their communities, they have to be sensitive to their own attitudes and
feelings. Educators need to gain an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, they need to develop a critical understanding of common stereotypes and prejudices related to LSEN in order to reflect how these have influenced their own beliefs and attitudes towards inclusive education. Educators have to be influenced to view LSEN not in terms of their disabilities, but rather in terms of their abilities.

Importantly, educators need to realise that their own attitudes towards LSEN have an effect on learners in their classroom. In this regard, Karagiannis, et al. (2000:4) indicate that learners in inclusive set-ups will develop positive attitudes towards other learners if they receive the necessary guidance and direction from adults.

A further challenge to the attitude of educators is the lack of resources at many South African schools. Resources include human and/or material resources or access to information and knowledge (Miles, 2000:1). Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:283) add to the list of possible resources special materials, assistive technology, para-educator assistance, opportunities to learn new skills to work with a diverse learner population, time for planning as well as administrative support.

As Clough (1998:12) puts it, “Positive attitudes to inclusion are directly linked to the resources that are attached to policies. The attitudes shrink in keeping with diminishing resources. Limited resources are used most often as reason why inclusive education cannot succeed”. Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:283) validate this statement by mentioning that without adequate resources, successful inclusive education will be shipwrecked, as educators become frustrated and discouraged by the obstacles and challenges they have to face on a daily basis in the classroom.

Miles (2000:1) conversely disputes the importance of resources in successful inclusion, stating that it is not the lack of resources, but rather people’s attitudes to and the way they make use of available resources that are crucial in promoting the ideal of inclusive education. Miles, in defense of his own assertion, notes that even in the best resourced countries, lack of resources is cited as a reason why inclusive education cannot succeed.

Nonetheless, I believe that responsible inclusion is without a doubt dependent on the availability of adequate resources and support. Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:38), supportive of the crucial need for resources, argue that the inclusion of LSEN in mainstream classes without support is “... not inclusion; it is inappropriate education.” I support the authors’
contention that inclusion without adequate educational resources and support is merely mainstream dumping. Putting LSEN in mainstream classes without adequate support should raise serious ethical questions for decision-makers.

Central to the provisioning of support to educators and learners at school level will be the establishment of institutional-level support teams. Donald, et al. (1997:27) indicate that the concept of ILSTs is not new and that ILSTs have existed over the years under various names, such as teacher support teams, teacher assistance teams or didactic assistance teams. ILSTs will be the structures around which school-level support will be developed within the new inclusive education system.

The primary role of ILSTs will be to support the learning process by identifying and addressing barriers to learning and accessing support from the wider community. The required skills and knowledge of ILSTs may be reinforced by expertise from local and district communities (Muthukrishna, 2001:48).

Hall, Campher, and Smit (1999:159) are of the persuasion that the main tasks of ILSTs will be the empowerment of educators. ILSTs are envisioned as primarily problem-solving teams, designed to enable educators to deal more effective with the array of challenges presented in the inclusive classroom. It is envisaged that ILSTs will assist educators in developing preventative and promotive strategies within a health-promoting framework. It is furthermore understood that the work done by ILSTs will help avoid inappropriate referrals to outside agencies, as all referrals first have to go through ILSTs, that then perform interventions on a “first-phase level” (Walther-Thomas, et al., 2000:140). If the need for outside assistance arises the ILST will coordinate recommendations by ensuring that ongoing monitoring and support strategies are in place.

In addition, the following functions are outlined for ILSTs (Department of Education, 2008:87):

- Studying the report provided by the educator on barriers identified and support providing/implemented up to that point, as well as the impact of that support.
- Assessing the support needed and developing a programme for educators and parents.
- Providing training/support to be implemented in the classroom, if necessary.
- Evaluating/Monitoring after the proposed programme has been implemented for a period agreed upon by the ILST, educators and parents. The kind of support to be provided, will determine the length of the formal report compiled by the ILST.
• Identifying further institutional-level support assets in order to mobilise these.
• Determining the level of support needed.

The Department of Education (2008:88) lists the purpose of ILSTs as follows:
• Coordinating all learner, educator, curriculum and institution development support in an institution. This includes linking the ILST to other school-level management structures and processes, or even integrating them so as to facilitate the co-ordination of activities and to avoid duplication.
• Collectively identifying institutional needs and, in particular, barriers to learning at learner, educator, curriculum and institutional levels.
• Collectively developing strategies to address these needs and barriers to learning. This should include a major focus on educator development and parental consultation and support.
• Drawing on the resources needed from within and outside the institution, to address these challenges.
• Monitoring and evaluating the work of the team within an ‘action-reflection’ framework.

Donald, et al. (1997:26) suggest that ILSTs should consist of regular classroom educators who, under the leadership of the principal, meet on a regular basis to discuss special needs and the problems referred to them by fellow educators. The Department of Education (2008:88) furthermore provides an extensive list of possible core members of the ILST, which include:
• Educators with specialised skills and knowledge in areas such as learning support, lifeskills/guidance, or counseling.
• Representatives from various levels or learning areas within the school.
• Educators at management level, i.e. the principal or any other member of the management team.
• Non-educating staff members, including administrative and care-taking staff.
• Learner representatives at senior education level.

In addition to the above, the assistance of parents, specific members of the district-based support team, including special/resource schools and members of the community, could be harnessed in order to find solutions to specific challenges.

The Department of Education (2008) suggests the following roles for the team:
• Raising awareness in the school with regard to barriers to learning and development.
• Promoting a high standard of professional conduct and confidentiality.
• Making inputs pertaining to the support of learners experiencing barriers to learning and development.
• Developing and implementing programmes and places and plans to promote inclusive classroom practices, differentiated teaching and effective multi-level teaching.
• Assisting in developing inclusive learning plans and programmes (curriculum adaptation).
• The team should meet regularly and keep records of deliberations and decisions.
• In the event that the ILST exhausts all resources within the schools and community, the help of the district-based support team may be requested.
• The ILST should assist the community with advice and offer it direction with regard to problems.

In addition, the ILST will need to follow up on learner needs, as identified through learner profiles. This will have to be accompanied by the design of intervention strategies to be implemented in the classroom. The ILST will be supported by management, which must make provision for regular meetings and planning sessions (Department of Education, 2005b: 26).

The Department of Education (2005b:31) acknowledges the need for all ILSTs to be trained in the following areas:
• Collaboration and co-operation.
• Sharing and support.
• Communication skills and multi-disciplinary work.
• Some essential knowledge of the most common disabilities and learning difficulties.
• Behaviour management.
• Multilingual issues.
• The effects of poverty and social deprivation.
• The skills to identify all of the above by means of assessment processes.

4.3.3 Parents
Van Wyk (2008:117) states that the South African Schools Act (1996) gives a broad definition of what constitutes a parent. A parent is defined as anyone who is the legal guardian of a learner, anyone who is legally entitled to custody of the learner, or anyone who has undertaken to fulfill the responsibility of a parent with regard to the learner’s education.
Prior to 1994, parents were given very little recognition as the primary caregivers of their children. The non-recognition and non-involvement of parents in the education process constituted a serious barrier to the learning and development of many learners (Department of Education, 2001:18). Within the new educational context, the role of parents within education support is emphasised, as it is recognised that inclusion in school does not relate to the learners only, but include the parents and custodians of all learners. The important role of parents within education is maintained by Sibaya (1996:88) who argues that the most important way of improving education is to strengthen parents’ involvement.

Gascoigne (1996:2) and the Department of Education (1997:38) are of the persuasion that the development of inclusive schools needs to be placed within the context of an inclusive society in which the family stands central. Gascoigne implies that where parents are not given acknowledgement or where their contribution is not facilitated and encouraged, successful learning is often jeopardized. Evidently, the central role of parents in providing their own child with support is unquestionable. Parents, as the principal caregivers of their children, need to be recognised as the real experts on their children. It is therefore imperative that educational decisions regarding a learner take into account the parents’ historical understanding of the learner’s problem and their perception of the learner’s strengths and weaknesses, behaviour and interests outside of school. In general, parents’ daily experience of their children is an essential resource of additional information that can make it easier for educators to form a more complete picture of learners’ problems or difficulties.

The Department of Education (2005b:26) advises that every parent should take responsibility for their children’s regular attendance of school; they also need to encourage their children to carry out homework assignments and other tasks. In addition, parents are required to provide their children with the necessary stationery and equipment. Where they are unable to do so, they should contact the school to make alternative arrangements. Parents are also legally liable to pay school fees, unless they have been exempted from this requirement.

Parents can, moreover, play a key role in lending extra hands in the school when added support is necessary. A close relationship between parents and educators is beneficial to parents, as it will allow them to develop their own skills in order to support their children more effectively at home (Lazarus, Daniels & Engelbrecht, 1999:56). Van Wyk (2008:116) also mentions that when parents are involved in the education of their child, parent-educator co-operation holds advantages for learners, parents and educators alike. For learners, there is a
decrease in truancy, an improved attitude to studies, an improvement in behaviour, as well as a decrease in school drop-out rate.

Parental involvement leads to an increase in the confidence levels of parents, an improved understanding of what happens in schools, and a greater sense of empowerment. Educators benefit in that they experience a higher level of support and appreciation from parents, which often leads to a rekindling of enthusiasm for problem solving and teaching (Van Wyk, 2008:116).

Parental involvement requires that parents be given the opportunity to take part in a meaningful way in learners’ education (Booth, et al. 2003:118). This involvement can be achieved only if parents are given more power and control over their children’s education. The optimal empowerment and participation of parents is pivotal for achieving successful outcomes in schooling for all children.

An inclusive school will need to identify the needs of parents and attempt to satisfy them. Russell (1996:73) suggests that parents have the following needs:

- Information, advice and counseling.
- Effective medical and educational provision.
- Friendship and a social life.
- Access to services and resources that are learner-centered, local and easily accessible.
- Protection from abuse.

Dybwad (2004:330) argues for support to parents at the earliest possible time after a problem or barrier to the child’s development has been established. The author insists that parents be provided with appropriate information to help their children develop optimally even before they enter the schooling system.

While progress has been made since 1994 in terms of parental participation in education, there are still too many parents who are seemingly indifferent to supporting their own children. To ensure the optimal participation of parents, schools need to address those factors that are potential barriers to parental participation in the education of learners. The following barriers have been indicated by Kalyanpur, Harry and Skrtic (2000:358):

- Lack of transport and/or childcare.
- Communication and language barriers.
• History of poor relationship with school.
• Cultural differences in seeking help.
• Beliefs about disability.
• Perception that professionals are experts whose opinions cannot be challenged.

Within the context of the racially and culturally diverse learner population at South African schools, special focus needs to be placed on the development of cross-cultural competence in order to enhance communication between educators and parents. Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:77) point out that some of the most dangerous obstacles in cross-cultural communication and collaboration are the faulty assumptions made in the absence of genuine knowledge. The authors maintain that without valid knowledge, educators may be inclined to interpret the behaviour of people from other cultural groups from their own cultural perspective, or may find themselves entwined in stereotypical or generalised attributes.

Cross-cultural competence does not mean that educators need to know absolutely everything about a specific culture. It rather requires an awareness of one’s own cultural limitations, an openness to and respect for cultural differences, an acknowledgement of the value and integrity of all cultures, a view of intercultural interactions as a learning opportunity, and the ability to use cultural resources in interventions (Walther-Thomas, et al., 2000:77).

The Department of Education (2005b:13) suggests that schools use the following guidelines to address the lack of parental recognition and involvement:

• Establish partnerships at school level in order to equip parents with skills and knowledge to contribute effectively to the education of their children.
• Parents need to be fully involved and informed with regard to the identification, screening, assessment and placement of their children.
• Parents need to be encouraged to take an active role in the teaching, learning and assessment of their children.
• To assist with early identification and intervention where children have problems, parents need to be encouraged to check with community based clinics and other practitioners or, where appropriate, educators, to help with an initial assessment and plan of intervention.
• Schools that use Sign Language should encourage and run accredited Sign Languages courses for parents and educators.
• Braille courses should be run in order to assist parents in communicating with their children and to help them with homework, reading and writing in Braille.
• General newsletters can be used as a means of keeping parents informed. This is deemed particularly important where learners reside in boarding schools.

• Schools should run information sessions and workshops to enable parents to better understand their children and their emotional and behavioral problems. Staff from district based support teams, including psychologists and social workers, can assist with these types of workshops.

• Where appropriate, school-based support teams should be strengthened with expertise from the local community, district-support teams and higher education.

• In order to deal effectively with learners infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, schools will have to maintain an open channel of communication and render support to parents and learners, where necessary. To facilitate this process, schools will have to write and openly display a clear HIV/AIDS Policy.

4.3.4 School Governing Bodies

Currently, education law requires each school to have a democratically elected School Governing Body. Parents can have a direct influence on school activities and decision-making through the SGB. The most important function of the SGB is to support the principal and educators in order to ensure that all learners receive quality education. Apart from its responsibility to ensure that the school buildings, property and environment are appropriate for learning and development, the SGB should also encourage and influence other parents and community members to provide their services voluntarily (Department of Education, 2005b:24).

Muthukrishna (2001:49) suggests that SGBs set up subcommittees that would serve the role of monitoring and facilitating inclusive educational practices at the specific schools. SGBs must also access community support and encourage community involvement in schools through the creation of constructive partnerships.

4.3.5 Education support professionals

The Department of Education (2005:17) indicates that an important education support role of the various professional specialists, such as therapists, psychologist, remedial educators and health professionals, is as members of district-based support teams (discussed at length in Chapter Three).

Research conducted by Pienaar (2005), Ebersohn (2005) and Struthers (2005) confirmed that support professionals, such as educational psychologists, physiotherapists and occupational, speech and language therapists, all have a vital role to play in providing effective education
support to LSEN. These three authors concur that inclusive education, as defined by the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), will nevertheless have major implications for the traditional roles these professionals have played so far.

It is indicated by the various authors that in order to provide effective support to the wider learner community, therapists will have to construe new professional roles. Struthers (2005:56) insists that within the inclusive context, their new role will encompass a move from the medical model towards a more holistic, ecosystemic mode of support. She comments that education support can no longer be provided on a direct one-on-one basis, but will have to focus on the provision of support to the adults involved in the education and support of learners who may be in need of therapeutic interventions.

Ebersohn (2005:22) cites Engelbrecht, who explains the change in philosophy as follows, “…they will have to move away from an ideology based upon positivism assumptions that the professional knows best, towards an approach that values different kinds of socially constructed knowledge, combining the unique knowledge and skills of everyone”.

Moreover, within the inclusive education context, therapists will be required to support educational goals rather than medical goals. In line with the philosophy of inclusive education, the emphasis should not be on treating learners in an attempt to make them ‘normal’, but rather on enabling mechanisms for successful teaching and learning within the system as a whole.

In addition to career specific knowledge, therapists will also require the following abilities (Struthers, 2005:67-70):

- Knowledge of school culture and curriculum.
- Assessment of learners in order to set functional goals, which takes into consideration the context in which the learner operates.
- Identification of ‘at risk’ learners.
- Use of screening as a preventative activity.
- Knowledge to modify the curriculum.
- Ability to work collaboratively with educators.
- Teaching skills, to be able to teach parents, teachers, assistants and other professionals.
- Effective communication and networking skills.
- Advocacy skills.
Ebersohn (2005) concurs, stating that education support professionals should extend their professional capacities beyond their traditional role of solving problems by increasing their involvement in multiple areas and levels of support. She explains that this involvement encompasses primary, secondary and tertiary intervention. Furthermore, it involves specific direct and indirect interventions, facilitating change, counseling, and crisis intervention and lifespan development.

Education support professionals will have to provide this indirect support to LSEN and the wider school system through a process of collaboration. Collaboration, a critical component in the process of providing effective educational support is necessary from national level to classroom level. Walther-Thomas, *et al.* (2000:5) explain collaboration as “… a creative partnership between all role-players who work together to identify mutually defined barriers and needs, and ways to meet the needs and address the barriers”.

In practice, collaborations will mean that parents, educators, principals, administrators, learners and professional support personnel will all have to contribute in one way or another. This approach will ensure that no educator, parent, education support professional, learner or volunteer will henceforth need to handle significant challenges alone (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:19).

In collaborative efforts, the following should be kept in mind:

- Collaboration is not an end to itself, but rather part of a mechanism used in interactive relationships between individuals working together towards a shared goal.
- Collaboration is a dynamic and ongoing process.
- The focus and outcomes of the process are numerous. A learner’s outcome is only one outcome: adult, organisational and systems outcomes are additional gains.
- A collaborative team share ideas and work together in an environment characterised by reciprocal respect and encouragement, trust, open communication, consensual decision-making and joint ownership. Each individual brings his or her own set of experiences, skills and knowledge to the collaborative relationship. These different perspectives, experiences and knowledge bases hold equal weight and status (Walther-Thomas, *et al.* 2000:5).

While working collaboratively will be a new experience for therapists, it is important to acknowledge that working collaboratively will also be a new experience for educators and parents who have grown used to work as individuals and in isolation (Swart & Pettipher,
Hall, et al., (1999:157) emulate this view, stating that collaboration may be difficult for educators, who have traditionally worked on their own.

Hall, et al. (1999:157) list the following preconditions for successful collaboration:

- Deal with attitudes, knowledge, skills and educational needs in order for educators to develop a full understanding of their work and the new challenges.
- Recognise the processes already in place that may have the potential to facilitate quality education for all learners.
- Mainstream and special school educators should become familiar with the concepts of consultation and collaboration and ways in which they can participate as partners and team members.
- Special school educators need to increase and expand ways and efforts to converse, plan cooperatively and share information with mainstream educators.
- Time provision must be made to facilitate the implementation of collaboration.

In addition, Friend and Cook (cited by Swart & Pettipher, 2001:19) mention that collaboration can be successful only if it meets the following criteria:

- It must be on a voluntary basis.
- It must meet the requirements of parity amongst participants.
- It must be based on mutual goals.
- Shared responsibility for participation and decision making.
- Sharing of resources and accountability for outcomes.

Swart and Pettipher (2001:42) identify the following types of collaborative partnerships:

- Collaborative problem solving.
- Group problem solving.
- Peer coaching.
- Co-teaching.
- Facilitating co-operative learning.

Collaboration can be successful only within a climate where it has previously been encouraged. School managers therefore need to create an environment that values collaborative interactions between educators, parents, learners and other professionals in order to create a climate conducive to working in teams. Walther-Thomas, et al. (2000:28) write that collaborative service delivery cannot simply be forced upon a system that does not include professional collaboration in other forms.
In addition to their role as collaborators, education professionals will also have to work as consultants. Ebersohn (2005:26) explains that consultation is a support model in which educational support professionals work within the school in a consultative role. Salend (cited by Ebersohn, 2005:27) recommends the following four steps to ensure effective consultation:

- Goal and problem identification.
- Goal and problem analysis.
- Plan implementation.
- Plan evaluation.

4.3.6 Communities

There is a growing recognition that ordinary community members could provide better quality support to individuals than traditional support service providers. Donald, et al. (1997:99) state that, from an ecosystemic perspective, schools are influenced by the communities in which they are located, and vice versa.

It is my contention that in the South African situation, where learners daily migrate from their local communities to other suburbs in order to receive the best education their parents can afford, the notion of what constitutes a school community needs to be revisited. Traditionally, a school community was the geographical area surrounding a specific school. The South African reality is that many children attend school in one area, while residing kilometers away in another area. In order to mobilise support, we will consequently have to look at support structures in the immediate geographical area as well as in the geographical area in which learners and their families reside.

Community resources could comprise parents, grandparents or other caregivers, members of the school itself, community based organisations, faith-based organisations, traditional healers and other natural support systems and people (Department of Education, 2005b:19). Swart and Phasha (2005:230) also suggest that schools should establish business partnerships and partnerships with higher education institutions, integrated health, mental and safety organisations as well as organisations for people with impairments.

District/Community centres could also be used to provide extensive educational support services. Professionals to serve at this level could include personnel qualified in guidance and counseling, special education health and social work. Their task will include the provision semi-specialised services.
Swart and Phasha (2005:230) highlight the following areas of involvement that could be targeted by communities:

- Sharing the use of school or neighborhood facilities, equipment and other resources.
- Enhancing safety.
- Raising funds.
- Underwriting activity.
- Sharing and dissemination of information.
- Networking and providing mutual support.
- Sharing responsibility for the planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes and services.
- Building and maintaining infrastructure.
- Expanding the opportunity for community service, internships, jobs, recreation and enrichment activities/facilities.
- Enhancing public relations.
- Sharing celebrations.
- Building a sense of community.
- Participating in health promotion.
- Using the school and its facilities for community functions.

Furthermore, extensive partnerships need to be established with the various NGOs active in communities. Several NGOs in South Africa have over the years developed successful programmes that can assist schools in providing educational support within an inclusive school setting. Importantly, NGOs can also play a vital role in addressing prejudice and discriminatory attitudes and practices through their anti-bias and human rights programmes (Lazarus, et al., 1999:56).

4.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter clearly illustrates that the implementation of inclusive education will necessitate fundamental changes in the roles of all stakeholders. Central to the new vision of education and support are the learners and classroom educators, who are dependent for effective and quality support on all the other stakeholders in the different systems in which they operate.

The challenges in the implementation of education policies is appropriately worded by Christie (1999b:282), who points out that the majority of education policies passed, were
“…idealistic text in an essentially top-down policy process which is not rooted in the realities of schools or responsive to the conditions on the ground”.

A personal concern is that the foundation upon which the inclusive education system has to be built, an integrated holistic education support structure, is still not functional. At the time of the writing of this thesis (2009) the challenges of identifying and mobilising all these different sources of support to effectively provide quality support for all learners who from time to time may need additional educational support, seem truly formidable. This process will clearly take a concerted collaborative effort from all stakeholders.

The next chapter provides the reader with a more detailed theoretical exposition of the research design and methodology introduced in Chapter One.
CHAPTER FIVE
RESEARCH DESIGN, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND EXECUTION OF INVESTIGATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION
In Chapter One, a brief introduction to this investigation was given. Chapter Two provided the reader with an international perspective on the development of education provisioning for LSEN. Chapter Three examined the development of educational provisioning for LSEN in South Africa, while Chapter Four presented an analysis of the implications of inclusive education on the roles and functions of stakeholders concerned with the process of education. Within this chapter, a more detailed theoretical exposition of the research design and methodology introduced in Chapter One will be offered.

5.2 THEORETICAL PARADIGM
The research paradigm is the net that contains the researchers and the epistemological, ontological and methodological premises (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003:33). The paradigm is described as a basic set of beliefs that guides the researcher’s actions. Paradigms are related to the nature of reality, the relationship of the researcher to that being researched, the role of values in the study and the process of research (Creswell, 2002:74).

During this investigation, I had to choose between the four basic paradigms structuring qualitative research, which are: positivist and post positivist, constructivist-interpretative, critical and feminist-post structural (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:33). This was dictated by the fact that the favored paradigm embodies researchers’ point of view, or their frame of reference, according to which they organise their observations and reasoning. In this study a constructivist-interpretative approach to grounded theory was elected.

Constructivism takes for granted the relativism of multiple social realities; acknowledges the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer; and seeks an interpretative understanding of the subject’s meaning (Charmaz, 2006:250). Denzin and Lincoln (1994:33) rephrase this as, “...The constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and respondent co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures”.

Within the scope of a grounded theory approach, the theory is grounded in the data, since the researcher’s intention is to construct theory by producing concepts to fit the data (Struwig &
Stead, 2001:15). Using a grounded theory strategy further dictated that I follow a process characterised by the simultaneous collection of data, a two-step coding process, comparative methods, memo writing, a focus on the construction of conceptual analyses, use theoretical sampling to refine emerging theoretical ideas, and the integration of the theoretical framework (Charmaz, 2006:251). These aspects will be further elucidated upon when the research design and methodology drawn on in this investigation are discussed.

The phenomenologist operates in the belief that multiple ways of interpreting experiences are available to all of us through interacting with others, and that it is the meaning of our experiences that epitomise reality (Biklen, 1992:34). During this investigation, I therefore attempted to understand the perceptions of support needs and the availability of support structures for LSEN and educators, from the perspectives of the participants, instead of imposing my own assumption on them (Wiersma, 2000:238). As mentioned in Chapter One, the experiences of participants were then reduced to a central meaning to capture the essence thereof (Fouchè, 2002:272). This choice of theoretical paradigm informed the research design discussed in the following section.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The purpose of the research design (or strategy) is to provide the most valid, accurate answers to the research question (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:34). The aim of a research design is to plan and structure research in such a way that the ultimate validity of the research is maximised by minimising or, where possible, eliminating possible error (Mouton & Marais, 1990:33).

The research design is fittingly described by Mouton (1996:107) as a set of guidelines and instructions on guiding the researcher towards the research goal. The research design positions the researcher in the empirical world, in that it links him or her with specific sites, persons, groups, institutions and bodies of relevant interpretive material (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:36).

I had the option of using a qualitative research design, a quantitative research design, or a combination of these two designs. Each of these designs has its own advantages and disadvantages. Qualitative research, other than quantitative research, does not use quantity measurement, but instead attempts to measure the quality of something. Furthermore, the language of qualitative methods is one of emotion, whereas the language of quantitative method is one of numbers (Balian, 1988:63). As indicated in Chapter One, the objective of this investigation was the description and understanding of education support needs and
education support structures available to educators and learners in an inclusive classroom, which informed the decision to use a qualitative research design (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:270, 646).

In addition, the chosen research paradigm above indicated that a qualitative research design was deemed best suited to obtain evidence or answers to the research questions set out below:

The primary research question guiding this investigation was formulated as:

**How can a framework for the development of a holistic, integrated, community based educational support structure, serving schools within Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas, be established?**

To answer the primary research question, the following secondary questions were formulated:

- What is the international perspective on the implementation of inclusive education?
- What was the nature of educational provisioning for learners who experienced barriers to learning (LSEN) before 1994, and the implementation of inclusive education policies thereafter?
- What are the practical implications of implementing the Education White Paper 6 (2001) on the support roles of education support providers in South African schools?
- What are the barriers to learning and development (challenges) facing learners and educators within inclusive classrooms in Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas?
- What support structures are currently available at the different levels of the education system within Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas?

The decision to conduct a qualitative study was furthermore guided by the list of qualities inherent to qualitative research presented by Struwig and Stead (2001:11).

- *The participants and researchers’ perspective:* The researcher attempted to understand the question being researched from the perspective of participants. The research data was thus analysed in association with the participants.
- *Contextualism:* I operated on the supposition that human behaviour does not take place in a void by laying emphasis on both the micro and macro experiences of the individual participants, as well as how these perspectives dynamically interrelated with one another (see discussion of Bronfenbrenner’s’s approach in Chapter One).
• **Process:** I followed a process whereby interconnected events were reviewed along a chronological or developmental continuum. This helped me to understand how past events impacted on the individual’s present thoughts and behaviours.

• **Flexibility:** The research was done in a relatively open and unstructured manner.

### 5.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

The next section details the population and sample as well as sampling methods used in executing this investigation.

The target population for this study included educators in mainstream primary and secondary schools, educators in special schools, teacher union representatives, representatives of community organisations as well as education support personnel working within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas. The Nelson Mandela Metropole has a population of 1,1 million and covers an area of 1950 km². According to a survey conducted on the tenth school day of each year there were 306 public schools, 7256 educators and 86 491 learners within the Nelson Mandela Metropole (www.nelsonmandelabay.gov.za).

As it was impossible within the scope of this investigation to reach the total population, a sample was drawn. A sample, according to Balian (1988:167), is “A small, select group from the population chosen to represent this population.”

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:88) state that the sample as a subset of the population must have properties that make it representative of the whole. The goal of complete representation is usually difficult to fully realise within qualitative research in general and, more specifically, within this investigation. The importance of representative samples is underplayed by May (1997:87) who argues that in cases of theory building, generalisation from the sample to the population is not always required.

One of the major decisions I had to take with regard to this investigation concerned the size of the sample necessary to accurately reflect the characteristics of the population. It involved a process of weighing the advantages of a large number of participating educators from a limited number of schools against having the view of various educators from schools as diverse as possible. I finally decided not to focus on the number of individual participants, but rather on the inclusion of an extensive sample of schools. In the selection of educators in the sample, I operated on the conjecture that they were already supporting learners and educators within inclusive education, as mentioned in Chapter One. Education support personnel,
education officials, community members and union representatives were included according to the principle of theoretical sampling, in terms of which the sample is extended based on ongoing data collection and data analysis process.

Sampling for this investigation was motivated by non-probability, purposive and theoretical sampling techniques whereby the principle of information saturation was applied.

**Purposive sampling:** As indicated in Chapter One, participants were hand-picked, based on the fact that they possessed information critical to the investigation (Denscombe, 1998:15). Participants were all involved in providing either education or support to a diversity of learners and educators within an inclusive education context.

This investigation followed the process below, as advocated by Lincoln and Guba (cited by Struwig & Stead, 2001:122):

- The sample was not drawn in advance, but instead adapted as the investigation continued.
- Each sampling unit was selected only after the information of the previous unit had been analysed. The first analysis was performed on the questionnaires distributed during Phase One of the investigation. Responses from participating educators led to the inclusion of community organisation and teacher union representatives into the original sample.
- Where I needed additional information, more specific sampling units were sought. For example at first all educators were targeted during the NAPTOSA training seminar, but an initial analysis of data identified educators doing part-time studies as more information rich participants. When the investigation was nearly concluded, teacher union representatives were interviewed in order to clarify some of the barriers to learning and development identified. The process is more extensively described in Chapter Five, under procedures followed during the execution of the data collection process.
- The sampling of new units continued until data saturation was achieved.

**Theoretical sampling** was further employed. Theoretical sampling, a defining ingredient of a grounded theory approach, was intentional and focused on the generation of a specific theory (Creswell, 2002:449). This approach, mentioned in Chapter One, was used with the purpose of refining ideas and not to increase the size of the original sample (Charmaz, 2006:265). Theoretical sampling, as suggested by Babbie and Mouton (2001:287) allowed me the opportunity to get to know not only the participants, but also gather more information with regard to the issues under investigation.
During the investigation, theoretical sampling assisted with the definition of categories, with the identification of contexts in which they are relevant, it specified the conditions under which they come up or are attained, and assisted in the discovery of their consequences (De Vos, 2005: 329; Charmaz, 2006:266).

**Table 5.1: Sample schools**

The research sample, which includes post-graduate students from the Nelson Mandela Metropole University, is indicated in Table 5.1. The final sample consisted of 120 educators from 85 schools.

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In addition, to the abovementioned participants, the sample included four education officials based at district offices in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage, two Teacher Union officials, and four members working within community support structures who declared themselves willing to participate in the investigation.
Motivation for selection of this specific sample was the accessibility of participants (researcher is currently working at a school within the Nelson Mandela Metropole), which meant fewer constraints on traveling and lower costs in executing the study.

Consistent with the principles of grounded theory, an emerging design was used, in terms of which data was collected and immediately analysed in order to determine what data to collect next (Creswell, 2002:450). As I progressed in refining the various categories emerging from the data collected, I returned to the original sample to collect more precise information to fill gaps in the data and holes in the developing theories (Charmaz, 2006:265).

5.5 PROCEDURES FOLLOWED IN PREPARATION FOR THIS INVESTIGATION

The procedures followed prior to the execution of this investigation are now described.

5.5.1 Execution of pilot study

As already mentioned in Chapter One, a pilot study was completed prior to the commencement of the investigation. The purpose of this pilot study was to establish whether the investigation would be feasible and whether the relevant data could be obtained from the participants identified by using the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview, which were to be the principal data collection tools.

The pilot study, conducted at the school where I am currently (2009) employed, included five educators well acquainted with me who had expressed their willingness to provide the necessary critique on the compilation of the initial questionnaire. The purpose of the study was explained and questionnaires were provided, which each participant had to complete and return the following day.

The educators participating in the pilot study indicated that the initial plan to visit as many individual schools to collect data was unrealistic, in that it would be time consuming and therefore expensive. As I am currently (2009) in full-time employment I would have been required to take unpaid leave in order to execute the investigation. As a result, I had to look for alternative opportunities to reach as wide a range of schools and educators as possible in order to execute a study that would have a high degree of trustworthiness. These data collection opportunities are discussed fully under section 5.7.
The conclusions made with regard to the questionnaire as well as the semi-structured interview, resulted in the correction of minor spelling, language and layout mistakes, as well as the reformulation of some questions that the pilot group indicated to be not well constructed or confusing.

The pilot group in addition commented that the original questionnaire was too long. Every attempt was made to keep the final questionnaire as brief as possible, even though the completion of the questionnaire exceeded the twenty minutes’ completion time recommended by Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:19). The final questionnaire took on average about thirty minutes to complete.

In addition, the pilot group confirmed the need to introduce sections indicating specifically what the purpose of each section of questions was. Furthermore, the need to redesign and simplify the cover page of the questionnaire was indicated by the participants. Through a discussion with the target group, I was able to determine that they possessed little knowledge as to what constituted barriers to learning. To solve the problem and increase the response rate to questions, a page explaining barriers to learning, as indicated by the Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) was included. Initially, this page (Appendix C) was to be sent only to the principals who declared themselves and their staff willing to participate in the investigation.

5.5.2 Permission to gain access to sites
Letters (Appendix B1 and B2) were drafted to the District directors, principals and SGBs requesting permission to launch this investigation. The letter, together with a summary of the research objectives, was delivered to the Acting District Director (Port Elizabeth), Mrs Mabopa and the District Director (Uitenhage), Mrs Bashman. Permission was granted on condition that all information gathered was used for research purposes only (Appendix D).

5.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS
One of the main issues contemplated during the preparation and execution of this investigation was how to collect quality data in the most ethical manner. Within the context of research, ethics constitute the standards or set of moral guidelines that determine how research should be conducted within a specific discipline. Setting clear ethical guidelines prevent researchers from engaging in scientific misconduct (Struwig & Stead, 2001:66).
Ethical problems, according to Burns (2000:17) relate to both the subject matter of the research as well as to what methods and procedures are used. It therefore reaches beyond the everyday courtesy or etiquette concerning what constitutes appropriate treatment of persons in a free society.

Ethical clearance for the execution of the investigation was provided by the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University Ethics Committee (Appendix A). With regard to the participants involved in this investigation, careful consideration was given to informed consent, voluntary participation, and respect for privacy and confidentiality. The decisions with regard to ethics adhered to during this investigation (already briefly mentioned in Chapter One) are explained in more detail in the next section.

_Informed consent_ is arguably the most fundamental ethical principles involved in research. Informed consent is a “freely given agreement” by the participants to become part of research (May, 1997:55). It implies that all possible and adequate information with regard to the purpose of the research, the procedures to be followed in the execution of the investigation, all possible advantages and disadvantages and dangers to which the participants may be exposed, as well as information to establish the credibility of the researcher must be provided to potential participants (Strydom, 2005:59).

Prior to executing each data collection opportunity, care was taken to ensure that participants understood the purpose of the research and that they were willing participants (Burns, 2000:18). Further care was taken to ensure that participants understood the consequences of publication of the research in the public domain (May, 1997:55). In addition, participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time if they were no longer willing to take part in the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:90; Strydom, 2005:59).

For the purpose of this research, each participant was provided with an information letter explaining the nature and aims of the research (Appendices C and E). The letter also included an invitation to the participant to ask any questions that may be of concern to him or her.

_Voluntary participation:_ As site representatives of educator trade unions and post-graduate students at the NMMU were used for completing questionnaires, particular attention was paid to the issue of voluntary participation. From the outset of the presentations participants were informed that participation would be on a voluntary basis. In cases where participants declined
to complete questionnaires, they were thanked for their willingness to listen and the questionnaires were taken back.

Confidentiality and respect for privacy involve the right of the participants to control information about themselves. Paying heed to Burton’s (2000:64) caution, the researcher respected the participants’ right to limit access to themselves physically, emotionally and intellectually.

At the outset of this investigation, participants were assured that all information was to be used for the purpose of the research only. I undertook in writing (Appendix E) that confidentiality would be protected by not disclosing the identity of study participants, and not attributing comments to individuals in a way that would divulge the identities of individuals or the institutions with which they were associated, unless they have expressly consented to being identified. As indicated in Chapter One, member checking was used in order to prevent the misinterpretation of views expressed by participants.

Burns (2000:20) adds that a clear understanding between the researcher and the participant concerning the use to be made of the data provided is important. I undertook to deal with sensitivity with the information provided as well as its dissemination (Cohen, et al., 2007:321). Material from interviews was kept anonymous to ensure future confidentiality. Schools, education officials, parents and community members were assigned numbers, for use when the researcher needed clarification on any data provided.

In the process of executing this investigation, the necessary respect was demonstrated to participants at all times. There was no probing into the personal or professional life of any of the participant, as the questions asked, related to the research question only. Extreme care was taken to prevent situations, which may have been experienced as intrusive or embarrassing to the participants.

5.7 DATA COLLECTION

Data are bits and pieces of information in the environment that are collected in a systematic way. Collected data provide an evidential base from which researchers can make interpretations and advance knowledge and understanding with regard to a specific research question or problem (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004:172).

In order to gather information on the views and opinions of individual participants with regard to the research questions, multiple research instruments or tools were used. A key advantage
inherent to the use of multiple research instruments to collect data remains the generation of
diverse kinds of information on the same topic, which is likely to improve the overall
trustworthiness and quality of the research (Denscombe, 1998:84). The value of utilising a
multiple method approach to data collection is further supported by Creswell’s (2002:97)
statement, “… qualitative researchers rely on multiple sources of information, and often add
new forms of data collection to best understand the phenomenon being explored.” This is also
known as data triangulation.

This multiple method approach, as mentioned in Chapter One, was considered practical for the
purpose of this study, as the focus was on diverse groups within the Nelson Mandela
Metropole and surrounding areas, such as educators, parents, various education officials,
teacher union representatives and community members.

The qualitative methods of data collection for this investigation included questionnaires, semi-
structured interviews and documents analysis. The content of the questionnaires, semi-
structured interviews and document analysis was guided and complemented by the literature
review conducted in Chapters Two, Three and Four.

Hereafter follows a clarification of the decision to use the questionnaire, semi-structured
interview and documentary analysis as data collection tools.

5.7.1 Questionnaire

The decision to utilise the questionnaire as primary data collection method, was influenced by
Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:7-10), who state that questionnaires are the most effective,
cheap and efficient way of eliciting views and opinions from a large number of participants in
a structured way. They indicate that an effective questionnaire has the potential of transmitting
useful and accurate information or data from the participant to the researcher. To maximise
the potential of the questionnaire used in this study, the questions had to be presented in a
clear and unambiguous way, which enabled the participants to interpret, articulate and
communicate responses effectively to the researcher.

The types of questions asked during this investigation were guided by the research population
(practising educators, education officials and members of community organisations), the
nature of the research question (which concerned the support needs/requirements of educators
and learners in an inclusive classroom) and the resources available (May, 1997:89).
In the designing of the questionnaire, closed questions and open-ended questions were utilised to varying degrees.

Closed-ended questions were asked to gather mostly biographical data. The biographical information gathered, was included to give a better understanding of the sample in terms of age, level of education, gender, school and school districts.

Open-ended questions were deemed effective in addressing the complex issue of the educational challenges and the support requirements of educators in the inclusive classroom as they allowed participants to respond as comprehensively as they wanted, in their own words. Cohen, et al. (2007:321) validate this choice by stating that open-ended questions “…enable the participant to write a free account in their own terms, to explain and qualify their responses and to avoid the limitations of preset categories”.

Denscombe (1998:101) reasons that open-ended questions are more likely to reflect the full richness and complexity of the views held by the participants as they allow adequate space for participants to express themselves in their own words. To encourage participants to give a detailed expression of their views and opinions, instructions to motivate answers and to provide as much detail as possible in the answers were given at several of the questions.

The questionnaire (Appendix E) was divided into the following sections:

A cover page: A simple covering letter was included, with the hope that it would maximise the response rate (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003:7). The covering letter set out the aims of the research, in addition to clarifying the ethical considerations with regard to the investigation. In adherence to the need to clarify ethical considerations, participants were informed that participation would be on a voluntary basis and that full anonymity, respect for their privacy and confidentiality were guaranteed. It also assured prospective participants that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time.

Information regarding what constitutes barriers to learning and development: Prior to the pilot study, this section, which sets out the barriers to learning and development, as indicated in White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), formed part of a letter drawn up to be sent to only the principals, requesting them to allow the research to be undertaken at their schools. However, after the questionnaire was piloted the participants involved requested that it be made available to all participants.
Section A: This section requested biographical details of the participants for the purpose of compiling profiles of all participating educators. Multiple-choice questions, together with closed-ended, questions, were included.

Section B of the questionnaire contained questions pertaining to what barriers to learning educators were experiencing in their classroom. This section included six different open-ended questions.

Section C is related to the identification of possible support structures in the school and the community that would enable educators to provide more effective support to the LSEN in their different classrooms. These questions were an attempt to track the development and functioning of ILSTs and other support structures at schools.

Section D: In this section, questions were asked in an attempt to identify the type of education support provided by parents and community members to learners and educators in schools.

A section titled additional information was included, which allowed participants to express themselves on aspects of education support that they felt had not been covered under the other questions posed in the questionnaire. Although I risked the possibility of compromising anonymity, participants were asked to indicate a telephone number or e-mail address to allow me the opportunity to obtain clarification on the answers provided in the questionnaire.

The data collected with the questionnaire was then supplemented with semi-structured interviews, to be discussed hereafter.

5.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

The semi-structured interviews used during the second phase of this investigation focused on the identification of barriers to learning and development present at schools within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas, as well as the identification of current support available at the various level of the system. Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003:7) describe an interview as a useful way of gathering more detailed information and insights into the research topic. Greeff (2005:287) adds that through qualitative interviews, an effort is made to understand the world from the participants’ points of view in order to unfold the meaning of people’s experiences prior to scientific explanation.
Semi-structured interviews were built upon specific fixed questions. This provided me with the option of improvising follow-up questions, which enabled me to explore meanings and areas of interest that emerged in the course of discussion (Arksey & Knight, 1999:7). It created the opportunity for participants to provide responses that were more on their own terms than would have been allowed by more standardised interviews.

Creswell (2002:205) explains that with semi-structured interviews the researcher uses both open-ended and close-ended questions. The benefit of this method is that the predetermined close-ended questions generate useful data that can be used to support theories and concepts in the literature. As in the questionnaire, close-ended questions were used to gather mostly biographical information. The purpose of including biographical data on the participating educators was to provide the reader with a clear picture of those characteristics that may potentially influence the views, feelings and perceptions expressed. Although the predetermined questions were put to each participant in a systematic and consistent manner, they were given the opportunity to address issues beyond the questions’ confines through the inclusion of open-ended questions.

An interview schedule (Appendix F), which contains a list of questions guiding the interview, was used to collect data during the second stage of the investigation. The interviews were conducted in an informal manner. Anonymity and respect of privacy were adhered to. In order to help the participants apply their minds to the issue under investigation, a copy of the questionnaire (Appendix E) presented to participants in the first stage of the investigation was provided in advance.

The two phases of the investigation were brought to a close by combining and integrating the data collected in Phase One and Two, Phase Three comprising a documentary analysis.

5.7.3 Documentary analysis

As part of the multi-method approach to data collection an analysis of various documents was undertaken. Documents are considered a good source for qualitative studies as they are normally in the words and language of the participant. In addition, documents have the added advantage that they are ready for analysis without having to be transcribed (Creswell, 2002:209).

As the issue under investigation is part of the ongoing process of education transformation, the latest information from documents produced by the National and/or Provincial Departments of
Education as well as newspapers, magazines and the internet was gathered. The documents were accumulated and integrated with the information obtained from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The information provided through the analysis of national and/or provincial educational documents formed the backbone of this investigation.

All documents were approached with the necessary watchfulness, as Blaxter, et al. (1996:187) counsel that documents need to be dealt with in the cultural context in which they were written. Careful note was taken of the assertion that some articles might even be an attempt at persuading the reader to a specific point of view.

De Vos (2002:324) argues that the reliability and validity of documents need to be evaluated. The author argues that if the creators of documents focus on factual data, the mass media can be viewed as an excellent source of information.

5.8 PROCEDURES FOLLOWED DURING THE DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The two key issues that had to be resolved before the execution of the research were access and ethical issues, as discussed previously. These issues remained an ongoing concern throughout the data collection process, as well as afterwards, as advised by Blaxter, et al. (1996:142).

Although the investigation was conducted in three phases, note should be taken that there was a constant overlap between the data gathering and analysis phases, as I had to go back and forth between phases, as data collected needed further clarification. The principles inherent in theoretical sampling, a characteristic of the grounded theory approach and explained in Chapter One, were used extensively during the data collection process.

First phase of the research: The support needs of both the learner and educator in the inclusive classroom were assessed by means of the questionnaire discussed above. In addition, the researcher included questions with regard to the support structures available at the different levels of the education system.

Questionnaires with an accompanying letter clarifying the purpose of the research as well as indicating the ethical considerations were distributed as follows:

On 19 February 2009, 105 educators from 85 different primary, secondary schools and special schools in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas attended the NAPTOSA site
representatives training workshop. I was fortunate to be granted permission to give a short overview of the research and distribute questionnaires at this workshop. Ethical issues with regard to voluntary participation, respect for privacy and anonymity, as indicated on the questionnaires, were explained to all participants present. I, together with my promoter, Professor Geldenhuys, remained in the venue while the questionnaires were being completed to ensure that participants were given the opportunity to ask for clarification with regard to the questionnaire, if necessary. We circulated in an attempt to be visible and available, but not intrusive. One hundred and five questionnaires were distributed, with fifty-two questionnaires being returned, which represents a return rate of fifty-eight percent.

It should be noted that the questionnaires were completed an hour before the end of the workshop. According to my own and Professor’s Geldenhuys’s observation the participants seemed tired, which may have resulted in the low return rate.

On 2 March 2009, my co-promoter, Dr Pienaar, presented me with the opportunity to do a short presentation on the research, as well as distribute questionnaires to those educators completing the Advanced Certificate in Education: Special Needs Educational course at the NMMU. We believed these educators to be particularly information-rich participants. This assumption was justified by a scrutiny of responses from the questionnaires distributed at the NAPTOSA representatives training workshop. These participating educators indicating an ACE or further qualification provided me with the most valuable information. They clearly had a good grasp of the issue under investigation.

This data collection session was started with a brief presentation outlining the purpose of the study. The ethical issues underpinning the research were again emphasised. Sixty questionnaires were distributed, of which forty-nine returned.

The excellent return rate is ascribed to the fact that it was completed during the first thirty minutes normally set out for a lecture. Cognizance was taken of the possibility that participants might to some degree have felt compelled to complete the questionnaires, so as not to give offense to the researcher and co-promoter who was also their lecturer during that period. I am, however, convinced that the advantages of maximised transferability of the study outweighed any possible violation of this ethical consideration (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:521). Between March and September 2009 another 50 questionnaires were distributed at several schools within the Nelson Mandela Metropole of these 23 questionnaires were returned.
In addition, eight follow-up telephonic interviews were conducted to collect data from selected educators who completed the questionnaires. The goal of these follow-up interviews was to fill gaps identified after scrutinising the questionnaires.

Second Phase: During this Phase, data was collected primarily by means of semi-structured interviews. Firstly, the researcher wanted to correlate the perceptions and feelings expressed as to the type of barriers to learning and development experienced and observed by learners and educators present in the inclusive context within Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas, with the perceptions expressed by the participating educators questioned in Phase One. Secondly, I wanted to test the perceptions of education support professionals on their role in providing educational support to the learners and educators within an inclusive classroom. To achieve this goal, four education officials were interviewed over a period of approximately six months.

In addition to the above, between March 2009 and September 2009, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five members of community organisations. The questions posed to these participants probed into the potential collaborative support programmes, provided, by the broader community. Below is a summary of these semi-structured interviews.

Semi-structured interview with education support officials: The initial interview with an education official at the section Education Support Programmes, in the Department of Education, was explorative in nature. The main aim during this meeting was to broaden my knowledge and understanding of barriers to learning and development present in Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas, as well as to determine how education support was being provided within the Port Elizabeth District. This opportunity was also used to identify other participants within the newly announced DBST who may possess the necessary information. No tape recording was made during the two hour-long interview. I summarised my impressions of the interview and presented the participant with a copy of the summary for verification purposes (Appendix G). The participant agreed that the copy of the interview summary provided was a true reflection of what was discussed.

At the start of this interview I was presented with a copy of the organogram of the Port Elizabeth Education District. We agreed upon a follow-up interview that would primarily focus on the support needs and support services available to LSEN by members of the Education Support Services. A special area of focus for our follow-up interview would then be
the development of ILSTs in schools. The participant also declared that he was willing to serve as gatekeeper to his colleagues.

During this interview, I also learnt that an investigation into the support needs and services available for educators and learners in Port Elizabeth had been completed in 2008 under the auspices of General Motors South Africa (GMSA). I was given the contact details of the principal investigators, which I later followed up. Due to the busy schedules of the principal investigators, I was unable to secure an interview with either of them. I was nevertheless fortunate to get a copy of their report through the investigators’ co-worker at the GMSA Foundation. The results of this report were integrated with the findings of this investigation, as discussed in Chapter Six.

In addition, an in-depth interview was completed with an Education official at her office. The interview was also explorative in nature. The information provided, enabled me to follow up other leads, such as the Nutrition Programme and the food gardens established at schools, with regard to support available to LSEN and educators. Directly after this interview, the interview was summarised and sent to that official, who read it and confirmed the accuracy of the information.

On the same date, 15 June 2009, interviews were held with DBST officials involved in the School Nutrition Programme (SNP), learner transport and HIV/AIDS home care.

Semi-structured interviews with community organisations: An introductory telephonic interview was conducted on 2 May 2009 with a senior member of the Project for Conflict Resolution and Development (PCRD) in Port Elizabeth. The purpose of the interview was to discuss the publication of a directory of support providers, which could be helpful in obtaining support for educators themselves or if they needed to refer LSEN to outside agencies.

Due to the fact that this was done telephonically, no recording was made. The interview was immediately summarised and the participant was asked to verify the correctness of the content.

Several telephonic conversations were held between June and September 2009 with members of the South African Police Victim Support Centre stationed at the Bethelsdorp, Gelvandale and Mount Road police stations. The Victim Support Centres are an initiative of the Community Policing Forums in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas. These
centres focus on providing support to learners and their families who have committed drug-related offenses or who refuse to attend school voluntarily.

Furthermore, several conversations were also held over an extended period of time with a Senior Social Worker at the Ibhayi Social Service Centre. The Centre focuses on providing social distress relief and related social services to families.

During October 2009, an interview was held with two Teachers Union officials. The aim of the interviews was to gain clarification on some of the barriers to learning and development which had emerged from the analysis of the questionnaire and semi-interviews.

*Third Phase:* This phase comprised the putting together of all the information collected by means of questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and official documents in order to bring to a close the data collection process. The following additional documents were analysed to complement the documents discussed in Chapters Two and Three. The documents also served an important function in the triangulation of data in order to improve the trustworthiness of my investigation.

- The 2008/9 report of the Port Elizabeth Education District. This document gave an indication of the work done at the Port Elizabeth District Office. I searched for evidence suggesting that the District office was driving the process of implementing inclusive education in schools in the Port Elizabeth area. However the absence of any evidence suggesting initiatives to promote inclusive education in mainstream schools indicated the contrary.
- An organogram of the Port Elizabeth Education District. This gave an indication of the various portfolios within the newly established DBST. It also confirmed the limited allocation of staff to serve a very extensive geographical area.
- Supporting Learners at Risk in Primary Schools: A Study initiated by General Motors South Africa. This study, conducted in several schools in the Port Elizabeth area, was used to confirm or disprove the findings of my investigation.
- Safe Schools Project (PCRD). It provided evidence of the various community based support structures available to learners, educators and their families within the Nelson Mandela Metropole.
- A PowerPoint presentation presented by Mrs Joan Joritsma, Principal of the School for Learners with Autism, on the development of Individual Education Support Plans (ISPs), also referred to as Individual Education Plans (IEPs). This document is used to indicate
that the focus of support to LSEN is limited to special schools. I attended the workshop personally and can testify that no mainstream educator was present.

- Several newspaper and internet publications which relate to the issue under investigation were included.

The documents mentioned above were included, with the understanding that they should give us a clear indication and verification of developments with regard to educational needs and the support services available or in the process of development. These documents generally represent a reflection of reality.

In order to establish a high level of trustworthiness, I scrutinised all these documents to establish a pattern of correspondence or conflict between opinions, perceptions and views expressed with regard to the support needs of educators and learners in the inclusive classroom as well as the provision of support and the support programmes rolled out by the Eastern Cape Education Department and community organisations. This assisted me in finding consensus between the views expressed by the participants on the issue under investigation. This strategy of data collection has the potential of increasing the trustworthiness of this study.

The data collected during the process discussed above was analysed, using comparative data methods and will be expanded upon in the next chapter dealing with the interpretations of results.

The next section will focus on the measures used to establish and increase the level of trustworthiness of the data collected during the three phases discussed above.

5.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Webster Comprehensive Dictionary (Marckwart, Cassidy and McMillan, 1992:1349) defines the term trustworthy as “… worthy of confidence, reliable”. It also explains the meaning of the term trustworthy in relation to its synonyms, which include words such as “authentic”, “faithful”, “honest”, “reliable” and “staunch”. From this definition it can be reasoned that the basic question of trustworthiness in qualitative research is one that examines the validity and reliability of a specific investigation or observation as normally used in quantitative research. This contention is elucidated by Bell (2005:117) who argues that irrespective of the method of data collection used, all information gathered should always be critically examined to establish the level of reliability or validity.
As mentioned in Chapter One, trustworthiness was expressed in terms of the following criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. The terms credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability, as used here, are the equivalents of the terms internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity used in quantitative research (Elman, 1995:78).

The different parts of trustworthiness are considered to be interlinked. For example research cannot be transferable unless it is credible, and it cannot be deemed credible unless it is dependable (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:277).

5.9.1 Credibility (internal validity)

Credibility was established in that the researcher attempted as far as possible to ensure that the participants had been accurately identified and described (De Vos, 2005:346). As indicated in Chapter One, participants included a sample of educators, education officials, Teacher Union representatives and community members within the Nelson Mandela Metropole. To further enhance credibility, a detailed description as to the procedures followed during the design, the execution and the reporting of the results of the investigation will be provided, which should convince an independent reader that the results are authentic.

Credibility was moreover achieved through the use of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing and member checks. These methods will be dealt with in the next section.

Prolonged engagement: As data collection took place over an extended period of time (more than seven months), I was able to establish and maintain a high level of rapport and cooperation with the majority of participants. The process of data collection was brought to a close only after I was satisfied that a high level of data saturation had occurred.

Persistent observation: In the execution of this investigation, I pursued interpretations in different ways by looking at multiple influences. The perceptions of educators as to their support needs and the support available for LSEN and educators at the various levels of the education system, were constantly weighed against the perceptions of Education officials, the viewpoints expressed by members of community organisations, as well as, the viewpoints of Teacher Union representatives and those extracted from documentary analysis. The data collected was furthermore weighed against the data gathered through a review of the
literature. During this time of prolonged engagement, I was able to develop an understanding of all the possible causes and effects, which helped with the continued weighing up of the data provided by different sources until I found what I believed to be the facts.

**Triangulation:** As a concept, triangulation is applied to all attempts made to get what will be accepted as factual. In this study, this was achieved by multiple methods of data collection, which included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and analyses of documents. Denscombe (1998:85), asserts that while multiple methods of data collection do not *per se* prove that the researcher has got it right, it at least gives confidence that the meaning of data has consistency across methods and that the findings are not too closely tied up with a particular data collection method. In addition, it increases the probability that the investigator makes the correct assumptions about the phenomena studied. I contend that, in this investigation, possible flaws in one method were eradicated by the use of additional methods of data collection.

**Peer debriefing:** A supportive fellow researcher, who recently completed her Master’s Degree, was on a regular basis involved in reviewing the data analysis process. Her main purpose was first to challenge my own interpretations and, in the final analysis, to attempt to find common grounds with regard to the interpretations made of the responses from participants.

**Member checks:** The credibility of the study was enhanced by member checking. During the data collection process, I went back to those participants who provided contact details per request at the end of the questionnaire, as well as those participants who were interviewed. The aim of the exercise was in the majority of cases to ascertain the meaning of certain phrases used in the questionnaire, to correct factual errors, to add further information, to check the correctness of transcribed data, and where possible, to put further information on record, to provide summaries and to check the adequacies of the analysis. I also gave copies of my initial interpretations and conclusions to those Education officials involved in the training of ILSTs.

The level of credibility of an investigation is closely linked to the investigation’s level of dependability, to be discussed in the next section. Babbie and Mouton (2001:278) indicate that there is no credibility without dependability.
5.9.2 Dependability (Reliability)

A study is deemed dependable to the degree to which another researcher will reach the same findings when doing the same study, if the interpretations and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if the findings are supported by the inquiry.

In an attempt to maximise the dependability of the investigation the write-up of this investigation involved a precise description of the aims of the research and its basic premises as well as a clarification on how the research was undertaken. In addition, an unambiguous understanding of the reasoning behind key decisions made, for example, decisions in relation to sampling, was provided (Denscombe, 1998:213).

5.9.3 Transferability (External validity or generalisability)

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other contexts or respondents. With qualitative research, the burden of demonstrating the applicability of one set of finding to another context rests more upon the researcher who makes the transfer than with the original investigator (De Vos, 2005:346).

Nevertheless, I, like the majority of researchers who have spent valuable time and effort in an investigation, want others who read the report to have confidence in the data and to develop respect for its integrity. Therefore in an attempt to maximise the transferability of this specific investigation, the reader is provided with rich, thick, detailed descriptions. Throughout the collection of data, detailed descriptions or verbatim responses are given with regard to the inputs provided by the participants.

The transferability of this investigation was furthermore advanced by means of purposive sampling used. The sample chosen was judged to be all information rich participants, as they were all on a daily basis involved with the issues under investigation. A large number of the participants used during Phase One of the data collection process were educators empowering themselves through further education in an attempt to provide support to LSEN.

Participants selected in Phase Two of the data collection procedure included departmental officials working with ILSTs, Teacher Union representatives and community members, based on their involvement in providing educational support to educators or learners. Participants from community organisations all had a direct and long involvement with the challenges facing LSEN within the education system.
I trust that these measures undertaken will provide the reader with sufficient evidence to determine the level of transferability of this research (Cohen, et al. 2007:137) to possible future research undertaken in the same field.

5.9.4 Conformability (Objectivity)

This concept refers to the degree to which the research findings are the product of the focus of the inquiry and not related to the biases of the researcher. It relates to the degree to which the researcher’s own biases or prejudices may have impacted on the research findings. Cohen et al. (2007:134) caution that with qualitative research, the researcher is a part of the world he or she is researching, which makes complete objectivity a challenge.

I acknowledged the warning by Denscombe (1998:208) and Creswell (2002:163) that the researcher’s identity, values and beliefs play a role in the construction and analysis of qualitative data. In order to increase the objectivity of the investigation, a conscious effort was made to distance myself from the normal every-day beliefs of the participants and to suspend judgment on social issues while executing the research.

As suggested by Cohen, et al. (2007:134), I fully articulated my possible biases as researcher at the outset of this investigation (Chapter One). I have complete confidence in the fact that any reader will have sufficient information on which to base his or her inferences about how evenhanded I was in my suppositions, given my own biases, self-identity and values, in the execution and analysis of this investigation.

As recommended by Babbie and Mouton (2001:278), researcher bias was further limited by means of an audit trail, which included the following:

- Raw data: including written field notes, telephonic interviews, documents and survey results.
- Data reduction and analysis products: write-up of field notes, summaries and condensed notes and, theoretical notes, such as concepts and hunches.
- Data reconstruction and synthesis products: themes that were developed, findings and conclusions and a final report.
- Process notes: methodological notes, trustworthiness notes and audit trail notes.
- Material relating to intentions and dispositions: inquiry proposal, personal notes and expectations.
• Instrument development information: pilots, forms and preliminary schedules, observation formats and surveys.

As indicated in Chapter One, the results of this investigation were also tested against the following questions as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (De Vos, 2005:347):

• Are the concepts generated?
• Are the concepts systematically related?
• Are there conceptual linkages and are the categories well developed so that they have conceptual density?
• Is enough variation built into the theory?
• Are the broader conditions that affect the phenomenon being studied, built into its explanation?
• Has process been taken into account?
• Do the theoretical findings seem significant, and to what degree?

5.10 DATA ANALYSIS
De Vos (2005:333) states that “… qualitative analysis transforms data into findings”. Data analysis constitutes a primarily inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns or relationships between the categories. As mentioned in Chapter One, in this study, categories and patterns were not imposed on the data prior to data collection, but were allowed to emerge from the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:501).

As indicated in Chapter One, the three major types of coding used during data analysis included open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The key function of this coding process was to generate theory rather than test theory (Dey, 1999:97).

As the lines between one type of coding and the next is artificial and the different types do not necessarily take place in sequence, the researcher moved back and forth between the three types of coding, which are now detailed in the following section:

5.10.1 Open coding
During open coding, the researcher created specific categories by first reading each questionnaire. The breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising of data followed this process (Dey, 1999:95). The aim at this stage was to produce concepts to fit the data (Strauss, 1987:29).
Open coding was done either line for line, sentence for sentence or paragraph by paragraph or by coding the entire text (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:500). The following comparative method of analysis prescribed by De Vos (2005:341), was followed:

- Phenomena were labeled whereby each response given by means of the questionnaire or semi-structured interview was compared to the responses given by other participants. Similar responses were clustered and given the same name.
- A process known as categorizing was followed in terms of which similar concepts and later subcategories were tentatively grouped together.
- Categories were then named according to what seemed to fit each category logically. As De Vos suggested, the names of categories identified, were graphic enough to remind the researcher quickly of their referents. In addition, codes for concept were also more abstract than the ones they denoted.
- During the process in which categories were developed (in terms of their properties and dimensions) code notes were taken and then written down.

5.10.2 Axial coding

Strauss and Corbin (as cited by Babbie and Mouton, 2001:500) define axial coding as, “A set of procedures, whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding by making connections between categories [or a category and its subtraction]…” The intent of axial coding is to generate new connections between a category and its sub-categories.

In this study, during axial coding, data coded during the open coding process above were sorted, synthesised, and organised more intensively and concertedly around a single category. In the process, a dense “… texture of relationships …” was established around the axis of the category being focused on (Strauss, 1987:64). The intent was to generate new connections between a category and its sub-categories.

In addition, the researcher used axial coding to find answers to questions such as when? why?, who?, how? and with what consequences?, which put me in a position to describe the results of the investigation more fully (Charmaz, 2006:60). This technique, according to De Vos (2005:343), reflects the three types of coding paradigms involving conditions, contexts, action/interactional strategies and consequences.
5.10.3 Selective coding

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:500) the key to selective coding is the establishment of a main storyline. In order to establish this storyline the following advice, suggested by Babbie and Mouton (2001:501) was adhered to:

- The object of the story (theme) was identified and then qualified by providing one or two sentences to explain the general idea behind it.
- The theme was analysed in a more analytical way, which led to the development of new sub-themes.
- As far as possible, the researcher indicated all the properties and dimensions related to the conditions, contexts, action/interactional strategies and consequences with regard to the issue under investigation.
- The researcher returned to the main themes in a little more detail where the need arose to make sense of the new order established.
- Patterns were identified and the theory was grounded by validating the theory against the data. As themes and sub-themes emerged, the theory started to take shape. The development of the theory formed part of the presentation and discussion of findings of this investigation as put forth in Chapter Six.

5.11 MEMO WRITING

Within the context of grounded theory, memos are central to the collection and analysis of data. Memos act as reminders of new ideas the researcher may have on specific aspects of the research. They also act as logs of the developing lines of thinking, which helps with the establishment of the audit trail (Denscombe, 1998:211).

I used memos to capture the thoughts, comparisons and connections I made while investigating the issues of support needs and support structures available at the different levels of the education system within the context of an inclusive classroom. Writing down my thoughts helped with crystallising the directions I needed to pursue with regard to sampling (Charmaz, 2006:73). For example, after analysing the majority of the questionnaires, I realised the need to include participants who had insight in the social grants available to learners and their families. The identification of social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, as well as the high levels of behavioural problems in schools, made me realise that the inclusion of participants from the South African Police Services was essential to the investigation. The Teachers Union representatives were included to shed further light on issues relating to class
size, teacher workload and limited human resources development in schools within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas.

The three types of memos used during this investigation were code notes, theoretical notes and operational notes (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:501). These memos, written in an informal and unofficial language for personal use, moreover served an analytical purpose. During data analysis, I read through the memo’s several times in order to get a sense of the investigation as a whole before breaking it into parts (De Vos, 2005:337).

5.12 CONCLUSION
This chapter provided an account of the research design and the theoretical paradigm wherein the investigation was completed. An explanation of the decisions with regard to sampling, ethical measures, the pilot study as well as the actual data collection process was given. In addition, the procedures used in analysing the data gathered were explained.

The next chapter will comprise an exposition of findings pertaining to the primary and secondary aims, which drove this investigation. The primary aim was to identify and understand the areas of support required by all learners, but more specifically LSEN in an inclusive classroom. The secondary aim was to identify the support services available inside the school, those provided by the ESS, as well as in the community.

In the next chapter, I present the findings of the results, integrated with a discussion on the issues highlighted by these findings.
CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter, a discussion based on the findings of the investigation will be presented. The primary research aim of the investigation was the establishment of a framework for an integrated, holistic and community based education support structure within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas. In order to provide the necessary impetus for such a structure, this investigation was guided by the following secondary questions:

- What are the support challenges (barriers to learning and development) learners and educators face within an inclusive classroom (data gathered in Chapter Six)?
- What support structures are currently available at the various levels of the education system (data collected in Chapter Six)?
- How did the development of inclusive education internationally impact on policy development and the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa (Chapter Two)?
- What was the nature of educational provisioning for learners who experienced barriers to learning (LSEN) before inclusive education, and what were the challenges in policy development and implementation of inclusive education after 1994 (Chapter Three)?
- What impact did the move to an inclusive education system have on the roles of stakeholders within education (Chapter Four)?

The extensive literature search completed in Chapters Two, Three and Four were followed by a qualitative investigation, described extensively in Chapter Five. During the qualitative investigation, data were collected from 120 practising educators, four Education officials, two Teachers Union representatives, as well six community members from private and governmental organisations within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas.

The collected data were analysed in terms of the process discussed in Chapter Five. In short, the questionnaires collected during in Phase One of the investigation were read question by question, comparisons made, similarities noted and codes established. The data collected during Phase Two, by means of semi-structured interviews and a documentary analysis, were then analysed and integrated with data collected in the Phase One. This led to the identification of themes and sub-themes, to be presented and discussed after a brief reference to the biographical details of the participating educators who responded to the questionnaires.
6.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS
The biographical details presented hereafter were collected in order to provide the reader with a more exact picture of the sample (participating educators) used. Characteristics of the sample indicated include gender of educators, the age of educators, their position at school, years of teaching experience, as well as their educational qualifications.

The biographical details are now presented:

6.2.1 Gender
As indicated in Table 6.1, the majority of participating educators were female.

TABLE 6.1: Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.2 Age distribution of participants
The majority of participating educators were in the age group 46 to 60 years, as indicated in Table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2: Age distribution of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 - 35</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 - 45</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 - 60</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.3 Educational qualifications
As shown in Table 6.3, the majority of participating educators had the minimum qualification only, which is a Teaching Diploma.

TABLE 6.3: Educational qualifications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First degree</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.2.4 Years of teaching experience

Table 6.4 indicates that the majority of educators (47.5%) have long service of between 21 to 30 years within the Education Department.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of teaching experience</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>47.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.5 Position held in school

A significant indication, as seen in Table 6.5, is that the majority of participating educators were Level One educators, with only a small number being on post Levels Two and above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position held in school</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal/ Deputy Principal</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Department</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade or learning area head</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Level One</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not indicated</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

Two themes, with sub-themes, presented in Table 6.6, emerged after an analysis of the data collected. A discussion of the themes and sub-themes, following the same layout as in Table 6.6, will hereafter be presented. Quotations taken from the questionnaires as well as semi-
structured interviews will be indicated in incursive. A literature control will be integrated in the discussion.

**TABLE 6.6: Themes and sub-themes of findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES</th>
<th>SUB-THEMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1 Barriers to learning and development within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas for which support is needed</td>
<td>• Poverty and economic hardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High levels of drug and alcohol abuse among both parents and learners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unsafe and inaccessible learning environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of physical resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overcrowded classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Behavioral and emotional difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dysfunctional families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Academic underperformance, due to literacy and numeric challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack or underdevelopment of human resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Educator workload</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Medical related barriers (including HIV/AIDS related illnesses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.2 Support services available to learners and educators at the different levels of the system</td>
<td>• Support provided within the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support available at school level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support provided by School Governing Bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support available through the district-based support teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support available at community level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support provided by parents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A discussion of the main themes and sub-themes as indicated in Table 6.6 will now follow.

**6.3.1 Theme 1: Barriers to learning and development present in schools within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas for which support is needed.**

Educators in schools within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas have to deal with a wide range of barriers to learning and development on a daily basis mainly...
external. As an Education official stated during an interview, “… educators in our district have to deal with multiple barriers in the classroom. It is wide-ranging”. The most prominent sub-themes emerging from the theme above relate to a number of socio-economic problems prevalent in communities surrounding the majority of schools included in this investigation. A variety of these socio-economic factors, discussed below, clearly have an exclusionary effect on the lives of the majority of the poorer learners in the greater Nelson Mandela Metropole.

6.3.1.1 Poverty and economic hardship

The majority of participants included the word “poverty” in their responses. The participants generally perceived many barriers to learning and development as undisputedly related to the inability of large numbers of families to escape the vicious poverty cycle. The overall observation of participants was that the growing poverty in many communities had a direct affect on the ability of families to access education.

Poverty and economic hardship are directly linked to the high levels of unemployment in the area. According to a situational analysis of the Nelson Mandela Metropole approximately 35% of the economically active population is unemployed. The situational analysis also indicates that though the unemployment rate within the Nelson Mandela Metro has declined since 1994 it remains higher that the national average for South Africa (www.nelsonmandelabay.gov.za).

The findings of this investigation further suggest that due to the high unemployment rates, there is an overreliance in numerous families on a variety of social grants. The Review of National Policies of Education (2007), corroborates this perception, maintaining that in 2003, 46.1% of households in the Eastern Cape were accessing social grants (old age pensions, disability grants and child support grants).

The economic hardship experienced by many parents are further compounded by the practice of lending money from unscrupulous money-lenders, which leads to a large number of these social grant and pension recipients finding themselves trapped in a debt-cycle from which they cannot escape (GMSA, 2007). The practice of money-lending, usually at unacceptably and illegally high interest rates, was confirmed after an incident, which a loan shark residing in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth was murdered in August 2009. The police reported that he was found in possession of about 300 identity documents and social grant and pension support cards (Van Staaden, 2009:1).
Severe poverty limits the potential benefits of education, as a poor child is often also a hungry child. A large number of participants teaching in the poorer schools in the Northern Areas as well as the townships of Port Elizabeth reported that due to the economic realities in poor communities, a large number of learners had to cope with issues such as undernutrition and malnutrition on a daily basis. Several participants, including two departmental officials, repeated the phrase, “… a child cannot learn on an empty stomach”. Another participant stated, “… It’s sad to see that children come to school hungry”.

Participants stated that many learners and their families were reliant on school feeding schemes run in some of the poorest primary schools for their survival. An Education official stated, “Some learners only get fed at school. Over weekends, there is no food”. She continued, “Children come to school even on days that they do not really have to attend, for example at the end of the year when schools close two days earlier for learners than for educators…” and “We encourage principals to allow learners to take left-over food home, as it is their only sustenance for the day”.

The finding of this investigation is further confirmed by that of GMSA (2007:22), which states that, “Children are lacking in terms of nutrition. Poor nutrition consequently impacts on their ability to function optimally in the classroom”. The Review of National Policies of Education (2007), confirms that within the Eastern Cape, children in 7% of households were always or often hungry, while in a further 17% of households, children sometimes went hungry. Rudolph (2009:1) reiterates the perception of participants, stating that children who are hungry, sick or afraid cannot learn.

Acknowledging the problems with regard to poverty, and the accompanying undernourishment and malnutrition of children from impoverished families, the National government introduced a National School Nutrition Programme, which is currently present in the poorest primary schools in the Nelson Mandela Metropole. The Review of National Policies of Education (2007), mentions the following with regard to the National School Nutrition Programme program:

The Primary School Feeding Programme set up in 1994 as part of the Integrated Nutrition Programme was initially managed collaboratively at the national level by the Department of Health and the Department of Education. In April 2004, however, accountability for the Programme was transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Education. The change in accountability was accompanied by a change in the name of the Programme, to
the National School Nutrition Programme. The National School Nutrition Programme is currently being funded from a conditional grant allocated to provinces, as well as other directives from the Departments of Education and National Treasury.

The goal of the National School Nutrition Programme is to promote better quality education by enhancing children’s active learning capacity, to alleviate short-term hunger, providing an incentive for children to attend school regularly and punctually, and addressing certain micro-nutrient deficiencies in children.

The targeting strategy for school feeding is described as follows:

- The identification of geographic areas in which poverty levels are high.
- The prioritisation of these selected geographic areas according to severity of poverty.
- The identification of needy schools for school feeding within the selected geographic areas.
- The prioritisation of schools from rural and informal settlements.

The excluding effect, resulting from the effects of severe poverty, is not limited to those learners in schools in the Nelson Mandela Metropole or Eastern Province, but to large numbers of learners from previously disadvantaged communities in the rest of South Africa. This contention is supported by Vally (n.d.), who estimates that nearly 60% of South African children lives in dire poverty (less than R200 per month). He writes, “For these children, the noble and admirable words in our Constitution that grandly proclaims that every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care and social services is often hollow”.

6.3.1.2 High levels of drug and alcohol abuse among both parent and learners

A disquieting factor is the reported high level of drug and alcohol abuse among both learners and the adults they live with. Several participating educators expressed concern that learners started using drugs at a very young age. The GMSA (2007) Report agrees that in primary schools, “children are also drinking at an early age… the younger children tend to go for substances like glue and paraffin”. It was also indicated by participating educators that some parents often encourage their children to procure alcohol on their behalf. One participant stated, “... they send the children to buy alcohol at taverns”.

The GMSA (2007) investigation, in addressing the issue of adult alcohol abuse, states that “Alcohol abuse is a major problem. On doing home visits parents are often under the influence”. The reported high levels of alcohol abuse by parents, especially from schools in
the lower socio-economic areas, result in an increase in the numbers of learners presenting with symptoms of fetal alcohol syndrome. One participant from a school in an extremely poor area stated that, “I have up to 14 out of the 35 learners in the class who are potentially suffering from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome”.

Quko and Ramsay (2006:16) confirm the high level of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome in certain communities, stating that one in every twenty children of school-going age in some South African communities suffers from this condition.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, which is incurable, comprises a range of mild to severe physical and neurobehavioral disorders and is the result of prenatal exposure to alcohol. Children with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome normally experience deficits in general intelligence, language skills, executive functions, memory, attention as well as gross and fine motor skills (Vasta, Miller & Ellis, 2004:67).

6.3.1.3 Unsafe and inaccessible learning environments
Evidently, the environment in which teaching and learning takes place, must first be safe before we can even consider the inclusion of LSEN, especially those who are extremely vulnerable. The unsafe nature of building structures at schools within the Nelson Mandela Metro was highlighted when a strong wind brought the classroom walls of Rufane Donkin Primary School in Gelvandale, Port Elizabeth, down during September 2009. A reporter, Anri Cronjè (2009:1) writes that a female educator and her grade 4 learners present during the incident were severely traumatised. The Principal indicated that the School was only one of ten other schools in the Nelson Mandela Metro placed on the priority list of the Department of Education due to its poor and unsafe nature.

Other schools identified in this report include the secondary schools Loyiso, Solomon Mhlanga, Cingani and Masibambane. Primary schools currently in a derelict state include Sivuyile, Soweto-on–Sea, Jarvis Gqamlana, James Ndulula and Fumisikona. These schools were proclaimed to be in need of emergency repairs in terms of a decision by the Nelson Mandela Metro Council sitting on 10 May 2007. The Metro Council, which expressed itself willing to bring relief to these schools, pointed out that the responsibility for repairs lay with the Department of Education and the Department of Public Works. As to date, no action has been taken to intervene and start with the repair and safeguarding of these schools.
In a separate but comparable incident, Mntuwenkosi Mashologu of Motherwell in Port Elizabeth describes himself in a letter to *The Herald* (2009:3) as enraged about the appalling conditions of classrooms and general neglect of schools, which he believed the Department of Education was knowingly allow to continue. He wrote that learners were exposed to danger as they were accommodated in classrooms with potholes. He mentioned that he was in possession of written proof of his engagement with and pleas to the Department of Education to assist schools in this regard, dating back to 2005.

A small number of participants indicated that, due to the inaccessibility of school buildings the inclusion of disabled LSEN was unrealistic. One participant wrote, “... *schools cannot deal with LSEN due to the inaccessibility of buildings*”

The GMSA Report (2007), which mirrors the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) (2007) Report in reflecting on unsafe learning environments, further points out that in many schools in the lower socio-economic areas broken windows and toilets and poorly maintained and often thorny sport grounds are evident.

Hancock’s (2009:1) report in a local newspaper mirrored these findings. She wrote that the condition of infrastructure in schools in the Eastern Cape was not conducive to teaching and learning. She referred to the conditions under which learners operated as “*horrendous*”. In the same article, Stephan Fray, Principal of Theodore Herzl in Port Elizabeth, was quoted as saying, “*... children cannot hope to learn in an environment where the basic needs were not in place. Many schools have their windows broken on a regular basis, many lack proper toilets, water and even electricity*”.

It seems the findings do not only relate to schools in the Eastern Cape, but point to a reality at national level. Dr Mamphela Ramphele, in an interview with Prega Govender of the *Sunday Times* (2009: 4), described the sorry state of school buildings as a crisis. She was quoted as follows: “*The tragedy is that we, in post-apartheid South Africa, have continued to tolerate conditions that are increasing inequality between the haves and the have-nots*”.

In addition to the learning environment being physical unsafe, the participants in this study reflected on the fact that unsafe learning environments resulting from gangsterism, vandalism, violence, physical or sexual abuse were major barriers to those learners educated in previously disadvantaged schools. With regard to the high incidence of violence that learners have to deal with in the Northern Areas schools in Port Elizabeth, the GMSA Report (2007) stated, “...
Children see it so often, they see little love and peace”. It also stated that gangsterism was rife in the communities surrounding schools in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth with many learners living in constant fear.

An article posted on the Eastern Cape Education Department’s website on 21 August 2009 drew further attention to the high levels of violence in schools. The article, quoting Shelton Kartun, Director of the Anger and Stress Management Centre of SA, indicates that the rise in violence in our schools is a result of many factors, including drug abuse, gangs, a lack of strict forms of punishment as part of a disciplinary policy, which has ‘disempowered’ teachers, exposure to violence on television and electronic games, over-crowded classrooms and a lack of resources, a complete lack of empathy as well as an inability to take responsibility by the learners, who have grown up in a rough environment in which violence and aggression are a way of life. He also mentions the increased use of cell-phones for things such as filming violent acts as ‘entertainment’ to send to others.

Sathiparsad (2003:99) concurs, stating that South African schools are gradually becoming sites of violence for many learners. She articulates the perception that all learners are negatively affected by violence, whether they are victims, perpetrators or observers. She furthermore expresses concern that this continued exposure of learners to violence may ultimately prevent them from developing their full potential and is often playing a role in the social marginalisation or exclusion of these learners.

The problem of safety and security in schools became so severe that it prompted a sitting of the Council of Education Ministers in June 2006. In an attempt to improve the situation, the Council agreed to the following measures:

- To provide infrastructure, such as walls and fences around schools that currently lack these.
- To strengthen the relationship between schools and local police stations.
- The possible introduction of safety officers at high risk schools.
- The possibility of introducing random searches for drugs and weapons at schools.
- All schools have to keep a register, to be completed by all visitors to the premises.
- The introduction of counseling services at schools.
- The identification of specific problems at school.
- The investigation of the possible use of close-circuit television in schools as well as the erection of floodlights around schools.
The findings of a national survey, as reported by Rademeyer (2009:7) further suggest that children are exposed to extremely high levels of violence in the family. This violence comes in the form of members beating each other out of anger or as a result of disagreements, the use of physical punishment to punish younger members of the family, and observing members intentionally physically hurting one another.

In the final analysis, we as South Africans need to acknowledge that our schools are a microcosm of society. Increased levels of violence in schools are only a reflection of the fact that South Africa is considered to be one of the most violent societies in the world. Gangsterism and violence are characteristic of family and community life replicating itself in the school grounds. As indicated in the Editorial Comment of the *African Journal of Psychiatry* (2009:1), violent crimes, including homicides and family murders, are part of the daily lives of South Africans.

In conclusion, it should be noted that though the creation of a safe school is highly challenging in areas where there are high crime rates in the community, it is not an insurmountable task. Clark (2007:66) suggests that the principal, with the help of his senior management team and SGB, should identify community leaders, the South African Police Services, the Department of Welfare and other support structures operating in the community to collaboratively address the challenges of safety and security in schools and their immediate communities.

6.3.1.4 Lack of physical resources

Linked to the above sub-theme is a lack of physical resources. This perceived lack of resources is evident from statements by the participants, which include, “... we have no materials, sport fields, etc.” Participating educators also indicated that they were in dire need of “... radios, televisions, overhead projectors, laptops, puzzles, motor skills apparatus, textbooks and any learning support material”. The majority of participants from schools within the lower socio-economic sector believed that adequate resources were a prerequisite for effective, quality education. One participant stated, “To provide quality education, we need to have proper resources”.

A Teachers Union representative summarised the situation as, “... we are currently implementing inclusive education, which is a first world ideology, with third world resources and a third world education budget”. The SAHRC Report (2007:3) concur that basic resources, such as buildings, sanitation, water, electricity and telephones, are lacking in some schools. In commenting on the poor state of resources in schools, Graham Bloch questions the
wisdom of implementing a new education policy without first addressing the lack of resources such as toilets, electricity and photocopiers (Van der Merwe, 2009:6).

6.3.1.5 Overcrowded classrooms

The majority of participants indicated that overcrowding in classrooms were a major problem. Participants’ responses included phrases like “class size a barrier”; “we struggle with overcrowded classes”; and “We are not able to do anything – too many kids in one class”. Another participant expressed her feelings of frustration with large classes with the words, “... get specialist assistants. We do not have the time and also have big classes”.

This finding was further echoed by a lady, who in a letter to Die Burger (2009: 4), complained about the unfairness of including LSEN in classes where the average class size was 40 learners. She admitted that she felt powerless, due to her inability to provide support in the form of remediation due to overpopulated classrooms. The writer argued that this inability of educators to intervene and support a learner usually resulted in an escalation of the learner’s barriers to learning.

Likewise, the GMSA Report (2007) is in agreement that classrooms in the Nelson Mandela Metropole’s schools are normally overcrowded, which is one reason why learning challenges are not detected early. This Report suggests that where challenges are detected, it is often either too late for remediation or there is no time for individual attention from educators.

During this investigation I found that defining what constitutes overcrowding is not always easy. A participating Teacher Union official consulted for clarification stated the following, “... overcrowding may be measured in terms of the physical attributes within a school or classroom. This relates to having adequate space for teaching and learning, which is determined by factors like the type of the classroom or classroom furniture”. He pointed out that in some schools classrooms were not originally built to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of learners allocated per class. He furthermore explained that when educators complained about overcrowding, they were actually referring to the educator: learner ratio in the classroom. The Union representative presented me with a copy of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, which explains how the Department of Education determines the educator: learner ratio in schools.

The educator: learner ratio constitutes the average number of learners per educator in a given school year. This educator: learner ratio, according to the Educators Employment Act
(1998:3B-74-76), is determined by various complicated factors, which include the specific learning area or phase, the period load of educators, the need to promote certain learning areas, the size of the school, the number of grades in the school, the number of languages used as medium of instruction, the disability of learners, access to the curriculum, poverty, and level of funding.

The participating Teacher Union’s representative elucidated upon the fact that in the ECED educator: learner ratio is 35:1 for secondary schools and 40:1 for primary schools. This, according to the Union official, unfortunately did not take into consideration the organisational realities of schools. In many schools the principal, deputy principals, heads of the different departments and other support staff were included into the calculated educator: learner ratio, although very few principals were actually able to spend their time teaching. He stated, “... if a principal has to teach, he will simply not be able to deal with his role as manager and administrator”. He further explained, “... other senior personnel have to spend a large portion of the day dealing with administrative and disciplinary issues, resulting in the rest of the staff having to compensate by teaching more learners at any given time”.

This educator: learner ratio calculation furthermore does not take into account that due to the variety of subject choices available in secondary schools, some educators, for example in subjects such as Mathematics and Science, have a small number of learners to teach, while other more popular subjects are taken by a larger number of learners. Overcrowding in these classes is inevitable. In addition, it does not contend with the limits that are set on the numbers of learners that are allowed to be accommodated in practical subjects.

The Teacher Union official pointed out, “... notwithstanding the fact that the Educators’ Employment Act 76(1998) clearly stipulates that learners with disabilities included in a mainstream classroom should be weighed heavier in order to provide room for better support, the ECED has until this refused to implement this decision. Learners in special schools are nevertheless weighted in the calculation of educator: learner ratio”.

He further alleged that the overcrowding of classrooms lay at the root of many of the challenges educators had to deal with. He specifically mentioned, “... educators cannot rectify problems with numeric and literacy in overcrowded classrooms”.

Alston (2009:1) in his online newspaper article advocates for smaller classes. He argues that, “... the harsh reality is that children with special needs, as a general rule, need greater
attention”. Alston continues by comparing the successful inclusion in Italy with the current process of inclusion in South Africa. He writes, “The Italians, with the longest period of workable inclusive education (since 1976), have a blanket rule that no class in Italian schools may have more than 25 learners. If there is just one child with special needs, the maximum number of the class is reduced to 20, and additional support teachers are brought in to assist the classroom teacher”.

Blatchford (2003:1) in turn questions the educational soundness of having a higher educator: learner ratio in primary schools than secondary schools. He points out that it is at primary school level where learners need most support.

Blatchford (2003:1) nevertheless acknowledges that the debate on class size is filled with controversy. He explains that on the one side of the debate there are those who strongly agree that smaller class sizes lead to better teaching and improvement in learning. He points to improvements in the area of classroom control, teaching interactions, educators knowledge of learners, as well as educators’ ability to support learner’s reading. He quotes Achilles and Finn whose writings contradict informed policy in various countries as follow, “Class size (reductions) should not just be a cornerstone, but the foundation of educational policy ... for early education”.

Blatchford (2003:1) also puts forth the flipside of this debate, which is that the efficacy of class size reductions is doubtful. He indicates that there are those who advocate for other more cost-effective strategies for improving educational standards. Cherian and Mau (2003:vi) also point out, that research in support of a preference for smaller classes has been inconclusive. The authors mention that the perception of overcrowdedness is linked to how accustomed the learners and educators are to densely populated settings. They further suggest that for those comfortable to large groups, class size may not be an issue.

The finding of this investigation is that participating educators’ sense of being overwhelmed by overcrowded classrooms was related to an overload of barriers to learning and development present in the inclusive classroom. Because of the large numbers of learners needing support and the accompanying limitation in time, the majority of learners simply go unsupported in schools.
This finding is supported by the Review of National Policies of Education (2007), which cautions that teachers with large classes and little experience in diagnostic assessment and remediation will find it difficult to pay close attention to each child’s progress.

6.3.1.6 Behavioral and emotional difficulties

The findings of this investigation indicate that a large number of participating educators in all schools perceive the poor discipline of learners, as manifested in bad behaviour, as a major barrier to learning and development in classrooms. The majority of participants agreed that effective teaching and learning could not take place in the absence of proper discipline. The perception of unacceptable poor discipline and behavioral problems among learners was expressed by participants as: “... they lack respect towards educators”; “... poor self-discipline on part of learners”; “... learners generally do not value knowledge/education”; “…learners are unable to deal positively with peer pressure”; and “... they are chronically absent for no good reason”.

A participating Teacher Union official suggested, “… behavioral problems are the result of learners having difficulty dealing with their poor academic ability...” He furthermore stated, “… a child that cannot read or write, becomes self-conscious … he sticks out like a sore finger in the classroom … and this is how he expresses his frustration”.

Ndamani (2008) confirms this finding, stating that poor discipline in schools is a challenge faced by the educators on a daily basis. Moreover, poor discipline is not only perceived as disruptive to educators, but also impacts on other learners who have a desire to learn.

Cooper (2006:1) states that emotional difficulties in learners become evident in the form of disruptive behaviour, which interferes with teaching and learning in the classroom. He points out that behavioral and emotional problems can be blamed on factors such as poor parenting, poor teaching and discipline in schools, biological predispositions, the negative influence of some television programmes, popular music and what he refers to as the “… inherent badness in some young people”.

Prinsloo (2005:449) adds to the debate, by putting the responsibility for the high level of behavioral problems on situations at schools, which are not contributing to positive character growth. Many schools, in her opinion, do little to enhance the stimulation of creative cognitive development. The author moreover ascribes disciplinary problems to the fact that educators are often not well qualified, lack the knowledge and skills to use different teaching methods,
and are in general demoralised by the challenges they have to face, together with limited support from parents.

Prinsloo (2005:449) and Clark (2007:78) support the finding, pointing to the fact that maintaining discipline is one of the most time-consuming and taxing activities in teaching and at schools. Clark (2007:78) adds that the social environments some schools increase the challenge of managing learner discipline. He nevertheless motivates educators to persist with attempts to establish proper discipline in schools, as many schools have been successful in this regard, irrespective of the negative influence of the social environment.

Clark (2007:98) supported by Prinsloo (2005:459), emphasises the importance of a collaborative approach between schools, parents and communities in dealing with school. He builds this contention on the fact that communities and parents generally view schools in which proper discipline is maintained as good schools. He is convinced that communities and schools will be very willing to be included in any initiative aimed at improving school discipline.

Literature suggests a link between learners’ lack of discipline in school (as discussed under the next sub-theme) and the breakdown of family life. Prinsloo (2005:449) is one of several authors who mention that a normal family life, where parents and grandparents instill values and serve as role models for children, is disappearing. She qualifies this statement with the following words, “The lack of warmth, acceptance and a provision of basic needs has caused a climate of physical and emotional insecurity, which has led to hostile and unruly behaviour of children”.

6.3.1.7 Dysfunctional families
A major concern remains the lack of parental support and participation not only in the school, but in the life of learners in general. The findings of this investigation indicate a high level of dysfunction within families. A participant commented as follows: ‘… *there is constant complaint of abuse in the family*’.

The GMSA Report (2007) upholds this perception of participating educators with the following findings on the family situation:

- Large number of learners living with grandparents or foster parents.
- High incidence of single parent households - mostly headed by females.
• Early exposure to sex and sexual materials (pornography) due to cramped living space – go hand in glove with early onset of sexual interest and activity among learners.
• Inability of parents to provide educational stimulation and support due to their own academic limitations.
• High incidence of emotional and physical abuse, neglect and child rape.

Prinsloo (2005:34) states that the rate of child abuse appears to be “frightfully” escalating in present-day South Africa. This suggested increase in threats to children, in the form of sexual and physical neglect, is confirmed by Judy Van Niekerk of Childline (Hollands, 2009: 2).

6.3.1.8 Academic underperformance due to literacy and numeric challenges
Limited reading, writing and mathematical skills seem to be a major challenge facing learners in the poorer communities. Participants indicated that the problem was not only limited to primary schools, but was also presenting itself as a major challenge in secondary schools. A participant from a secondary school in a conversation pointed to the history scripts he was marking and stated, “… this boy is already in Grade Eleven, but he is not even able to put three letters together to make a coherent word. Unfortunately, no-one ever took the trouble to find out why he cannot read and write. This problem is common in my school”. Another participant indicated, “I have a learner in Grade Eleven who is not able to read or write one word. We knew he had a serious problem when he came to us in Grade Nine, but there was never any way to assist him. His parents do not have money to pay for private interventions”. Another participant expressed her feelings as, “It is depressing and heartbreaking to have to work with learners at high school that cannot read or write”.

This finding is further supported by the view of a participating Teacher Union official, who stated that, “The most prominent barriers remain the challenges related to literacy and numeracy”.

Participants described the limited numeracy and literacy among learners in the following phrases:
• They have learning disabilities like dyslexia.
• Large numbers of learners are unable to follow logical explanation.
• Many learners are slow learners.
• Clear signs of lack of early childhood stimulation in Foundation Phase learners.
• Learners have visual and perceptual difficulties.
• Problems with concentration and recall.
• Learners lack the necessary listening skills.

The academic underperformance of learners in socio-economically deprived schools in the Nelson Mandela Metropole was also revealed in the GMSA Report (2007), which pointed to the fact that “learners have minimal reading and writing skills, which is linked to a high incidence of learning disabilities, which never get remediate”.

Graham Bloch, specialist-educationist, gives credence to the perception of participants by articulating the concern that the academic underperformance of the majority of learners in previously disadvantaged schools will be the single sad theme of the new democratic South Africa (Van der Merwe, 2009:5).

Likewise, this finding is confirmed by the Review of National Policies of Education (2007), which points to the fact that of the twelve African countries participating in the 1999 MLA Project, South Africa scored the lowest average in numeracy, the fifth lowest in literacy, and the third lowest in life skills. Nationally, the Eastern Cape is singled out as one of the provinces where challenges with regard to limitations in reading, writing and mathematics are greatest. The study revealed that the Literacy and Mathematics levels in South Africa were the lowest in the entire world, with a mere 6% to 10% of the country’s students achieving 75% or more, unlike students from developed countries worldwide and particularly from other African countries.

The following excerpt from the Education Summit held on 16 March 2009 supports the concern expressed by the participating educators during this investigation: “With South Africa still being regarded as the most advanced country by other African counterparts, results of a research study conducted two years ago reflected the country’s education Literacy and Mathematics skills as a serious concern”.

Participants in this investigation expressed the opinion that numeracy and literacy problems were also related to the continued education of learners in a language other than their mother tongue especially during the critical Foundation Phase. One participant wrote, “Afrikaans-and Xhosa-speaking parents increasingly demand that their child be educated in English”. Another participant indicated, “… literacy problems are caused by learners receiving their education in a language which is not their mother tongue”.

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Lemmer (1996:324) draws attention to the fact that an obvious preference for English as medium of instruction in schools already emerged among the majority of South Africans in the eighties. Especially Black parents are opting for instruction in English, as opposed to mother tongue instruction, as black languages still have a lower status. In addition, the choice of English instruction for Black learners is related to the fact that mother-tongue instruction is associated with apartheid ideology, in terms of which the use of indigenous languages was part of the then government’s attempts to prevent upward black mobility.

This tendency of parents to enroll their children for English tuition from the moment they enter formal schooling is a major concern, as language is vital in academic success, in that it serves as a vehicle for accessing important knowledge and skills. Nel (2005:151) cautions that learners, who are forced to learn in English too early, may develop a limited ability to speak, write or read both their first and second languages well. The author argues that those learners who experience prolonged exposure to their first language are allowed the opportunity to strengthen the foundation from which the second language is acquired.

Clark (2007:210) articulates the belief that schools commonly underestimate the impact that second or third language education has on learners’ academic performance. He ascribes this to the fact that most learners are able to communicate reasonably well in a social context in their second language, although they may not be capable of understanding the content of the various learning areas they have to study at school.

The SAHRC Report (2007) has concurred that the education of learners in a language other than the mother tongue during the Foundation Phase is not advisable and recommends mother tongue language as medium of instruction for learners, as far as possible.

The development of literacy and innumeracy skills seems to be a complex process with the limited development of these skills directly linked by the participants to the illiteracy and limited levels of involvement in their children’s education of the parent themselves. Parents are viewed as central to the solution with regard to the challenges pertaining to illiteracy and innumeracy. A participating member of the District-based support team in the Port Elizabeth District stated, “… there can be no development with regard to literacy in schools without developing the literacy and innumeracy skills of parent first”. This participant suggested, “... this need to be an imperative within development of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) classes in all affected communities”.

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The responses elicited from several participating educators suggested that illiterate parents not only did not have the capacity to support the academic development of their own children at home, but also lacked the confidence to question educators on how they could assist their children in the development of literacy and numeracy skills.

The limited literacy and numeric level of adults is confirmed by the Eastern Cape Strategic development Plan for 2002-2005, which indicates that the Eastern Cape operates from an extremely low skills base, as 42.4% of the population is functionally illiterate (www.nelsonmandelabay.gov.za).

The results of this investigation suggests that academic underperformance due to illiteracy and innumeracy do not necessarily results from intrinsic barriers to learning and development, but is rather related to external environmental causes.

6.3.1.9 Lack or underdevelopment of human resources

The Department of Education (2005:18) elaborately described human resources as including a wide range of personnel, including special education teachers, learners, parents, community members, psychologists, health workers, community organisations, parent organisations, school governing bodies, school management staff, social workers, community based rehabilitation workers, departmental officials, school nurses, medical doctors, community leaders, traditional healers, nutritionists services, youth, religious and welfare organisations, NGOs and the private sector.

The majority of participants indicated that the total absence of these essential human resources was a severe barrier to effective support to learners in the classroom. Participants responded at a high frequency, with comments like, “We need classroom assistants...” and “… we need someone to help in the class”. These participants perceived the presence of general classroom attendants or assistants as an imperative in providing extra support to LSEN in the classroom.

The participating educators also, expressed the need to have access to professional support personnel. This was reflected in responses like, “… inadequate provision of therapists and remedial teachers” and “We need professional specialist like psychologists, occupational therapists, remedial, therapists, audiologists, social worker”.

Furthermore, findings suggest that the current programmes for in-service human resource development are insufficient. The majority of participating educators felt that their own
training was “inadequate”. This was an area of concern, especially if linked to the statement of a participating Teacher Union official that, “... the level of educators’ knowledge is reflected in the level of the learners’ knowledge. Educators cannot give what they themselves do not possess. If an educator has limited numeric skills, the learner has limited numeric skills”.

Participating educators substantiated that even where they were willing to provide assistance to LSEN they did not feel that they had adequate knowledge or skills to intervene. This perception was reflected in statements like, “I feel that the Department of Education is shirking its duty and putting all the responsibly on the educators. They then do not provide the educators with adequate training and support to meet these broadening roles and responsibilities” and “We do not have the knowledge or skill required to provide remedial assistance”.

This perception is confirmed in a report of the Eastern Cape Education Summit of March 2009, at which it is argued that a lack of skilled educators, and not limited physical resource, especially in the Foundation Phase, was the single most critical challenge that the Department faced.

The overwhelming majority of participating educators expressed a need for more training in the following areas:

- Skills training to cope with writing and language challenges, as well as remedial education.
- Training to improve learners’ study skills and techniques
- Training that will improve educator’s ability to identify, assess and support LSEN.
- Information as to what constitute barriers, as well as courses in remedial education.

The frustration of educators caught in a trap where they were willing but not able to provide assistance to learners experiencing barriers to learning and development was in all probability the central reason for the recent massive increase in the number of educators enrolling for the Advanced Diploma in Education: Special Educational Needs. In a conversation, a senior lecturer in Special Educational Needs at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University’s Education Department commented that the number of in-service educators registering for courses in remedial education had seen a dramatic increase over the past three years. He stated, “From registering only five students we now have more than 80 students enrolling each year, our lecture halls are currently filled to capacity”.

6.3.1.10 Educator workload

The majority of participating educators shared the perception that that they were not able to provide LSEN (which in many schools constitute the majority of learners in the class) with support in the inclusive context, due to time limitations.

That the time constriction was perceived as a major factor impeding on the provision of effective support in the class was expressed as follows by participating educators:

- Overcrowded classroom means limited or no time for intervention.
- We are hampered by time limitations.
- None, because there is no time, we have too much administrative work to do.
- Educators are already overloaded with additional administrative responsibilities.
- Time for effective interventions not available – educators have to focus on completing set syllabi.

Taylor (2009:12) underscores the actuality of time as a highly valued and scarce commodity in schools. He observes that too much of this valued commodity is wasted in dealing with issues related to bureaucratic compliance, which distracts teachers from their core task of teaching. He point out that the effective use of time is a management responsibility, which he believes the majority of South African principals do not exercise effectively.

6.3.1.11 Medical related barriers (including HIV/AIDS related diseases)

Only a limited number of participating educators indicated the presence of intrinsic or medical related problems that went untreated as a barrier to learning and development in their classroom. The small number of participants indicating intrinsic barriers to learning and development may be ascribed to the fact that the majority of LSEN with intrinsic barriers are catered for in special schools where they are provided with adequate support services.

Participants indicated, “… poor hearing and eyesight ...” and “... the effects of HIV/AIDS ...” as medical related barriers to learners’ development at schools. Participants from special schools indicated medical related barriers like “... cerebral palsy...”, “... autism...” and “... RETT...” (a chromosomal abnormality) as barriers to learning and development. Participating educators also indicated that medical related barriers often went hand in glove with other type of barriers.
Kunneke and Orr (2005:431) indicate that chronic diseases have an impact on learners’ school success. Success in school is described as dependent on reasonable school attendance, the psychological well-being of the learner, parents’ attitudes (whether they value school attendance), the attitude of educators towards learners who are chronically ill, as well as good peer relationships. With regards to the effect of HIV/AIDS, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007:313) state that schools will have to deal with the impact of the pandemic on learners, parents and educators equally.

To conclude the discussion on the first identified theme, namely the barriers to learning and development in schools within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas for which support is needed, I wish to state that the mainly external challenges, facing all learners, not only LSEN, are reason for great concern. We must be wary not to create a situation where inclusive education leads to the exclusion of those learners most in need of support.

The availability of support services to educators and learners at the different levels of the education system, as indicated in Table 6.6, will hereafter be discussed.

6.3.2 Theme 2: The availability of support services to educators and learners at different levels of the system

As indicated in the introductory chapters of this investigation, inclusion without adequate support is merely mainstream dumping. The second theme emerging from the data analysis revolves around the identification of support structures available for learners and educators at the different levels of the education system.

The sub-themes, as presented in Table 6.6, which relate to the different levels of support available to LSEN and educators will be discussed hereafter.

6.3.2.1 Support provided within the classroom
As indicated under the theme above the participating educators felt that they were not able to provide effective support to LSEN within the inclusive classroom. They ascribed this as due to time constraints brought about by either a heavy workload, overcrowded classrooms or a lack of knowledge or skills. Where educators indicated they provided support, it was mostly in the form of motivation. One participating educator responded with, “I start each day with a prayer... I try to motivate my learners”. Another educator stated, “Every day I try to increase the learners’ poor self esteem and boost their confidence”.

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The majority of participants indicated that due to the fact that they did not know how to support LSEN, they felt forced to consult with parents with the sole purpose of requesting external professional interventions. Participants indicated that they normally referred parents to the following organisations or persons:

- **Agencies in the broader community such as Child Line and Stop Crime.**
- **Outside specialists such as psychologists, occupational therapists, remedial specialist.**
- **Department of Social Welfare to assist with applications for social grant.**

### 6.3.2.2 Support available at school level

The data suggests clear differences in the levels of support available to LSEN and educators in special schools and mainstream schools, as well as between primary and secondary schools. Another determining factor to the level of support available at school level was stated the socio-economic status of the learner population of the school.

Special schools, still to a large degree cater for LSEN based on the type of barrier involved. These schools, as prior to 1994, have in general the full range of support professionals needed to assist LSEN. Specialists like occupational therapists and speech therapists appointed at these special schools are normally reserved for assisting and providing support to LSEN enrolled at these specific locations. Limiting the services of professional education support personnel to LSEN in specific special schools, means that the ineffective use of these scarce human resources is being maintained.

The participating mainstream school educators suggested that the level of support was generally determined by the socio-economic status of the majority of learners. Those schools serving learners from the higher socio–economic groups indicated fewer barriers to learning and development and higher levels of support available.

The participating educators indicated that the services of support professionals like social workers, remedial therapists or psychologists were non-existent in the majority of mainstream schools, especially those in the poorer communities, where the need was at its highest. Where there were trained remedial educators in schools, they had to be utilised as general educators, due to operational requirements within the individual schools. During a conversation with a qualified remedial educator working in a poor school, she related her situation as, “... my colleagues do not think it is fair that I should be allowed to offer small group remedial classes and carry my heavy teaching load over to other educators”.
One of the inadequacies of support in mainstream schools pointed out by a participating departmental official was the limited allocation of school counselors to provide additional support to LSEN and educators. A departmental official involved in the training of ILSTs suggested, “We need a school counselor in each school if we really want to see support working to the benefit of everyone”.

The findings suggest that the majority of mainstream schools providing educational services to learners from the higher socio-economic class have access to the services of one or more school counselors. Furthermore, schools serving learners from the higher socio-economic group have the necessary financial means to pay for additional staff and support personnel like school counselors.

The majority of participating educators perceived the level of effectiveness of ILSTs in the poorer schools as highly questionable. When quizzed on the functionality of ILSTs, a participating Education official commented, “...whether it is functional, I do not know. Sometimes when we call and ask about ILSTs, we are surprised when no-one seems to know what we are talking about. Very little is being done at secondary level. We are mostly working with the primary schools, especially with the Foundation Phase educators”.

Primary mainstream schools across the board indicated that, with the help of Education Support Programmes, they were establishing ILSTs in an attempt to address the challenges they faced on a daily basis. This was supported by a participating Education official, who pointed out that the members of the district-based support team, in both the Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage districts, were establishing ILST structures in all primary and special schools. A member of the district-based support team in the Port Elizabeth District mentioned, “We did advocacy for the establishment of ILSTs in 200 primary schools. Afterwards, schools had to provide the names of members serving on the ILSTs”. A report provided by an Education official further serves as confirmation that advocacy for the establishment of ILSTs was done in nearly 200 primary schools within the Port Elizabeth District.

The majority of participating educators in primary mainstream schools who indicated that their school had established ILST conversely indicated that the ILSTs were not functioning or not active. Participants mentioned the following reasons:

- ILST members who are too busy with sport.
- ILST members normally have their own workload to consider.
- **ILST members are usually only involved in decisions with regard to promotion of learners, based on their age at the end of the academic year.**
- **ILST members are often not equipped to assists other educators.**

Participating educators from secondary mainstream schools were generally negative as to the level of support available to LSEN and educators. All participants (without any exception) teaching in mainstream secondary schools indicated no knowledge of ILSTs in their schools. One respondent stated, “... the Department is shunning its responsibility”. This lack of education support at secondary school level was confirmed by an Education official, who stated, “... we are still only focusing on the primary schools”.

A limited number of participants indicated that some schools were still in the process of establishing ILSTs and felt that it was still too early to measure the success of outcomes.

The findings of this investigation suggest that even at schools where ILSTs are perceived as functional the intervention strategies were perceived as unsuccessful. Participants indicated the following reasons for the lack of success for interventions ILSTs:
- **Private interventions, suggested by ILST, are unaffordable for the majority of LSEN.**
- **The numbers of learners experiencing barriers are overwhelming.**
- **The schools lack the necessary manpower for the scope of intervention required.**
- **Staff members on ILST themselves do not have the skills and knowledge to be effective.**
- **Interpersonal differences between educators serving in ILST hamper the work.**
- **Parents are uninvolved – they expect the educator to take all the responsibility.**

In contrast, successful interventions programmes by ILSTs were reported by participants who found themselves either in special schools where a full range of specialist support services were available or in schools serving learners from higher socio-economic groups, where expensive outside specialist services could be contracted.

Responses from a large number of participating educators suggested that many educators clearly misunderstood the function of ILSTs. (Chapter Four dealt extensively with the prescribed roles and functions of ILSTs.). A large number of participants perceived the role of ILSTs the provision of extra remedial lessons to learners on a one-on-one basis.
White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001:47) indicates that the primary function of these teams is, “… to put in place properly co-ordinated learner and education support services that will support the learning and teaching by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs”.

An important function of ILSTs is to support teaching and learning in the class through the development of an Individual Support Programme (also referred to as an Individual Education Plan) for those learners identified as presenting with specific barriers to learning and development. According to Mrs Joritsma who presented workshops for District-based support teams in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas during 2008 and 2009, “.... an IEP needs to be seen as the cornerstone to quality education and support for each LSEN”.

An ISP (which is also a prescription for the process of screening, identification, assessment and support), (Department of Education, 2008) is promulgated as vital to LSEN, as it guides the delivery of support intervention and the related services needed to maximise the educational access for each individual LSEN. It, in addition, determines the level and type of support needed by the learner.

The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (Department of Education, 2008) document emphasises that the design and development of the Individual Support Plan needs to be a collaborative approach between the parents, educators and all other professional support personnel involved with LSEN.

In addition, some of the participating educators mistakenly believed that the success of ILSTs should be measured in relation to the successful placement of difficult to manage LSEN in special schools. This is an indication that educators, in general, are not well informed on the procedures prescribed for screening, identification, assessment and support. It is vital that educators understand that the placement of LSEN is feasible only where the level of need is so high that they cannot be accommodated in normal classrooms or schools. The identification of barriers to learning and development means that educators, supported by the ILST, and if necessary, the district-based support team, need to find creative solutions to deal with the challenges presented in the inclusive classroom. Only if all avenues of help have been exhausted, may the ILST of a school recommend placement in a special school.
6.3.2.3 Support provided by School Governing Bodies

During this investigation, the overwhelming majority of participants indicated no or limited support from the SGB for themselves and the LSEN in their care. One educator responded with, “…the SGB is not aware of support and they can’t assist educators when help is requested”. Another participant stated, “No… the SGB is not very literate”. It seems that the school governing bodies did not fully comprehend that they had a vital role to play in the development of a culture of inclusivity and acceptance through direct and indirect support to educators and LSEN.

In the few instances where participants indicated support from the SGB, they mentioned that it was in the form of monies paid to attend staff development programmes. The role and functions was dealt with in Chapter Four.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007:131) confirm that poverty and illiteracy within many school communities are barriers to effective parental participation in SGBs. They suggest that many caregivers and parents in poorer communities are struggling to survive. As a result, they have little or no energy left for social obligations, such as participation in school activities.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007:131) furthermore concur with the findings of this investigation, stating that a lack of educational qualifications have a negative impact on the relations between parents, educators and the community.

6.3.2.4 Support provided by the district-based support team

The perception expressed by the vast majority of participating educators of the support provided by the district-based support team to educators and learners was negative. One participant stated, “District presence is minimal to non-existent… they never make an appearance”.

Due to the frustration caused by what was seen as unnecessary delays and seeming unwillingness to provide support, the participating educators had given up on eliciting the assistance of the district-based support team. One participant articulated the situation as follows, “… waiting lists too long and placement delayed”. Another participating educator responded with the phrase, “… do not use often because they do not respond quickly enough”. A further participant supported this perception of long delays by the district-based support team, stating, “We have two educators at school who forward the names of learners - and it ends there”.

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The exasperation experienced by educators, due to their inability to access support from the DBST, was further deduced from a phrase used by one participant, “Given up ... they are never available”. Participants indicated that they seldom used the services of district-based support teams, for the following reasons:

- The waiting period for interventions was unacceptably long (up to one year). As a result of not finding solutions to challenges, learners are just passed on until they can no longer be promoted or drop out of school.
- Normally receive no feedback on referrals done to district-based support team. District-based support team is perceived as unavailable to help.

When asked to indicate the frequency with which participating educators contacted the district-based support team, the following responses were frequently recorded:

- “Unknown, never, seldom, only for workshop”.
- “Who are these people? Where do I find them?”. 
- “Do not have a DBST”.
- “Only use DBST support for assessment with the purpose for placement in special schools”.

As indicated earlier, a large number of participating educators indicated that they, due to the limitations perceived in the district-based support team, referred parents to private service providers, such as psychologists and occupational therapists if they could afford it. Participants acknowledged that this option of consulting private support specialist was outside the reach of the average learners and their families.

The perception of participating educators that the district-based support team was not available or willing to provide support to educators and learners, was refuted by a participating Education official, who asserted that, “We have been supporting educators and learners to the best of their ability over the years. All they have to do, is to request help”. In defense of the negative view held by educators, it needs to be stated that DBSTs are probably not unwilling to help, but evidence collected suggests that they are seriously impaired in terms of the staff available to provide the assistance on the scale required. A participating educator mentioned, “They are understaffed/overloaded or not willing to visit our schools.” Another participant expressed her sympathy with the members of the district-based support team by pointing out that, “They have their own operational problems”.
The perception of a district-based support team that is understaffed and lacking the capacity to respond to the support needs of educators and LSEN was confirmed by an analysis of the organogram of the Department of Education: Port Elizabeth district. Only two staff members are involved in the development and monitoring of ILSTs. These personnel have to service educators and learners in 316 schools. Even if they are to focus on only one school per working day, they will not be able to cover the full district in a year. Although White Paper 6 promises that district-based support teams will be strengthened in order to provide more effective support, there is currently little sign of this happening.

The following excerpt from the monthly report for January 2009 (provided by a participating Education official) clearly expressed the frustration of education support personnel who are supposed to provide support to educators and LSEN: “There are three administrative posts allocated to this section. For the past year only one of these posts has been filled. Administration forms 50% of my workload and as a result I am unable to pay sufficient attention to the running of this section. We are responsible for 316 schools and even if we receive only ten referrals per day this cannot be handled by one administrative officer”.

Furthermore, inputs from members of the district-based support team suggest that they are working very hard towards the establishment of the ILST as primary support mechanism in schools, but that their hard work does not have any visible effect on the challenges educators have to deal with in schools.

A minority of participants expressed a positive view on the support provided by the district-based support team. These participants indicated that they contacted the district-based support team on a regular basis. They responded with:

- “Regularly, but contact is mostly telephonic”.
- “When I make contact, it focuses on the need to have learners assessed and placed in special schools”.

When quizzed on their knowledge of support programmes provided by the district-based support team, a large number of participants responded that they lacked information or had not benefited from the support programmes provided by the district-based support team.

Where participants had benefited from support programmes they mentioned one or more of the following:
• Reading and innumeracy programmes for Foundation Phase educators (Drop all and read).
• NCS training; this was an introduction to the implementation of the NCS curriculum in all schools.
• In-service: Autism training offered by the principal of a school catering for learners with Autism.
• Learning and support materials, which include books, charts and other support material.
• School psychological services, which focus on the psychological assessment of and crisis intervention for learners and educators, e.g. debriefing after exposure to violence at schools.
• ILST training conducted during 2009 for primary schools.
• Services of remedial therapists and caregivers. These services are available on request, but are only provided if the required personnel are available.

A participating Education official confirmed that support programmes, where they existed were mostly available to primary schools. Existing programmes includes the School Nutrition Programme, HIV/AIDS caregiver support, the scholar transport programme, programmes for psychosocial interventions and programmes focusing on the development of ILSTs in primary schools.

Documentary analysis indicated that successes were only recorded where the district-based support team was working in collaboration with other private and community organisations. The Conceptual and Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of Inclusive Education:District Based Support Teams (Department of Education, 2005:10) emphasises the need for support services to develop a framework of collaboration or teamwork where the different role-players work together in order to address the challenges presented in the class and school in a comprehensive way. Education and support without collaboration is doomed to fail, as children learn at home, in school and in the community. Collaboration between parents, schools and communities is therefore vital in order to deal effectively with barriers to learning and development, which may be present at various levels of the system. In the literature review, presented in Chapter Five, the critical role of collaboration in order to provide successful support to LSEN and educators is highlighted.

The participating educators suggested that, from the perspective of schools, there were very few formal structures for collaboration with outside educators, community members, parents
or education specialists. The majority of participants indicated that collaboration was left to the initiative and prerogative of each individual educator.

Responses elicited from participating educators indicated that *ad-hoc* and informal collaboration took place at the following locations:

- *Cluster meetings with neighboring schools* (time limitations made this not very meaningful).
- *Continuous assessment meetings, where assessment procedures and strategies are discussed with Education officials, once or twice per year.*
- *Social gatherings where educators informally discuss problems, ask advice, and share knowledge of best practices.*

The participating educators further indicated that collaboration, though not formally arranged, did take place inside of their schools. Where there was collaboration inside the school, participants indicated that it took place during:

- *ILST meetings,*
- *Staff meetings,* and
- *Informal discussions during breaks.*

The minority of educators indicated no knowledge of collaboration either inside or outside their school. A small number of participating educators indicated that they never collaborated because as one stated, “*I simply cannot find the time in my busy schedule*”. The lack of formal collaborative initiatives between educators and community structures is but one probable reason why ILSTs are not functioning effectively. ILSTs are currently operating in isolation and giving too little consideration to developing the knowledge or support structures available in the community.

Collaboration between clusters of schools is an extremely useful and cost-effective strategy for providing support. In addition, where different educators share their skills and knowledge, they empower one another (Department of Education, 2007:18). At the level of the district-based support team, the importance of peer support through the clustering of schools is clearly acknowledged. An Education official indicated that, “*... our next big challenge is the clustering of schools*”.
The findings of this investigation indicate that the schools that are currently able to provide support, are those who form collaborative external partnerships. To a question why some schools succeeded at providing a supportive environment, an Education official involved in educational development replied “…all some schools need, is an extra pair of hands, it is not that they do not have the knowledge or that they are unwilling... they just cannot find the time to do everything”.

In reflecting on the limited availability of education support professionals Clark (2007:199) writes, “This is probably the area most in need of development in all provinces and regions”. The author further postulates the reality that despite the Department of Education’s commitment to an inclusive education policy, neither mainstream schools nor regional offices are equipped to deal with the numbers of learners in need of support. He furthermore declares that all should have access to the services of educational psychologists, counselors, district nurses and social workers for diagnostic purposes or advice on how to cope with challenges presenting themselves in the inclusive classroom.

In line with the findings of this investigation, Clark (2007:199) points out that those schools for which the education system presents with limited challenge, are those who can readily access support services. These schools, serving learners from the middle and higher socio-economic groups, have the necessary resources to enable them to pay specialists like school counselors to provide services, either on a full-time or part-time basis.

6.3.2.5 Support available at community level

Effective education and support is determined by the level of the commitment and involvement of the community surrounding the school. Graham Bloch, a well-known South African educationist, in an interview with reporter Kirby Van der Merwe mention that one of the critical ANC resolutions at Polokwane in 2009, was that education needed to be the concern of the wider community (Van Der Merwe, 2009:5).

Rudolph (2009:1) explains that a school community includes the full range of role-players either residing in a specific geographic area or responsible for service provision in that specific area. This definition of community includes all government institutions and officials, NGOs and community structures, as well as faith-based organisations and households.

Even though the participating educators offered diverse responses as to what resources are available in the community, the majority of educators shared the notion that there was no or
limited support available to LSEN or educators in the community. When asked to list the support services available in the community, the vast majority of participant indicated “nothing” or “none”.

In those instances where participants indicated knowledge of community services they mentioned the following:

- *Tina Cowley Reading Centre.*
- *Kip McGrath Remedial Centre.*
- *Master Maths.*
- *NMMU (Missionvale Campus Psychology Department, at a previously determined scale of renumeration).*
- *Municipal health clinics and libraries.*
- *South African Social Services for social related problems and grant applications.*
- *Community Policing Forums and the Victim Support Unit of the South African Police Services, who provide parental assistance for parents whose children display severe behavioral challenges like alcohol and drug abuse and truancy.*

In addition to these responses, the GMSA Report (2007) indicates the availability of the following projects and programmes available to educators and learners through outside organisations:

- *GMSA Seeds of Peace Project, which focuses on the promotion of non-violence in schools and communities.*
- *Special needs educator workshops at Parsons Hill, where educators are empowered to assist in identifying and addressing special educational needs.*
- *Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University’s Clinic for psychological assessment.*
- *HIV/AIDS garden Project where the food from the Project is used to feed learners.*
- *Grassroots, which promotes sex and AIDS awareness through role-play. In addition, it promotes soccer among learners.*
- *Community Police forums, which assist with minimising vandalism in schools.*
- *Community health Clinics for health related matters.*
- *Local general practitioners and volunteer nurses who visit schools on a weekly basis.*
- *Drama at schools, which addresses issues such as bullying and violence among learners.*
In numerous instances where participants indicated knowledge of support services, they qualified their answers by stating that even though these organisations were available there were normally additional challenges that they or learners had to overcome in order to access this support. One participating educator stated that, “Municipal clinics also struggle with a huge workload. Due to this learners have then to wait for hours to be assisted and in the process regularly absenting themselves from school”. A participating social worker indicated, “… where unemployed people go to their Ward Councilor or to social workers for food parcels or other help to relieve extreme poverty, it takes months before they are helped ... I feel sorry for these people, but what can I do ... it’s the system that’s failing them”.

The GMSA Report (2007) corroborates this finding, indicating that in cases where several NGOs, like NICRO, ACVV and Childline, are involved, their response to crises is perceived as retarded. The Report states that, “They do not get to respond to the urgent cases immediately”.

This finding is corroborated by a newspaper report, dated 5 September 2009, wherein Eastern Cape Childline admitted that it was not proud of its performance in the Eastern Cape (Hollands, 2009:2). The report quotes Judy Van Niekerk, Manager of Advocacy and Training of Childline National, as follows: “The Eastern Cape has the second most poverty-stricken children in the country (after Limpopo), yet our statistics shows that calls to our centre in that province are among the lowest in South Africa”. This shortcoming within the Eastern Cape is, according to Van Niekerk, the result of a huge shortage of social workers and NGOs, especially in the rural areas.

The participating educators pointed out those privately owned organisations were only accessible to those parents who had the necessary funds. A large number of participants indicated, “… the prices charged by these organisations are high and prevent the majority of LSEN from using it”. Access to free support services is furthermore limited due to the inability of parents to pay transport costs. It was suggested that many outside organisations expected parents and learners to report directly to their offices.

The participating educators’ perception of limited support available at the level of the community of educators was contested by some of those organisations. It is especially the very comprehensive Safe Schools Directory, distributed by the Project for Conflict Resolution and Development (PCRD) as well as the GMSA Foundation Initiatives that provided documentary evidence that support for social as well as academic barriers to learning and
development, though presenting with challenges, was readily available in some communities. A member of an NGO interviewed, indicated that schools simply needed to initiate collaborative initiatives between themselves and these organisations.

With regard to educators not referring learners to NGOs for support, a senior member of PCRD responded, “I am appalled at the lack of knowledge educators have with regard to where they can go for support ... We have been publishing this manual for the second time now... It is comprehensive... The NGOs can help... we want to take this manual further to include other areas beyond Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage”.

The Safe Schools Directory referred to above, is compiled in collaboration between (PCRD) and Coca Cola Fortune. It is a comprehensive directory of service providers, which profiles a number of organisations within the Port Elizabeth, Uitenhage and Dispatch areas that are able to provide assistance and support to parents, learners and educators. The manual is made available to schools for the use of learners, educators, school counselors and members of the community. In addition it is distributed at local police stations.

Moreover, the PCRD Education Programmes provide the following services to schools:

- Developing Safe Schools programmes, including policies, information and resources, can be used by schools and education districts in the Eastern Cape to ensure that schools become safe places of learning.
- Assisting schools in implementing the Safe Schools programmes, once they have been developed.
- Training Safety Committees to ensure the successful implementation of the programmes.
- Conducting organisational development intervention programmes with district officials in the various Education Districts to assist with the process of transformation in education.
- Providing resources to schools seeking information on various issues that may be affecting them in education.
- Training in conflict management offered to principals, educators, learners and SGB members.

Another mentionable education support initiative is the Supporting the Foundations for Learning Programmes initiated by GMSA. These programmes, compiled in collaboration between the private sector (GMSA) and the Department of Education, were initiated at several primary schools in the Port Elizabeth District. Their primary aim is support to improve quality
and teaching and learning. The main focus is the improvement of reading, writing and innumeracy at Foundation Phase level. These programmes were initiated in response to a national need when regional and international studies pointed to the poor literacy and innumeracy skills in schools. In 2009, the initiatives were implemented at the Abraham Levy Primary, Cebeline Primary, Emafine Primary, Kleinskool Primary and Missionvale Primary.

Research undertaken by Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007:301) emphasises the importance of establishing home-school-community partnerships. The researchers recommend that communities play a stronger role in the socialisation of children in the light of the fact that so many families are, due to illness or death related to HIV/AIDS, unable to provide the necessary socialisation and pedagogical support required for academic development. This belief has been corroborated by Lazarus (2006:541) who points out that although the South African Education policy and the national guidelines for the development of health promoting schools point to the importance of establishing strong community partnerships for effective education support, we as a country still have a very long way to go before this goal is achieved.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007:302) quote Cohen, who coined the term “social capital”, in reference to the power of communities to promote the welfare of its members. According to these authors, Cohen regards social capital within education as those resources available to learners that can promote their educational growth. Examples of social capital include parental interest, as well as the norms and standards enforced by parents and other community members that may shape and control learners’ activities and relationships with adults.

The notion of social capitalism was during this investigation emphasised by several Education officials. One departmental official stated, “... if people wait for the Education Department to do things, they will wait forever. We do not have money, but we have the people power. With the help of the people, we can achieve our goals”.

With regard to the establishment of community based support initiatives, Ebersohn and Eloff (2006:457), suggest the development of an asset based approach to intervention, whereby the strengths instead of the deficiencies within the community are identified. Examples of successful community-school collaborative relationships using this principle are the Cehelbile Primary School and the Sapphire Primary School in Port Elizabeth district, where the principals and school management use the schools to make available social, health and parent skills development services.
An Education official commented on the successes of these schools, “Successful schools are those schools, which use their facilities as places where their community can come to be helped. In one school, the principal has set a room aside for the community, enables them to access government services. One day, he allows the Department of Internal Affairs to visit the school so that the community can apply for documents like birth certificates or identity documents, on another day the school is visited by South African Department of Social Development where parents are assisted in application for things like social grants or pensions. The people do not vandalise the school, because it becomes their place; it is where they go for help.”

The Sapphire Primary School is an example of a school that is owned and supported wholeheartedly by the community. This School has established a parental skills development programme, has become one of the first school fees free schools, has established its own vegetable garden, and provides medical services to learners on its premises. The school sends a clear message that collaboration not only entails getting sponsorships or money into the school, but rather establishing long-term relationships that will empower both the school and the community.

The same Education official argued that schools needed to give incentives for community members to become involved. The unemployed need to have something as motivation. She also warned against a attitude of ‘one size fit all’ solutions to problems involving community members.

6.3.2.6 Support provided by parents
The general perception of participating educators was that parents were not able or willing to support the education process of their children. Most of the challenges pointed out by these participants, such as literacy and numeracy problems, absenteeism, truancy, latecoming and learner substance abuse, were perceived by participants to be linked to the inability of parents to provide a nurturing learning environment, which education was valued.

With regard to the question on the support offered by parents to learners and educators in the inclusive classroom, the vast majority of participating educators indicated limited support and involvement. Participants’ general responses included phrases like, “none”, “very limited”, “nothing”, “uncooperative”, “do the bare minimum” and “expect educator to provide all the necessary support”. One participant gave voice to his frustration by stating that, “... parents
really need to learn to deal with their child’s problem at home, as educators do not have the
time”.

The participants considered the following reasons as the cause for the limited or lack of
participation of parents:

- A lack of knowledge on how to assist their child.
- The fact that a large number of parents is themselves illiterate; have not attained a
matriculation certificate.
- Parents are perceived to be persistently in denial with regard to the learner’s additional
support needs. Educators indicated that parents would rather spend time questioning the
educator’s qualifications and experience when they are informed of the learner’s
additional challenges.
- Due to their lower educational level and economic status, parents do not feel
comfortable taking charge of educational problems. They prefer to leave important
decision making to educators.
- Many parents do not know how to get involved in supporting their child or the school.
- A number of parents live far away from the school and, due to lack of transport, are not
able to attend parent-educator conferences or meetings after school hours.

Several participating educators expressed the view that many parents had the tendency to
neglect their parental duties during the year, tending to make an appearance only after the
school had indicated that their child would not be allowed to proceed to the next grade, due to
poor academic performance or absenteeism. One response reads: “… parents many times
simply ignored invitations to discuss the learner’s general lack of progress, absenteeism and
disciplinary problems. At the end of the year, they turn up angry at us”.

Clark (2007:60) warns that the level of parental participation in schools is determined by the
degree to which educators and the principal welcome parental participation in the activities of
the school. He contends that if parental involvement is limited to discussions of the learner’s
academic progress and the payment of school fees, parental participation is likely to be
limited. The author suggests that parental participation be increased by activities, which may
lead to the parent developing a sense of ownership towards the school. He advises that parents
should be engaged through the following measures:

- The establishment of gardening clubs, which would allow parents to work in the school
garden
• At school tuck-shops, where parents can make and sell school lunches.
• Parents could cater for school functions.
• The provision of flower arrangements for school reception areas and school functions.
• The provision of first aid at sports events.
• The running of second-hand uniform and uniform exchange stores,
• The running of a secondhand bookstore to serve the school’s needs.
• Maintenance and repairs of school buildings and facilities.
• Serving as substitutes for educators who are absent or have to attend workshops.
• Homework supervision after school.
• Fundraising activities such as big walks.
• As officials for sports matches and tournaments.
• As guest speakers for clubs and societies if they have special interest and skills.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2007:308) add to the debate by arguing that educators need to understand that as they are generally the most highly qualified people in a community, they should not only be of assistance to learners, but also use their knowledge to empower parents, for example by providing ABET classes. Clearly, educators need to put more effort into explaining to parents what they can do, instead on focusing on what parents are not doing. Where parents do not have the skills and knowledge to assist their children effectively, educators should provide enabling programmes to parents. Educators also need to establish positive relationships with parents. According to an Education official participating in this investigation, parents often complain that educators treat them as though they are children.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Booth and Ainscow (1998:2) concur that inclusion needs to be evaluated within the context of exclusionary factors within a society. They argue that inclusion is not primarily a question of the physical placement of learners; it is more about limiting the factors that lead to the exclusion of certain groups of learners from the mainstream.

The results of this investigation would seem to suggest that the level of continued mainstream dumping in schools serving learners from the lower socio-economic groups remains unacceptably high. There is no question that too many of our learners, although physically included, are excluded, as they are not able to enjoy the potential benefits of an inclusive quality education as promised by Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001).
As stated above, inclusive education entails far more than just extending the opportunity to be educated to as many learners as possible; it presupposes the effective provision of support to all learners, but more specifically LSEN. Effective support is possible only within a framework of support that is holistic, integrated and community based. Inclusive education without support is exclusion in practice. As Alston (2009:1) puts it, “There is nothing more unequal than the equal treatment of unequals”.
In the next chapter, the proposed framework for the establishing a holistic, integrated, community based educational support structure within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas will be presented.
CHAPTER SEVEN
ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR A HOLISTIC, INTEGRATED, COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT STRUCTURE

7.1 INTRODUCTION
Chapter Six entailed a discussion of the findings of this investigation. These findings, integrated with an extensive discussion and literature review, are now followed by a proposed framework for the establishment of a holistic, integrated; community based educational support structure for the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas. The proposed framework for a holistic, integrated and community based educational support structure, which was the primary aim of this investigation, is framed within the bioecological model presented by Bronfenbrenner.

The following section explores Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model of human development and explains why it is ideally suited for adaptation to the proposed framework of educational support.

7.2 BRONFENBRENNER’S BIOECOLOGICAL MODEL AS ADAPTED FOR EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES
As explained in Chapter One, Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model is conceived as a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls. In Bronfenbrenner’s model, four different systems, presented in Figure 7.1 as the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem, crossed through and influenced by the chronosystem are identified.

Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model is valuable for application to educational support provisioning, as it allows for an assessment of all the possible influences, interactions and interrelations between learners and the different role-players that may impact on the effective support of LSEN in an inclusive setting. The adapted Bronfenbrenner model allows educational support personnel and others involved with supporting LSEN with the opportunity to evaluate the effect of the family, peers, educators, the local community as well as the wider community on efficient support for LSEN.

Bronfenbrenner’s model further points to cultural, political, social and other forces, both on the national and international arena, which may impact on the provision of quality educational support to LSEN. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner’s model indicates that not only do the various
systems have an effect on the learners, but the learners themselves also have an effect on the systems wherein they operate.

In providing effective quality educational support, we consequently have to focus not only on what is happening within one system (or subsystem), but also on the relations and influences between the different systems and subsystems in which learners function. The success of educational support provisioning in one setting, such as the classroom, is reliant on the quality of support provided in other settings, such as the home, the peer group, the school and the local and wider community as a whole. Within the context of Bronfenbrenner’s model, educational support within an inclusive classroom is understood as the responsibility of everyone, at all levels of the system.

An illustrated version (Figure 7.1) of the full bioecological model of Bronfenbrenner’s system as adapted for educational support is provided below. This is followed by a discussion on the influences and interactions of the different systems and subsystems on support provision.

**FIGURE 7.1: Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model as applied to educational support provision**
The following section provides an illustration (Figure 7.2) of the microsystem with its various subsystems significant in the life of learners.

7.2.1 Microsystem

The microsystem, as indicated in Figure 7.2, refers to the direct personal relationships, interactions or settings wherein learners spend the majority of their time. As suggested by Figure 7.2, learners, with their own individual strength and weaknesses, are at the centre of the microsystem and its subsystems. The various subsystems constituting the microsystem are characterised by patterns of daily activities, roles and relationships, which may directly impact on learners’ development. The conditions and events that learners experience in each subsystem will potentially impact on the success of support strategies implemented in another subsystem, such as the classroom. Successful support programmes will therefore have to focus not only on providing support to the learner within the classroom, but support should be extended to all subsystems, which in the context of this investigation may be the family, school and classroom as well as the peer groups in the school, class and community.

FIGURE 7.2: Microsystem

The influence of each subsystem within the microsystem, mentioned above, on the success of quality education support will be discussed hereafter.
The most important subsystem for learners is the family, which may consist of grandparents, parents, brother, sisters, legal guardians or in some cultures, the extended family. In order to provide effective support to LSEN and their families, educators and other individuals in support roles should never underestimate the critical role of the family in the provisioning of educational support. I contend that it is vital that support providers beforehand make an effort to understand and respect the unique strengths and weaknesses of each family system. A thorough evaluation of stresses within a specific family will enable support providers to correctly identify factors that may cause, perpetuate or limit barriers to learning and development in the classroom. This knowledge then needs to become a central component in the design and implementation of meaningful education support programmes for LSEN.

The significance of exploring the characteristics of families is substantiated by the findings of this investigation, which identified familial factors as directly linked to the development of many barriers to learning and development experienced by learners in the classroom. A key factor that needs to be considered in designing a support programme, is the quality of relationships between parents and learners. A regular perception expressed during this investigation was the lack of parental involvement in the lives of learners. Where parents display a caring and loving positive attitude towards learners, the successful outcomes of support strategies should improve. This means that any support strategy for learners whose parents seem to be uncaring and unsupportive needs to take this lack of parental support into consideration in the design of intervention and support strategies.

Related to this finding is the factor of the breakdown of family life, resulting in many learners living either within single parent families or with grandparents. A possible reason for the many learners under the guardianship of grandparents is the continuing high level of mortality due to HIV/AIDS. The fact that HIV/AIDS, and its devastating effect on families’ lives, were indicated by only a small number of participating educators as a possible barrier to learning and development can be ascribed to the continuing stigma related to this disease.

In providing support, educators should acknowledge the fact that an evaluation of family dynamics will play a decisive role in the outcome of educational support programmes or interventions. Factors such as the breakdown of or instability within learners’ most important subsystem (the family) is a highly destructive factor that may leave them highly vulnerable, as the family is the place where children’s basic need for love should be satisfied. If the need for love and acceptance is not satisfied at this level, learners will turn to other places to look for it.
This desire for love and acceptance may manifest itself in problematic, disruptive, attention-seeking behaviour in the class.

Cognisance should be taken that in families headed by a single parent the ability of one parent to adequately support the learner may be compromised. However, the negative effect of this barrier is often mitigated by the availability of grandparents or the extended family. Although the extended family could be used as measure to improve support to LSEN, this presents its own pitfalls, such as that families may adopt or foster children for the sole reason of accessing a foster grant, which they then in some instances abuse.

Another consideration determining the level of support required to LSEN within the inclusive classroom is the socio-economic context and its impact on the learner’s family. One of the factors pointed out during this investigation was the high levels of unemployment and accompanying economic hardship parents had to deal with. The high level of unemployment is, according to the data collected during this investigation, accompanied by an overreliance on social grants in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and its surrounding area.

Consideration has to be given that where parents are unemployed, they may lack the necessary financial resources to provide in the basic needs of the learner. The findings of the investigation indicate that due to high levels of parental unemployment, learners are either malnourished or undernourished. Parents may also be unable to provide their children with schoolclothes, stationery, books, access to media like the internet to assist with homework assignments, and the equipment necessary to take part in extra-mural activities.

Another challenge that has to be dealt with, when providing support to LSEN in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding area, is the high level of illiteracy among parents in lower socio-economic communities. This investigation found that the limited literacy of parents has compromised their ability to support intervention strategies aimed at improving the literacy barriers experienced by their children. Illiterate parents are usually not able to provide support in supervising homework or giving guidance when learners are given assignments to complete at home. Due to their limited literacy, parents are moreover disempowered when it comes to influencing school policies through effective participation in SGBs.

Furthermore, the high levels of violence that learners are exposed to in the family and community need to be considered in the design and implementation of support strategies. Where learners are constantly exposed to violence and abuse, it impacts on their ability to access
education maximally. Exposure to violence and abuse may result in learners being severely traumatised, which in turn may negatively affect their ability to concentrate. Note should be taken that patterns of violence learnt at home and community are often copied by learners in their interactions with peers in the classroom.

The investigation pointed to parental alcohol abuse impacting negatively on the physical, academic and emotional development of learners. In Chapter Six, the findings point to high levels of fetal alcohol syndrome prevalent in learners in poorer communities. In addition to the development of fetal alcohol syndrome, it is argued that parents who are constantly under the influence of alcohol are not only poor role models for vulnerable children, but that their ability to provide their children with quality support is compromised.

Support providers also need to understand and encourage the advocacy role parents can play in order to address shortcomings in support provisioning for LSEN at all levels of the system. The implementation of educational support policies will be more successful if parents formed pressure groups, demanding that their children’s constitutional right to quality education and support must be respected at all levels of the education system.

The peer group (in class and community) forms a significant subsystem, which may positively or negatively affect the eradication of barriers to learning and development. It is therefore important that support and intervention strategies also be directed at peer groups. Interaction with the peer group influences the outcomes of education support and intervention strategies, especially for learners in secondary schools.

In Chapter Four, the investigator pointed to the possible role of peers in the support of LSEN in the inclusive classroom. In addition, education support professionals should focus on developing, among others, life skill programmes, which will enhance leadership ability, assist learners in becoming more independent and learn appropriate social skills, enhance their sense of community “ubuntu” and develop the tolerance needed to enable all learners to effectively interact with the diverse groups within the school population.

Another significant subsystem, which is central to the success of support and intervention strategies, is the school and classroom. The quality of education support is determined by the quality of the learning environment. Learners spend on average eight hours per day in the classroom where they interact with one another (peers) and their educators. One of the vital factors in the successful support of LSEN is the attitude of educators and peers towards the
inclusion of LSEN in the mainstream classroom. As indicated in Chapter Four, educators’ attitudes, beliefs and assumptions are reflected in their daily actions, teaching practices and decision-making. Noteworthy is that learners in the inclusive classroom usually take their cue on how to treat LSEN from their educators. This means that if the educator demonstrates a negative attitude towards LSEN, their classmates will do the same, and vice versa.

The findings of this investigation suggest that the attitude of educators towards the inclusion of LSEN, is linked to unhappiness over too large class sizes and limited physical and human resources. Because of the overloading of classes, with the many learners having different needs that have to be supported, educators have become frustrated and demoralised. This is especially true for schools in the lower socio-economic communities, where no funds are available to employ additional staff. It stands to reason that where class sizes are too big, educators will find it extremely challenging to get to grips with the personal circumstances of each learner in their care. They simply do not have the most important resource, that of time, available.

The possible influence of limited educator skills and knowledge in providing adequate support to LSEN in the inclusive classroom also needs to be evaluated. This matter is crucial, especially given the findings of this investigations, as well as the research conducted during the completion of a Master’s degree in Education that indicate that the majority of educators perceive themselves as not equipped to deal with the support needed by LSEN in an inclusive classroom.

Interestingly, no educators at any stage during this investigation indicated that they themselves (or other educators) could be viewed as a barrier to learning and development. The ample literature filled with negative images of the teaching profession belies this perception. In addition, none of the participating educators verbalised an understanding of the fact that they had to actively find effective coping skills in order to support themselves psychologically in an extremely stressful occupation.

In order to provide effective support it is vital that educators receive ongoing in-service training to sensitisie them on disability issues and capacitate them with the necessary knowledge and skills to provide the support required by LSEN within an inclusive classroom. In addition, consideration will have to be given as to how the limited human resource development and availability, especially in the form of classroom assistants and professional support personnel such as psychologists and speech-hearing and remedial therapists, as indicated in Chapter Six, have affected the success of support strategies within a classroom. I wish to argue that the
current limited capacity in terms of human resources will negatively affect the support of LSEN in an inclusive classroom.

The quality of education support provisions to learners in the classroom or at school is dependent on the successful establishment of ILSTs. According to the Department of Education (2001:29), the primary function of ILSTs is to put into place properly co-ordinated learner and educator support teams. The aim of these teams is to support teaching and learning by identifying and addressing learner, educator and institutional needs. Ongoing in-service training should in addition build the capacity of ILSTs, where established, to assist educators in the screening, identification and assessment of learners who are at risk for developing barriers to learning and development. This investigation points to several factors hampering the ability of ILSTs to provide quality educational support. The lack of capacity within ILSTs, which seriously limits their support possibilities, need to be seriously addressed at all levels of the education system.

In addition to human resources development, the development and availability of physical resources will impact on the provision of quality education support in the classroom. The findings of this investigation, supported by the literature review Chapter One and Chapter Three, indicate that the lack of the most basic resources at schools within the lower socio-economic communities is presenting itself as a serious systemic barrier to learning and the development of all learners.

Effective educational support is also hampered by the absence of safety at schools. The lack of physical safety is further complicated by the high level of behavioral problems that educators have to deal with. In addition, quality educational support is hampered by inaccessible buildings, which according to the data collected in Chapter Six, are generally in a dilapidated state.

In addition, it is at this level that support available though the SGB, the school management team and other support organisations becomes critical. The successful inclusion of LSEN will be determined by the level of enthusiasm the group, mentioned above display in promoting a leaning environment that is accommodating of diversity. These groups have the responsibility to oversee the development of ramps and other structures that will increase the accessibility of school buildings. These groups are also entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring a learning environment that is free from physical, emotional and psychological threats that may exclude LSEN.
In examining the impact of interactions within the different subsystems on learners, support providers also need to consider that learners have an impact on their environment too. For example, learners with special educational needs change the dynamics of the family structure in that parents have to give more attention to them, which may negatively impact on the other children in the family. In the classroom, the high level of support required by LSEN, coupled with the absence of classroom assistants, may also interfere with the ability of educators to assist other learners in the classroom. Where the barrier to learning and development is behavioural in nature, the education of all learners will suffer, as instruction in the class usually becomes difficult or even at times impossible.

7.2.2 Mesosystem

The next system, which is the mesosystem, as illustrated in Figure 7.3, will now be discussed.

According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), the mesosystem comprises interrelations among two or more settings. The mesosystem is therefore a set of systems at the level of the microsystem, such as the peer, family, classroom and school, connected with one another through the learner. The implications of how the various subsystems within the microsystem interact and influence each other and the learner in a reciprocal manner in the provision of quality educational support needs to be evaluated.

**FIGURE 7.3: Mesosystem**
Interactions and influences within the mesosystem include learners (peers) meeting each other on a day-to-day basis in and outside the school and classroom, or in their various communities, parents attending parent-educator conferences or school events like prize-giving functions. They also entail the involvement of the parent with the school (educators, principal, the school governing body, and professional education support providers, such as psychologists and speech, remedial and physiotherapists) through activities, such as volunteering and fund-raising for the school.

The interaction between the families of learners and the school needs to be encouraged as it is, as indicated several times in this investigation, of critical importance for the effective educational support of LSEN. The promotion of collaborative partnerships within the mesosystem, which will have a positive ripple effect on all other subsystems within the microsystem, is crucial to the success of intervention and support for LSEN in inclusive classrooms.

As indicated in Chapter Four, where parents become more involved in the education of their children, not only to the learners, but also to the parents and educators benefit. It is at this level that education support personnel can provide parenting skills programmes to improve the capacity of parents to provide quality support at home. Where parents are illiterate, they need to be empowered through the provision of basic literacy programmes, which can be implemented in collaboration with ABET education centers. Awareness programmes on the effect of alcohol abuse, especially during pregnancy, can be introduced through collaborative partnerships between community health clinics and schools.

Collaborative relationships need to be established, not only between educators within a specific school, but also between schools in the same neighbourhood. An example of possible collaboration, is the clustering of one or more secondary schools with the primary schools in their immediate geographical area. Meetings and support programmes with community organisations, district-based support teams or education development officials should be undertaken within these clusters, as all schools in the same neighbourhood normally have to deal with the same challenges within that specific community.

Beyond the microsystem and the mesosystem linkages lies the exosystem, which will now be discussed.
7.2.3 Exosystem

As indicated in Chapter One, the exosystem includes one or more environments in which the learner is not directly involved, but that may still have an influence on them or the people with whom these learners have intimate (proximal) relationships in their microsystem. Examples include the parents’ place of employment, the DBST, NGOs and other local community organisations.

FIGURE 7.4: Exosystem

Based on the statement by Bronfenbrenner (1979:3), that the most powerful influence affecting a child’s development is the conditions of their parents’ employment, support providers need to evaluate this possible influence on the provision of quality support to LSEN. Quality educational support provided by parents is often negated by their workplace and
accompanying working conditions. For instance, the ability of parents to provide support to their children is often determined by factors such as their ability to take leave when their child is sick, or to leave early when they are summoned to school for vital parent-educator consultations. Another important determinant of parents’ ability to support their children is the availability of quality child care facilities provided by the employer. Where employers do not provide childcare facilities, parents must source external daycare facilities, which can be very expensive. Where parents are not able to pay for quality childcare facilities, they have little choice but to leave their children with a neighbour, friend or in the care of older siblings.

The hours parents work may also impact heavily on their ability to support their children. Parents who are employed as shift worker often leave home very early and return late at night. This results in limited opportunity for parental involvement and supervision, as these parents are many times not available to physically get their children ready for school, to oversee their breakfast, or provide them with a proper school lunch.

In addition, shift workers and other parents who work irregular hours, may not be able to provide assistance with homework. These parents are often not able to avail themselves for parent-educator conferences. As a result of their failure to attend parent-educator conferences, educators often wrongly assume that these parents are uninterested in the well-being of the learner or not willing to provide the support that may be required.

Education support providers should taken into consideration that numerous parents are, due to time restrictions related to their employment, unable to participate in school governance activities, such as fundraising and the election of SGB members, or to attend SGB budget meetings. This may lessen these parents’ chances of influencing school policies, which may have an effect on the development of their children.

*District-based support teams* comprising staff from provincial, district, regional, head offices and special schools, as indicated in Chapter Three, lie at the heart of the envisaged strengthened educational support structure. The findings of this investigation point to limited capacity within the district-based support teams. The fact that educators supporting LSEN are, according to the findings of this investigation, despondent because of the limitations within DBSTs also negatively impacts on the possibility that these vulnerable learners will receive adequate support. In order to live up to the promise of effective support by DBSTs to LSEN and educators within inclusive classrooms, the provincial government will have to provide adequate professional support personnel at the local level.
Other groups involved at this level include the various NGOs and other organisations in the local community. The research findings, presented in Chapter Six, indicate that community organisations and structures, within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas that are involved in providing support to individual learners, families and schools are numerous, but ineffective, due to the fact that they operate in a fragmented manner.

To improve the quality and accessibility of educational support, the various organisations working within the community must be integrated into the school. Consideration should be given to the fact that families and schools are integral parts of the community, with each family connecting with its community in their own unique manner. When support providers design support strategies, they should identify and address factors that may compromise families’ ability to access the available community support structures.

For effective support provision, an important component of community-school partnerships should be the establishment and ongoing development of collaborative relationships between educators, parents and community members and their organisations. For education support to be effective, all roleplayers must have a good understanding of their specific roles and responsibilities within these collaborative partnerships (rules for successful collaboration were examined in Chapter Four). In addition, all roleplayers should receive ongoing training and support from the DBST in this critical area.

Collaborative relationships should not only be established at the level of the exosystem, but should be encouraged at the level of the macrosystem, which will be the area of focus in the next section.

7.2.4 Macrosystem
The macrosystem (surrounded by the chronosystem), as illustrated in Figure 7.5, refers to the attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies dominant within a specific society that may influence the acceptance or rejection of certain policies and theories. In addition, it encompasses the educational, social, health and economic policies and organisational structures put in place by government. Interactions in the other systems discussed so far are affected by what happens in the macrosystem.

In the development of educational support strategies, support providers must evaluate the influences of attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies on inclusion present within schools, as well as within the local and wider community. As indicated in Chapter Two and Chapter
Three, the societal context determines how disability is constructed and therefore influences the support options available to LSEN. Provision for LSEN was, as indicated in Chapter Two, initially driven by superstition and discrimination and the rejection of people with disabilities. This generally changed as the political and social forces relating to disability changed. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the *Brown vs. the Board of Education* racial discrimination case in the United States of America is viewed as a watershed in how society responded to disability.

**FIGURE 7.5: Macrosystem (surrounded by the chronosystem)**

Chapter Two furthermore elaborated on how events in the international political and educational arena impacted on the development of inclusion in most developed and developing countries, including South Africa. As elaborated upon in Chapter Two, educational policy changes on the international arena that spearheaded educational change on national level in South Africa, include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); the World Declaration on Education for All (1990); Standard Rules on the Equalization of
Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1993); the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Education (UNESCO, 1994); and the Millennium Development Goals, which focus on reducing poverty and promoting development.

Chapter Three, in turn, indicated how, before 1994, education and support in South Africa was provided on the basis of race. It also pointed out how this oppression of large numbers of South African citizens led to the development of an education system that in some communities reflect a well-developed First World education and educational support system and in other communities an education support system mirroring those in most developing countries in Africa.

In addition, the literature review offered in Chapter Three highlighted how the provision of education and support prior to 1994 led to a situation where the majority of learners today, in 2009, are considered to have special educational needs, as a result of exposure to poverty. Chapter Three also explored the process of transformation, which was instituted after 1994 to correct the disparities in provision between the different race groups. Chapter Three confirmed that though South Africa had developed very sophisticated education policies, there were still enormous challenges relating to the implementation of these. In order to effectively address these challenges, capacity building within the Provincial and National Education Departments dealing with the implementation of inclusive education in schools should receive priority.

With regard to the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa, Ebersohn (2000:4) states, “We need to address the needs of learners in new education policy. We have to see and deal with social issues and special needs in education as part of a broader net of developmental challenges, challenges, which relate to our society as a whole, as well as education itself”.

The worldwide economic crisis led to an increase in the levels of unemployment in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas. Unemployment, as indicated in Chapter Six, is directly related to poverty and other socio-economic barriers to learning and development. In order for us to address support at the microsystem level, the macro-economic policies of our country have to be adjusted to focus on job creation and the overall eradication of poverty.

The next section deals with the interactions of the chronosystem, which constantly interacts with the other systems discussed above.
7.2.5 Chronosystem

As mentioned in Chapter One, the relationships, influences and interactions within and between the different systems are crossed and affected in a complex manner by developmental timeframes, referred to as the chronosystem. Engelbrecht and Green (2005:10) explain that time has an effect on the contexts in which human beings develop. This has direct consequences for the development of appropriate support strategies and programmes within the inclusive classroom as well as all other systems.

The developmental stage learners find themselves in will impact on the level of support required within the various systems and subsystems. Within the family subsystem, the relationship between parents and children will evolve as the child proceeds through the different developmental stages until he or she reaches maturity and becomes less dependent on parental support. For the majority of LSEN (depending on the type of barrier), the high level of support required when they enter the school system should lessen as they mature. Likewise, the relationship between educator and learners should alter as learners reach higher levels of maturity and independence.

In addition, the influences, interactions and relationship with peers change over time as learners mature. For example, as the majority of adolescents move into adulthood they usually become more susceptible to influences and pressures from their peer group, as opposed to those of parents and educators. The type of community support structure and programmes available will therefore have to reflect the phases of childhood development. This will mean that educational support strategies must be developed and redesigned over time in order to remain age-appropriate for all LSEN.

The timeframe of the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa, spanning a period of twenty years, will also have an impact on the options available for quality educational support. As indicated in Chapter Three, the following timeframes for the implementation of inclusive education were initially set out:

- Short-term steps (2001 - 2003),
- Medium-term steps (2004 - 2008) and

The long-term steps, which promised the expansion of provision to reach the target of 380 special schools and resource centres, and the establishment of 500 full-service schools and district-based support teams, would mean an expansion of support options available. If the
provincial and national education departments are able to deliver on their promises, it would mean that LSEN would in future be accommodated in environments that offer higher levels of educational support than are currently available.

The proposed framework presented in Figure 7.6 is based on the results of the investigation, as indicated in Chapter Six, and framed within Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological system.

FIGURE 7.6: Proposed framework for establishment of holistic, integrated educational support structure for the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas

The following is an alternative representation of the proposed framework, which allows the researcher to deal with the different systems and subsystems in a more expansive manner.
FIGURE 7.7: Alternative illustration of proposed framework for establishment of holistic, integrated educational support structure for the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas

**MICRO SYSTEM**

**FAMILY**
Siblings, grandparents and guardians should establish a home environment that limits the effects of barriers to learning and development. Parents to be assisted by means of ABET classes to eradicate illiteracy, as well as programmes aimed at the development of parenting skills.

**PEERS**
Learners assist one another through the buddy system. School promotes culture of respect and tolerance among learners.

**CLASSROOM**
- Educators to be empowered with knowledge and skills to facilitate inclusion.
- Provide necessary physical resources and assistive devices to benefit LSEN.
- Development of effective ILSTs to develop and facilitate support strategies.
- Classroom assistants must be available to provide additional support to LSEN.
- Administrative assistants should be appointed to relieve educators of administrative burdens.

**SCHOOL MANAGEMENT**
- SGBs need to create conditions for inclusive education by focusing on the reduction or elimination of exclusionary factors or practices in the school and community.
- Principal – provide critical leadership and management skills to staff.

**MESOSYSTEM**
Collaborative partnerships must be developed between roleplayers within the different subsystems of the microsystem. Collaborative partnerships must also include roleplayers at the level of the exosystem.

**EXOSYSTEM**
The focus at this level is on the establishment of collaborative partnerships between schools, parents and the local community structure.
Possible community structures to be utilised to promote inclusion in schools and society include NGOs such as Childline, Lifeline, Government departments, community health clinics, libraries, social welfare, professional medical specialists, such as optometrist, speech-language and occupational therapists, and psychologists.
Included at this level are also private individuals and businesses such as taxi owners, Community Police Forums, pensioners and retired persons.

**MACROSYSTEM**
- Collaborative approach to policy development, which promotes an inclusive society to be followed between Departments of Health, Social Development, Public Works and Safety and Security.
- Develop mechanisms to monitor the implementation of policies, such as health promoting policies, Whole School development, Safe schools policies and inclusive education policies.
- Address values, attitudes, ideologies and philosophies that impede the development of inclusive education through the use of mass media, such as television, radio and popular magazines.
7.3 GUIDELINES

The following guidelines, together with recommendations for educational support, as indicated in Chapter Eight, must be followed in order to provide quality educational support within the holistic, integrated, community based framework proposed in this chapter.

7.3.1 Guidelines pertaining support at microsystem

- **Individual learner**
  Prior to the provision of support, individual learners should be assessed to determine their intrinsic needs, strengths as well as weaknesses. Their strengths once identified, should be used effectively to allow learners not only to be supported, but also to contribute to their own educational success and that of their peers.

- **Family**
  The vital role of parents, as primary educators, needs to be acknowledged and supported. Where the required skills are lacking parents have to be assisted in acquiring such skills. These skills may include parenting skills, literacy skills, and time management skills. Parents also have to be advised how to manage the challenges learners of different ages face within the context of the family, community and at school.

- **Peer group**
  Learners should as much as they desire to be assisted and supported also be encouraged to assist their fellow learners (peers). A programme, involving all learners should be initiated to sensitise them to issues of disability and to respect and tolerate diversity at all levels of society.

- **School Management Teams, SGBs and other management structures**
  Individuals serving on school management structures must be guided and constantly developed in terms of leadership and management skills, which will enable them to develop schools as inclusive institutions built on the principles set out in national health promoting policies. Effective monitoring tools to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive education policies must be developed by principals and SGB members, in collaboration with all roleplayers.

7.3.2 Guidelines to be followed at level of mesosystem

As indicated in Figure 7.3, the mesosystem is the level at which various subsystems within the microsystem interact and influence one another. The promotion of positive and ongoing interaction through the development of collaborative parent-educator-community
partnerships should be initiated by the various SGBs and school managers at this level. Broad
guidelines for the development of successful collaborative partnerships were provided in
Chapter Four.

7.3.3 Guidelines to be followed at level of exosystem

- Community
In Chapter Eight, extensive suggestions are offered for the possible role of the community in
providing support to LSEN. Education support provision must first and foremost be internally
focused, in that it is elicited from inside the school and the immediate community. Care needs
to be taken that the support provided, is accessible and appropriate. Only when all attempts to
identify appropriate support within the school and its immediate community have failed,
should outside interventions, such as interventions and support from the DBST, be sought.

Education support initiatives should be tailored to the specific support needs of a school
within the context of the community in which the school is situated. All schools under the
leadership of their principals should undertake an audit of all support structures available to
them within the community. The different levels and types of support that need to be
integrated should be determined by the specific support needs of learners, educators and the
wider school community.

When developing education support strategies, the focus needs to be on the identification of
the strengths rather than the deficiencies within a school community. The concept of social
capitalism and the asset based trends mentioned in Chapter Six need to be adhered to as far as
possible.

The educational support provided, should focus on the prompt identification and remediation
of barriers to learning and development at all levels of the system.

- District-based support teams
Capacity building mechanisms to enable these officials to perform their support roles
effectively need to be put in place at the DBST level.

7.3.3 Guidelines to be followed at level of macrosystem

- National and provincial education departments
The implementation of policies must be evaluated through the establishment of strict
monitoring mechanisms. Specific guidelines with regard to the role of departmental officials
at the provincial level of support need to be provided. All office-bearers responsible for implementing policies should be held accountable for failing to implement policies or not assisting school in creating conditions that favour inclusive education.

- Values and attitudes
Schools should initiate programmes aimed at the development of a culture in which diversity is respected. The media play a vital role in perceptions of disability and should be encouraged to promote programmes and material that will positively affect such perceptions in schools and society. Churches and other moral-based organisations should engender the development of a moral and value system in which respect and tolerance is made central to their programmes.

7.3.4 Guidelines relating to level of chronosystem
Education support programmes and interventions should reflect the developmental stages of learners and educators.

Different programmes of educational intervention and support have to be developed for learners within different age groups. Younger learners, depending on the nature and degree of the barriers present, will generally need a higher level of support, which ought to lessen as they become more mature and independent over time.

Likewise, different programmes of support should be developed for educators who are in junior positions, or who indicate that they do not have the necessary skills, knowledge or attitude to successfully support LSEN in their classes.

7.4 CONCLUSION
As indicated in this chapter, adequate educational support is influenced by interactions, influences and interrelations at all levels at the system. Before ILSTs, educators or parents can initiate the inclusion of LSEN in mainstream schools, they must first ensure that the needs of LSEN can be met by an inclusive educational support structure, which reflects a holistic, integrated, community based approach to support provision.

Though mainly external barriers to learning and development was pointed out by participants, support providers need to carefully consider addressing all learner needs including those stemming from intrinsic barriers to learning and development. Note should also be taken, that
providing effective and adequate educational support is, just as inclusive education, never a destination, but an ongoing journey.

The following chapter brings this investigation to a close. In the final chapter, Chapter Eight, a summary of chapters are provided, the main findings of the investigation are highlighted and recommendations are offered, based on the findings emerging from the two themes and sub-themes as presented in Chapter Six. It also describes the limitations of the investigation and offers suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER EIGHT
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION

8.1 INTRODUCTION
In this chapter, which brings this investigation to a close, the main findings of the investigation are highlighted and recommendations are offered, based on the findings emerging from the two themes and sub-themes as presented in Chapter Six.

8.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS
Below is a summary of the chapters.

Chapter One presented the rationale and significance for this investigation. The research problem was formulated and put into perspective, and the research design and methodologies were discussed and clarified. The Chapter was concluded with a clarification of the major concepts used in the investigation, the scope of the investigation was demarcated, and the value of the study elucidated.

Chapter Two set out to define inclusive education. In addition, it provides an international perspective on the implementation of inclusive education.

In Chapter Three, the investigator mapped out the historical development of educational provisioning for LSEN in South Africa before 1994. Additionally, she examined the development and processes involved in the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa after 1994.

Chapter Four presented the practical implications of implementing Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) on the support roles of education support providers in South African schools.

Chapter Five encompassed the practical execution of the investigation. Within this chapter, a detailed theoretical exposition of the research design and methodology introduced in Chapter One was provided.
Chapter Six constituted a discussion of the findings of the investigation. The themes and sub-themes emerging from an analysis of data collected during the investigation, were presented and discussed.

In Chapter Seven, the investigator presented a proposal for the establishment of an integrated, holistic, community based educational support structure for the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas. The proposed framework, structured on the bioecological model introduced by Bronfenbrenner, was integrated with the findings of this investigation.

Chapter Eight concludes the investigation with the presentation of the final summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the investigation.

The following is a brief discussion on the main findings of the investigation:

8.3 MAIN FINDINGS

The results of this investigation led to the following conclusions, related to the research aims.

Firstly, this investigation was guided by the primary research aim, which was: Establishing a framework for an integrated, holistic, community based educational support structure in schools within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas.

To steer the establishment of such a framework of educational support, the major secondary aim focused on the identification of barriers to learning and development for which LSEN and educators in the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas needed support. The findings suggest that whereas race had been the deciding factor in terms of the quality of education and support for LSEN available before 1994, the socio-economic status of the relevant community has become the deciding factor.

The following barriers to learning and development, presented as sub-themes to Theme One in Chapter Six, emerged:

- Poverty and economic hardship, related to high levels of unemployment.
- The prevalence of high levels of drug and alcohol abuse among both parent and learners.
- The inclusion of LSEN is hampered by unsafe and inaccessible learning environments.
- Overcrowded classrooms are impeding the possibility of effective support for LSEN in the inclusive classroom.
• Behavioural and emotional problems, which interfere with the establishment of a culture of teaching, learning and effective support for LSEN.
• High prevalence of dysfunctional families.
• The majority of educators are overwhelmed by academic underperformance of learners due to literacy and numeric challenges.
• Successful inclusive education is sabotaged by a lack of human resources and inadequate human resources development to help educators deal with challenges within the inclusive classroom.
• Presence of various medical related barriers (including HIV/AIDS related illnesses).

Secondly, the investigation aimed to identify the educational support structures available for LSEN and educators at all level of the education system. The finding of this investigation, as indicated in Chapter Six, is that quality educational support in the form of specialist education support providers such as psychologists, remedial educators and occupational therapists and physiotherapists is dependent on the parents’ level of income. Only LSEN whose parents or schools are financially able to pay for the services of private support professionals are generally able to access additional educational support services.

The findings further indicate that very limited support is available to LSEN in the majority of primary and secondary mainstream classrooms within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas. Attempts to establish ILSTs to coordinate support in primary schools were made, but the effectiveness of these ILSTs is highly questionable. Enabling mechanisms and conditions that should assist ILST members to operate effectively are unfortunately lacking at school level.

In this study, the lack of support provision in primary and secondary mainstream schools was ascribed to various factors such as time limitations, class size, educators’ high workload, educators’ lack of skills and knowledge, and the limited human resources available. Effective support for LSEN, especially for LSEN with severe physical and intellectual disabilities, is more readily available in special schools.

Very limited support is also provided at the level of SGBs and school management. As indicated in Chapter Six, SGBs, principals and school management are currently not providing the necessary leadership and support required to encourage and promote the development of schools as inclusive settings.
The overriding perception of educators was that support from the district-based support teams was ineffective. Support programmes, such as learner transportation, psychosocial services, HIV/AIDS and school nutrition programmes are available for some learners in schools within the lower socio-economic areas.

The findings of this investigation led to the identification of a multitude of other potential community based education support structures, as indicated in Chapter Six, within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas. The identification of numerous community based support structures refutes the perceptions of the majority of participating educators that very little support is available within the community.

This flawed perception that limited educational support is available can be ascribed to the fact that the majority of these support services are still to a large degree, as before the 1994 era, fragmented, with each organisation or programme functioning in total isolation from one another. It is clear that to effectively access support on behalf of LSEN and themselves, educators must gain a more comprehensive understanding of the array of support services available to both their learners and themselves. Educators, especially principals and school managers, must pro-actively initiate collaborative partnerships with community organisations, with the aim of integrating their services into their schools.

Thirdly, the investigation aimed to assess the practical implications of implementing Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) in the support provided by education support providers in South African schools. This investigation, as put forth in Chapter Four and Chapter Six, concluded that the current roles of stakeholders would have to be altered in order to provide effective educational support. Where support provision is done in isolation, a more effective approach, based on collaborative partnerships between all role-players, must be developed.

Fourthly, the investigation indicated, by means of the literature review provided in Chapter Two, that the development of inclusive education internationally impacted on policy development and the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa.

Finally, the investigation, by means of a literature review presented in Chapter Three, indicated that the democratically elected government in South Africa after 1994 made enormous strides in policy development to change education support from one characterised by exclusion to one guaranteeing inclusion as a constitutional right. This investigation also
highlighted the challenges in implementing these inclusive education policies. As indicated in Chapter Six, the most prominent barriers to the successful implementation of inclusive education are related to socio-economic factors, which have an exclusionary effect for those LSEN living in poorer communities.

Recommendations to improve educational support at the different levels of the system are presented below:

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORT AT THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

In this section, the researcher set out recommendations, which should be implemented at the various levels of the education system, to curb the exclusion of learners from effective educational support. Recommendations will once more be framed within the bioecological model as presented by Bronfenbrenner.

8.4.1 Recommendations for support at microsystem and mesosystem level

The following section presents recommendations to improve support at the various subsystems constituting the microsystem. It is envisaged that these recommendations for support within the microsystem will engender better interaction and positive influences within the mesosystem.

8.4.1.1 Recommendations to improve classroom support

As indicated in Chapter Six, limited additional educational support is provided to LSEN in classrooms in mainstream primary and secondary schools. This is largely ascribed to time limitations resulting from educator workload, as well as inadequate human and physical resources. Recommendations to deal with these challenges are discussed below.

Time constraints, linked to limited human resources, must be addressed by identifying the human resources available within the community. Where volunteers from within the community are used, strict screening guidelines need to be established, to enhance the safety of vulnerable learners.

Volunteers, who may include unemployed parents and retired persons from the community, could be used as classroom assistants. In primary schools, these classroom assistants could be trained to assist LSEN with the development of basic skills literacy and numeracy skills. Classroom assistants could, in addition, deal with administrative responsibilities, assist in
developing life skills, oversee the completion of homework tasks and assignments, as well as serve as sport coaches.

Furthermore, educators need training on how to make more effective use of peer support in the classroom. With regard to peer support, the following recommendations are offered:

- All learners, but more specifically those in higher grades, need to take responsibility for their own learning as well as that of their peers. To enhance success, every member of the inclusive classroom must be aware of his or her primary role in the classroom. Learners must understand that the primary aim of schools is the development of all learners on academic, social and cultural levels. The primary role of the educator is to teach, that of the learner to learn, and jointly learners and educators need to respect each other and take responsibility by maximally supporting one another’s needs in an inclusive classroom.

- All learners must be actively encouraged to voluntary support their peers, as well as learners in lower grades, for example, by using the big brother/big sister or buddy concept. Support by peers within the classroom should guide against the disempowerment of individual learners, but rather aim to enhance and develop greater independence. Within this focus of support for LSEN, note should be taken that individual LSEN may have intrinsic initiatives and strengths, which they can use to support their own education and in the process develop the required level of independence. These strengths could be used to in turn provide support to peers.

Learners must be supported through adaptations within the curriculum. Where educators do not possess the necessary knowledge on how to adapt the curriculum to the needs of specific LSEN, assistance from the district-based support team should be sought. Class curriculum adaptations for LSEN may include the following:

- Where possible, design the curriculum down to match learners’ ability.
- Make lessons interesting through dramatisation and the development of visually stimulating learning aids.
- Educators need to provide individual assistance, when possible.
- Educators should provide LSEN with additional time to complete tasks.
- Extra homework/Additional tasks should be provided.

In addition to classroom support, it seems as if support at school level also needs strengthening. The following recommendations focus on the provision of support to improve support at schools level.
8.4.1.2 Recommendations to improve school level support

The investigation concluded that whether support is available on site is dependent on the type of school as well as the socio-economic status of the school population. Special schools currently have, to a large degree, the necessary support staff, while the majority of primary and secondary mainstream schools struggle in the absence of professional support personnel. Mainstream schools with learners from the higher socio-economic groups compensate for this limitation by either using their own resources to pay for additional support or providing parents with references to private professional support providers.

The Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education is still in the process of establishing ILSTs in primary schools, whose duty it is to facilitate support for LSEN. In instances where ILSTs have been established, they are currently not functional. In order to improve the functioning of ILSTs and lessen the dependency of educators on outside referrals, all educators should be empowered through a compulsory remedial education course.

Currently, no ILSTs exist at secondary school level. It is imperative that the process of developing support structures at this level should receive immediate attention.

I wish to recommend that less emphasis be placed on the provision of an ever-widening range of support for LSEN, primarily by educators serving in ILSTs. I acknowledge that educators stand central to providing support in the classroom, but contend that the type of support they are required to give should be clarified by the Department of Education. The primary support to be provided by educators should be academic in nature; with social, cultural and physical benefits for learners the integrated results of this academic development. Clearly, educators must focus all their energies and creativity in addressing literacy and numeracy challenges.

At school level the position of school counselor should be reinstated. School counselors as trained support professionals could take the lead in facilitating support through promoting collaborative partnerships with parents and the community.

All support dealing with non-academic issues should be provided within a collaborative approach where the community, family and community organisations should be involved. Furthermore, to achieve the recommendation that collaborative partnerships be established, more prominence must be given to the role of school management and SGBs in developing inclusive structures and community-school collaborations in schools. The results of this study
suggest that the critical responsibility of developing and providing educational support to LSEN is too often handed to Post Level One educators, who seldom have the necessary authority to bring about change in the school.

Leadership skills will be vital in the establishment of inclusive schools. In order to provide principals and school managers with the necessary leadership skills to develop inclusive schools, compulsory workshops and continuous, well-structured mentoring programmes needs to be provided by Education development officials.

It is vital that principals and school managers indicate their own support for the inclusion of LSEN by creating the necessary time, space and other enabling mechanisms for educators as individuals or as members of their ILST to perform their required support roles. When principals and school management fail to do so, they are directly sabotaging all initiatives at additional support for LSEN at their schools.

Principals and school management have the responsibility to monitor the successful implementation of all government’s educational policies. In order to promote the development of inclusive schools, as stipulated in Education White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001), they should create a welcoming space for parents and the rest of the community to become involved in providing support to their own children as well as the educators teaching them. Inclusive practice implementation initiatives by principals must be monitored at district and provincial levels in order to make principals and school managers more accountable for the lack of success, or where inclusion is not actively encouraged and promoted.

Principals as managers and leaders of their institutions, together with school management teams and SGBs, should set the example by collaborating with community organisations, with the aim of drawing them into the school direct and/or obtaining indirect support for educators and learners. Principals, SGBs and school management must pro-actively promote and market their schools as an inclusive community in which diversity is not merely tolerated, but in fact welcomed. Principals and school managers must make a concerted effort to identify and integrate the available support structures in a holistic structure of support, provided within the framework of a health promoting, whole school development approach.

To fulfill their vital support role, all SGBs should establish a variety of sub-committees, as indicated by the challenges specific to their institutions. These committees must focus exclusively on the creation of an environment and atmosphere in which all learners and
educators feel safe and supported. A vital function of such support committees should be the development of increased parental involvement in and support to their schools. SGB members are mostly democratically elected members who have the mandate to be representatives of the rest of the parent community. They should therefore work in close collaboration with ILSTs to develop or enhance parent-community-school partnerships.

SGBs, PTAs and other parent bodies need to fulfill their mandate, which is the establishment of quality education and support at the schools where they were elected. The South African Schools Act (1996) clearly indicates that the role of SGBs is to support educators and learners.

An essential part of the SGB’s mandate should be to ensure that educators are supported with regard to developing the necessary knowledge and skills to do justice to policy implementation at grassroots level. Workshops on time management and basic counseling skills and a resilience programme to enable educators to deal effectively with their stressful occupations should be introduced.

The level of support provided by parents not involved in SGBs, PTAs and other parent bodies also needs to be improved. Recommendations to enhance greater collaboration between schools, educators and parents are discussed below.

8.4.1.3 Recommendations to improve parental participation

Parents, notwithstanding increased rights to be involved in schools, are still not living up to the expectations of educators. Chapter Six of this investigation elaborated on the various reasons for the limited parental participation and support in education. Recommendations aimed at involving parents in a meaningful manner in schools are presented below.

Schools should make concerted efforts to identify, limit and reduce challenges that may limit parental participation at school level. Special measures must be developed to reach and involve those parents who are, due to their own barriers, not able to commit themselves to the education of their children. These parents, are often single parents who are in full employment and find it difficult to get time off to attend and support school activities; and parents who live far away from school and cannot attend parent-educator meetings, due to lack of transport. Where necessary, special programmes should be developed to build the problem-solving capacities of parents.
Parents could support the process of teaching and learning by doing the following:

- Create an education friendly lifestyle by enrolling learners at the local library.
- Read to their children and provide their children with the necessary tools and equipment for schooling, for example, make sure that they have the required writing equipment such as pencils and pens.
- Take learners on educational excursions, for example, on trips to local museums and concerts.
- Provide learners with enough emotional support. This can be achieved by spending time playing with their children, by being emotional available for their children and by assisting with monitoring homework.
- Always attend meetings with educators, when requested. During these meetings, parents must be honest with educators about the history of their child as well as their own living situation, which may impact on the learner’s development.
- Provide opportunities for additional tuition in instances where learners may struggle academically.
- Acquaint themselves with the type of barriers their children have to cope with. They need to know realistically the prospects for academic and social success within the context of the specific barriers.
- When educators make recommendations for private assessments and support, parents should as far as possible follow through on these.
- Communicate information relating to or affecting the learners on a regular basis to educators, for example, where the learners were privately assessed by a professional such as a psychologist or occupational therapist, the educator needs to be informed and included in the process.
- Play a role as advocates for LSEN by confronting the Department of Education and demanding higher level of support for LSEN.

Parents could, in addition, increase their general involvement in the school by the following means:

- Providing transport for outings/excursions to learners or the school, if possible.
- Becoming involved and supporting all school functions and activities.

The community support provided directly and indirectly to the school population will enhance the support possibilities for everyone involved. Recommendations to facilitate community support are discussed below.
8.4.2 Recommendations to improve support at level of exosystem

Schools are normally a microcosm of the communities in which they exist. We therefore need to address barriers to learning and development within the context of the community. Community members themselves will have to play a much bigger role in providing educational support to schools, especially in relation to the successful inclusion of LSEN. Increased support from the community will free up vital time that educators can use in the execution of their primary role as teachers. The following section provides recommendations to be followed at exosystem level.

8.4.2.1 Recommendations to improve community support

It is critical that schools identify and integrate community resources and services in order for these to become part of the schools’ daily organisational structures. Support offered by NGOs, government organisations and faith-based organisations is readily available but is currently not fully utilised. NGOs and other private business are not only willing, but capable of providing support where it is most needed. The reason for the perception of non-support from community organisations is that support is still very fragmented and provided as piece-meal interventions, with each organisation focusing only on a specific type of challenge.

In order to integrate community support services, a priority should be the establishment of community resource centres where learners can not only be supervised and guided in terms of homework and studying, but that can also serve as a point from where they can access social and health related services. These community resource centres could also offer counseling to parents who are struggling with providing effective guidance and support to their children.

It is recommended that community members and organisations undertake the following support roles:

- Community leaders, especially religious leaders, could intervene in disciplinary and socio-economic problems. Religious leaders are potentially able to serve as positive role models to learners with regard to values and morals. Religious leaders are assumed to have the moral authority to facilitate the creation of a more positive attitude towards educators and education.

- Community leaders must become advocates for the establishment of community resource facilities, libraries and internet cafés or media centres.

- Communities should organise themselves into pressure groups in order to speak out against the labeling of LSEN, by modeling acceptance of LSEN in the community and thus guiding others to be more understanding and supportive of LSEN. These groups need
to put pressure on the Department of Education to provide adequate education support to LSEN.

- Community members, especially the unemployed, could assist in maintaining school buildings.
- Voluntary forums must be assembled within the community to provide security after school hours to address the problem of the escalating vandalism of school properties.
- Professionals within the community must avail their professional services on a *pro bono* basis to schools serving needy learners.
- These professionals must also encourage their fellow professionals to visit schools in order to provide educators with practical advice.
- Communities should take responsibility for the establishment of sport and recreational clubs to ensure that learners are occupied positively after school hours.
- Private businesses and individuals should donate materials like paint, cardboard, newspapers, magazines and other excess items to be used during educational activities in class. Private businesses could provide learnerships. These learnerships should focus on those learners who struggle academically, but have demonstrated some practical ability in, for example, welding, carpentry and hairdressing.

In terms of the framework proposed, support must be accessed outside of the immediate community only if it is deemed unavailable in that community. Support outside the community should be accessed through the assistance and intervention of the DBST, which will be discussed in the following section.

### 8.4.2.2 Recommendations to improve support by district-based support teams

This investigation concluded that educators have very limited knowledge of the services offered by DBSTs. To rectify this problem, DBSTs must urgently initiate a campaign to inform, parents, educators as well as the wider school community of the services provided by them. In this regard, the establishment of an annual roadshow should be considered.

The current model of in-service training used by the DBST, in terms of which only a limited number of staff members are called to workshops and then expected to drive the implementation of departmental policies and initiatives on their return, should be abolished. These staff members, usually Post Level One educators, are given the responsibility to drive policies, but unfortunately do not have the authority to implement these at school. The implementation of all policies is, and must remain, the prerogative of principals and SGBs.
The workshop model of training and information dissemination mentioned above should be replaced by a school-based approach. If departmental officials did the training on site, where they are able to evaluate the challenges and strengths within schools, where educators must implement these initiatives, more realistic expectations of success would be set. Doing the training, Education officials, will moreover be presented with opportunities to model best practices within the context of the school and the school community to educators.

The investigation furthermore highlighted the limited capacity that exists within DBSTs. In order to re-establish the confidence of educators in the ability of DBSTs to provide effective support, the Department of Education must put in place capacity building mechanisms that will enable DBSTs to respond speedily to requests for assistance from educators.

The successful School Nutrition Programme has nevertheless proven that, through the establishment of collaborative agreements and effective support provision to LSEN, educators and parents could be improved. DBSTs must move their focus from the provision of training to educators to the development of knowledge and skills among school principals, school management and all SGB members. Training in how to establish support networks and develop successful collaborative partnerships in the school and communities should be prioritised.

The number of professional support personnel theoretically part of the DBST, but in practice allocated to specific sites like special schools, is extremely limited, which necessitates a more indirect level of support to LSEN. In order to achieve a more effective and equitable access to education support professionals, these specialists should be removed from specific sites and distributed more evenly amongst schools.

Direct support to educators and learners must be replaced by an indirect intervention process that focuses on the prevention, screening and identification of barriers to learning and development, as well as the development of intervention programmes to address the challenges identified.

Support programmes, like the Nutrition Programme, Learner Transportation; HIV/AIDS and the psychosocial services currently available for primary schools, should be extended to also include learners in secondary schools.
Developments within the exosystem are determined and influenced by the level of support provided at the macrosystem level. Recommendations to be followed at macrosystem level are provided below.

8.4.3 Recommendations to improve support at level of macrosystem
The values and attitudes held by adults, including educators, principals, SGB members and parents will have an important impact on the development of effective educational support structures. Recommendations to be followed at macrosystem level are presented below.

All roleplayers should continuously evaluate whether their own attitudes and values could be hampering the successful inclusion of LSEN in schools and communities. All roleplayers, but especially those in leadership positions within the school and community, should promote a value system in terms of which all members of the school and community are welcome, notwithstanding their barriers or challenges.

The political will to successfully implement inclusive and related policies should be addressed at both provincial and national education levels. Although all national and provincial education policies, discussed in Chapter Three, acknowledge the need for an integrated, holistic, community based educational support structures, this investigation asserts that very little success is reported at grass roots level. To ensure the establishment of essential support services, there is an urgent need to rapidly move beyond policy development and advocacy, to implementation.

The efficient implementation of national policies could be achieved through the establishment of mechanisms to drive formal collaborative relationships, to ensure the integration of the support services and programmes provided through the Departments of Health, Education, Social Development and Public Works, as well as the private sector.

To ensure their successful inclusion in schools, the different national and provincial Department responsible for Health, Social Development, Public Works, and Safety and Security should steer away from the random inclusion of LSEN in mainstream classes, but rather collaboratively address the challenges that serve as exclusionary factors, not only at school level, but within society. As indicated in Chapter Seven, this will include a rethinking of political philosophies, cultural and traditional values at all levels of the system.
The developmental stage of learners, parents, educators, communities and political, education and social systems has an effect on the support options available to LSEN. Recommendations to regulate the effect of time on support provision are discussed below.

8.4.4 Recommendations regarding influence of chronosystem on educational support provisioning

The following recommendations are made with regard to the chronosystem:

Support service and programmes need to take a developmental approach to service delivery. As indicated in Chapter Seven, learners’ specific support needs change over time. Appropriate support programmes must therefore include a process focusing on early identification and support for younger learners before they enter the education system. This should include programmes focusing on visual and hearing screening, immunisations, nutrition, and preschool education.

In addition, supplementary support strategies focusing on the support needs of learners during primary and secondary schooling should be established. At primary school level, learners may require support that relates more to their physical development and safety, and the development of literacy and numeracy skills. At secondary level, learners may require support in developing appropriate relationship skills as well as skills preparing them for the job market.

Support programmes for educators should also consider their developmental stage, with different programmes of support instituted for educators as they develop and mature as professionals.

Note should also be taken of the need for adjusted support programmes, in line with the process of the developmental implementation of inclusive education, as pointed out in Chapter Three. Monitoring mechanisms to ensure the implementation of inclusive education, as set out in White Paper 6 (2001), are required. It is recommended that provincial departments strictly adhere to the timelines put forth in White Paper 6 (2001).

8.5 LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

This study has certain limitations. Firstly, one of the outstanding experiences during this investigation was successfully encouraging educators to become voluntary participants. Educators are already feeling overburdened in the completion of their normal teaching duties.
As stated in this thesis, time is a highly valuable commodity in teaching and learning. Motivating educators to find time to complete the questionnaire as comprehensively as possible, was a major accomplishment.

Secondly, the participating educators in mainstream secondary schools, although having to deal with an overload of barriers in the learner population, had a very limited understanding of the possible support structures available in the community. This led to reluctance to answer certain questions, as some felt that they were out of their depth in terms of knowledge.

Lastly, due to limited time and resources on the part of the researcher, the study was confined to 85 schools within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas.

Huge positives from the study are that educators, although acknowledging their own limited skills and working in virtually impossible conditions, seem very willing to do their best in order to support learners with additional difficulties.

Notwithstanding its limitations as set out above, it is foreseen that this study will contribute substantially to the effective establishment of an integrated, holistic, community based educational support structure within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas, in terms of which an inclusive education policy can be implemented and possibly flourish.

8.6 FINAL CONCLUSION

The results of this investigation support the findings of the South African Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2007) that the inclusive education system in South Africa is currently not functioning. In my opinion, the many exclusionary factors, especially those resulting from socio-economic factors, which are still present in our school system, are putting the effective implementation of an inclusive education system at risk.

In order to provide a model of inclusive education that is in line with the “Education for All” principle, schools in the lower socio-economic areas, in a collaborative partnership with all relevant roleplayers, need to prioritise the elimination of those factors identified as barriers to learning and development. The eradication of these barriers to learning and development, which mirror the conditions and challenges present in other developing countries in Africa, are, as discussed in Chapter Two, only achievable if all support structures are mobilised within an integrated, holistic, community based educational support structure. The development of such a structure needs to be guided by an audit, as proposed in Chapter Seven,
of support structures available in each community. It is imperative that an asset-based approach to support provision is developed within all communities within the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas.

Finally, it needs to be emphasised that although this study was only done within the parameters of the Nelson Mandela Metropole and surrounding areas, it should contribute to the establishment of holistic, integrated, community-based educational support structures in other districts within the Eastern Cape and may even have significance beyond the provincial boundaries.

8.7 POSSIBLE FURTHER RESEARCH
This study has raised many questions that need to be answered in future research. Possible areas for future research are:

- In view of the overload of barriers educators are dealing with in the Nelson Mandela Metropole, it becomes important to understand the psychological effect on educators of working under these crippling conditions.
- Through action research, researchers need to establish the curriculum adaptations necessary to effectively support the learning of LSEN presenting with different barriers to learning in an inclusive classroom.
- The roles and responsibilities of school governing bodies in overseeing the implementation of important education legislation with regard to LSEN should be investigated.
- Research that endeavours to design a new in-service training model for institution-level support teams, needs to be undertaken.

8.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS
The inability of national and provincial education departments to deal effectively with the challenges in the implementation of education policies is appropriately worded by Christie (1999b:282) who points out that the majority of education policies passed, were “… idealistic text in an essentially top-down policy process, which is not rooted in the realities of schools or responsive to the conditions on the ground”.

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Ref: [H08-EDU-ASE-018/Approval]

Contact person: Carol Polsat

24 June 2008

Ms G Pieterse
Education Faculty
NMMU

Dear Ms Pieterse

FRAMEWORK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTEGRATED, HOLISTIC, ECOSYSTEMIC APPROACH TO EDUCATION SUPPORT

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the June 2008 meeting of the Faculty Research, Technology and Innovation Committee (Education).

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The ethics clearance reference number is H08-EDU-ASE-018.

We wish you well with the project. Please inform your co-investigators of the outcome, and convey our best wishes.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Prof M M Botha
Chairperson: ERTIC
31 May 2009

THE DISTRICT MANAGER
Department of Education and Culture
Port Elizabeth district
6000

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am currently a student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The title of my doctoral thesis is as follow:

ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR A HOLISTIC, INTEGRATED, COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION SUPPORT STRUCTURE WITHIN NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN.

The primary aim of my investigation is to identify the barriers to learning and development, which educators have to deal with, in an inclusive classroom. In addition, I intend to determine the support structures available at the different level of the system. The secondary intention is to use the information gathered to develop a framework for education support, which is integrated, holistic and community based.

The study has been given ethical clearance by the ethical Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

I thus request permission to visit and distribute questionnaires to educators at a few primary, secondary and special schools within you district. In addition, I will need to conduct interviews with staff currently related to education support services at the district offices.

I am aware that gaining permission from your office does not guarantee me unrestricted entry into institutions and that I will have to get individual permission from the governing bodies of each institution separately. Your permission will nevertheless pave my way towards gaining permission.

If needed, I can e-mail an outline of the research as it is a little bulky for faxing. If it cannot be e-mailed, I will have it hand delivered to your office. Once the study is completed, a copy of my findings will be made available to your office.

I hope that my request will receive your favourable consideration.

Yours faithfully

_________________
GLYNIS PIETERSE
6 June 2009

THE DISTRICT MANAGER
Department of Education and Culture
Uitenhage district
6230

Dear Sir/Madam

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am currently a student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. The title of my doctoral thesis is as follow:

ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR A HOLISTIC, INTEGRATED, COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION SUPPORT STRUCTURE WITHIN NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN.

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I hope that my request will receive your favourable consideration.

Yours faithfully

GLYNIS PIETERSE
APPENDIX C: LETTER TO PRINCIPALS (ALSO INCLUDED IN QUESTIONNAIRES)

Thank you for your willingness to allow your school and community to be included in this research. The aim of the research is to identify the support requirements of educators and learners within an inclusive classroom. I will also, with the help of participants, identify those support structures already available within the school, the Provincial (district) Education Department and the community. This research evidence will then be used to establish a framework for an integrated, holistic, community based structure for education support.

What does inclusive education entails? Inclusive education simply means the inclusion of the majority of learners, irrespective of their barriers to learning and development, in the nearest school in their neighbourhood. Barriers to learning and development at your school may include the following as defined by White Paper 6 of 2001:

• Socio-economic barriers
• Negative and discriminatory attitudes (for example towards learners who are HIV positive)
• An inflexible curriculum
• Language and communication blocks
• Inaccessible and unsafe built environments (for learners in have problems with mobility e.g. those in wheelchairs
• Inadequate and inappropriate provision of education support services
• Lack of parental recognition and involvement in the support for educational provisioning for learners
• Lack of human resource development, including education and training of educators
• Neurological and sensory disabilities, including physical, neurological, psycho-impairments as well as moderate to mild learning difficulties

The outcome of this research will have benefits to your school and community in that it will enable you to identify and access support more efficiently. Inclusion is a reality and we as educators, parents and community members have to prepare for the impact it will have on the life of our educators and learners.

Yours in education

GLYNIS PIETERSE
Ms Glynnis Pieterse  06 July 2009
11 Blignaut Street
Hillside
PORT ELIZABETH
6001

Dear Ms Pieterse

D. Ed RESEARCH: ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR AN INTEGRATED, HOLISTIC, COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION SUPPORT STRUCTURE

Emanating from your written request and telephonic conversation permission is hereby granted for the above research on the following conditions:

1. Selected primary and high schools need to be identified and the list forwarded via the District Manager (Ms Bashman) for attention CES: IDMS & G (Mr. Gorgonzola), who in turn will inform the respective circuit managers before the research commences.
2. Schools participate on a voluntary basis and are not coerced in any way.
3. The principal, staff, parents and SGB are aware of the study and give permission for the research in writing.
4. Parents should indicate on the relevant consent forms their permission for their son/daughter to participate in the research if applicable.
5. Appropriate time frames be negotiated for the research on site which will not disrupt schooling in any way, especially where educators & learners are targeted for responses.
6. A summary of the results of the findings should be submitted to the Office of the DM on completion of the study.
7. We appreciate and acknowledge the ethical clearance given by the Ethical Committee of NMMU, but nevertheless in view of the sensitive nature of the topic, to please clarify with your supervisor regarding the content/nature of the questions of the questionnaire in terms of human rights/ethical considerations.

As a District Office we wish you best of luck for your research and trust that the outcomes will benefit the community.
APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE

DEAR PARTICIPANT

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research. The completion of the questionnaire will not take up more than twenty minutes of your time.

The investigation is part of the requirement towards obtaining a Doctorate degree. The title of my thesis is: ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR AN INTEGRATED, HOLISTIC, COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION SUPPORT STRUCTURE. The primary aim of this investigation is to ascertain the support requirements of both learners and educators with the inclusive classroom. The secondary intention is to develop a framework for education support which is integrated, holistic and community based.

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee (Human) of the Nelson Mandela Metropole 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 this research can be directed to the Director: Research Management (Research Ethics Committee (Human) at (041) 504-4536.

NOTE: In accordance with ethical guidelines set out participation in this research is completely voluntary with full confidentiality and anonymity guaranteed. You may at any time withdraw from the research.

Please be advised that 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.

You are in addition required to complete an informed consent statement which has been prepared in compliance with current statutory guidelines.

If you need to contact me with regard to the questionnaire please do so at the following number:
1. 041 4524671 (after hours) or
2. 0733175557
3. glynis.pieterse@gmail.com

Yours sincerely

Glynis Pieterse
RESEARCHER
RE: INFORMATION REGARDING RESEARCH TO BE CONDUCTED AT YOUR SCHOOL.

This research is done against the background of the implementation of inclusive education in all South African schools. What does inclusive education entail? Inclusive education simply means the inclusion of the majority of learners, irrespective of their barriers to learning and development, in the nearest school in their neighbourhood. Barriers to learning and development at your school may include the following as defined by White Paper 6 of 2001:

- Socio-economic barriers which relates to poverty, unemployment, alcohol and drug abuse, gangsterism etc.
- Negative and discriminatory attitudes (for example towards learners who are HIV positive)
- An inflexible curriculum.
- Language and communication blocks e.g. learners being educated in a language other than their mother tongue.
- Inaccessible and unsafe built environments (for learners in have problems with mobility e.g. those in wheelchairs).
- Inadequate and inappropriate provision of education support services in order to provide intervention in the classroom.
- Lack of parental recognition and involvement in the support of learners.
- Lack of human resource development, including education and training of educators to equip them to deal effectively with challenges in their classrooms.
- Neurological and sensory disabilities, including physical, neurological, psycho- impairments as well as moderate to mild learning difficulties.

The outcome of this research will have benefits to your school and community in that it will enable you to identify and access support more efficiently. Inclusion is a reality and we as educators, parents and community members have to prepare for the impact it will have on the life of our educators and learners.

Yours in education

GLYNIS PIETERSE
SECTION A

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING SECTION BY PROVIDING AN ANSWER OR TICKING THE APPROPRIATE BOX

1. Name of School

2. Education District

3. Type of school
   Primary | Secondary | Special

4. Subject/Learning area specialisation

5. Position in school
   Principal /Deputy principal
   Head of Department
   Learning area/grade head
   Post level one educator

6. Age
   23 - 35 | 36 - 45 | 46- 60

7. Gender
   Male | Female

8. Educational qualification:
   Diploma in Education | Postgraduate diploma in education
   First degree (B.A, B.Com or BSc) | Honours degree or ACE
   Masters degree/ Doctorate degree in education | Other:

9. Years of teaching experience
   1 - 5 | 6 - 10 | 11- 20 | 21 - 30+
SECTION B

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND SUPPORT TO LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (LSEN) IN YOUR SCHOOL

KINDLY ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS GIVING AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE.

1. List the types of barriers to learning and development that you encounter in your classroom.

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<tr>
<th>Barriers to Learning</th>
<th>Development</th>
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2. How do you as an educator go about identifying LSEN (those learners experiencing barriers to learning and development)?

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<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Details</th>
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3. What type of support are you as an educator able to provide to these learners (LSEN)?

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<tr>
<th>Type of Support</th>
<th>Details</th>
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4. What other type of support services or interventions are available at school-level to support learners identified as learners with special educational needs (LSEN)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Services</th>
<th>Details</th>
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APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What in your opinion are the barriers or challenges educators have to deal with in their classrooms?

2. To your knowledge, what support programmes are available at school level, to meet the needs of educators in these barriers you have identified?

3. According to your knowledge, what is the support role of the DBST and SGB in our schools?

4. Do you believe, that the DBST, as it currently functions, has the capacity to address the needs of educators, especially those dealing with LSEN?

5. What programmes or avenues for educational support are available in the local community?

6. Besides the questions asked are there any comment or statement you wish to add.

Thank you.
APPENDIX G: SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW

The following is a summary of an interview with an education development official. The interview, which was two hours long is described below:

At the start of the interview the purpose of the investigation as well as the ethical considerations involved were clarified. The following were the salient points of the interview:

The education development officer indicated that each education development officer has about thirty schools in his/her circuit. These schools include mainstream primary and secondary schools, and special schools. She indicated that the type of challenges present is linked to the type of school. She was of the opinion that special schools are reasonably equipped to deal with the challenges experienced by LSEN in their schools.

She stated that the biggest challenges are those experienced by mainstream schools (both primary and secondary) situated in the previously disadvantaged communities. She mentions that these schools are experiencing more problems under the present dispensation, than they did under the apartheid government.

Challenges identified include socio-economic problems such as poverty, alcohol abuse, unemployment, dysfunctional families, and malnutrition. She singled out a specific school where parents are mostly unemployed. Parents in this community consist mostly of young single mothers. Highly problematic is the fact that the specific school as many other schools in townships, are situated in the same road as taverns. In addition, she expressed concern with regard to the level of illiteracy among learners, as well as parents

She further identified apathy, lack of passion and accountability in principals and staff as crippling to schools. She argued that some principals are only doing the basics – they are seemingly waiting around for their retirement. She pointed out that the situation is the result of unions manipulating staff appointments. People get senior positions based on connections and not skills. She pointed out that infighting among staff members is problematic.

The participating education official pointed out that the greatest asset for any school is the community. She mentioned that communities should not wait for hand outs but use their own “people power” to achieve better schools and education for their children – communities need to be proactive. Communities need to identify their strengths and use it.
The education development official pointed out that those successful schools in poorer communities, such as Sapphire Primary and Cebelihle Primary are working hand in glove with their communities to improve education, not only of learners, but also of the parents.

She indicated that the vital element of successful schools is parental involvement and that educators should build a positive relationship with their parents. She stated that illiteracy among parents is rampant and especially cautioned educators against treating parents as ignorant children, because they are illiterate and poor.

She referred to the support programmes for principals under GMSA (The Delta Foundation), the aim of which is to empower principals and SGBs to manage schools more effectively. She furthermore mentioned that the most successful support initiative, School Nutrition Programme, leads to an increase in attendance rates for learners. The School Nutrition Programme is collaboration between The Departments of Health and Education and other private businesses.

She concluded that all schools need additional community support and that sufficient support is available. She stated that educational support have to be coordinated to be successful.